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"WITH THE BOUND OF A TIGER HOLMES WAS ON HIS BACK."

(See page 492.)

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**THE RETURN OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES.**

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

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VIII.—The Adventure of the Six Napoleons.

I

It was no very unusual thing for Mr. Lestrade, of Scotland Yard, to look in upon us of an evening, and his visits were welcome to Sherlock Holmes, for they enabled him to keep in touch with all that was going on at the police head-quarters. In return for the news which Lestrade would bring, Holmes was always ready to listen with attention to the details of any case upon which the detective was engaged, and was able occasionally, without any active interference, to give some hint or suggestion drawn from his own vast knowledge and experience.

On this particular evening Lestrade had spoken of the weather and the newspapers.

Then he had fallen silent, puffing thoughtfully at his cigar. Holmes looked keenly at him.

"Anything remarkable on hand?" he asked.

"Oh, no, Mr. Holmes, nothing very particular."

"Then tell me about it."

Lestrade laughed.

"Well, Mr. Holmes, there is no use denying that there *is* something on my mind.

And yet it is such an absurd business that I hesitated to bother you about it. On the other hand, although it is trivial, it is undoubtedly queer, and I know that you have a taste for all that is out of the common. But in my opinion it comes more in Dr. Watson's line than ours."

"Disease?" said I.

"Madness, anyhow. And a queer madness too! You wouldn't think there was anyone living at this time of day who had such a hatred of Napoleon the First that he would break any image of him that he could see."

Holmes sank back in his chair.

"That's no business of mine," said he.

"Exactly. That's what I said. But then, when the man commits burglary in order to break images which are not his own, that brings it away from the doctor and on to the policeman."

Holmes sat up again.

"Burglary! This is more interesting. Let me hear the details."

Lestrade took out his official note-book and refreshed his memory from its pages.

"LESTRADE TOOK OUT HIS OFFICIAL NOTE-BOOK."

"The first case reported was four days ago," said he. "It was at the shop of Morse Hudson, who has a place for the sale of pictures and statues in the Kennington Road. The assistant had left the front shop for an instant when he heard a crash, and hurrying in he found a plaster bust of Napoleon, which stood with several other works of art upon the counter, lying shivered into fragments. He rushed out into the road, but, although several passers-by declared that they had noticed a man run out of the shop, he could neither see anyone nor could he find any means of identifying the rascal. It seemed to be one of those senseless acts of Hooliganism which occur from time to time, and it was reported to the constable on the beat as such. The plaster cast was not worth more than a few shillings, and the whole affair appeared to be too childish for any particular investigation.

"The second case, however, was more serious and also more singular. It occurred only last night.

"In Kennington Road, and within a few hundred yards of Morse Hudson's shop, there lives a well-known medical practitioner, named Dr. Barnicot, who has one of the largest practices upon the south side of the Thames. His residence and principal consulting-room is at Kennington Road, but he has a branch surgery and dispensary at Lower Brixton Road, two miles away. This Dr. Barnicot is an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon, and his house is full of books, pictures, and relics of the French Emperor. Some little time ago he purchased from Morse Hudson two duplicate plaster casts of the famous head of Napoleon by the French sculptor, Devine. One of these he placed in his hall in the house at Kennington Road, and the other on the mantelpiece of the surgery at

Lower Brixton. Well, when Dr. Barnicot came down this morning he was astonished to find that his house had been burgled during the night, but that nothing had been taken save the plaster head from the hall. It had been carried out and had been dashed savagely against the garden wall, under which its splintered fragments were discovered."

Holmes rubbed his hands.

"This is certainly very novel," said he.

"I thought it would please you. But I have not got to the end yet. Dr. Barnicot was due at his surgery at twelve o'clock, and you can imagine his amazement when, on arriving there, he found that the window had been opened in the night, and that the broken pieces of his second bust were strewn all over the room. It had been smashed to atoms where it stood. In neither case were there any signs which could give us a clue as to the criminal or lunatic who had done the mischief. Now, Mr. Holmes, you have got the facts."

"They are singular, not to say grotesque," said Holmes. "May I ask whether the two busts smashed in Dr. Barnicot's rooms were the exact duplicates of the one which was destroyed in Morse Hudson's shop?"

"They were taken from the same mould."

"Such a fact must tell against the theory that the man who breaks them is influenced by any general hatred of Napoleon. Considering how many hundreds of statues of the great Emperor must exist in London, it is too much to suppose such a coincidence as that a promiscuous iconoclast should chance to begin upon three specimens of the same bust."

"Well, I thought as you do," said Lestrade. "On the other hand, this Morse Hudson is the purveyor of busts in that part of London, and these three were the only ones which had been in his shop for years. So, although, as you say, there are many hundreds of statues in London, it is very probable that these three were the only ones in that district. Therefore, a local fanatic would begin with them. What do you think, Dr. Watson?"

"There are no limits to the possibilities of monomania," I answered. "There is the condition which the modern French psychologists have called the 'id ée fixe,' which may be trifling in character, and accompanied by complete sanity in every other way. A man who had read deeply about Napoleon, or who had possibly received some hereditary family injury through the great war, might conceivably form such an 'id ée fixe' and under its influence be capable of any fantastic outrage."

"That won't do, my dear Watson," said Holmes, shaking his head; "for no amount of 'id ée fixe' would enable your interesting monomaniac to find out where these busts were situated."

"Well, how do *you* explain it?"

"I don't attempt to do so. I would only observe that there is a certain method in the gentleman's eccentric proceedings. For example, in Dr. Barnicot's hall, where a sound might arouse the family, the bust was taken outside before being broken, whereas in the surgery, where there was less danger of an alarm, it was smashed where it stood. The affair seems absurdly trifling, and yet I dare call nothing trivial when I reflect that some of my most classic cases have had the least promising commencement. You will remember, Watson, how the dreadful business of the Abernethy family was first brought to my notice by the depth which the parsley had sunk into the butter upon a hot day. I can't afford, therefore, to smile at your three broken busts, Lestrade, and I shall be very

much obliged to you if you will let me hear of any fresh developments of so singular a chain of events."

The development for which my friend had asked came in a quicker and an infinitely more tragic form than he could have imagined. I was still dressing in my bedroom next morning when there was a tap at the door and Holmes entered, a telegram in his hand. He read it aloud:—

"Come instantly, 131, Pitt Street, Kensington.—Lestrade."

"What is it, then?" I asked.

"Don't know—may be anything. But I suspect it is the sequel of the story of the statues. In that case our friend, the image-breaker, has begun operations in another quarter of London. There's coffee on the table, Watson, and I have a cab at the door."

In half an hour we had reached Pitt Street, a quiet little backwater just beside one of the briskest currents of London life. No. 131 was one of a row, all flat-chested, respectable, and most unromantic dwellings. As we drove up we found the railings in front of the house lined by a curious crowd. Holmes whistled.

"By George! it's attempted murder at the least. Nothing less will hold the London message-boy. There's a deed of violence indicated in that fellow's round shoulders and outstretched neck. What's this, Watson? The top steps swilled down and the other ones dry. Footsteps enough, anyhow! Well, well, there's Lestrade at the front window, and we shall soon know all about it."

The official received us with a very grave face and showed us into a sitting-room, where an exceedingly unkempt and agitated elderly man, clad in a flannel dressing-gown, was pacing up and down. He was introduced to us as the owner of the house—Mr. Horace Harker, of the Central Press Syndicate.

"HE WAS INTRODUCED TO US AS THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE—MR. HORACE HARKER."

"It's the Napoleon bust business again," said Lestrade. "You seemed interested last night, Mr. Holmes, so I thought perhaps you would be glad to be present now that the affair has taken a very much graver turn."

"What has it turned to, then?"

"To murder. Mr. Harker, will you tell these gentlemen exactly what has occurred?"

The man in the dressing-gown turned upon us with a most melancholy face.

"It's an extraordinary thing," said he, "that all my life I have been collecting other people's news, and now that a real piece of news has come my own way I am so confused and bothered that I can't put two words together. If I had come in here as a journalist I should have interviewed myself and had two columns in every evening paper. As it is I am giving away valuable copy by telling my story over and over to a string of different people, and I can make no use of it myself. However, I've heard your name, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and if you'll only explain this queer business I shall be paid for my trouble in telling you the story."

Holmes sat down and listened.

"It all seems to centre round that bust of Napoleon which I bought for this very room about four months ago. I picked it up cheap from Harding Brothers, two doors from

the High Street Station. A great deal of my journalistic work is done at night, and I often write until the early morning. So it was to-day. I was sitting in my den, which is at the back of the top of the house, about three o'clock, when I was convinced that I heard some sounds downstairs. I listened, but they were not repeated, and I concluded that they came from outside. Then suddenly, about five minutes later, there came a most horrible yell—the most dreadful sound, Mr. Holmes, that ever I heard. It will ring in my ears as long as I live. I sat frozen with horror for a minute or two. Then I seized the poker and went downstairs. When I entered this room I found the window wide open, and I at once observed that the bust was gone from the mantelpiece. Why any burglar should take such a thing passes my understanding, for it was only a plaster cast and of no real value whatever.

"You can see for yourself that anyone going out through that open window could reach the front doorstep by taking a long stride. This was clearly what the burglar had done, so I went round and opened the door. Stepping out into the dark I nearly fell over a dead man who was lying there. I ran back for a light, and there was the poor fellow, a great gash in his throat and the whole place swimming in blood. He lay on his back, his knees drawn up, and his mouth horribly open. I shall see him in my dreams. I had just time to blow on my police-whistle, and then I must have fainted, for I knew nothing more until I found the policeman standing over me in the hall."

"Well, who was the murdered man?" asked Holmes.

"There's nothing to show who he was," said Lestrade. "You shall see the body at the mortuary, but we have made nothing of it up to now. He is a tall man, sunburned, very powerful, not more than thirty. He is poorly dressed, and yet does not appear to be a labourer. A horn-handled clasp knife was lying in a pool of blood beside him. Whether it was the weapon which did the deed, or whether it belonged to the dead man, I do not know. There was no name on his clothing, and nothing in his pockets save an apple, some string, a shilling map of London, and a photograph. Here it is."

It was evidently taken by a snap-shot from a small camera. It represented an alert, sharp-featured simian man with thick eyebrows, and a very peculiar projection of the lower part of the face like the muzzle of a baboon.

"And what became of the bust?" asked Holmes, after a careful study of this picture.

"We had news of it just before you came. It has been found in the front garden of an empty house in Campden House Road. It was broken into fragments. I am going round now to see it. Will you come?"

"Certainly. I must just take one look round." He examined the carpet and the window. "The fellow had either very long legs or was a most active man," said he. "With an area beneath, it was no mean feat to reach that window-ledge and open that window. Getting back was comparatively simple. Are you coming with us to see the remains of your bust, Mr. Harker?"

The disconsolate journalist had seated himself at a writing-table.

"I must try and make something of it," said he, "though I have no doubt that the first editions of the evening papers are out already with full details. It's like my luck! You remember when the stand fell at Doncaster? Well, I was the only journalist in the stand, and my journal the only one that had no account of it, for I was too shaken to write it. And now I'll be too late with a murder done on my own doorstep."

As we left the room we heard his pen travelling shrilly over the foolscap.

The spot where the fragments of the bust had been found was only a few hundred yards away. For the first time our eyes rested upon this presentment of the great Emperor, which seemed to raise such frantic and destructive hatred in the mind of the unknown. It lay scattered in splintered shards upon the grass. Holmes picked up several of them and examined them carefully. I was convinced from his intent face and his purposeful manner that at last he was upon a clue.

"Well?" asked Lestrade.

Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"We have a long way to go yet," said he. "And yet—and yet—well, we have some suggestive facts to act upon. The possession of this trifling bust was worth more in the eyes of this strange criminal than a human life. That is one point. Then there is the singular fact that he did not break it in the house, or immediately outside the house, if to break it was his sole object."

"He was rattled and bustled by meeting this other fellow. He hardly knew what he was doing."

"Well, that's likely enough. But I wish to call your attention very particularly to the position of this house in the garden of which the bust was destroyed."

Lestrade looked about him.

"It was an empty house, and so he knew that he would not be disturbed in the garden."

"Yes, but there is another empty house farther up the street which he must have passed before he came to this one. Why did he not break it there, since it is evident that every yard that he carried it increased the risk of someone meeting him?"

"I give it up," said Lestrade.

Holmes pointed to the street lamp above our heads.

"HOLMES POINTED TO THE STREET LAMP ABOVE OUR HEADS."

"He could see what he was doing here and he could not there. That was his reason."

"By Jove! that's true," said the detective. "Now that I come to think of it, Dr. Barnicot's bust was broken not far from his red lamp. Well, Mr. Holmes, what are we to do with that fact?"

"To remember it—to docket it. We may come on something later which will bear upon it. What steps do you propose to take now, Lestrade?"

"The most practical way of getting at it, in my opinion, is to identify the dead man. There should be no difficulty about that. When we have found who he is and who his associates are, we should have a good start in learning what he was doing in Pitt Street last night, and who it was who met him and killed him on the doorstep of Mr. Horace Harker. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt; and yet it is not quite the way in which I should approach the case."

"What would you do, then?"

"Oh, you must not let me influence you in any way! I suggest that you go on your line and I on mine. We can compare notes afterwards, and each will supplement the other."

"Very good," said Lestrade.

"If you are going back to Pitt Street you might see Mr. Horace Harker. Tell him from me that I have quite made up my mind, and that it is certain that a dangerous homicidal lunatic with Napoleonic delusions was in his house last night. It will be useful for his article."

Lestrade stared.

"You don't seriously believe that?"

Holmes smiled.

"Don't I? Well, perhaps I don't. But I am sure that it will interest Mr. Horace Harker and the subscribers of the Central Press Syndicate. Now, Watson, I think that we shall find that we have a long and rather complex day's work before us. I should be glad, Lestrade, if you could make it convenient to meet us at Baker Street at six o'clock this evening. Until then I should like to keep this photograph found in the dead man's pocket. It is possible that I may have to ask your company and assistance upon a small expedition which will have to be undertaken to-night, if my chain of reasoning should prove to be correct. Until then, good-bye and good luck!"

Sherlock Holmes and I walked together to the High Street, where he stopped at the shop of Harding Brothers, whence the bust had been purchased. A young assistant informed us that Mr. Harding would be absent until after noon, and that he was himself a newcomer who could give us no information. Holmes's face showed his disappointment and annoyance.

"Well, well, we can't expect to have it all our own way, Watson," he said, at last. "We must come back in the afternoon if Mr. Harding will not be here until then. I am, as you have no doubt surmised, endeavouring to trace these busts to their source, in order to find if there is not something peculiar which may account for their remarkable fate. Let us make for Mr. Morse Hudson, of the Kennington Road, and see if he can throw any light upon the problem."

A drive of an hour brought us to the picture-dealer's establishment. He was a small, stout man with a red face and a peppery manner.

"Yes, sir. On my very counter, sir," said he. "What we pay rates and taxes for I don't know, when any ruffian can come in and break one's goods. Yes, sir, it was I who sold Dr. Barnicot his two statues. Disgraceful, sir! A Nihilist plot, that's what I make it. No one but an Anarchist would go about breaking statues. Red republicans, that's what I call 'em. Who did I get the statues from? I don't see what that has to do with it. Well, if you really want to know, I got them from Gelder and Co., in Church Street, Stepney. They are a well-known house in the trade, and have been this twenty years. How many had I? Three—two and one are three—two of Dr. Barnicot's and one smashed in broad daylight on my own counter. Do I know that photograph? No, I don't. Yes, I do, though. Why, it's Beppo. He was a kind of Italian piece-work man, who made himself useful in the shop. He could carve a bit and gild and frame, and do odd jobs. The fellow left me last week, and I've heard nothing of him since. No, I don't know where he came from nor where he went to. I have nothing against him while he was here. He was gone two days before the bust was smashed."

"Well, that's all we could reasonably expect to get from Morse Hudson," said Holmes, as we emerged from the shop. "We have this Beppo as a common factor, both in Kennington and in Kensington, so that is worth a ten-mile drive. Now, Watson, let us

make for Gelder and Co., of Stepney, the source and origin of busts. I shall be surprised if we don't get some help down there."

In rapid succession we passed through the fringe of fashionable London, hotel London, theatrical London, literary London, commercial London, and, finally, maritime London, till we came to a riverside city of a hundred thousand souls, where the tenement houses swelter and reek with the outcasts of Europe. Here, in a broad thoroughfare, once the abode of wealthy City merchants, we found the sculpture works for which we searched. Outside was a considerable yard full of monumental masonry. Inside was a large room in which fifty workers were carving or moulding. The manager, a big blonde German, received us civilly, and gave a clear answer to all Holmes's questions. A reference to his books showed that hundreds of casts had been taken from a marble copy of Devine's head of Napoleon, but that the three which had been sent to Morse Hudson a year or so before had been half of a batch of six, the other three being sent to Harding Brothers, of Kensington. There was no reason why those six should be different to any of the other casts. He could suggest no possible cause why anyone should wish to destroy them—in fact, he laughed at the idea. Their wholesale price was six shillings, but the retailer would get twelve or more. The cast was taken in two moulds from each side of the face, and then these two profiles of plaster of Paris were joined together to make the complete bust. The work was usually done by Italians in the room we were in. When finished the busts were put on a table in the passage to dry, and afterwards stored. That was all he could tell us.

But the production of the photograph had a remarkable effect upon the manager. His face flushed with anger, and his brows knotted over his blue Teutonic eyes.

"AH, THE RASCAL! HE CRIED."

"Ah, the rascal!" he cried. "Yes, indeed, I know him very well. This has always been a respectable establishment, and the only time that we have ever had the police in it was over this very fellow. It was more than a year ago now. He knifed another Italian in the street, and then he came to the works with the police on his heels, and he was taken here. Beppo was his name—his second name I never knew. Serve me right for engaging a man with such a face. But he was a good workman, one of the best."

"What did he get?"

"The man lived and he got off with a year. I have no doubt he is out now; but he has not dared to show his nose here. We have a cousin of his here, and I dare say he could tell you where he is."

"No, no," cried Holmes, "not a word to the cousin—not a word, I beg you. The matter is very important, and the farther I go with it the more important it seems to grow. When you referred in your ledger to the sale of those casts I observed that the date was June 3rd of last year. Could you give me the date when Beppo was arrested?"

"I could tell you roughly by the pay-list," the manager answered. "Yes," he continued, after some turning over of pages, "he was paid last on May 20th."

"Thank you," said Holmes. "I don't think that I need intrude upon your time and patience any more." With a last word of caution that he should say nothing as to our researches we turned our faces westward once more.

The afternoon was far advanced before we were able to snatch a hasty luncheon at

a restaurant. A news-bill at the entrance announced "Kensington Outrage. Murder by a Madman," and the contents of the paper showed that Mr. Horace Harker had got his account into print after all. Two columns were occupied with a highly sensational and flowery rendering of the whole incident. Holmes propped it against the cruet-stand and read it while he ate. Once or twice he chuckled.

"This is all right, Watson," said he. "Listen to this: 'It is satisfactory to know that there can be no difference of opinion upon this case, since Mr. Lestrade, one of the most experienced members of the official force, and Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the well-known consulting expert, have each come to the conclusion that the grotesque series of incidents, which have ended in so tragic a fashion, arise from lunacy rather than from deliberate crime. No explanation save mental aberration can cover the facts.' The Press, Watson, is a most valuable institution if you only know how to use it. And now, if you have quite finished, we will hark back to Kensington and see what the manager of Harding Brothers has to say to the matter."

The founder of that great emporium proved to be a brisk, crisp little person, very dapper and quick, with a clear head and a ready tongue.

"Yes, sir, I have already read the account in the evening papers. Mr. Horace Harker is a customer of ours. We supplied him with the bust some months ago. We ordered three busts of that sort from Gelder and Co., of Stepney. They are all sold now. To whom? Oh, I dare say by consulting our sales book we could very easily tell you. Yes, we have the entries here. One to Mr. Harker, you see, and one to Mr. Josiah Brown, of Laburnum Lodge, Laburnum Vale, Chiswick, and one to Mr. Sandeford, of Lower Grove Road, Reading. No, I have never seen this face which you show me in the photograph. You would hardly forget it, would you, sir, for I've seldom seen an uglier. Have we any Italians on the staff? Yes, sir, we have several among our workpeople and cleaners. I dare say they might get a peep at that sales book if they wanted to. There is no particular reason for keeping a watch upon that book. Well, well, it's a very strange business, and I hope that you'll let me know if anything comes of your inquiries."

Holmes had taken several notes during Mr. Harding's evidence, and I could see that he was thoroughly satisfied by the turn which affairs were taking. He made no remark, however, save that, unless we hurried, we should be late for our appointment with Lestrade. Sure enough, when we reached Baker Street the detective was already there, and we found him pacing up and down in a fever of impatience. His look of importance showed that his day's work had not been in vain.

"Well?" he asked. "What luck, Mr. Holmes?"

"We have had a very busy day, and not entirely a wasted one," my friend explained. "We have seen both the retailers and also the wholesale manufacturers. I can trace each of the busts now from the beginning."

"The busts!" cried Lestrade. "Well, well, you have your own methods, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and it is not for me to say a word against them, but I think I have done a better day's work than you. I have identified the dead man."

"You don't say so?"

"And found a cause for the crime."

"Splendid!"

"We have an inspector who makes a speciality of Saffron Hill and the Italian quarter. Well, this dead man had some Catholic emblem round his neck, and that, along

with his colour, made me think he was from the South. Inspector Hill knew him the moment he caught sight of him. His name is Pietro Venucci, from Naples, and he is one of the greatest cut-throats in London. He is connected with the Mafia, which, as you know, is a secret political society, enforcing its decrees by murder. Now you see how the affair begins to clear up. The other fellow is probably an Italian also, and a member of the Mafia. He has broken the rules in some fashion. Pietro is set upon his track. Probably the photograph we found in his pocket is the man himself, so that he may not knife the wrong person. He dogs the fellow, he sees him enter a house, he waits outside for him, and in the scuffle he receives his own death wound. How is that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

Holmes clapped his hands approvingly.

"Excellent, Lestrade, excellent!" he cried. "But I didn't quite follow your explanation of the destruction of the busts."

"The busts! You never can get those busts out of your head. After all, that is nothing; petty larceny, six months at the most. It is the murder that we are really investigating, and I tell you that I am gathering all the threads into my hands."

"And the next stage?"

"Is a very simple one. I shall go down with Hill to the Italian quarter, find the man whose photograph we have got, and arrest him on the charge of murder. Will you come with us?"

"I think not. I fancy we can attain our end in a simpler way. I can't say for certain, because it all depends—well, it all depends upon a factor which is completely outside our control. But I have great hopes—in fact, the betting is exactly two to one—that if you will come with us to-night I shall be able to help you to lay him by the heels."

"In the Italian quarter?"

"No; I fancy Chiswick is an address which is more likely to find him. If you will come with me to Chiswick to-night, Lestrade, I'll promise to go to the Italian quarter with you to-morrow, and no harm will be done by the delay. And now I think that a few hours' sleep would do us all good, for I do not propose to leave before eleven o'clock, and it is unlikely that we shall be back before morning. You'll dine with us, Lestrade, and then you are welcome to the sofa until it is time for us to start. In the meantime, Watson, I should be glad if you would ring for an express messenger, for I have a letter to send, and it is important that it should go at once."

Holmes spent the evening in rummaging among the files of the old daily papers with which one of our lumber-rooms was packed. When at last he descended it was with triumph in his eyes, but he said nothing to either of us as to the result of his researches. For my own part, I had followed step by step the methods by which he had traced the various windings of this complex case, and, though I could not yet perceive the goal which we would reach, I understood clearly that Holmes expected this grotesque criminal to make an attempt upon the two remaining busts, one of which, I remembered, was at Chiswick. No doubt the object of our journey was to catch him in the very act, and I could not but admire the cunning with which my friend had inserted a wrong clue in the evening paper, so as to give the fellow the idea that he could continue his scheme with impunity. I was not surprised when Holmes suggested that I should take my revolver with me. He had himself picked up the loaded hunting-crop which was his favourite weapon.

A four-wheeler was at the door at eleven, and in it we drove to a spot at the other side of Hammersmith Bridge. Here the cabman was directed to wait. A short walk

brought us to a secluded road fringed with pleasant houses, each standing in its own grounds. In the light of a street lamp we read "Laburnum Villa" upon the gate-post of one of them. The occupants had evidently retired to rest, for all was dark save for a fanlight over the hall door, which shed a single blurred circle on to the garden path. The wooden fence which separated the grounds from the road threw a dense black shadow upon the inner side, and here it was that we crouched.

"I fear that you'll have a long wait," Holmes whispered. "We may thank our stars that it is not raining. I don't think we can even venture to smoke to pass the time. However, it's a two to one chance that we get something to pay us for our trouble."

It proved, however, that our vigil was not to be so long as Holmes had led us to fear, and it ended in a very sudden and singular fashion. In an instant, without the least sound to warn us of his coming, the garden gate swung open, and a lithe, dark figure, as swift and active as an ape, rushed up the garden path. We saw it whisk past the light thrown from over the door and disappear against the black shadow of the house. There was a long pause, during which we held our breath, and then a very gentle creaking sound came to our ears. The window was being opened. The noise ceased, and again there was a long silence. The fellow was making his way into the house. We saw the sudden flash of a dark lantern inside the room. What he sought was evidently not there, for again we saw the flash through another blind, and then through another.

"Let us get to the open window. We will nab him as he climbs out," Lestrade whispered.

But before we could move the man had emerged again. As he came out into the glimmering patch of light we saw that he carried something white under his arm. He looked stealthily all round him. The silence of the deserted street reassured him. Turning his back upon us he laid down his burden, and the next instant there was the sound of a sharp tap, followed by a clatter and rattle. The man was so intent upon what he was doing that he never heard our steps as we stole across the grass plot. With the bound of a tiger Holmes was on his back, and an instant later Lestrade and I had him by either wrist and the handcuffs had been fastened. As we turned him over I saw a hideous, sallow face, with writhing, furious features, glaring up at us, and I knew that it was indeed the man of the photograph whom we had secured.

But it was not our prisoner to whom Holmes was giving his attention. Squatted on the doorstep, he was engaged in most carefully examining that which the man had brought from the house. It was a bust of Napoleon like the one which we had seen that morning, and it had been broken into similar fragments. Carefully Holmes held each separate shard to the light, but in no way did it differ from any other shattered piece of plaster. He had just completed his examination when the hall lights flew up, the door opened, and the owner of the house, a jovial, rotund figure in shirt and trousers, presented himself.

**"THE DOOR OPENED, AND THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE
PRESENTED HIMSELF."**

"Mr. Josiah Brown, I suppose?" said Holmes.

"Yes, sir; and you, no doubt, are Mr. Sherlock Holmes? I had the note which you sent by the express messenger, and I did exactly what you told me. We locked every door

on the inside and awaited developments. Well, I'm very glad to see that you have got the rascal. I hope, gentlemen, that you will come in and have some refreshment."

However, Lestrade was anxious to get his man into safe quarters, so within a few minutes our cab had been summoned and we were all four upon our way to London. Not a word would our captive say; but he glared at us from the shadow of his matted hair, and once, when my hand seemed within his reach, he snapped at it like a hungry wolf. We stayed long enough at the police-station to learn that a search of his clothing revealed nothing save a few shillings and a long sheath knife, the handle of which bore copious traces of recent blood.

"That's all right," said Lestrade, as we parted. "Hill knows all these gentry, and he will give a name to him. You'll find that my theory of the Mafia will work out all right. But I'm sure I am exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Holmes, for the workmanlike way in which you laid hands upon him. I don't quite understand it all yet."

"I fear it is rather too late an hour for explanations," said Holmes. "Besides, there are one or two details which are not finished off, and it is one of those cases which are worth working out to the very end. If you will come round once more to my rooms at six o'clock to-morrow I think I shall be able to show you that even now you have not grasped the entire meaning of this business, which presents some features which make it absolutely original in the history of crime. If ever I permit you to chronicle any more of my little problems, Watson, I foresee that you will enliven your pages by an account of the singular adventure of the Napoleonic busts."

When we met again next evening Lestrade was furnished with much information concerning our prisoner. His name, it appeared, was Beppo, second name unknown. He was a well-known ne'er-do-well among the Italian colony. He had once been a skilful sculptor and had earned an honest living, but he had taken to evil courses and had twice already been in gaol—once for a petty theft and once, as we had already heard, for stabbing a fellow-countryman. He could talk English perfectly well. His reasons for destroying the busts were still unknown, and he refused to answer any questions upon the subject; but the police had discovered that these same busts might very well have been made by his own hands, since he was engaged in this class of work at the establishment of Gelder and Co. To all this information, much of which we already knew, Holmes listened with polite attention; but I, who knew him so well, could clearly see that his thoughts were elsewhere, and I detected a mixture of mingled uneasiness and expectation beneath that mask which he was wont to assume. At last he started in his chair and his eyes brightened. There had been a ring at the bell. A minute later we heard steps upon the stairs, and an elderly, red-faced man with grizzled side-whiskers was ushered in. In his right hand he carried an old-fashioned carpet-bag, which he placed upon the table.

"Is Mr. Sherlock Holmes here?"

My friend bowed and smiled. "Mr. Sandeford, of Reading, I suppose?" said he.

"Yes, sir, I fear that I am a little late; but the trains were awkward. You wrote to me about a bust that is in my possession."

"Exactly."

"I have your letter here. You said, 'I desire to possess a copy of Devine's Napoleon, and am prepared to pay you ten pounds for the one which is in your possession.' Is that right?"

"Certainly."

"I was very much surprised at your letter, for I could not imagine how you knew that I owned such a thing."

"Of course you must have been surprised, but the explanation is very simple. Mr. Harding, of Harding Brothers, said that they had sold you their last copy, and he gave me your address."

"Oh, that was it, was it? Did he tell you what I paid for it?"

"No, he did not."

"Well, I am an honest man, though not a very rich one. I only gave fifteen shillings for the bust, and I think you ought to know that before I take ten pounds from you."

"I am sure the scruple does you honour, Mr. Sandeford. But I have named that price, so I intend to stick to it."

"I BROUGHT THE BUST UP WITH ME, AS YOU ASKED ME TO DO."

"Well, it is very handsome of you, Mr. Holmes. I brought the bust up with me, as you asked me to do. Here it is!" He opened his bag, and at last we saw placed upon our table a complete specimen of that bust which we had already seen more than once in fragments.

Holmes took a paper from his pocket and laid a ten-pound note upon the table.

"You will kindly sign that paper, Mr. Sandeford, in the presence of these witnesses. It is simply to say that you transfer every possible right that you ever had in the bust to me. I am a methodical man, you see, and you never know what turn events might take afterwards. Thank you, Mr. Sandeford; here is your money, and I wish you a very good evening."

When our visitor had disappeared Sherlock Holmes's movements were such as to rivet our attention. He began by taking a clean white cloth from a drawer and laying it over the table. Then he placed his newly acquired bust in the centre of the cloth. Finally, he picked up his hunting crop and struck Napoleon a sharp blow on the top of the head. The figure broke into fragments, and Holmes bent eagerly over the shattered remains. Next instant, with a loud shout of triumph, he held up one splinter, in which a round, dark object was fixed like a plum in a pudding.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "let me introduce you to the famous black pearl of the Borgias."

Lestrade and I sat silent for a moment, and then, with a spontaneous impulse, we both broke out clapping as at the well-wrought crisis of a play. A flush of colour sprang to Holmes's pale cheeks, and he bowed to us like the master dramatist who receives the homage of his audience. It was at such moments that for an instant he ceased to be a reasoning machine, and betrayed his human love for admiration and applause. The same singularly proud and reserved nature which turned away with disdain from popular notoriety was capable of being moved to its depths by spontaneous wonder and praise from a friend.

"Yes, gentlemen," said he, "it is the most famous pearl now existing in the world, and it has been my good fortune, by a connected chain of inductive reasoning, to trace it from the Prince of Colonna's bedroom at the Dacre Hotel, where it was lost, to the interior of this, the last of the six busts of Napoleon which were manufactured by Gelder

and Co., of Stepney. You will remember, Lestrade, the sensation caused by the disappearance of this valuable jewel, and the vain efforts of the London police to recover it. I was myself consulted upon the case; but I was unable to throw any light upon it. Suspicion fell upon the maid of the Princess, who was an Italian, and it was proved that she had a brother in London, but we failed to trace any connection between them. The maid's name was Lucretia Venucci, and there is no doubt in my mind that this Pietro who was murdered two nights ago was the brother. I have been looking up the dates in the old files of the paper, and I find that the disappearance of the pearl was exactly two days before the arrest of Beppo for some crime of violence, an event which took place in the factory of Gelder and Co., at the very moment when these busts were being made. Now you clearly see the sequence of events, though you see them, of course, in the inverse order to the way in which they presented themselves to me. Beppo had the pearl in his possession. He may have stolen it from Pietro, he may have been Pietro's confederate, he may have been the go-between of Pietro and his sister. It is of no consequence to us which is the correct solution.

"The main fact is that he *had* the pearl, and at that moment, when it was on his person, he was pursued by the police. He made for the factory in which he worked, and he knew that he had only a few minutes in which to conceal this enormously valuable prize, which would otherwise be found on him when he was searched. Six plaster casts of Napoleon were drying in the passage. One of them was still soft. In an instant Beppo, a skilful workman, made a small hole in the wet plaster, dropped in the pearl, and with a few touches covered over the aperture once more. It was an admirable hiding-place. No one could possibly find it. But Beppo was condemned to a year's imprisonment, and in the meanwhile his six busts were scattered over London. He could not tell which contained his treasure. Only by breaking them could he see. Even shaking would tell him nothing, for as the plaster was wet it was probable that the pearl would adhere to it—as, in fact, it has done. Beppo did not despair, and he conducted his search with considerable ingenuity and perseverance. Through a cousin who works with Gelder he found out the retail firms who had bought the busts. He managed to find employment with Morse Hudson, and in that way tracked down three of them. The pearl was not there. Then, with the help of some Italian *employé* he succeeded in finding out where the other three busts had gone. The first was at Harker's. There he was dogged by his confederate, who held Beppo responsible for the loss of the pearl, and he stabbed him in the scuffle which followed."

"If he was his confederate why should he carry his photograph?" I asked.

"As a means of tracing him if he wished to inquire about him from any third person. That was the obvious reason. Well, after the murder I calculated that Beppo would probably hurry rather than delay his movements. He would fear that the police would read his secret, and so he hastened on before they should get ahead of him. Of course, I could not say that he had not found the pearl in Harker's bust. I had not even concluded for certain that it was the pearl; but it was evident to me that he was looking for something, since he carried the bust past the other houses in order to break it in the garden which had a lamp overlooking it. Since Harker's bust was one in three the chances were exactly as I told you, two to one against the pearl being inside it. There remained two busts, and it was obvious that he would go for the London one first. I warned the inmates of the house, so as to avoid a second tragedy, and we went down with the

happiest results. By that time, of course, I knew for certain that it was the Borgia pearl that we were after. The name of the murdered man linked the one event with the other. There only remained a single bust—the Reading one—and the pearl must be there. I bought it in your presence from the owner—and there it lies."

We sat in silence for a moment.

"Well," said Lestrade, "I've seen you handle a good many cases, Mr, Holmes, but I don't know that I ever knew a more workmanlike one than that. We're not jealous of you at Scotland Yard. No, sir, we are very proud of you, and if you come down to-morrow there's not a man, from the oldest inspector to the youngest constable, who wouldn't be glad to shake you by the hand."

"Thank you!" said Holmes. "Thank you!" and as he turned away it seemed to me that he was more nearly moved by the softer human emotions than I had ever seen him. A moment later he was the cold and practical thinker once more. "Put the pearl in the safe, Watson," said he, "and get out the papers of the Conk-Singleton forgery case. Good-bye, Lestrade. If any little problem comes your way I shall be happy, if I can, to give you a hint or two as to its solution."

The Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt.

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[These Memoirs, written by the greatest actress of our time, will give not only the story of her career in the theatrical world, but also in social life, in which she has, of course, met nearly all the celebrated people of the day, from Royalties downwards, and will be found throughout of the most striking interest to all classes of readers.]

CHAPTER II.—HOW I BECAME DESTINED FOR THE STAGE.

I

arose one September morning, my heart leaping with some vague thought of coming joy. It was eight o'clock. I pressed my forehead against the window-panes and gazed out, looking at I know not what. I had been roused with a start in the midst of a beautiful dream, and I rushed towards the light, as if in the hope of finding in the infinite space of the grey sky some explanation of the feelings that possessed me—the anxiety, and yet the bliss, of expectation. Expectation of what? I could not have answered that question then, any more than after much reflection I can do so now. I was on the eve of my fourteenth birthday, and I was in a state of expectation as to the future of my life. That particular morning seemed to me to be the precursor of a new era. I was not mistaken, for on that September day my fate was settled for me.

"I HAD BEEN ROUSED WITH A START IN THE MIDST OF A BEAUTIFUL DREAM."

From a Drawing by G. Clairin.

As if hypnotized by what was taking place in my mind, I remained with my forehead pressed against the window-pane, gazing in imagination through the halo of vapour formed by my breath at houses, palaces, carriages, jewels, pearls, which passed in fantasy before my eyes. Oh! what pearls there were! And there were princes and kings also; yes, I saw even kings! Oh! how fast imagination travels when left by its enemy, reason, free to roam alone! In my fancy I proudly rejected the princes, I rejected the kings, I refused the pearls and the palaces, and I declared that I was going to be a nun. For in the infinite grey sky I had caught a glimpse of the convent of Grand Champ, of my white bedroom, and of the small lamp that swung to and fro above the little Virgin which our hands had decorated with flowers. The king offered me a throne, but I preferred the throne of our Mother Superior, and I entertained a vague ambition to occupy it on some distant day. The king was heart-broken and dying of despair. Yes, *mon Dieu!* I preferred to the pearls that were offered me by princes the pearls of the rosary I was telling with my fingers; and no costume could compete in my mind with the black *bar ège* veil that fell like a soft shadow over the snowy white cambric that encircled the beloved faces of the nuns of Grand Champ.

I do not know how long I had been dreaming thus when I heard my mother's voice asking our old servant, Marguerite, if I were awake. With one bound I was back in bed, and I buried my face under the sheet. Mamma half-opened the door very gently and I pretended to wake up.

"How lazy you are to-day!" she said. I kissed her, and answered in a coaxing tone, "It is Thursday, and I have no music lesson."

"And are you glad?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," I replied, promptly.

My mother frowned; she adored music, and I hated the piano. She was so fond of music that, although she was then nearly thirty, she took lessons herself in order to encourage me to practise. What horrible torture it was! I used very wickedly to do my utmost to set at variance my mother and my music mistress. They were both of them

excessively short-sighted. When my mother had practised a new piece three or four days she knew it by heart, and played it fairly well, to the astonishment of Mlle. Clarisse, my insufferable old teacher, who held the music in her hand and read every note with her nose nearly touching the page. One day I heard, with joy, a quarrel beginning between mamma and this disagreeable person, Mlle. Clarisse.

"There, that's a quaver!"

"No, there's no quaver!"

"This is a flat!"

"No, you forget the sharp! How absurd you are!" added my mother, perfectly furious.

A few minutes later my mother went to her room and Mlle. Clarisse departed, muttering as she left.

As for me, I was choking with laughter in my bedroom, for one of my cousins, who was very musical, had helped me to add sharps, flats, and quavers to the music-sheet, and we had done it with such care that even a trained eye would have had difficulty in immediately discerning the fraud. As Mlle. Clarisse had been sent off, I had no lesson that day. Mamma gazed at me a long time with her mysterious eyes—the most beautiful eyes I have ever seen in my life—and then she said, speaking very slowly:—

"After luncheon there is to be a family council."

I felt myself turning pale.

"All right," I answered; "what frock am I to put on, mamma?" I said this merely for the sake of saying something and to keep myself from crying.

"Put on your blue silk; you look more staid in that."

Just at this moment my sister Jeanne opened the door boisterously, and with a burst of laughter jumped on to my bed and, slipping under the sheets, called out: "I'm there!" Marguerite had followed her into the room, panting and scolding. The child had escaped from her just as she was about to bath her, and had announced: "I'm going into my sister's bed." Jeanne's mirth at this moment, which I felt was a very serious one for me, made me burst out crying and sobbing. My mother, not understanding the reason of this grief, shrugged her shoulders, told Marguerite to fetch Jeanne's slippers, and, taking the little bare feet in her hands, kissed them tenderly.

MME. BERNHARDT'S SISTER, JEANNE, AT THE AGE AT WHICH SHE IS DESCRIBED IN THIS CHAPTER.

From a Photo. by Delintraz.

I sobbed more bitterly than ever. It was very evident that mamma loved my sister more than me, and this preference, which did not trouble me in an ordinary way, hurt me sorely now.

Mamma went away quite out of patience with me. The nervous state in which I was, together with my anxiety and grief, had quite exhausted me. I fell asleep again and was roused by Marguerite, who helped me to dress, as otherwise I should have been late for luncheon. The guests that day were Aunt Rosine; Mlle. de Brabender, my governess, a charming creature whom I have always regretted; my godfather, and the Duc de Morny,

a great friend of my godfather and of my mother. The luncheon was a melancholy meal for me, as I was thinking all the time about the family council. Mlle. de Brabender, in her gentle way and with her affectionate words, insisted on my eating. My sister burst out laughing when she looked at me.

"Your eyes are as little as that," she said, putting her small thumb on the tip of her forefinger, "and it serves you right, because you've been crying, and mamma doesn't like anyone to cry. Do you, mamma?"

"What have you been crying about?" asked the Duc de Morny. I did not answer, in spite of the friendly nudge Mlle. de Brabender gave me with her sharp elbow. The Duc de Morny always awed me a little. He was gentle and kind, but he was a great quizz. I knew, too, that he occupied a high place at Court, and that my family considered his friendship a great honour.

"Because I told her that after luncheon there was to be a family council about her," said my mother, speaking slowly. "At times it seems to me that she is really idiotic. She quite disheartens me."

"Come, come!" exclaimed my godfather, and Aunt Rosine said something in English to the Duc de Morny which made him smile shrewdly under his fine moustache. Mlle. de Brabender scolded me in a low voice, and her scoldings were like words from Heaven. When at last luncheon was over, mamma told me, as she passed, to pour out the coffee. Marguerite helped me to arrange the cups and I went into the drawing-room.

Maître G——, the notary from Havre, whom I detested, was already there. He represented the family of my father, who had died a few years before at Pisa in a way which had never been explained, but which seemed mysterious. My childish hatred was instinctive, and I learnt later on that this man had been my father's bitter enemy. He was very, very ugly, this notary; his whole face seemed to have moved upwards. It was as though he had been hanging by his hair for a long time, and his eyes, his mouth, his cheeks, and his nose had got into the habit of trying to reach the back of his head. He ought to have had a joyful expression, as so many of his features turned up, but instead of this his face was smooth and sinister. He had red hair, planted in his head like couch grass, and on his nose he wore a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. Oh, the horrible man! What a torturing nightmare the very memory of him is, for he was the evil genius of my father, and his hatred now pursued me!

THE HAVRE NOTARY IN HIS OFFICE. *From a Drawing.*

My poor grandmother, since the death of my father, never went out, but spent her time mourning the loss of her beloved son, who had died so young. She had absolute faith in this man, who, besides, was the executor of my father's will. He had the control of the money which my dear father had left me. I was not to touch it until the day of my marriage, but my mother was to use the interest for my education.

FÉLIX FAURE. *From a Drawing*

My uncle, Félix Faure (no relation of the late President), was also there. He was a very delightful man, handsome, too, and he had a deep, sympathetic voice. I loved him dearly, and, indeed, I love him now, although I have not seen him for a long time, as he

has buried himself alive at the Grande Chartreuse, to await there, far away from the rest of the world, the time when he will rejoin those whom he loved so dearly.

Seated near the fireplace, buried in an arm-chair, M. Lesprin pulled out his watch in a querulous way. He was an old friend of the family, and he always called me "*ma fil*," which annoyed me greatly, as did his familiarity. He considered me stupid, and when I handed him his coffee he said, in a jeering tone: "And is it for you, *ma fil*, that so many honest people have been hindered in their work? We have plenty of other things to attend to, I can assure you, than to discuss the fate of a little brat like you. Ah, if it had been her sister, there would have been no difficulty," and with his benumbed fingers he patted Jeanne's head, as she sat on the floor plaiting the fringe of the sofa upon which he was seated.

When the coffee had been taken, the cups carried away, and my sister also, there was a short silence. The Duc de Morny rose to take his leave, but my mother begged him to stay. "You will be able to advise us," she urged, and the Duke took his seat again near my aunt, with whom, it seemed to me, he was carrying on a slight flirtation. Mamma had moved nearer to the window, her embroidery-frame in front of her, and her beautiful, clear-cut profile showing to advantage against the light. She looked as though she had nothing to do with what was about to be discussed. The hideous notary was standing up by the chimney-piece, and my uncle had drawn me near to him.

My godfather, Régis de L——, seemed to be the exact counterpart of M. Lesprin; they both of them had the same bourgeois mind, and were equally stubborn and obstinate. They were both devoted to whist and good wine, and they both agreed that I was thin enough for a scarecrow. The door opened and a pale, dark-haired woman entered, a most poetical-looking and charming creature. It was Mme. Gu éard, "the lady of the upstairs flat," as Marguerite always called her. My mother had made friends with her, in rather a patronizing way certainly, but Mme. Gu éard was devoted to me and endured the little slights to which she was treated very patiently for my sake. She was tall and slender as a lath, very compliant and demure. She had no hat on, and was wearing an indoor gown of *indienne* with a design of little brown leaves.

**MME. GUÉARD, THE GREAT FRIEND OF SARAH BERNHARDT
WHEN A CHILD. *From a Photo. by Delintraz.***

M. Lesprin muttered something, I did not catch what. The abominable man gave a very curt bow, as Mme. Gu éard was so simply dressed. The Duc de Morny was very gracious, for the new-comer was so pretty. My godfather merely bent his head, as Mme. Gu éard was nothing to him. Aunt Rosine glanced at her from head to foot—Mme. Gu éard was by no means rich. Mlle. de Brabender shook hands cordially with her, for Mme. Gu éard was fond of me.

My uncle, Félix Faure, gave her a chair and asked her to sit down, and then inquired in a kindly way about her husband, a *savant*, with whom my uncle collaborated sometimes for his book, "The Life of St. Louis."

Mamma had merely glanced across the room without raising her head, for Mme. Gu éard did not prefer my sister to me.

"Well, as we have come here on account of this child," said my godfather, looking at his watch, "we must begin and discuss what is to be done with her."

I began to tremble, and drew closer to "*mon petit dame*," as I had always called Mme. Gu éard from my infancy, and to Mlle. de Brabender. They each took my hand by way of encouraging me.

"Yes," continued M. Lesprin, with a laugh, "it appears you want to be a nun."

"Ah, indeed?" said the Duc de Morny to Aunt Rosine.

"Sh! Be serious," she remarked. Mamma shrugged her shoulders and held her wools up close to her eyes to match them.

"You have to be rich, though, to enter a convent," grunted the Havre notary, "and you have not a sou." I leaned towards Mlle. de Brabender and whispered, "I have the money that papa left."

The horrid man overheard.

"Your father left some money to get you married," he said.

"Well, then, I'll marry the *bon Dieu*," I answered, and my voice was quite resolute now. I turned very red, and for the second time in my life I felt a desire and a strong inclination to fight for myself. I had no more fear, as everyone had gone too far and provoked me too much. I slipped away from my two kind friends and advanced towards the other group.

"I will be a nun, I will!" I exclaimed. "I know that papa left me some money so that I should be married, and I know that the nuns marry the Saviour. Mamma says she does not care, it is all the same to her; so that it won't be vexing her at all, and they love me better at the convent than you do here!"

"My dear child," said my uncle, drawing me towards him, "your religious vocation appears to me to be mainly a wish to have someone to care for."

"And to be cared for herself," murmured Mme. Gu éard, in a very low voice.

Everyone glanced at mamma, who shrugged her shoulders slightly. It seemed to me as though the glance they all gave her was a reproachful one, and I felt a pang of remorse at once. I went across to her and, throwing my arms round her neck, said:—

"You don't mind my being a nun, do you? It won't make you unhappy, will it?"

Mamma stroked my hair, of which she was very proud.

"Yes, it would make me unhappy. You know very well that, after your sister, I love you better than anyone else in the world."

She said this very slowly in a gentle voice. It was like the sound of a little waterfall as it flows down, babbling and clear, from the mountain, dragging with it the gravel, and gradually increasing in volume, with the thawed snow, until it sweeps away rocks and trees in its course. This was the effect my mother's clear, drawling voice had upon me at that moment. I rushed back impulsively to the others, who were all speechless at this unexpected and spontaneous burst of eloquence. I went from one to the other, explaining my decision, and giving reasons which were certainly no reasons at all. I did my utmost to get someone to support me in the matter. Finally the Duc de Morny was bored, and rose to go.

"Do you know what you ought to do with this child?" he said. "You ought to send her to the Conservatoire." He then patted my cheek, kissed my aunt's hand, and bowed to all the others. As he bent over my mother's hand, I heard him say to her, "You would have made a bad diplomatist, but take my advice and send her to the Conservatoire."

He then took his departure, and I gazed at everyone in perfect anguish.

The Conservatoire! What was it? What did it mean?

I went up to my governess, Mlle. de Brabender. Her lips were firmly pressed together, and she looked shocked, just as she did sometimes when my godfather told, at table, some story of which she did not approve. My uncle, Félix Faure, was looking at the floor in an absent-minded way; the notary had a spiteful look in his eyes; my aunt was holding forth in a very excited manner; and M. Lesprin kept shaking his head and muttering, "Perhaps—yes—who knows? Hum! hum!" Mme. Guérard was very pale and sad, and she looked at me with infinite tenderness.

What could be this Conservatoire? The word uttered so carelessly seemed to have entirely disturbed the equanimity of all these people. Each of them seemed to me to have a different impression about it, but none looked pleased. Suddenly, in the midst of the general embarrassment, my godfather exclaimed, brutally:—

"She is too thin to make an actress."

"I won't be an actress!" I exclaimed.

"You don't know what an actress is," said my aunt.

"Oh, yes, I do. Rachel is an actress!"

"You know Rachel?" asked mamma, getting up.

"Oh, yes; she came to the convent once to see little Adèle Sarony. She went all over the convent and into the garden, and she had to sit down because she could not get her breath. They fetched her something to bring her round, and she was so pale—oh, so pale! I was very sorry for her, and Sister Appoline told me that what she did was killing her, for she was an actress, and so I won't be an actress, I won't!"

I had said all this in a breath, with my cheeks on fire and my voice hard.

I remembered all that Sister Appoline had told me, and Mother Sainte-Sophie, too, the Superior of the convent. I remembered, too, that when Rachel had gone out of the garden, looking very pale and holding a lady's arm for support, a little girl had put her tongue out at her. I did not want people to put out their tongues at me when I was grown up. There were a hundred other things, too, to which I objected, and about which I have only a vague memory now.

My godfather laughed heartily, but my uncle was very grave. The others discussed the matter in a very excited way with my mother, who looked weary and bored. Mlle. de Brabender and Mme. Guérard were arguing in a low voice, and I thought of the aristocratic man who had just left us. I was very angry with him, for this idea of the Conservatoire was his. "Conservatoire!" This word frightened me. It was he who wanted me to be an actress, and now he had disappeared, and I could not talk the matter over with him. He had gone away smiling and tranquil, patting my head in the most ordinary yet friendly way. He had gone off without troubling a straw about the poor little, meagre child whose future was being discussed. "Send her to the Conservatoire," and this phrase, that had come to his lips so easily, was like a veritable bomb hurled into my life. I, the little, dreamy child, who that morning had rejected princes and kings; I, whose trembling fingers had only that morning told over whole rosaries of dreams and fancies; I, who only a few hours before had felt my heart beat wildly with some inexplicable emotion, and who had got up expecting some great event to happen during the day! Everything had given way under that phrase, which seemed as heavy as lead and as murderous as a cannon-ball. *Send her to the Conservatoire!*

I guessed somehow that that phrase was destined to be the finger-post of my life. All these people had stopped at the bend of the road where there were crossways.

Send her to the Conservatoire! I wanted to be a nun, and they all thought that absurd, idiotic, unreasonable. Those words, "Send her to the Conservatoire," had opened up a new field of discussion, widened the horizon of the future. My uncle, Félix Faure, and Mlle. de Brabender were the only ones who disapproved of this idea, but they were in the minority—a passive minority which felt for me. I got very nervous and excited, and my mother sent me away. Mlle. de Brabender tried to console me. Mme. Gu éard said that this career had its advantages. Mlle. de Brabender considered that the convent would have a great fascination for so dreamy a nature as mine. The one was very religious and a great church-goer, and the other was a pagan in the purest acceptation of that word, and yet the two women got on very well together, thanks to their affectionate devotion to me.

Mme. Gu éard adored the proud rebelliousness of my nature, my pretty face, and the slenderness of my figure; Mlle. de Brabender was touched by my delicate health. She spent no end of time trying to smooth my refractory hair. She endeavoured to comfort me when I was jealous at not being loved as much as my sister; but what she liked best about me was my voice. She always declared that my voice was modulated for prayers, and my delight in the convent appeared to her quite natural. She loved me with a gentle, pious affection, and Mme. Gu éard loved me with bursts of paganism. These two women, whose memory is still dear to me, shared me between them, and made the best of my good qualities and my faults. I certainly owe to both of them this study of myself and the vision I have of myself.

The day was destined to end in the strangest of fashions. Mme. Gu éard had gone back to her apartment upstairs, and I was lying back on a little straw arm-chair, which was the most ornamental piece of furniture in my room. I felt very drowsy, and was holding Mlle. de Brabender's hand in mine when the door opened and my aunt entered, followed by my mother. I can see them now—my aunt in her dress of puce silk trimmed with fur, her brown velvet hat tied under her chin with long, wide strings, and mamma, who had taken off her dress and put on a white woollen dressing-gown. She always detested keeping on her dress in the house, and I understood by her change of costume that everyone had gone and that my aunt was ready to leave. I got up from my arm-chair, but mamma made me sit down again.

"Rest yourself thoroughly," she said, "for we are going to take you to the theatre this evening—to the Français."

**THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS, TO WHICH SARAH BERNHARDT WAS
TAKEN TO SEE HER FIRST PLAY WHEN HER DESTINY FOR THE STAGE
HAD BEEN DECIDED. *From a Photo.***

I felt sure that this was just a bait, and I would not show any sign of pleasure, although in my heart I was delighted at the idea of going to the Français. The only theatre I knew anything of was the Robert Houdin, to which I was taken sometimes with my sister, and I fancy that it was for her benefit we went, as I was really too old to care for that kind of performance.

"Will you come with us?" mamma said, turning to Mlle. de Brabender.

"Willingly, madame," she replied. "I will go home and change my dress."

My aunt laughed at my sullen looks.

"Little fraud," she said, as she went away, "you are hiding your delight. Ah, well,

you will see some actresses to-night."

"Is Rachel going to act?" I asked.

"Oh, no; she is ill."

My aunt kissed me and went away, saying she should see me again later on, and my mother followed her out of the room. Mlle. de Brabender then prepared to leave me, as she had to go home to dress, and to say that she would not be in until quite late. She lived at a convent where old maids and widows were taken as boarders, and special permission had to be obtained when one wished to be out later than ten at night. When I was alone I swung myself backwards and forwards in my arm-chair, which, by the way, was anything but a rocking chair. I began to think, and for the first time in my life my critical comprehension came to my aid. And so all these serious people had been inconvenienced, the notary fetched from Havre, my uncle dragged away from working at his book, the old bachelor, M. Lesprin, disturbed in his habits and customs, my godfather kept away from the Stock Exchange, and that aristocratic and sceptical Duc de Morny cramped up for two hours in the midst of our bourgeois surroundings, and all to end in this decision: *she shall be taken to the theatre!*

I do not know what part my uncle had taken in this burlesque plan, but I doubt whether it was to his taste. All the same, I was glad to go to the theatre; it made me feel more important. That morning on waking up I was quite a child, and now events had taken place which had transformed me into a young woman. I had been discussed by everyone, and I had expressed my wishes—without any result, certainly; but all the same I had expressed them, and now it was deemed necessary to humour and indulge me in order to win me over. They could not force me into agreeing to what they wanted me to do; my consent was necessary; and I felt so joyful and so proud about it that I was quite touched and almost ready to yield. I said to myself that it would be better to hold my own and let them ask me again.

After dinner we all squeezed into a cab—mamma, my godfather, Mlle. de Brabender, and I. My godfather made me a present of some white gloves.

THE HALL AND STAIRCASE OF THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS.

On mounting the steps at the Français I trod on a lady's dress. She turned round and called me a "stupid child." I moved back hastily and came into collision with a very stout old gentleman, who gave me a rough push forward, so that I felt inclined to burst out crying.

THE BOXES OF THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS, FROM ONE OF WHICH SARAH BERNHARDT SAW HER FIRST PLAY.

When once we were all installed in a box facing the stage, mamma and I in the first row, with Mlle. de Brabender behind me, I felt more reassured. I was close against the partition of the box, and I could feel Mlle. de Brabender's sharp knees through the velvet of my chair. This gave me confidence, and I leaned against the back of the chair, purposely to feel the support of those two knees.

When the curtain slowly rose I thought I should have fainted. It was as though the curtain of my future life were being raised. Those columns ("Britannicus" was being

played) were to be my palaces, the friezes above were to be my skies, and those boards were to bend under my frail weight. I heard nothing of "Britannicus," for I was far, far away, at Grand Champ, in my dormitory there.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked my godfather, when the curtain fell. I did not answer, and he laid his hand on my head and turned my face round towards him. I was crying, and big tears were rolling slowly down my cheeks, the kind of tears that come without any sobs and as if there were no hope that they would ever cease.

My godfather shrugged his shoulders and, getting up, left the box, banging the door after him. Mamma, losing all patience with me, proceeded to review the house through her opera-glass. Mlle. de Brabender passed me her handkerchief, for my own had fallen, and I had not the courage to pick it up.

When the curtain rose on the second piece, "Amphitryon," I made an effort to listen, in order to please my governess, who was so kind and so conciliating. I remember only one thing about it, and that was I was so sorry for Alem ène, who seemed to be so unhappy, that I burst into audible sobs, and that everyone, much amused, looked at our box. My mother was most annoyed, and promptly took me out, accompanied by Mlle. de Brabender, leaving my godfather furious. "*Bon Dieu de bois!*" I heard him mutter, "what an idiot the child is! They'd better put her in the convent and let her stop there."

My teeth were chattering when Mlle. de Brabender, helped by Marguerite, put me to bed. Mme. Gu éard was there too; she had been listening for my return, as though foreseeing what would happen.

I did not get up again for six weeks, and only narrowly escaped dying of brain fever.

Such was the *d ébut* of my artistic career.

(*To be continued.*)

The Mutinous Conduct of Mrs Ryder. By Morley Roberts.

A

LTHOUGH Watchett of the *Battle-Axe* and Ryder of the *Star of the South* were cousins, there was no great love lost between them, and all unprejudiced observers declared that this lack of mutual admiration was in no way due to Captain Ryder. That they remained friends at all was owing largely to his infinite good nature, and to the further fact that Mrs. Ryder pitied Mrs. Watchett.

"I wonder she goes to sea with him at all," she said. "If you were one quarter as horrid as your cousin, Will, I should never go to sea till you came ashore."

But she always went to sea with Will Ryder. It was their great delight to be together, and there were few men, married or single, who did not take a certain pleasure in seeing how fond they were of each other. He was a typical seaman of the best kind; he had a fine voice for singing and for hailing the foretopsail yard; his eyes were as blue as forget-me-nots, and his skin was as clear as the air on the Cordilleras which peeped at them over the tops of the barren hills which surround the Bay of Valparaiso. And Mrs. Ryder was just the kind of wife for a man who was somewhat inclined to take things easily. If she was as pretty as the peach, she had, like the peach, something inside which was not altogether soft. Her brown eyes could turn black—she had resolution and courage.

"You shall not put up with it," was a favourite expression on her tongue. And

there were times, to use his own expression, when she made sail when he would have shortened it. In that sense she was certainly capable of "carrying on."

Both vessels were barques of about eleven hundred tons register, and if the *Star of the South* had about twenty tons to the good in size she was rather harder to work. It is the nature of ships to develop in certain ways, and though both of these barques were sister ships it is always certain that sisters are never quite alike. But as they belonged to the same Port of London, and were owned by two branches of the same family, all of whose money was divided up in sixty-fourths, according to the common rule with ships, they were rivals and rival beauties. But, unlike the more respectable ladies who owned them, both the vessels were fast, and it was a sore point of honour with Ryder and Watchett to prove their own the fastest.

"If she only worked a little easier, I could lick his head off," said Ryder, sadly.

But there was the rub. The *Star of the South* needed more "beef" on her than the *Battle-Axe*. She wasn't so quick in stays. By the time Ryder yelled "Let go and haul," the *Battle-Axe* was gathering headway on a fresh tack.

"And instead of having two more hands than we are allowed, we are two short," said his wife, bitterly. "If I were you, Will, I'd take those Greeks."

"Not by an entire jugful," replied Captain Ryder. "I remember the *Lennie* and the *Caswell*, my dear. I never knew Valparaiso so bare of men."

"And we're sailing to-morrow," said Connie Ryder, angrily; "and you've betted him a hundred pounds we shall dock before him. It's too bad. I wonder whether he'd give us another day?"

But Ryder shook his head.

"And you've known him for years! He's spending that money in his mind."

"But not on his wife, Will," said Mrs. Ryder. "If we win, I'm to have it."

"I'd give him twenty to let me off," said Ryder.

But Connie Ryder went on board the *Battle-Axe* to see if she could induce her husband's cousin to forego the advantage he had already gained before sailing. She found him dark and grim and as hard as adamant.

"A bet's a bet and business is business," said Watchett. "We appointed to-morrow, and, bar lying out a gale from the north, with two anchors down and the cables out to the bitter end, I'll sail."

His wife, who was as meek as milk, suggested humbly that it would be more interesting if he waited.

"I ain't in this for interest; I'm in it for capital," said Watchett, grinning gloomily. "The more like a dead certainty it looks the better I shall be pleased."

Mrs. Ryder darkened.

"I don't think you're a sportsman," she said, rather shortly.

"I ain't," retorted old Watchett; "I'm a seaman, and him that'd go to sea for sport would go to Davy Jones for pastime. You can tell Bill that I'll give him ten per cent. discount for cash now."

As Mrs. Ryder knew that he never called her husband "Bill" unless he desired to be more or less offensive, she showed unmistakable signs of temper.

"If I ever get half a chance to make you sorry, I will," she said.

"Let it go at that," said Watchett, sulkily. "I got on all right with Bill before you took to going to sea with him."

"He was too soft with you," said Bill's wife.

"And a deal softer with you than I'd be," said Watchett.

"Oh, please, please don't," cried Mary Watchett, in great distress.

"I thought you were a gentleman," said Connie Ryder.

"I THOUGHT YOU WERE A GENTLEMAN,' SAID CONNIE RYDER."

"Not you," replied Watchett; "you never, and you know it. I'm not one and never hankered to be. I'm rough and tough and a seaman of the old school. I'm no sea dandy. I'm Jack Watchett, as plain as you like."

"You're much plainer than I like," retorted his cousin's wife, "very much plainer."

And though she kissed Mary Watchett she wondered greatly how any woman could kiss Mary Watchett's husband.

"If I ever get a chance," she said. "But there, how can I?"

She wept a little out of pure anger as she returned to the *Star of the South*. When she got on board she found the mate and second mate standing by the gangway.

"Is there no chance of these men, Mr. Semple?"

"No more than if it was the year '49 and this was San Francisco," said the mate, who was a hoary-headed old sea-dog, a great deal more like the old school than "plain Jack Watchett."

"Why doesn't the captain take them Greeks, ma'am?" asked McGill, the second mate, who had been almost long enough out of Scotland to forget his own language.

"Because he doesn't like any but Englishmen," said Connie Ryder.

"And Scotch, of course," she added, as she saw McGill's jaw fall a little. "I've been trying to get Captain Watchett to give us another day."

"All our ship and cargo to a paper-bag of beans he didn't, ma'am," said Semple.

"I—I hate him," cried Connie Ryder, as she entered the cabin.

"She's as keen as mustard—as red pepper," said Semple; "if she'd been a man she'd have made a seaman."

"I've never sailed wi' a skeeper's wife before," said McGill, who had shipped in the *Star of the South* a week earlier, in place of the second mate, who had been given his discharge for drunkenness. "Is she at all interferin', Mr. Semple?"

Old Semple nodded.

"She interferes some, and it would be an obstinate cook that disputed with her. She made a revolution in the galley, my word, when she first came on board. Some would say she cockered the crew over-much, but I was long enough in the fo'c's'le not to forget that even a hog of a man don't do best on hogwash."

Which was a marvellous concession on the part of any of the after-guard of any ship, seeing how the notion persists among owners, and even among officers, that the worse men are treated the better they work.

"She seems a comfortable ship," owned McGill.

And so everyone on board of her allowed.

"Though she is a bit of a heart-breaker to handle," said the men for'ard. "But for that she be a daisy. And to think that the bally *Battle-Axe* goes about like a racing yacht!"

It made them sore to think of it. But it also made the men on board their rival sore to think how comfortable the *Star of the South* was in all other respects.

Owing to the fact that the *Battle-Axe's* crowd was sulky, the *Star of the South* got her anchor out of the ground and stood to the north-west to round Point Angelos a good ten minutes before Watchett's vessel was under way.

"That's good," said Connie Ryder. "I know they're a sulky lot by now in the *Battle-Axe*. And our men work like dears."

It was with difficulty she kept from tailing on to the braces as they jammed the *Star* close up to weather the Point. For the wind was drawing down the coast from the nor'ard, and Valparaiso harbour faces due north. She was glad when they rounded the Point and squared away, for if there was any real difference in the sailing qualities of the rival barques, the *Star* was best before the wind and the *Battle-Axe* when she was in a bow-line.

"And with any real luck," said Mrs. Ryder, "we may have a good fair wind all the way till we cross the line."

It was so far ahead to consider the north-east trades, which meant such mighty long stretches in a wind, that she declined to think of them. And she entirely forgot the calms of Capricorn.

"We're doing very well, Will," she said to her husband when the starboard watch went below and the routine of the passage home commenced.

"It's early days," replied Will Ryder. "I fancy the *Battle-Axe* is in her best trim for a wind astern."

But Mrs. Ryder didn't believe it.

"And if she is, she mayn't be so good when it comes to beating."

She knew what she was talking about and spoke good sense.

"It's going to be luck," said Ryder. "If either of us get a good slant that the other misses, the last will be out of it. But I wish I'd had those other two hands. The *Star* wants 'beef' on the braces. Mr. Semple, as soon as possible see all the parrals greased and the blocks running as free as you can make 'em."

And Semple did his best, as the crew did. But Mrs. Ryder had her doubts as to whether her husband was doing his. For once he seemed to think failure was a foregone conclusion.

"I think it must be his liver," said Mrs. Ryder. "I'll see to that at once."

But instead of looking up the medicine chest she came across the Pacific Directory.

"I never thought of that," she said. "He's never done it, now he shall."

She took the big book down and read one part of it eagerly.

"I don't see why not," she decided, and she went to her husband with the request that he should run through Magellan's Straits when he came to it.

"Not for dollars," said Will Ryder. "When I'm skipper of a Pacific Navigation boat I'll take you through, but not till then."

"But look at all you cut off," urged his wife, "if you get through."

"And how you are cut off if you don't," retorted Ryder. "When I was an apprentice I went through in fine weather, and I'd rather drive a 'bus down Fleet Street in a fog than try it."

She said he had very little enterprise and pouted.

"Suppose the *Battle-Axe* does it?"

Ryder declined to suppose it.

"John wouldn't try it if you could guarantee the weather. I know him."

"You never take my advice," said his wife.

"I love you too much," replied Will Ryder. He put his arm about her, but she was cross and pushed him away.

"This is mutiny," said the captain, smiling.

"Well, I feel mutinous," retorted Connie. "I wanted you to steal two of your cousin's men and you wouldn't. I'm sure they would have come, for what the *Battle-Axe* owed them. And you wouldn't. And now I want to go through the Straits and you won't. The very, very next time that I want to do anything I shall do it without asking you. Why did you bet a hundred pounds if you weren't prepared to try to win it?"

"We'll win yet," said the skipper, cheerfully, "We're only just started."

The two vessels kept company right down to the Horn, and there, between Ildefonso Island and the Diego Ramirez Islands, the *Star of the South* lost sight of her sister and her rival, in a dark sou'-westerly gale. With the wind astern as it was when they squared away with Cape Horn frowning to the nor'-west the *Star* was a shooting star, as they said for'ard.

"If we could on'y carry a gale like this right to the line, we'd 'ave a pull over the *Battle-Axe*, ma'am," said Silas Bagge, an old fo'c's'le man, who was Mrs. Ryder's favourite among all the crew. He was a magnificent old chap with a long white beard, which he wore tucked inside a guernsey, except in fine weather.

"But we can't; there'll be the trades," said the captain's wife, dolorously.

"I've picked up the sou'-east trade blowin' a gale, ma'am, before now," said Bagge; "years ago, in '74 or thereabouts, I was in the *Secunderabad*, and we crossed the line, bound south, doing eleven close-'auled, and we carried 'em to twenty-seven south latitude. There's times when it's difficult to say where the trades begin south too. Mebbe we'll be chased by such a gale as this nigh up to thirty south."

"It's hoping too much," said Mrs. Ryder.

"Hope till you bust, ma'am," said Silas Bagge. "Nothin's lost till it's won. If we can only get out of the doldrums without breaking our hearts working the ship, there's no knowing what'll 'appen. 'Twas a pity we didn't get them other two 'ands, though."

And there she agreed with him.

"'HOPE TILL YOU BUST, MA'AM,' SAID SILAS BAGGE."

"Me and Bob Condy could 'ave got Gribbs and Tidewell out of the *Battle-Axe* easy as easy," said Silas, regretfully. "'Twas a lost hopportunity, and there you are."

The honourable conduct of his skipper in vetoing this little game seemed no more than foolishness to Bagge.

"When we comes to the Hequator and it's 'square away' and 'brace up' every five minutes till one's 'ands are raw, 'twill be a grief to every mother's son aboard," said Bagge, as he touched his cap and went for'ard.

But now the *Star of the South* went booming on the outside of the Falklands with a gale that drew into the sou'-sou'-west and howled after her. She scooped up the seas at times and dipped her nose into them, and threw them apart and wallowed. The men were happy, for the fo'c's'le didn't leak, and the galley-fire was kept going every night to dry their clothes. At midnight every man got a mug of cocoa, and those that rose up called Mrs. Ryder blessed, and those that lay down agreed with them. The *Star* was a happy ship. There was no rule against playing the concertina on a Sunday in her fo'c's'le, and the men were not reduced to playing "blind swaps" with their oldest rags for amusement, as they were in the *Battle-Axe*. And yet every man in the *Star* knew his time for growling was coming on, with every pitch and send of the sea.

They picked up the trades in nearly 30deg. south, with only a few days of a light and variable breeze, and the trades were good.

"But where's the *Battle-Axe*?" asked Mrs. Ryder.

She kept a bright look-out for her, and deeply regretted that her petticoats prevented her going aloft to search the horizon for John Watchett. She rubbed her hands in hope.

"I do believe, Will, that we must be ahead of him," she declared, after the south-east trade had been steady on the *Star's* starboard beam for a week.

"Not much ahead," replied Will.

And just then Bob Condy, who was aloft on the foreto'gallant yard cutting off old seizings and putting on new ones, hailed the deck.

"There's a sail on the port beam, sir."

"Take a glass aloft and have a look at her, Mr. McGill," said the skipper. "No, never mind, I'll go myself, as you've never seen the *Battle-Axe* at sea. I know the cut of her jib, and no mistake."

So Will Ryder went up to the maintop-gallant-yard, and with his leg astride of the yard took a squint to loo'ard. He shut up the glass so quick that his wife knew at once that the distant sail was the *Battle-Axe*. As he came down slowly he nodded to her.

"It is?"

"Rather," said Ryder. "I'm sorry we've no stun-sails. We're carrying all we've got and all we can."

"And to think he's as good as we were on our own point of sailing!" said his wife, with the most visible vexation. "Can't you do anything to make her go faster, Will?"

"MRS. RYDER SAT ON A HEN-COOP AND NEARLY CRIED."

And when Will said he couldn't unless he got out and pushed, Mrs. Ryder sat on a hen-coop and very nearly cried. For if the *Battle-Axe* had done so well up to this she would do better in the dead regions of the line, and the *Star* would do much worse. There the want of a few more hands would tell. The *Star* was no good at catching cat's-paws, and short-handed she worked like an unoiled gate.

"If I'd only done what Silas Bagge wanted," she said, "we'd have been all right. To think that the want of a couple of hands should make all the difference."

It was cruelly hard, but when vessels are undermanned at any time, less than their complement means "pull devil, pull baker," with the former best at the tug of war.

For days there was nothing to choose between the vessels, save that the unusual strength of the trades gave the *Star* a trifling advantage. Every night Watchett took in his royals. This Ryder declined to do, though he often expected them to take themselves in.

"What did I say, ma'am?" said old Bagge. "I told you it *could* blow quite 'eavy in its way in the south-east trades."

And thus it happened that what the *Star* lost by day she pulled up by night. And presently the *Battle-Axe* edged up closer and at last was within hailing distance. Watchett stood on his poop with a speaking-trumpet, and roared in sombre triumph:—

"I'm as good as you this trip on your best p'int, Ryder!"

"Tell him to go to—to thunder," said Mrs. Ryder, angrily. Nevertheless, she waved her handkerchief to her enemy's wife, who was standing by "plain Jack Watchett."

"You've done mighty well," said Ryder, in his turn, "but it isn't over yet."

Jack Watchett intimated that he thought it was. He offered to double the bet. He also undertook to sail round the *Star of the South* in a light wind. He offered to tow her, and made himself so disagreeable that Mrs. Ryder, who knew what became a lady, went below to prevent her snatching the speaking-trumpet from her husband and saying things for which she would be sorry afterwards. But Ryder, though he was by no means a saint, kept his temper and only replied with chaff, which was much more offensive to Watchett than bad language.

"And don't be *too* sure," he added. "I may do you yet."

"Not you," said Watchett. "I'm cocksure."

They sailed in company for a week, and gradually, as the trade lessened in driving power, the *Battle-Axe* drew ahead inch by inch. And as she did Mrs. Ryder's appetite failed—she looked thin and ill.

"Don't feel it so much, chickabiddy," said her husband.

"I can't help it," sobbed Connie. "I hate your cousin. Oh, Will, if you'd only let me entice those two men from him. Bagge was sure that Gribbs and Tidewell would have come."

"It wouldn't have been fair," said Ryder.

"I—I—wanted to win," replied Connie; "and it'll be calm directly, and you know what that means."

It *was* calm directly, and very soon everyone knew what it meant. For it was a real fat streak of a calm that both vessels ran into. And as luck would have it the *Battle-Axe*, which was by now almost hull down to the nor'ard, got into it first. The *Star of the South* carried the wind with her till she was within a mile of her rival. For a whole day they pointed their jibbooms alternately at Africa and South America, to the North Pole and the South. What little breeze there was after that day took them farther still into an absolute

area of no wind at all.

"This is the flattest calm I ever saw," said Ryder. "In such a calm as this he has no advantage."

They boxed the compass for the best part of a week and lay and cooked in a sun that made the deck-seams bubble. At night the air was as hot as it had been by day. The men lay on deck, on the deck-house, on the fo'c's'le head.

"This is a bally scorcher," said the crews of both ships. "Let's whistle."

They whistled feebly, but the god of the winds had gone a journey, or was as fast asleep as Baal. And day by day the two vessels drifted together. At last they had to lower the boats and tow them apart. Watchett was very sick with the whole meteorology of the universe, and being a whole-souled man, incapable of more than one animosity at a time, he found no leisure to spare from reviling a heaven of brass to taunt Ryder. At the end of the week he even hailed the *Star* and offered to come on board and bring his wife.

"I don't want him," said Connie Ryder: "I won't have him."

And as she said so she jumped as if a pin had been stuck into her.

"What's the matter?" asked her husband.

"Nothing," said Connie. "But let him come!"

She went for'ard to interview the cook, so she said. But she really went to interview Silas Bagge. When she came back she found Watchett and his wife on board. If she was a little stiff with Watchett he never noticed it. As a matter of fact, the whims and fads and tempers of a woman were of no more account than the growling of the men for'ard. He was too much engaged in cursing the weather to pay her any attention.

"This licks me," he said; "in a week we ain't moved—we're stuck. 'Ow long will it last, Bill?"

"It looks as if it might last for ever," replied Ryder. "We've struck a bad streak."

The women had tea and the men drank whisky and water. Although Watchett didn't know it, two of his hands left the boat and were given something to eat in the galley by Mrs. Ryder's orders. It was Bagge who conveyed the invitation, with the connivance of the mate, for whom the word of the captain's wife was law.

"'Ave some marmalade and butter?" said Bagge. "Does they feed you good in the *Battle-Axe*, Gribbs?"

"'AVE SOME MARMALADE AND BUTTER?' SAID BAGGE."

"Hogwash," said Gribbs, with his mouth full. "Ain't it, Tidewell?"

Tidewell, who was a youngster of a good middle-class family, who had gone to sea as an apprentice and run from his ship, agreed with many bitter words.

"As I told you, we lives like fightin'-cocks 'ere," said Bagge. "When you're full in the back teeth, we'll 'ave your mates up. We likes to feed the pore and 'ungry, don't we, doctor?"

The cook, to whom Bagge had confided something, said he did his best, his humble best.

"The *Star's* an 'appy ship," he added. "We know what your ship is."

The other two men came up in their turn and were filled with tea and biscuit and butter and marmalade till they smiled.

"This is like home," said Wat Crampe, who was from Newcastle.

"It was petter—much petter," said Evan Evans, "and ass for the captain's wife, she iss a lady, whatefer."

That evening Ryder and his wife returned the call and were rowed to the *Battle-Axe* by Bagge, Bob Condy, and two more of the men. Bagge and Condy went into the fo'c's'le. They lost no time in condemning the *Battle-Axe* and in lauding their own ship.

"This 'ere's a stinkin' 'ooker, mates," said Silas Bagge; "why, our fo'c's'le is a lady's droring-room compared with it. And as for the grub, ask them as come on board us this afternoon. What d'ye say, Gribbs?"

"Toppin'," said Gribbs. "It's spiled my happetite 'ere."

"It was good," said the Welshman; "it was good, whatefer."

Bagge took Billy Gribbs aside on the deck and had a talk with him.

"Oh, Lord!" said Gribbs. "Oh, what?"

"Straight talk," replied Silas; "*she* said so."

"Do you mean it? "

"Do I mean it?" replied Silas, with unutterable scorn. "In course I mean it. It will sarve them right as it sarves right."

Gribbs held on to the rail and laughed till he ached. "It's the rummiest notion I ever 'eard tell on."

"Not *so* rummy!"

"Wot!" cried Gribbs, "not so rummy? Well, if it ain't so rummy, I'm jiggered. I'll think of it."

"Do, and tell your mate Tidewell."

"If I tell Ned, 'e'll do it for sure. 'E's the biggest joker 'ere!"

"Then tell him," said Silas.

That evening Ned Tidewell and Billy Gribbs acted in a very strange way on board the *Battle-Axe*. Without any obvious reason they kept on bursting into violent fits of laughter.

"The pore blokes is gone dotty from the 'eat," said the pitying crowd. "We've 'eard of such before."

"Why shouldn't I laugh?" asked Gribbs. "I'm laughin' because I'm a pore silly sailor-man and my life ain't worth livin'. If I'd died early I'd ha' been saved a pile o' trouble. I was thinkin' of my father's green fields as I looked over the side this afternoon."

"Was you really?" asked the oldest man on board. "Then you take my advice quick and go and ask the skipper for a real good workin' pill of the largest size."

"Wot for?" asked Gribbs.

"Because you've hobvious got a calentoor," said the old fo'c's'le man. "And chaps as gets a calentoor jumps overboard. Oh, but that's well known at sea by those as knows anythin'."

But Gribbs laughed.

"The worst is as it's catchin'," said his adviser, anxiously; "it's fatally catchin'. I've 'eard of crews doin' it one hafter the hother, till there wasn't no one left. In 'eat it was and in calm."

"Gammon," said Gribbs. But he was observed to sigh.

"Are you 'ot in your 'ead?" asked the anxious and ancient one.

"I feels a little 'ot and rummy," said Gribbs; "but what I chiefly feels is a desire to

eat grass."

The old man groaned.

"Then it's got you. Mates, we ought to tie Gribbs up, or lock 'im in the sail-locker, or 'is clothes will be auctioned off before long."

But Gribbs kicked at that, and just then eight bells struck.

"I'm turnin' in," said Gribbs, "and I'm all right."

But at six bells in the first watch he was missing, as was discovered by old Brooks, the authority on calentures. He waked up Ned Tidewell, who was extraordinarily fast asleep.

"Where's Gribbs?"

"Not in my bunk," returned Ned, who with Gribbs was one of the few who still dossed in the fo'c's'le.

"Then 'e's gone overboard for sartain," said Brooks, in great alarm; "there was the look of it in his eye, and in yours too, youngster. These long calms is fataller than scurvy. I shall go aft and report it."

He reported it to Mr. Seleucus Thoms, the second mate, who came for'ard, and roused the watch below from the deck-house and t'gallant fo'c's'le. When all hands were mustered it was certain that Gribbs was missing.

"This is a terrible catastrophe," said Seleucus Thoms, who had a weakness for fine language, derived from his rare Christian name, of which he was extremely proud. "My name is not Seleucus Thoms if he hasn't gone overboard."

"'E was rampagious with laughter in the second dog-watch, sir," put in old Brooks. "And 'e talked of green fields, the which I've 'eard is a werry fatal symptom of calentoor."

"Humph!" said Mr. Thoms, "there's something in that."

And when he went for'ard old Brooks was as proud as a dog with two tails! Though he usually spent the second dog-watch daily in proving that Thoms was no sailor, this endorsement of his theory flattered him greatly.

"I've been mistook in the second," he said, as Thoms went aft. "He's got 'orse sense, after all. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd make a sailor some day."

And Thoms reported the catastrophe to Watchett.

"Drowned himself?" roared the captain; "drowned himself? And who's responsible if you ain't?"

He came on deck in a great rage and scanty pyjamas and mustered the crew aft, and roared at them for full ten minutes as if it was their fault. When he had relieved his mind he asked if there was anyone who could throw light on the matter, and old Brooks was shoved to the front. He explained his views on calentures.

"Never 'eard of 'em," said Watchett.

"And I think, sir, as Tidewell 'ere 'as the symptoms."

"I haven't," said Tidewell, indignantly.

"Wild laughin' is a known symptom, sir, and Tidewell was laughin' 'orrid in the second dog-watch," insisted Brooks; "I'd put him in irons, sir."

But Watchett was not prepared to go so far in prophylaxis.

"If any of you 'as any more symptoms I'll flog 'im and take the consequences," he declared. He went below again unhappily, for he wasn't quite a brute after all.

"This is a mighty unpleasant thing," he said to poor Mrs. Watchett, who cried when she heard the news. "It's a mighty unfortunate affair. Gribbs was the smartest man

in the whole crowd and worth two of the others."

But still the great and terrible calm lasted, and the morning was as hot as yesterday and the sea shone like polished brass and lapped faintly like heavy oil against the glowing iron of the sister barques. At dawn, which came up like a swiftly opening flower out of the fertile east, the vessels were just too far apart for hailing, and Watchett signalled the news to the *Star of the South*.

"Lost a man overboard!" said Ryder. "That's strange; I wish to Heaven we'd found him!"

When he told his wife she seemed extraordinarily callous.

"Serves him right," she said.

And it was wonderful how the crew of the *Star* took the news. They had never seemed so cheerful. They grinned when Watchett came aboard.

"This is an 'orrid circumstance," said Watchett. "I never lost a man before, not even when I was wrecked in the *Violet*. And this a dead calm!"

"Your men aren't happy," said Mrs. Ryder, "and you don't try to make 'em. If I give you three seven-pound tins of marmalade and some butter, will you serve it out to them?"

""YOUR MEN AREN'T HAPPY,' SAID MRS. RYDER."

But Watchett shook his head angrily.

"I'll not cocker no men up," he declared; "not if they all goes overboard and leaves me and the missis to take 'er 'ome. And what's marmalade against 'eat like this?"

He mopped a melancholy brow and sighed.

"It will help them to keep from gloomy thoughts," said Mrs. Ryder. "The *Star of the South* is a home for our men."

"And two run in Valparaiso," retorted Watchett. "And I on'y lost one."

He took a drink with his cousin and went back on board the *Battle-Axe*, and spent the torrid day in getting a deal of unnecessary work done. And still no flaw of lightest air marred the awful mirror of the quiet seas. Early in the first watch the boats were lowered again to tow the vessels apart. At midnight, when the watch below came aft and answered to their names in the deep shadow of the moonless tropic night, Ned Tidewell did not answer to his name.

"Tidewell!" cried Thoms, angrily and anxiously.

And still there was no answer, but a groan from old Brooks.

"Wot did I tell you?" he demanded. "I seed it in 'is eye."

They searched the *Battle-Axe* from stem to stern; they overhauled the sails in the sail-lockers; they hunted with a lantern in the forepeak; they even went aloft to the fore and main tops, where once or twice someone who sought for coolness where no coolness could be found went up into what they jocosely called the "attic." But Ned had lost the number of his mess.

"More clothes for sale," said the melancholy crew, as they looked at each other suspiciously. "'Oo'll be the next?"

Brooks declared to the other fo'c's'le men that the next would be Wat Crampe, or Taffy, as they called the Welshman.

"There's an awful 'orrid look o' the deep, dark knowledge of death in their faces,"

declared old Brooks. "They thinks of the peace of it and the quiet, and smiles secret!"

Next morning Watchett hailed the *Star* and told the latest dreadful news. And at the end he added, in a truly pathetic roar, "Send me them tins o' marmalade aboard, and the butter."

And when Mrs. Ryder superintended the steward's work getting these stores out of the lazaret, she smiled very strangely. She said to her husband: "If he loses another hand or two the *Battle-Axe* will be no easy ship to work, Will."

"I wouldn't have believed the matter of a hundred pounds would have made you so hard," said Ryder. And Connie Ryder pouted mutinously, and her pout ran off into a wicked and most charming smile.

"I'm not thinking so much of the money as of our ship being beaten," she said.

And poor Watchett was now beginning to think the same of his ship. Like most vessels, the *Battle-Axe* required a certain number of men to work her easily, and her luck lay in the number allowed being the number necessary. With two hands gone a-missing she would not be much superior to the *Star* in easiness of handling, and if more went a week of baffling winds now or later, when the north-east trade died out, might give the *Star* a pull which nothing but an easterly wind from the chops of the Channel to Dover could hope to make up. He began to dance attendance on his crew as if they were patients and he their doctor. And the curious thing was that they all began to feel ill at once, so ill that they could not work in the sun. A certain uneasy terror got hold of them; they dreaded to look over the side, lest in place of an oily sea they should look down on grass and daisies.

"Daisies draws a man, and buttercups draws a man," said old Brooks.

"Don't," said Crampe, with a snigger. "You make me feel that I must pick buttercups or die."

"Do you now?" asked Brooks. "Do you now?"

And he sneaked aft to the skipper, who was turning all ways, as if wondering where windward was.

"I'm very uneasy about Crampe, sir," he said, with a scrape, as he crawled up the port poop ladder. "Is mind is set on buttercups."

"The deuce it is!" cried Watchett, and going down to the main deck he called Crampe out.

"What's this I 'ears about your 'ankering after buttercups?" he demanded, very anxiously.

"I *did* feel as if I'd like to see one, sir," said Crampe.

"Don't let me 'ear of it again," began Watchett, angrily, but he pulled himself up with an ill grace. "But there, go in and lie down, and you needn't come on deck in your watch. I can't afford to lose no more mad fools. And you shall have butter instead of buttercups."

"YOU SHALL HAVE BUTTER INSTEAD OF BUTTERCUPS."

"And marmalade, sir?" suggested Crampe. "Marmalade's yellow too, as yellow as buttercups."

"Say the word agin and I'll knock you flat," said the skipper. But, nevertheless, he sent the whole crowd marmalade and butter at four bells in the first dog-watch.

"Hoo, but it iss fine," said "Efan Efans." "Thiss iss goot grup whatefer and moreover, yess!"

"They scoffs the like in the *Star* day in and day out," said Crampe; "if I can't roll on grass I'd like to be in her."

And that night both Crampe and Evans disappeared.

"I believe I 'eard a splash soon after six bells," said old Brooks. "Mates, this is most 'orrid. I feels as if I should be drawed overboard by a mermaid in spite of myself."

And Watchett went raving crazy.

Ryder came on board the *Battle-Axe* as soon as the latest news was signalled to him. Mrs. Ryder declined to go, but she gave him a timely piece of advice.

"Don't let him off the bet, Will, or I'll never forgive you."

"I won't do that," said her husband, hastily, as if he hadn't been thinking of doing it.

"And if he asks for a man or two, you know we're short-handed already."

"Tell me something I don't know," said Ryder, a trifle crossly. Even his sweet temper suffered in 115deg. in the shade.

"I dare say I could," said his wife, when he was in the boat; "I dare say I could."

Watchett received his cousin with an air of gloom that would have struck a damp on anything anywhere but the Equator.

"This is a terrible business," he said. "I never 'eard of anything like it. Every night a man, and last night two!"

Ryder was naturally very much cut up about it, and said so.

"Will you have some more marmalade?" he asked, anxiously.

"Marmalade don't work," said Watchett, sadly; "it don't work worth a cent. Nor does butter. I'd give five pounds for some green cabbage."

A brilliant idea struck Ryder.

"Why don't you paint her green, all the inside of the rail and the boats?"

"She'd be a beauty show, like a blessed timber-droghing Swede," said Watchett, with great distaste. "But d'ye think it'd work?"

"You might try," replied Ryder.

"And now you've got the bulge on me," sighed Watchett; "with two 'ands missing from both watches, she'll be as 'ard in the mouth as your *Star*. You might let me off that bet, Bill."

"No," said Ryder, "a bet's a bet."

"But fairness is fairness," urged Watchett; "there should be a clause in a bet renderin' it void by the act of God or the Queen's enemies."

"There isn't," said his cousin, "and you forget you wouldn't help me about those two hands I wanted."

"Oh, if you talk like that——"

"That's the way I talk," said Ryder, remembering the wife he had left behind him. "I'm sorry."

"Hang your sorrow," said Watchett. "But I'll lose no more, and 'tain't your money yet."

"Will you and Mary come on board to tea?" asked Ryder.

"I won't tea with no unfair person with no sympathy," returned Watchett, savagely.

And when Ryder had gone he set the crowd painting his beautiful white paint a ripe grass-green.

"Watch if it soothes 'em any," he said to Seleucus Thoms. "If it seems to work I'll paint 'er as green as a child's Noah's Ark."

And that night there was no decrease of the *Battle-Axe's* sad crowd, in spite of the fact that he did not act on his impulse to lock them up in the stuffy fo'c's'le. For soon after midnight Mr. Double felt one side of his face cooler than the other as he stood staring at the motionless lights of the *Star of the South*, then lying stern on to the *Battle-Axe's* starboard beam.

"Eh? What? Jerusalem!" said Double. Then he let a joyous bellow out of him. "Square the yards!"

For there was a breath of wind out of the south. Both vessels were alive in a moment, and while the *Battle-Axe* was squaring away the *Star's* foreyard was braced sharp up on the starboard tack till she fell off before the little breeze. Then she squared her yards too, and both vessels moved at least a mile towards home before they began fooling all round the compass again.

"Them hands missin' makes a difference," said Watchett, gloomily. "Less than enough is starvation."

As they fought through the night for the flaws of wind which came out of all quarters, the short watches of the *Battle-Axe* found that out and grumbled accordingly. But it was a very curious thing that the *Star of the South* was never so easy to handle.

"That foreyard goes round now," said old Semple, "as if it was hung like a balance. This is very surprisin'. So it is."

He mentioned the remarkable fact to McGill when he came on deck at four in the morning, and so long as it was dark, as it was till nearly six, McGill found it so too. And both watches were in a surprisingly good temper. For nothing tries men so much as "brace up" and "square away" every five minutes as they work their ship through a belt of calm. But as soon as the sun was up the *Star* worked just as badly as she did before.

"It's maist amazin'," said McGill.

During the day the calm renewed itself and gave everyone a rest. But once more the breeze came at night, and the amazing easiness of the *Star* showed itself when the darkness fell across the sea. Ryder and Semple and McGill were full of wonder and delight.

"The character of a ship will change sometimes," said Semple. "It's just like a collision that will alter her deviation. This calm has worked a revolution."

Because of this revolution the *Star* got ahead of the *Battle-Axe* every change and chance of the wind. She got ahead with such effect that on the third day the *Battle-Axe* was hull down to the south'ard, and when the fourth dawn broke she was out of sight. This meant much more than may appear, for the *Star* picked up the north-east trade nearly four days earlier than her rival, and a better trade at that. When the *Battle-Axe* crawled into its area it was half-sister to a calm, while the *Star* was doing eight knots an hour. And as there was now no need to touch tack or sheet, there was no solution of the mysterious ease with which she worked in the dark. How long the mystery might have remained such no one can say, but it was owing to Mrs. Ryder's curious behaviour that it came out. She laughed in the strangest manner till Ryder got quite nervous.

"These chaps that jumped over from the *Battle-Axe* laughed like that," he told her,

in great anxiety.

And she giggled more and more.

"Shall I try marmalade?" she asked. Then she sat down by him and went off into something so like hysterics that a mere man might be excused for thinking she was crazy.

"They're not dead!" she cried; "they're not dead!"

"THEY'RE NOT DEAD!" SHE CRIED; 'THEY'RE NOT DEAD!'"

"Who aren't dead?" asked her husband, desperately.

And, remembering something which had been told him years before, he took her hands and slapped with such severity that she screamed and then cried, and finally put her head upon his shoulder and confessed.

"Was it mutiny of me to do it?" she asked, penitently.

Will Ryder tried to look severe, and then laughed until he cried. "What ever made you think of it?"

"It wasn't a what; it was a who," said his wife; "it was Silas Bagge."

"The dickens it was," said Will, and with that he left her.

"Call all hands and let them muster aft," he said to McGill, who, much wondering, did what he was told. The watch on deck dropped their jobs and the watch below turned out.

"Call the names over," said Ryder, sternly.

"They're all here, sir," said McGill.

The skipper looked down at the upturned faces of the men and singled out Silas Bagge as if he meant to speak to him. But he checked himself, and, going down to the main deck, walked forward to the fore-castle. The men turned to look after him, and there was a grin on every face which would have been ample for two. Ryder walked quietly, and pushing aside the canvas door he came on a party playing poker. He heard strange voices.

"I go one better, moreover," said one of them.

"I see you and go two better," said a man with a Newcastle burr in his speech.

Then Ryder took a hand.

"And I see you," he remarked. They dropped their cards and jumped to their feet.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded. And there wasn't a word from one of them; they looked as sheepish as four stowaways interviewing the skipper before a crowd of passengers.

"Get on deck," said Ryder. And much to McGill's astonishment the addition to the crew appeared with the captain behind them.

"Divide this lot among the watches," said Ryder.

Leaving McGill to "tumble to the racket," he walked to the mate's berth and explained to him that henceforth the *Star of the South* would go about as easy by day as by night.

"Then they're not dead!" cried Semple.

"Not by a jugful," said Ryder, nodding.

"This is very lucky, sir," said the mate, smiling.

"It's confoundedly irregular, too," replied the skipper, as he rubbed his chin. "Are you sure you knew nothing of it, Mr. Semple?"

"Me, sir! Why, I'd look on it as mutiny," said Semple; "rank mutiny!"

"It was Mrs. Ryder's notion, Semple."
"You don't say so, sir! She's a woman to be proud of!"
"So she is," replied Ryder. "So she is."
He went back to his wife.
"You'll win the hundred pounds now, Will?"
"I believe I shall," said Ryder.
"And I'll spend it," cried his wife, running to him and kissing him.
"I believe you will," said Ryder.
It was a happy ship.

The Size of the World's Great Cities.

By Arthur T. Dolling.

T

HOSE imposing agglomerations of houses and dwellers we call cities (in most cases political or commercial capitals) have shown a notable rate of progress during the last two or three decades. More and more do the centripetal forces at work in almost every nation make for the growth of the capital at the expense of the rural community. A century ago a million human beings dwelling side by side under a single municipal government was almost of itself one of the great wonders of the world. Men spoke of London with bated breath and wondered where it would all end. Reports of monster cities in China with a population double that of London were dismissed as travellers' tales. Travellers' tales, verily, they have proved to be, seeing that Peking even to-day has fewer than a million souls. But what would our forefathers have said of these twentieth-century "wens," these "gloomy or glowing, febrile and throbbing concentrations" of human life, numbering not merely two, but three, four, and even five millions of souls?

LONDON: THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF LONDON, WITH WHICH THE OTHER CITIES ARE COMPARED, IS SHOWN BY THE SHADED PORTION.

Let us take London as the basis of our diagrams. London is an indeterminate quantity. It may mean the City of London, which comprises only 673 acres, or it may mean the Administrative County of London, which boasts nearly 117 square miles, or 74,839 acres, or Greater London, which embraces the Metropolitan Police district, and has an area of no less than 692 square miles, or 443,420 acres. If we take the second of these Londons we shall find it to consist of twenty-nine large and small cities, ranging in population from 334,991 to 51,247 inhabitants. These are called the Metropolitan boroughs; but as it is rather geographical size than population which here concerns us, we may state that the largest of these boroughs is Wandsworth, with an area of 9,130 acres, and the smallest is Holborn, with 409 acres. The average area of these boroughs, if we exclude the City, is about four square miles. Within these borders of London—which must not be confounded with Greater London—there were in 1901 4,536,541 souls, living in 616,461 houses. Within this area, besides buildings, must be counted 12,054

acres of grass, including the public parks and gardens.

If we take Greater London we embrace a far wider and yet still a homogeneous community, for it cannot be denied that the adjoining boroughs just outside the pale of the administrative county are policed from the same centre, are London to the Post Office, and commonly regard themselves, what they must soon be officially, as an integral part of the Great Wen. Greater London—within the fifteen-mile radius—is far more homogeneous and compact than Greater Chicago, for example, or even than Greater New York or Greater Boston. We have here an aggregation of 6,580,000 inhabitants and, as we have already seen, 443,420 acres. But perhaps the fairest estimate of London is the natural one of a single mass of buildings, without any unoccupied or unimproved areas. This gives us a solid, compact city of 85,000 acres and 6,000,000 inhabitants; extending from Edmonton on the north to Croydon on the south, and east and west from Woolwich to Ealing. Nor can one doubt, at the present rate of expansion, that even more distant areas than Croydon will eventually be included, although the Scotsman may have been a little "previous" who addressed a letter to a friend at "Bournemouth, S.W."

A MAP OF PARIS PRINTED UPON A MAP OF LONDON, SHOWING THE RELATIVE SHAPES AND SIZES.

In the following article we propose to compare with London the sizes of the chief cities of the world and, by printing a black map of each city upon a map of London, to display their relative magnitude at a glance. Let us see, to begin with, how Paris compares with London as represented in the above diagram.

At a *coup d'œil* we perceive that the French capital is for its population remarkably small in area, a fact clearly owing to its fixed military barriers, which make growth upward rather than outward. Consequently, dwellers in Paris often have six or eight pairs of stairs to climb where the dweller in London has but two. There have been repeated agitations for municipal expansion, but so far nothing has been done to annex the surrounding communes. Paris has a population of 2,700,000, living in 75,000 houses, and an area of over thirty-one square miles. If, however, the agglomeration of houses be taken—including the suburbs—the area is forty-five square miles and the population 3,600,000, although, as yet, this is not actually and geographically Paris.

BERLIN COMPARED WITH LONDON.

Berlin, a mere village a century ago, is the third city of Europe in point of population, and its growth since 1870 has been phenomenal, as we shall see. Yet the technical barriers which enclose the city remain precisely what they were more than forty years ago, and Berlin is still as it was in 1861, compressed within twenty-eight square miles, six miles long and five and a half wide. At the close of the Franco-Prussian War Berlin, now the capital of a new empire, became a paradise for builders. Streets of houses appeared almost as if by magic, and the whole aspect of the city became changed. From being the worst lighted, the worst drained, and ugliest capital in Europe it has become one of the finest, cleanest, and handsomest of cities, and its population has more than doubled. Berlin now boasts within its boundaries 1,857,000 inhabitants. But without there is, in Ibsen's phrase, "the younger generation knocking at the door," and Greater Berlin

might have a population of 2,430,000, with an area at least treble, extending, indeed, as far as Potsdam. Berlin's actual increase from 1800 to 1900 was 818 per cent., multiplying its population by nine.

VIENNA COMPARED WITH LONDON.

"The transformation of Vienna" has for nearly half a century been a watchword amongst the progressive party in the Austrian capital. The example of Paris—with which the Viennese love to be compared—has, since 1858, brought to the fore innumerable Haussmannizing projects, all of which have tended to the city's amplifying and beautifying. The second or outer girdle of fortifications has been taken down; the barriers thus removed, fifty suburbs became, in 1891, part and parcel of the capital. Before this time Vienna was twenty-one English square miles, or one-third less than Paris; afterwards it covered sixty-nine square miles, besides having by the process added half a million to its population, which now stands at 1,662,269. But Vienna does not intend to be stationary in the coming decade. The fever of the municipal race for territory is upon her also. She is now reaching out for the adjoining town of Floridsdorf across the Danube, together with four other communes, having a population of 50,000; and this step increases the area of Vienna to about eighty-two square miles, nearly thrice the size of Berlin. Naturally such a large territory for a population smaller than a third that of London would comprise much open ground, especially as there is great overcrowding in the industrial districts. And, as a matter of fact, over five-eighths of Vienna is woods, pastures and vineyards, and arable ground, while above a tenth of the total area is made up of parks, gardens, and squares. The cost of making Vienna so vast has been enormous; but it has not been borne by the ratepayers to any oppressive extent, because the appropriated military ground and sites of fortifications have yielded a handsome profit, and municipal improvements in the annexed districts have, of course, enhanced the value of property. Moreover, the most acute observers are convinced that, if Vienna had not roused herself to material self-improvement, her prestige, which is already threatened by Budapest, would ere this have completely vanished. After the Austro-Prussian struggle and the marvellous rise of Berlin and Budapest, the city on the Danube would have sunk to be the Bruges of the twentieth century.

ST. PETERSBURG COMPARED WITH LONDON.

There is, perhaps, hardly a capital in the world so badly situated as St. Petersburg. To its north and east is a desolate wilderness, and to its south is a mighty stretch of marshland, and it is 400 miles from any important commercial centre. Yet, built at the behest of an Imperial autocrat, it has risen steadily into magnitude and wealth, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of human lives.

St. Petersburg is, as all the world knows, built on a swamp, or low-lying alluvial deposits, at the mouth of the Neva. These cover altogether an area of 21,185 acres, of which 12,820 are part of the delta proper of the river and 1,330 acres are submerged. In consequence of its origin and present condition the city is naturally subject to inundations, but these, owing to the admirable public works and precautions taken, are not of frequent occurrence. Of the area of the city, 798 acres are given up to gardens and parks, while a third of the whole area is densely overcrowded, the average in some districts being one inhabitant for every ninety-three square feet and some dwellings containing from 400 to 2,000 inhabitants each. As for the population, it is now 1,248,739, to which if that of the

suburbs be added (190,635), the Russian capital is the fifth city of Europe. Yet in area it is far too small; overcrowding is universal, in spite of the 1,000 dwellings that are erected annually, and the mortality is appalling.

LIVERPOOL COMPARED WITH LONDON.

Liverpool is about six miles long by about three broad, the area being 13,236 acres. It has a population of 686,332 within boundaries less than half the size of Berlin or Paris. But it comprised only 5,210 acres in 1895. In that year, feeling cramped, Liverpool annexed an area of 8,026 acres. Of the total area, there is comprised 772-1/2 acres of parks and gardens.

PEKING COMPARED WITH LONDON.

Peking, as we may see, is a walled city of oblong shape, and contains a total area of about thirty square miles. The two chief divisions are known as the Tartar city and the outer or Chinese city. The population is now about 1,000,000. Writing twenty years ago Sir Robert Douglas thought that a population of a mere million was "out of all proportion to the immense area enclosed within its walls. This disparity," he continued, "is partly accounted for by the fact that large spaces, notably in the Chinese city, are not built over, and that the grounds surrounding the Imperial Palace private residences are very extensive."

What would he have said of Chicago, New York, Budapest, or, indeed, of any modern capital "expanded"? To us, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a million inhabitants seems a very respectable population indeed for a city of only thirty square miles, and in this respect we can no longer sneer or be astonished at the "peculiarities" of Oriental cities.

BOSTON COMPARED WITH LONDON.

Boston is one of the older and more conservative American cities which have lately been seized by the expansion fever, and now proudly refers to its "Greater Boston." But this is as yet only a term, and the new Boston metropolitan district, embracing all the area within a circle of ten miles from the State House, is hardly yet a distinct municipality. It will doubtless soon come about, and in that case twenty-two towns and cities will be taken to the bosom of "the Hub," and the total population will be close upon a million and a quarter. At present the area of the city is over thirty-seven square miles (24,000 acres), or just the size of Chicago a decade ago, of which 2,308 acres are common open spaces and 126 acres ponds and rivers, in addition to numerous squares, gardens, and playgrounds. The length of the city is eight miles and its greatest breadth about seven miles.

CHICAGO COMPARED WITH LONDON.—THE SOLID BLACK AREA REPRESENTS THE ACTUAL BUILDINGS OF CHICAGO; THE GREY AREA COMPLETING THE ADMINISTERED CITY.

Exactly one hundred years ago the American Government built Fort Dearborn, on Lake Michigan. In 1831 there was a village of one hundred people on the site; to-day the city of Chicago has spread out (rather too generously, its rival municipalities think) until it comprises 190-1/2 square miles and a population of 1,698,575. But only some seventy square miles of this area is improved, and less than fifty miles built upon. As there are also 2,232 acres of parks and open spaces, Chicago cannot be said to be overcrowded; especially when one remembers the great height of most of the buildings in the business quarter. Chicago's expansion, in truth, follows the lines laid down by the early Western boom "cities," which were prairie wilderness one week, were surveyed the next, had a population of twelve, one man to the square mile, and applied for a charter the week following, and elected a Mayor and Corporation. The next week the boom was over and a mere shanty remained to mark the site of Boomopolis.

NEW YORK COMPARED WITH LONDON, THE SOLID BLACK AREA REPRESENTING THE ACTUAL BUILDINGS, THE GREY AREA COMPLETING THE ADMINISTERED CITY.

Before 1898 the city of New York lay partly on Manhattan Island, a long and narrow strip of land at the head of New York Bay, thirteen miles long and twenty-two square miles in area, and partly, although to a very trifling extent so far as population was concerned, north of the Harlem River, and on several small islands in the bay and East River. The total area was forty-two square miles, within which was a population of 1,515,301 souls. But in the aforementioned year the great arms of the city flung themselves out and gathered to its bosom so many of the outlying parts and people as to bring the total area of Greater New York up to 307 square miles, and the population to 3,437,202. It must be confessed that much of this huge municipal territory has been rather irrelevantly brought in—especially Staten Island (area 57.19 square miles), which is separated from New York proper by the width of the bay. But, on the other hand, other and nearer towns, such as Jersey City and Hoboken, were excluded, for the reason that they were in another State. Within Greater New York are included 6,766 acres of parks and open spaces, which is but little more than half that of London; yet the proportion of unoccupied land not under the control of the city is, of course, many times as great. The actual agglomeration of buildings in Greater New York—excluding Staten Island—covers barely 51,000 acres, or eighty square miles, as is shown in the diagram. Less than 5,000 acres is built upon in Staten Island.

Some Novel Banquets.

By Theodore Adams.

T

HE art of him who prepares the banquet has reached, in these latter days, a distinction of novelty which might reasonably make the gastronome of fifty years ago hold up his knife and fork in wonder. It is a novelty born of the desire for change. No longer does the dinner-giver merely prepare, with the aid of his costly *chef*, the menu for

his guests and the viands on it. He—or, more properly, she, because of the present prominence of the fair hostess—tries not only to set a pretty table with flowers and cutlery of gold. The giver of dinners is ever thinking of that which will make the banquet memorable to the guest, and, in some cases, even wonders what the Press will say about it. This means to lie awake at night, and in such nightly vigils many wondrous things have been evolved.

Thus we have come to hear of banquets under conditions that make the imagination reel, and arouse speculation as to what the dinner of the twenty-first century will be like. When thirty-two people sat about on horseback a year ago, in a temporary stable, eating from dishes handed to them by waiters dressed as grooms, it seemed as if the top notch of *bizarriere* had been reached. But, as the German says, *noch nicht*.

A HORSEBACK DINNER IN A HOTEL BALLROOM, THE TABLES BEING CARRIED IN FRONT OF THE SADDLES.

From a Photo. by Byron.

This remarkable horseback dinner was given in the great ballroom at Sherry's by Mr. C. K. G. Billings, of New York, and, as it was intended to celebrate the construction of a new stable, the rumour went round that the banquet would be held in the structure itself. The guests, however, met at Sherry's, and were escorted to a small banquet room, where a long table, in the form of an ellipse, was lavishly banked with flowers. The centre space was occupied by a stuffed horse, which cast his glass eyes curiously upon the assembly as the oysters and caviare were served. So convinced were the guests that this was the real and much-talked-about equestrian dinner that their surprise was great when they were asked to follow their host into an adjoining room.

"Here," according to the report of one who was at this famous banquet, "there had taken place an amazing transformation, for the decoration, the waxed floors, and everything of the world of indoors had been obliterated. A space sixty-five by eighty-five feet in the centre of the room had been enclosed by scenery. The guests were in a land of winding roadways, of brooks which coursed through green meadows, and of giant elms. There were cottages, vine-covered, and at the edge of a country estate was a porter's lodge. Far away stretched fields of grain. Over all was the blaze of a summer sun, for above in a vault of blue were strung electric lights. On all sides was the country, and in the middle of the room, rising in a pyramid, were geraniums, daisies, and roses, all blooming as if in the air of June. Above them a palm formed the apex of a pyramid thirty feet at the base. The floor was covered with long, velvety grass. Around the centrepiece were arranged thirty-one horses waiting for their riders. Mr. Billings's mount stood near the door, gazing into the geranium bed. How the steeds got up to the ballroom is no mystery in these days of large lifts, and they were well-trained horses, who cared not for lights and unusual conditions. Each guest found his mount by means of a horseshoe-shaped card attached to the saddle of the horse, just as he had been guided to his seat at the preliminary banquet by means of the bits of Bristol-board at each cover."

Between every two horses there was placed a carpet-covered block, from which the diners swung into their saddles, where, from little tables placed upon the pommels,

they ate their splendid dinner. The horses showed little nervousness. Their trappings were yellow and gold, making pretty contrast with the costumes of the servants, who wore trousers of white buckskin, scarlet coats, and boots with yellow tops. Towards the end of the feast the horses were treated with a consideration due to their efforts, for a turkey-red fence surrounding the floral pyramid was discovered by the guests to contain feeding-troughs in which had been placed a plentiful quantity of superior oats. After dinner the horses were taken from the room by the grooms, small tables and chairs were brought in, and the guests sat down to an after-dinner chat as if in a beautiful garden.

A DINNER OF THE NEW YORK EQUESTRIAN CLUB, THE TABLE REPRESENTING A HORSE'S HEAD.

From a Photo. by Byron.

The horse has figured in a less ambitious, though perhaps quite as attractive, manner at the dinners of the Equestrian Club, which meets in New York during the winter once a month. For one of these banquets was arranged a rural scene with trees, shrubs, and beautiful beds of tulips and hyacinths, the whole floor being covered with stage grass. The table represented a horse's head, chairs being placed around the neck, while the head proper of the horse was a mass of flowers, with eyes, nose, and mouth displayed by means of ornamental and many-coloured flowers. The bridle, particularly, stood out strongly in brilliant red. The menu was formed in the shape of a horse's head, with a small bit and bridle made of leather and steel attached to it.

A DINNER INSIDE AN EASTER EGG.

From a Photo. by Byron.

The use of effective scenery at such functions is growing more common. Perhaps the most effective use to which it was ever put was at the Proal banquet of April, 1903, when thirty-five ladies dined within a monster Easter egg. The egg itself towered to the top of Sherry's ballroom and extended almost to the outer walls. Outside the egg was represented a farm on which chickens, ducks, geese, rabbits, pigs, lambs, and guinea-pigs disported to the life—for they were really live. The ballroom had been turned into a fine landscape, with scenes representing fields and pastures, with flowing brooks near by, and farmhouses, windmills, and hayricks in the distance. One or two mirrors reflected parts of this landscape, which had been arranged to express that longing for "green fields and pastures new" which comes to all who live a city life when spring appears.

In every respect the farm was true to life. A farmer with blue overalls and smock passed in front of the guests, followed by a flock of geese. Pigs ran between his legs, and the spring lamb frisked upon the green. Rabbits munched their carrots until, timid at the sight of strange people, they hid themselves in the straw which lay about. Around were scattered the implements of labour, as if the farmers had just left their work. There were scythes, mowing-machines, milk-pails, and milking-stools to be seen. Every detail, in fact,

had been thought of necessary to make the illusion complete, and the guests—all of whom had been kept in ignorance until they came into the room—were justly astonished at the sight.

The egg itself, with its shell of white, was geometrically perfect, and brought to mind the famous tale of Sindbad and the gigantic roc. The shell was fashioned with light timber bands bent to the required shape, and the supports were covered with green, all making a delightful arbour-like effect. The table was oval in form, hollowed in the centre, within which were floral decorations representing the white and yellow of an egg. Daffodils and jonquils were used for the yolk, while lilies, candytuft, and other white flowers were freely used. The air was filled with fragrance from these blooms. Mrs. Proal sat at the head of the ornamental table, with her guests around the oval. Music was provided by a band of negro musicians, who, seating themselves on wooden benches outside the dining-room, sang plantation melodies. The waiters were dressed as farm-labourers in gaily coloured shirts and smocks, with wisps of straw upon their heads. Fortunate, indeed, were the thirty-five women who took part at this unique banquet, for the farm and its giant egg had come into existence only for a single day, to be destroyed when luncheon was ended and its use was over.

THE GUESTS OF THE KETTLE CLUB DINNER WITH THE KETTLE IN WHICH THEY DINED.

From a Photo. by Byron.

We already begin to see in these dinners the existence of a new form of humour. This is shown even better in the so-called "babies' dinner" given at Sherry's by a Philadelphia organization called the Kettle Club. This club, composed of gentlemen who summer in the Adirondack Mountains, and who eat their forest meals round a vast and fragrant kettle, recently decided to admit five new members, or "babies." The only condition of candidacy was that the "babies" should show due appreciation of the honour conferred upon them. The result was a banquet such as had never been held before. To it were invited the older members of the club. The ballroom resembled a forest glade. Round the walls were painted forests with real trees in the foreground, to one of which was hitched a hunting-horse. The scenic effects included a dark blue cloth which represented a sky, with a moon in the distance and twinkling stars. In the centre of the room rested on a tall mound a huge kettle, twenty-five feet high and twenty-eight feet in diameter, with a door at one side reached by a rustic stairway. There was a circular table within the kettle, around which sat the guests, each with a wine "cooler" at his side.

In the centre of the table, perfectly dark when dinner began, was a bed of tall flowers on the floor, nine feet below. Suddenly, when this hole was lighted, was revealed a magnificent display of orchids, with a vine of pale purple flowers. Below sat a negro with a banjo, who sang and played throughout the evening for the pleasure of the guests. The menu card showed a picture of the kettle, into which five babies were climbing, the faces of these being those of the five new members, each with a teething ring, a nursing bottle, and a rattle. Souvenirs of the occasion were given to the guests in the form of small kettles, each with the name of the guest and the club motto, "Take the Kettle,"

painted on the side. This same inscription appeared on the structure in which the banquet took place, as shown in our illustration. Here we may note the part which the backcloth played at this noteworthy function.

THE OLD GUARDS' "MOCK-MENU" DINNER.

From a Photo. by Byron.

Another novel dinner was that given by a well-known New Yorker, Colonel O'Brien, to the Old Guard of Delmonico's, known to fame as the guard that "dines but never surrenders." For this affair two menus had been provided, one as a joke, the other for consumption. The mock bill of fare contained a list of dishes which *might* have been provided. For example, under the heading of oysters were the words "half shell," which the waiters solemnly set before the assembled gentlemen, minus the bivalves. These being removed made way for the next item, which, being "cream of celery" and presumably a soup, was found to be small tubes of celery with cold cream inside. Through all the regular courses the joke was carried, with amusing success, the joint being spring lamb with "string," or French, beans. What was the astonishment of the guests to find served for this course a woolly toy lamb on a spring, which squeaked when pressed, and wore dried beans on a string around its neck! The humour of the dinner came with the continued surprise at the ingenuity shown by the preparer of the feast, and it can be truly said that each item tickled the guests immensely. With the woolly lambs this band of gastronomers were especially pleased, and it was at the moment when these ridiculous toys were handed round to the well-proportioned diners that our photograph was secured.

THE "LYRE DINNER," THE TABLE BEING IN THE FORM OF A LYRE.

From a Photo. by Byron.

A few years ago Mr. Sherry himself was returning with the *impresario*, Maurice Grau, from Europe, and as the result of a wager upon the ship's "run" Mr. Grau was given a splendid dinner. It is now known in gastronomic history as the "lyre dinner," for the table was arranged in the form of an enormous lyre. Long gilded ropes covered with pretty vines represented the strings, while, to carry out the idea of the instrument, there was a golden cloth on the inner side of the table. Into this were woven mauve orchids, with electric lights sparkling under the green leaves, thus bringing out sufficient brilliancy to please the guests and not to affect their eyesight. Between each two seats of the table was a wine "cooler," sunk into the wood in such a way that the neck only of each champagne bottle showed above the edge. The banquet was attended by those best known to music in New York, and its brilliancy has probably never been surpassed.

A Doubtful Case.

By Mrs. Egerton Eastwick (Pleydell North).

HEN, in the year 189-, a weakness of the throat prevented me from preaching for a time, I had considerable difficulty in persuading Allan Fortescue to take my place in the pulpit.

He had been amongst us rather more than two years; and although an ordained priest in the Church of England, and a man of considerable ability, was without preferment, and, apparently, content to remain so.

How came it, I often wondered, that he stayed on in our quiet village, with no apparent interest or occupation in life beyond his garden and his books?

Nor, when he at length consented to my proposal and preached his first sermon in Stony Lea, was my perplexity lessened. His diction was that of a classical scholar, but his words were also the outpouring of a sensitive, warm-hearted man; I could have fancied that in these impersonal utterances he sought compensation for years of enforced silence and isolation.

He had attracted me from the first. Manly, genial, but strangely reserved, Sir Lewin Maxwell and myself were, I believe, the only visitors who had gained admittance to his cottage.

When I so far induced him to change his habits as to help me with my weekly sermons Sir Lewin Maxwell was abroad. He had left Stony Lea for the Riviera in November, and now, early in May, the fact of his marriage had just been announced. No particulars, however, concerning the bride had reached us, and the appearance of the newly-married couple at the Hall was looked for with much interest and curiosity. They did not come until June, and then, by the express desire of Sir Lewin, were met by no demonstration of any kind; indeed, no one, I believe, except the steward and myself knew the exact date or hour at which they were to be expected.

On the Sunday following their arrival, therefore, glances were turned with some eagerness towards the Hall pew, but it was occupied only by a stout, elderly lady, who could not assuredly be Sir Lewin's newly-married wife.

No sooner, on that day, had Allan Fortescue in due course mounted the pulpit than I became aware of something amiss. From my position in the chancel I could not see his face, but the pause which preceded his announcement of a text was just long enough to cause uneasiness, and his voice, when at length he broke the silence, was harsh and unnatural, although, when once fairly started, he spoke with even more than his usual fervour.

When I reached the sacristy after the service Fortescue had already left, and as I was preparing to follow him I was accosted by the lady whom I had seen in the squire's pew.

**"SHE TURNED TO ME AND INQUIRED WHETHER I WAS AWARE OF
THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE MAN."**

My visitor's comely, good-tempered face was flushed with heat and nervous

indignation. After abruptly closing the sacristy door upon the two of us she turned to me and inquired whether I was aware of the true character of the man I had admitted to my pulpit, adding that it was with the greatest difficulty she had refrained from walking out of the church.

Somewhat startled, I asked for further explanation, whereupon she gave me, at considerable length, the particulars I will here try to relate as concisely as possible.

It seemed that about five years previously Allan Fortescue had been engaged as resident tutor to Mrs. Llewellyn's only son, and in that capacity had accompanied the family to Llidisfarn, a solitary, old-fashioned place in Wales. The house was occupied for the greater part of the year by a gardener and his wife as caretakers; but during the residence of their mistress these people retired to their own cottage. Mrs. Llewellyn brought with her two old and faithful servants—both women. Her party further included her niece and ward, Edith Graham, now Sir Lewin Maxwell's wife. The evening of her arrival Mrs. Llewellyn retired early to her room and to bed. The latter was an antiquated four-poster; the canopy had been removed for the sake of air, but the curtains remained, and on the night in question, the weather being boisterous and the room draughty, had been drawn so as to have only a small opening at the foot. Before retiring Mrs. Llewellyn had taken from her travelling-bag an ebony and silver casket which contained some valuable diamonds. She had intended placing the casket in an iron safe near the head of the bed, but had found the lock rusty from disuse; consequently, being exceedingly tired, and believing there could be no fear of burglars in this quiet and remote place, she left the casket on the dressing-table.

The dressing-table faced the door of the room, and to cross from one to the other it was necessary to pass the foot of the bed.

"A FIGURE CARRYING A SMALL READING-LAMP PASSED THE APERTURE."

In the dead of the night Mrs. Llewellyn awoke, feeling sure that someone was stirring in the room, and, as she became more fully conscious, saw on the ceiling above her a dim reflection of light. Almost at the same moment a figure carrying a small reading-lamp passed the aperture between the curtains at the foot of the bed, going towards the door, and she recognised, to her amazement, the tutor, Allan Fortescue. She described herself as being too surprised and terrified to call out; it seemed but a moment before the door was closed and she was in darkness and alone. Then she struck a light, sprang from the bed, and went to the dressing-table. The ebony casket was gone. Even then she gave no alarm. Except her son and Allan Fortescue, only women were in the house; and she reflected that it would be safer and wiser to wait until the morning. That the thief should dispose of the diamonds during the night was virtually impossible. Also the circumstances were otherwise peculiar. Allan Fortescue was at that time the avowed admirer of Miss Graham, and for her sake an open scandal was, if possible, to be avoided.

The following morning, however, after hours of sleepless anxiety, Mrs. Llewellyn summoned the tutor to the study, made her accusation, and demanded the return of her property.

He did not attempt either to explain or deny his presence in her room during the night, but appeared to treat the idea of theft as a ludicrous jest, and stoutly maintained

that the jewels were not in his possession. During the altercation which followed Miss Graham entered, and Fortescue at once explained the situation.

Apparently to his surprise, Miss Graham took the affair very seriously, and seemed to feel that the evidence against him was overwhelming. She pleaded, however, so piteously that for her sake he might be spared from public disgrace that Mrs. Llewellyn finally consented to allow him to leave the house, upon the understanding that he should seek no further intercourse with any member of the family, and that he should never again undertake the duties either of a clergyman or a tutor. Under these circumstances he at last seemed to realize the seriousness of his position; he went away that morning, maintaining towards the end an obstinate silence. The most rigorous search, made at his own request, among his possessions failed to reveal the diamonds, which, indeed, had never since been heard of.

I also gathered that, although made fully aware of the penalty to be incurred by any breach of the conditions named, he had steadily refused to bind himself as to his future.

That afternoon, as soon as I was at leisure, I walked down to Allan Fortescue's cottage.

Shocked and distressed as I was at the story, I felt many points in it needed clearing up, and was inwardly assured that, if he would, he had the power to explain the whole matter satisfactorily.

He opened the door himself.

"I know," he said, abruptly, before I could speak, "why you have come. Mrs. Llewellyn was with you this morning; I saw her rustling up towards the sacristy. Don't let charity bring you any farther."

I signed to him to let me come in.

"We can't talk on the doorstep," I said. "Of course, it is all a mistake."

He let me come to the study; then, as he closed the door behind me, he said:—

"There is no mistake. I was there—in her room that night. She saw me."

"You were not there to take the diamonds," I persisted.

"I was not there to steal the diamonds; I will own so much."

"In that case, who did steal them, if stolen they were? No pains should have been spared at the time to discover the actual thief. Even now it might not be too late, if you would only account for your presence in the room."

"The actual thief——" He began restlessly to pace the floor. "What if I were to say that I took the diamonds—with my own hands?"

"I should answer that you must have been in some way unconscious of your actions."

My confidence seemed to touch him; he looked at me, and for a moment I hoped I was to gain some enlightenment; then he said, slowly:—

"I was never in my life more completely master of myself. And now there must be an end of my confessions."

I saw that to question him further would be useless, and shortly afterwards took my leave. As we parted he grasped my extended hand.

"I owe you an apology," he said, "for having brought this annoyance upon you, and I don't know how to thank you for your patience with me."

A few days later an invitation reached me to dine at the Hall. Any intercourse

between Allan Fortescue and Sir Lewin Maxwell had inevitably ceased. Sir Lewin, not unnaturally, accepted Mrs. Llewellyn's view of the case, but he did not quarrel with me for taking my own line, and young Lady Maxwell seemed almost grateful for my belief in the possible innocence of her old lover. She was a most charming woman, with an habitually sweet and gracious manner, rendered only more attractive, I at first thought, by a variableness of mood which brought suggestion of possible storms.

An accomplished musician, her talent made a link between us. Often, indeed, during the earlier part of our intercourse she became associated in my mind with the harmonies of Beethoven, whose creations she rendered with remarkable skill and feeling. Later, however, I noticed an increase of nervous restlessness, an expression in her eyes as of some haunting, eager desire, little in keeping with the works of the master, which, however full of variety, are to my mind always instinct with a great satisfaction and repose.

For some time I was inclined to attribute these signs of disturbance to the neighbourhood of Allan Fortescue, and to think that he would have done well to leave the village. But, so far as I could see, he studiously avoided all chance of encounter with any of the Hall party; and, without definite reason, I had not the heart to suggest that he should become once more a wanderer.

In this way some few months passed without noticeable event. Sir Lewin, I thought, at times looked careworn and more aged than the passage of months would justify, but he seemed, if possible, more entirely devoted to his wife than in the earlier days of their marriage. Then, one Monday afternoon early in April, as I was riding homewards from visiting an outlying district, a curious thing happened.

My way led me through Oxley Dell, a piece of road bordered on each side by Sir Lewin's woods, through which to the right a bridle-path leads by a short cut to Stony Lea. The path and immediate neighbourhood are but little frequented, owing to an old story of a murder and a subsequent ghost.

"A WOMAN SUDDENLY APPEARED FROM AMONG THE TREES."

As I neared the Dell I saw Allan Fortescue tramping along the road in front of me, but before I could overtake him he turned aside into the bridle-path. There I presently followed, and had him once more in view, when a woman suddenly appeared from among the trees and accosted him. Allan raised his hat, and the two walked on together; the meeting had the air of an appointment.

Having no wish to play the spy I turned my pony's head, but I was ill at ease. The tall, graceful figure of the woman, enveloped though it was in a long rain-coat, had been ominously familiar, and as I jogged slowly homewards I resolved that I would call that evening on Allan and have the matter out with him.

I found him in better spirits than usual, but when I explained my errand he seemed somewhat disconcerted.

"Ah! you saw us," he said, and bent to knock the ashes from his pipe; then added, "You are sure, I suppose, of the identity of the lady? "

"As sure as it is possible to be without having seen her face to face."

"Still, you might be utterly mistaken. Would it not be better, for the sake of—the lady chiefly concerned in your mind—to give her the benefit of the doubt?"

His eyes met mine fully, I answered question with question.

"Do you think you are dealing fairly with me? Strictly speaking, perhaps this is no affair of mine, and yet——"

"And yet you have been extraordinarily good to me, and deserve that I should be open with you. I can only ask you to trust me a little farther; to believe that the meeting you witnessed to-day cannot possibly injure the lady you are thinking of except through your interference, and that it was as far removed from being of a sentimental nature as though I had met my grandmother."

The Friday following this interview I received a visit from the squire; he looked ill and harassed.

"I am vexed," he said, "about Edith. She went to town for a day's shopping on Wednesday and has not returned. She was to lunch with Mrs. Llewellyn and come back for dinner. She has frequently made these little excursions of late. In the evening, however, I got a telegram to say she was detained by the dressmaker, and yesterday morning a letter to the same effect. This morning I had no letter, but half an hour ago I met General Anson—he had just arrived by the three o'clock train. He told me that he had seen Edith having lunch at Franconi's with Fortescue. They did not see him—his table was behind theirs—but as he left the room he passed close to them and heard Fortescue say, 'To-night, then, without fail, by the seven-thirty.' 'So,' the old man went on, 'I suppose Lady Maxwell comes down to-night, and Mr. Fortescue is to escort her. I thought there was a coolness—that he was under a cloud.' I laughed, and told him it was a case of mistaken identity."

"And Fortescue?"

"He went to London yesterday; I happen to know that."

I must here mention that Stony Lea, although but a small village in Kent, has a good train service, and is but an hour's run from town. I looked at my watch. It was barely four o'clock. "Why not," I said, "go up to town by the four-forty-five, and travel down yourself with Lady Maxwell when she is prepared to come? You could be in Belgrave Road before six o'clock."

"Will you come with me?" he asked.

I consented; and by 6.30 we were in Belgrave Road.

Mrs. Llewellyn's house had an empty, uninhabited air, and the servant who came to the door said his mistress had been out of town for a few days. Lady Maxwell had been staying there during the week. She had driven out in the morning and not returned until four o'clock; then, after a cup of tea, she had gone out again, walking; she had said she was leaving town that evening, and would return about half-past six in a cab for various parcels that were awaiting her.

"Quite so," Sir Lewin said; "she is travelling down with me. I will wait for her here," and he walked straight into the drawing-room, whither I followed him. The room opened into the hall. Presently a hansom drove up; Lady Maxwell got out and entered the house with a latch-key. Sir Lewin moved towards the door of the room as though intending to meet her, when the arrival of another cab made him pause and look round. Lady Maxwell ran lightly upstairs; the door was ajar and I heard the swish-swish of her skirts. The second cab was a four-wheeler; Fortescue descended from it, and the electric bell of the front door tingled persistently in the silence of the house. Then we heard him asking for Lady Maxwell, and almost before the servant could reply Sir Lewin was on the

doorstep. Fearful of what might ensue I followed him from the room; I saw him touch Fortescue on the shoulder, and Allan's start of surprise and, apparently, dismay; then the two men entered the hall together.

"Now," said Sir Lewin, "kindly explain your presence here and your business with my wife."

Allan's answer was unexpected.

"I think," he said, quietly, "I will leave that to Lady Maxwell herself."

They had spoken so far in low tones and with outward calm; now Sir Lewin muttered angrily some words which I could not hear, and raised his arm.

"SIR LEWIN MUTTERED ANGRILY SOME WORDS WHICH I COULD NOT HEAR, AND RAISED HIS ARM."

I stepped forward.

"Come into the drawing-room," I said hurriedly in his ear. "Don't make a public scene."

He shook me off, but at that moment another and more importunate voice intervened.

"My dear Lewin, you here? How exceedingly fortunate! Now we need not rush for that seven-thirty train; you and dear Edith can stay to dinner."

There was a darkening of the doorway, a rustle of garments, and Mrs. Llewellyn advanced with outstretched hands.

Sir Lewin stared in blank amazement. Allan smiled.

"I was in the cab," went on the lady, "waiting for Edith. Mr. Fortescue kindly drove with me from the station, and I had intended to travel down with her, trusting, my dear Lewin, to your hospitality to put me up for the night. I am so sorry I have been unable to return before, to be with the dear child all the time."

She had talked us all to the drawing-room door.

"I still quite fail to see," began Sir Lewin, stiffly, "how Mr. Fortescue——"

"I will explain," said Lady Maxwell. She had come down the stairs unheard, and now advanced towards us. Her face was as white as the gown she wore, her eyes looked wild and startled. "Come with me," she added to Sir Lewin, and led the way to a small back room. He followed her without a word.

"Pay the cab," said Mrs. Llewellyn, cheerfully, to the servant, "and bring all those packages in. Sir Lewin and Lady Maxwell will remain to dinner. Mr. Greyling and Mr. Fortescue, please come in, and let me offer you some refreshment."

She moved towards the dining-room and, the door being safely closed, fell gasping into a chair. There was wine upon the side-board; Allan poured some into a glass and brought it to her. She sighed heavily as she took it. "How all this is to end, Heaven only knows!"

"I think," said Allan, "there is nothing further for me to do. If you will allow me I will bid you good-night."

She looked at him curiously, the wineglass half-way to her lips.

"Can you," she said, "trust your vindication to us?"

"Entirely. It has come to be the last thing I think about," he answered, sadly; "and, if she may in any degree be spared, I beg that it may be the very last thing in your mind

also."

A few minutes later Allan and I left the house. We dined in town and travelled back to Stony Lea together; but he offered me no explanation of the events of the afternoon, and I respected his silence.

Nearly a week passed before I heard anything further about the matter.

Then, one morning, Sir Lewin called upon me; he and Lady Maxwell had returned only the previous night from town. He made no reference to the circumstances of our last meeting, but asked me to come to the Hall that afternoon, as his wife was far from well, and anxious to see me.

I went accordingly and found her alone, lying upon a couch in her morning-room and looking sadly, terribly changed.

"I have asked you to come," she said, when I had taken a seat beside her, "because I want to tell you the truth about Allan Fortescue; he has suffered all these years through my fault, and I must make what reparation I can before—— It was I who really had the diamonds; I wanted them, and I employed him to bring me the casket; he did this quite innocently, as you will hear, not knowing what it contained. I had seen it on the dressing-table when I went to say good-night to my aunt just after she had gone to bed—about nine o'clock; but I was equally afraid either to take it then or to return to the room in the dark later on. Yet the chance seemed too good to be lost; I had never seen the casket left exposed before; it was always kept under lock and key. On my way downstairs I met Allan Fortescue, and we went together to the drawing-room. As we sat chatting by the fire, the plan I afterwards carried out occurred to me. The talk turned upon ghosts, and he said he should much like to meet one. Then I told him, truly, that one room in the house was said to be haunted by the spirit of a lady who had died there mysteriously on her return from a ball at which she had promised her lover to elope with him. I explained that nothing had been disturbed since the morning she was found there, dead in her chair before the mirror; but instead of the room to which the story really attached I described the one I had just left, and dared him to visit it after midnight. He said he had no fear, but I added that I should not believe in his courage unless he brought me as a proof a small ebony casket which had always stood upon the dressing-table. He laughed and said he would do even that, and I promised to meet him in the conservatory the following morning before breakfast to receive it and hear his experiences. He was quite strange to the house and did not know how any of the bedrooms were occupied except his own and his pupil's, which were in another wing. In the morning he handed me the casket as arranged. You know the rest; you see he was helpless in my hands."

"Do you mean to tell me," I asked, "that you wrecked a man's life for a few jewels?"

"DON'T JUDGE ME TOO HARDLY,' SHE SAID, PITEOUSLY."

"Don't judge me too hardly," she said, piteously. "I was in terrible straits. I had been staying with some of my father's relations in town, and had learned much of a side of life concerning which Aunt Mary knew practically nothing. I owed a great deal of money, and was afraid to tell her about it. When I had the diamonds I was able to put off the most threatening of my creditors with promises of payment, and, later, one of my cousins helped me to dispose of the stones. I told him they were some jewels of my mother's which had just been made over to me. Aunt Mary would hold no intercourse with my father's family, so I had no fear of awkward explanations. When I was twenty-one I came in for a little money, all that was left of my mother's fortune, and I gave Aunt Mary some fresh jewels. You see, I had inherited certain tendencies from my father—perhaps in the beginning there was some excuse for me; you will understand when I say that he died from a hurt received in a gambling quarrel when I was about twelve years old. The house and all he possessed were sold to pay his debts, and Aunt Mary took charge of me. It was a great change. To me at all events my father had been good always, and I loved him dearly.

"As to Allan Fortescue, when he found how I had tricked him he was furious, but I managed to see him alone and persuaded him to accept the situation. You see, I had contrived things so that his speaking would have been of very little use unless I had chosen to confess—only his word against mine. Of course, I was dreadfully upset when I found that Aunt Mary had seen him. That was just what I had not counted upon; but I couldn't go back then and give up the jewels—I couldn't. I promised him that, if he would keep silence, I would never be reckless and extravagant or wicked again; and for a long time I kept my word. But life was dreadfully dull, and the thought of what I had done made me wretched; if Allan had been prosecuted I don't think I could have borne it—I must have spoken out. As it was, I became subject to dreadful fits of depression, and I think Aunt Mary was very glad to get me safely married, as she called it. For a time, then, I was very happy; for I loved Lewin dearly, and I tried to forget. Then, finding Allan here, seeing the wreck I had made of his life, brought back to me all my trouble. I began to crave again for excitement of any sort. Lewin thought I was ill, and at first used to give me champagne as a tonic.

"When we were in town last year I got back into the old set, from a different standpoint, and with more money at command——"

Once more she stopped, but I would not again interrupt her; I felt that the whole sad story must be finished now.

"I don't know," she continued, presently, "how Allan Fortescue discovered what was going on, but he did. One day I received a communication from him—I can't call it a letter—telling me that he knew the sort of life I was leading, and that unless I kept my promise to him he would speak and tell Lewin the truth even now. He knew and could prove where I had sold the diamonds. In reply to that I induced him to meet me in the Oxley Woods, and persuaded him to give me a little more time. I promised to tell Lewin that very night about my debts. Instead, I went to London. I really meant to start afresh; but I thought I could raise some money and get fairly straight without saying anything to my husband. I—I stayed longer than I meant. Allan came to look for me. He followed me

to the places where he thought I was likely to be—he must have kept a watch upon me for some time past—but our meeting at last was accidental. I was really at my wits' end, and I went into Franconi's with Allan to talk things over. We saw General Anson leave the place, and I think that made Allan decide there must be no more concealment; also, I suppose he felt it was useless to trust me any longer. He went straight from me to Aunt Mary and fetched her. She knew that he must be speaking the truth. I had promised to go home that night anyhow; but I don't know what I might have done if I had been left to myself. Then you and Lewin appeared—— It is better as it is—I should never have had the strength, the courage—I am so sorry—so sorry—for Lewin—for myself—for Allan—for my little child that is coming——"

She turned her face to the wall, and I saw her slight frame shiver with voiceless, choking tears.

There is little more to tell. Lady Maxwell lived only a few months after she had made this confession. Her child survived—a son—and there are three men who watch over that boy with perhaps exaggerated solicitude and love—his father, Allan Fortescue, and myself.

Will he reward our care? I think so. He has his mother's face and charm, but in character he takes after Sir Lewin. Allan Fortescue has remained in the village as my curate. I trust he may never leave me, and that the bishop may see fit hereafter to appoint him vicar in my stead; I am growing old.

Illustrated Interviews.

No. LXXXI.—DR. EDWARD ELGAR.

By Rudolph de Cordova.

From a Photo. by] DR. EDWARD ELGAR. [George Newnes, Ltd.

F ever this votary of the muse of song looked from the hills of his present home at Malvern, from the cradle of English poetry, the scene of the vision of Piers Plowman, and from the British camp, with its legendary memories of his own 'Caractacus,' and in the light of the rising sun sees the towers of Tewkesbury and Gloucester and Worcester, he might recall in that view the earlier stages of his career, and confess with modest pride, like the bard in the 'Odyssey':—

Self-taught I sing; 'tis Heaven, and Heaven alone,
Inspires my song with music all its own."

From a Photo. by] DR. ELGAR'S HOUSE AT MALVERN. [George Newnes, Ltd.

It was in November, 1900, that these words were spoken by the Orator when the University of Cambridge honoured itself by conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of

Music on Dr. Elgar, whom one of the most distinguished German writers on music declared to be "the most brilliant champion of the National School of Composition which is beginning to bloom in England."

The encomiums which Germany—the acknowledged leader of the world in music—has showered on Dr. Elgar have at length been reflected in England, which has awakened to the fact that to him at least that much misapplied word "genius" belongs by right divine. That awakening was marked by the three days' festival in the middle of March, when Covent Garden Opera House reverted to an old custom and for two glorious nights became the home of oratorio, with a concert on the third night. That festival is unique in the history of music, for it is the first time an English composer has been so honoured.

However gratifying the applause of the public may be to the worker in any art, his greatest pleasure must properly come from his fellow-workers, who know the difficulties which have to be surmounted before the desired effect can be produced.

"Was not Herr Steinbach, the conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra, among the others who said that you have something different from anybody else in the tone of your orchestra?" I asked Dr. Elgar, as we sat in his study at Malvern, with a great expanse of country visible through the wide windows.

From a Photo. by] DR. ELGAR'S STUDY. [George Newnes, Ltd.

"I believe so," he replied; "and that remark has been one from which I have naturally derived great pleasure.

"You know," said Dr. Elgar, as he settled down to talk for the purpose of this interview, in accordance with a long-standing promise made in what he came to regard as an unguarded moment—"you know, since you compel me to begin at the beginning, that I 'began' in Broadheath, a little village three miles from Worcester, in which city my father was organist of St. George's Catholic Church, a post he held for thirty-seven years. I was a very little boy indeed when I began to show some aptitude for music and used to extemporize on the piano. When I was quite small I received a few lessons on the piano. The organ-loft then attracted me, and from the time I was about seven or eight I used to go and sit by my father and watch him play. After a time I began to try to play myself. At first the only thing I succeeded in producing was noise, but gradually, out of the chaos, harmony began to evolve itself. In those days, too, an English opera company used to visit the old Worcester Theatre, and I was taken into the orchestra, which consisted of only eight or ten performers, and so heard old operas like 'Norma,' 'Traviata,' 'Trovatore,' and, above all, 'Don Giovanni.'

DR. EDWARD ELGAR.

From a Photo. by E. T. Holding.

"My general education was not neglected. I went to Littleton House School until I was about fifteen. At the same time I saw and learnt a great deal about music from the stream of music that passed through my father's establishment.

"My hope was that I should be able to get a musical education, and I worked hard at German on the chance that I should go to Leipsic, but my father discovered that he could not afford to send me away, and anything in that direction seemed to be at an end. Then a friend, a solicitor, suggested that I should go to him for a year and see how I liked the law. I went for a year, but came to the conclusion that the law was not for me, and I determined to return to music. There appeared to be an opening for a violinist in Worcester, and as it occurred to me that it would be a good thing to try to take advantage of the opening, I had been teaching myself to play the violin. Then I began to teach on my own account, and spent such leisure as I had in writing music. It was music of a sort—bad, very bad—but my juvenile efforts are, I hope, destroyed.

"Although I was teaching the violin I wanted to improve my playing, so I began to save up in order to go to London to get some lessons from Herr Pollitzer. On one occasion I was working the first violin part of the Haydn quartet. There was a rest, and I suddenly began to play the 'cello part. Pollitzer looked up. 'You know the whole thing?' he said.

"Of course,' I replied.

"He looked up, curiously. 'Do you compose, yourself?' he asked.

"I try,' I replied again.

"Show me something of yours,' he said.

"I did so, with the result that he gave me an introduction to Mr., now Sir, August Manns, who, later on, played many of my things at the daily concerts at the Crystal Palace.

"When I resolved to become a musician and found that the exigencies of life would prevent me from getting any tuition, the only thing to do was to teach myself. I read everything, played everything, and heard everything I possibly could. As I have told you, I used to play the organ and the violin. I attended as many of the cathedral services as I could to hear the anthems, and to get to know what they were, so as to become thoroughly acquainted with the English Church style. The putting of the fine new organ into the cathedral at Worcester was a great event, and brought many organists to play there at various times. I went to hear them all. The services at the cathedral were over later on Sunday than those at the Catholic church, and as soon as the voluntary was finished at the church I used to rush over to the cathedral to hear the concluding voluntary. Eventually I succeeded my father as organist at St. George's. We lived at that time in the parish of St. Helen's, in which is the mother church of Worcester, which had a peal of eight bells. The Curfew used always to be rung in those days at eight o'clock in the evening, and I believe it is still rung. I made friends with the sexton and used to ring the Curfew, and afterwards strike the day of the month. My enthusiasm was so great that I used to prolong the ringing from three minutes to ten minutes, until the people in the neighbourhood complained, when I had to reduce the time. On Sunday the bells were supposed to go for half an hour before service, from half-past ten to eleven. The performance was divided into certain parts. With a friend, I used to 'raise' and 'fall' the bell for ten minutes, chime a smaller bell for ten minutes or so, and at five minutes to eleven I would fly off to play the organ at the Catholic church.

AN EARLY PORTRAIT OF DR. ELGAR.

From a Photograph.

"You ask me to go into greater details about my musical education. I am constantly receiving letters on this point from all over the world, for it is well known that I am self-taught in the matter of harmony, counterpoint, form, and, in short, the whole of the 'mystery' of music, and people want to know what books I used. To-day there are all sorts of books to make the study of harmony and orchestration pleasant. In my young days they were repellent. But I read them and I still exist."

If only cold type could suggest the humour with which those words were spoken!

"The first was Catel, and that was followed by Cherubini. The first real sort of friendly leading I had, however, was from 'Mozart's Thorough-bass School.' There was something in that to go upon—something human. It is a small book—a collection of papers beautifully and clearly expressed—which he wrote on harmony for the niece of a friend of his. I still treasure the old volume. Ouseley and Macfarren followed, but the articles which have since helped me the most are those of Sir Hubert Parry in 'Grove's Dictionary.'"

"How did these various authorities mix?" I interrupted.

"They didn't mix," was Dr. Elgar's reply, "and it appears it is necessary for anyone who has to be self-taught to read everything and—pick out the best. That, I suppose, is the difficulty—to pick out the best. How to forget the rubbish and remember the good I can't tell you, but perhaps that is where his brains must come in.

"It would be affectation were I to pretend that my work is not recognised as modern, and I hate affectation, yet it would probably surprise you to know the amount of work I did in studying musical form. Only those can safely disregard form who ignore it with a full knowledge and do not evade it through ignorance.

"Mozart is the musician from whom everyone should learn form. I once ruled a score for the same instruments and with the same number of bars as Mozart's G Minor Symphony, and in that framework I wrote a symphony, following as far as possible the same outline in the themes and the same modulation. I did this on my own initiative, as I was groping in the dark after light, but looking back after thirty years I don't know any discipline from which I learned so much.

"So you insist on my telling you some more of my early struggles and my early work? I was interested in many other things besides music, and I had the good fortune to be thrown among an unsorted collection of old books. There were books of all kinds, and all distinguished by the characteristic that they were for the most part incomplete. I busied myself for days and weeks arranging them. I picked out the theological books, of which there were a good many, and put them on one side. Then I made a place for the Elizabethan dramatists, the chronicles including Baker's and Hollinshed's, besides a tolerable collection of old poets and translations of Voltaire, and all sorts of things up to the eighteenth century. Then I began to read. I used to get up at four or five o'clock in the summer and read—every available opportunity found me reading. I read till dark. I finished by reading every one of these books—including the theology. The result of that reading has been that people tell me I know more of life up to the eighteenth century than I do of my own time, and it is probably true.

"In studying scores the first which came into my hands were the Beethoven

symphonies. Anyone can have them now, but they were difficult for a boy to get in Worcester thirty years ago. I, however, managed to get two or three, and I remember distinctly the day I was able to buy the Pastoral Symphony. I stuffed my pockets with bread and cheese and went out into the fields to study it. That was what I always did. Even when I began to teach, when a new score came into my hands I went off for a long day with it out of doors, and when my unfortunate—or fortunate?—pupils went for their lessons I was not at home to give them.

"By the way, talking about scores, it will probably surprise you to know that I never possessed a score of Wagner until one was given to me in 1900.

**DR. ELGAR AS A MEMBER OF HIS QUINTET, FOR WHICH HE
WROTE THE MUSIC.**

From a Photo. by Bennett.

"In the early days of which I have been speaking five of us established a wind quintet. We had two flutes, an oboe, a clarinet, and a bassoon, which last I played for some time, and afterwards relinquished it for the 'cello. There was no music at all to suit our peculiar requirements, as in the ideal wind quintet a horn should find a place and not a second flute, so I used to write the music. We met on Sunday afternoons, and it was an understood thing that we should have a new piece every week. The sermons in our church used to take at least half an hour, and I spent the time composing the thing for the afternoon. It was great experience for me, as you may imagine, and the books are all extant, so some of that music still exists. We played occasionally for friends, and I remember one moonlight night stopping in front of a house to put the bassoon together. I held it up to see if it was straight before tightening it. As I did so, someone rushed out of the house, grabbed me by the arms, and shouted, 'It will be five shillings if you do.' He thought I had a gun in my hand.

"The old Worcester Glee Club had been established as long ago as 1809 for the performance of old glees, with an occasional instrumental night. At these last I first played second fiddle and afterwards became leader, as, after a time, I used to do the accompanying. It was an enjoyable and artistic gathering, and the programmes were principally drawn from the splendid English compositions for men's voices. The younger generation seemed to prefer ordinary part-songs, and ballads also were introduced, and the tone of the thing changed. I am not sure if the club is still in existence.

"It was in 1877 that I first went to take lessons of Pollitzer. He suggested that I should stay in London and devote myself to violin playing, but I had become enamoured of a country life, and would not give up the prospect of a certain living by playing and teaching in Worcester on the chance of only a possible success which I might make as a soloist in London.

"The thing which brought me before a larger public as a composer was the production of several things of mine at Birmingham by Mr. W. C. Stockley, to whom my music was introduced by Dr. Wareing, himself a composer, and still resident in Birmingham. At that time I was a member of Mr. Stockley's orchestra—first violin."

In this connection it is interesting to break Dr. Elgar's narrative to tell an anecdote

which Mr. Stockley relates. When he decided to do something of Dr. Elgar's, he asked him if he would like to conduct it. "Certainly not," Dr. Elgar replied; "I am a member of the orchestra and I am going to stick in the orchestra. I am not recognised as a composer, and the fact that you are going to do something of mine gives me no title to a place anywhere else." The piece was a success and the audience called for Dr. Elgar, who came down from among the fiddles, made his bow, and then went back to his place.

**REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE FULL SCORE OF "THE
DREAM OF GERONTIUS."**

To resume. "Don't suppose, however," Dr. Elgar said, "that after that recognition as a composer things were easy for me. The directors of the old Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden Theatre were good enough to write that they thought sufficiently of my things to devote a morning to rehearsing them. I went on the appointed day to London to conduct the rehearsal. When I arrived it was explained to me that a few songs had to be taken before I could begin. Before the songs were finished Sir Arthur Sullivan unexpectedly arrived, bringing with him a selection from one of his operas. It was the only chance he had of going through it with the orchestra, so they determined to take advantage of the opportunity. He consumed all my time in rehearsing this, and when he had finished the director came out and said to me, 'There will be no chance of your going through your music to-day.' I went back to Worcester to my teaching, and that was the last of my chance of an appearance at the Promenade Concerts.

"Years after I met Sullivan, one of the most amiable and genial souls that ever lived. When we were introduced he said, 'I don't think we have met before.' 'Not exactly,' I replied, 'but very near it,' and I told him the circumstance. 'But, my dear boy, I hadn't the slightest idea of it,' he exclaimed, in his enthusiastic manner. 'Why on earth didn't you come and tell me? I'd have rehearsed it myself for you.' They were not idle words. He would have done it, just as he said. He never forgot the episode till the end of his life.

"Two similar occurrences took place at the Crystal Palace: rehearsals were planned which never came off, so I was no nearer to getting a hearing for big orchestral works.

"Mr. Hugh Blair, then the organist of Worcester Cathedral, saw some of the cantata, 'The Black Knight,' and said: 'If you will finish it I will produce it at Worcester.' I finished it, and it was produced by the Worcester Festival Choir. This cantata then came under the notice of Dr. Swinnerton Heap, to whom I owe my introduction to the musical festivals as a writer of choral works. He had known me for a good many years as a violinist, but it had never occurred to him to talk to me about my composing, and he knew nothing of it.

"It was through Dr. Heap that I was asked to write a cantata for the Staffordshire Musical Festival, and, shortly after, the committee asked me to provide an oratorio for the Worcester Festival. They were 'The Light of Life,' performed in Worcester Cathedral, and 'King Olaf,' at Hanley.

"Since then it has been a record of the production of one composition after another until we come to 'The Apostles,' and my new overture 'In the South,' produced at Covent Garden; the one great event that particularly stands out is the production of the 'Variations' by Dr. Richter, to whom I was then a complete stranger.

"For a long time I had had the idea of writing 'The Apostles' in pretty much the form in which I hope it will eventually appear. As you know, there have been oratorios on many points of Jewish and Christian history, but none had shown how Christianity has risen. I take the men who were in touch with Christ, the Apostles in fact, and show them to be ordinary mortals rather than superhuman men, as they are generally represented in art. I was always particularly impressed with Archbishop Whately's conception of Judas, who, as he wrote, 'had no design to betray his Master to death, but to have been as confident of the will of Jesus to deliver Himself from His enemies by a miracle as He must have been certain of His power to do so, and accordingly to have designed to force Him to make such a display of His superhuman powers as would have induced all the Jews—and, indeed, the Romans too—to acknowledge Him King.'

"In carrying out this plan I made the book myself, taking out lines from different parts of the Bible which exactly express my conception. How it was done the following chorus will show you, for you will notice that the references to the text are printed in the margin:—

The Lord hath chosen them to stand before Him, to serve Him.—*II. Chron.* 29, 11.

He hath chosen the weak to confound the mighty.—*I. Cor.* 1, 27.

He will direct their work in truth.—*Isa.* 61, 8.

Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him?—*Job* 36, 22.

The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way.—*Ps.* 25, 9.

He will direct their work in truth.—*Isa.* 61, 8.

For out of Zion shall go forth the law.—*Isa.* 2, 3.

"You will notice that occasionally, as in the third extract, I have used the words in their meaning that appears on the surface, and not in the real meaning of the sentence which may be found in any commentary. To keep the diction exactly the same I have not gone outside the Scripture except in one sentence from the Talmud in the case of the watchers on the Temple roof.

"It was part of my original scheme to continue 'The Apostles' by a second work carrying on the establishment of the Church among the Gentiles. This, too, is to be followed by a third oratorio, in which the fruit of the whole—that is to say, the end of the world and the Judgment—is to be exemplified. I, however, faltered at that idea, and I suggested to the directors of the Birmingham Festival to add merely a short third part to the two into which the already published work, 'The Apostles,' is divided. But I found that to be unsatisfactory, and I have decided to revert to my original lines. There will, therefore, be two other oratorios."

This definite pronouncement of Dr. Elgar's cannot fail to evoke the warmest anticipations on the part of the music loving world.

It is worth noting here that shortly after "The Dream of Gerontius" was produced at the Birmingham Festival, in 1900, Herr Julius Butts, the famous conductor of Düsseldorf, was so struck with it that he determined to produce it in Germany and himself translated the libretto. So great a success was this performance that "The Dream," which one of the most celebrated German musical critics has declared to be "the greatest composition of the last hundred years, with the exception of the 'Requiem' of Brahms," was repeated at the Lower Rhine Festival, a thing hitherto unheard of in the annals of

English music, and at the Lower Rhine Festival on Whit-Sunday "The Apostles" is to be given.

Dr. Elgar has a delightful and most acute sense of humour, so that I was sure I should not be misunderstood if I ventured to ask a question about his "musical crimes."

He smiled. "But which of my musical crimes do you mean? From the point of view of one person or another I understand all my music has been a crime," he replied, lightly. Then he added, "Oh, you mean 'The Cockaigne,' 'The Coronation Ode,' and 'The Imperial March' especially. Yes, I believe there are a good many people who have objected to them. But I like to look on the composer's vocation as the old troubadours or bards did. In those days it was no disgrace to a man to be turned on to step in front of an army and inspire the people with a song. For my own part, I know that there are a lot of people who like to celebrate events with music. To these people I have given tunes. Is that wrong? Why should I write a fugue or something which won't appeal to anyone, when the people yearn for things which can stir them—"

"Such as 'Pomp and Circumstance,'" I interpolated.

"Ah, I don't know anything about that," replied Dr. Elgar, "but I do know we are a nation with great military proclivities, and I did not see why the ordinary quick march should not be treated on a large scale in the way that the waltz, the old-fashioned slow march, and even the polka have been treated by the great composers; yet all marches on the symphonic scale are so slow that people can't march to them. I have some of the soldier instinct in me, and so I have written two marches of which, so far from being ashamed, I am proud. 'Pomp and Circumstance,' by the way, is merely the generic name for what is a set of six marches. Two, as you know, have already appeared, and the others will come later. One of them is to be a Soldier's Funeral March.

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF MS. OF "POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE."

"As for 'The Imperial March,' which was written for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897, it would, perhaps, interest you to know that only on January 22nd last it was given in St. George's Chapel, Berlin, at the unveiling of the memorials of Queen Victoria and the Empress Frederick, and Dr. G. R. Sinclair, of Hereford Cathedral, played it on the organ.

From a Photo. by] GOLF ON MALVERN COMMON. Foulsham & Banfield.

"How and when do I do my music? I can tell you very easily. I come into my study at nine o'clock in the morning and I work till a quarter to one. I don't do any inventing then, for that comes anywhere and everywhere. It may be when I am walking, golfing, or cycling, or the ideas may come in the evening, and then I sit up until any hour in order to get them down. The morning is devoted to revising and orchestration, of which I have as much to do as I can manage. As soon as lunch is over I go out for exercise and return about four or later, after which I sometimes do two hours' work before dinner. A country life I find absolutely essential to me, and here the conditions are exactly what I require. As you see," and Dr. Elgar moved over to the large window which takes up the whole of one side of his study, "I get a wonderful view of the surrounding country. I can see across Worcestershire, to Edgehill, the Cathedral of Worcester, the

Abbeys of Pershore and Tewkesbury, and even the smoke from round Birmingham. It is delightfully quiet, and yet in contrast with it there is a constant stream of communication with the outside world in the shape of cables from America and Australia, and letters innumerable from all over the world."

In the house itself there are not many evidences of Dr. Elgar's productions, but prominent in a corner of the drawing-room is the laurel wreath presented to him at Düsseldorf when "The Dream" was first produced. The leaves are brown to-day, but the scarlet ribbon is as bright as the memory of the music in the enraptured ears of those who have heard it. In his study are two prized possessions, the one a tankard made by some members of the Festival Choir at Hanley at the time of the production of "King Olaf." The inscription, taken from one of the choruses, is, appropriately, a Bacchanalian one:—

The ale was strong;
King Olaf feasted late and long.
—*Longfellow*.

Next to this is a cup, also specially designed by Mr. Noke, of Hanley, to commemorate the performance of "The Dream." On one side is a portrait of Cardinal Newman and on the other a portrait of Dr. Elgar, with the following inscription from the work itself:—

Learn that the flame of the everlasting love
Doth burn ere it transform.

Off the Track in London.

BY George R. Sims.

II.—IN THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON.

T

HE sun shines brightly on the gay Kensington thoroughfare in which I meet my artist *confrère* and prepare to wander off the track in a district which is held to be the wealthiest in the Empire.

It is a winter morning, but the sky is blue, the air is balmy, and the flood of sunlight gives a Rivieran aspect to the stately mansions and pleasant villas that we pass on our way to the point at which we are to turn off and make our plunge into one of the strangest districts of London, a district of which its rich neighbours have no knowledge, although it lies at their doors.

A walk of a few minutes and we have left wealth and fashion behind us; the gay shops have vanished, the well-dressed people have disappeared as if by magic. The mansions and the villas have given place to the long streets of grey, weather-beaten, two and three story houses, in which the local industry writes itself large in white letters.

Here we are in Notting Dale and in the heart of Laundry-Land. In every house in street after street the blinds of the ground floor are down as though someone lay dead within. But if you look from the opposite side of the street you will see that in every room above the blinds lines are stretched from wall to wall, and from these lines wrung out details of the washing-tub are hanging. If you cross to the dilapidated railings of the sorry

little patch that was once a front garden and peer into the basement you will see that laundry work is in full swing. The blinds of the ground-floor rooms are probably drawn because the hand laundresses do not like to be criticised too closely by the neighbours, who are also their business rivals.

The street is typical of a dozen others. You may see again and again that broken-down little front garden, with its stunted trees, strewn rubbish, and the little wooden, lop-sided railing that looks as though it no longer thought the patch it once guarded worth standing up for. On the window-sill of the top floor of a score of houses you may see a lonely, empty flower-pot that looks more like a handy missile in an emergency than an adjunct of window gardening. The rain-sodden, blackened stucco meets you at every turn, and when you have counted the twentieth cat sitting on a sill or a doorstep washing its shirt to snowy whiteness you begin to wonder why the local influence has not made itself more widely felt. Everybody inside the houses is washing for other people, everything is conducted with scrupulous cleanliness and under official inspection, but there are plenty of streets adjacent to Laundry-Land in which only the cats make themselves conspicuously clean.

A little farther away towards Latimer Road are the great steam laundries employing a small army of young women, who at the dinner hour will turn out and make every street in the Dale a forest of white aprons.

But all the streets of Laundry-Land are not given up to useful industry. A portion of the district is so notorious as a guilt garden that it has been called the London Avernus. It is packed with common lodging-houses, a large number of them for women, and it has streets of evil reputation in which almost every window is broken and stuffed with rags. The Borough Council has now in hand a splendid rehousing scheme which will vastly improve the district, but we must take it as we find it to-day.

We turn out of the sunlight, and entering a narrow doorway descend into the basement of a typical lodging-house. The house is known locally as the "Golden Gates," a name bestowed upon it in a spirit of badinage by a client with a sense of humour.

The kitchen is crowded with women, young and old. Some are sitting on the benches around the wall, one or two are making a late breakfast; an old woman is cooking something at the red coke fire.

As a rule there is little conversation in a lodging-house in the morning hours. I have been constantly struck by the note of moodiness, not to say sullenness, which hangs over the company during the hours of daylight. The men are, as a rule, more communicative than the women. Women of the class that drift to the doss-house are not inclined to exchange confidences with their neighbours.

But the kitchen of the Golden Gates as we enter it has one talkative occupant. As soon as our eyes get accustomed to the gloom, which is only relieved by a ray of light filtering through a small, dust-covered window, we notice that a tall woman in faded finery and an astrachan hat, and with some traces of refinement in features and bearing, is standing in the centre and chaffing the others. One or two smile at her jokes, but the majority are wholly indifferent, wearing that air of sullen aloofness which is peculiarly characteristic of a woman's lodging-house.

I have not intruded on the privacy of the ladies of the Golden Gates without a show of justification. To enable my companion to make a sketch of the scene, I have resorted to an expedient which permits me to make certain inquiries of a semi-official

nature, and to attract the attention of the guests while my *confrère* is at work. If they were aware that they were being sketched it is quite likely that there would be trouble, and my comrade might find himself in as unpleasant a fix as did a photographer who once went with me to the Chinese quarter in Limehouse, for "Living London," and attempted to take the proprietor of an opium den and some of his clients. The photographer emerged unscathed, but the camera required a considerable amount of repair.

Fortunately I have an inquiry to make which puts my audience in sympathy with me, and my *confrère* is supposed to be making notes of the information supplied as to the last movements of a woman who had used the house for some time and had mysteriously disappeared.

During the whole time the lady in the dingy astrachan keeps up a running fire of chaff, which materially assists us.

**"THE LADY IN THE DINGY ASTRACHAN KEEPS UP A RUNNING
FIRE OF CHAFF."**

She welcomes us to the "Hotel de Fourpence," and says, though it isn't exactly the Carlton, it is quite comfortable when you get used to it. She interlards her bantering remarks with French words, and we come to the conclusion that she is a governess who has drifted down.

It is no uncommon thing to find men and women of education in the lowest lodging-houses of London. I have found a clergyman in one of the worst dens of Flower and Dean Street. In one of the Dale lodging-houses there is a woman whose father had his town house and his country house and his villa in the South of France.

This woman in the astrachan hat is a striking contrast to her surroundings. Most of the other inmates are of the usual type—women who have drifted down from honest industry to vagabondage, or have been born to it.

Returning through the Golden Gates into the sunshine, we make our way to Jetsam Street. That is not its real name, but the one I have given it. This is a street of black and battered doors, of damaged railings, and of broken windows. On the doorsteps here and there stand groups of slatternly, unkempt women. From the windows above a tousled head occasionally appears. Many of the houses here are common lodging-houses; but some of them are in the hands of the house-farmers, who let them out in furnished rooms at a shilling a day. We enter a room which is unoccupied and take stock of the furniture. It consists of a bed, two chairs, and the wreckage of a dirty deal table.

In this room a man and his wife and children are accommodated at night, but the shilling paid only entitles the family to remain there until ten in the morning.

At that hour they are turned out and their tenancy ceases. If they wish to renew it they can do so in the evening, but not before.

These people, who are paying six shillings a week, or seven shillings where Sunday is not a free day, for a single room, have to spend the day in the streets. Many of them make their way to the public parks and sleep on the seats or on the grass. Some of them beg, some of them hawk trumpery articles. They are probably paying eighteen pounds a year for a wretched room, and yet in the house-farmer's hands they are homeless every day in the week.

Jetsam Street is flooded with golden sunshine as we pass through it, but the

sunshine has not made the inhabitants light-hearted. Half-way down the street a man and a woman are fighting. The man is delivering a series of kicks in the style of La Savate at the woman, who is defiant and nimble and defends herself with her jacket, which she has taken off and uses both as a guard and as a weapon.

**"ONE OR TWO WOMEN STANDING ON THE DOORSTEPS WATCH
THE PROCEEDINGS."**

One or two women standing on the doorsteps watch the proceedings, but apparently without interest. An old woman proceeding to the public-house for beer turns her head for a moment and then passes on her way. A little boy in rags passes the fighting couple and takes no notice whatever. It is an ordinary incident, and has no special attraction for the neighbours.

Presently the man succeeds in planting a blow that sends the woman down. She is up again in a moment and faces him, prepared to continue the contest. But he thinks he has scored a point and is satisfied.

"Now I'll go to the workhouse," he says.

"And the best place for you," answers the woman.

The man thrusts his hands in his pockets and slouches off. The woman puts on her jacket and strolls away. If we were to investigate the circumstances that have led up to the fight, we should find that we had been assisting at a Notting Dale version of the story of Carmen, Don José, and Escamillo, only Carmen in this case is a laundry girl, Don José is an idle ruffian, and Escamillo is another, only of a bolder type.

In Notting Dale the women are the principal wage-earners, and the district is infested with a contemptible set of men, who are loafers or worse. It is a common thing in the Dale for a man to boast that he is going to marry a laundry girl and do nothing for the rest of his life.

It seems difficult to realize that such a scene and such a street can exist within a stone's throw of a quarter crowded with the wealth and fashion of the capital. But wherever you step off the beaten track in London a hundred surprises await you.

I do not wonder at the fight in Jetsam Street which fails to rouse the lookers-on from their midday lethargy, for I am an old traveller in this strange land. But I must confess that it gives me a little shock when at the end of the street I come upon a man in the last stage of consumption sitting propped up with pillows in an arm-chair on the doorstep.

"BROUGHT OUT TO SIT A LITTLE WHILE IN THE SUNSHINE."

He has been brought out to sit a little while in the sunshine. The poor fellow has, I ascertain, taken his discharge from the infirmary a few days previously. He wants to die at home—at home in Jetsam Street!

The picture I have had so far to draw is a painful one and a squalid one. But it is typical of the neighbourhood, and could not be omitted if in these travels off the track I am to give a faithful account of the London that is so little known even to Londoners.

Let us hasten through the sordid streets, looking up at the blue skies and ignoring the squalid houses, and make our way to a more romantic spot.

"The Potteries!" How odd this description of a portion of Kensington sounds, yet the district we are now in is known by this name, and yonder is what remains of the kiln.

Here in the Potteries the spell of the old romance still lingers, for this is the district of the gipsies. In front of it is the pleasant recreation-ground, Avondale Park, which the County Council has made beautiful for the children of the Dale, and just round the corner is hidden a space where, year after year, the gipsies came with their vans and encamped for the winter. And close at hand are cottages and gardens, to which ducks and geese give quite a rural appearance.

"THERE ARE ONE OR TWO VANS LEFT TO MARK THE SPOT."

The gipsies are not here this winter, but there are one or two vans left to mark the spot where, until quite recently, the sons and daughters of Egypt pitched their "tans" in the heart of fashionable Kensington. Some of them, yielding to the force of such modern ideas as the sanitary inspector and the School Board officer, have given up the fight for existence in a dwelling-van and have gone to live under a roof like the gorgios, though a gipsy of the true Romany blood believes that nothing but ill-luck will attend the Romany chal or the Romany chi who lives in a house.

To-day the children of the gipsies are, many of them, in the Notting Dale Board School and the fathers and mothers are in the lodging-houses. One of the wanderers, who in the old times used to pitch on the vacant ground of the Potteries, so far fell into Gentile ways as to take a lodging-house and run it himself. He and his wife became noted characters in the Dale, and when he died a little time ago the gipsies came from far and near and gave him a genuine Romany funeral, with all the ancient rites and ceremonies of the great Pali tribe who wandered out of India long centuries ago and gave the word "pal" to our language to signify brother.

Though the gipsy camp has departed and the ground will know it no more, the surroundings are still suggestive of the old days. Hard by a dwelling-van left, like the rose of the poet, blooming alone is the shed of a chair-caner, a handsome, prosperous-looking man, who is working in the open and singing at his congenial task. The battered carts, the old chains, the broken wheels, the pigeon lofts, and the wooden sheds standing on a patch of waste ground remind you of the pictures you were given to copy at school when you were in the drawing-class. If there had only been a mill handy the resemblance would have been complete, but the chimney of the old kiln dominates the scene and takes the mill's place.

Here the note of Jetsam Street has disappeared. All around are respectable working-class dwellings and stableyards. A little farther up is a double row of cottages with a paved way between them that seem to have been lifted bodily out of a Yorkshire mill town and dropped with their quaint out-houses on to the confines of Kensington. When you come upon Thresher's Place you rub your eyes and wonder if it is possible that five minutes' walk will bring you out on Campden Hill.

In the mews round about the Potteries are the remnants of the Italian colony that drifted here some years ago, when Little Italy in Clerkenwell began to be encroached upon by the modern builder. The majority have now drifted farther afield, to Fulham and Hammersmith.

But there are still a fair number of the children of the Sunny South in the Dale. You may see the organs in the early morning being polished up outside the houses, and if you go into the yards you may discover the ice-barrows packed away in the coach-houses, waiting for the disappearance of the baked-chestnut season and the coming of summer.

Here, in a large coach-house in a mews, is a proprietor of ice-cream barrows hard at work repainting his stock in gorgeous colours. Brilliant streaks of red and green light up the dreary place where the signor is working. When we look in upon his artistic proceedings he is filling his studio with melody. He is singing an air from "Il Trovatore" in his native Italian, and at the same time painting an Italian girl in her national costume

on the panel of an ice-barrow.

A little farther down the mews we climb the crazy staircase that leads to the loft, and find a middle-aged widow occupying it with five children.

We have arrived at an awkward moment, for the widow is in tearful converse with the Industrial Schools officer.

One of the children has been caught the previous night begging. Children are not allowed to beg in the streets to-day, and if it is found that the parents send them out or have not sufficient control over them to keep them in the little offenders can be taken before a magistrate and sent to an industrial school, to be trained for more reputable occupations in life.

The widow declares that the boy was not sent out by her, and weeps copiously while she relates her story. She has five children and no money. I don't think the officer is very much impressed. I am afraid he knows more about the widow and the begging boy than he cares to reveal in the presence of strangers. He gives the woman a kindly warning, and leaves her with the intimation that if any more of her children are caught begging she will be invited to pay a visit to the magistrate.

The Industrial Schools officer has a busy time in the Dale, for there are many young children living in vicious and criminal surroundings, and it is his task to remove them at the first opportunity, in order that they may have a chance in life. The work the industrial schools are accomplishing is invaluable. Under the Act a careful guardianship can be exercised by the State until the rescued boy or girl has reached the age of eighteen. There is no coming out of the industrial schools and returning to the evil surroundings now. But the task of the officer who has to see that the lads and lasses do not, after their school days are up, return to their evil associates is not a light one. He has occasionally to exercise the ingenuity of a Sherlock Holmes in order to get on the track of "one of his young people" who has mysteriously disappeared from the place that has been found for him or her.

Not long ago a young girl who had been sent to Canada, and was supposed to be doing well there, was discovered dressed in boy's clothes back again in the Dale with her uncle and aunt, who were undesirable companions for her. The girl had in some way managed to get her passage-money and come home, and had hoped, disguised as a young man, to escape the vigilance of the Industrial Schools officer.

Through a couple of streets and we are back in common lodging-house land. There is one long street in which the houses are registered from end to end. Some of them look like shops with the shutters up, others like private houses that have come down in the world. But every room is packed with as many beds as the law permits, and the common kitchen is reached by the area steps.

At one of the houses along this street a man and a woman are standing at the door. The woman has only one arm and one eye, the man has no arms. But they are a highly popular couple, and a good many of the lodging-houses in the street belong to them. The lady is said to be quite equal to quieting any disturbance among the lodgers with her one hand, and the man displays the most remarkable skill, suffering apparently little inconvenience from his loss. When you have seen him take his pipe out of his mouth with the empty sleeve of his jacket you will understand how he is able, with his wife's assistance, to keep his rough *client de* well in hand, and to compel their respect.

There is one feature of Notting Dale which strikes you forcibly if you go into a

local crowd engaged in a heated argument, and that is the preponderance of the rural accent; for this is a district in which the evil of rural immigration has written itself large. Thousands of honest country folks crowd up year after year to the great city that they believe to be paved with gold. Of those who come in by the Great Western a large percentage drift to the Dale, failing to find room in the districts around the terminus; and in the Dale a process of moral deterioration goes on which is a tragedy.

The husband fails to find the work he expected would be ready to his hand in busy London. The little savings are soon gone; the man and his wife are driven to the common lodging-house, or, if there are children with them, to the furnished room. The wife perhaps goes to the laundry work. The husband's enforced idleness often ends in his becoming a confirmed loafer, contented to live on what his wife can earn. There is in Notting Dale a large working population living cleanly by honest industry, but the country folk who have been unfortunate at the commencement of the struggle for life in London cannot avail themselves of the cleaner accommodation and the better environment. They are forced into the area which is given over to the vicious and the criminal, and they gradually sink to the level of their neighbours.

Many a tale of heroic struggle against evil surroundings do the women tell who come before the School Board officials to explain the non-attendance of their children. Sometimes it is the man who has had the moral strength to resist, and with tears in his eyes will tell of the healthy, country-bred wife who came with him one day from the far-away village full of hope, but who has yielded to the awful environment, deserted his home, and left his children to fall into evil companionship.

There is no sadder chapter in the story of London than that of the light-hearted country folk who come to it full of courage and hope, and gradually sink down under the evil influence of a slum to which their poverty has driven them, until they themselves are as criminal and as vicious as their neighbours.

For them little can be done, though now and again the brave men and women who are working in the good cause succeed in rescuing them, even though they have fallen to the lowest depths of the abyss.

But for the next generation the hope is greater. High above one of the most notorious streets in the Dale tower the great buildings in which the children are gathered together and educated and taught the principles of right doing.

This is the thought that comes to me as, fresh from our pilgrimage of pain, we stand in the big playground and watch the little ones filing out in the sunshine to go to their homes. Some of them are well clad, the children of honest, hard-working folk who love them and care for them. But many are going back to miserable dens where there is neither love nor care, where there is no respect for the laws of God or man.

"MANY ARE GOING BACK TO MISERABLE DENS."

They cannot all be saved from the evil environment that awaits them, but they come day after day to the schools, and there they fall under an influence which, if they are not inherently bad, will stand them in good stead through all their lives.

We watch the little ones as with the light-heartedness of childhood they trip away, some to the meal which loving hands have prepared for them, others to crowd and clamour at the doors of the mission-house, where the free meal stands between them and

the hunger pain, and then we turn into a street that bore formerly so ill a name that the authorities changed it, to remove the stigma of the address from the few decent people in it.

In five minutes we are once more on the beaten track and in the heart of Royal and aristocratic Kensington.

DIALSTONE LANE BY W W JACOBS

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CHAPTER IX.

T

HE church bells were ringing for morning service as Mr. Vickers, who had been for a stroll with Mr. William Russell and a couple of ferrets, returned home to breakfast. Contrary to custom, the small front room and the kitchen were both empty, and breakfast, with the exception of a cold herring and the bitter remains of a pot of tea, had been cleared away.

"I've known men afore now," murmured Mr. Vickers, eyeing the herring disdainfully, "as would take it by the tail and smack 'em acrost the face with it."

He cut himself a slice of bread, and, pouring out a cup of cold tea, began his meal, ever and anon stopping to listen, with a puzzled face, to a continuous squeaking overhead. It sounded like several pairs of new boots all squeaking at once, but Mr. Vickers, who was a reasonable man and past the age of self-deception, sought for a more probable cause.

A particularly aggressive squeak detached itself from the others and sounded on the stairs. The resemblance to the noise made by new boots was stronger than ever. It *was* new boots. The door opened, and Mr. Vickers, with a slice of bread arrested half-way to his mouth, sat gazing in astonishment at Charles Vickers, clad for the first time in his life in new raiment from top to toe. Ere he could voice inquiries, an avalanche of squeaks descended the stairs, and the rest of the children, all smartly clad, with Selina bringing up the rear, burst into the room.

"What is it?" demanded Mr. Vickers, in a voice husky with astonishment; "a bean-feast?"

Miss Vickers, who was doing up a glove which possessed more buttons than his own waistcoat, looked up and eyed him calmly. "New clothes—and not before they wanted 'em," she replied, tartly.

"New clothes?" repeated her father, in a scandalized voice. "Where'd they get 'em?"

"Shop," said his daughter, briefly.

Mr. Vickers rose and, approaching his offspring, inspected them with the same interest that he would have bestowed upon a wax-works. A certain stiffness of pose combined with the glassy stare which met his gaze helped to favour the illusion.

"For once in their lives they're respectable," said Selina, regarding them with moist eyes. "Soap and water they've always had, bless 'em, but you've never seen 'em dressed like this before."

Before Mr. Vickers could frame a reply a squeaking which put all the others in the

shade sounded from above. It crossed the floor on hurried excursions to different parts of the room, and then, hesitating for a moment at the head of the stairs, came slowly and ponderously down until Mrs. Vickers, looking somewhat nervous, stood revealed before her expectant husband. In scornful surprise he gazed at a blue cloth dress, a black velvet cape trimmed with bugles, and a bonnet so aggressively new that it had not yet accommodated itself to Mrs. Vickers's style of hair-dressing.

"Go on!" he breathed. "Go on! Don't mind me. What, you—you—you're not going to *church*?"

Mrs. Vickers glanced at the books in her hand—also new—and trembled.

"And why not?" demanded Selina. "Why shouldn't we?"

Mr. Vickers took another amazed glance round and his brow darkened.

"Where did you get the money?" he inquired.

"Saved it," said his daughter, reddening despite herself.

"*Saved* it?" repeated the justly-astonished Mr. Vickers. "*Saved* it? Ah! out of my money; out of the money I toil and moil for—out of the money that ought to be spent on food. No wonder you're always complaining that it ain't enough. I won't 'ave it, d'ye hear? I'll have my rights; I'll——"

"Don't make so much noise," said his daughter, who was stooping down to ease one of Mrs. Vickers's boots. "You would have fours, mother, and I told you what it would be."

"He said that I ought to wear threes by rights," said Mrs. Vickers; "I used to."

"And I s'pose," said Mr. Vickers, who had been listening to these remarks with considerable impatience—"I s'pose there's a bran' new suit o' clothes, and a pair o' boots, and 'arf-a-dozen shirts, and a new hat hid upstairs for me?"

"Yes, they're *hid* all right," retorted the dutiful Miss Vickers. "You go upstairs and amuse yourself looking for 'em. Go and have a game of 'hot boiled beans' all by yourself."

**""WHY, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN STINTING ME FOR YEARS,"
CONTINUED MR. VICKERS."**

"Why, you must have been stinting me for years," continued Mr. Vickers, examining the various costumes in detail. "This is what comes o' keeping quiet and trusting you—not but what I've 'ad my suspicions. My own kids taking the bread out o' my mouth and buying boots with it; my own wife going about in a bonnet that's took me weeks and weeks to earn."

His words fell on deaf ears. No adjutant getting his regiment ready for a march-past could have taken more trouble than Miss Vickers was taking at this moment over her small company. Caps were set straight and sleeves pulled down. Her face shone with pride and her eyes glistened as the small fry, discoursing in excited whispers, filed stiffly out.

A sudden cessation of gossip in neighbouring doorways testified to the impression made by their appearance. Past little startled groups the procession picked its way in squeaking pride, with Mrs. Vickers and Selina bringing up the rear. The children went by with little set, important faces; but Miss Vickers's little bows and pleased smiles of recognition to acquaintances were so lady-like that several untidy matrons retired inside

their houses to wrestle grimly with feelings too strong for outside display.

"Pack o' prancing peacocks," said the unnatural Mr. Vickers, as the procession wound round the corner.

He stood looking vacantly up the street until the gathering excitement of his neighbours aroused new feelings. Vanity stirred within him, and leaning casually against the door-post he yawned and looked at the chimney-pots opposite. A neighbour in a pair of corduroy trousers, supported by one brace worn diagonally, shambled across the road.

"What's up?" he inquired, with a jerk of the thumb in the direction of Mr. Vickers's vanished family.

"Up?" repeated Mr. Vickers, with an air of languid surprise.

"Somebody died and left you a fortin?" inquired the other.

"Not as I knows of," replied Mr. Vickers, staring. "Why?"

"*Why?*" exclaimed the other. "Why, new clothes all over. I never see such a turn-out."

Mr. Vickers regarded him with an air of lofty disdain. "Kids must 'ave new clothes sometimes, I s'pose?" he said, slowly. "You wouldn't 'ave 'em going about of a Sunday in a ragged shirt and a pair of trowsis, would you?"

The shaft passed harmlessly. "Why not?" said the other. "They gin'rally do."

Mr. Vickers's denial died away on his lips. In twos and threes his neighbours had drawn gradually near and now stood by listening expectantly. The idea of a fortune was common to all of them, and they were anxious for particulars.

"THEY WERE ANXIOUS FOR PARTICULARS."

"Some people have all the luck," said a stout matron. "I've 'ad thirteen and buried seven, and never 'ad so much as a chiney tea-pot left me. One thing is, I never could make up to people for the sake of what I could get out of them. I couldn't not if I tried. I must speak my mind free and independent."

"Ah! that's how you get yourself disliked," said another lady, shaking her head sympathetically.

"Disliked?" said the stout matron, turning on her fiercely. "What d'ye mean? You don't know what you're talking about. Who's getting themselves disliked?"

"A lot o' good a chiney tea-pot would be to you," said the other, with a ready change of front, "or any other kind o' tea-pot."

Surprise and indignation deprived the stout matron of utterance.

"Or a milk-jug either," pursued her opponent, following up her advantage. "Or a coffee-pot, or——"

The stout matron advanced upon her, and her mien was so terrible that the other, retreating to her house, slammed the door behind her and continued the discussion from a first-floor window. Mint Street, with the conviction that Mr. Vickers's tidings could wait, swarmed across the road to listen.

Mr. Vickers himself listened for a little while to such fragments as came his way, and then, going indoors, sat down amid the remains of his breakfast to endeavour to solve the mystery of the new clothes.

He took a short clay pipe from his pocket, and, igniting a little piece of tobacco which remained in the bowl, endeavoured to form an estimate of the cost of each person's

wardrobe. The sum soon becoming too large to work in his head, he had recourse to pencil and paper, and after five minutes' hard labour sat gazing at a total, which made his brain reel. The fact that immediately afterwards he was unable to find even a few grains of tobacco at the bottom of his box furnished a contrast which almost made him maudlin.

He sat sucking at his cold pipe and indulging in hopeless conjectures as to the source of so much wealth, and, with a sudden quickening of the pulse, wondered whether it had all been spent. His mind wandered from Selina to Mr. Joseph Tasker, and almost imperceptibly the absurdities of which young men in love could be capable occurred to him. He remembered the extravagances of his own youth, and bethinking himself of the sums he had squandered on the future Mrs. Vickers—sums which increased with the compound interest of repetition—came to the conclusion that Mr. Tasker had been more foolish still.

It seemed the only possible explanation. His eye brightened, and, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, he crossed to the tap and washed his face.

"If he can't lend a trifle to the man what's going to be his father-in-law," he said, cheerfully, as he polished his face on a roller-towel, "I shall tell 'im he can't have Selina, that's all. I'll go and see 'im afore she gets any more out of him."

He walked blithely up the road, and, after shaking off one or two inquirers whose curiosity was almost proof against insult, made his way to Dialstone Lane. In an unobtrusive fashion he glided round to the back, and, opening the kitchen door, bestowed a beaming smile upon the startled Joseph.

"Busy, my lad?" he inquired.

"What d'ye want?" asked Mr. Tasker, whose face was flushed with cooking.

Mr. Vickers opened the door a little wider, and, stepping inside, closed it softly behind him and dropped into a chair.

"Don't be alarmed, my lad," he said, benevolently. "Selina's all right."

"What d'ye want?" repeated Mr. Tasker. "Who told you to come round here?"

Mr. Vickers looked at him in reproachful surprise.

"I suppose a father can come round to see his future son-in-law?" he said, with some dignity. "I don't want to do no interrupting of your work, Joseph, but I couldn't 'elp just stepping round to tell you how nice they all looked. Where you got the money from I can't think."

"Have you gone dotty, or what?" demanded Mr. Tasker, who was busy wiping out a saucepan. "Who looked nice?"

Mr. Vickers shook his head at him and smiled waggishly.

"Ah! who?" he said, with much enjoyment. "I tell you it did my father's 'art good to see 'em all dressed up like that; and when I thought of its all being owing to you, sit down at home in comfort with a pipe instead of coming to thank you for it I could not. Not if you was to have paid me I couldn't."

"Look 'ere," said Mr. Tasker, putting the saucepan down with a bang, "if you can't talk plain, common English you'd better get out. I don't want you 'ere at all as a matter o' fact, but to have you sitting there shaking your silly 'ead and talking a pack o' nonsense is more than I can stand."

Mr. Vickers gazed at him in perplexity. "Do you mean to tell me you haven't been giving my Selina money to buy new clothes for the young 'uns?" he demanded, sharply. "Do you mean to tell me that Selina didn't get money out of you to buy herself and 'er

mother and all of 'em—except me—a new rig-out from top to toe?"

"D'ye think I've gone mad, or what?" inquired the amazed Mr. Tasker. "What d'ye think I should want to buy clothes for your young 'uns for? That's your duty. And Selina, too; I haven't given 'er anything except a ring, and she lent me the money for that. D'ye think I'm made o' money?"

"All right, Joseph," said Mr. Vickers, secretly incensed at this unforeseen display of caution on Mr. Tasker's part. "I s'pose the fairies come and put 'em on while they was asleep. But it's dry work walking; 'ave you got such a thing as a glass o' water you could give me?"

The other took a glass from the dresser and, ignoring the eye of his prospective father-in-law, which was glued to a comfortable-looking barrel in the corner, filled it to the brim with fair water and handed it to him. Mr. Vickers, giving him a surly nod, took a couple of dainty sips and placed it on the table.

"It's very nice water," he said, sarcastically.

"Is it?" said Mr. Tasker. "We don't drink it ourselves, except in tea or coffee; the cap'n says it ain't safe."

Mr. Vickers brought his eye from the barrel and glared at him.

"I s'pose, Joseph," he said, after a long pause, during which Mr. Tasker was busy making up the fire—"I s'pose Selina didn't tell you you wasn't to tell me about the money?"

"I don't know what you're driving at," said the other, confronting him angrily. "I haven't got no money."

Mr. Vickers coughed. "Don't say that, Joseph," he urged, softly; "don't say that, my lad. As a matter o' fact, I come round to you, interrupting of you in your work, and I'm sorry for it—knowing how fond of it you are—to see whether I—I couldn't borrow a trifle for a day or two."

"Ho, did you?" commented Mr. Tasker, who had opened the oven door and was using his hand as a thermometer.

His visitor hesitated. It was no use asking for too much; on the other hand, to ask for less than he could get would be unpardonable folly.

"If I could lay my hand on a couple o' quid," he said, in a mysterious whisper, "I could make it five in a week."

"Well, why don't you?" inquired Mr. Tasker, who was tenderly sucking the bulb of the thermometer after contact with the side of the oven.

"It's the two quid that's the trouble, Joseph," replied Mr. Vickers, keeping his temper with difficulty. "A little thing like that wouldn't be much trouble to you, I know, but to a pore man with a large family like me it's a'most impossible."

Mr. Tasker went outside to the larder, and returning with a small joint knelt down and thrust it carefully into the oven.

"A'most impossible," repeated Mr. Vickers, with a sigh.

"What is?" inquired the other, who had not been listening.

The half-choking Mr. Vickers explained.

"Yes, o' course it is," assented Mr. Tasker.

"People what's got money," said the offended Mr. Vickers, regarding him fiercely, "stick to it like leeches. Now, suppose I was a young man keeping company with a gal and her father wanted to borrow a couple o' quid—a paltry couple o' thick 'uns—what

d'ye think I should do?"

"If you was a young man—keeping company with a gal—and 'er father wanted—to borrow a couple of quid off o' you—what would you do?" repeated Mr. Tasker, mechanically, as he bustled to and fro.

Mr. Vickers nodded and smiled. "What should I do?" he inquired again, hopefully.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said the other, opening the oven door and peering in. "How should I?"

At the imminent risk of something inside giving way under the strain, Mr. Vickers restrained himself. He breathed hard, and glancing out of window sought to regain his equilibrium by becoming interested in a blackbird outside.

"What I mean to say is," he said at length, in a trembling voice—"what I mean to say is, without no roundaboutedness, will you lend a 'ard-working man, what's going to be your future father-in-law, a couple o' pounds?"

Mr. Tasker laughed. It was not a loud laugh, nor yet a musical one. It was merely a laugh designed to convey to the incensed Mr. Vickers a strong sense of the absurdity of his request.

"I asked you a question," said the latter gentleman, glaring at him.

"I haven't got a couple o' pounds," replied Mr. Tasker; "and if I 'ad, there's nine hundred and ninety-nine things I would sooner do with it than lend it to you."

**"MR. VICKERS ROSE AND STOOD REGARDING THE IGNOBLE
CREATURE WITH PROFOUND CONTEMPT."**

Mr. Vickers rose and stood regarding the ignoble creature with profound contempt. His features worked and a host of adjectives crowded to his lips.

"Is that your last word, Joseph?" he inquired, with solemn dignity.

"I'll say it all over again if you like," said the obliging Mr. Tasker. "If you want money, go and earn it, same as I have to; don't come round 'ere cadging on me, because it's no good."

Mr. Vickers laughed; a dry, contemptuous laugh, terrible to hear.

"And that's the man that's going to marry my daughter," he said, slowly; "that's the man that's going to marry into my family. Don't you expect *me* to take you up and point you out as my son-in-law, cos I won't do it. If there's anything I can't abide it's stinginess. And there's my gal—my pore gal don't know your real character. Wait till I've told 'er about this morning and opened 'er eyes! Wait till——"

He stopped abruptly as the door leading to the front room opened and revealed the inquiring face of Captain Bowers.

"What's all this noise about, Joseph?" demanded the captain, harshly.

Mr. Tasker attempted to explain, but his explanation involving a character for Mr. Vickers which that gentleman declined to accept on any terms, he broke in and began to give his own version of the affair. Much to Joseph's surprise the captain listened patiently.

"Did you buy all those things, Joseph?" he inquired, carelessly, as Mr. Vickers paused for breath.

"Cert'nly not, sir," replied Mr. Tasker. "Where should I get the money from?"

The captain eyed him without replying, and a sudden suspicion occurred to him. The strange disappearance of the map, followed by the sudden cessation of Mr. Chalk's visits, began to link themselves to this tale of unexpected wealth. He bestowed another searching glance upon the agitated Mr. Tasker.

"You haven't *sold* anything lately, have you?" he inquired, with startling gruffness.

"I haven't 'ad nothing to sell, sir," replied the other, in astonishment. "And I dare say Mr. Vickers here saw a new pair o' boots on one o' the young 'uns and dreamt all the rest."

Mr. Vickers intervened with passion.

"That'll do," said the captain, sharply. "How dare you make that noise in my house? I think that the tale about the clothes is all right," he added, turning to Joseph. "I saw them go into church looking very smart. And you know nothing about it?"

Mr. Tasker's astonishment was too genuine to be mistaken, and the captain, watching him closely, transferred his suspicions to a more deserving object. Mr. Vickers caught his eye and essayed a smile.

"Dry work talking, sir," he said, gently.

Captain Bowers eyed him steadily. "Have we got any beer, Joseph?" he inquired.

"Plenty in the cask, sir," said Mr. Tasker, reluctantly.

"Well, keep your eye on it," said the captain. "Good morning, Mr. Vickers."

But disappointment and indignation got the better of Mr. Vickers's politeness.

CHAPTER X.

"A penny for your thoughts, uncle," said Miss Drewitt, as they sat at dinner an hour or two after the departure of Mr. Vickers.

"*H'm?*" said the captain, with a guilty start.

"You've been scowling and smiling by turns for the last five minutes," said his niece.

"I was thinking about that man that was here this morning," said the captain, slowly; "trying to figure it out. If I thought that that girl Selina——"

He took a draught of ale and shook his head solemnly.

"You know my ideas about that," said Prudence.

"Your poor *mother* was obstinate," commented the captain, regarding her tolerantly. "Once she got an idea into her head it stuck there, and nothing made her more angry than proving to her that she was wrong. Trying to prove to her, I should have said."

Miss Drewitt smiled amiably. "Well, you've earned half the sum," she said. "Now, what were you smiling about?"

"Didn't know I was smiling," declared the captain.

With marvellous tact he turned the conversation to lighthouses, a subject upon which he discoursed with considerable fluency until the meal was finished. Miss Drewitt, who had a long memory and at least her fair share of curiosity, returned to the charge as he smoked half a pipe preparatory to accompanying her for a walk.

"You're looking very cheerful," she remarked.

The captain's face fell several points. "Am I?" he said, ruefully. "I didn't mean to."

"Why not?" inquired his niece.

"I mean I didn't know I was," he replied, "more than usual, I mean. I always do look fairly cheerful—at least, I hope I do. There's nothing to make me look the opposite."

Miss Drewitt eyed him carefully and then passed upstairs to put on her hat. Relieved of her presence the captain walked to the small glass over the mantelpiece and, regarding his tell-tale features with gloomy dissatisfaction, acquired, after one or two attempts, an expression which he flattered himself defied analysis.

He tapped the barometer which hung by the door as they went out, and, checking a remark which rose to his lips, stole a satisfied glance at the face by his side.

"Clark's farm by the footpaths would be a nice walk," said Miss Drewitt, as they reached the end of the lane.

The captain started. "I was thinking of Dutton Priors," he said, slowly. "We could go there by Hanger's Lane and home by the road."

"The footpaths would be nice to-day," urged his niece.

"You try my way," said the captain, jovially.

"Have you got any particular reason for wanting to go to Dutton Priors this afternoon?" inquired the girl.

"Reason?" said the captain. "Good gracious, no. What reason should I have? My leg is a trifle stiff to-day for stiles, but still——"

Miss Drewitt gave way at once, and, taking his arm, begged him to lean on her, questioning him anxiously as to his fitness for a walk in any direction.

"Walking 'll do it good," was the reply, as they proceeded slowly down the High Street.

"HE BECAME INTENT ON A DERELICT PUNT."

He took his watch from his pocket, and, after comparing it with the town clock, peered furtively right and left, gradually slackening his pace until Miss Drewitt's fears for his leg became almost contagious. At the old stone bridge, spanning the river at the bottom of the High Street, he paused, and, resting his arms on the parapet, became intent on a derelict punt. On the subject of sitting in a craft of that description in mid-stream catching fish he discoursed at such length that the girl eyed him in amazement.

"Shall we go on?" she said, at length.

The captain turned and, merely pausing to point out the difference between the lines of a punt and a dinghy, with a digression to sampans which included a criticism of the Chinese as boat-builders, prepared to depart. He cast a swift glance up the road as he did so, and Miss Drewitt's cheek flamed with sudden wrath as she saw Mr. Edward Tredgold hastening towards them. In a somewhat pointed manner she called her uncle's attention to the fact.

"Lor' bless my soul," said that startled mariner, "so it is. Well! well!"

If Mr. Tredgold had been advancing on his head he could not have exhibited more surprise.

"I'm afraid I'm late," said Tredgold, as he came up and shook hands. "I hope you haven't been waiting long."

The hapless captain coughed loud and long. He emerged from a large red pocket-handkerchief to find the eye of Miss Drewitt seeking his.

"That's all right, my lad," he said, huskily. "I'd forgotten about our arrangement."

Did I say this Sunday or next?"

"This," said Mr. Tredgold, bluntly.

The captain coughed again, and with some pathos referred to the tricks which old age plays with memory. As they walked on he regaled them with selected instances.

"Don't forget your leg, uncle," said Miss Drewitt, softly.

Captain Bowers gazed at her suspiciously.

"Don't forget that it's stiff and put too much strain on it," explained his niece.

The captain eyed her uneasily, but she was talking and laughing with Edward Tredgold in a most reassuring fashion. A choice portion of his programme, which, owing to the events of the afternoon, he had almost resolved to omit, clamoured for production. He stole another glance at his niece and resolved to risk it.

"Hah!" he said, suddenly, stopping short and feeling in his pockets. "There's my memory again. Well, of all the——"

"What's the matter, uncle?" inquired Miss Drewitt.

"I've left my pipe at home," said the captain, in a desperate voice.

"I've got some cigars," suggested Tredgold.

The captain shook his head. "No, I must have my pipe," he said, decidedly. "If you two will walk on slowly, I'll soon catch you up."

"You're not going all the way back for it?" exclaimed Miss Drewitt.

"Let me go," said Tredgold.

The captain favoured him with an inscrutable glance. "I'll go," he said, firmly. "I'm not quite sure where I left it. You go by Hanger's Lane; I'll soon catch you up."

He set off at a pace which rendered protest unavailing. Mr. Tredgold turned, and, making a mental note of the fact that Miss Drewitt had suddenly added inches to her stature, walked on by her side.

"Captain Bowers is very fond of his pipe," he said, after they had walked a little way in silence.

Miss Drewitt assented. "Nasty things," she said, calmly.

"So they are," said Mr. Tredgold.

"But you smoke," said the girl.

Mr. Tredgold sighed. "I have often thought of giving it up," he said, softly, "and then I was afraid that it would look rather presumptuous."

"Presumptuous?" repeated Miss Drewitt.

"So many better and wiser men than myself smoke," explained Mr. Tredgold, "including even bishops. If it is good enough for them, it ought to be good enough for me; that's the way I look at it. Who am I that I should be too proud to smoke? Who am I that I should try and set my poor ideas above those of my superiors? Do you see my point of view?"

Miss Drewitt made no reply.

"Of course, it is a thing that grows on one," continued Mr. Tredgold, with the air of making a concession. "It is the first smoke that does the mischief; it is a fatal precedent. Unless, perhaps——How pretty that field is over there."

Miss Drewitt looked in the direction indicated. "Very nice," she said, briefly. "But what were you going to say?"

Mr. Tredgold made an elaborate attempt to appear confused. "I was going to say," he murmured, gently, "unless, perhaps, one begins on coarse-cut Cavendish rolled in a

piece of the margin of the Sunday newspaper."

Miss Drewitt suppressed an exclamation. "I wanted to see where the fascination was," she said, indignantly.

"And did you?" inquired Mr. Tredgold, smoothly.

The girl turned her head and looked at him. "I have no doubt my uncle gave you full particulars," she said, bitterly. "It seems to me that men can gossip as much as women."

"I tried to stop him," said the virtuous Mr. Tredgold.

"You need not have troubled," said Miss Drewitt, loftily. "It is not a matter of any consequence. I am surprised that my uncle should have thought it worth mentioning."

She walked on slowly with head erect, pausing occasionally to look round for the captain. Edward Tredgold looked too, and a feeling of annoyance at the childish stratagems of his well-meaning friend began to possess him.

"We had better hurry a little, I think," he said, glancing at the sky. "The sooner we get to Dutton Priors the better."

"Why?" inquired his companion.

"Rain," said the other, briefly.

"It won't rain before evening," said Miss Drewitt, confidently; "uncle said so."

"Perhaps we had better walk faster, though," urged Mr. Tredgold.

Miss Drewitt slackened her pace deliberately. "There is no fear of its raining," she declared. "And uncle will not catch us up if we walk fast."

A sudden glimpse into the immediate future was vouchsafed to Mr. Tredgold; for a fraction of a second the veil was lifted. "Don't blame me if you get wet, though," he said, with some anxiety.

They walked on at a pace which gave the captain every opportunity of overtaking them. The feat would not have been beyond the powers of an athletic tortoise, but the most careful scrutiny failed to reveal any signs of him.

"I'm afraid that he is not well," said Miss Drewitt, after a long, searching glance along the way they had come. "Perhaps we had better go back. It does begin to look rather dark."

"Just as you please," said Edward Tredgold, with unwonted caution; "but the nearest shelter is Dutton Priors."

He pointed to a lurid, ragged cloud right ahead of them. As if in response, a low, growling rumble sounded overhead.

"Was—was that thunder?" said Miss Drewitt, drawing a little nearer to him.

"Sounded something like it," was the reply.

A flash of lightning and a crashing peal that rent the skies put the matter beyond a doubt. Miss Drewitt, turning very pale, began to walk at a rapid pace in the direction of the village.

The other looked round in search of some nearer shelter. Already the pattering of heavy drops sounded in the lane, and before they had gone a dozen paces the rain came down in torrents. Two or three fields away a small shed offered the only shelter. Mr. Tredgold, taking his companion by the arm, started to run towards it.

Before they had gone a hundred yards they were wet through, but Miss Drewitt, holding her skirts in one hand and shivering at every flash, ran until they brought up at a tall gate, ornamented with barbed wire, behind which stood the shed.

The gate was locked, and the wire had been put on by a farmer who combined with great ingenuity a fervent hatred of his fellowmen. To Miss Drewitt it seemed insurmountable, but, aided by Mr. Tredgold and a peal of thunder which came to his assistance at a critical moment, she managed to clamber over and reach the shed. Mr. Tredgold followed at his leisure with a strip of braid torn from the bottom of her dress.

**"AIDED BY MR. TREGOLD AND A PEAL OF THUNDER, SHE
MANAGED TO CLAMBER OVER."**

The roof leaked in twenty places and the floor was a puddle, but it had certain redeeming features in Mr. Tredgold's eyes of which the girl knew nothing. He stood at the doorway watching the rain.

"Come inside," said Miss Drewitt, in a trembling voice. "You might be struck."

Mr. Tredgold experienced a sudden sense of solemn pleasure in this unexpected concern for his safety. He turned and eyed her.

"I'm not afraid," he said, with great gentleness.

"No, but I am," said Miss Drewitt, petulantly, "and I can never get over that gate alone."

Mr. Tredgold came inside, and for some time neither of them spoke. The rattle of rain on the roof became less deafening and began to drip through instead of forming little jets. A patch of blue sky showed.

"It isn't much," said Tredgold, going to the door again.

Miss Drewitt, checking a sharp retort, returned to the door and looked out. The patch of blue increased in size; the rain ceased and the sun came out; birds exchanged congratulations from every tree. The girl, gathering up her wet skirts, walked to the gate, leaving her companion to follow.

Approached calmly and under a fair sky the climb was much easier.

"I believe that I could have got over by myself after all," said Miss Drewitt, as she stood on the other side. "I suppose that you were in too much of a hurry the last time. My dress is ruined."

She spoke calmly, but her face was clouded. From her manner during the rapid walk home Mr. Tredgold was enabled to see clearly that she was holding him responsible for the captain's awkward behaviour; the rain; her spoiled clothes; and a severe cold in the immediate future. He glanced at her ruined hat and the wet, straight locks of hair hanging about her face, and held his peace.

Never before on a Sunday afternoon had Miss Drewitt known the streets of Binchester to be so full of people. She hurried on with bent head, looking straight before her, trying to imagine what she looked like. There was no sign of the captain, but as they turned into Dialstone Lane they both saw a huge, shaggy, grey head protruding from the small window of his bedroom. It disappeared with a suddenness almost startling.

"Thank you," said Miss Drewitt, holding out her hand as she reached the door. "Good-bye."

Mr. Tredgold said "Good-bye," and with a furtive glance at the window above departed. Miss Drewitt, opening the door, looked round an empty room. Then the kitchen door opened and the face of Mr. Tasker, full of concern, appeared.

"Did you get wet, miss?" he inquired.

Miss Drewitt ignored the question. "Where is Captain Bowers?" she asked, in a clear, penetrating voice.

The face of Mr. Tasker fell. "He's gone to bed with a headache, miss," he replied.

"Headache?" repeated the astonished Miss Drewitt. "When did he go?"

"About 'arf an hour ago," said Mr. Tasker; "just after the storm. I suppose that's

what caused it, though it seems funny, considering what a lot he must ha' seen at sea. He said he'd go straight to bed and try and sleep it off. And I was to ask you to please not to make a noise."

Miss Drewitt swept past him and mounted the stairs. At the captain's door she paused, but the loud snoring of a determined man made her resolve to postpone her demands for an explanation to a more fitting opportunity. Tired, wet, and angry she gained her own room, and threw herself thoughtlessly into that famous old Chippendale chair which, in accordance with Mr. Tredgold's instructions, had been placed against the wall.

**"SHE THREW HERSELF THOUGHTLESSLY INTO THAT FAMOUS
OLD CHIPPENDALE CHAIR."**

The captain stirred in his sleep.

(To be continued.)

Wild Western Journalism.

By an ex-Editor.

O

ONE of the most thrilling occupations that a human being could follow in the old days—say a brief generation since—was that of editing a newspaper in a small American town. There was a fulness in the life, a feverish activity in the office and a perpetual spice of danger out of it, that made all other callings seem trivial. Things have changed a great deal in the past few years, but even yet Wild Western journalism can boast a flavour—a tang of its own. There is no other Press in the world quite like it; there is no similar body of men like those who engineer it. To our old friends, Mr. Pott, of the *Eatanswill Gazette*, and Mr. Slurk, of the *Eatanswill Independent*, their Occidental followers of the *Arizona Arrow* and the *Tombstone Epitaph* bear but faint resemblance. Perhaps in the birth-throes of English journalism—in the era of the *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and the *Scot's Dove*—the vicissitudes of editors were not dissimilar to those endured by the Colorado and Texas editor of yesterday, who was often his own publisher, his own printer, and his own editor rolled in one—and not only that, but was forced to perform these functions with a six-chambered revolver reposing gracefully, yet ominously, on his desk. As to his Protean character there has been little if any improvement. I cull the following from a recent issue of the *Yampa* (Oregon) *Leader*:—

The great city papers think they are smart in having a large staff, and, although we have not published ours before, we shall do so to take some of the conceit out of the city brethren. The editorial staff of the *Leader* is composed of: Managing editor, V. S. Wilson; city editor, Vic Wilson; news editor, V. Wilson; editorial writer, Hon. Mr. Wilson; exchange editor, Wilson; pressman, the same Wilson; foreman, more of the same Wilson; devil, a picture of the same Wilson; fighting editor, Mrs. Wilson.

Facsimile of newspaper, "Tombstone Epitaph"

By no means exaggerated is the description of a Western editor and his environment which was given some years ago by the authors of that amusing novel, "The Golden Butterfly." Prototypes of Gilead P. Beck could be found in abundance throughout the region west of the Mississippi. One of the most extraordinary characters and one of the most delightful was the late Alvin S. Peek—"Judge" Peek of Dakota—whose boast it was that he had "run" papers in nine different States and territories, had shot eleven men who disagreed with his opinions—three of them fatally—and had never swallowed a word he had ever written, and who died universally respected in bed and at the ripe age—for Dakota—of fifty-one years.

But apart from any personal contact with the men who make the newspapers of the wild and woolly West it was once my experience to receive and peruse weekly many hundreds of their productions—"exchanges" they are called—and ranging from the *Mother Lode Magnet* of California and the *Tombstone Epitaph* of Tombstone, Arizona, to the *Arkansas Howler* and the *Mustang (Colorado) Mail*. Many a pleasant evening have I spent over them, and I still prize a scrap-book containing things to me as funny as I could find in any collection of wit and humour in the world. There is reason for this, because the backwoods and prairie Press of America is the nursery of American humour. It produced Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Petroleum V. Nasby, Joshua Billings, J. M. Bailey, Bob Burdette, Bill Nye, John Phoenix, and F. L. Stanton, to mention only a few of the humorists of international renown. I was well acquainted with Stanton at the time he was editing, printing, and publishing the famous *Smithville News*. *Texas Siftings*, the *Arizona Kicker*, and the *Burlington Hawkeye* have made the peculiarities and amenities of Western journalism familiar to English readers. Albeit, scattered through a dozen States and territories are thousands of small newspapers, eking out a precarious existence—full of native humour and sentiment—of which not even the resident of Chicago and St. Louis has so much as heard. How precarious that existence is may be judged from the following editorial appeal in the *Gem*, of Flagstaff, Arizona:—

Have you paid your subscription yet? Remember even an editor must live. If the *hard times* have struck your shebang, don't forget turnips, potatoes, and corn in the shock are most as welcome as hard cash at the *Gem* office. Also hard wood. Our latch-string is always out, or same (*i.e.*, the turnips, etc.) can be delivered to our wife, who will give receipt in our absence.

One of the pleasing fictions preserved by the Western Press is, as we have seen, that of a plurality of editors. To these supposititious editors the most extraordinary titles and functions are bequeathed. On the front page of the *Rising Star* (Texas) *X-ray* no pretence of a numerous staff is made—Mr. Albert Tyson boldly announces himself as "horse, snake, lying, and fighting editor," while his motto is, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you, and do it *fust!*"

In mining districts or in the new territories, where a "tenderfoot" is made welcome in the "'eave 'arf-brick" fashion, the career of an editor is one of constant risk and turmoil. If he is young and inexperienced there are always lawless spirits ready to take a rise out of him, just for the pleasure and excitement of the thing.

The Rising Star X-Ray Albert Tyson, Horse, Snake, Lying, And Fighting Editor,
Entered at the Rising Star Post-Office as Second-class Mail matter. Published every
Friday. "Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do To You, And Do It Fust"
Editorial -0- This is 1901, have you resolted any yet? If you have been making a dozen

New Year resolutions and breaking them all in about 30 days, try the plan this time of making only six and see if you can't keep your integrity with at least three of them. In this New Year, A D 1901 make a grave effort to "Do unto others as you would have them do to you, and do it FUST" 0 0 0 The Mav Enterprise has gone into hence,—is a mournful corpse. She died, according to a hasty post mortem examination, of a malignant attack of impecuniosity fever or financial strangulation. 0 0 0 The X-Ray makes a motion that the people of Eastland county instruct their next Representative to the Legislature to introduce a bill in that honorable body against the sale of toy pistols, firecrackers, and torpedos of every description.

Even in the civilized Southern States to the east of the Mississippi editing was not fifteen years ago a healthy pastime. On one occasion, when I was assisting a friend in Georgia, a citizen in a high state of excitement entered the "editorial sanctum"—they are very particular about the dignity of these epithets in America—and riddled the walls and my desk with bullets from a revolver.

Luckily, I happened not to be there, but in the composing-room, engaged in making-up the editorial page. My eye dwelt lovingly on a neat row of paragraphs, one beginning in this wise:—

If our esteemed (but chronically overheated) fellow-townsmen, Sam Beale, will take our advice, etc.

"THE MALLET GRAZED MY EAR AND CRASHED INTO THE WALL."

At that moment three shots rang out in deafening succession. My journeyman "comp." dropped on his knees under the composing-case, and I was just deciding on my own line of conduct when the door was flung violently open, and Mr. Samuel Beale and I stood face to face. There were no words—none which I could bring my pen to write—but a heavy printer's mallet lay at one end of the make-up stone; this "our esteemed (but chronically overheated) fellow-townsmen" seized and flung with all possible force straight at my head. Had his aim been true I should never have lived to tell this tale. As it was, the mallet grazed my ear and crashed into the wall, and the next object I saw was Beale wrestling with the door in a frantic effort to escape. The conclusion of this anecdote doesn't matter; but my printer was, I believe, finally obliged to haul me off the body of the prostrate Mr. Beale, upon whom I then and there felt it my editorial duty to take summary vengeance. Afterwards I wisely went armed, my victim having openly threatened to shoot me on sight. But the quarrel was eventually patched up, my chief inserting the following characteristic *amende*:—

The *News-Democrat* having on divers occasions, through a misapprehension of the true circumstances, stated that our esteemed townsman Sam Beale was a liar, a thief, and the meanest skunk in the whole State of Georgia, we beg hereby to retract this, and declare that our knowledge is solely confined to Pawnee County. Shake, Sam, and be friends!

One of the arts which a Western editor must understand is that of "padding," especially in his local "society" items.

Thus a Missouri paper, the *Hannibal Hornet*, is responsible for the following string of "personals":—

Dec. 7th. Miss Sadie James, of Tarrant Springs, is visiting her friend, Miss Annabel S. Colver, at the house of Miss Annabel S. Colver, on Decatur Street.

Dec. 8th. Miss Annabel S. Colver gave a party in honour of her guest, Miss Sadie James, who is visiting her at Miss Colver's beautiful home on Decatur Street, at which all the youth and beauty of Hannibal were present in full force.

Dec. 9th. Miss Sadie James, of Tarrant Springs, was observed out sleigh-riding with her charming hostess, Miss A. S. Colver, and their neat turn-out was shortly joined by several others.

Dec. 10th. Miss Sadie James terminated a pleasant visit to Hannibal and returned to Tarrant Springs.

But occasionally it happens that an exquisite item of "society" falls in the editor's way, without his having to do any "padding" at all, as in this from the *Fairplay Flume*, published in the flourishing Colorado "city" of Fairplay:—

Married. Markham—Seely.—At the residence of the groom's parents one of the most up-to-date weddings took place. (There had been an agreement between the bride and groom not to be married in the old-fashioned way, but to change the mode a little.) Therefore they were married at the residence of the father of the groom, Peter J. Seely, Esq. The groom wore a long pair of overalls and a cutaway coat. The bride wore a calico dress and apron. They both looked the picture of health, and were ably assisted—the groom by the bride's sister and the bride by Mr. Sam Meadows, a particular friend of the groom's. After spending a couple of weeks in the West they will return and settle down in their pleasant home, "Swandown"; Burlap, the furniture man at Five Forks, having already the contract to see that their home is properly furnished during their absence.

FAIRPLAY FLUME, THE BLISS BREEZE, THE ARIZONA ARROW, THE
CREEDE CANDLE, THE RIFLE REVEILLE, THE MUSTANG MAIL, D THE
MOTHER LODE MAGNET

As to the titles of many of these Western productions, it might be supposed these spring from the fertile brain of some incorrigible humorist. But this is not so. Nothing could be more real—"alive and kicking"—in Anno Domini 1904, than the *Creede* (Colorado) *Candle*, the *Arizona Arrow* of Chloride, Arizona, the *Rifle Reveille*, the *Rising Star X-ray*, the *Bald-Knob Herald*, the *Dallas World Hustler*, the *Kosse Cyclone*, the *Blooming Grove Rustler*, the *Carrizo Javelin*, the *Noyales Oasis*, and the *Devil's Lake Free Press*. The names of some Western towns are fantastic to a degree, and the editorial love for alliteration is strong. Thus we have the *Bliss Breeze*, the *Mustang Mail*, and the *Searchlight Searchlight* in addition to those I have mentioned. What more natural in the "city" of Tombstone, Arizona, than that the newspaper should be entitled the *Epitaph*? Or that an *Epitaph* should take as naturally to obituaries as a duck to water or an Arizonian takes to his "gun"?

Jake Moffatt Gone Skyward!

As we feared on hearing that two doctors had been called in, the life of our esteemed fellow-citizen Jake Moffatt ended on Wednesday last, just after we had gone to press. Jake was every inch a scholar and a gentleman, upright in all his dealings, unimpeachable in character, and ran the Front Street Saloon in the very toniest style consistent with order. Jake never fully recovered from the year he spent in the county jail

at the time of the Ryan-Sternberg fracas. His health was shattered, and he leaves a sorrowing widow and nary an enemy.

Newspapers: "THE JAVELIN. The Flagstaff Gem. The Oasis. The Oklahoma Hornet."

The Tombstone men are handy with their "shooting-irons," as may be judged from the accompanying cheery advertisement last Christmas time.

TURKEY SHOOTING Wednesday, December 23, 1903 North End of Fifth Street
——— Use Any Kind of Rifle ——— AT 50 YARDS, Turkey's Head Exposed, 25c
Per Shot AT 200 YARDS, Entire Turkey Exposed, 25c Per Shot To Draw Blood Entitles
You to the Turkey ——— SPORT BEGINS AT 2 P. M. ——— Turkeys Now on
Exhibition at Saylor's Store, Allen. Bet. Fourth and Fifth Streets

The chief advertisements in the *Epitaph*, as in the other papers in the ranching country, consist of cattle-brands—*i.e.*, rude outlines or silhouettes of equine or bovine quadrupeds, marked with the peculiar sign which distinguishes their ownership from others. By this means any strayed or stolen cattle are readily identified.

CATTLE-BRAND ADVERTISEMENTS.

As to the technical aspect of all the papers, which have so much in common, the reader may like to learn something. How are they produced so as to cover expenses in a "city" which boasts often fewer than one thousand inhabitants, rarely reaches two thousand, and not seldom has but five hundred souls? The answer is, in the first place, to be found in the invention of patent "insides" or "outsides." These are sheets ready printed on two of the four outside or inside pages; or, if it should happen to be an eight-page paper, six pages would be set up and printed at some great centre of population like Chicago or St. Louis. The invention is of English origin, but owes its vogue in America to A. N. Kellogg, who in 1861 was editing a little paper at Baraboo, Wisconsin. When the Civil War broke out his printers left him for the front, and, unable to get out his journal, he wrote to the publisher of the Madison *Daily Journal* for sheets of that paper printed on one side only with the latest available war news. The blank side the enterprising Kellogg filled up himself with big "block" advertisements and local items and the inevitable political "editorial," without which no American newspaper, however small, would be complete in its editor's eyes, although it is rarely read. In a short space of time other country editors followed Kellogg's example, and the Madison daily was printing newspapers for thirty different Wisconsin papers on one side of the sheet. The enterprise grew, Kellogg directed his entire attention to it, and ended by founding a business which to-day prints two thousand different sets or editions of patent insides.

At one time the same formes were used for hundreds of papers, only the titles, headings, etc., being changed to suit each customer. But now the editors of the *Oasis* and the *Hustler* have at least a hundred different styles of paper to select from. As to the cost, the editor pays hardly more than what the blank paper is worth, for the ready-print companies derive their profit from the advertisements, for which they reserve several columns of space. These country papers are usually sold in "bundles" of nine hundred and sixty copies, but the circulation may not be one-half of that figure.

We have seen that editing is a precarious livelihood, yet the editor manages to get along somehow. I have seen it publicly stated that there are four classes of men who usually own these small papers: farmers' sons who are too good for farming and not quite

good enough to do nothing; school-teachers; lawyers who have made a failure of the law; and professional printers who have "worked their way"—these last two by far the most numerous class. They derive their chief profits from advertisements, for it is a point of honour with the local bankers, storekeepers, implement dealers, lawyers, doctors, liverymen, and blacksmiths to advertise in the local paper. Then there is the annual, and occasionally the semi-annual, circus advertisement, which may bring in as much as a hundred dollars, "if a picture of the elephant is thrown in." In the cattle-raising districts, as in Arizona, the different cattle-brands fill up a large part of the paper, as in the case of the *Tombstone Epitaph*. But besides the patent "inside," the editor of the little paper has another convenient expedient for filling up his columns. He can buy stereotype plates—that is, columns of interesting matter in thin sheets. These are made to fit metal bases with which he is supplied, and which he keeps in stock. Plates and bases being "type high," or level with the type of the newspaper, are cheap to send by rail, and being furnished to hundreds of other journals are of far higher literary character than the editor could turn out himself for treble cost.

I have said little of illustrated journalism in the Far West; but, as the accompanying reproduction humorously suggests, it is—inexpensive. And it may also betray the fount whence the authors of that amusing brochure, "Wisdom While You Wait," drew some, at least, of their inspiration.

PHENIX'S PICTORIAL, And Second Story Front Room Companion. Vol. I] San Diego, October 1, 1853 [No. 1 Mansion of John Phoenix, Esq., San Diego, California House in which Shakespeare was born, in Stratford-on-Avon

The Red Counter.

By L. J. BEESTON.

I.

V

Érin gathered up from the table the papers which his captain pushed toward him. He said, moodily:—

"I am surprised at *you*. We shall all be killed while you are making love here. You may be very emotional, but you will have to tell that to the German advanced guard."

Nicolas La Hire rose and took his sabre from a chair in this, the best room of the *auberge*. He was commanding a scattered remnant of cuirassiers who were shadowed by a Prussian force. It was his intention to join the main body, but not only were there many obstacles in the way, but he had fallen very desperately in love with Rachel Nay, the sweetest and prettiest girl in Orgemont. He replied—by no means offended by the familiarity of his officer, for whom he had the greatest friendship:—

"You are needlessly alarmed. Besides, love speaks louder than a bugle-call."

"LOVE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN A BUGLE-CALL."

"But not so loud as a bomb, and that is what we shall get very soon. I am not afraid—I; but there is a time for making love and a time for making war. Then, consider your family. A farmer's pretty daughter is no match for a La Hire. And in any case you will not get her, for she is promised to that rascal Simon Mansart, who lives in the chateau on the hill yonder"; and V é érin pointed through the unshuttered window, across the village, where the cottages bore a covering of snow, and the frozen road, to where a clump of acacias crowned an eminence.

"That is what troubles me," answered La Hire, beginning to pace the room. "If she is married to that man, whom she detests and fears—to that miser, that creature——!" he broke off suddenly, then continued: "It is a burning shame that this pure girl, this sweet Rachel, this wild-flower——!"

"Oh, come," interrupted V é érin, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously, "if you are going to dilate in that strain——"

"Silence!" shouted La Hire; "you go too far." He muttered, in an undertone, "I cannot leave her, loving her as I do, loving me as she does, for I greatly fear that this vulture Mansart will be too strong for me when I am gone."

"Then visit him," said V é érin. "Have you not a sword to threaten with? Better still, have you not gold to offer? That will persuade him, if anything can."

La Hire thought for a moment; then he said, "That is not at all a bad idea. I will go now.... We will leave to-night. You will give the word. Laporte is moving on Besançon, which is in a state of siege. We really ought to join him three leagues from here, if only these confounded Prussians will let us alone." He went out, murmuring, "I must see Rachel before I go."

"You hear what I say, Monsieur Mansart?" thundered La Hire.

Simon did not reply, nor did his eyes fail before the stern gaze of the captain of cuirassiers. A crafty smile touched the corners of his thin lips, and he stroked with either hand the heads of two immense mastiffs that crouched on the floor by his side.

"Mademoiselle Rachel Nay does not need your attentions. You will not molest or annoy her in any way. Your gold, which, if report says true, you have spent your life in wringing from whom you can, cannot buy a woman's heart, and hers is pledged to me."

Simon smiled still more craftily. He knew that his parsimony had made him notorious; he knew that the widow and the fatherless had little cause to love him. His heart had shrunk in the grip of his miserly instincts. But he was not afraid as he answered:—

"I shall take my own course, monsieur. Who are you to dictate to me? I care not for your clanking spurs, your fierce looks. I have influence with Mademoiselle Rachel's parents, who are very poor, and I shall use it to the uttermost. I pit my gold against your handsome face and swaggering manner. We will see who will win."

"Listen!" said Nicolas, in a voice hoarse with anger. "I will descend to make terms with you, though, *mon Dieu!* there is little reason why I should. Since money is as vital breath to you, I offer you five thousand francs if you will withdraw your suit."

"I refuse."

"Ten thousand, then?"

Mansart laughed and snapped his dry fingers.

"Come, I offer you fifteen thousand francs, and not a sou further will I go."

Simon was visibly moved, and his hands rested nervously upon the heads of his

great curs; but he controlled the rising temptation and answered, bitterly:—

"It is clear that you fear me or you would not make such overtures. I decline your offer."

"Think well! I will never yield this girl."

"That is unfortunate, for I certainly intend to win her."

"Be careful!" said La Hire, in such a terrible voice that the mastiffs growled and bared their teeth.

And instinctively, though he meant nothing, his hand groped at the hilt of his sabre.

Mansart half rose from his chair. "You forget my dogs," he snarled.

"And you forget the Prussians, who cannot be far off," replied the other; and when he perceived that the warning had a distinct effect he followed up his advantage. "You will have to take care of yourself here, monsieur, and yet greater care of your gold. I warn you that a Prussian force is shadowing us, so that they will almost certainly take this direction, if that is comforting for you to know."

Mansart turned pale.

"And as they have a couple of field-pieces, you may expect a display, by Jove!"

He had scarcely spoken the words when a deep sound, a heavy thud, which appeared to come from a long distance, startled him.

"Malediction! A gun!" exclaimed the captain.

He had scarcely spoken when a second and much sharper report sounded. The shell had burst. Faint shouting came from below in the village.

"The 'Blues' have come after all," said La Hire, and he went out.

Looking northward he saw a tiny cloud drifting across the stars. It was the smoke from the cannon which had been discharged. In that direction a ridge broke the flatness of the fields, that were buried under a sheet of ice. He muttered to himself:—

"They are there, on the escarpment. They will put a few shells into the village and turn us out, and we must retreat—as usual. I do not care if I can withdraw them from Orgemont." His eyes grew tender; he was thinking of Rachel.

"Are they here—these Germans?" asked a fearful voice at his elbow.

Mansart also had quitted the house. That note of war, which was the first he had ever heard, had terrified him.

"You may be sure of it," said the other, laughing. "And it is to be hoped that you have some good things in your larder, for if these Prussians visit you you will find that they have the stomachs of wolves."

A bugle sounded.

"They will be expecting me," murmured La Hire.

It was frightfully cold. The air, like the earth, seemed frozen, biting the lungs and making it difficult to breathe. The swaying branches of the trees in the garden appeared to be trying to obtain a little warmth by the exercise. The final crescent of the moon had risen, and her pale gleam upon the fields seemed to have become petrified also with the cold, and permanent.

La Hire had no sooner made up his mind to move than a red flame glowed on the summit of the escarpment, and passed. It was quickly followed by a second heavy thud—the report of a six-pounder field-gun. A bright light appeared upon the sky, moving swiftly.

Something uttered a wail; something rushed amongst the acacia trees in the garden, flinging down branches and tearing up earth. There was a splitting report, sheeted flame, a terrible cry.

The night closed down as before, scarcely disturbed by that burst of passion.

La Hire relaxed his grip of the garden soil. He lifted his face, which was covered with earth.

"*Ciel!* I thought I was done for," he muttered.

He rose from the prostrate position into which he had flung himself, and looked around with eyes that were still dazed by the explosion.

"Simon—Simon Mansart! Are you still alive?" he called.

A loud burst of derisive laughter came from one of the lower windows of the house.

"Go! The Prussians are waiting for you!" cried Mansart.

La Hire shrugged his shoulders, then stepped briskly from the garden to where an orderly waited with his horse.

And as he rode away he felt his love swell and rise in his heart, and a mad longing to see Rachel once more gripped him; to feel on his lips the soft touch of her lips, and round his neck the clinging fingers once clasped there. And this wave of passion that ran through his veins seemed to unstring his nerves, weaken his purpose, and cast a mist of love over his courage.

He found V á érin waiting impatiently for his appearance; and he led his men south*-ward, tempting the Prussians and drawing them from the village.

II.

Weeks passed. The battles with the Germans, that were scarring the land and so many hearts, only threatened Orgemont.

Now Simon Mansart lay very ill, and it was said that he was dying. At a late hour that night Rachel received a letter. It was from Mansart, and ran as follows:—

"Rachel,—I am very ill, and have but a few more hours to live. Will you wed me, dying? This is a strange request; but if for one brief hour I might call you wife it should not make you sad, and it would give me happiness.... I have a considerable sum of money with me in this house, which represents the greater part of my fortune. I am anxious that you should possess this when I am gone. I have papers drawn up making over to you the whole of this sum. Only your signature is needed and all becomes yours, even while I live. I would have it so, fearing that you might say, 'If he should not die after all!' In any case you will be rich. But have no fears; I am sinking, and can scarcely hold this pen. Rachel, you have scorned my offer of marriage; at any rate you cannot scorn me now. Let me call you wife; let me hold your hand for my final but sweetest hour.—Simon Mansart."

Old Joseph Nay, when this letter was read to him, slapped his shrunken thighs. "And I wished, when you were born, that you had been a boy!" cried he. "What a piece of fortune this is! At last I hope you will show some sense. Quick, and get ready. I will take you round in the cart. It is a frightful night, but one does not get a fortune every day on such terms. Then one must respect the request of a man who is dying." And he went out, adding to himself, "We are so poor that this is nothing less than a godsend."

Rachel had turned very pale. She had greatly feared Mansart living; now, at his

last moments, he still threatened her peace. Seeing marriage only in the holy light it has for lovers, she shrank from this thing.

A month passed.

One day the hamlet was thrown into a state of excitement.

A horseman came dashing bravely up the rough, snow covered road. He was a splendid figure. He wore a steel helmet with streaming plumes, a glittering cuirass, red breeches, and immense boots to his knees. A sabre leaped at his side, and foam flew from the red jaws of his magnificent horse. His bronzed face carried a formidable scar, that added to the fierceness of his appearance. He reined in his charger with a most telling effect.

"Where is Mademoiselle Rachel Nay?" he demanded.

They brought her to him. He sprang off his horse, removed his helmet, which he placed in the bend of his left arm, and bowed with gallantry, while his eyes showed his appreciation of the girl's beauty. He was Philippe V é érin.

"I have come for you, mademoiselle," said he, trying to soften his voice, that had been roughened in the war.

The blood crept from Rachel's cheeks.

"And with a message from Nicolas La Hire, who is my friend. He is wounded—ah! pardon my stupidity, I am too abrupt; the hurt is not much, but enough to prevent his coming for you. *Mon Dieu!*—do not look so frightened, my pretty one; I have the best of news—news to bring the blood again to those smooth cheeks. Listen! We ambushed a whole host of Prussians, and we cut them to pieces. La Hire was equal to any two of us. The colonel vowed he would give him whatever he asked for. 'Then send,' said Nicolas, 'to Orgemont, which is three leagues from here, and fetch my sweetheart to me, that I may kiss her lips.'

"We cheered him, mademoiselle, for it appealed to our hearts and made us think of the women whose love is ours, and who are waiting for us. 'It shall be done,' said the colonel, 'and you shall wed her, La Hire, if that be your present wish. Then she can return to her parents to wait for you until we have finished the war.'

"This is my errand, pretty one. I have come to fetch you. Ah! you are paler than before. Courage! You shall have such a wedding that every woman in France shall envy you. The church bells will peal while our sentries guard the roads, the guns will salute you, and each breast that a cuirass hides will swell with the cheers that we shall give you. My sword, why am I not Nicolas La Hire! "

Rachel tried to speak, but there was such a weight upon her heart that the words she would have uttered stopped in her throat. At length she said, faintly: "I—I cannot go: it is impossible."

The trooper laughed outright. "*Pardonnez moi,*" he cried, "I said that I have come for you, and without you I dare not return, or I should be compelled to fight my regiment, one by one. Mademoiselle, you will obtain a horse, and you will accompany me; that is as certain as my name is Philippe V é érin." He twisted his moustache, and a flash almost of menace sparkled in his black eyes.

They were without old Joseph's cottage as they spoke, and Rachel drew V é érin in, closing the door against the little crowd of villagers, who turned their attention to the trooper's charger. She said, in a heart-broken voice:—

"Nevertheless, I cannot accompany you. I am married already; I am another man's

wife."

"I AM MARRIED ALREADY."

The trooper gave back a step; then he laughed harshly—a contemptuous laugh.

"Oh, oh!" said he, shrugging his shoulders, "that is a different matter. All the same, it is bad, bad news for La Hire," and he moved toward the door.

"Stay!" said the girl, flushing hotly at his derisive tone. "I have a message in return for yours. Will you tell Nicolas that, though he must come no more to Orgemont, though he must not see me again, I am wife in name only. Maiden I am still, before God, and, for Nicolas's sake, shall always remain so. You will tell him, monsieur, that he had been gone but a few weeks when Simon Mansart——"

"Ah!" interrupted V á érin, "I have heard about him."

"——when Simon Mansart fell ill. At the point of death (so it seemed to all of us) he besought me to wed him, for he loves me almost as much as he loves his gold. And he offered me in return all his money that is hid in his house. I refused. It was pointed out to me that Monsieur Mansart had no one to whom to leave the wealth which he had accumulated, but he asked nothing better than to leave it to me if I would grant him one brief hour in which to call me wife, that, holding my hand, he might pass the last great barrier. I refused again. Then they made it clear to me that certain papers only wanted my signature, and even while Monsieur Mansart lived his wealth became mine—so certain was he that he could not recover. Again I declined this offer. I was told that I should hold sacred the prayer of one who loved me and was dying; that it would not be only right, but an act of nobleness to render his end peaceful and happy. Still I refused."

"Ah! Yet you yielded!" sighed V á érin, moved to his heart by a tear that was trickling down one of the soft brown cheeks.

"For my parents' sake. They had their way at last. They are very poor; the war has tried us greatly. Against my heart, against my conscience, I said 'yes.' That night I signed the papers and was wedded to Monsieur Mansart; that night he held my hand as I sat by his couch, and he looked into my eyes with a terrible gaze of love."

"And he lived? My sword! I could swear he was not so ill as he said. The cunning rascal!"

"It was God's will. I have not seen him since then, and will not.... You will tell Nicolas all this, monsieur; and you will give him these papers and ask him to destroy them, lest he should say, 'Rachel married this man for the money.' I thought at first that I would send them back to Monsieur Mansart, for you may be sure I shall not touch this money that has come between Nicolas and me. And you will tell him that he must not grieve for me, because I am not worthy of his remembrance."

"And I shall tell him that you love him still. Is it not so, mademoiselle?" said V á érin, huskily.

"Yes, yes!" Rachel answered, struggling with her rising tears. She caught the trooper by the arm, clasping his great muscles with her two hands, and her breath fanned his face. "Tell him that—that I love him as much as—as I despise myself; that my heart, which I gave to him, must always be his; that all my thoughts are of him, are with him wherever he goes. And you may tell him, monsieur, if you like, that my heart is breaking—no, no; you must not say that! He would come to see me, and he must not. Oh,

mon Dieu!"

The clinging fingers tightened round the soldier's arm; the voice broke off into a sob. V é érin's eyes were wet. He blinked fiercely.

"Take him my message. Tell him all this. But you cannot, wanting my voice and my eyes, in which he used to read every thought. Yet you will remember how I looked and what I said. And you will tell Nicolas that I love him as he taught me to, that without him all the world has grown dark, and that I shall love him until I die!"

The trooper caught her to him, for he felt that she was falling. Rachel controlled herself by a strong effort, and she pushed him gently toward the door. V é érin turned to give one last look at that supplicating figure, with the dishevelled hair in sweet confusion about the tear-stained face; then he went out. He muttered, in a voice that he might not have known as his own:

Peste! It seems to me that this Simon Mansart is very much in the way!"

III.

On the evening of that day Simon Mansart was sitting alone before a handful of fire when he heard his big dogs barking with anger. As the disturbance continued he went to the door, and he thought he perceived without, in the black night, a blacker shadow beyond the gate.

"Will you call off your lambs?" shouted a voice.

"Who are you? And what do you want?" cried Mansart, always terribly suspicious of strangers, and especially those who arrived after dusk.

"You do not know me, but I have come on your business."

"Then you will come again when it is daylight, my friend," and he began to close the door.

"Very well," was the immediate reply. "I am determined to see you now, and if your dogs attempt to stop me they must take the consequences."

Simon laughed incredulously; but when he heard the iron gate scream on its rusty hinges, and when he heard the growls of the dogs, he exclaimed, vehemently, "Take care! You will be torn to pieces!"

"I shall at least kill one of your dogs first," was the determined reply.

"Stop! I will call them off," said Mansart, who would never have yielded had he the smallest doubt of the other's resolution. He whistled his great curs off; but he was sorry that he had done so when he perceived his visitor, who was a French trooper, swaggering and fierce, and who could have crushed Mansart in his strong arms.

"May I come in?" said he, and he advanced so persistently that the other was compelled to retreat before him. He closed the door and stood before it—tall, erect, commanding.

"Your errand, monsieur?" demanded Simon, trembling with rage, yet afraid.

"How dark it is in here! And what a little fire for so cold a night!"

"We do not need light to talk by, and I am warm enough."

"And poor enough. Is it not so? It is about that that I have come."

Mansart grew more polite. He had signed away a fortune to a girl who loathed him. When peace should come the courts would make good her claim. So that any overture, any compromise, was welcome.

"MY NAME IS PHILLIPE VÉTÉRIN," SAID THE CUIRASSIER.

"My name is Philippe V é t é r i n," said the cuirassier, folding his arms with their gauntleted hands, and fixing a stern look upon Mansart. "Captain Nicolas La Hire is my friend."

"And my enemy," muttered Simon, his deep-set eyes flashing.

"I have come to Orgemot on his behalf."

"Ah! Is he wounded?"

"He is."

Mansart rubbed his hands together.

"But not badly. Unless you are going to listen to me, I think it likely that La Hire will pay you a visit one of these days."

Simon sank uneasily into his chair. "What has this to do with me?" he demanded. "And how is it that you are here?"

V é t é r i n went on steadily. "I am here with a message for Mademoiselle Rachel Nay, that sweet girl——"

"That name is hers no longer. Also you will keep your compliments until I ask for them," interrupted the other, savagely.

"You are her husband; that is true enough. To you I bear a message also. Yet I can scarcely call it that, since what I am about to propose to you is entirely an idea of my own, and which I should like to mention in the interests of my friend Monsieur Nicolas La Hire. It is of a most unusual nature. Here it is. Rachel married you believing that you were at Death's door. But the door wouldn't open. Good for you, bad for her, bad for Nicolas, whom she loves. Now, La Hire loves this girl; she is as indispensable to his happiness as your money is to yours. Mark that."

There was a pause. Then Mansart said, "What do you mean?"

"That I have come to offer to restore to you these papers, which represent the fortune which you have bestowed upon your wife. Ah! not so quick. There is one condition attached. You must release this girl."

A terrible light of joy leaped into Simon's face, but it died away instantly. "The thing is impossible," he said. "She is my wife; we were lawfully wedded, remember. How, then, can I release her? How can she be wedded to another?"

"Yet La Hire has sworn that only as her husband will he kiss the lips of his love again."

"But, monsieur, how can it be? See for yourself!"

V é t é r i n continued, imperturbably:—

"Certainly, if I restore to you these papers, which I am sure you would be glad to get back, that would scarcely break the bond between you and Rachel; yet I am about to yield them to you. It follows, then, that you will still call her your wife and enjoy your own as well? I am afraid that it does, but there is an 'if' in the case; for though I am perfectly willing to give you these papers, yet it is just possible that they may cost you your life."

"My life!"

"Precisely."

Mansart crouched back. "You are threatening me?" said he, hoarsely.

"By no means. Look here."

V é érin advanced to the table, upon which he emptied a handful of small counters. "There are thirteen of them," he said. "You will perceive that twelve of them are white and that the other is red. Will you count them?"

"Oh, I take your word for it."

"Yet you had better count for yourself. That is right. And now I will tell you my idea, which is so unusual and so dramatic that I rather pride myself upon it. I throw these ivory discs into my helmet and cover them with a handkerchief—so. And I ask you, if you are a man of courage, to raise one corner of the handkerchief and take out a single counter. If it be a white one—as is almost certain to be the case—I hand you the papers in my possession and I wish you good-night, enjoyment of your hoarded gold, and happiness with Rachel. But if it be the solitary red one—and that is extremely unlikely—then—then—if it be the red one, I say——"

The cuirassier broke off and regarded the other steadily. Mansart had turned livid. "Go on," he said, in a shaking voice; "why do you stop? If I should draw the red one—what then?"

V é érin shrugged his shoulders as he answered, "In that case I should ask you to fight with me."

"Ah! you would murder me!" said Simon, recoiling.

"Pardon, I have *two* pistols here. It would be fair fighting."

"It is horrible, monstrous! I will not listen to you."

"Almost as terrible as wedding a maid whose soul has been given to another; almost as monstrous as coming eternally between two hearts that beat for each other," was the stern response.

"I tell you that I will not hear of it," repeated Mansart, frantically.

"Then you will be a great fool. I wish I stood in your shoes. The chances of life are twelve; of death, one. And even then it will be fair fighting—though, by my sword, I shall do my best to kill you. Consider. But a moment separates you from your wealth. Come, it might have been over and forgotten by now."

"Monsieur, if you are a gentleman, if you entertain toward me no sinister intent, you will leave my house at once."

"Very well, I will go," said V é érin, and he moved toward the door. He opened it and was about to pass out when the querulous voice of Simon called to him again.

"Well?"

"The chances in my favour are not sufficient."

"What a coward it is!"

"Add six more to the number and I will agree."

The trooper laughed and tossed half-a-dozen more of the white discs into his helmet. "There you are," he said. "Take one; you are perfectly safe."

"Shake them well together," whispered Mansart, who appeared to be almost fainting with the excitement of this terrible gamble.

Then he put his hand under the handkerchief and into the steel casque. He withdrew it slowly. The trooper snatched away his helmet to prevent any trick, and Simon looked at the disc which his fingers held.

It was the red one!

"HE REMAINED GAZING FIXEDLY AT THAT SYMBOL OF DEATH."

And he began to mutter; inarticulate words, such as one may use under the spell of some strangling dream. He remained gazing fixedly at that symbol of death. A rush of blood mounted to his forehead, swelling the veins, then as quickly died away, leaving him pallid.

"Ah!" said V é érin, "how unfortunate for you!"

Mansart retreated a few steps, crouching back like a wild beast that has received a wound, which simulates an approaching end, and which holds its remaining strength together waiting for its destroyer to draw near.

"You must acknowledge that it does not look like chance," went on V é érin, who was cool as ice. "Eighteen to one! *Ma foi*, it is astonishing." He placed two pistols upon the table.

"Come, monsieur," he exclaimed, suddenly, in a hard, rasping voice. "You will play the man, will you not?"

Mansart appeared unable to reply; perhaps he could not. His look was steadily directed upon the trooper, whose slightest movement he observed with the most intense anxiety.

V é érin examined the pistols, while he threw more than one furtive glance at the other's passionless face. He pushed a pistol toward Simon. "I think you had better defend yourself," he said. "I am going to hold you to your word," and he stepped back, raising his own weapon.

"Stop!" exclaimed Mansart, in a choked voice. "We do not fight on equal terms."

"What do you mean?"

"You are skilled in the use of your weapon, while I——"

"That is easily remedied." V é érin suddenly extinguished the candle. He called out, "Take care! I shall fire at the first opportunity."

A nebulous red glow came from the nearly-burned log in the grate and shone upon the farther side of the apartment. Both men had retreated into the shadow; both waited.

There was a profound silence, broken occasionally by whispering sounds from the log that pulsated, red and grey, as the draught fanned it. V é érin was scarcely breathing; his straining eyes peered into the dark, seeking to detect the form of Simon Mansart. He listened intently. Not the faintest sound was audible. Suddenly he believed that he perceived a black object but a few feet from him. Surely that was Mansart.

The cuirassier lifted his pistol and aimed at the centre of that indistinct form; yet his finger did not press the trigger. Instead he gradually lowered the weapon.

"What is the matter with my nerves?" he thought.

He remained standing in a rigid posture, undecided. "Why not?" he asked himself again. "It is fair fighting. *Ma foi*, I have done worse things."

Another minute passed. V é érin sighed deeply. "I cannot do it," he muttered; "not even for you, Nicolas." Then he called out aloud:—

"Light the candle; I shall do you no harm."

No answer.

"You need not fear me," repeated the trooper.

Still no reply.

"If I move he will shoot at me," thought V á érin. Nevertheless, he advanced in the direction of the table and groped about for the candlestick. He found it, went to the fire, and held the coarse wick against the log. All the time he did not remove his eyes for an instant from that black something which he believed to be Mansart. The candle smoked, glowed, then broke into a flame. The trooper had made a mistake; he perceived that the shadowy object was a chair merely.

V á érin spun round, expecting a pistol-ball and extending his weapon. A low cry escaped him at the sight which met his eyes.

"A LOW CRY ESCAPED HIM AT THE SIGHT WHICH MET HIS EYES."

Simon Mansart, crouched in an angle of the room, held with dead fingers his undischarged pistol, looked with dead eyes at the flaring light. The excitement of the gamble and terror of this unfought duel had stopped his heart.

V á érin crossed himself. "God judge me! I did it for Nicolas's sake," he said. He crossed to the grate and pushed some papers into the embers.

And all at once there came upon him a sudden fear which sent him running from the house. The sharp air and a strong effort of self-control gave him his wits again. For a moment he halted to look back at the ch âteau, with its unlighted windows and dead aspect; and he said aloud, as if concluding an unspoken thought:—

"——and they will be married when the war is over."

**A MEETING OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL WAR GAME SOCIETY
IN THE NELSON ROOM AT THE "GEORGE", PORTSMOUTH.**

The Naval War Game and How it is Played.

By Angus Sherlock.

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(Note.—This is the only popular article that has ever appeared on the Naval War Game, though it is played in every navy in the world. The subject is of some special interest just at present, because both the Japanese and Russian navies trained on it for the present war. Proofs of the article have been submitted to the inventor, who himself selected the illustrations.)

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FROM time to time one reads in the technical naval Press brief references to, or fixtures for, the Naval War Game. At rare intervals a "war-game battle" will be found described at length in some of the Service journals, but beyond this it is safe to say that the game is a mystery to the general public. The reason is, in part, that it touches technical questions that are caviare to the million, but as much, or more so, it is mysterious on account of the secrecy with which many of its details are guarded. It is

open to the public to purchase the "game," it is true, but, though the material and plenty of directions can thus be secured, it is by now well enough known that many unpublished "confidential" rules exist.

These, it may be noted, differ in every navy. The problems of naval warfare and the ideals of facing them are not the same for a Russian as for an American, and Sweden and the Argentine Republic again have nothing in common in their naval aspirations. However, were I in a position to divulge these matters they would not be of any great interest to readers of *The Strand Magazine*, so I propose to confine myself as much as possible to things in which the human interest is the dominant factor.

First, however, some description of the game and its invention may be of interest. The naval war game reached its fruition some five years ago, but Mr. Fred. T. Jane, its inventor, always asserts that he began to think it out when he was a small boy at school.

"When I was a small boy," said Mr. Jane, "I had the boat sailing craze. A school-fellow had a better boat than I; I mounted a gun in mine and committed an act of piracy on a duck-pond. My chum was a sportsman, and, after punching my head, proceeded to arm his ship also. We took to armour-plates made from biscuit-tins, and to squadrons instead of single ships. In the battle that ensued our fleets annihilated each other, and depleted finances forbade their renewal. Then it was that the economy born of necessity caused me to think that make-believe battles would be cheaper. Thus was the naval war game evolved in embryo. At first we fought with imaginary leviathans, but after a time such impossible vessels were claimed that we decided to simulate nothing but existing ships.

"A year or so later I read in some newspaper that a fortune awaited the man who could invent something that could be applied to ships as the land *Kriegspiel* to armies. I thought I could do with that fortune, so packed the game in an empty Australian beef-tin and sent it to the Admiralty, together with a letter in which the following magnificent sentence occurred: 'I shall not be above accepting financial remuneration, and for convenience this can be paid in instalments.'

"In due course 'My Lords' returned the game with thanks. They had 'inspected it with much interest,' they said.

"Somehow I doubt it. After the lapse of many years I still remember vividly the smell of that old meat-tin in which the game was sent to them.

"My next step was one which is, I believe, chronic with disappointed inventors. I wrote letters to the newspapers attacking Admiralty policy in general, with a view to making the callous authorities tremble! I never witnessed the trembling, but as out of this campaign I grew into what is called a 'naval expert,' I suppose I owe the Admiralty a debt of gratitude! However, that is another story.

"Meanwhile, war game languished, till some seven years ago it was found by accident in a lumber-room. Even then it was resuscitated only as a toy. I used to take it to the *Majestic*, and it was played there very much *à la* ping-pong, till one day the captain, Prince Louis of Battenberg, asked about it, and wished to see the rules.

"Feeling somewhat of a fraud," says Mr. Jane, "I hastily recast the thing into its original serious mould, plus a variety of improvements that occurred to me, or were suggested by various naval friends.

"The game was then played in the *Majestic* once more, and 'caught on.' To my astonishment I was deluged with letters asking about the game. The first came from the

Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, the Czar's brother-in-law, who, with that absence of 'side' so characteristic of the Romanoffs, wrote himself as a naval officer. He had, he told me, himself invented a naval war game, the strategical part of which was successful, but the tactical not what he had hoped for it. If mine were satisfactory, he would do all he could for it.

"That is how the game came to have its Imperial and Royal 'godfathers,' as announced on the title-page. Royal sailors are usually regarded as mere ornamental dummies, but both the Grand Duke Alexander and Prince Louis of Battenberg were responsible for many excellent improvements in the game, for which I, perhaps, have received the credit.

"There were two other godfathers—Rear-Admiral H. J. May, of the British Navy, and Captain Kawashima, of the Japanese Navy. The former expended endless labour in revising the rules; the latter it was who played with me all the early experimental games to test the rules, and alter them when necessary to make practice as simple as possible. We used to fight little one-man 'wars,' beginning at about ten in the morning and carrying on till after midnight. Captain Kawashima is now in command of the *Matsushima* (the famous cruiser that was flagship at Yalu in the Chino-Japanese War), and when I remember the painstaking enthusiasm he used to put into the 'wars' he and I had, I think that he will go far in the present war.

"A lecture at the United Service Institution followed the *Majestic* battle, and thus the game 'took root.' It is in every navy in the world now."

About this time a foreign Government approached the inventor with a view to purchasing the game and its secret. The offer was declined, but Mr. Jane gave a similar option to the British Admiralty, which, however, made no reply whatever beyond an official acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter. Perhaps, like Mr. Jane, the Permanent Secretary remembered the old meat-tin!

After an interval the game was produced—the very first set to be sold being secured by, of all people, the Chinese! This particular set later on helped to make history; indeed, it has been seriously surmised that it caused the Chinese attack on the allied fleets at Taku. After that affair a British landing party found the ground inside one fort littered with war-game models, each model ship being stuck full of pins. The leader of the party being a war-game player followed up his find, to discover a shed laid out for naval war game and "scorers"[1] of all the allied fleets in various stages of destruction!

[1] For particulars of "scorers" see later.] The Chinese had apparently worked out things by war game before opening fire. They had, however, made one little mistake—they had made no allowance for the allied fleet firing back!

Following China, the United States, Germany, Russia, and Japan secured early sets, and a little while afterwards the British War Office. That much-abused department was, curiously enough, the very first to recognise the utility of the game for the chief purpose its inventor designed it for—the teaching of the guns and armour of possible enemies. It was procured for the use of artillery officers in sea forts, and in his last report Lord Roberts emphasized the vast difference between those officers who had played the game and those who had not. The former knew the weak points of every possible enemy; the latter, on hearing the name of any ship, could not tell whether she were a battleship or gunboat, dangerous or harmless. Every War Office has since followed suit in adopting the "Kindergarten war system."

A STANDARD NORWEGIAN NAVAL WAR-GAME SET.

From a Photo. by Symonds & Co.

And now for some account of how the game is played. A large table is the primary requisite. This is covered with blue cards divided into a multitude of little squares, each of which represents half a cable—that is to say, a hundred yards. Over these squares are moved the pieces—model ships on the same scale as the board.

These models are a most important part of the game. They are made of cork, painted, and most accurate representations of actual ships; and this they need to be, for the players have to recognise them. Each model is fitted with tiny guns—little bits of wire set in at various angles which indicate the arcs of training of the corresponding guns in the real ships, while long pins mark the bearings of the torpedo tubes. Other pins, fitted with delicate little military tops, make the masts; and, to digress a moment, hereby hangs a tale.

One of the earliest experimenters with the naval war game was the ubiquitous Kaiser. He took to it keenly, and himself played it often with his admirals. One day, so runs the story in the German Navy, the Kaiser was winning hand over fist, his fleet, led by his flagship, bearing down upon the enemy. Excitement was high, when at the critical moment the Kaiser's fleet suddenly disappeared!

The Kaiser gazed at the deserted board and then at his admirals. An "awkward pause" is said to have ensued, and the writer for one can quite believe that. It is undoubtedly an awkward thing to seem to have played tricks with an Emperor so as to cheat him out of victory.

"Where is my fleet?" asked the Kaiser.

"I do not know, sire," exclaimed his chief opponent, a famous admiral.

He saluted as he spoke, and thereupon there fell to the floor, apparently from down the admiral's sleeve, three of the missing warships! What the admiral felt is better imagined than described.

Fortunately for his reputation one model still remained stuck in his sleeve. In moving his own ships he had rested his arm on the Kaiser's vessels, and so lifted the lot unawares. All's well that ends well, and the Kaiser laughed most heartily; but there is an admiral in the German fleet whom it is in no way wise to talk to about naval war game.

However, this admiral is not the only one who has met misadventure from war-game models, no less a person than the Japanese Admiral Togo heading the list of those who have had "naval war-game hand"—the result of inadvertently leaning on the masts of a model ship!

To resume the description. Every player has assigned to him a particular ship, and this he moves simultaneously with all the others at the direction of his "admiral." Each move nominally occupies a minute of time—actually it usually takes more, and it is in the ways and means adopted to balance this that most of the confidential rules exist. A most essential part of the game is to counterfeit with all possible realism the hurry-scurry of an actual battle.

A NAVAL WAR-GAME TARGET—ACTUAL SIZE.

The distance moved depends, of course, upon the speed of the ship represented. A flier like H.M.S. *Drake*, for instance, can cover as many as eight squares should full speed be ordered. This means eight hundred yards a minute—equivalent, approximately, to a speed of twenty-four knots per hour. In actual practice the ships do not move by squares, else a vessel proceeding along the diagonals would go much faster than one moving straight across; the squares merely exist to afford a rough means of guessing the range. Special measures are, therefore, employed.

Innumerable rules cover such matters as increasing and decreasing speed, turning, and so forth. General conventions exist, but in actual practice the real turning circles of ships are alone made—and here, of course, confidential features are thick. The inventor of the game is probably the repository of more secrets in this respect than three of the best Naval Intelligence Departments of Europe put together.

At the end of each "minute" more firing takes place. This is the characteristic feature of the game. Each player has a card with a plan of his ship showing guns, armour, etc., and divided into arbitrary vertical sections of twenty-five feet each. This card is known technically as a "scorer." Pictures of each ship, similarly divided, but showing no armour, and of different sizes for different ranges, are also provided. These are the "targets."

They are struck at by "strickers," which at first sight are rather like ping-pong bats with a pin in them.[2] This pin is nearly, but never quite, in the centre of the striker. To ensure hitting any particular part of a ship is, therefore, practically impossible, except at close range, and not very often then. Nice calculation is required, and also great coolness—too great effort after accuracy being usually as fatal as too little. Thus, by automatic means, that great factor of modern warfare, "moral effect," is provided for, since experience shows that no player whose ship has been badly knocked about ever hurts the enemy very much. One strike per gun is allowed; with reduced gun-fire he feels his chances of hitting reduced, and tries harder to make the most of what he has got, and the slight excitement, coupled with the extra effort that he makes, invariably disconcerts his aim.

[2] "Strickers" will be seen on the table and in the hands of players in the big picture of a war game. **"SCORER" FOR H.M.S. "KING EDWARD VII."**

To some extent the excitement of a battle always does this. When the game was first exhibited at the Royal United Service Institution, a certain admiral urged as a weak point in the shooting system that he could hit the enemy every time. He took a target and did it. Yet in the battle that ensued he never scored a single hit—the slight extra tension upset his aim completely. And it is astonishing how many misses are made by many players from this cause.

THE SAME "SCORER" AFTER A BATTLE IN WHICH THE SHIP WAS KNOCKED ABOUT. THE DAMAGES HAVE BEEN SCORED ACCORDING TO HITS RECEIVED ON "TARGETS."

Hitting the enemy is, however, but half the battle. If the ship fired at is armoured

the impact may be on a cuirass that the gun represented cannot get through, or an armour-piercing shot may hit a part where no armour exists, and so do next to no harm. When harm is done it is scored on the card of the ship hit on a scale corresponding to the actual damage that would be inflicted. In a very little while the player realizes that what will put one ship out of action will hardly hurt another. This in theory he has, of course, always known, but between knowing a thing and fully realizing it there is an enormous gap. He has been firing, perhaps, at the German *Kaiser Friedrich* and blown her to pieces almost with big shell. He shifts his fire to the *Wittelsbach*, hits her as often, and she comes on unhurt. These two ships have the same armament and the same weight of armour—it is merely differently disposed. That difference of disposition tells in naval war game as heavily as it would in actual war.

In this little piece of realism lies the fascination of the game. That it has extraordinary fascinations for some naval officers is beyond dispute. The Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, for instance, had all the furniture turned out of the big drawing-room at the Xenia Palace, St. Petersburg, in order to have set up a table large enough to allow huge fleets to be manœuvred, and he invited the inventor over to stay with him at St. Petersburg for a month in order to play against him. In a Russian lunatic asylum there is at this day a captain who actually went mad on the game and spends his existence in perpetual imaginary battles. In the British Navy there are dozens of young officers who think nothing of playing a game from half-past eight on to four in the morning, taking their chances of being able to find a shore-boat to take them back to their ships at that hour in the depth of winter. I have seen battles often in which the opposing sides would not speak to each other; indeed, when a regular "war" is being worked out this is the usual situation. It is being "real war in miniature" that produces this. The writer can vouch for the maddening effect in a battle of some apparently splendid scheme being ruined by a single "lucky shell" from the enemy. Too late one realizes that the best dispositions are not those that promise most, but those in which a lucky shot or two will not bring about failure.

Torpedoes, however, perhaps take first place as maddening irritants. In the game as now played in the British Navy, between each move screens are usually put up. The object of these is to prevent the enemy "answering" any change of formation more quickly than could be done in actual battle. Under cover of these screens torpedoes are fired—the firing method being to draw a pencil line following the bearing of the tube, firing not at the enemy, but at the spot on which he is *expected to be when the torpedo reaches him*. Torpedoes are slow things relatively. They can travel a thousand yards in a minute, but take three minutes to do two thousand yards, and six to go three thousand. Very nice calculation is, therefore, needed. At the expiration of the time—that is to say, anything from one to six moves after firing—if the torpedo line and any ship (friend or foe) coincide, the ship is torpedoed. Till then nothing has been said: the torpedo comes as a bolt from the blue.

The panic caused by the first torpedoes fired under this system was immense. Both fleets put about and rushed away from each other, never getting within torpedo range again. In the centre, between the fleet, lay the victim, which the umpire had notified as torpedoed. Not till the battle was over was it made known that the torpedoed vessel had been hit by a torpedo fired by one of her consorts, across the path of which she had unwittingly wandered!

The acme of horror in this direction is perhaps provided by submarines. Slow moving, they have more or less to take up their positions before the battle begins. It is not permitted me to describe exactly how they are worked. I may say, however, that they are manoeuvred on a separate board, and work blindly enough; for all that the player of a submarine sees of the battlefield is what he can find reflected in a tiny mirror. He has, in fine, to guess a great deal as to the course and distance of the enemy from the spot corresponding to that on which he is supposed to be, which reproduces the conditions under which a periscope is used fairly accurately. If a submarine can get within a square (one hundred yards) of a ship, that ship is allowed torpedoed. Nothing is allowed for the chance of the boat being seen by the ship, the assumption being that these chances are too small to be worth consideration; at any rate, till such time as it is too late for the ship to do anything.

This looks like an easy time for the submarine, but it is not so comfortable in reality, because destroyers and picket-boats may be with the enemy. Should a destroyer at any time pass within a hundred yards of the submarine, it is exit submarine!

In the British Navy the official home of the naval war game is at Greenwich Naval College, where captains play it during the "war course." In the United States the War College is its home. Its real British head-quarters are at Portsmouth, where a voluntary society plays it twice a week. Admiral Sir John Hopkins is the president of this association, and Mr. Fred. T. Jane, the inventor, its secretary. Both naval and military officers are eligible for membership, and, as far as possible, junior officers only. At the "war course" tactics are the principal study, but at Portsmouth tactics play a minor part. "Tactics cannot be taught by naval war game, save in a very general way," is the dictum of the inventor. "The Portsmouth Naval War-Game Society exists for quite different objects. It aims chiefly at teaching the guns and armour of possible enemies; and for the rest tries to train officers to think out war problems, to train them to think things quickly, and to exhibit resource, to learn the value of all the vital side issues of war, such as international law or the keeping up of communications, and so forth. There is no such thing as the abstract right or wrong move in war; to do a more or less wrong thing at once may often be better than doing a better thing a little later. 'Act' is the motto that the society strives to inculcate."

It is, it will be seen, far removed from a "theory hot-bed." In pursuance of the plan the society's members are incessantly at war with each other. Advantage is taken of the rivalry that exists between ships in the Navy—and one ship's officers are usually pitted against those of another ship. At other times it is the Navy against the Army; and before now personal enemies have been pitted against each other.

"In cards and games you play for sport, but in war game you must 'play to win,'" is the principle inculcated.

To this end anything whatever may be claimed, subject, however, to the provision that, should the umpire consider any claim impossible or absurd, the maker of it gets a breakdown to his best ship as a reward.

The record in claims is held by a young lieutenant who acted as Admiral Alexieff in a Russo-Japanese War. His claim ran as follows:—

"Orders issued that no offal is to be thrown overboard from Russian ships.

"A special field of small observation mines is to be laid at —— (here a place geographically suitable near Port Arthur is mentioned). At this spot offal is to be freely

thrown into the water to attract porpoises and sharks. When a good number have collected the mines are to be exploded and the stunned fish collected.

"Each is then to have strapped to it a leather band, holding a short pole in position (as per small model accompanying), after which it is to be liberated.

"I claim that these fish will, as usual, follow any vessels in the neighbourhood of Port Arthur dropping offal—that is to say, Japanese ships only—and that they will be taken for submarine boats when the pole like a periscope is sighted.

"The Japanese will soon detect the imposition, and then grow so used to the sight that after a time a real submarine will be able to approach without attracting any suspicion."

Attacking destroyers (Japanese).

Russian merchantman. Russian battleship *Peresviet*.

A TORPEDO-BOAT ATTACK IN A RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR GAME—PLAYED OCTOBER-DECEMBER LAST. AS USUAL IN TORPEDO OPERATIONS, THIS WAS PLAYED ON A BOARD WITHOUT SQUARES, IN ORDER TO RENDER IT MORE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE DISTANCES.

From a Photo. by West.

Truly an astounding claim! It was not allowed by the umpire, but the fertile brain whence it originated is never likely to let its owner come to grief for want of an expedient.

As a rule possible actual wars are not often played: more usually imaginary countries are established in some part of Europe and given the ships which it is most desired to study. Admiralty charts are used, and an immense amount of study of harbours is thus put in as pastime, while these little wars give prominence to such minor operations as attacks on coastguard stations and so forth, which could not well enter into a larger war. Usually, too, there is some special theme—international law, perhaps, one time, gleaning and sifting intelligence another time, and so forth.

What was, perhaps, the funniest war ever carried out had "Intelligence Sifting" as its theme. The combatants were allowed to procure information of each other's plans by any means they chose—any trick being regarded as legitimate. The gamut of the possible was run in no time. Both sides enrolled their friends as spies, and a silver-haired old lady, who liked to hear officers talk of their professions, was most deadly to one player. Two others, wishing to ensure private discussion, hired a motor-car. They had only gone some little way into the country when a policeman sprang from the hedge and stopped them. After the usual protests the policeman admitted an element of doubt in the case; if they would drive him to the police-station he would have his stop-watch tested in their presence. They took him on board and, as motorists have done before and since, marooned him far away after an hour's drive. By then, plans being decided, they went home by devious routes, thinking no more of the marooned policeman. Not till some days afterwards did it dawn on them that the policeman was a bogus one—an enemy who had availed himself of this means of learning their secret plans!

They were not, however, without resource. The day following the discovery they called on the ship which the chief "admiral" of the other side served in. Keeping out of

sight, they waited till he went to his cabin; then, slipping in, gagged and bound him, after which they proceeded to rifle his cabin. Plans were soon found, but false information had been disseminated once or twice, and they were wary. They continued the search, being at last rewarded by finding the whole plan of campaign concealed inside a telescope.

After this they departed happy, and made their dispositions accordingly, handing these in to the umpire long before the gagged one—for they left him gagged and bound—was able to release himself.

Total failure was theirs: their wily enemy had in some way anticipated their raid, and the plan concealed in the telescope had been carefully prepared for their undoing!

It must not be supposed, however, that a war game is often so frivolous as this one, for in the ordinary way any such "spying" is strictly forbidden. Yet few games, perhaps, have been more useful than this one, for certainly half the players must have had impressed upon them in the most direct and unexpectedly forcible of ways the urgent necessity of taking no information for granted and also of sifting it all most carefully, which was the object sought. And if in the hereafter any one of them is the repository of important Service secrets he will have to be a very wily spy who secures them from him. There cannot be much wrong while young officers can be found ready to sacrifice such little leisure as they get in studying war problems for amusement.

It is only in the British Navy that—so far as I can ascertain—this is done. In other navies officially supervised games are plentiful enough, but with them, of course, there is not the same interest. Here and there isolated foreign ships have the game on board and use it for purposes akin to those for which the inventor designed it. Two such ships are the Russian *Bayan* and *Novik*—the only two ships which have, so far, distinguished themselves in the present war.

In connection with the former ship it is interesting to note that her captain was a regular attendant at the Grand Duke Alexander's games in St. Petersburg, and used there to be laughingly called the "War-Game Skobelev." Skobelev, it will be remembered, was that Russian general who, in the Turco-Russian War, led a hundred desperate forlorn hopes untouched, though all around him were killed or wounded. Any ship played by Captain Wren of the *Bayan* used to have similar extraordinary luck; as one Russian officer, who must have Irish blood in him, put it: "The enemy's hits on him were all misses." Strangely enough, the same luck has followed him in the present war—the *Bayan* survived the torpedo attack of February 8th; in the battle of the 9th, though she charged the Japanese fleet, she was untouched; in the action of the 25th February, when Captain Wren, with three Russian cruisers, tried to fight the entire Japanese squadron, two were badly mauled, but the *Bayan* was not hurt.

In concluding this brief sketch of naval war game from the popular standpoint a reference may be made to flying-machines, which some think will be the warships of the future. Rules of the aerial fights of the future are said to exist all ready cut and dried, together with an ingenious machine by which the aerial warship's moves can be made. There is, in fine, nothing in earth, sky, or sea, or under the sea, that has not been the subject of rules in this "War by Kindergarten."

The Phoenix and the Carpet. By E. NESBIT.

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XI.—THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

W

ELL, I *must* say," mother said, looking at the Wishing Carpet as it lay, all darned and mended and backed with shiny American cloth, on the floor of the nursery—"I *must* say I've never in my life bought such a bad bargain as that carpet."

A soft "Oh!" of contradiction sprang to the lips of Cyril, Robert, Jane, and Anthea. Mother looked at them quickly, and said:—

"Well, of course I see you've mended it very nicely, and that was sweet of you, dears."

"The boys helped too," said the dears, honourably.

"But, still—twenty-two and ninepence! It ought to have lasted for years. It's simply dreadful now. Well, never mind, darlings, you've done your best. I think we'll have cocoanut matting next time. A carpet doesn't have an easy life of it in this room, does it?"

"It's not our fault, mother, is it, that our boots are the really reliable kind?" Robert asked the question more in sorrow than in anger.

"No, dear, we can't help our boots," said mother, cheerfully, "but we might change them when we come in, perhaps. It's just an idea of mine. I wouldn't dream of scolding on the very first morning after I've come home. Oh, my Lamb, how could you?"

This conversation was at breakfast, and the Lamb had been beautifully good until everyone was looking at the carpet, and then it was for him but the work of a moment to turn a glass dish of syrupy blackberry jam upside down on his young head. It was the work of a good many minutes and several persons to get the jam off him again, and this interesting work took people's minds off the carpet, and nothing more was said just then about its badness as a bargain and about what mother hoped for from cocoanut matting.

When the Lamb was clean again he had to be taken care of while mother rumbled her hair and inked her fingers and made her head ache over the difficult and twisted housekeeping accounts which cook gave her on dirty bits of paper, and which were supposed to explain how it was that cook had only fivepence-halfpenny and a lot of unpaid bills left out of all the money mother had sent her for housekeeping. Mother was very clever, but even she could not quite understand the cook's accounts.

The Lamb was very glad to have his brothers and sisters to play with him. He had not forgotten them a bit, and he made them play all the old exhausting games: "Whirling Worlds," where you swing the baby round and round by his hands; and "Leg and Wing," where you swing him from side to side by one ankle and one wrist. There was also climbing Vesuvius. In this game the baby walks up you, and when he is standing on your shoulders you shout as loud as you can, which is the rumbling of the burning mountain, and then tumble him gently on to the floor and roll him there, which is the destruction of Pompeii.

"All the same, I wish we could decide what we'd better say next time mother says anything about the carpet," said Cyril, breathlessly ceasing to be a burning mountain.

"Well, you talk and decide," said Anthea; "here, you lovey ducky Lamb. Come to Panther and play Noah's Ark."

The Lamb came with his pretty hair all tumbled and his face all dusty from the destruction of Pompeii, and instantly became a baby snake, hissing and wriggling and

creeping in Anthea's arms, as she said:—

I love my little baby snake,
He hisses when he is awake,
He creeps with such a wriggly creep,
He wriggles even in his sleep.

"Well, you see," Cyril was saying, "it's just the old bother. Mother can't believe the real true truth about the carpet, and——"

"You speak sooth, O Cyril!" remarked the Phœnix, coming out from the cupboard where the black-beetles lived, and the torn books, and the broken slates, and odd pieces of toys that had lost the rest of themselves. "Now hear the wisdom of the Phœnix, the son of the Phœnix."

"There's a society called that," said Cyril.

"Where is it? And what is a society?" asked the bird.

"It's a sort of joined-together lot of people—a sort of brotherhood—a kind of—well, something very like your temple, you know, only quite different."

"I take your meaning," said the Phœnix. "I would fain see these calling themselves Sons of the Phœnix."

"But what about your words of wisdom?"

"Wisdom is always welcome," said the Phœnix.

"PRETTY POLLY!" REMARKED THE LAMB."

"Pretty Polly!" remarked the Lamb, reaching his hands towards the golden speaker.

The Phœnix modestly retreated behind Robert, and Anthea hastened to distract the attention of the Lamb by murmuring:—

I love my little baby rabbit;
But oh, he has a dreadful habit
Of paddling out among the rocks
And soaking both his bunny-socks.

"I don't think you'd care about the Sons of the Phœnix, really," said Robert. "I have heard that they don't do anything fiery. They only drink a great deal. Much more than other people, because they drink lemonade and fizzy things, and the more you drink of those the more good you get."

"In your mind, perhaps," said Jane; "but it wouldn't be good in your body. You'd get too balloony." The Phœnix yawned.

"Look here," said Anthea, "I really have an idea. This isn't like a common carpet. It's very magic indeed. Don't you think, if we put Tatcho on it and then gave it a rest, the magic part of it might grow, like hair is supposed to do?"

"It might," said Robert, "but I should think paraffin would do as well—at any rate as far as the smell goes, and that seems to be the great thing about Tatcho."

But with all its faults Anthea's idea was something to do, and they did it.

It was Cyril who fetched the Tatcho bottle from father's washhand-stand. But the bottle had not much in it.

"We mustn't take it all," Jane said, "in case father's hair began to come off suddenly; if he hadn't anything to put on it, it might all drop off before Eliza had time to get round to the chemist's for another bottle. It would be dreadful to have a bald father,

and it would all be our fault."

"And wigs are very expensive, I believe," said Anthea. "Look here, leave enough in the bottle to wet father's head all over with in case any emergency emerges—and let's make up with paraffin. I expect it's the smell that does the good really—and the smell's exactly the same."

So a small teaspoonful of the Tatcho was put on the edges of the worst darn in the carpet and rubbed carefully into the roots of the hairs of it, and all the parts that there was not enough Tatcho for had paraffin rubbed into them with a piece of flannel. Then the flannel was burned. It made a gay flame, which delighted the Phoenix and the Lamb.

"How often," said mother, opening the door—"how often am I to tell you that you are *not* to play with paraffin? What have you been doing?"

"We have burnt a paraffiny rag," Anthea answered. It was no use telling mother what they had done to the carpet. She did not know it was a magic carpet, and no one wants to be laughed at for trying to mend an ordinary carpet with lamp-oil.

"Well, don't do it again," said mother. "And now away with melancholy! Father has sent a telegram. Look!" She held it out, and the children holding it by its yielding corners read:—

"Box for kiddies at Garrick. Stalls for us, Haymarket. Meet Charing Cross, 6.30."

"That means," said mother, "that you're going to see 'The Water Babies' all by your happy selves, and father and I will take you and fetch you. Give me the Lamb, dear, and you and Jane put clean lace in your red evening frocks, and I shouldn't wonder if you found they wanted ironing. This paraffin smell is ghastly. Run and get out your frocks."

The frocks did want ironing—wanted it rather badly, as it happened; for, being of tomato-coloured Liberty silk, they had been found very useful for *tableaux vivants* when a red dress was required for Cardinal Richelieu. They were very nice *tableaux*, these, and I wish I could tell you about them—but one cannot tell everything in a story. You would have been specially interested in hearing about the *tableaux* of the Princes in the Tower, when one of the pillows burst and the youthful Princes were so covered with feathers that the picture might very well have been called "Michaelmas Eve; or, Plucking the Geese."

Ironing the dresses and sewing the lace in occupied some time, and no one was dull because there was the theatre to look forward to, and also the possible growth of hairs on the carpet, for which everyone kept looking anxiously. By four o'clock Jane was almost sure that several hairs were beginning to grow.

The Phoenix perched on the fender, and its conversation, as usual, was entertaining and instructive—like school prizes are said to be. But it seemed a little absent-minded and even a little sad.

"Don't you feel well, Phoenix, dear?" asked Anthea, stooping to take an iron off the fire.

""DON'T YOU FEEL WELL, PHENIX, DEAR?' ASKED ANTHERA."]

"I am not sick," replied the golden bird, with a gloomy shake of the head, "but I am getting old."

"Why, you've only been hatched about two months."

"Time," remarked the Phoenix, "is measured by heart-beats. I'm sure the palpitations I've had since I've known you are enough to blanch the feathers of any bird."

"But I thought you lived five hundred years," said Robert, "and you've hardly begun this set of years. Think of all the time that's before you."

"Time," said the Phœnix, "is, as you are probably aware, merely a convenient fiction. There is no such thing as time. I have lived in these two months at a pace which generously counterbalances five hundred years of life in the desert. I am old, I am weary. I feel as if I ought to lay my egg, and lay me down to my fiery sleep. But unless I'm careful I shall be hatched again instantly, and that is a misfortune which I really do not think I *could* endure. But do not let me intrude these desperate personal reflections on your youthful happiness. What is the show at the theatre to-night? Wrestlers? Gladiators? A combat of camelopards and unicorns?"

"I don't think so," said Cyril; "it's called 'The Water Babies,' and if it's like the book there isn't any gladiating in it. There are chimney-sweeps and professors, and a lobster and an otter and a salmon, and children living in the water."

"It sounds chilly," the Phœnix shivered, and went to sit on the tongs.

"I don't suppose there will be *real* water," said Jane. "And theatres are very warm and pretty, with a lot of gold and lamps. Wouldn't you like to come with us?"

"I was just going to say that," said Robert, in injured tones, "only I know how rude it is to interrupt. Do come, Phœnix, old chap; it will cheer you up. It'll make you laugh like anything. Mr. Bouchier always makes ripping plays. You ought to have seen 'Shock-Headed Peter' last year."

"Your words are strange," said the Phœnix, "but I will come with you. The revels of this Bouchier of whom you speak may help me to forget the weight of my years."

So the Phœnix snuggled inside the waistcoat of Robert's Etons—a very tight fit it seemed both to Robert and to the Phœnix—and was taken to the play.

"ROBERT HAD TO PRETEND TO BE COLD."

Robert had to pretend to be cold at the glittering, many-mirrored restaurant where they all had dinner, with father in evening dress, with a very shiny white shirt-front, and mother looking lovely in her grey evening dress, that changes into pink and green when she moves. Robert pretended that he was too cold to take off his great-coat, and so sat sweltering through what would otherwise have been a most thrilling meal. He felt that he was a blot on the smart beauty of the family, and he hoped the Phœnix knew what he was suffering for its sake. Of course, we are all pleased to suffer for the sake of others, but we like them to know it—unless we are the very best and noblest kind of people, and Robert was just ordinary.

Father was full of jokes and fun, and everyone laughed all the time, even with their mouths full, which is not manners. Robert thought father would not have been quite so funny about his keeping his overcoat on if father had known all the truth. And there Robert was probably right.

When dinner was finished to the last grape and the last paddle in the finger-glasses—for it was a really truly grown-up dinner—the children were taken to the theatre, guided to a box close to the stage, and left. Father's parting words were:—

"Now, don't you stir out of this box, whatever you do. I shall be back before the end of the play. Be good and you will be happy. Is this zone torrid enough for the abandonment of great-coats, Bobs? No? Well, then, I should say you were sickening for

something—mumps or measles, or thrush or teething. Good-bye."

He went, and Robert was at last able to remove his coat, mop his perspiring brow, and release the crushed and dishevelled Phœnix. Robert had to arrange his damp hair at the looking-glass at the back of the box, and the Phœnix had to preen its disordered feathers for some time before either of them was fit to be seen.

They were very, very early. When the lights went up fully the Phœnix, balancing itself on the gilded back of a chair, swayed in ecstasy.

"How fair a scene is this!" it murmured; "how far fairer than my temple! Or have I guessed aright? Have you brought me hither to lift up my head with emotions of joyous surprise? Tell me, my Robert, is it not that this, *this* is my true temple, and the other was but a humble shrine frequented by outcasts?"

"I don't know about outcasts," said Robert, "but you can call this your temple if you like. Hush! the music is beginning."

I am not going to tell you about the play. As I said before, one can't tell everything, and no doubt you saw "The Water Babies" yourselves. If you did not it was a shame, or rather a pity.

What I must tell you is that, though Cyril and Jane and Robert and Anthea enjoyed it as much as any children possibly could, the pleasure of the Phœnix was far, far greater than theirs.

"This is indeed my temple," it said, again and again. "What radiant rites! And all to do honour to me!"

The songs in the play it took to be hymns in its honour. The choruses were choric songs in its praise. The electric lights, it said, were magic torches lighted for its sake, and it was so charmed with the footlights that the children could hardly persuade it to sit still. But when the limelight was shown it could contain its approval no longer. It flapped its golden wings, and cried in a voice that could be heard all over the theatre:—

"Well done, my servants! Ye have my favour and my countenance!"

Little Tom on the stage stopped short in what he was saying. A deep breath was drawn by hundreds of lungs, every eye in the house turned to the box where the luckless children cringed, and most people hissed, or said "Shish!" or "Turn them out!"

Then the play went on, and an attendant presently came to the box and spoke wrathfully.

"It wasn't us, indeed it wasn't," said Anthea, earnestly; "it was the bird."

The man said well, then, they must keep their bird quiet.

"Disturbing everyone like this," he said.

"It won't do it again," said Robert, glancing imploringly at the golden bird; "I'm sure it won't."

"You have my leave to depart," said the Phœnix, gently.

"Well, he is a beauty, and no mistake," said the attendant, "only I'd cover him up during the acts. It upsets the performance."

And he went.

"Don't speak again, there's a dear," said Anthea; "you wouldn't like to interfere with your own temple, would you?"

So now the Phœnix was quiet, but it kept whispering to the children. It wanted to know why there was no altar, no fire, no incense, and became so excited and fretful and tiresome that four at least of the party of five wished deeply that it had been left at home.

What happened next was entirely the fault of the Phœnix. It was not in the least the fault of the theatre people, and no one could ever understand afterwards how it did happen. No one, that is, except the guilty bird itself and the four children. The Phœnix was balancing itself on the gilt back of the chair, swaying backwards and forwards and up and down, as you may see your own domestic parrot do. I mean the grey one with the red tail. All eyes were on the stage, where the lobster was delighting the audience with that gem of a song, "If you can't walk straight, walk sideways!" when the Phœnix murmured warmly:—

"No altar, no fire, no incense!" and then, before any of the children could even begin to think of stopping it, it spread its bright wings and swept round the theatre, brushing its gleaming feathers against delicate hangings and gilded wood-work.

It seemed to have made but one circular wing-sweep, such as you may see a gull make over grey water on a stormy day. Next moment it was perched again on the chair-back—and all round the theatre, where it had passed, little sparks shone like tinsel seeds, then little smoke wreaths curled up like growing plants—little flames opened like flower-buds.

People whispered—then people shrieked.

"Fire! Fire!" The curtain went down—the lights went up.

"Fire!" cried everyone, and made for the doors.

"A magnificent idea!" said the Phœnix, complacently. "An enormous altar—fire supplied free of charge. Doesn't the incense smell delicious?" The only smell was the stifling smell of smoke, of burning silk, or scorching varnish.

The little flames had opened now into great flame-flowers. The people in the theatre were shouting and pressing towards the doors.

"Oh, how *could* you!" cried Jane. "Let's get out."

"Father said stay here," said Anthea, very pale, and trying to speak in her ordinary voice.

"He didn't mean stay and be roasted," said Robert; "no boys on burning decks for me, thank you."

"Not much," said Cyril, and he opened the door of the box.

"HE OPENED THE DOOR OF THE BOX."

But a fierce waft of smoke and hot air made him shut it again. It was not possible to get out that way.

They looked over the front of the box. Could they climb down?

It would be possible, certainly, but would they be much better off?

"Look at the people," moaned Anthea; "we couldn't get through." And, indeed, the crowd round the doors looked thick as flies in the jam-making season.

"I wish we'd never seen the Phœnix," cried Jane.

Even at that awful moment Robert looked round to see if the bird had overheard a speech which, however natural, was hardly polite or grateful.

The Phœnix was gone.

"Look here," said Cyril, "I've read about fires in papers; I'm sure it's all right. Let's wait here, as father said."

"We can't do anything else," said Anthea, bitterly.

"Look here," said Robert, "I'm *not* frightened—no, I'm not. The Phœnix has never been a skunk yet, and I'm certain it'll see us through somehow. I believe in the Phœnix!"

"The Phœnix thanks you, O Robert," said a golden voice at his feet, and there was the Phœnix itself, on the Wishing Carpet.

"Quick!" it said, "stand on those portions of the carpet which are truly antique and authentic—and——"

A sudden jet of flame stopped its words. Alas! the Phœnix had unconsciously warmed to its subject, and in the unintentional heat of the moment had set fire to the paraffin with which that morning the children had anointed the carpet. It burned merrily. The children tried in vain to stamp it out. They had to stand back and let it burn itself out. When the paraffin had burned away it was found that it had taken with it all the darns of Scotch heather-mixture fingering. Only the fabric of the old carpet was left—and that was full of holes.

"Come," said the Phœnix, "I'm cool now."

The four children got on to what was left of the carpet. Very careful they were not to leave a leg or a hand hanging over one of the holes. It was very hot—the theatre was a pit of fire. Everyone else had got out.

Jane had to sit on Anthea's lap.

"Home!" said Cyril, and instantly the cool draught from under the nursery door played upon their legs as they sat. They were all on the carpet still, and the carpet was lying in its proper place on the nursery floor, as calm and unmoved as though it had never been to the theatre or taken part in a fire in its life.

Four long breaths of deep relief were instantly breathed. The draught which they had never liked before was for the moment quite pleasant. And they were safe. And everyone else was safe. The theatre had been quite empty when they left. Everyone was sure of that.

They presently found themselves all talking at once. Somehow none of their adventures had given them so much to talk about. None other had seemed so real.

"Did you notice——?" they said, and "Do you remember——?"

When suddenly Anthea's face turned pale under the dirt which it had collected on it during the fire.

"Oh," she cried, "mother and father! Oh, how awful! They'll think we're burned to cinders. Oh, let's go this minute and tell them we aren't."

"We should only miss them," said the sensible Cyril.

"Well—*you* go, then," said Anthea, "or I will. Only do wash your face first. Mother will be sure to think you are burnt to a cinder if she sees you as black as that. Mother, she'll faint or be ill or something. Oh, I wish we'd never got to know that Phœnix."

"Hush!" said Robert; "it's no use being rude to the bird. I suppose it can't help its nature. Perhaps we'd better wash too. Now I come to think of it my hands are rather——"

No one had noticed the Phœnix since it had bidden them to step on the carpet. And no one noticed that no one had noticed.

All were partially clean, and Cyril was just plunging into his great-coat to go and look for his parents—he, and not unjustly, called it looking for a needle in a bundle of hay—when the sound of father's latchkey in the front door sent everyone bounding up the stairs.

"Are you all safe?" cried mother's voice; "are you all safe?" and the next moment she was kneeling on the linoleum of the hall, trying to kiss four damp children at once, and laughing and crying by turns, while father stood looking on and saying he was blessed or something.

"But how did you guess we'd come home?" said Cyril, later, when everyone was calm enough for talking.

"Well, it was rather a rum thing. We heard the Garrick was on fire and, of course, we went straight there," said father, briskly. "We couldn't find you, of course—and we couldn't get in—but the firemen told us everyone was safely out. And then I heard a voice at my ear say, 'Cyril, Anthea, Robert, and Jane'—and something touched me on the shoulder. It was a great yellow pigeon, and it got in the way of my seeing who'd spoken. It fluttered off, and then someone said in the other ear, 'They're safe at home'; and when I turned again, to see who it was speaking, hanged if there wasn't that confounded pigeon on my other shoulder. Dazed by the fire, I suppose. Your mother said it was the voice of——"

"IT WAS A GREAT YELLOW PIGEON."

"I said it was the bird that spoke," said mother, "and so it was. Or at least I thought so then. It wasn't a pigeon. It was an orange-coloured cockatoo. I don't care who it was that spoke. It was true—and you're safe."

Mother began to cry again, and father said bed was a good place after the pleasures of the stage.

So everyone went there.

Robert had a talk to the Phoenix that night.

"Oh, very well," said the bird, when Robert had said what he felt, "didn't you know that I had power over fire? Do not distress yourself. I, like my high priests in Lombard Street, can undo the work of flames. Kindly open the casement."

It flew out.

That was why the papers said, next day, that the fire at the theatre had done less damage than had been anticipated. As a matter of fact, it had done none, for the Phoenix spent the night in putting things straight. How the management accounted for this, and how many of the theatre officials still believe that they were mad on that night, will never be known.

Next day mother saw the burnt holes in the carpet.

"It caught where it was paraffiny," said Anthea.

"I must get rid of that carpet at once," said mother.

But what the children said in sad whispers to each other, as they pondered over last night's events, was:—

"We must get rid of that Phoenix."

NIAGARA FALLS—THE POINT MARKED X SHOWS THE SPOT REACHED BY GUIDE BARLOW AND SUPERINTENDENT PERRY.

From a Photo.

Walking on the Brink of Niagara.

By Orrin E. Dunlap.

T

HERE is no man who has so many adventures at Niagara to his credit as John R. Barlow. Mr. Barlow, in the summer-time, is the chief guide at the Cave of the Winds, that wonderful cavern under the waterfall as it plunges between Goat and Luna Islands. Years of familiarity with the waters of the world-famed Niagara have caused Guide Barlow to forget what fear is, and he moves about in dangerous places without thinking of possible disaster. He is the oldest and best-known guide at Niagara, and people from many countries have crossed his palm with silver in token of care bestowed upon them, or in return for the kindly information which he is ever ready to give.

When the new stone arch bridges were built to connect Goat Island to the mainland, a temporary bridge was erected on piers for the convenience of pedestrians. When this temporary structure had ceased to be useful it was destroyed, and, unfortunately for the scenic beauty of the portion of the upper rapids lying between the brink of the American fall and the island bridges, several of the cribs lodged on the reefs and refused to be stirred by the rush of the downpouring waters. The hope of the State Reservation officials was that the cribs would pass over the fall in time of high water, but flood after flood poured down from Lake Erie and the cribs refused to move. They were unsightly to a remarkable degree, and quite an annoyance to the officials who had charge of the beauty of Niagara. This was the condition when winter set in last autumn.

The winter proved of unusual severity. Ice came down from the lake in large sheets, and a considerable quantity of it lodged on the reefs between the mainland and Goat Island. By February the main part of the channel through which the water flows to the American fall was blocked with ice. Between Goat Island and the mainland there were three open channels, through which the water ran streak-like to the brink. One of these was close by the mainland, and made the plunge over the fall close to Prospect Point. The second was close to the outer edge of Luna Island, while the third was between Luna and Goat Islands. This left a wide expanse of the American fall, and the river-bed immediately above it, covered with ice. This ice-field remained unbroken for several days, but by going out on the ice-bridge that spanned the river in front of the fall it was possible to study the face of the cliff, and to see that at several points the water crept through under the ice and found its way to the fall.

However, the fact that the portion of the fall below Green Island was covered with ice gave the impression to Superintendent Edward Perry, of the State Reservation, that the unsightly cribs on the river-bed could be removed. He called Guide Barlow to go with him, together with another man named William Mullane, and the trio made their way to Green Island. Going to the foot of this island, it was easy for them to step out over the ice to several of the cribs, which Superintendent Perry then and there ordered to be removed.

It was while Superintendent Perry and Guide Barlow were on this mission that the latter recognised the unusual conditions of the ice. His practised eye scanned the white expanse as it extended westward and turned over the precipice.

"I believe it would be possible for us to walk to the brink of the American fall," said Barlow, addressing Superintendent Perry.

The superintendent looked at him in amazement. So far as is known no human being had ever stood where Guide Barlow contemplated going. Still, the superintendent is a man of nerve, and as he looked down the river at Robinson's Island, at Chapin's Island, at Crow and Blackbird Islands, he longed to set foot on the possessions of the Empire State over which he was the official guard.

**GUIDE BARLOW AND SUPERINTENDENT PERRY STANDING ON
THE BRINK OF THE FALL AT A POINT NEVER BEFORE REACHED BY
MAN.**

From a Photo.

There was little said. Guide Barlow had already commenced to move down the river over the ice. It was firm, and stood his weight well. In a minute Superintendent Perry followed him. As they moved along the untrodden path the condition of the ice gave them new courage, and both felt that they were walking where man had never before been. Their route carried them between Robinson's and Blackbird Islands, and on down by a little isle as yet unnamed. Leaving the foot of Robinson's Island behind, they moved cautiously over the frozen expanse down, farther down, right to the brink of the American fall, midway between Luna Island's shore and Prospect Park. Along the very crest of the brink they walked, realizing that they were at the very centre of the great fall that is a world-wonder. Guide Barlow pointed out to Superintendent Perry the mighty ice-mountain that reared its head from below, and also related how human beings passing over the fall at that point were never found.

Their dark forms outlined against the pure white, snow covered ice, standing only a few feet back from the awful brink of the fall, made a startling picture. As they stood there a dark shadow crept down over the ice, intimating that the river was rising and might overflow the ice on which they stood. Yet it was such a novel place to be in that they lingered and looked—looked and gained new and wonderful ideas of the sublimity and awfulness of Niagara. So close did they go to the brink that a slight advance would have carried them over the precipice to the frightful, unknown, unexplored regions behind the icy mounds below.

Before they returned the author of this story hurried from Goat Island, from which point he had taken a picture of the remarkable trip, to the brink of the American fall, where he took another photograph of Superintendent Perry and Guide Barlow as they stood at the edge of the precipice over which the Niagara torrent flows in chaotic fury in summer-time.

**GUIDE BARLOW AND SUPERINTENDENT PERRY STANDING ON
THE BRINK OF NIAGARA.**

From a Photo.

The trip up the channel carried the party outside of Robinson's Island, all stopping

to pay tribute to Chapin's Island, the little spot where, in 1838, a man had lodged as he was being swept toward the fall by the awful current.

"I am glad to be back," said Superintendent Perry, as the party reached the lower end of Green Island.

"But you are also glad to have been where you have been," added Guide Barlow, the only man who had ever conducted a party to that dangerous point on the brink of the American fall.

The date was Saturday, February 13, 1904.

Curiosities

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[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

A WHEEL—OR WHAT?

"This is a cross-section of a white pine tree about twenty-eight inches in diameter. What appear to be carrots sticking through the sides are the knots caused by the branches, which, owing to their resinous nature, have not decayed, while the wood which formerly surrounded them has rotted away."—Mr. A. S. Angell, care of *Times* Printing and Publishing Co., Victoria, B.C.

A HOMEMADE BICYCLE.

This photograph, taken in Russia by a Blackburn contributor, is of an extraordinary bicycle and its ingenious maker, a Russian peasant, who at the time was employed as a mill watchman in St. Petersburg. The frame of the bicycle is mainly made out of broomsticks, the wheels consist of barrel hoops and wooden spokes, the cranks are of wood, and bobbins form the principal part of the pedals; the front forks are likewise of wood, working inside a ten-inch "slubbing bobbin"; the saddle (movable) is cut out of an ordinary piece of wood, the back of a disused arm-chair does duty as handle-bars, and the chain was taken off an old "flat-card" machine. It only remains to add that this curiosity is not a mere exhibit, for a friend of the gentleman who supplies the photo. rode it more than once, though he never accomplished anything in the way of record-breaking on the wooden "bike."

SWALLOWED BY AN OSTRICH.

"I send you a photo. of the contents of a tame ostrich's stomach, which you will not be surprised to hear was the cause of its death. All these pieces of metal were picked

up by it around the blacksmith's shop of a farm in South America. The circle of round pieces in the centre is made up of $\frac{3}{8}$ in. punch pellets from a punching machine, and will give an idea of the size of the rest of the metal. All these pieces were more or less worn, according to the time they had been swallowed; some had almost disappeared. The total weight of iron was considerable."—Mr. E. Windus, Erin Manor, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

PECULIAR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

"The accompanying photos. are of two musical instruments which, with their inventor, can be found at an obscure little hamlet called Keld, about twenty miles from Richmond in Yorkshire. No. 1 is an adaptation to a harmonium, and consists of the branch of a tree fastened to the end of the harmonium; upon the branch is a double row of bells which come from all parts of England. When playing, the musician has a long piece of wood ending in a steel spike, and at the lower end of the wood is a finger-hole. The striker is slipped upon one of the fingers of the left hand, and as the treble and bass are being played the finger with the striker upon it is bent in order to strike one of the bells. No. 2 is what the inventor calls 'a stone organ.' The old man said that one day when fishing in the river his foot caught a stone and he noticed that it gave forth a musical note, so he constructed a sounding-board, secured stones from the river, and placed them thereon. He found that clipping a piece off the end of the stone sharpened the note, whilst to clip off the side flattened it; in this way he made three octaves. The old man has never had any lessons in music."—Mr. G. Hardwick, The Promenade, Bridlington.

SAVED BY A CARTRIDGE.

"Here is the photograph of a cartridge which has been pierced by a bullet. My brother, of the 6th Dragoon Guards, was carrying this in his bandolier when he was wounded in the late South African War. The bullet after piercing the cartridge passed clean through his body, leaving in the centre of his back after penetrating one of his lungs. Fortunately it did not touch the spinal cord, owing probably to being deviated by the cartridge, and he recovered. The cartridge did not explode, and has still the explosive in it intact."—Mr. F. W. Robins, 14, Wellington Road, Barnsbury, N.

A DIVING TOWER ON DRY LAND.

"I send you a photo. of a curious structure which stands not very far from the Lake of Neuchâtel. It would be difficult for anyone unacquainted with its history to give a name to it, for its appearance and position furnish absolutely no clue as to its use. It is, as a matter of fact, a diving tower, built many years ago for the use of bathers in the Lake of Neuchâtel. The peculiar part about it is that anyone desirous of diving from it nowadays

would have to fly horizontally over a railway, a road, and a good three hundred yards of dry land before reaching the water, for, the lake having gradually receded, the tower has been left high and dry, about a quarter of a mile from the edge of the water. As may be seen from the photo., it is now in a very tumble-down condition."—Mr. J. O. S. Ziegler, Place Bel Air, Yverdon, Switzerland.

A POSTAL MARROW.

"The vegetable marrow shown in the accompanying photograph was grown by my brother, Mr. David Ager, gardener to Mr. Milton Bode, of West Dean, near Reading, the well-known gold medallist for chrysanthemum culture. The name and address were marked on the marrow when it was quite small, and the writing has become more distinct with increasing age. When about nine inches in length the marrow was cut, a label with the necessary postage affixed tied to the small piece of stalk, and it was then handed in at the post-office. In due course it arrived at its destination, the marrow being none the worse for its journey."—Mr. J. Ager, c/o Messrs. Betts, Hartley, and Co., 9 and 10, Great Tower Street, E.C.

WHAT IS THERE BENEATH THE IVY?

"This curious statue, which appears to be looking out of a tree, is to be found in the public park at Bath. The ivy has been allowed to cover the whole statue with the exception of the head; probably no one knows what the rest of it is like. This is a winter view; in summer the head has a background of foliage."—Mr. James A. Rooth, 112, Oakwood Court, Kensington.

"HOW THE CROW FLIES."

"A remarkable instance of the unexpected happening, especially to devotees of the camera, occurred to me the other day. I took the photograph of Canterbury Cathedral which I send you, and whilst the plate was exposed I noticed a crow rising from the branches of the tree at the extreme left of the picture. The bird flew slowly upwards and in zigzag fashion until it reached a height nearly equal to the cathedral spire. On developing the negative I found that the bird's flight was most accurately recorded in the shape of a thin black line, which can be distinctly traced in the photograph. By means of a magnifying glass the extended wings of the crow could be distinctly seen. I may add that as I was using a small stop the exposure was rather a long one."—Mr. H. J. Divers, 13, Burgate Street, Canterbury.

THE MORRIS DANCE.

"I send you a photograph which may interest some of your readers. The village of Bidford-on-Avon keeps up the quaint old custom of the Morris Dance, and on high days and holidays the six dancers, accompanied by the clown and the hobby-horse, dance through the village to the music of a violin."—Miss Dryhurst, 11, Downshire Hill, Hampstead.

VERY SIMPLE.

"The curious effect produced in the photograph which I send was obtained by the simple means of placing a small piece of specially-cut paper over the negative."—Mr. R. J. Chenneour, Ishpeming, Mich.

THE FAN TREE.

"Travellers in South-Eastern Asia sometimes see at a distance what appears to be a gigantic fan. In fact, it closely resembles the dainty creations of feathers and ivory which are so popular with ladies. On approaching closer, however, the fan is seen to be a natural one, being a species of palm tree which is wonderfully like a fan, not only in the way in which its branches project from the trunk, but in the leaves in which the branches terminate. As shown in the picture, the tree spreads out like an extended fan and the leaves bear a strong resemblance to feathers. It is called the Traveller's Palm, partly for the reason that in the forenoon or afternoon, when the sun is not directly above, it frequently offers welcome shade. Some of the palms grow to a height of fifty or sixty feet, with 'feathers' ranging from ten to fifteen feet in length."—Mr. D. A. Willey, Baltimore.

PETRIFIED WIRE.

"Here is the photo. of a piece of wire rope taken from a coal-mine in Wales. The mine referred to had not been worked for some ten years, and when the water was pumped out the rope was discovered as shown, encased in a formation of hard stone. I may add that when the stone was broken the wire was found to be in a perfect state of preservation."—Mr. B. H. Wadsworth, Oriel College, Helensburgh, N.B.

NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.

"This is not a snap-shot of Satan, nor of Pluto, or any demon of the heathen mythology. Neither is it the picture of a water-logged member of the 'tramp' profession after a shower of rain. It is simply the photograph of the curious form which a splash of

lead took when it dropped from a crucible on the floor."—Mr. Joseph W. Hammond, 12, Stafford Street, Dublin.

A WOODEN SOLDIER.

"I took this snap-shot in Spain, at La Zubia, a small town about two miles from Granada. The 'soldier' is a most surprising object to come upon suddenly. He is cut out of a single tree, and is therefore all in one piece. Branches have been neatly adapted to make his fingers, which, it will be observed, have a somewhat knotted and gouty appearance. A flower-pot forms the head, while a plant of aloes makes a very fine plumed head-dress. His uniform is painted in the most realistic way, so that altogether he has a most ferocious appearance and his expression does not invite confidence, as may be seen from the photograph. The garden in which he lives is rather an historic one, for it was here that the great Queen Isabella the Catholic was saved from falling into the hands of the Moors by hiding in a laurel bush. A monument marks the spot."—Miss A. Milne Home, Caldra, Duns, N.B.

IN THE MIDST OF THE ENEMY.

"A gamekeeper in this neighbourhood had shot a fine carrion crow, and hung up his prize, as usual, on a nail near his cottage. A wren finding it built her nest between the wings, and in the body of her greatest enemy actually reared her family. By the kindness of the owner of the nest I have been able to photograph it."—Miss Mary Sharp, Riding Mill, Northumberland.

A PECULIAR HARVEST.

"The Rev. W. H. Jenoure, rector of Barwick, Yeovil, describes a novel sight which may be seen in his parish. A farmer had been feeding his sheep on oats, and some of the grain fell on the back of one of the animals. It has taken root in the wool and sprouted, and the young shoots may be seen growing on the animal's back."—Mr. S. G. Witcomb, Middle Street, Yeovil, Somerset.

Transcriber Notes:

Throughout the dialogues, there were words used to mimic accents of the speakers. Those words were retained as-is.

The illustrations have been moved so that they do not break up paragraphs and so that they are next to the text they illustrate.

Copyright notices at the bottom of the first pages of articles were moved to under the author.

Errors in punctuations and inconsistent hyphenation were not corrected unless otherwise noted.

On page 525, "menu was formed the shape" was replaced with "menu was formed in the shape".

On page 548, "slouches of" was replaced with "slouches off".

On page 563, "A D 1901. make a grave" was replaced with "A D 1901 make a

grave".

On page 563, the single quotation mark after "FUST" was replaced with a double quotation mark.

On page 563, a period was placed after "is a mournful corpse".

On page 563, "ex amination" was replaced with "examination".

On page 563, "honoable" was replaced with "honorable".

On page 573, "onn" was replaced with "on".

On page 584, "plain of campaign" was replaced with "plan of campaign".

