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The Mystery of the Ravenspurs.

By F. M. WHITE,
Author of "The Ends of Justice," "The Law of the Land," etc.

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CHAPTER XXV.

Geoffrey is Puzzled.

It was a long time before Ralph Ravenspur spoke again. He remained so quiet that Geoffrey began to imagine that his existence had been forgotten. He ventured to lay a hand on his uncle's knee.

The latter started like one who sleeps uneasily under the weight of a haunting fear.

"Oh, of course," he said. "I had forgotten you; I had forgotten everything. And yet you brought me news of the greatest importance."

"Indeed, uncle. What was it?"

"That you shall know speedily. The danger had not occurred to me for the moment. And yet all the time it has been under my nose."

"Still, you might easily be forgiven for not seeing——"

"Seeing has nothing to do with it. And there is nothing the matter with my hearing. The danger has been humming in my ears for days, and I never heard it. Now it is roaring like Niagara. But, please God, we shall avert the danger."

"You might take me into your confidence in this matter, uncle."

"That I shall before a day has passed, but not for the moment. We are face to face now with the most dangerous crisis that has yet occurred. The enemy can strike us down one by one, and nobody shall dream that there is anything beyond a series of painfully sudden deaths. Failure of the heart's action the doctors would call it. That is all."

At that moment Tchigorsky returned to the room. No longer was he in the disguise of an Indian. Perhaps he had donned it to surprise Geoffrey; perhaps he was just discarding the disguise after putting it to some practical use. To him Ralph repeated all that Geoffrey had said.

He followed with the most rapt and most careful attention.

"Danger, indeed," he said gravely; "the danger that moves unseen on the air, and strikes from out of nothingness. I prophesied something like this, Ralph."

"Aye, my friend," Ralph replied, "you did. But not quite the same way."

"Because I did not know that fortune had placed the medium so close at hand. Where are the bees?"

Geoffrey was listening intently. Up to now he had failed to understand why his story had moved Ralph so profoundly. And what could the bees have to do with it? Yet Mrs. May had mentioned bees.

"They are in two hives outside the morning-room window," said Ralph. "The bees are Vera's pets, and they thrive for the most part along the flower borders of the terrace. They are ordinary bees."

"In the ordinary bar-frame hives, of course?"

"Oh, yes; they are quite up to date. You can see the insects working, and all that kind of thing. The hives can be moved."

"I suppose they are a nuisance occasionally?" Tchigorsky asked.

"Yes," Geoffrey smiled. "We have all been stung now and again."

Tchigorsky appeared to be satisfied on that head. He smoked a whole cigarette while he revolved a plan in his mind.

"It is necessary to get the whole family out of the way for a time," he said slowly. "It will be necessary to do so without delay. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the mischief has already been done. Ralph, can you induce your father and the whole family to go away for a time—say till after dark?"

"Perhaps," Ralph replied. "But not without explaining, and it is impossible to do that. But Geoffrey might manage it. Unless he does so, one or more of us will pay the penalty before daybreak."

"I will do anything you desire," Geoffrey cried eagerly.

"Then go to your grandfather and get him to arrange a picnic over to Alton Keep. It is a perfect day, and it will be possible to remain out till dark, returning to a late supper. I know the suggestion sounds absurd—childish in the circumstances—but it will have to be done. Say that there is a great danger in the castle which has to be removed. Say that nobody is to know anything about it. Go!"

Geoffrey went at once. He found the head of the family in the library trying to interest himself in a book. He looked up as Geoffrey entered, and a slight smile came over his worn face. There were two people in the house who could do anything with him—Geoffrey and Vera.

"You look as if you wanted something," he said.

"I do," Geoffrey replied. "I want you to do me a great favor."

"It is granted—granted on the principle that we make the last hours of the condemned criminal as comfortable as possible."

"Then I want you to get up a picnic to-day."

Rupert Ravenspur dropped his glasses on the table. He wondered if this were some new kind of danger, a mysterious form of insanity, brought about by the common enemy.

"I am perfectly serious," Geoffrey said, with a smile. "Not that it is any laughing matter. Dear grandfather, there is a great danger in the house. I don't know what it is, but Uncle Ralph knows, and he has never been wrong yet. It was he who found out all about those dreadful flowers. And he wants the house cleared till dark. Unless we do so, the morning will assuredly see the end of one or more of us."

"Is it a painless death?" the old man asked grimly. "If it is, I prefer to remain here."

"But there is always hope," Geoffrey pleaded. "And you always think of us. Won't you do this thing? Won't you say that it is a sudden whim of yours? Mind, everybody is to go; everybody but Uncle Ralph. I shall ride, and when I have ridden some distance I shall pretend to have forgotten something. Perhaps you deem me unduly foolish. But I implore you to do this thing."

Rupert Ravenspur hesitated no longer. He always found it hard to resist that young, smiling, handsome face. Not that he was blind to the folly of the proceedings. On his own initiative he would as soon have danced a hornpipe in the hall.

"I will go and see about it at once," he said.

He had put off his sombre air, and assumed a kind of ill-fitting gaiety. Gordon Ravenspur and his wife received the suggestion with becoming resignation. To them it was the first signs of a mind breaking down under an intolerable strain. Vera and Marion professed themselves to be delighted.

"It sounds odd," said the latter. "Fancy the doomed and fated Ravenspurs going on a picnic! And fancy the suggestion, too, coming from grandfather!"

Vera looked anxious.

"You don't imagine," she said, "that his mind——"

"Oh, his mind is all right. You can see that from his face. But I expect that the strain is telling on him, and that he wants to get out of himself for a time. Personally, I regard the idea as charming."

The preparations were made, no great matter in so large and well-regulated an establishment as Ravenspur Castle. If the servants were astonished, they said nothing. The stolid coachman sat solemnly on the box of the waggonette; the demure footman touched his hat as he put up the step with the air of a man who is accustomed to do this sort of thing every day.

Geoffrey stood under the big portico and waved his hand.

"You should drive with us," Marion cried.

"And you will not be long?" Vera asked.

"Oh, I am duly impressed with the importance of the occasion," Geoffrey laughed. "My horse will get there almost as soon as you arrive. Call the spaniel."

Tut, the pet spaniel, was called, but no response was made, and finally the party drove off without him. Geoffrey watched the waggonette with a strange sense of unreality upon him. He felt that he could have scoffed at a situation like this in the pages of a novel. And yet it is the truth that is always so improbable.

Our most solemn and most trivial thoughts always run along the grooves of the mind together, and as Geoffrey passed round the house he caught himself wondering where the dog was. He whistled again and again. It was a most unusual thing for Tut to be far from the family. Outside the morning-room window the dog lay as if fast asleep.

"Get up, you lazy beast," Geoffrey cried; "after them, sir."

"But the dog did not move; he made no sign as Geoffrey cuffed him with the side of his foot. The dog was dead. He lay still and placid; there was no sign of pain. There was nothing about the carcase to suggest poison. Close by the bees were busy among the flowers. In the hives there seemed to be more noise than usual. Geoffrey opened the windows of the morning-room, leaving the casement flung back behind him. A long claw was put forth to shut it.

"The window must be kept shut," Ralph Ravenspur said quietly. "In fact, I have given orders that every window in the house is to be closed. Why, you will see presently. Did you notice anything as you came along?"

"I was too excited," Geoffrey replied. "I have just found poor Tut outside. The dog has died suddenly. Half an hour ago he was perfectly well, young, full of life and vigor. And now he is dead."

"Lies just outside the window, doesn't he?" Ralph asked.

He seemed to speak callously. A man who had passed through his experiences and emotions was not likely to feel for the loss of a dog. And yet there was intense curiosity in his tone.

"Just outside; close to the hives."

"Ah, yes. He was poisoned, you think?"

"I expect so. And yet where could he get the poison? Nobody comes here. Perhaps it was not poison after all."

A thin smile flickered on Ralph's face.

"Yes, it was," he said; "the dog was poisoned by a bee sting."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Geoffrey Begins to Understand.

Geoffrey had no words for a time. Slowly the hideousness of the plot was beginning to beat in upon him. Mrs. May had mentioned bees to her mysterious companion, who had so remarkable a likeness to Marion, and by a strange chance Ralph Ravenspur had the same morning at breakfast mentioned a certain Asiatic bee, whose poison and whose honey were fatal to human life.

"Ah," said Geoffrey slowly, "the bees Mrs. May mentioned."

"Precisely, my boy. And the bees that I mentioned also. Tchigorsky found the dog but a minute or two ago. He slipped downstairs with me the minute we heard the waggonette drive away. He was very anxious to see the hives. Directly he caught sight of Tut lying there he knew what had happened. He has gone to my room for something. When he comes back he will have something to show you."

Tchigorsky entered the room a moment later. He had in his hand a small cardboard box with a glass lid. Inside something was buzzing angrily. It was an insect, the wings of which moved so rapidly that they seemed to scream, as a house-fly does when the falces of a spider close upon it.

"Have a good look at it," Tchigorsky said curtly.

"Is it dangerous?" Geoffrey asked.

"One of the most deadly of winged insects," the Russian said. "It is a black bee from the forests near Lassa. There is a larger variety, whose sting produces the most horrible sufferings and death. This sort injects a poison which stops the action of the heart like prussic acid, but without the rigidity caused by that poison. The Lassa black bee invades other bees' nests and preys on their honey. They frighten the other bees, which make no attempt to drive them out, but go on working as usual. Then gradually the whole hive gets impregnated with that poison, and an ordinary brown bee becomes as dangerous as a black one. This is the bee that killed your dog."

"Then the hives are already impregnated," Geoffrey cried.

"Precisely. Half-a-dozen of these black bees have been introduced into the hives. Now, do you begin to understand the malignity of the plot? Your dog was not dead when, with my net, I caught this fellow—I expected to catch him."

"And ran great risk in doing so."

"Of course. It was a recreation compared with some of the risks I have run."

"You are right there," Ralph said in his deep, croaking tones. "Look at the thing, Geoffrey."

With a shudder Geoffrey took the box in his hand. There was nothing formidable about the insect under the glass lid. It had more anger and fury, more "devil" than the ordinary bee, but it was very little larger, of a deep, lustrous black, with orange eyes and purple, gauzy wings. There was nothing weird about it.

"Was it imported for the purpose?" Geoffrey asked.

"Undoubtedly," Ralph replied. "Imported by the woman who calls herself Mrs. May. Before she came over to England she must have had this house described to her with the greatest minuteness. Otherwise, she could not have so many instruments ready to her hand; she would never have thought of these bees, for instance.

"If this scheme had not been discovered everybody in the house would have been stung before long, and every one assuredly would have died. Those black bees are exceedingly fierce, and do not hesitate to attack everybody and everything. Their sting is so sharp and so minute that it leaves no mark and no pain. Half an hour passes, and then the victim falls down and dies."

Geoffrey regarded the specimen with new interest. He eyed it up and down as if examining a cobra through the glass sides of its prison house. Tchigorsky took the box and flattened the lid down until the insect within was no more than a red smash on the glass. A little later and the thing was pitched over the cliffs into the sea.

"It is a dreadful business," Geoffrey said. "And, indeed, it seems almost hopeless to try to combat foes so ruthless, so resourceful, and so daring as ours. No sooner are we out of one horror than we are into another."

"While life lasts there is always hope," said Tchigorsky.

"That's true," said Geoffrey, more cheerfully. "At any rate we can avert the danger now. But how are we going to get rid of those things?"

"We are going to catch them," said Tchigorsky grimly. "We shall have to destroy all the other bees, I am afraid, and we shall be compelled to let Miss Vera draw her own conclusions as to the cause of the mischief."

"And the honey, Mr. Tchigorsky?"

"Oh, the honey will be all right. That hasn't been stung, you know. I have tasted honey from a nest which the black bees have invaded, and have been none the worse for it. We had better surmise that for some inscrutable reason the bees have deserted their quarters. And we shall propose to know nothing at all about the matter. I flatter myself we shall puzzle the enemy as completely as our friends."

The matter was discussed in all its bearings until the light began to fail and the glow faded gradually from out of the sky.

Then after locking the inner door of the morning-room, Ralph produced two large gauze frames, some matches, and powdered sulphur. This, with a small bellows, completed the stock in trade.

Tchigorsky immediately set about his task in a workmanlike manner. The bees were all in the two hives by this time. Over the hole in front of each a square of muslin was fastened, a pile of sulphur in front was lighted, and the fumes were gently wafted into the hole with the aid of the pair of miniature bellows.

There was an angry murmur from within, the murmur of droning insects, then the quick scream of churning wings. The little strip of muslin was strained by alarmed and infuriated bees striving to escape. But not for long. Gradually the noise died down, and Tchigorsky signed to Geoffrey to help him carry the hive into the house.

There it was deposited on a table and the top lifted off. Instantly the gauze frame was placed over it, and with a brush Tchigorsky swept out the stagnant insects into a glass-topped box provided for the purpose. On the whole, there was not much danger, but it was just as well to be on the safe side. "Not one left," said Tchigorsky, after he had made a careful investigation. "But it's quite as well to be certain. I've put those insects into the box, but I don't fancy any of them will revive. Now for the other one."

The other hive was treated in similar fashion. There was no hitch, and finally the frame was replaced as if nothing had happened, with the exception that the tiny occupants were no more. In the glass boxes, among the piles of dead bodies, Geoffrey could see here and there the form of a black insect. From his coat pocket Tchigorsky produced some long, thin strips of lead, which he proceeded to wind round the boxes containing the bees.

"There," he exclaimed, "that job is done at last, and a nasty one it has been. To prevent any further mischief I'll just step across the terrace and throw these over into the sea. He moved off into the darkness, and as he did so there came the sound of a fresh, young voice that startled Geoffrey and Ralph as if they had been criminals caught red-handed in some crime.

"Geoffrey, Geoffrey, where are you?" the voice cried.

Ralph stepped across and closed the window as Vera entered. It was quite dark outside, and Ralph hoped that Tchigorsky would see without being seen. Vera flashed a look of gentle reproach at her lover.

"How can you look me in the face after the way in which you have treated me?" she asked. "This is the first day's pleasure we have had for years, and you——"

"Did not care to leave Uncle Ralph," Geoffrey said. "He seemed so lonely that I felt I could not let him remain like this."

"Geoffrey is a good fellow," Ralph muttered.

Vera bent and kissed Geoffrey fondly. She smiled without any show of anger.

"I forgive him," she said. "Still, I did miss him. Where are you going, dear?"

"Across the terrace," Geoffrey replied. "I'll be in to supper directly. It's all ready, and there is Marion calling you. I'm coming."

Tchigorsky had crept to the window. He caught Geoffrey's eye and waved to him vigorously. It was a sign that he wanted assistance at once.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An Unexpected Guest.

Geoffrey gave one glance at Ralph before he went. The latter nodded slightly and sharply, much as if he saw the look and perfectly comprehended it. Vera had disappeared at Marion's call. In the dining-room beyond the servants were getting supper. From the distance came the pop of a cork.

Outside it was dark by this time. Geoffrey closed the window. He did not speak, but waited for Tchigorsky to give the sign. His feet touched something that gave out a faint metallic twang.

Geoffrey wondered. Did this mean burglars? He was certainly near to a wire which was stretched across the terrace, close to the ground. It was precisely the precaution taken by modern burglars to baffle capture in case of being disturbed during their predatory proceedings.

But burglars would not come to Ravenspur. A minute's reflection convinced Geoffrey of that. The name and horror of the house were known all over England. Everybody knew of the watch and ward kept there, and no burglar in his senses would risk what amounted to almost certain capture.

No; something far different was going on. And that something had been sprung hastily, for half an hour before these wires had not been there. Geoffrey waited with the comfortable assurance that Tchigorsky was not far off.

A stealthy footstep crept towards him; a shadow crossed the gloom.

"Is that you, Tchigorsky?" Geoffrey whispered.

"Yes," came the reply. "There are hawks about. Listen."

A little way down the terrace something was moving. Geoffrey could hear what sounded to him like laboured breathing, followed by a stifled cry of pain.

"The one hawk is wounded, and the other has sheered off," said Tchigorsky.

"It sounds like a woman," said Geoffrey.

"It is a woman, my dear boy. And such a woman! Beautiful as the angels, fair as a summer's night. Clever! No words can paint her talents. And she is in the toils. She cries, but nobody heeds."

Again came the cry of pain. There was a flash and a spurt of flame as Tchigorsky struck a match and proceeded to light a lantern. He picked his way over the entanglement of wires; Geoffrey followed him.

"Who laid this labyrinth?" Geoffrey asked.

"Oh, a good and true assistant of ours, an old servant of your uncle's. We have more than one assistant, and Elphick is invaluable. We laid the trap for the bird, and she has broken her wing in it. Pity she had not broken her neck."

Geoffrey did not echo the last ferocious sentiment. He was aflame with curiosity. A little farther off in the dim path shown by the lantern's flare something dark lay huddled on the ground. There was a flash of white here and there, the shimmer and rustle of silken garments.

It might have been Geoffrey's fancy, but he seemed to hear a hurried whisper of voices, and saw something rise from the ground and hurry away. But the black and white heap remained. Tchigorsky flashed his lantern upon it. Geoffrey could just see that there was a strange, malignant grin upon his face.

"A lady!" he cried in affected astonishment. "Ravenspur, here is a lady! Madam, permit me to tender you our assistance. You are in pain."

A white, defiant face looked up—a beautiful face disfigured for the moment by evil passions. There was murder in the eyes. The woman seemed to have no consciousness of any one but Tchigorsky.

"It is you!" she hissed. "Toujours Tchigorsky."

"Yes, it is I. But I have unfortunately forgotten your name. Strange that one should do so in the case of one so lovely and distinguished. You are ——"

"Mrs. May. Mrs. Mona May."

She had caught sight of Geoffrey now and a smile came, forced to her lips.

"Mrs. Mona May," said Tchigorsky. He spoke in the same slightly mocking strain. "Mrs. Mona May. How stupid of me to forget. And yet in my muddled brain the name was so different."

Geoffrey bent over the woman anxiously.

"You are in pain," he said. "May I assist you?"

"Indeed, it is very kind of you, Mr. Ravenspur," Mrs. May replied. "I tripped over something. I have hurt my ankle."

"Barbed wire," said Tchigorsky. "Laid down to trap—er—burglars."

"But on no other occasion——"

Mrs. May paused and bit her lips.

Tchigorsky smiled. He understood what she was going to say. On no other occasion when she had been here had she encountered a similar obstacle.

Geoffrey was frankly puzzled.

"How did you get here?" he asked. "When the gates are closed——"

"But they were not closed an hour ago when I slipped into the yard," was the reply. "I am ashamed to say that I allowed sheer vulgar curiosity to get the better of me, and now I am properly punished for my error of taste."

"Nothing but curiosity," Tchigorsky murmured. "My dear Ravenspur, you may dismiss any unworthy suspicions from your mind. The glamor of your name and the fatal romance that clings to your race have proved too much for the most charming and most tender-hearted of her sex."

"I have no suspicions at all," said Geoffrey.

"Of course not," Tchigorsky said in the same mocking way. The light yet keen sarcasm was lost on Geoffrey, but the other listener understood. "Mrs. May would not injure a living creature—not a fly or a bee."

The white face flashed again. By this time the woman was on her feet. One foot she found it almost impossible to put to the ground.

"Get a conveyance and take me home," she moaned.

"Perish the thought," Tchigorsky cried. "Would the Ravenspurs outrage the sacred name of hospitality like that? Circumstances compel the life of the cloister and the recluse, but there are limits. Suspicious as the family must be, I am sure they would not fear an unfortunate lady with a sprained ankle."

"Of course not," Geoffrey observed. "I will go and prepare them."

He had read that suggestion in Tchigorsky's eyes. Heedless of Mrs. May's protests, he had vanished towards the house. Tchigorsky had stooped and taken the woman in his arms as if she had been a child.

"What a precious burden!" he said. "Scarred and battered old Tchigorsky is a fortunate man, madam. There, you need not struggle; your little, fluttering heart has no occasion to beat like that. I am not going to throw you over the cliffs."

The last few words were uttered in tones of smothered ferocity.

"You are a devil," the woman muttered.

"Aye, you are right there. Never was the devil stronger in my heart than he is at this moment. Never was I more tempted to pitch you over the terrace into the sea. But there is worse than that waiting for you."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I am going to carry you into the house; I am going to introduce you formally to the family to Ravenspur. I am doing you a kindness. Think how useful the information afforded you will be later!"

"You are certainly the boldest man in England."

"As you are the most utterly abandoned and unscrupulous woman. I can only die once. But I am not going to die before I see you and your hell-spawn all hanged."

"Why don't you denounce me now?"

"Madam, I never did care for unripe fruit. The pear is ripening on the tree, and I will pluck it when the time comes."

Tchigorsky pushed the window of the morning-room open and laid his burden down on a couch.

Almost immediately Rupert Ravenspur, followed by Mrs. Gordon and Geoffrey, came into the room. Ralph was already there. Geoffrey proceeded to explain and make the necessary introduction.

"And who is this gentleman?" Rupert Ravenspur demanded, his eye on Tchigorsky."

"A friend of mine," Ralph put in—"Dr Tchigorsky."

Ravenspur bowed, not that he looked overpleased.

"Permit me to place my hospitality at your disposal," he said. "It is many years since we entertained at Ravenspur, nor do we, in ordinary circumstances, desire them. At present I cannot do less than make you welcome. Madam, I regret that your curiosity should have ended so disastrously."

"I am properly punished," Mrs. May groaned. "My poor foot!"

In the presence of pain and suffering even Ravenspur's displeasure disappeared. Mrs. Gordon proceeded to cut away the high French boot and bathe the small foot in warm water. Almost immediately Mrs. May declared the pain to have passed away. There were tears in her eyes—tears that moved some of the onlookers.

"I am sure I don't deserve this," she said. "I have behaved so abominably that I really don't know what to say."

"Say nothing," Mrs. Gordon replied simply and gently, "but come in to supper. I understand that you are staying at Jessop's farm. A message shall be sent them that you will not return till morning. Meanwhile, if you will lean on me we will manage to reach the dining-room."

The procession started. In the doorway stood Vera. She came forward with a speech of condolence. Tchigorsky was watching the pair. There was a hard gleam in his eyes; the clenching of his hand as over the hilt of a dagger. Beyond, with a face white as her dress, stood Marion.

She staggered against the table as she saw Mrs. May. Her face was full of terror. Geoffrey wondered what it all meant. And was this the wildest comedy or the direst tragedy that was working out before his eyes?

(To be continued.)

A THRILLING ENCOUNTER WITH A SERPENT.

Some of our Zanzibaris had been buying food close to our camp, writes one of the survivors of Stanley's expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha. Suddenly I saw some of them running back to us in panic and heard them shouting: "Master! Master! Come and see!"—the cry which was always raised for our chief in time of peril.

I thought it was a cry of alarm, a signal that an enemy was upon us; but on rushing up I noticed in the distance a huge boa-constrictor hastening away—wriggling over the ground as only a gigantic serpent can, with the fore-part of him erect, and clasping the crushed body of one of our Zanzibaris. The foul brute had been hanging from the branch of a tree, it had whirled round the almost naked body, crushed the man as the crust of a pie is crunched, and was hurrying away with its meal.

"Master! Master! Come and see!"

No soldier ever responded more quickly to the bugle-call than our beloved chief replied to that appeal for help from one of his people. Stanley hurried forth, gun in hand. He was an unerring shot, and even as the boa writhed along he took a true and steady aim. There was a crack, a flash, a tumbling of the loathsome runaway, and a general rushing up of people. The bullet had done its work, but too late to save the man. We got him free of the cruel coils and buried him. The snake—it must have measured nearly twenty feet in length—we left.

To love one's self is the beginning of a life-long romance.

AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

A VISIT TO ONE OF THE SCHOOL FARMS.

On Friday, the 7th inst. (writes "Contributor") I paid a visit to the farm connected with the Sale Agricultural High School, and was much interested in the work carried out, and more especially in the experiments performed there.

Thirty boys, in charge of the head master, reached the farm shortly after my arrival. They were a fine, sturdy, intelligent-looking lot, and after mentally sizing them up, I concluded that here, at any rate, was evidence that there was no deterioration of our race, and in the specimens before me were "worthy sons of worthy sires."

On reaching the farm buildings, the boys doffed their coats, vests and collars, and reappeared in slouch hats and dungarees.

Six of them were drafted off and sent to the farm manager, who had received instructions to be prepared to give them their first lesson in setting-out, opening-up, and ploughing a piece of land.

The remaining 24 boys were taken to a plot of potatoes containing 12 varieties. A chat then took place about the characteristics of the plants, which varied in height from two to six inches, according to variety. In this the boys freely took part by question and answer, and the right atmosphere for the lesson to follow was created.

The boys were then drawn up in a semi-circle before the plot. "Of the varieties before us," said the master, "there are two which seem hardier, and are certainly more productive, than the others; but these hardier and more productive varieties lack in quality which some of the others possess. It may be possible to create a new variety having the productivity of the one and the quality of the other. The fact that such varieties as Up-to-date and Brown's River are heavy-haulmed seems to suggest that much of their productivity is due to their greater leafage. On the other hand, Puritan, Empress Queen, Twentieth Century, and others are light-haulmed and less productive, but finer in quality. Supposing, then, we were to engraft upon the overground stem of an Up-to-date variety the haulm of one of the varieties of finer quality, or upon one of the finer-flavored varieties to engraft the haulm of an up-to-date plant, it may follow that the tubers produced would be of finer quality in the one case and of greater productivity in the other, and possibly a new variety would be created. Taking, then, a plant of the Up-to-date variety, I shall graft it upon the haulm of a plant of Little's Perfection."

The students were evidently acquainted with various methods of grafting fruit-trees, for when asked for suggestions as to the best methods to adopt, these were readily forthcoming. The operation having been carried out by the master, six of the boys were left to carry out the experiments with other plants and varieties.

With the remaining eighteen students, I accompanied the master to another plot of potatoes in a more advanced stage of growth. Coming to a halt before it, the characteristics of the plants at this later stage were noted, a few questions asked, and from the students was elicited that the so-called tubers of the potato plant were in reality underground stems.

"If that be correct," said the master, "then these underground stems respond to the process of grafting, and we shall now try one."

The tuber of a Brown's River variety was exposed, and on this the master grafted a tuber from a Dunion plant. Six of the boys were left at the plot to carry out operations there, and the rest proceeded to the maize plot, where they noted the growth and characteristics of the several varieties in cultivation.

On our way to the maize plot, I asked the master whether he was sure success would attend the operations, which to me were of absorbing interest.

"Oh, no!" said he; "I can find no literature on the subject, but I am confident that these experiments have been tried by others, and probably without success. So far as the union of haulm with haulm, and tuber with tuber, is concerned, I look forward to success; but with our aim of creating a new variety which will produce both quality and quantity, time alone will tell. New varieties of potatoes have hitherto been produced in one of two ways—by cross fertilization of the flowers and by sports. The former method is long and wearisome. One may cross-fertilise hundreds of flowers and find after one's trouble that not one fruit has formed. Out of three-quarters of an acre of early potatoes planted on the farm I was unable to find one fruit. Potatoes have been so bred to produce tubers that they seem to have lost the power of producing fruit. I have a potato, the result of cross-fertilization, between a Vermont and a Schoolmaster, which I have been experimenting with for five years. The work has been interesting, but the result is, that I have produced a potato, so far as I can judge, inferior to either of the parents. Sports, such as Coronation and Cook's Favorite, have proved of value, but the causes of sporting are evidently not fully understood. At any rate, there is no consensus of opinion between grower and scientist on the subject. However, after all, it is not so much a matter of success or non-success in this particular branch of our work that is of importance; these experiments set up a spirit of inquiry amongst the students which may in time bear good fruit."

We had now reached the maize crop. Standing before one of the Dent varieties, the master said: "Here is a striking achievement on the part of a great American agriculturist." To my uninitiated eye, this variety seemed to be the poorest of the many varieties growing. The plants were from two to three feet high, whilst in the three acres of maize before me, it would have been difficult to find a plant less than five feet high. The students were asked to look for cobs in the varieties near by. Search revealed several plants in which the cobs were just forming, none with more than three, and most with but one cob. In the variety before me none of the plants had less than three cobs, and many had five. These cobs were almost fully developed.

"A maize plant, you see," said the master, "which matures early, and whose energies are devoted to the production of seed instead of stalk—surely a notable achievement! To the American, a heavy yield of corn is of more importance than the production of stalk."

Addressing the boys, the master said: "I have brought you to the maize plot for two purposes—the first, to select plants amongst all the varieties, and to mark them so that the cobs on those may be kept for seed. The viability of seed depends so largely on the vigor of the plant from which it is taken that the necessity of care in selection of seed, not only of maize, but of all farm plants, cannot be too forcibly impressed upon you who will follow agricultural pursuits. We must have an aim in view, but as our circumstances are different, that aim will not be on the lines of the American agriculturist.

"Our aim is threefold:—(1) To produce a maize that will resist drought better than any of the varieties now grown; (2) to produce a larger stalk; (3) to produce a fair amount of corn. With regard to the first division in our aim, we know that the successful growth of maize is limited to a few districts of Victoria, and we also know that no more valuable plant can be grown by the dairy farmer; and seeing that the export of dairy produce stands at the head of exports from this State, it is of great importance that the dairy farmers in all parts of the State should be able to make use of this, the best of fodders. We have seen, of the half-dozen varieties of maize which were sown on the farm early in the season, one only—Sydney Flat Red—which was able to withstand the drought.

"With regard to the second portion of our aim, we can see that Gold Mine and several of the white varieties grow abundance of stalk, and, finally, that so far as we can at present judge, Reflet (excepting the Dent varieties) is most productive in cobs.

"To attempt to carry out our aim we shall cross-fertilise by pollinating Sydney Flat Red with Gold Mine, Reflet, and the white varieties.

"Our preparatory work to-day will consist in protecting the cobs which are now forming from pollination by wind. These bags are made of material which will freely allow light to enter, but will not allow pollen to pass through.

"Here is a plant which is exceptionally vigorous, and the cob is just forming. I cut away the root shoots, lop off the pollen-head, and affix the protecting bag."

After the operation had been completed, the boys were drafted off in twos, each provided with marking cloth and pollen-protecting bags. They were instructed to place the marking cloth on any exceptionally vigorous plants and to cut away side-shoots from them. These would be plants from which the cobs would be taken from which the supply of next season's seed would be obtained. On the varieties named for cross-fertilization, vigorous plants were to be treated as shown, and the pollen protectors affixed.

"There," said the master, as we accompanied him round the plot, "is maize planted as the farmer frequently sows it—broadcast. In a very favorable season maize sown in this way may produce a greater weight per acre of green fodder, but in ordinary seasons, from want of intertillage and conservation of moisture, the weight per acre is considerably less. Here the maize is sown in drills two feet apart, but the plants are close together. The crop, as you see, is at least a foot higher than the broadcast maize, but not as well-grown as in the next plot, where the drills are three feet apart. But even here the maize fails when compared with that check planted 3ft. apart every way. Our experiments for this season—an exceptionally dry one—would lead us to infer that maize grown at wider intervals will give heavier yields of fodder, and certainly a much heavier yield of corn. The results are largely due to the fact that intertillage conserves the moisture and keeps the soil in such a condition that more food is rendered available to the plants. But apart from the increase in weight of material brought about by greater feeding area, analyses have proved that the maize, on account of the sunlight and free circulation of air, has a much higher nutritive value than is the case with broadcast maize."

On our way back to the farm buildings we looked at the boys ploughing. These boys were some of those newly enrolled, and were having their first lesson in ploughing. All were red-faced and hot. The land was hard, gravelly, and covered with weeds, and the work formed a fine test of the grit of the boys. Each boy took one round of the land, and on finishing up, he had to face five critics and receive advice from the farm manager.

TIME'S THREE.

Time has three children, fleeting and fair,
Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow:
Who circle about as we travel on,
And yield us our joy and our sorrow.

Yesterday stands in her widow's weeds,
Bereft and broken and sad;
To-day smiles over an unfilled grave,
And To-morrow is distant and glad.

And we poor wayfarers worship and woo
These daughters of Father Time:
And Yesterday grieves and To-day deceives,
And the maid named To-morrow's sublime.

"As a matter of fact," boasted a chronic idler who had been remonstrated with on the score of laziness, "I always do my hard work before breakfast."

"Indeed!" said his friend, considerably astonished. "Whatever's that?"

"Getting out of bed!" was the slothful man's reply.

When is vice most dangerous?—When it clothes itself in the garb of virtue.

House painters and novelists are responsible for some highly-colored stories.

Love laughs at locksmiths, but not at wedlock.

The man who always talks grammatically seldom says anything worth listening to.

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE.

Aphorisms and Reflections of Huxley.

Misery is a match that never goes out.

My experience of the world is that things left to themselves don't get right.

Time, whose tooth gnaws away everything else, is powerless against truth.

Patience and tenacity of purpose are worth more than twice their weight of cleverness.

No delusion is greater than the notion that method and industry can make up for lack of mother-wit, either in science or in practical life.

Nothing great in science has ever been done by men, whatever their powers, in whom the divine inflatus of the truth-seeker was wanting.

The only freedom I care about is the freedom to do right; the freedom to do wrong I am ready to part with on the cheapest terms to anyone who will take it of me.

I take it that the good of mankind means the attainment, by every man, of all the happiness which he can enjoy without diminishing the happiness of his fellow-men.

"Learn what is true, in order to do what is right," is the summing-up of the whole duty of man, for all who are unable to satisfy their mental hunger with the east wind of authority.

Thoughtfulness for others, generosity, modesty, and self-respect are the qualities which make a real gentleman or lady, as distinguished from the veneered article which commonly goes by that name.

We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it.

I fancy we are almost the only nation in the world which seems to think that composition comes by nature. The French attend to their own language, the Germans study theirs; but Englishmen do not seem to think it is worth their while.

The higher the state of civilisation, the more completely do the actions of one member of the social body influence all the rest, and the less possible is it for any one man to do a wrong thing without interfering, more or less, with the freedom of all his fellow-citizens.

If a man cannot get literary culture of the highest kind out of his Bible, and Chaucer, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Hobbes, and Bishop Berkeley, to mention only a few of our illustrious writers—I say, if he cannot get it out of those writers, he cannot get it out of anything; and I would assuredly devote a very large portion of the time of every English child to the careful study of the models of English writing of such varied and wonderful kind as we possess, and what is still more important and still more neglected, the habit of using that language with precision, with force, and with art.

WHY FISHES ARE SLIPPERY.

Fish of almost every sort are, when fresh caught, slippery and hard to hold. This slipperiness is due to a sort of mucous exuded through the scale, and is of the greatest importance to all slimy creatures.

One of the most important functions of the fish's slimy coating is to protect it from the attacks of fungus, a form of plant life found in all waters, salt and fresh, foul and pure. If the fish is so injured that some spot becomes uncovered by the slime, a barely visible fungus will be likely to lodge there, and when it is once lodged the process of reproduction is very rapid. It soon extends over the gills and kills the fish.

The primary purpose of the slime of the fish is to reduce its friction when in motion through the water and to increase its speed. It also serves as a cushion to the scales, which it thus protects from many injuries.

A STRANGE BONFIRE.

When the news of the Battle of Waterloo arrived at Warrington—then, as now, a thriving place—the chief magistrate of the town declared that he should add to the projected illuminations by burning his own house down, and he actually did so.

It seems that the house was an old one, mostly wood, and that his worship had previously contemplated dismantling it and building a new one. But his example was contagious, and the owner of a considerable block of what would in these days be called "slum" property, happening to be a political rival of the other incendiary, burnt the ancient tenements as a counter-attraction.

Unfortunately, a big house not contemplated in the scheme took fire also, but the crowd and the authorities, thinking that it was all part of the show, did nothing to put this fire out, and even restrained the owner as a mad drunkard when he danced about exhorting them to put the fire out.

Overdone.

They had met in the home-going train, and the talk had drifted to their neighbors.

"Ye-es," Mr. Billings said, reluctantly, in reply to his friend's remark that Mrs. Joyce was "an awfully sweet little woman."

"So cheerful! Always sunny! Always looking on the bright side!" Billings' friend continued enthusiastically.

"There's such a thing as overdoing that 'bright side' business though," said Billings. "The other night I was up there, and Joyce—you know how absent-minded he is—put the lighted end of his cigar in his mouth. He jumped three feet, and was a little noisy for a minute. Right in the midst of it all Mrs. Joyce smiled blandly and said:

"'How fortunate you were, dear, to discover it at once!'"

It shows wonderful self-control when a man never mistakes his good luck for ability.

Jealousy is born with love, but does not always die with it.

He that has no silver in his purse should have silver on his tongue.

Truth does not do as much good in the world as its counterfeits do harm.

Supplement to the Leader.

March 14, 1908.

THE RESULT OF AN EXPERIMENT,

OR

AVIS'S HOLIDAY.

"Yes," said little Vose, in a nodding tattoo tone, as he perched himself comfortably in the railing of the long verandah of the Queen's Hotel, "I guess I call myself a judge of good judge of character. I've read a little, I've travelled a little, and I can read it like a book—almost. A thoroughly good, honest man—glorious this, and shall probably analyse the features of every person I meet before my mouth is open. So shall get over them—the one you were so devoted to last night, I mean? I spent nearly the whole morning yesterday studying her. Her chief characteristic is jealousy."

"Nonsense!" said Sydney Cowan, a little insolently. "She isn't even the least indication of such a thing. She is one of those calm, lovely women who are above petty feeling of any sort. You're wrong, Vose."

"No, I'm not," returned Vose. "She's jealous—as the man who marries her will find out to his cost. I shouldn't like to be the man who married her myself, but I'm sorry for the poor fellow who is her choice. Who is she?"

"Miss Nelson," answered Sydney Cowan. "That stout old lady in the verandah is her mother. She's very well off, I believe, and Miss Lillian's very accomplished."

"And you won't believe she is jealous?"

"No; I must believe it. I've known her intimately for two years, too, and have never seen even the faintest symptom of jealousy."

"Perhaps not. She hasn't had cause to show it—yet. I'll tell you what you think, that I'm right, if you are willing to help me."

"What kind I do?" asked Cowan.

"You know that Avis paying attention to her, and pretend devotion to someone else. Take to that little little girl in white, for instance—the one sitting over there by the fire place."

"That little little girl in white is Miss Nelson's cousin—a poor relation! I believe—only this morning heard her say—that she is an orphan."

"All the better—the more helpless! Well, I'll bet you a hundred to one she will be jealous of her cousin, and show that people were—as I said—above such feeling. Look here, I'm willing to bet you a hundred to one that Avis's attention to her, and pretend devotion to someone else. Take to that little little girl in white, for instance—the one sitting over there by the fire place."

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fairly cried because of the impossibility of ever becoming even one-tenth as lovely as Lillian! Perhaps some of the neglect Avis felt so keenly was due to the calm distance in which she was held by her cousin, who took care to let everyone know that Avis stay at the Queen's Hotel was due entirely to "one of mamma's generous freaks," and she was always proud to tell people how amazed she was that she considered that mamma had any notion of her being the one Avis fetch home for which she was so totally unfitted.

Had Sydney had expected the idea that the little school-teacher was not worth cutting out, and as she was too shy and proud to make any advances towards friendship, she had been thrown entirely on her own resources for amusement. She had often felt dull and very lonely, and had more than once wished she could leave her little room in the London boarding-house, and go home, but she had never to try otherwise, and I suppose felt it was better to be a little lonely than to be never to be sure of her mother's approval. Her chief characteristic is jealousy.

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"I'll

ROY'S BETRAYAL.

MERELY AN EPISODE.

If vanity were one of Mr. West's weaknesses, few could blame him, for his friends, especially those of the fair sex, were apt to flatter him. Even his male circle was apt to remark that Cyril really wasn't a bad-looking fellow.

Cyril himself, gazing affectionately into the depths of his looking-glass, laid to his soul the flattering unction that he was an undeniably handsome man.

And handsome men, as all the world knows, are few and far between, whilst even those who "aren't bad-looking" ought to be keenly appreciated.

Besides his good looks, Cyril was the owner of a moderate salary in a London shipping office, of a plain and prim elder sister, a pretty, but hoydenish younger one, and a dog about which there were no two opinions.

Young ladies called him a perfect darling, and would go into mild ecstacies about his dear brown eyes, that really talked to one, and men remarked judiciously that young West's dog was a very decent animal, and almost fit for a show.

His one drawback, in Cyril's eyes, was his breed; he would have chosen any other than a Newfoundland, but Roy had been a gift, and kept for that reason at first, and later on because all the admiration lavished on him gave his master a certain reflected glory most pleasant to him.

To Roy he extended a careless patronage, repaid by an absolute and unswerving devotion, and when he took his fortnight's holiday in August, Roy went northward with him.

Cyril was going to Scarborough, that being sufficiently distant from London to make it unlikely that he should meet any undesirable acquaintances there, and his spirits rose as he was whirled away from the dust and din of town, lounging at ease in a second-class smoking carriage.

He always regretted that Fate had reprehensibly failed to provide him with a purse long enough to indulge in first-class returns and other trifles of like nature beloved of his soul; but there is no lot without its cross, and things might have been worse, he reflected philosophically — distinctly worse.

He strolled up the pier next morning after breakfast, the inevitable Roy at his heels, and did not pause until he reached the end, when he leant on the railing and gazed into the water, not altogether unaware that a young lady was similarly occupied a few feet farther on.

She was a pretty girl. Cyril, by surreptitious glances, assured himself that she was a very pretty girl.

She was slender and graceful, with a delicate, apple-blossom complexion and rippling golden hair, knotted loosely under her big hat.

Cyril wished her hat was not so big. He wished she would close her parasol. They conspired to hide her eyes from him, and that was provoking.

Suddenly, as he watched and wished, she leant a little further forward, and then, how it happened he never exactly knew, but somehow the parasol slipped from her fingers and splashed into the lazy, rippling waves.

A little cry from the girl, a sharp order, "After it, Roy; fetch it, sir!" from Cyril, and Roy, nothing loth, was in.

A moment more and he came up, wet and shaggy, from the steps of the lower pier, laid the parasol at Cyril's feet, and shook himself—a performance that caused the two to beat a rapid retreat.

They approached each other again, and the girl began to thank Cyril in a pretty, gracious fashion, expressing polite regrets and gratitude in a clear, low voice, and (which he appreciated still more) favoring him with a smiling look from her hitherto hidden eyes—lovely eyes, of the pure violet one rarely sees except in a baby's face, with an almost childish simplicity and sweetness of expression.

"I am afraid your parasol is quite spoiled," he said, still holding it in his hand. "Will you throw it away?"

"Oh, no," she said; "I can have it recovered. I like the handle."

He glanced involuntarily at it, and remarked vaguely that it was very pretty, noticing for the first time that the handle was ivory with a gold top and the monogram "E.H."

She held out her hand for it as she spoke, but Cyril did not give it up.

"Let me carry it up to the end of the pier for you," he said; "it will only wet your dress now."

Rather to his surprise the favor was granted, and they went down the pier together. She proved a charming companion, and chattered gaily about London and "last season," told him she was staying with an old uncle and aunt, and found Scarborough very dull, and finally took herself and her parasol away with another bewitching smile and reiterated thanks.

Then Cyril and Roy went back to the hotel, and Roy received sufficient petting and praise to turn the head of any dog, and grew almost accustomed to being told he was a brick, and the best old fellow out.

Perhaps neither Cyril nor the fair owner of the parasol were surprised when they met the next day, when Cyril raised his hat, and she acknowledged his salutation with a bow and a smile, and the day after they looked upon a walk and chat as quite a matter of course.

Her name, he learned was Evelyn Hamilton. He was glad it was a pretty name; an ugly one would have spoiled the little romance.

Evelyn suited her; an Evelyn had a right to be gracious and graceful and lovely—to be, in short, everything that Miss Hamilton was.

And she, on her side, thought Cyril "wasn't bad-looking," and had extremely good manners, and, besides, one must amuse one's self somehow, if not that way, why, then, some other way.

Her uncle, old Mr. Egerton, took care it should not be that way. He was full of the idea that, because she was a beauty and an heiress, she would surely fall a victim to some fortune-hunter, wherefor he forbade all men—fortune-hunters or others—his house while it sheltered Miss Hamilton.

Her aunt was, or rather imagined she was, an invalid, and if Evelyn ever hinted that there was a specially good concert or amusing entertainment on, she would look at her reproachfully, and exclaim, "With my nerves, dear!" An unanswerable but extremely irritating argument.

And thus it came to pass that she and Cyril spent long, sunny mornings on the pier, listening to the band, or rowing idly over the blue waters of the bay, or rambling through the older streets, full of quaint beauty and warm color, and Cyril counted each remaining day of his holiday jealously.

One morning, when he had only three or four days left, he met her as usual down near the pier. She was in an idle humor, and did not want to walk or go boating, so they sat down on the promenade, Roy at their feet, and began to talk.

Presently Cyril interrupted himself to call her attention to an old lady in a bath-chair, who was watching them steadfastly.

"Where? I don't see——" Evelyn began.

Then she sprang to her feet, looking so guilty that she might as well have made a full confession of her enormities on the spot.

The old lady threw up her hands with a horrified gesture, the bath-chair went off rapidly, and Evelyn turned round with a rather nervous laugh.

"That's auntie," she said. (Cyril was quite aware of it.) "And she will go and tell my uncle, and then there will be wars!"

"Oh, I do hope not," Cyril said earnestly; but Miss Hamilton shook her pretty head and went off homewards in a rather desponding frame of mind.

The first post next morning brought a dainty little note to Cyril, and its contents startled him considerably:—

"Uncle declares nothing would induce him to take charge of me any longer, so I am to be packed off to my aunt in Kensington until my father is ready to take me abroad. There were fearful agitations, of course, and I am to be ready to depart by the 9.15 in the morning. One thing, I have enjoyed my last ten days in Scarborough much better than I ever expected to!"

It was 8.45 when Cyril read that note, but his portmanteau was packed, his bill paid, and he was at the station by five minutes past nine.

He had just taken his ticket—first-class this time—and was gazing ruefully at the small balance it left him, when Miss Hamilton and her uncle appeared.

They were discreet enough to exchange no greeting beyond a glance, and Cyril sauntered up the platform with Roy to deliver him into the guard's care.

Old Mr. Egerton watched him keenly. "Upon my word, I believe that's the fellow," he said to himself.

"Tall, good-looking, owns a big dog. The big dog marks him. Very smart that, very."

He was standing by the carriage door when Cyril returned, and was about to step in.

"Excuse me," Mr. Egerton said, arresting his movement. "May I ask if you are the owner of that very fine Newfoundland?"

"Yes, sir," Cyril replied, unsuspectingly regarding the question as another tribute to Roy's beauty.

"Then," said Mr. Egerton, studiously civil in voice, but waxing wrathfully red in face, "then I'm sorry to say you can't get in here. Here, guard! Just see that this young lady has her carriage to herself as far as London, will you?"

Cyril saw him slip something into the smiling official's hand, but he had no time for protest or remonstrance, barely enough to fling himself into the next carriage, and then the train steamed slowly out, leaving Mr. Egerton, upright and watchful, on the platform.

Cyril was furious—furious with the old gentleman, the guard, with himself, and most of all, with his betrayer, Roy; but he was not completely baffled yet, and when the train stopped he got out, intending to try again to enter Miss Hamilton's carriage, or, at least, to speak to her.

But the guard, apparently anticipating this manoeuvre, remained ostentatiously near, and Cyril saw he had no chance.

Then Miss Hamilton turned her head and looked at him, and then—she laughed. She laughed heartily; she was immensely amused.

Cyril was speechless with wrath. He flung into his carriage and sat there, in as royal a rage as anyone need wish to behold.

He hated the luxurious fittings of the compartment, and longed savagely for the humbler comforts of the erstwhile despised second-class, and wondered why he had been fool enough to spend his money for the sake of a girl who—oh! the humiliation!—who laughed at him—laughed in his very face!

Why had he not waited for their first stop before trying to enter her carriage? Why had that old gentleman been so preternaturally quick-witted?

Why had he ever troubled his head about such a thorough-going little coquette? Why? Why? Why?

Cyril was consumed with what Rossetti would have called—"Vain desire at last, and vain regret." And a very disagreeable process he found it.

London at last, and Cyril got out, with a sort of angry relief at being released from purgatory, and, as he turned, he knocked against Evelyn.

He was hot and tired and dusty, but she looked as fresh and charming as ever, and smiled at him in the old, winsome way he knew so well.

"Good-bye, Mr. West," she said, holding out her slender little hand. "Wasn't it a shame that uncle saw through everything so quickly? It was all that naughty Roy's fault; he is so dreadfully unmistakable. I was provoked; it was quite too fearfully boring to come all that way alone. Good-bye! good-bye!"

She was gone, followed by a dignified footman, laden with various small packages, and Cyril stood staring resentfully after her.

"Please, sir," said a porter's voice at his elbow, "'ere's your dog, sir. What shall I do with 'im?" looking at the great animal as if rather doubtful of his ability to "do" anything except hold him.

Cyril wheeled sharply round.

"Oh, hang the dog!" he said, and he spoke with considerable emphasis.

It was only a seaside flirtation, after all, and nothing came of it.

Explained.

Andrew Carnegie is said to be amusing his friends with the story of an old Scotch woman who had no great liking for modern church music. One day she was expressing her dislike of the singing of an anthem in her own church when a friend said:

"Why, that anthem is a very ancient one. David sang it to Saul."

"Weel, weel!" said the old woman, "I noo for the first time understan' why Saul threw his javelin at David when the lad sang for him."

He: Alice, you've been eating onions again?

She: Yes, dear.

He: Well, come out with me in my motor-car, and see if I can't take your breath away.

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

Eccentricities of gait have been developed by all the international bowlers. Fielder, the English fast bowler, has three distinct paces in running to the wicket, and at each change he bobs his head as if to avoid something hurled at him. Barnes, on the other hand, gets his speed up by long, slow, seven-leagued strides, and has a huge corn on his third finger from turning the ball. Saunders describes a semi-circle in reaching the crease, and ties his feet up in a knot at the moment of delivery. O'Connor, the South Australian, has a most curious wig-waggle movement, in which every part of his body participates, while his eyes are glued to the ground, so that he never seems to see the wicket until he is actually bowling. One might almost suspect him of trying to make the batsmen feel sea-sick. Noble's theory is "Pitch 'em well up; they either hit or go out."

"That's a shockin' thing in ther paper this mornin'," said Posty (one of "Punch's" identities). "They're goin' t' melt down £250,000 worth of sov'rins an' half sov'rins." "Go on!" gasped the Squatter. "What for?" "'Cause it's er bit worn an' defaced." "But, bless me eyes," said the Squatter, "if they melt 'em they'll spoil 'em altogether. Why, it's mad!" "Well, it does seem what I'd call er trifle hinjudicious," Posty admitted. "Fancy goin' an' boilin' down all them sov'rins. Even supposin' they are a bit worn, there's thousands 'ud be glad of 'em." "My word!" ejaculated Squatter; "an' I'm one." "It's an act iv judicious tyranny an' spoilyation," cried Squatter, warming up, and using his best words in his just wrath. "It's er act iv hadministrative folly an' blind waste; an' yet this here pretends t' be er liberal an' democratic Gov'mint run in the best hinterests iv ther masses. "Rot!" screamed the Squatter. "Whatter they care erbout ther suff'rin' an' strugglin' workers?" "'Enery," resumed Posty, sadly, "they don't care er bean, hotherwise would they go meltin' down them 250,000 sov'rins when they might easy distribit 'em er mong ther 'ungry poor? There's me an' you, 'Enery, representin' the 'ungry poor——" "An' thirsty," cut in the Squatter. "Ther 'ungry and thirsty poor, 'Enery—here we are ready an' willin' t' take them sov'rins off the 'ands of the Gov'mint, an' save all the trouble an' hexpense iv meltin' 'em down; but do they give us a thought? No; the toil-worn an' himpoverished poor ain't nothink t' them fat plutercrats, the breadless 'ome ain't anythin' t' them! We can toil an' suffer an' 'unger while a brutal Goverm'mnt has money t' burn." "'Taint the same ez if we was proud, Willyum, an' wouldn't take sov'rins what was a bit worn," said Squatter. "No, 'Enery, but we're on'y the toilin' masses, good enough for the rich people's worn coats an' boots, but not good enough for their worn sov'rins. But, never mind, the revolution's comin'." "Wake me when it comes, Willyum," said 'Enery, yawning elaborately, and the brothers in adversity drowsed again.

He was a very astute artist, and an excellent one. He was holding an exhibition of his works in an Australian metropolitan centre. One day two big buyers came into competition at the show. Both men were rich, both were a trifle vain of their reputation as connoisseurs and art lovers, and each a little jealous of the other. The result of the feeling of rivalry was extremely profitable to the artist. He realised what it was going to be as soon as he perceived that the pair were on the eve of a battle. The two men began making selections of pictures for purchase, and when Blank said, "I'll take that one!" Dash kept pace by promptly responding, "I shall take this one." The result was that each patron bought more pictures than he had any intention of doing, as he discovered when the zealous attendant presented the lists. Meanwhile, where was the astute artist? He was behind the screen on which the pictures were hung rapidly altering the prices on the paintings to much higher figures. And they say artists have no heads for business!

There is an old story told of the late Lord Brampton, which is similar to a recent occurrence in the Victorian backblocks. Lord Brampton had a man before him charged with murder, the principal evidence relating to the ownership of a hat. Prisoner's counsel succeeded in convincing the jury that the hat in question could not have belonged to his client, and the man was acquitted. Just as he was leaving the dock the late prisoner turned to the judge and guilelessly remarked, "Please, yer lordship, can I 'ave my 'at?" Now for the local case. Up in the way-back a man was before the local "beak" charged with entering and stealing from a dwelling-house. The evidence against him was fairly strong, though mostly circumstantial, and the marauder had left behind him a pair of almost new boots. The "beak" thought that there was hardly sufficient evidence to send the case before a jury, and discharged him. After the court adjourned the beak heard a furious altercation outside the court-house. He was just in the act of going out to see what was the matter when in rushed the late accused. "Look 'ere, boss," he yelled, "that bloke what says I broke into 'is 'ouse won't gimme back me boots. Why, I paid fifteen shillings fer 'em only a week ago. You gimme a sumons and I'll make the waster part up if it cost me every bob I 'ave."

Borrow had a very poor idea of his wife's capacity as a shopper. They had only been married a couple of months, but it seemed to him that she could not buy as his old mother did. She paid too much for everything, and rarely got value for her money; at least, so it seemed to Borrow. Even in buying her own dresses, boots, hats, etc., she displayed little acumen, and her husband was convinced he could buy nicer goods at half the price. "You take anything people will give you, my dear," he said one evening after returning from town, placing a parcel on the table, "so I was determined to buy this dress material for you myself. There it is; open it; look at it. It cost me a guinea, and I think it will make a beautiful frock." "Do you, darling?" said Mrs. Borrow, grittily. "I do, indeed. Now isn't that all right?" "Yes," said the wife; "but it happens to be a pair of rather cheap and rather loud window curtains!" Borrow does not buy for his wife now.

He: But why did she lead him on to propose if she had no intention of accepting him?

She: Oh, I told her how funny you looked when you proposed to me, and she wanted to go through the same experience.

BURTON'S BURGLAR ALARM.

How It Worked.

My friend Burton had dabbled in electricity for some time; he had learned something about it at the Polytechnic school, and it seemed to come natural to him to be interested in batteries and Leyden jars and induction coils and other uncanny things like that. It was all very well when he confined himself to fitting-up electric bells to his own house and to mine; I could forgive him that. But it became objectionable when he made a galvanic battery all out of his own head and insisted on his friends receiving a shock whenever they called.

I left off calling because one evening Burton set the thing going at fever heat just when I had got a good grip of the handles, and he was so excited over his mistake that he was quite powerless to set me free until in my agony I had danced three hornpipes, a set of lancers, and a barn dance. I said a few things to Burton when I was able to speak, and left him to muse over my remarks.

After that Burton struck out in a new line. It appeared that his wife was terribly afraid of burglars. It was a constitutional weakness, and one that she could not help, but she always insisted on looking under the bed every night, and would wake up three times before morning because she was sure there was a man in the house.

Instead of just saying, "Yes, there is a man in the house, dear; it is——," instead of saying that and turning over to go to sleep again, Burton set his mighty brain to work to invent something that would put an end to her distressing fears.

He concluded that a burglar alarm would do the trick, and for many days he wrestled with yards of wire and copper discs and gallipots and chemical stuff until he had the thing complete. He festooned the house with it. If the postman came after dark he could not set his foot on the doorstep without ringing a bell—so Burton said.

He took his wife round to show her how the thing worked, and he kept saying, "Don't touch this!" and "Don't touch that!" till the poor woman was walking tip-toe and locking her fingers together in case they hit the wall.

That was the first day, when the entire system was complete.

So they retired to rest that night in unusual happiness and comfort, Mrs. Burton feeling secure for once, and her husband looking forward to a night's rest, which would be a nice change for him.

It was a sad oversight on their part to lock Tibby out. Tibby is Mrs. Burton's cat. The animal had no objection to roam about for an hour or so, but about three o'clock in the morning it wanted to get indoors again, to its cosy bed on the drawing-room sofa. The cat signified its wishes in the usual manner, and its me-ows must have been most distressing to the neighbors. Still, the door opened not, and Tibby proceeded to investigate matters.

The cat leaped upon the window-sill. There were three immediate results. First, a bell was set going; second, Tibby got an electric shock and began to yell; third, several other cats came round to see what was transpiring.

The other cats in their turn jumped on window-sills and ledges, and set more bells going. They had me-owed out of sympathy, but when they, too, got shocked, they cried in deadly earnest. One big black Tom, with hair on end and a tail like a sweep's broom, went clean through a pane of glass in the excitement of his supreme surprise.

All the cats in the neighborhood came round to see the affair cleared up properly, and the caterwauling was unique in its way. The neighbors threw open their windows, and threw strange things out of them, such as old boots, candlesticks, and half-bricks. It is charitable to surmise that they threw at Tibby and his friends, but the fact remains that their missiles struck glass more often than fur.

As an alarm, Burton's contrivance was an entire success, for the whole place was alarmed for about three miles around. All the cats had the jumps for many moons, and all the neighbors said the thing was a scandal. Burton, the Philistine, seemed satisfied with events, and went to bed quite happy that second night.

He retired early, a little after ten. About eleven a man came slowly up the garden path and approached the house.

"Ah!" he said, "they are all asleep."

No doubt he was a burglar, intent upon the exercise of his nefarious profession.

He went to the door and pushed it. It did not open, for, of course, it was bolted; but a bell went "ting-a-ling."

The man muttered something inaudible under his breath and went round to the parlor window. He put his hand to the top sash, and pulled. "Ting-a-ling!" went another bell, and a wire, which touched his wrist, sent a slight shock through him. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "there's those rheumatics coming on again. I thought I'd got over 'em."

So he went back to the door and tried to turn the handle. It must have been a decoy handle, for a current from it ran up his arm and made him squirm like a conger eel in the process of dissection. In his pain he threw himself bodily at the door.

"Ting-a-ling-a-ling!" went a thousand bells.

"It's like a performance by the Royal Handbell Ringers," gasped the man. "Whatever can it mean?" He grasped the knocker with one hand and the bell-knob with the other—and got a shock that threw him on all fours. And just then Burton, aroused by the din, threw open his bedroom window and began bravely firing his revolver at the stars.

"Go away!" he cried.

"All right," moaned the man down below, as he picked up his own pieces, and shambled along the path towards the gate. "All right, I'm going. I'll go to the hotel, and get a bed there."

And then an agonised voice sounded from the interior of the room. "Why," came the accents of Mrs. Burton, "that's Uncle Fred! And you've frightened him, and shocked him, and shot him—and now he's gone for good!"

Uncle Fred was the rich uncle from whom Mr. and Mrs. Burton had "expectations."

"It's unfortunate," Burton owned; "but we didn't know the old fool was coming to-night. If we had known, I'd have sat up for him and destroyed the connection. He'll never forgive us. But that can't be helped now. There's one consolation, we know how perfect my invention is!"

So it was all in order, as usual, on the third night. And when that night came, real burglars came as well—and they cut the wires and got into the house without one bell giving a sound, and they cleared out all they wanted from the lower rooms and left the house by the front door without anybody being an ounce the wiser till the milkman called in the morning.

RANJITSINJHI'S REIGN.

Judging from what His Highness Jam Sahib Ranjitsinjhi of Jamnagar has been doing for the past three months, there is little doubt that steady progress will be made and maintained under the close and enlightened guidance of such an able chief. For the first time in the course of seven years plague has been stamped out from Nawanagar by the cordial co-operation of the people. For improving the city, which is very badly built and thickly populated, a city improvement trust has been formed. For the lower classes of people houses will be built outside the town, and the better classes will be allowed to build on the Bedi-road on easy terms. His Highness has sanctioned the expenditure of £2000 for repairing the public buildings, they not having been repaired for the last 15 years. As a memorial to the late Jam Vibhaji, instead of erecting a statue at the cost of £1200, collected by the people, His Highness has expressed his desire to add Rs. 7000 (£466) more, and to build a training school, a female hospital, and a boarding house for students coming from the Nawanagar districts. It having been brought to his notice that the want of a grain market disseminates plague more than anything else, orders have been issued for its construction. His Highness keeps a vigilant watch over all his officials, expecting them to do their work promptly and effectually. Every month His Highness calls for progressive reports from the heads of all departments, and invites suggestions for improvement, and then issues orders thereon.

For nearly 50 years Nawanagar State has been passing through unfortunate and critical periods, such as have scarcely befallen any principality in Kathiawar. The last two years have enabled the State to pay off the Government loan, and the Gondal debt is due in 1911. By that time His Highness hopes to free the State from the debt. At the same time he wishes to introduce much-needed reforms in the State rather than to let it remain in its present neglected and backward condition. His Highness's long residence with English people has considerably broadened his views, and he looks at things from a broad and liberal standpoint.

THE FIRST MEERSCHAUM PIPE.

If hardly as popular as they were a few years ago, meerschaum pipes still attract a large number of enthusiastic devotees. Probably few of these admirers, however, are acquainted with the alleged origin of their cherished consolers.

More than a century and a-half ago, relates a contributor to the "Tribune," there lived in Pesth a certain shoemaker, by name Karol Kowates, who, it is said, earned a decent competency by making shoes and a handsome fortune by carving pipes.

Among his many patrons was a certain Count Andrassey, who, being the recipient of a huge lump of meerschaum, handed it to Kowates, the shoemaker, ordering him to experiment on the new material, and, if possible, fashion from it a pipe. Kowates, it appears, being a man of some resource, cut two pipes from the block, and smoked one himself.

Now, the hands of the shoemaker were waxy, and the meerschaum became waxed here and there while Kowates smoked. He found after some little time that wherever the pipe had been waxed a spot of pale brown appeared like a stain. Still experimenting, he waxed the entire pipe, which now, after habitual smoking, grew to a most beautiful, even brown. Incidentally, the pipe smoked sweeter than before. On the publication of his discovery, meerschaum pipes attained immediate popularity.

The Light of Genius.

For more than a week a school-teacher had been giving lessons on the dog, and so when the inspector came down and chose that very subject there seemed every prospect of the class distinguishing itself.

Things were progressing quite satisfactorily, and the teacher was congratulating himself on the trouble he had taken, when, alas! a question was asked which made him tremble for the reputation of his scholars.

"Why does a dog hang his tongue out of his mouth?" asked the inspector.

"Yes, my boy?" he said to a bright-looking lad who held up his hand, while the light of genius was in his eye.

"To balance his tail!" shouted the bright boy.

More Economical.

Expert testimony may be valuable from a scientific point of view, but there are often cheaper ways of establishing a certainty, as the hero of the following anecdote decided at the last moment:—

An Irish laborer entered a chemist's, and drawing a paper-bag from his pocket poured on the counter a number of very sticky and unattractive-looking lozenges.

"Can ye examine this candy?" he asked.

"It looks queer. What is the matter with it?" asked the chemist.

"Pizen, Oi'm thinkin'. Did ye iver see such stuff? Dinnis Daly give thim to me b'y, and Dinnis is no frind of mine."

"Well, I can make an analysis."

"All right. Oi'll come in to-morrow on me way from worruk."

The Irishman had reached the door, but he suddenly stopped with his hand on the latch.

"And how much will thot 'nalysis be costing me?" he inquired.

"Five shillings," was the answer.

The man walked over to the counter and swept the lozenges into the bag, which he replaced in his pocket.

"Niver moind," he said. "Oi'll feed wan to the cat."

Jakes: Todd, your wife has a voice like velvet.

Todd: Gracious! Don't talk so loud. If she heard you I should have to get her a new dress to match it.

Neighbor: I have no secrets from my wife. I tell her everything.

Next Door: Yes, I know you do.

Neighbor: How do you know it?

Next Door: Oh, your wife tells what you tell her to my wife, and she tells me!

SOME LUCKY FINDS.

Some years ago a servant girl in the West of Ireland was breaking a block of peat across her knee while kindling a fire under the copper in the morning, when out dropped a gold signet ring with her master's monogram and crest upon it. Two years before he had lost it on the edge of the bog while following the hounds, and it was thus miraculously recovered.

A German waiter in England, who had fallen upon very bad times, made surely one of the luckiest discoveries on record lately. Wishing to apply for a situation, and his clothes being somewhat shabby, he spent his last few shillings with a second-hand clothier. Having worn his "new clothes" for a day or two, he was struck with the unusual rustling of the jacket while brushing it. His curiosity was aroused, and to investigate the peculiarity of the padding he ripped up the lining and found, craftily hidden away, three ten-pound Bank of England notes. Elated with the discovery, he proceeded to rip up the other shoulder, but only found a five-pound note there. Still, thirty-five pounds out of the lining of a second-hand jacket was not a bad return for the outlay of a few shillings.

An Italian diver named Bardi missed a valuable dagger, which, having been presented to him, he prized highly. Several years later he was at work on a vessel which had foundered close to the Italian coast. His work was exceedingly gruesome, for the bodies of those who had been drowned remained below. Penetrating into the cabin, he came upon two corpses locked in a deadly embrace. One was the body of his own brother, of whom he had heard nothing for many years, and the other of a woman, in whose breast was buried the blade of his long lost dagger, the hilt being hidden in her murderer's rigid hand.

A diver for sponges on the coast of Tunis suddenly found himself amid the columns and fallen monuments of a ruined city in the bed of the ocean. At first he thought he was the victim of some remarkable mirage, but as he proceeded further he found that the city was not a figment of his imagination, but a reality. He returned to the surface and dived into the very midst of the city, and found himself surrounded by the ruins of a great temple, with marble and bronze statues in profusion. Large numbers of the pillars were still standing, and one or two statues were raised and taken to the French authorities.

A celebrated Egyptian explorer was examining a royal tomb which had been plundered years ago. Probably the robbers had been disturbed, for in a crevice in the wall was hidden the arm of a mummy, which had probably belonged to one of the queens of a remote Egyptian dynasty. On the wrappings being removed, the explorer found four magnificent bracelets of gold, and amethysts, turquoise and lapis lazuli. The gold work was particularly fine and delicate, and the stones very beautiful and of exceeding value.

Another Egyptian explorer had gained entrance to a long hidden tomb which was also discovered to have been rifled, probably thousands of years ago. But just when the excavators were coming to the conclusion that there was nothing of value left, the spade of one of the assistants uncovered a secret receptacle which had escaped the notice of the ancient robbers. In this hiding-place was a little wooden box, quite rotten, but filled with jewels of a perfectly marvellous workmanship. The chief treasure was a breast-piece of gold, encrusted with jewels of remarkable beauty and size. The rest of the treasure consisted of bands and bracelets set with stones, and scores of various little trinkets.

A short time ago, in County Cavan, one thousand seven hundred pounds in gold was found secreted in the wall of a public-house. It is thought that the money had been secreted there for the last fifty years by the late owner, who had the reputation of possessing considerable wealth. This extraordinary find set all the public-house keepers in the county searching in all the corners and holes they could find in the hope of making a similar discovery.

In a remote village in Ireland an old woman was knocked down and killed instantly on the roadside by a dray. When the police inspected the wretched dwelling in which the old woman lived they found it almost packed to the door with branches for the winter fuel. Behind these they discovered two large buckets and a tin trunk, full of all kinds of current coin. Searching further, they found a bigger wooden box and a dozen earthenware jars, and when the money was collected and put into scales the total weight exceeded a hundredweight.

The relative of a London dairyman died intestate, and her furniture came into his possession. One of the articles was an old four-post bedstead, the only part of which he valued being the two carved mahogany corner-posts, which, of late years, have become valuable because of their suitability for transformation into pedestals for flower-pots, etc. Thinking to utilise them for this purpose he proceeded to break up the bedstead, and he found in different parts of it sufficient treasure to make him a wealthy man.

These are lucky finds, but how much treasure has been irretrievably lost, who can say? As showing the danger of hiding things in strange places, quite recently a thrifty peasant of Lausanne in Switzerland, who had saved some money, which he kept in bank-notes, went away from home, and the better to guard his hoard from thieves, hid the notes in his stove. Unluckily his son, finding the day chilly, kindled the stove, and the peasant, when he returned home, found to his dismay that the notes were burnt, or rather, badly charred. Fortunately for him, Professor Aman, of the University of Lausanne, heard of his trouble and came to his relief. Photographs taken of the charred notes revealed their nature sufficiently to satisfy the bank, which refunded the money.

The moon shines blandly through the night,
It gives the soul a joyous thrill
To think of getting all that light
With no one sending in a bill

A married man says that it isn't the jaws of death that worry him, but the jaws of life.

"Do you know that Mr. Thompson I was just speaking to?" asked the lady at the tea of the one standing next to her.

"Oh, yes."

"I suppose he says those sweet things to all the women he meets?"

"No; he never says them to me."

"Indeed! And you know him?"

"Oh, yes; I'm his wife!"

IF I WERE A LADY.

Some Things I Should Do—And Shouldn't.

By a Mere Man.

Of course I never shall be, and I am by no means sure I should want to be if I had the chance. Taking all things into consideration, I have a pretty good time as a man. It is true that as a man one cannot be picturesque. In no circumstances can I see myself going through the varied streets of life in high heels, feathers, and assorted trimmings, nor can I ever hope to achieve unto the manifold virtues of the sex which is not mine. They are beautiful in mind and body, they make a photograph invariably worth an inexpensive frame, and if it were not for them none of us would have anybody to get married to. Treat them well, and they are a good investment and a fine advertisement. My wife improves my credit and exalts my influence. When people see me walking down the street with her they at once jump to the conclusion that either I have a tremendous salary or she has a private income, whereas—but no matter.

Still, with all her manifold virtues and qualities, I shall be excused for saying that a lady—any lady—has one or two failings. To start with, if I were she, I really should not be so trivial. I should not stand in front of a shop window and call a hat a perfect duck, or go around with a magnifying glass to see whether Mary Jane had made a small scratch on the piano, or set the whole house in commotion because the cat had got upstairs, or expect my husband to feel interested in my enthusiasm for some other woman's garments.

I should not say rather nasty things about one of my own sex, even in the nicest way, and then kiss her every time I met her. In fact, I should economise on my kisses in regard to my own sex. I do not know any spectacle more remarkable than that often seen in a railway station, one woman being kissed by a dozen. To me it seems a prodigal waste of sweetness and rapture. As a man I can let my best friend go to the farthest ends of the earth without kissing him. A woman would not let her best friend go ten yards up the street without kissing her a fond farewell.

If I were a lady and had nothing to worry about I should worry about nothing; I shouldn't think it worth while. Come to think of it, the future promises heaps of awful calamities which never happen, and the present holds a great many which might be worse. Anyhow, if I were a woman I should not worry my husband until I had fed him. I should not fire next week's troubles at him before he got in at the door; I should give them a chance to escape out of the window. When somebody or other has been raising a husband's hair at the office all the day, he naturally expects his wife to stroke it down again when he reaches home at night, instead of piling the gas bills and rate bills near his soup plate, or making a fuss about every little domestic triviality which has gone wrong since he left home in the morning. He doesn't want to know what has gone wrong, believe me. He wants the assurance of a voice and a sunny face that everything has gone right. Trouble never yet digested anybody's dinner.

I would not stoop to jealousy, and by never coming down to breakfast in hair curlers I would keep myself superior to it. Hair curlers in sight of crisp toast and kidneys and bacon are a great strain on connubial love. Ever and always I would take pains to make myself pretty, so that if my husband compared me to anyone else, the comparison would be always to my advantage. If while out walking with him he raised his hat to Mrs. Jones, and presently remarked that she was a charming woman, I should agree with him—and take early occasion to study Mrs. Jones more closely—and copy.

If I were a woman I should always praise my husband to all my friends. I should never say a single word to slight him, or give him away, or show that he was a little lower than the angels. The average husband can do with all the praise his wife gives him, and the less he deserves it the more he can do with it. You see, if a woman belittles or slights her husband to other people it is a reflection on her personal choice. I should put his likeness on a pedestal and worship him—sometimes when he was looking, but more often when he wasn't.

It is not sufficient that a woman should love a man; therefore, if I were a woman, I should always be wondering what I could do to show him that I loved him, and never get tired in the process. For instance, a woman may love a man, but it is no proof that she does if she throws a plate at his head, or sulks for half a week, and "nags" at him for the other half. Many wives make a great mistake in disguising their love. The face of love should never be hidden. A wife may hit her husband on the head with the frying pan, but he would feel a deal happier if she kissed him.

I should always try to amuse my husband, in addition to being always sweet to him. This is subtle. I would keep him at home as much as possible by seeing he had as much entertainment at home as possible. I would not grumble even if he brought home a friend unexpectedly. I would make the best of the friend, just to be told afterwards, "How nice to him you were, dear."

In a word, I would make more fuss about my husband's friends than I made about my own. I know it is worth while.

My wife has tried it, and after twenty years she is the dearest and most beautiful woman in all the world to me, and to her I am—well, she said the other day she'd rather lose her hair than lose her "hubby."

"Did Jerrold get anything out of his rich uncle's estate?

"Well, rather! He married the daughter of the lawyer to the estate."

The Judge (in the court-room): I've lost my hat.

The Lawyer: That's nothing. I lost a suit here yesterday.

Sometimes a man doesn't marry because he's afraid he may have a large collection of his wife's folks to support.

Mrs. Slybel: The boy grows more like his father every day.

The Caller: Poor dear; And have you tried everything?

Mrs. Sainte: But why do you keep your new maid if she is so awkward?

Mrs. Sinna: Out of gratitude. Last week she upset all the sauce over my old gown, and George bought me a new one.

COURTSHIP CRACKERS.

Friend: Do you know anything about the art of husbandry?

Old Lady: Well, I ought to if I don't. I've married off five daughters.

"George is getting on," said Flossie, to her dearest friend Maud. "Last night he said I was a little duck."

"Oh!" murmured Maud, sweetly, "I thought he would find out you're no chicken."

"What did you tell father about your prospects?" she asked.

"I told him I expected in the near future to be helped by a rich relative."

"Why, Charles! You told me you had no rich relative!"

"I know it; but I shall have one after the wedding."

"Miss Ethel is a long time coming down," said the youth to the servant, after waiting some time for the young lady's appearance. "Perhaps," he added, with a laugh, "perhaps she is making up her mind whether to see me or not?"

"No," said the servant, with an icy smile, "it is not her mind she is making up."

Borely (at 11.30 p.m.): Yes, my hair is getting quite thin. Is there anything you could advise me to put on it, Miss Smart?

Miss Smart (stifling a yawn): You might put your hat on it, Mr. Borely.

A young man who was to be married in church to a Miss Way, after a courtship of four years, privately requested the choir not to open the service by singing "This is the Way I Long Have Sought."

Kind To His Horses.

One of our smaller public schools boasts a brass band, of which the boys are exceedingly proud. But the townspeople look with anything but favorable eyes upon these young musicians, and never lose an opportunity of showing their dislike.

One day recently the band was engaged to play at a charity bazaar in a small town some distance from the school, and a waggonette was hired to take the boys there.

On the way the young leader of the band suggested that they should "have a tune," but the driver of the waggonette at once objected.

"No toons while I drive," he declared.

"But why?" persisted the musicians. "Surely the horses wouldn't run away?"

"No," said the driver they wouldn't."

"Then why object?"

"Simply becos the poor beggars couldn't run away if they tried," was the grim retort. "Their runnin' away days is over, an' as long as I drives you ain't goin' to take no mean advantage of 'em! That's why I sez no toons."

The boys subsided, and there were "no toons" on that journey.

Hedging.

A worthy professor was invited to dine at the house of a lady of fashion. When the company rose from the table, the professor noticed, to his great consternation, that he was unsteady on his feet.

In his anxiety to save appearances, he repaired to the drawing-room, where the lady of the house yielded to the wishes of her lady friends and ordered the nurse to bring in the baby twins.

The professor gazed intently at them for a while, as if deciding whether or not there were two or one, and then said, somewhat huskily:

"Really, what a bonny little child!"

An' He Bowed, an' He Bowed.

Many of the engineers on a certain steamship line are Scotsmen. One captain, dissatisfied with the speed of his ship, interviewed his chief engineer, whom he found playing a fiddle.

"Mr. Mac," he thundered, "what are you about? I am not at all satisfied with your engines; we go like snails, sir."

Mr. Mac flourished his bow defiantly and retorted:

"Sair, my engines should hae ben in Liverpool yesterday; it's your slow old ship that's at fault!"

Short-Lived.

Professor (coming from his club triumphantly holding up his umbrella to his wife): You see, my dear, how stupid are all the anecdotes about our absent-mindedness. I haven't forgotten my umbrella.

Mrs. Professor: But, my dear, you didn't take your umbrella with you; you left it at home.

What is the difference between a hen with a wing and a hen without a wing?—A mere difference of a pinion.

Sarcasm may have many admirers, but it has no friends.

It is not until we ask a favor that we discover how many of our friends are merely acquaintances.

A woman will freely confess her faults to the man she loves, but a man will not admit that he has any.

It's better to have an ounce of confidence in yourself than a pound of faith in your neighbor.

When a girl begins to order a young man about he might just as well begin to save money to buy the furniture.

Deceit has a very short reign.

There may be a few people who are beneath flattery, but there are also only a few who are above it.

The most innocent girl knows that a man is in love with her before he finds it out himself.

A selfish man is sceptical about friendship, just as a man who has no ear does not like music.

Few things are more certain than expenses we hadn't counted on.

The man is fortunate who never knows when he gets the worst of it.

During hot weather a man should make love to the girl that puts on the most airs.

When destiny wills, it must be obeyed.

Book Agent: I have a little book here on "Things You Ought to Know!"

Subbubs: Then you ought to know that I don't want one.

Supplement to the Leader.

March 21, 1908.

The Mystery of the Ravenspurs.

By F. M. WHITE,
Author of "The Ends of Justice," "The Law of the Land," etc.

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CHAPTER XXXI.
The Silk Thread.

Intensely interested as he was in the story that Tchigorsky had to tell, Geoffrey, nevertheless, watched the slowly moving thread on the table. Gradually and very slowly the silken tag began to draw away from the pattern on the table-cloth, Tchigorsky following it with grim eyes.

"You find it strange?" he asked Geoffrey.

"Strange and thrilling," Geoffrey replied. "It appeals to the imagination. Some tragedy may be at the other end of that innocent-looking thread."

"There may be; there would be if I were not here. We are [illegible]ing with a foe whose cunning and [illegible]ity know no bounds. You see I have been among the foe and know something of their dealings."

A passionate anger rose up in Geoffrey as he watched the gliding thread.

"Then why not drop upon them?" he cried. "Why not produce your proofs and hand the miscreants over to the police?"

"What good would that do?" Tchigorsky replied. "Could we prove that the foe had had a direct hand in the tragedies of the past? Could we demonstrate to the satisfaction of a jury that Mrs. May and her confederates were responsible for those poisoned flowers or the bees? And if we get them out of the way there are others behind them. No, no; they must be taught a lesson; they must know that we are all-powerful. And they must feel the weight of our hands. Then the painful family scandal——"

"You are going too far," Ralph interrupted warningly.

Tchigorsky checked himself after a glance at Geoffrey.

"I am not to be told everything," he said. "Why?"

"Because we dare not," Ralph murmured. "It is not that we cannot trust you, but because we dare not."

With this Geoffrey was fain to be content. By this time the thread had left the table, and was lying on the floor.

"The other end is tied to Mrs. May's door," Tchigorsky explained. "When that door was cautiously opened, of course the thread moved. Geoffrey, you stay here. Ralph, will you go up by the back staircase and get up to the corridor. Wait there."

"Is there any danger?" Geoffrey whispered.

"Not now," said Tchigorsky; "but this audacity passes all bounds. That woman had planned to strike a blow at the very moment when she was enjoying the hospitality of this roof. The boldness of it would have averted all suspicion from her. One of the family mysteriously disappears and is never heard of again. In the morning not one lock or bolt or bar is disturbed. And yet the member of the family is gone. England would have been startled by the news to-morrow."

"You heard all this?" Geoffrey cried.

"Yes," Tchigorsky said quietly. "That disguise I showed you was useful to me. It is going to be more useful still."

"But the danger! It must be averted," Geoffrey whispered.

Already Tchigorsky was leaving the room. The lamp had been extinguished, after taking care to place a box of matches close beside it. In the darkness Geoffrey waited, tingling to his finger-tips with suppressed excitement.

Meanwhile, Tchigorsky felt his way along in the darkness. He was counting his steps carefully. He reached a certain spot and then stopped. Ralph strolled down the back staircase, and thence down a flagged passage into the hall, where he climbed the stairs.

Light and darkness, it was all the same to him. There was nobody in the house who could find their way about as well as he.

Then he waited for the best part of half an hour. He could hear queer sounds coming from one of the bedrooms, a half-cry in light, feminine tones, a smothered protest, and then the suggestion of a struggle. Yet Ralph never moved towards it; under cover of the darkness he smiled.

Then he heard a door creak and open; he heard footsteps coming along in his direction. The footsteps were stealthy, yet halting; there was the suggestion of the swish of silken drapery. On and on that mysterious figure came until it walked plump into Ralph's arms.

There was a faint cry—a cry strangled in its birth.

"Mrs. May," Ralph said quietly, "I am afraid I startled you."

The woman was gasping for breath, iron-nerved as she was. She stammered out some halting, stumbling explanation. She was suffering from nervous headache; she was subject to that kind of thing, and there [illegible] remedy she always carried in her jacket pocket. And the jacket was in the hall.

"Go back to your room," said Ralph. "I will fetch it for you."

"There is no occasion," the woman replied. "The shock of meeting you has cured me. But what are you doing?"

"Sleeping on the stairs," Ralph said in his dullest, most mechanical way.

"Sleep—sleeping on the stairs! Why?"

"I frequently do it. I suffer from insomnia. The accident that deprived me of my sight injured my reason. This is one of my lucid intervals. For years I slept in the open air; the atmosphere of a bedroom stifles me. So I am here."

"And here you are going to remain all night?"

"Yes. I presume you have no objection."

Mrs. May was silent. Did this man know the terrible position he had placed her in? Was he telling the truth, or was he spying on her? Was he dangerous enough to be removed, or was he the poor creature he represented himself to be?

"You should get your clever friend Tchigorsky to cure you," she said.

"Tchigorsky has gone away. I don't know when I shall see him again."

That was good news at any rate. Mrs. May stooped to artifice. There were reasons why this man should be got out of the way at present. He had brought danger by his stupid eccentricity, but the bold woman was not going to change her plans for that.

"Be guided by me," she said. "Go to your room."

"I am here till the morning," Ralph said doggedly. "Go to yours. We are a lost, doomed race. What does it matter what I do?"

It was useless to combat sullen obstinacy like this. Mrs. May uttered a few clear words in a language that not one in a million would understand—certainly not three people in England. It never occurred to her for a moment that Ralph Ravenspur might be one of the three; but he was.

He listened grimly. No doubt the mysterious words had nothing to do with the matter, but a door in the corridor opened, and Marion emerged, carrying a light in her hand. She came swiftly down the corridor, her long hair streaming behind her. As she saw Ralph she gave a sigh of relief.

"Come quickly to Vera's room," she said. "We want your help."

In her intense excitement she seemed not to notice Mrs. May. The latter stood aside while the other two passed along. She slipped into her own room and closed the door.

"Foiled," she hissed, "and by that poor meaningless idiot. Is it possible that he suspected anything? But no; he is only a fool. If I had only dared, I might have 'removed' him at the same time. On the whole, it was a good thing that Marion did not see me."

Without the least trace of excitement and without hurry, Ralph followed Marion. A light was burning in the room and Vera, still dressed, was lying on the bed. She was fast asleep, but her face was deadly cold and her breathing was faint to nothingness. Ralph's fingers rested on her pulse for a minute.

"How long has she been like this?" Ralph asked.

"I don't know," Marion replied. "I was just dropping asleep when I fancied I heard Vera call out. In this house the mere suggestion sufficed. I crept quietly along and came in here. The room was empty save for Vera, and there was no sign of a struggle. I should have imagined it to be all fancy but for the queer look in Vera's face. When I touched her I found her to be deadly cold. Is—is it dangerous?"

Ralph shook his head.

"Mysterious as ever," he said. "The miscreant is by us, almost in our hands, and yet we cannot touch him. Vera has been rendered insensible by a drug. The effect of it will pass away in time. She will sleep till morning, and you had better remain with her."

"Of course; I should not dream of leaving the poor child alone."

Ralph just touched Marion's cheek.

"You are a good girl—an angel," he murmured. "What we should do without you I cannot say. Stay here and have no fear. I shall not be far away. I am going to sleep for the rest of the night on the floor outside."

"On the floor, my dear uncle?"

"Bah! it is no hardship," said Ralph. "I have had far less comfortable quarters many a time. I am used to it, and like it. And I sleep like a hare. The slightest noise or motion and I am awake instantly."

Marion raised no further protests. This singular individual was in the habit of doing as he pleased, and nothing could turn him from his humor.

He bade Marion good-night and softly closed the door. But he did not lie down at the head of the stairs. On the contrary, he crept quietly down to his room again.

There Tchigorsky and Geoffrey waited him. The lamp was once more lighted. Tchigorsky had a grin on his face.

"Foiled her?" he asked. "I heard you."

"For the present, at any rate," Ralph replied. "That charming woman does me the honor to regard me as a benighted idiot."

Tchigorsky dropped into a chair and rocked to and fro, shaking with noiseless mirth.

CHAPTER XXXII.
More From The Past.

Geoffrey looked from one to the other for explanation.

"Will you not tell me what has happened?" he asked.

"As a matter of fact, nothing has happened," Ralph replied. "A little time ago Tchigorsky outlined a bold stroke on the part of the foe. He suggested that it was possible, without removing a single bolt or bar, to spirit away one of the family, who would never be heard of again. Tchigorsky was making no prophecy; he was speaking from knowledge. Well, the attempt has been made, and it has failed."

"Who was the victim, uncle?"

"Your cousin, Vera. Sit down, my boy; if you go plunging about like that you will ruin everything. Did I not tell you that the attempt had been made and had failed? Vera is safe for a long time to come."

Geoffrey dropped into his seat again.

"How did you manage it, uncle?" he asked.

Ralph gave the details. He told the story drily.

"So I not only prevented the dastardly attempt to carry Vera away," he concluded, "but I baffled the foe altogether. There was not the slightest suspicion that I was on the stairs by the merest accident."

"But you say that Marion was with Vera?"

"She was. That nimble wit of hers led her to suspect danger. But Marion could not have averted the tragedy. A slender girl like her could have done nothing against a strong and determined foe. If necessary, she would have been carried off, and they would have killed two birds with one stone."

Geoffrey shuddered. He was sick of the whole business. For a moment he was a prey to utter despair. It seemed hopeless to fight against a foe like this, a foe striking in the dark and almost moving invisibly.

"Some one ought to watch that room," he said.

"It is unnecessary. I am supposed to be sleeping close by. Already the foe has learnt that I slumber with one eye open. Don't be cast down, Geoffrey. Two more of the enemy are on their way to Yorkshire, and when they are here the mouth of the net is going to close. I pledge you my word that no further harm shall come to anybody. And Tchigorsky will say the same."

"On my head be it," Tchigorsky muttered. He twisted a cigarette dexterously with his long fingers.

"There is nothing to fear," he said; "nothing with ordinary vigilance. The danger will come when the time for defence has passed and it is our turn to attack. Then there will be danger for the three of us here. Shall we go to bed?"

"I could not sleep for a king's ransom," said Geoffrey.

"Then we will chat and smoke awhile," said Tchigorsky. "If you like, I will go on with the history of our adventures in Lassa."

Geoffrey assented eagerly. Tchigorsky proceeded in a whirl of cigarette smoke.

"We knew we were doomed. We could see our fate in those smiling, merciless eyes. That woman had lived among civilised people: she knew Western life; she had passed in society almost for an Englishwoman.

"But she was native at heart; all her feelings were with her people. All the past could not save us. She meant us to die, and die with the most horrible torture under her very own eyes. Her life in India was a masquerade—this was her real existence.

"'You fancy you are the first,' she said. 'Did you ever know a Russian traveller, Voski by name? He was very like you.'

"I recollected the man. I had met him years before, and had discussed this very Lassa trip.

"'Yes,' I said, for it was useless to hold up our disguises any longer. 'What of him?'

"'He came here,' the princess said. 'He learnt some of our secrets. Then it was found out and he had to walk the Black Valley. He died.'

"All this was news to me. So astonished was I that I blurted out the truth. Only a year before, long after Voski was supposed to be dead, I had met him in London. When I mentioned Lassa he changed the subject and refused to continue the conversation. I fancied that he suspected me of chaffing him. Now I know that he had been through the horrors of the Black Valley and—escaped.

"The eyes of the princess blazed when she heard this. She was a wild, devastating fury. It seemed almost impossible to believe that I had seen her in a tea-gown at Simla, chattering society platitudes in a white sahib's bungalow. And I bitterly regretted betraying myself, because I knew that, wherever he was Voski would be hunted down and killed, as they were seeking to kill me, as they would slay Ralph Ravenspur, only they have not recognised him."

"Hence the changed face and the glasses?" Geoffrey asked.

"You have guessed it," said Ralph. "I did not want to be known. I am only a poor, demented idiot, a fool who cumbers the ground."

"I had betrayed Voski without doing any good to myself," Tchigorsky resumed. "If any harm has come to him, I am his murderer. Presently the princess calmed down, and the old cruel, mocking light came back to her eyes. We were speaking English by this time—a language utterly unknown to the awestruck, open-mouthed priests standing near us.

"'Let us pretend that this is my drawing-room in India, and that I am entertaining you at tea,' she said. 'Later you shall know something of me in my real character. I suppose you recognised the risks that you ran?'

"'Perfectly,' I replied. 'We are going to be done to death in barbarous fashion, because we have come here and learnt your secrets as your husband did.'

"I could afford this shot. I could afford to say anything. We were going to perish by a death the horror of which is beyond all words; had I strangled her as she sat there, the punishment could have been made no worse.

"'Take care,' she said, 'you are in my power. What do you mean?'

"'I mean that your husband penetrated the secrets of Buddha, and that you married him so as to regain those secrets. They were papers and the like, or he would merely have been assassinated in the ordinary vulgar manner, and there would have been an end of the business. Your husband has got an inkling of this, and that is why he has hidden the documents and refuses to give them up; he would be murdered if he did.'

"'You are a bold man,' the princess said.

"'Not at all,' I replied. 'A man can only die once. Would you say that the condemned murderer was rash for attempting to pick the pocket of the gaoler, even for attempting to murder him? What I say and what I do matters nothing. And you know that I am telling the truth.'

"The princess smiled. My friend Ralph here will remember that smile."

"I could see then," Ralph muttered, "and I do remember it."

"'Very well,' the princess replied, 'you are candid and I will be the same. What you have said about my husband is perfectly true. I did marry him to recover those papers. And when I accidentally let out the truth that I was not outcast of my tribe he saw his danger. He is safe till those papers are mine. And then I shall kill him. And yet I love that man—I shall be desolate without him. But my religion and my people come first. For them I lose my caste, for them I degrade myself by becoming the wife of a white sahib, for them I shall eventually die. And yet I love my husband. Aye, you cannot command the human heart.'

"At this I laughed. The princess joined me.

"'You think I have no heart,' she said, 'but you are mistaken. You shall see. For the present I have my duty to perform. I do it thus.'

"She rose to her feet and clapped her hands and spoke in terse, vigorous sentences. A minute later we were bound and our disguises slipped from us. And there for the present you must be content to leave us. To-morrow I shall tell the rest."

Tchigorsky rose and yawned, but Geoffrey would fain have had more.

"The princess," he said; "at least tell me if I know her."

"Of course you do. Princess Zara is the woman who calls herself Mrs. Mona May."

CHAPTER XXXIII.
Vera Sees Something.

It was nearly dawn when Vera came to herself out of an uneasy slumber. The darkest hour that precedes the faint flush in the eastern sky was moving away. There was a light in the room.

Vera rubbed her eyes wondering. It was one of her fancies to have no light in her room. Better to lie with horrors she could not see than have the glimmer from a nightlight filling every corner with threatening shadows.

Vera sat up in bed, forgetting for the moment that she had a raking headache. Something had happened while she slept. Something was always happening in that house of fears, so that Vera was conscious of no new alarm. In a big easy-chair at the foot of the bed Marion reclined, fast asleep.

Vera checked an impulse to wake her. In that miserable household sleep was the most blessed of all luxuries. Why, then, should Marion be disturbed? Doubtless she had come there to protect, and doubtless the girl would know all about it in the morning.

"I will not wake her," Vera murmured.

But she could not sleep herself. The splitting, blinding headache was very much in evidence just now. Vera felt that she would give anything for a glass of cold spring water. She poured out that in her own bottle, but it was flat and tepid.

She would go down into the stone-flagged outer kitchen, where the pump was, and get some fresh. In any case, she had not the least idea of going to bed again. Vera partly dressed herself, doing up her hair in a big shining knot, and then, in slippered feet, crept down to the kitchen. She had no need of a light—there was already enough to show the way.

How cool and refreshing the water was! She drank a glass and then laved her face in the crystal fluid. All headache was gone by this time, though Vera had a curious trembling of her lower limbs that she could not account for.

She opened a side door leading into a green quadrangle, and from there made her way to the terrace. For a few minutes she stood in a dark angle facing the house, just picked out, as it was, from the gloom. Along the dim corridor some one was advancing with a light.

What could it mean? What was going on? Vera crouched close into the dark corner. She had an idea that she was going to witness something.

The light in the corridor stopped and grew brighter. From the black shadow of the house a human figure crept out and slid along the terrace to a spot where it was just possible for a man of strong courage and cool head to make his way down to the beach at low tide. At high water the sea swept the foot of the cliff.

Vera strained her eyes to make out the figure. It passed so close to her that she might have touched the hem of the white diaphanous garment about it; a faint, sour kind of perfume was in the air. These swiftly flying feet made not the slightest noise. Vera guessed at once that this was one of the Orientals whom she and Geoffrey had seen along the cliffs on a memorable occasion.

She was not far wrong. If not the same, they belonged to the same noisome band. Almost before Vera could recover from her surprise another figure followed.

Vera watched with intense eagerness. Slight and frail though she was, she was not in the least afraid. She came from the wrong race for that. She had made up her mind to know what was going on even if she ran some danger in obtaining the knowledge. And what did that light mean?

She was soon to know. Presently another figure came along, a tall figure which in the gloom bore a strong resemblance to Tchigorsky. The figure wore boots and a European dress, and did not seek concealment. By his side was yet another figure, also clad in European dress.

"You say this is the place?" the latter man whispered in indifferent English.

"Yes, yes," was the reply, in still more indifferent English. "It is to this place that my master, Dr. Tchigorsky, bade me bring you. And there is the signal."

The light in the corridor waved again.

"I am not satisfied," the stranger muttered. "I am in great danger."

"But not here," the other said eagerly. "Nobody knows you are here. The princess has not the least idea of your presence. And Dr. Tchigorsky, my master, bade me hunt for you until I found you. And I have done it."

"Oh, yes; you have done it right enough. And Dr. Tchigorsky would not have sent for me unless there had been danger. But why not meet him in daylight in a proper and natural manner?"

The other spat gravely on the pavement.

"The doctor is a great man," he said. "He knows. Would you have your enemies to guess that you have seen my master? That is why I bring you here at night. That is why there is the great secret."

The tall man muttered something that sounded like an acknowledgment of the force and cogency of this reasoning.

"I daresay it is all right," he said. "Fetch your master."

The servant salaamed and departed in the direction of the house. He returned presently with the information that Tchigorsky had gone along the terrace. There was a summer-house a little way off, where Tchigorsky waited.

Vera felt her heart beating faster. There was no summer-house along the terrace—nothing but a broken balustrade that Rupert Ravenspur was always going to have mended. Over this there was a sheer drop to the sea below.

As the pair moved on, Vera followed. Then what followed seemed to happen in the twinkling of an eye. A white-robed figure emerged and flung himself upon the stranger. At the same time the other miscreant, who had acted as Tchigorsky's servant, attacked him from behind.

"You rascals," the stranger cried, speaking this time in French. "So I have been deceived. You are going to throw me over the cliff. There is no escape for me. Well, I don't mind much. The agony of suspense has taken all the sweetness out of life for me. I knew that sooner or later this was bound to come. But I am going to take a toll."

The stranger's breath was coming rapidly between his teeth. Vera tried to scream, but no sound emerged from her lips. She stood rooted to the spot, watching what seemed to her a long one-sided struggle. As a matter of fact, it had not lasted more than ten seconds. Gradually the stranger was forced back.

Back and back they forced him to the very edge of the cliff. There was no escape for him now. He reached out two long and swinging hands; he grasped two arms, one for each of his would-be assassins, and then he jumped backwards. Two fearful, wailing yells rent the air; there was a mocking laugh, and silence.

Had she really seen this thing or had she dreamt it? Vera was not sure. Just for a brief moment her senses left her. When she came to herself again she crept along to the house and thence to her bedroom. She locked the door and flung herself upon the bed, pressing her hands to her eyes.

"How long will it last?" she murmured. "How long can one endure this and live? Oh, Heaven! is there no mercy for us?"

Then the blessed mantle of oblivion fell again.

(To be continued.)

Some men have a lot of good in them, but the trouble is they keep it there.

There is nothing dishonorable in having small capacities and meagre abilities, or in working and living in common-place positions.

GRAVE AND GAY

Why is an orange like a church steeple?—Because we have a peel from it.

What is the difference between a cat and a speech?—The one has its claws at th end of its paws, and the other has its pauses at the end of its clauses.

Whenever you hear a girl refer to a man as an idiot, she is in love with him, and he is in love with some other girl.

"He married money, didn't he?"

"No. He thought he was marrying money, but he merely married something else that talks!"

"Ever try an automobile, judge?" said a friend.

"No," replied the judge; "but I've tried a lot of people who have."

"Are you in favor of clubs for women?" asked the woman with the square chin.

"Yes," answered the old bachelor, "clubs, sandbags, or any [illegible]

"Do you think your dad would say anything if I told him we were going to be married?"

"I don't know; but I fancy he'd say something if you told him we weren't."

Gentleman (indignantly): When I bought this dog you said he was splendid for the rats. Why, he won't touch them.

Dog Dealer: Well, isn't that splendid for the rats?

Captain (to the man at the wheel): Another point a-port, quartermaster.

Lady Passenger: Goodness gracious! That's the second pint of port he has called for within a few minutes. How those captains drink!

"Did you hear about the defacement of Skinner's tombstone?"

"No. What was it?"

"Someone added the word 'friends' to the epitaph."

"What was the epitaph?"

"'He did his best.'"

Young Man: What do you think of Brown?

Indignant Old Gentleman: Brown, sir; he is one of those people who smack you on the back before your face and hit you in the eye behind your back. Ugh!

"It is strange how some people cry at weddings."

"Yes; but you've probably noticed that it's never the single who cry!"

"Well?"

"It is only the married ones, who realise the tragedy of it!"

"How do you account for the fact," asked the doctor, "as shown by actual investigation, that thirty-two out of every hundred criminals in the country are left-handed?"

"That's easily accounted for," said the professor. "The other sixty-eight are right-handed."

Windig: Look here, Hammerton, what did you tell Muggsby I was a liar for?

Muggsby must have misunderstood me. I didn't say you were a liar.

Windig: Then what did you say?

Hammerton: I merely told him that you were fully capable of holding a job in the weather bureau.

"Tompkins has got more nerve than any man I ever met."

"What's he done?"

"He came over to my place yesterday to borrow my gun, saying that he wanted to kill a dog that kept him awake during the night."

"Well?"

"He killed my dog!"

A young artist recently gave his wife her first peep at a picture he had been working on for a wealthy patron.

"Why, dear, it's lovely," murmured the better half—"lovely! But I think those sheep look—well, just a trifle too much like clouds—that is, of course, dear—er—unless they are clouds!"

"Two short years ago," remarked the man with the whiskers on the lower extremities of his trousers, "I went into a little limited liability company with £5000."

"Really?" interrogated the other occupant of the park seat. "How did you come out?"

"Oh, I came out all right," answered the party of the prelude sadly, "but my £5000 stayed in."

A gentleman visiting Ireland after a long absence, met the village postman.

"Could you tell me the address of Mr. Rafferty?"

"Indade, I could not, sur. Sorry it is I am that he's dead, sur."

"Dead?"

"Yes, sur."

"How long would that be?"

"Sure, if he'd lived till to-morrow, he'd be dead a fortnight."

Her Laugh.

"You no longer call upon Miss Cold?"

"No. I abominate her. She has such a vulgar laugh."

"I never noticed it."

"You would have done so if you'd been round the evening I proposed to her."

What He Left.

A man wrote to a lawyer in another town for information of the financial standing of a man there who owed him a considerable sum of money.

"What property has he that I can attach?" he asked.

The reply was as follows:—

"The person to whom you refer died a year ago. He has left nothing liable to attachment except a widow."

Two Views.

A coal miner in the East of Scotland was visited by a friend. Among the places of interest shown was, of course, the pit mouth.

Seeing the cage lowered into the pit with the stout steel rope, the miner's friend exclaimed:

"My word! I shouldn't like to go down there on that rope."

"Why," exclaimed the miner, "Aw wadna like to gang doon there without it!"

GARIBALDI'S WOOING.

The whole life of the great Italian liberator, Garibaldi, was one of romantic adventure, but nothing else in it was more romantic than his wooing. He had been driven from Italy in 1836 and landed in South America, where he joined the struggle then being carried on by several small states against the Empire of Brazil. He had with him many devoted comrades, whom he loved with his whole heart. One day, however, he was shipwrecked on the Brazilian coast of Santa Catharina, and several of his dearest friends were drowned in getting to shore. The survivors at once joined the local army, led a successful attack on Laguna, and were hailed as liberators. Garibaldi was made chief of the captured Brazilian fleet. He paced up and down the deck of his flagship, but in no victor's mood. The loss of so many friends had filled him with melancholy, and he began to feel his loneliness. His mind turned to a natural remedy. He determined to seek a bride among these people who so idolised him.

"The loss of Luigi, Edoardo, and others of my countrymen," he [illegible] in his own story, "left me utterly isolated. I felt quite alone in the world. I needed a human heart to love me, one whom I could always keep near me. I felt that unless I found one at once life would become intolerable.

"By chance I cast my eyes towards the houses of the Barra, a hill on the south side of the entrance to the lagoon, where a few simple and picturesque dwellings were visible. Outside one of these, I espied a young woman, and forthwith I gave orders for my boat to be got out, as I wished to go ashore."

This girl was Anita Riberas, eighteen years old, a young woman of unusual beauty, of great bodily strength and endurance, and of an unusually fine type of intellect; as romantic as Garibaldi, and untiring as he in her labors for liberty.

"I landed," says Garibaldi, "and, making for the houses where I expected to find the object of my excursion, I had just given up hopes of seeing her again, when I met an inhabitant of the place whose acquaintance I had made soon after our arrival. He invited me to take coffee in his house.

"We entered, and the first person I saw was the girl who had attracted me ashore. We both remained enraptured and silent, gazing on one another like two people who meet not for the first time, and who seek in each other's face something that will make it easier to recall a forgotten past. At last I greeted her with the words, in Italian, 'Thou oughtest to be mine.'

"My insolence was magnetic. I had formed a tie, pronounced a decree, which death alone could annul."

The young woman was at that time betrothed by her father to a wealthy suitor whom she had refused to marry. As her father and the suitor were determined however, and she had no option, the arrival of Garibaldi must have been extremely welcome.

Her father refusing to change her destiny, Garibaldi came ashore with a small party a few nights later and carried her off—with her entire consent—and they were married at another port.

Later, when he was fighting Uruguayan independence, she rode with him through privation and starvation over the prairies; and on one march, while they were together, he carried their three-months-old son in a handkerchief slung round his neck.

Never were man and wife more passionately devoted to each other than these two; and when, in the terrible retreat from Rome in 1849, she succumbed to fever and died in a hut in the marshes of the Po delta, it seemed to the soldier that not only the light of Italy but the light of earth itself had gone out.

AT THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

The intelligence of the horse is admirably depicted in a little incident which occurred during the war in South Africa in a small Boer camp near Ladysmith.

A burgher had captured a handsome charger belonging to a squadron of Lancers, and felt so proud of his prize that he mounted the animal and paraded it up and down like a prince, in the presence of his comrades. Having finished the performance, he jumped off, threw the bridle reins carelessly over the head of the horse, and sat down for the usual talk. Just then a bugle sounded from Ladysmith, whereupon the charger pricked up his ears, looked in the direction from which the sound proceeded, and bolted away so fast that in less than no time he could not be seen for dust. His captor was too much astonished to either say a word or pick up his Mauser. He flew to his feet when too late, and said the British were the very incarnation of Satan, and even their horses were gifted to answer the call of the devil and give them the slip.

Their Fears Confirmed.

Has the knife-thrower, who used to provide one of the most thrilling items on the programme of the itinerant circus altogether disappeared? He was a deft blade-flinger, who made a speciality of throwing his knives all round a lady into a board at the back of the stage.

The partner of one of these artists was middle-aged, stout, and—well, very plain, and when she came on the audience gasped.

They had not thought it possible for any one to be so plain and live through it.

The man arranged her in front of the board, and at the critical moment threw the knife.

It flew through the air and stuck quivering in the board.

Voice from the back:

"Great Scott! You've missed her."

Mother: Why did you not scream when Hans kissed you?

Daughter: He threatened me?

Mother: How?

Daughter: He said if I did he'd never kiss me again.

"My dear, I must tell you a secret. George has proposed to her."

"I wonder if that's what he meant when I rejected him, by saying he would do something desperate?"

We make our habits first, and then our habits make us

A NOBLE WOMAN.

"What a shame for a big, strong man to be such a slave to an invalid wife!"

The words were spoken in a disgusted tone by a girl in the saloon of an ocean steamer. The couple on whom she made her caustic criticism were slowly descending the stairs. The woman was pale and haggard. Her hands were twisted by pain, and her voice had the pathos of suffering.

She was helped from state-room to steamer chair and back every day, and all day long her handsome husband attended her. He adjusted her wraps, saw that her food was prepared for her helpless hands, read to her hour after hour, or sat quietly with his hand resting near hers and his eyes watching her, even when they seemed fixed on the horizon.

Sympathetic spectators had pitied the man even while they admired his devotion, and the girl had but put into words the popular irritation when she called him "a slave to an invalid wife."

She spoke in a louder tone than she meant, and the two persons interested in her speech heard her clearly. An [illegible] later the man slipped into a deck chair beside his critic, and said:

"I think your remark, which I accidentally overheard, justifies me in telling you a little about my 'slavery' as you call it. It began thirty years ago, when I went out to the East and my young bride nursed me through yellow fever—alone—because every one else had fled in panic.

"She did not have a sound hour's sleep for three weeks. Most of the time I was violently delirious, and how she managed to control me was a wonder. We were quarantined three miles from a town, and she cooked for me, and nursed me, and brought me safely out of the loathsome disease before she fell ill with it herself.

"After she recovered she pulled me through a worse trial. I was in business with a man who turned out to be a scoundrel, and for three years everybody except my wife believed that his villainy was mine. When I lost money and position, she did herself the work of three women. When children came, she contrived that they should be noticeable for their manners and thoughtfulness, although they wore poor clothes.

"When sickness and death visited our home, it was her courage and wisdom which kept the sordid details of the trouble away from the rest of us, and left us only the ideal sorrow which lifts life toward heaven.

"For twenty-five years all this was her task. I tried to save her from strain when I could, but so great a spirit could not spare herself. Five years ago her health gave way. She will never be well again. She has given her life for mine.

"My 'slavery,' thank God, is the slavery of whole-hearted devotion to one of the noblest women ever given to earth, and you may well pray every night that you may some day be so lovely a tyrant and that you may command so contented a 'slave'!"

SOWING BOILED BEANS.

An author, writing on life among the Moors, tells the following little anecdote:—

When Ab del Hakk was poor, as he was one day travelling across a weary plain, he came to the house of the Widow Zaidah, who was also poor; but when he made known his hunger she set before him two hard-boiled eggs, all the food there was in her house.

Later, when Ab del Hakk lived in Marakesh, and was very rich, Meludi, the lawyer, disliking him, persuaded the Widow Zaidah to sue him for the eggs; but not for the eggs alone, for they would have become two chickens, which in time would have so multiplied that the whole fortune of Ab del Hakk would not now pay for them. When the case came to trial the rich man was not in court.

"Why is the defendant not here?" demanded the judge.

"My lord," said counsel for the defence, "he has gone to sow boiled beans."

"Boiled beans?"

"Boiled beans, my lord."

"Is he mad?"

"He is very wise, my lord. Surely if hard-boiled eggs can be hatched, boiled beans will grow."

The suit was promptly dismissed, with costs to the plaintiff.

ON CLOTHES.

Remember that more clothes are spoilt by being left about, or carelessly packed, than by actual wear. Your clothes will last double as long, and always look fresh, if you spend an extra five minutes in putting them away.

Don't forget that fog has a way of penetrating into wardrobes and drawers. Therefore wrap delicate blouses, laces and feathers in plenty of tissue paper, and put evening dresses into large linen bags before hanging them.

If your tailor-made costume has got wet, dry it carefully, and send it to a tailor to be pressed. This may cost you a shilling or so, but it will keep it looking fresh and in shape.

More hats are ruined by careless packing than anything else. Take a hint and pack your hats as a milliner does with heaps of tissue paper, and always be careful to remove your veil pins.

A farmer in a country town sent a boy to tend a flock of sheep grazing by the roadsides, as is usual there. Presently the boy came running home crying. When asked what was the matter, he said between sobs:

"There's a man a-stealing the sheep."

"And why did you not stay and see they were not stolen?" asked the farmer.

"Cause—cause—he wanted to take I too, and I warn't a-goin' to be took."

The farmer sent a man to see after the sheep, who found them peacefully grazing and a tourist busy taking their photograph, who said:

"What was the matter with that boy? He seemed scared when I suggested "taking" him with the sheep, and ran off as fast as his legs could carry him, howling all the way."

Praise is well, compliment is well, but affection is the final and most precious reward that any man can win, whether by character or achievement.

DENTITION OF THE DOMESTICATED ANIMALS.

The Horse.

We extract the following concise article upon this matter from the "New Zealand Farmer":—

A foal at birth has two temporary incisors, while three temporary molars above and below are cutting the gums. At six weeks the two lateral incisors appear, and at about nine months the two corner incisors. At 12 months the fourth molar is cut, and at two years the fifth molar, and at two years and six months the two central permanent incisors appear, and are in wear at three years. At the same time the first and second temporary molars fall off, and are replaced by permanent ones.

At three years and six months the two lateral permanent incisors are cut, and come into wear at four years. At this time the third temporary molar is shed, to be replaced by a permanent tooth; also the sixth molar is cut.

At four and six months the lateral temporary incisors are replaced by permanent teeth, which come into wear at five years, and about this time the tushes appear. The horse has then a full mouth of 40 teeth, viz., 12 incisors, [illegible] tushes, and 24 molars.

At this age, upon examination, it will be seen that the incisor teeth contain a hollow cavity on their cutting edges, which disappear as the animal advances in years.

At six years the cavity has disappeared from the central incisors, at seven years from the lateral, and at eight years from the corner incisors, after which the age of the animal is somewhat difficult to tell. As age advances the teeth become rounder, until in old age they have resumed a triangle appearance; the gums also recede from the teeth as the animal advances in age.

Little devices are often practised by horse dealers and others which often deceive the purchaser in the age of the animal he is buying. This consists in cutting small cavities in the teeth of aged horses, so as to make them resemble the teeth of younger animals. Only the inexperienced are taken in by such devices, as the length and shape of the teeth give a true indication to the animal's age.

Another trick that is sometimes practised is pulling the corner temporary incisor a year before it is ready to come off. By doing so the permanent teeth are allowed to come up, and the animal shows a five-year-old mouth when it is only four years. This, however, can again be detected, as there is always a space left between the corner and lateral incisors when the teeth have been pulled before they are ready to leave the gum.

Dentition of the Ox.

A calf at birth has two, four, six and eight temporary incisors, also three temporary molars above and below, on each side.

The first change takes place at six months, when the fourth molar (permanent) is cut, and comes into wear at nine months.

Next change, the fifth molar (permanent) is cut at 12 months, and comes into wear at 15 months. At one year nine months, the sixth molar (permanent) is cut, and comes into wear at two years. At the same time the two central incisors (permanent) are cut, and come into wear.

Between two years and two years and three months, the first, second and third temporary molars are cast, and permanent ones take their place.

At two years and three months the second pair of permanent molars are cut, and come into wear at two years and six months.

At two years and nine months the three pairs of permanent incisors are cut, and come into wear at three years.

At three years and three months the fourth pair of permanent incisors are cut, and come into wear at three years and six months, when the animal has got its full mouth of teeth, numbering 32. At this age the incisor teeth will be found flat and sharp; as the animal gets older the edges begin to wear off, and the teeth become rounded, until ultimately, in old age, only stumps are left. The above table varies slightly in the case of pedigree stock or in animals that are well fed. In such cases the teeth are frequently shed a little earlier.

Sheep.

A lamb at birth may have four, six or eight temporary incisors; if they are not all through the gum by the time the animal is a month old; also by this time the first, second and third temporary molars are in wear.

At three months the fourth molars are cut, and at nine months the fifth.

At 15 months the central pair of permanent incisors are cut, and in wear at 18 months.

At 18 months the first, second and third temporary molars are shed, and replaced by permanent at the same time the sixth molar is cut. These are all up and in wear when the animal is two years.

At one year and nine months the second pair of permanent incisors are cut, and in wear at three years.

At three years and six months the fourth pair of permanent incisors are cut, and in wear at four years, when the animal has a full mouth. At this age the teeth are very sharp; as the animal gets older the teeth become worn at their cutting edges, and have tables formed upon them. The neck also becomes prominent, and in very old animals only small stumps are left.

In judging the age of sheep it must not be forgotten that the age at which the animals cast their temporary teeth, to be replaced by permanent ones, is subject to variation, in some cases to the extent of several months.

The writer has often seen lambs getting their central pair of permanent teeth at a little over a year old, and the others [illegible] a corresponding early date. In other instances they have been well over the 15 months before any permanent teeth made their appearance.

The following is one of many humorous conversations (frequently unnoticed), which actually occurred at a well-known ham and beef shop, in London:—

Proprietor (to boy who has just entered the shop): Now, Tommy, what can I get for you?

Boy: A small ham sandwich, please.

Proprietor: Eat it here or take it away?

Boy: Both.

When the humor of the boy's answer dawned upon the proprietor's mind, his face was a study.

A sportsman not at all distinguished for his prowess with the gun declared that he had shot as many as forty hares before breakfast."

"Then, Jack," rejoined a witty friend, "you must have been firing at a wig!"

It is just as well to be on with the new love before the old one throws you over.

March 28, 1903.

Supplement to the Leader.

THE MARRIAGEABLE MAN.

By C. Edwardes.

CHAPTER I.

"Bachelor Village."

It had been often the resentful name of a little Bohemian village where bachelor of a particular value to matrons nowadays resolved to lit. They all went elsewhere in the hot of their teens or the first of their twenties.

About the age they should have been striding to the railway station, free and fancy free, they settled down in the hollow. "Poor bachelor! If it was too much to every in the hand, followed in the carter's cart, which slightly crawled into the town with the railway station.

Its directors name was Rudlingham, and it dated from the 'Forties.

There was nothing to do in the village, and it was nothing to do, and a shop because it possible well helps itself. The Stags—generally the first, the shop had always been a shop, and the shop keeper, who was also a churchwarden, was not expected to live on the place, but to be carpenter, wheelwright, or undertaker, or all three. The Stags and Mrs. Stags lived in the good house which spread its gables over half the surrounding shops.

Old servants of the great house had for generations had charge of the inn. One after the other they came to it with themselves, their knees and their ways. They paid no rent—it was taken out of their wages—and they made ale, autumn. Their old master, middle, was the nationwide in social order of the handsome eccentricum which crowded above the big porch and bore the arms of the Corders of Rhuddlan Hall.

The present landlord was one, elderly, who for thirty years had been butler at the Hall.

A widower, moreover, and content to continue so. A comfortable old fellow with white hair, who dozed neither in his chair in the bar-parlor, or sat on sunny mornings on the porch, smoking his clay pipe, and read fine affairs when a village came to call with almost respectful greeting.

He was not, in his deep, fat, and not stiffing, but standing, and evidently not to be disturbed. Nothing, in fact, stirred on his white, broad, pudgy, spectacle of life. Nor, had some ever on both sides of the counter to have, and turn him.

The view was the universe.

Down the street from his old church spire, in the broad, deserted meadow, the Rudlingham River, a little, shallow, a silver. He walked sometimes and smiled as he walked.

"Well, Stevens?" he said pleasantly. "This is the weather we are wanting, is it not?"

"Yes, sir; but have you heard the news?"

"News, sir?"

"My gentleman home, sir—a Mr. Symington—talks of going to the Hall to paint a picture. One of those travelling gentlemen who have grown of the country's private possessions, sir. I expect I will have to see him, sir. I leave it to him, Mrs. Siddaway." "Well, Stevens, I think it is a good idea. Mr. Symington, he's not on trying."

"Indeed, Stevens," said the vicar. "Then I would be his try. Good-morning to you."

The innkeeper turned to his inn. He was a little disappointed. He had a shortness of speech. Only the parson Miss Meesiters had attended his morning service—and that was rather a day reverend nonfiction to listen to and the prayers and read the Bible to the congregation of two ladies. Then they stopped and talked about the time, minus, and glances at his watch, and he was disappointed.

All Rudlingham knew that Symington had come to the inn the previous evening. The event was the talk of the hour. The Miss Meesiters even and tripping well had indulged in Stevens that it was something more than a wonder to them, and they confessed that also, as reckoned, as Rudlingham hadn't much to teach anybody, least of all him.

Inside his inn, the temptation was strong to enter the parlor and entertained the guest. But he, remembered the possible, stern look in the gentleman's eyes when he arrived and asked for a bed, as if bedroom, and he turned his every sixth in Rudlingham. The gentleman was a stranger, and the cross-examination to which he was subjected. He had a plain air of the "quality" about him, and Mr. Stevens' questions with a sort of inquiring seriousness, which seemed to say, "Not very important old man, but I suppose I must be civil to him."

Stevens hadn't liked to put himself a small person in his own house, and that was the impression conveyed.

The gentleman subsequently required nothing, but as a gentleman before retiring, only a candle. After he had left it was "Good-night, sir," in a tone still more suggestive of the "quality." Stevens was left, as he remarked in a confidential chat to the earlier years of his long service at the Hall.

Suddenly, while he hesitated, the underdoor opened and the stranger reappeared. He seemed impatient by his manner, and Stevens was sure he was made fine sense of about people with dark eyes and hair, and an air of authority. Mr. Symington was a gentleman not have been matched in Rudlingham in a twelvemonth.

"I think I'll be off at once, landlord," he said, quickly.

"Off, sir? You're leaving us, then?" said Stevens.

"By no means. Please deliver at the Hall—that is, unless Mrs. Siddaway is a late riser. Is she?"

"I'd give her an hour or two," replied Stevens. "And, sir, if you wouldn't, if I was you, make sure of your bed. Mr. Symington, sir, is very particular about bedsheets, sir, one night as."

"Ah, really!" said the stranger. "Then I'll smoke a pipe in your rustic porch to keep with."

The gentleman was as one of the "quality." Stevens, as he was asked and obeyed, was not the least offended, but he was face to face. Stevens and his long clay, and the stranger and his lean briar.

"She's bad what you may call troublesome," said the stranger, with a side glance to articulate which the visible landscape, and somewhere the visible landscape. "That's why I'm afraid you'll have your work cut out."

The other encouraged him to continue.

"Have you submitted your design to the Royal Academy, Mr. Symington?" said Stevens, with a fall of their tomes and dry dust, sir."

From this he proceeded to discourse the trying history of Mrs. Siddaway, last of the Corders.

Married years ago a gentleman usually, and left a widow, turned out anything but what you call a real gentleman. Spent her money, sir, and gave her a bad time, sir, and then left her and was reclosed to have died. She was in Italy at that time, sir, and it was—and I remember it well—a sunny Sunday morning when the news of it came. She was a fine, handsome young lady, sir, and I'm sure we all felt sorry for her poor letter that when she returned like that, thinking herself a widow. Stayed a week and away she went again—and that's where the mournful part begins. She had fallen in love again out there, and had now married a foreign nobleman, sir. We have Mr. Siddaway home on the very afternoon of the wedding and there, two days afterwards, we received a letter from the bride, saying that she was back here for good, sir, and that she hoped we would be as good to her as we had been before, sir. Well, sir, we thought, of course, that she was ashamed of herself, and that we should see no more of her, sir. But we did, sir, and she was as good as ever, sir, and we thought no more about it.

"Well, sir, we had been living quietly for a year, when one day there came a letter addressed to Mrs. Siddaway, Rudlingham Hall, Rudlingham, Wales, and it was from a lawyer, sir, and it was to say that a nobleman, sir, had died, and that Mrs. Siddaway was his only relation, sir, and that she was his heiress, sir, and that she was to come to her estate, sir, and take her place in the world. Well, sir, we thought, of course, that she would be off at once, sir, and we should see no more of her, sir. But we did, sir, and she was as good as ever, sir, and we thought no more about it.

"Well, sir, we had been living quietly for another

HIS LAST SHIP.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

By Vernon Ralston.

Captain Norris lounged idly on the Valparaiso quays. He waited in hope that some acquaintance would heave in sight—some captain or first or second officer who would be good for a drink—or after dark even, he would accept the hospitality of a man before the mast, or a steward. His thirst had overpowered his sense of the dignity of a man who had commanded numberless vessels on the high seas. And now times were particularly hard.

After the collision of the Amoor with the Nancy Bell, which caused a paralysing amount of perjury at the Board of Trade inquiry, the captain's certificate had been suspended for a year. At the end of that time a wily shipowner, knowing that Captain Norris was a fine sailor and could be got cheaply, had given him another chance. But the shipowner's agent in Valparaiso, on finding that the captain had never been sober during the voyage out, had cabled to Liverpool and had him discharged.

So now Captain Norris was without a ship, or the prospect of a ship, without friends, without money, stranded on Valparaiso Quay.

Night was falling, and no one came whom the captain knew. He had sold all his possessions save the clothes he stood in. The fiendish thirst gripped him by the throat. He was even now wondering if he proffered to ship as an able seaman whether some crimp would advance him enough money for one big drink.

Suddenly a tall man strolled past and glanced casually at him.

"Captain Norris, I declare, ain't it?" said the stranger.

"Yes; but I can't put a name to you," grunted the captain.

"That's no account—come and split a drink, captain."

Captain Norris would have gone anywhere with anybody for a drink at that moment, so he eagerly accepted the invitation.

The stranger led him, not to a bar, but to an office at a short distance from the quay. A glance at the doorplate informed the captain that it was the office of Stevens and Teran, shipowners.

"Don't be backward, captain," said the stranger, as the captain paused at the door, "there's plenty of liquor here."

Directly they were in the office the stranger produced a bottle of whisky and glasses from a cupboard, and said:

"Now, captain, help yourself."

Norris swallowed a glass of whisky in a gulp, and then held out his glass to be refilled. "I wanted that drink badly," he said.

"Much as you like, captain—jest get yourself settled, and then we'll talk business."

The second glass made Captain Norris feel himself again.

He looked at the stranger and said: "You'll be Mr. Stevens, I suppose?"

The tall man nodded.

"Well, what do you want with me?"

"Look hyar, captain; I want to talk straight to you. You're right up against it. Lost your ship, lost your reputation. Do you think there's a shipowner on the West Coast who'd trust you with a vessel?"

"Give me some more whisky and tell me something fresh," grunted the captain.

"Well, you're right up against it—you can't get a berth—you're dying for the drink, and you can't get that. For all I know you've folk dependent on you somewhere."

The captain wriggled as he listened to this last sentence. He thought of his wife and three children at Poplar, and wondered what she thought when she heard from the owners that he had been discharged and that she could no longer draw against his pay.

"Now, I can give you a chance—the command of a ship, and as much drink as you like shipped aboard, for the drunker you are the better it will suit me."

"What's the game?" thundered Norris, slamming his fist down on the table.

"There's a ship of ours loading at the jetty. Could you take her to Maranaibo?"

"There ain't a ship sailing that I couldn't take anywhere," roared the captain.

"That's what I thought," said Mr. Stevens; "have some more whisky, captain?"

"As much as you like—it makes me feel a man again."

"Well, this particular vessel isn't what you might call a profitable speculation, captain. She's old and cranky, and won't last many voyages more. Already the underwriters are sniffing at her. So I thought that you, being a first-class seaman with a liking for drink might, while you were on the bust, pile the ship up on Maranaibo Bar."

"Heavens!" cried the captain; "see what drink brings a man to. Last night I cadged drinks from a steward, and to-day a derned Yankee asks me to lose my first ship."

The shipowner rose quickly from his seat.

"H'yar, captain, if you can get a vessel from any other firm, go and get it; but take care how you talk about this firm. My partner's a Spaniard, and touchy—he might see you got a bowie in your back. Though, after all, what you say won't be of much account. Who'd take any notice of the ravings of a drunken, discharged captain?"

Captain Norris glared at Stevens.

"I didn't say I wouldn't do your dirty work. Only it ain't pleasant for a man to know how low he's got. But mind you, if I agree to sell myself I want my price. What does it mean to me if I pile this vessel up?—the loss of my certificate. Never will I command a ship again. What does it mean to you? The full value of a rotten ship and all you can get from a faked cargo. I know you wreckers' dodges. It'll be ten or twenty thousand pounds in your pockets. Now, it's money down I want. I fancy myself coming to you when the job's done for my pay and getting kicked out of this office as a derned blackmailer. Give me five hundred pounds down, and I'll scuttle her or pile her up, or do what you wish with your rotten ship."

"It's a lot of money," said the shipowner, shaking his head.

"Five years ago I'd have laid any man out who offered me fifty thousand pounds to sink any ship I commanded."

"We might arrange for you to have half the dollars in advance and half when the job's done."

"That's like offering me half my price. No; if I risk my certificate and my life and the lives of twenty better men than me it'll be for money down—cash, no credit."

"Well, we won't quarrel about the amount. Now, captain, let me tell you what we want you to do. You must keep fairly sober till the vessel sails. Give us the chance of saying you've sort of reformed. When she's out of harbor the more you drink the better. There'll be a supercargo aboard."

"Never had I a supercargo on ship of mine yet," groaned the captain.

The shipowner ignored the interruption.

"He will protest against your drinking habits," he said.

"I'll clap him in irons if he does."

"Then we think it would be as well not to scuttle the ship. Sailormen talk when a vessel springs a sudden leak at sea, and the underwriters might turn rusty. So you'll be drunk when running in Maranaibo Harbor——"

"You needn't explain to me. Don't I know that any ship that touches there goes to pieces inside of half an hour, and that the outdrift from the harbor keeps wreckage from washing up? Aye, Maranaibo Bar was made to suit shipowning sharks."

"Well, about the money, captain?"

"I want paying what's due to me in English sovereigns or American dollars—none of your bills or cheques which won't be met."

"Well, where are you staying now?"

"Last night I slept on some cases on the quay."

"That won't do now you're in my employ. See, captain, I'll advance you a couple of hundred dollars to-night. Smart yourself up a bit. Stay at a decent hotel. We want you to look like the sort of man we could employ. So don't drink till you are out of the harbor. Now, shake hands on our bargain."

Captain Norris surveyed the proffered hand contemptuously, and then, making an effort, extended his hand and gripped it. Then the shipowner counted out two hundred dollars, and they left the office together.

During the next few days the captain's acquaintances were astonished to see him in a comparatively prosperous state. They were even more surprised to find that he declined all invitations to have a drink. It was generally agreed that if Captain Norris had thrown up the rum for good and all, he was pretty sure to get a ship soon. They did not know that the captain secretly smuggled whisky into the bedroom at his hotel, and made up for his sober days by drinking all the night.

The money agreed upon was paid down the next evening.

"Now, captain," said the shipowner, "don't make a fool of yourself by swanking those dollars about. People might wonder how you got them."

The captain glared at his employer. "What do you think I'm going to do with this money? Every penny of it is going to be paid into a British bank to be sent to a little woman at Poplar. It it weren't for that little woman you'd have to look a sight further for a man to pile up your rotten tub."

After a few days Mr. Stevens let it slip that as Captain Norris had reformed he had offered him the command of the Oregon. One or two wily persons who knew Stevens' way of doing business smiled at the news; but most people agreed that, as Norris had turned over a new leaf, Stevens and Teran were lucky to get him—especially as having a black mark against him he would come cheap.

At last the Oregon was ready for sea, and the captain heaved a sigh of relief. Now he could give up the miserable abstinence which had made his days a burden. He could let his chief officer look after the ship, whilst he himself could spend his time in an unceasing fuddle.

All went well for the first few weeks of the voyage. The captain kept his cabin, and rarely appeared on deck. The weather was so favorable that even a leaky old tub like the Oregon gave no trouble. It was not till the vessel was within a day's sail of Maranaibo that anything untoward happened. Then a heavy south-westerly gale sprang up. When the chief officer consulted the captain, the only answer he got was, "Run before it."

So the Oregon sped on her course, and early the next morning the lookout sighted Maranaibo lights.

The gale had become a hurricane, and the chief officer lost his nerve. He went down to the cabin and demanded the captain's presence on deck. With some difficulty Norris was made to understand the situation. He staggered on deck, and the air sobered him a little. He saw the Maranaibo Bar in the distance—one mass of foaming breakers.

The supercargo stepped up to the captain and whispered:

"Not to-day, or every soul will be lost."

Instantly the captain swung round, and with one blow of his fist struck the unfortunate supercargo to the deck.

"Set three men at the wheel," cried the captain, "a man like me ain't afraid of Maranaibo Bar."

The crew hesitated, but the captain pulled out a revolver and ordered them to their posts. The chief officer murmured an expostulation, and was ordered below at the revolver's point. Then whilst great seas smote the vessel and she trembled through every rotten timber, her head was set for the line of breakers which showed Maranaibo Bar.

The crew were frantic with terror; some cast off their oilskins and seaboots so that they might stand a chance when the smash came. But much as they dreaded the angry seas, they dreaded the angry captain more. There he stood, clinging to the rail with one hand, holding his revolver with the other—now roaring his orders so that they could be heard even above the storm, now singing in sheer exultation at the fight with the tempest before him.

The vessel came nearer and nearer to the mass of foam. The captain covered the men at the wheel with his revolver. If one of them had shrunk from his post he would have shot him.

A blind mass of foam and spume surged over the vessel's deck, the ship was turned and tossed about by the waves as if she were a plaything; out of the flurry on the port side a great mass of rock rose not five yards from the ship's quarter. Then came a final smother, the vessel turned nearly on her beam-ends, and then all at once it was in the smooth waters of Maranaibo Bay, and sailormen on the quays and on vessels in harbor were cheering the plucky captain who had faced the deadly bar.

As the Oregon took up her moorings in the harbor two boats sped out from the quay. In one the harbor-master and Lloyd's agent came to congratulate the captain on his feat of pluck. Captain Norris was standing on the bridge, whisky bottle in hand. He accepted their congratulations as if they were no more than his due. When they had left him he noticed a small, dark Spaniard whispering eagerly to the supercargo.

The next moment the Spaniard came up to the captain. "I am Senor Teran, part owner of this ship. What does this mean? We paid you five hundred pounds to wreck the ship, and here she is safe in harbor."

Captain Norris struck his forehead with his hand. "That's the worst of whisky—makes a man forget things so. I knew there was something all the time I had to do, but I couldn't call it to mind. Now, I'm a man of my word. I'd give you your money back if I hadn't sent every penny of it to the old girl at Poplar. But as I can't do that, I'll tell you what I will do. I'll take your derned ship out and pile her up for you—properly this time. I can't treat you fairer than that, can I?"

The Spaniard gave him an ominous glance, but left him without saying a word.

That night Captain Norris spent ashore in Maranaibo drinking. It was past midnight when he staggered down to the quay to go aboard his ship. He was singing loudly as he swayed his way down, and never heard the stealthy footsteps behind him. Then came a sudden knife-thrust in the dark, and a slight splash in the harbor.

The next morning the chief officer of the Oregon, leaning idly over the ship's side, saw a body floating in the water. The receding tide brought it alongside. He started with horror when he saw the face.

It was Captain Norris's return to his last ship.

Conscience is powerful in two directions—it frees the innocent from all fear and continually keeps before the eyes of the guilty the dread of punishment.

A Midnight Adventure.

A SHORT STORY YOU WILL REMEMBER.

By A. Wallie.

I.

"I'm a bit fresh to this," remarked Mark Stubbins, indicating his surroundings within a luxurious first-class carriage. "I've travelled mostly excursion third, and that don't run much to plated fittings."

A genially, garrulous young man, with pleasing features—stronger in character than in grammar—he was attempting conversation with a shrewd-faced lady, stout and elderly, who, along with a handsome, russet-haired girl, apparently her daughter, were his travelling companions. The first, having responded without enthusiasm to his previous comments upon the weather, regarded him now with severity through gold-rimmed eyeglasses.

"I imagine," she said freezingly, "that you still fail to appreciate all the differences."

Mark laughed, being in no mood to take offence.

"I don't quite 'cotton' to all of them, if that is what you mean," he returned cheerfully; "because it seems to me the thirds were what you might call more social, and that shortens a journey. But with a position to maintain I can't afford to use 'em," he added almost dolefully.

The lady stared, but said nothing, and he went on:

It's this way. I'm a new rich, as the French say, and make no secret of it. Less than a month ago I was leading hand at the tapestry trimmings counter in 'Totals', the big West-End house, getting thirty bob a week, and thinking I was doing well. Then a grand uncle I'd never heard of died in California a multi-millionaire, and blest if he didn't leave every cent to the family of my father, his only brother's only son. That meant me, as dad had no other children, and my mother is dead also."

"So you left the shop?"

"Chucked it whenever I was certain the news was no fraud, and started to look for a country estate. I always fancied cows and hens and turnips, with a decent gee-gee or two and some shooting. An agent offered me a likely place near Butsdon, and I'm out now to look at it. He says it has a Tudor mansion, and that the owner is an old lady, as proud as she is poor, who wants to part because she has not coin to keep the place up. Fere Manor is its name—you don't happen to know it, do you?"

"It belongs to me. I am Lady Caaily."

Stubbins collapsed, but only momentarily.

"Lucky we've met," said he, recovering elasticity. "It will save worry on both sides. And this"—he turned towards the girl who had hidden behind a paper—"is Miss Caaily, I suppose?"

Her mother gasped at his audacity, but ere words came to crush him the train drew up sharply at a tiny roadside station where it was not timed to stop, and the guard came along the platform.

"The heavy goods is off the metals just ahead," he announced, "and we can't get on for some hours."

The short winter day had deepened to a sullen dusk that threatened storm. Lady Caaily flung up her hands.

"I know this station," she cried despairingly. "It is on the moors, about twenty miles from Fere, in a perfect desert, with neither accommodation nor conveyance at hand. What are we to do—we cannot remain here?"

Stubbins opened the door and jumped out.

"Just stay where you are," he answered with assurance, "until I come back."

Presently he returned, smiling broadly.

"Come along," he said. "There's a thirty horse-power Diehard motor, with chauffeur complete, waiting at the station gates to whisk you home in a brace of shakes."

He caught up the light luggage, including two cameras, and the ladies followed to where the motor stood.

"Noticed it trucked on our train," Mark explained, chuckling, "and told the man travelling with it I'd make everything right with the Marquis Deleigh, who owns it. Cash and cheek did the trick—they ran it out on to the platform for us. I'm going to look after you."

II.

"Thank Heaven, we have arrived!" ejaculated Lady Caaily. "Knock and ring—they have all gone to bed."

A howling gale which had risen after the motor left the station had caused the travellers to miss their way. But at last, after several hours' exposure to wind and wet, they had reached the Manor and drawn up under its great vaulted stone porch. Save for the lights the car carried all was ominously dark, until Mark hammered upon the huge knocker suspended from the nail-studded front door. It opened, and an old man, lantern in hand, peered out.

"Jorrocks!" called Lady Caaily. "Here we are!"

"We had given you up for to-night, m' lady," he responded, hobbling forward. "Even Mr. Cecil is asleep."

"Don't disturb him," the lady ordered, creeping stiffly from her seat. "Mrs. Jorrocks can attend to Miss Ada and myself. Do you get refreshment and a room ready for this—er—gentleman, and rouse the stable people to see to the chauffeur's needs. You'll stay the night," she added, addressing Stubbins without cordiality. "It is impossible to proceed in this weather."

"Delighted," said he. "I'm as wet as I'm peckish."

An hour later, having finished a hearty, though solitary meal in a room wainscotted and ceiled in wonderful old oak, he questioned Jorrocks, who was himself clearing the table.

"Are you the only man in the house?" he asked.

"The only indoors man-servant nowadays, sir, but Mr. Cecil Clout is staying here—m'lady's son, sir, by her first husband; Miss Ada being the only child by the second, the late Sir George Caaily, of Fere. Will you want anything more, sir?" he asked, locking the last of some marvellous old silver from the table away in a small, iron-lined pantry behind an oaken panel. "If not, I'll go to bed!"

"So shall I," Stubbins responded, yawning, and was ushered to his room. But there a cheery fire induced him to linger over it, wondering whether, if he bought the Manor, Ada Caaily might be persuaded to become its mistress. This train of thought reminded him that, having some idea of photographing the place, he had brought a camera, together with a portable developing apparatus which had taken his fancy, and that these had been left below in the hall. In stocking soles he crept down the great staircase, secured the things, and starting to reascend, noted a streak of light showing underneath the door of the room where he had supped, which he promptly entered.

"Hullo!" he cried. "What is your little game?"

The silver pantry was open, and a man stepped out from it. Evidently startled he pulled himself together.

"I swear," the thief protested earnestly, "I've not lifted an ounce. Look for yourself."

Unheedingly, Mark stepped forward into the cupboard. A moment later its door closed swiftly, and as he heard the lock click, the floor slipped from beneath him.

III.

"The village constable has come, m' lady," reported Jorrocks, who, on rising, had found the silver pantry stripped, "and is searching outside for footprints."

"This is terrible!" Lady Caaily turned distractedly to her son. "The sale of the Manor with its contents would have enabled me to pay your most pressing debts, though it would not have provided any more money for you to waste. But without the silver I fear that unspeakable man won't look at it."

Jorrocks returned, more alarmed than ever.

"The gentleman, m' lady, who came last night is not in his room—his bed has not been slept in."

Cecil Clout whistled softly, as in surprise.

"I shall go to town at once," he announced, "and have proper detectives sent down to trace this evasive gentleman and the silver. I have no doubt they are together. The local police are no earthly good, and wiring may only lead to delay and confusion."

It was Ada who saw him off at the porch, and as he drove away in pursuance of this resolution, her eye caught sight of a gleam of silver from a brand new cigarette case which had fallen amongst the shrubbery bordering the ivy clad front of the Manor. She picked it up, and thinking it must be her step-brother's, raised her hand to signal to him. Then, changing her mind, she opened the case, and found within it a scrap of paper scribbled upon.

A few minutes later she was upstairs above the porch, in an old-fashioned bedroom with a huge open fireplace. She touched a spring, and a door inside this opened, revealing a narrow passage, within the thickness of the outside wall, which she traversed until it ended at another door, at which she knocked.

"For pity's sake come in," Stubbins' voice responded, "if you know how—there is no door on this side!"

She pressed another spring, and what appeared to be a panel within opened to give her access to a tiny chamber of considerable height, lit by a narrow slit near its ceiling, through which a spray of ivy fluttered.

"I never saw anyone so like an angel!" cried Mark, who had been seated on the relics of what had once been a bedstead. "I feared that I was to be buried alive here."

"I have this moment found your case with its message," she answered, her color rising. "You say in it that you are trapped beneath the silver pantry, and I guessed at once that you must be in the Priest's Den. It was contrived long ago to conceal fugitive clerics, with a double entrance to facilitate escape when necessary. But what were you doing in the silver pantry?" she demanded.

He explained what he had seen; then continued:

"When the trap-door was slipped—I suppose by the burglar from outside—I fell upon some musty straw at the bottom of a kind of well, from which a winding stair led up here. I shouted myself hoarse, but no one seemed to hear, so I chucked my cigarette case out of that hole up there, which I could not reach otherwise. I'm glad you found it," he added with marked emphasis.

"But," she queried, blushing; "who was the thief?"

"I don't know," he returned; "but I have his photo."

"Why!" she exclaimed, "that is my camera."

"It is," he acknowledged, holding it out; "but the make is exactly that of mine, and the two must have got mixed during our journey yesterday. Anyhow, when I was alone here with a developing machine, and found water trickling into the well, I started work to keep myself from thinking, and brought out a picture, on one of your exposures, in which I recognised the man of the silver pantry. If he is engaged to you," he concluded shakily, "I'll play the game, and tear it up rather than cause you trouble."

Her face grew white, then crimson again.

"You are a true gentleman, Mr. Stubbins," she answered at last; "but I am not engaged, and the only person I had photographed there was my step-brother, Cecil Clout, who is now on his way to London."

"Then," responded Mark, shrewdly, "he talked like a regular burglar to fool me—as he did—and I fear he is a bad potato, who has carried off the stuff in his baggage."

"Mother was selling it along with the Manor," Ada acknowledged, tears in her eyes, "to pay debts which might have brought him to prison—now he must go there."

"Not at all"—Mark secured both her hands—"if you will only stay to be mistress of the Manor as my wife, the place will be worth millions more to me than with the old silver. I did not care much for what I saw of that," he urged, "and I loved you at first sight."

"Suppose we talk about it after you have breakfasted," she suggested coyly, "if Lady Caaily agrees?"

"I'll see she does," said Mark.

And she did.

LITTLE RULES FOR HUSBANDS ONLY.

Don't forget that your wife will love in proportion to the amount of consideration you show her: that little daily attentions and trifles that demonstrate love and devotion are far more valuable in married life than anything else.

Make a practice of occasionally bringing your wife home a bunch of flowers, a bottle of scent, or some other little gift, such as you constantly bestowed upon her in your courtship days.

She will appreciate such gifts far more than the bestowal of some grand gift presented on set occasions such as her birthday, or at Christmas-time.

Try and grasp the fact that, even if you have been married some years, and though you may regard your wife as an old married woman, she is still feminine enough to like being made love to.

No woman is ever too old to be proof against being made love to.

Show your appreciation of her daily efforts to please you, and instead of taking all her kindness and trouble for granted, give her an occasional word of encouragement, and show her that you appreciate her daily toil to keep your home nice and bright.

So many men quite forget to bestow the words of praise which are so sweet to the worker, especially to women, who always were, and always will be, greedy for admiration and praise. You don't forget to blame when things are left undone—try and remember to praise when they are well done.

Make a fuss of your wife. Be more attentive to her than you would be to a stranger, and don't be afraid of showing your devotion before other and your own.

Have you never noticed that the women who are loved, and made much of by their husbands, are always pretty, happy, and contented women? They are the women who smile at life, and consequently life smiles back on them. We are too fond of saying that such women belong to the unfolding type who develop late, and are more beautiful at forty than they were at twenty.

Lime should be freely used in all butter factories. A special limewater tank, with a tap, say 9in. from the bottom, is of great value. This tank could be filled with water and a bag of lime thrown into it. The water then should be freely used in rinsing out churns, butter-printers, and other utensils. Floors should be washed over once a week. By doing this we would find much less of the disagreeable factory odor which must affect flavors.

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

The prodigal son told me all about his return the other day (writes Edson in "Punch"). I found him sitting on a stump by the roadside near Werribee. He was looking for a job. He had a swag beside him, and was very dusty and dry. "I was like most blokes when they're young," he said. "Didn't know when I was well off. Dad had a farm—a dashed good farm, too—and he and mum were tryin' pretty hard to make the best of it, when I takes it into my head I was cut out for better things than bein' a spud miner, and I cuts my stick. I got away to Melbourne, worked my way to Sydney, put in a few years there, and then got work pearl fishin'; worked south again, and joined one of the contingents to the Boer war. I stayed in Africa till a year or so ago, and then drifted back, full to the throat of knocking round and grafting and starving, and thankin' Heaven, with all my soul there was a good home I could go to. I didn't write. I hadn't written a single letter since I left home; but I knew the old people, and I was sure of my welcome. With a bit of bread, a pinch of tea and sugar, this old swag, and eighteenpence in my pocket, I started from Melbourne. I reached home in two days, dead beat, and half-starved. The front door was opened by a strange woman. 'Good day,' I said. 'I'm Dan. I want to see my mother.' She looked at me for a moment. 'So you're Dan, are you?' says she. 'Well, I'm your mother.' 'Please don' joke with me,' I said; 'I'm in no humor for it.' 'It's no joke, young man,' says she: 'I'm your mother, and there's your father.' She pointed to a strange man working in the garden. 'You see,' she said, 'your mother died, and your father married again, and then your father died, and your mother married again.' 'Great Scott!' I cried. 'Yes,' says she, with a frosty look, 'so me and him is your father and mother in a way of speaking; but we don't want prodigal sons.' Then she shut the door in my face."

A number of Melbourne artists went out on an extended picnic the other week, taking a truck-load of provisions and guarding against the possibilities of a devastating drought with a stock of bottled beer that it took a draught horse to shift. They had been in camp a few days, and the bottled stuff was far from being as numerous as when landed on the grounds, but was still plentiful enough to make the possibility of a sudden cessation of water supply a matter of indifference to the artists, when a belated friend arrived on the scene. He looked in at the small house occupied by the picnickers, and discovered in one dark room a form prone on the floor among many bottles. The newcomer thought he recognised the figure and the position. "Is that you, Blank?" he said; but he got no reply, the figure among the bottles being temporarily oblivious. None of the other picnickers were in the house or about the paddock, so the late arrival went to seek them down by the sea. The party was in bathing, and after greetings and compliments the arrival explained: "I looked in at the house," he said. "I say, Blank's properly pickled, isn't he? He was lying there almost buried under bottles. You shouldn't give him the run of the glassware. You know what he is." "But Blank is here!" exclaimed the picnickers. "Then who is up there among your beer?" The picnickers rushed for their clothes, then galloped for the house, and found a total (if not teetotal) stranger on the kitchen floor, among the remains of the stock of beer. The total stranger was a tramp, but for the time being he was entirely incapable of tramping. He was drunk up to the eyebrows, and there was not a whole bottle of beer in the house. In the luxury of so vast a possession the tramp had opened every bottle. The beer burglar was dragged out by one leg and kept on the chain till he sobered up, in order that the picnickers might have the satisfaction of pointing out the error of his ways forcibly, when he was capable of appreciating the attention.

It is not often one hears close at home of the sudden rise to fortune of two hard-working toilers on the land. Nevertheless, two brainy farmers who had taken up land in New South Wales, not far from Lithgow, have had this good fortune. For several years they have been struggling against the farmer's great enemy, drought, which visited them almost each season. Knowing that their land was in a "mineral country," one of the brothers, who had made a study of mineralogy, was hopeful that some day they would strike "something." So they have at last, no less than platinum, gold, and also a valuable metal used for hardening steel. These hard-working settlers, who by the way are brothers of Miss Bertha Bors, of the Alexandra Club, can now take their ease, as they are, to use the slang expression, "made for life." It is at present their intention to indulge a long-desired ambition to travel.

Travelling recently from Hobart to Launceston a back-block lady was very irate with a popular doctor because he did not put out his pipe the moment she hurried into the smoking carriage. He is an epicure in brands, and was thoroughly enjoying himself. The lady glared at him and dropped several broad hints, of which he took no notice. Unable to contain herself any longer, she burst out: "If I were your wife and you smoked when I was shut in a stuffy carriage with you, I would put poison in your tea." The doctor said and did nothing. Several stations further on the lady got out. As she alighted, he leisurely removed his pipe and said with ineffable politeness, "Madam, if I were your husband, I would drink that tea."

To illustrate the vicissitudes of those who die rich, Andrew Carnegie told at a dinner in New York an amusing Scotch story.

"George Gordon, a rich old Scot," he said, "was taken seriously ill, and decided that he had better draw up his will at once. Accordingly the testament was then and there written out at his dictation, read to him, and placed in his lap for his signature.

"The old man took the pen, wrote 'George Gor—,' and then sank back exhausted.

"The heir hastily raised him again. "'D,' uncle; 'd,' he prompted.

"'Dee!' growled the old man, 'I'll dee when I'm ready, ye avareecious wretch.'"

Said an ambitious youth one day to a young lady, "Don't you think I'd better dye my moustache?" caressing the faintly-visible progeny.

"I think if you let it alone it will die itself," said the lady.

UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE OF A SMALL BOY.

In farming districts medical men are often obliged to combine veterinary surgery with their ordinary practice, and if they are not careful to keep the two departments separate, ludicrous blunders are apt to occur.

Entering the cottage of one of his patients recently, a country doctor was surprised to find the front room floor covered with water, while sounds of hysterical weeping proceeded from the little kitchen behind. Noiselessly opening the door that connected the two rooms he peeped in, and remained for a few moments a silent spectator of a scene that was at once both pathetic and laughable.

Seated in the middle of the floor, without a rag of clothing on him, was the little patient vainly trying to dodge a stream of liquid which his mother was squirting upon his unprotected body. Behind him, with parental solicitude on his face, was his father, who from time to time encouraged him to bear the process like a man, as they were only doing it for his good.

"What on earth are you up to?" cried the bewildered doctor at last. "You'll give the lad his death of cold."

"Why, doctor, how else are we to do it?" asked the father. "You said in the note that we were to mix the physic in three gallons of water and squirt it all over him."

"Bless that boy of mine!" groaned the doctor. "He's brought the stuff I made up for Farmer W.'s calf, which has got skin disease!"

A GIFT WORTH HAVING.

There are those who, wherever they go, diffuse brightness, shed a sort of halo around themselves that irresistibly attracts. Even in the coldest, most formal gathering a person of this kind puts others at their ease, brings out the best of the most retiring and shrinking who may be there. To few of us is given this gift, for gift it certainly is, and one of the most powerful. In this strenuous, work-a-day world it is worth while, even at a little cost, to make people pleased with themselves, to be bright and pleasing, and convince the wearied and saddened that, spite of troubles, "'Tis a very good world that we live in," and life is worth living.

USEFUL INFORMATION.

A mustard plaster mixed entirely with white of egg will neither scar nor blister.

Boiled fruits should be kept in the dark. A dry cupboard is the best place for them.

Rub a little oil of peppermint over a sensitive corn. This will ease the soreness.

Those who suffer from aching feet should occasionally sponge the insides of their shoes with a moderately strong solution of ammonia. The shoes must be perfectly dry before they are put on.

For a starch polish make a good thick solution of gum arabic. Add a tablespoonful of this to the hot starch. If cold is required, dissolve a tablespoonful of gum in one pint of water, and use it when cold for mixing the starch.

Keep the windows sufficiently open so that the fresh night air can come in from one side, and the impure can go out through the other. The upper sash should be down one inch, and the lower sash up one inch, for each person sleeping in the room.

A good whitewash is made as follows:—Stir six pounds of whiting into cold water, avoiding all lumps. Steep three ounces of glue in cold water for twelve hours, then heat it until it is dissolved, and pour it into the whiting, which must be hot. The wash should be of a consistency to be applied with a whitewash brush.

The Wise Virgin.

The old man laid down his newspaper.

"My child," he said to the fair girl in sables who had just come in, her cheeks pink and her eyes shining from the frosty air; "my child, I am unspeakably shocked and grieved. Your mother informs me that you are engaged to five young men at once."

But his daughter laughed and patted his shoulder in reassuring fashion.

"Dear old stupid dad, it's all right," she said. "They are football players, and at the end of the season I shall wed the survivor."

"Oh!" said the father; and his brow clearing, he resumed his reading.

There is an old legend about the clock in St. Paul's, London, striking thirteen times instead of twelve once upon a time, and it is said that because this was proved a sentinel's life was saved. He was accused of sleeping at his post, which was at a considerable distance from the church. The poor fellow denied the charge, but could not bring evidence of his innocence. He had his trial, and the only proof of his wakefulness he brought forward was that at midnight he had heard St. Paul's strike thirteen. The judges laughed this to scorn as an impossibility, and, besides, they thought he could not hear so far. However, while he lay under sentence of death several persons came forward and swore to the truth of his statement. It is reported that the soldier was set free, and long years afterwards when he died the record of the circumstances was engraved on his coffin-plate.

George Golden and his friend Casey, a pair of well-known American humorists, once sailed for Europe.

Relating the events of the trip afterwards, Golden remarked:

"Talk about seasickness! Had I known that Casey was afflicted that way, we never should have gone abroad. The very first day out Casey collapsed, and refused to brace up again. I tried all sorts of remedies on him, but without avail. All he would mutter was, 'Oh, musha! musha! I'm so sick!'

"Finally I cried out, 'Can't you keep anything on your stomach, man?'

"'Only my hands, George,' he groaned; 'only my hands!'"

Seated at the pianoforte, a young lady remarked to a bachelor visitor: "You are a lover of music, are you not?"

To this the cruel cynic replied:

"Oh, yes; but you can go on playing all the same!"

Mankind is in the end always governed by superiority of intellectual qualities.

VARIETIES.

Our virtues are often but our vices disguised.

Misfortunes are not without their heroism and glory.

Although few of us get what we want, most of us get what we deserve.

English is a compulsory subject in all Japanese schools.

Fortune may find you a pot, but your own industry must make it boil.

When we feel that we cannot trust ourselves, our credit is indeed bad.

He who discerns others is wise, but he who knows himself is enlightened.

When we say that wisdom is better than riches, we always mean our wisdom and other people's riches.

It is always well to obtain what one desires, but it is better to desire what one only can obtain.

Every man who hears of a woman who is a man-hater believes she would alter her views if she ever met him.

Probably there is no quality more efficient in dispelling ignorance than the courage which dares to confess it.

Jealousy nourishes itself on doubt; when the doubt becomes a certainty jealousy either turns to hate or dies.

It is calculated that Europe and America have between them about 8,000,000 hives of honey bees.

In selecting a bicycle, always be sure to get the best make. Any of the advertisements will tell you which that is.

All that glitters may not be gold, but it is just as well to wait for the jeweller's verdict before giving the young man the cold shoulder.

Some other fellow is applauded for saying the good things that we might just as well have said, had we only thought of them.

It would be a good idea for some people to hold their tongues occasionally, and give their brains a chance to catch up.

It is so easy to forget a kindness, and to remember a kick. Yet controlling our recollections is almost as important as controlling our temper.

The bones of all flying birds are hollow, and are filled with air, thus combining the greatest strength with the greatest possible lightness.

A naturalist, who sewed bits of red silk to swallows caught in England, identified one of the same birds in the neighborhood of the Pyramids.

The amount deposited in the savings banks of Japan is £20,000,000. Ten years ago it was only a quarter of this.

The ordinary weight of the human heart is 9½oz., and in size the organ is equal to the closed fist of the person to whom it belongs.

The annual value of British seaborne commerce is £1,465,000. This is two and a-half times the value of that of Germany, and three times that of America.

Each virtue hath his time; if you command your soldier to march foremost, and he for courtesy put others before him, would you praise his modesty?

There are 80 bacon factories in Denmark, over two-thirds of them run on the co-operative principle. The output for last year was valued at £3,000,000 sterling.

Through their leaves and stems plants breathe air just as do animals. A young plant is 75 per cent. water, and most of the rest carbon, which the plant has extracted from the air.

He that gives good advice builds with one hand; he that gives good counsel and example builds with the other; but he that gives good admonition and bad example builds with one hand and pulls down with the other.

To waterproof boots and shoes, melt together two ounces of mutton-fat and one ounce of beeswax. When in a liquid state, rub a little of the preparation on the uppers and over the edges of the soles, where the stitches are.

Nothing can be better for farmers and farm laborers than to devise some plan whereby the agricultural laborer can be taught to look with pride upon his own calling, can be encouraged to do the best that is in him, can be taught to search for the happiness and contentment that the countryside holds for all who will seek conscientiously to discover it.

A veterinary surgeon says the tooth method is useless for telling the age of a horse which is more than eight years old. As soon as the set of teeth is complete, however, a wrinkle begins to appear on the upper edge of the lower eyelid, and a new wrinkle is added each year, so that to get at the age of a horse over eight years old you must figure the teeth plus the wrinkles.

It often happens that if a lie be believed for only an hour it has done its work, and there is no further occasion for it. Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it, so that when men come to be undeceived it is too late; the jest is over, and the tale has had its effect; like a man who has thought of a good repartee when the discourse is changed or the company parted; or like a physician who has found out an infallible medicine after the patient is dead.

ISN'T THIS TRUE—

That men will flirt with smart, extravagantly dressed girls and then go away to marry the thrifty, neat housewife, and confide to her that they'd be sorry to pay for all the finery worn by the other girl?

That men will dance half the night with the girl who has a small waist, or a pretty, delicate complexion, but when they want a wife they will look round for someone more healthy and robust?

That a man will be vastly amused by the smart, cynical girl, but when he marries he will want his wife to be full of sympathy, tact, and affection?

The 15th Battalion of the Loamshire Militia was home again from the front, and the Mayor and the Corporation of Loamshire's county town, in all their municipal robes, entertained the brave boys to a banquet in the town hall. The meal was nearly over, and a corpulent sergeant loosened his belt. Presently a waiter sidled up to him with a plate of fruit.

"Dessert, sergeant?"

"Desert? Not me, while I can get a feed like this for nothing."

There are better fish in the sea than have ever been caught; the big ones always get away.

"I may tell you, my boy, that although my daughter is well educated, she cannot cook."

"That doesn't matter in the least, so long as she doesn't try!" replied the future son-in-law.

FOREORDAINED.

Let me not deem that I was made in vain,
Or that my being was an accident,
Which Fate, in working its sublime intent,
Not wished to be, to hinder would not deign.
Each drop uncounted in a storm of rain
Hath its own mission, and is duly spent
'Mid myriad dimples on the shipless main.
The very shadow of an insect's wing,
For which the violet cared not while it stayed
Yet felt the lighter for its vanishing,
Proved that the sun was shining by its shade.
Then can a drop of the eternal spring,
Shadow of living lights, in vain be made?

—Coleridge.

A SPECIALIST AT FAULT.

In a French journal appears an appalling misadventure, recorded on the authority of the distinguished writer Aurelien Scholl, which befell a shining light of medical science, Legrand du Saule, one of the acknowledged authorities on mental disease in Paris.

A well-known man of letters, feeling uneasy about a daughter who showed some signs of eccentricity, was anxious to get the opinion of the leading specialist without arousing her suspicions. He hit on the idea of giving a dinner to which several celebrities were invited. Legrand du Saule took little part in the conversation, but listened attentively and used his highly-trained powers of observation. Towards the end of the dinner he leaned towards his host and whispered:

"You may make your mind easy about your daughter; she is suffering from nothing more serious than a trifling nervousness, which will pass off. But I think it right to tell you that there is one of your guests whose mental condition is distinctly alarming, and, I fear, hopeless."

Being asked who this was, the oracle said:

"That stout gentleman yonder, with the look of a canon, who is laughing so heartily."

The man who was thus enjoying himself all unconscious of the doom pronounced upon him was Ernest Renan, the famous philologist and French Academician!

FACTS FROM ODD PLACES.

Japan has a written history extending over 2500 years.

Cornish miners believe that it is unlucky to whistle underground.

China raises and consumes more ducks than any other country in the world.

The first American oil well was found accidentally by men sinking for salt in the year 1815.

It is estimated that nearly 4000 acres of cedar-trees are cut down annually to provide the material for lead-pencils.

The pigeon and turkey have each a natural temperature of 109 degrees, which is 10 degrees higher than man's natural temperature.

Rabbits, says a naturalist, have white tails so that the young may be able to distinguish their mother in case of pursuit. The color of the rabbit is so like that of the ground that this would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible.

A remarkable bird found in Mexico is the bee martin, which has a trick of ruffling up the feathers on the top of its head into the exact semblance of a beautiful flower, and when a bee comes along to sip honey from the supposed flower it is snapped up by the bird.

There is more shrewdness and keenness of observation with deep-set eyes than with prominent ones. Whatever we perceive is conveyed to the brain by means of the optic nerve; thus the deeper the eyes are set in the head, the closer their proximity to the brain. The nerve being shorter accounts for a quicker transmission of sensation and sight.

NATURE FAKES.

After a careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence bearing on the subject, the investigating committee reports that notwithstanding their long life and apparent respectability, the following are undoubtedly Nature fakes:—

The bull in the china shop.
The wolf at the door.
The fly in the ointment.
The dog in the manger.
The bee in the bonnet.
The flea in the ear.
Pigs in clover.
Time flies.
The man on a lark.

Nicely Colored.

In a field the artist sat, making a study of a picturesque clump of trees. By his side stood an inquisitive intruder, who muttered under his breath and curiously watched the operation.

At last the artist could stand it no longer.

"You oaf!" he exclaimed. "You loutish clodhopper! Don't you know better than to stand there annoying me? What possible interest can you take in what I am doing?"

"Bless me," cried the man, "don't get excited! I meant no harm; but I never in all my life, sir, saw an artist painting two pictures at once!"

"Two pictures!" exclaimed the paint smudger, bewildered.

"Yes!" replied the onlooker; "and I'm blessed if I don't like the one you've got your thumb through the better of the two!" And he pointed to the great palette, smeared with every conceivable tint, that the artist held in his left hand.

By Hand.

"Don't, on any account, whip your children," said the theoretical educational expert to the angry mother of many perniciously active olive branches. "Adopt the rational, modern methods, and you will find their rapid development along the highest mental and moral lines remarkable."

"There ain't a-goin' to be no machine-made prodigies in this family," answered the practical parent firmly, as she reached for her cane. "I'm a-bringin' up these 'ere children by hand."

A Woman's View.

Doctor B—— rarely met his match, but on one occasion he fairly owned that he had. He was sent for by an innkeeper who had a quarrel with his wife, who had scarred his face with her nails so that the poor man was bleeding, and much disfigured.

Doctor B—— thought this an opportunity not to be lost for admonishing the offender, and said:

"Madam, are you not ashamed of yourself to treat your husband like this? The husband is the head of the family—your head, in fact, madam."

"Well, doctor," fiercely returned the virago, "and may I not scratch my own head?"

"Hasn't Woodby got his coat-of-arms yet? Why, he told me he was going to look up his ancestry the first opportunity he got, and——"

"Well, I believe he got an opportunity to look up his family tree, but he saw some things hanging to the branches that discouraged further research."

Supplement to the Leader.

April 4, 1908.

The Mystery of the Ravenspurs.

By F. M. WHITE,

Author of "The Ends of Justice," "The Law of the Land," etc.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

Diplomacy.

Mrs. May crossed rapidly and noiselessly to the door and closed it. Not that there was any need for caution, seeing that the primitive household had been abed long ago. But precaution is never wasted.

There was coffee in the grate, kept hot by means of a spirit lamp. Mrs. May poured out a cup and handed it to her guest.

She lay back in her chair watching him with a keen glance and the easy, natural insolence, the cruel, cutting superiority of the great over the small. The man stood, his hands thrust into the folds of his loose sleeves, a picture of patient resignation.

"How did you get here?" the princess asked.

"At the great house in London I asked, O mistress," Ben Heer replied. "I came over, as thou knowest, to do certain work. There was yet another one with me. And when my work was done I came on to tell what thy slave had accomplished."

"You have proofs of what you say?"

"Else I had not been here. For two years we have followed up the track of the victim. It was as if we had searched for one single perch in the whole of a great lake of water. But we never tired, and never slept both at the same time. Then at last we got near, and it came to the knowledge of the prey that we were upon him. That was long before the last cold weather that nearly starved us."

The man paused and shivered. The princess nodded with careless sympathy. She had never tried a winter in England, but she could imagine what it was.

"He knew us at last," Ben Heer resumed. "He met us face to face in the public street, and he knew that his hour had come. A night later he was in Paris. At the same time we were in Paris also. He tried Rome, Vienna, Berlin. So did we. Then he came back to London again. When he did so we knew that he had bowed his face before the All-seeing, and prayed that the end might come speedily."

The princess followed all this with impatience. But the man was speaking after the manner of his kind, and could not be hurried.

He would go on to the end without omitting a single detail, and the princess was forced to listen. Despite the Western garb and the evidences of Western life and custom about her, she was no longer Mrs. May, but Princess Zara.

She had only to close her eyes and the droning intonation and passionless voice of the speaker took her back to Lassa again. And the day was near—ah! the day was near when the goal would be reached!

"Once we had him, and once he es- [illegible] iron. He knew that the end was near. It was in a big house—a house near to London—that we found him.

"There were servants, and they were glad to have their fortunes told. It was their evening meal on the table when we got there, and the man Voski Sahib was out. Then, behold, after that evening meal the servants slept till dawn, and at midnight the master returned. He came into his study and the bright flash of the lightning came at the touch of his fingers."

"Electric light," the princess impatiently. "Go on."

"Then he saw us. We knew that he had no weapon. The door we barred. Then Voski, he sit down and light a cigar, smiling, smiling all the time. When we look at him we see that he moves not so much as a little finger. There was no sign of fear, except that he look at a little box on the table now and then."

"Ah!" the princess cried. "You got it, eh?"

Ben Heer made no direct reply. He was not to be hurried. He meant to describe a sordid murder in his own cold-blooded way. Probably he did not regard the thing as a crime at all; he had been acting under the blessing of the priests.

"'You have come for it?' he asked. "We bowed low with respect, saying that we had come for it. He lay back in his chair, making a sign for me to approach. Previously we had told him that it was useless for him to call out to the servants."

"You did not tell those servants their fortunes in your present garb?"

"No, no, my mistress. We no such pigs as that. . . . Sahib Voski bid me approach. My friend had the 'pi' ready on the cloth. . . . It was held to the head of the other. And so he died peacefully in his chair."

"Ah! so you say. Where are your proofs?"

Ben Heer slowly withdrew a white packet from the folds of his dress.

"What better proof could the slave of my illustrious mistress have?" he asked. "It is here—the precious stone with the secrets of the gods written on it. Behold!"

With a slightly dramatic gesture a glittering fragment of something that looked like green jade was held on high. The princess grasped it eagerly and devoured it with her eyes. Words were pouring in a liquid stream from her lips; she was transformed almost beyond recognition.

"At last," she murmured; "at last! But the other one—your companion. How did he die? You say he is dead. How?"

Ben Heer shook his head sadly.

"I cannot say," he replied. "It might have been some scheme on the part of Sahib Voski. When we got back to our room in London we were both dreadfully ill. For days I lie, and when I get better they tell me my poor friend is dead and buried. Then I understood why Voski Sahib smile and smile in that strange way. It was witchcraft, perhaps, or some devil we do not know in the East—but there is the stone."

The princess was regarding the shining stone with a besotted enthusiasm that seemed grotesquely out of place with her dress and surroundings. Perhaps this suddenly flashed upon her, for she carefully locked up the stone.

"You have done well, Ben Heer," she said, "and shall not go unrewarded. The worst part of our task is over; the rest is easy."

"Then the princess goes not back to Lassa?" Ben Heer asked.

"Oh, not yet, not yet. Not till they are destroyed root and branch to the smallest twig on the tree. I have not spared myself, and I am not going to spare others. Yet there remain those of the accursed race yonder, the Ravenspurs. They know too much; they have that which I require. I will kill them off—they shall die——"

"As my mistress slew her husband when his life was of no more value to her?"

"Ah! so you know that? You would not reproach me, Ben Heer?"

"Does the slave reproach the master who keeps his carcase from the kennel?" Ben Heer asked, as he bowed low. "My mistress was right; her hands were washed whiter than the snow in the blood of the Christian. It was well; it was just."

"Then you shall help me, for there is much to be done. Take this ring. Place it on your finger and go to the others. They are outside waiting. Give them the call, thus."

The princess made a faint noise like the drowsy call of a bird, and Ben Heer caught it up at once. He had heard it many times before. Then he slipped out like a cat in the darkness, and presently the call came from the gloom. A moment later it was answered, and then all was still again.

Mrs. May, who had discarded the princess for a moment, closed her window. It was a glad night for her.

"So those two are out of the way," she murmured. "The road is clear at last—clear to the vengeance that must be mine. And with the vengeance comes the wealth that should make me a feared and dreaded power in the East. Give me but the wealth and Lassa shall be my footstool."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Geoffrey Gets a Shock.

Ralph Ravenspur had wandered along the cliffs and Geoffrey had followed him. The latter came up to the blind man at the loneliest part of the rugged granite, and there for a time they sat. Ralph was graver and more taciturn than usual, till presently his head was raised and he seemed to be listening to something intently.

"What is the matter?" Geoffrey asked.

"Somebody is close to us,' Ralph explained. "Somebody is creeping up to us in the gorse. Nay, you need not move. We are safe here on this bare ledge. There is one thing there is no cause to fear in dealing with these miscreants, and that is firearms. Weapons of that description make a noise, and your Oriental hates noise when he is out on the kill. Ah! what did I tell you? Somebody is close by."

A figure rose out of the gorse, a slender figure with a ragged beard and brown face. The stranger crept along and dropped by Geoffrey's side.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "It is only I—Tchigorsky."

Geoffrey was astonished, though he had no occasion to be.

Ralph took the matter coolly. "I expected something like this," he said. "I knew you would desire to see me, and that is why we came along the rocks."

Tchigorsky lay on his back puffing a cigarette.

"Keep your eyes open," he said to Geoffrey. "One can't be too particular. Not that there is any danger, for I've sent those two wretches off on a wild-goose chase for an hour or two, and the she-devil is down with one of her blinding headaches. You wouldn't think she was a woman whose heart is in a weak state, eh?"

"I shouldn't have supposed she had one," said Geoffrey. "Have you seen her?"

"I was in her company for a long time last night," Tchigorsky explained. [illegible] proofs of my success."

"The forged Garuda stone," Ralph chuckled.

"The same," Tchigorsky said gravely. "It was a magnificent forgery, and calculated to deceive those pious, murderous old rascals at Lassa. At any rate, I am now deep in the confidence of the princess, and attached to her subordinates, who are pledged to assist in wiping out the Ravenspur family."

Geoffrey sighed involuntarily. He would have liked to know why this vendetta aimed at his family, but he knew that the question would be useless. Still, he felt that a great deal had been gained during the last few hours.

"Have you learnt what the latest villainy is?" Ralph asked.

"Not yet. There is much uneasiness and alarm over the recent failures, and my dusky allies are getting a little frightened. For the next day or two I expect we shall lie low and plan some big coup.

"What I want to secure now are the princess's private papers. I know she has them and is in regular communication with the priests at Lassa. Give me these and I can expose the whole plot. Let me wipe these three people out, and then Lassa shall get a hint that will save further trouble from that quarter.

"A hint from the India Office that any more rascality will mean an expedition to Lassa and the destruction of their temples will suffice. But first I must have my proofs. Without proofs I am helpless."

"Find them," Ralph croaked; "find them. Never mind the scandal, never heed what people may say. Bring the matter home, hang those wretches, and we shall never more be troubled by this plague from the East. If I had my way I would shoot the whole lot."

"And be hanged for your pains," Tchigorsky replied. "Ah! my friend, there are serious flaws in the criminal law of this fine country of yours. Patience, patience. I shall find out everything in time."

"There is one thing I am curious to know," said Geoffrey. "I want to know who was the girl on the cliff with Mrs. May that afternoon—the girl who has such an amazing likeness to Marion? Have you discovered that, Tchigorsky?"

"That is what I am trying to get at myself," Tchigorsky replied with great gravity. "It is one of the mysteries of the campaign."

Geoffrey said no more on the point, chiefly because he had no more to say. Yet it was haunting him now, as it had done for some time past. It filled his mind as he made his way down the cliffs after luncheon. And then, to his surprise, as he gained the sands he saw a figure rise from the rocks and flit along the beach until it flashed round a distant point.

It was the girl who bore that surprising resemblance to Marion. She was dressed, as before, in a blue skirt and red tam-o'-shanter.

With a sudden impulse Geoffrey followed. His feet flew over the heavy sands, making no noise. As he turned the rocky point he saw no signs of the girl, but there on the beach with her sketch-book on her knee was Marion herself, so deeply interested in manipulating her water-colors that she did not see Geoffrey till he hailed her.

"Did you see her?" Geoffrey gasped.

Marion smiled at his excited face.

"See whom?" she asked. "Oh, yes, some girl did pass me; but I was so busily engaged that I did not look up. How do you think my sketch is progressing? I have been at it all the morning. Vera made me a small bet that I should not finish it to-day, so I am going to win my bet or perish in the attempt."

Geoffrey was hardly listening. He recollected that there had been some little chaff at luncheon over some sketch, but he had paid little heed to the subject.

"It was the same girl," he said. "The girl so like you. Oh, Marion, how unfortunate you did not look up!"

"It was indeed," Marion replied. She appeared to be deeply interested. "I would have given anything to see her. But it is not too late. Put my materials in your boat, Geoff, and I will follow up the cliffs. I can't be very much use, I'm afraid; but at any rate I may solve this much of the mystery."

Geoffrey returned to his boat. It seemed very strange to him that Marion should not have seen the girl, and also that on each occasion these two should have been so close together without meeting.

Geoffrey pushed his boat out, got his sails up, and then stood out for the bay. It was very quiet, and no other boats were to be seen. One or two of the upper windows of the castle were visible from there, but no other signs of habitation.

The breeze freshened as Geoffrey reached the open sea. Some distance from him a pile of wreckage covered with a mass of seaweed floated on the water.

"I'll anchor here and get my lines out," said Geoffrey.

He luffed, and as he did so a puff of wind filled the sail. The mast gave an ominous crack, and the whole thing snapped and went by the board. Geoffrey stared with widely-open eyes. The wind was as nothing, barely enough to belly the sail. Then he looked down and saw that the mast had been almost sawn away. Somebody had cut it nearly through, so that the first puff would suffice.

Geoffrey felt vaguely alarmed and uneasy. He was a good four miles from shore, and was an indifferent swimmer. The sea was too dangerous and rough for bathing. There might be further treachery. He sat down and pulled hard at the oars with the idea of returning to the beach again.

As he bent his back to the work, he toppled over the seat with two short stumps in his hands. The oars, too, had been sawn through and Geoffrey was helpless, four miles from land in an open boat, with no means of progress and nobody in sight.

The position was alarming. There would be nothing for it but to wait until some passing craft came along and picked him up. But the time went by without any sign of a boat, and starvation might be the result. Nor was the position improved when it began to dawn upon Geoffrey that the boat was filling fast.

He saw that a large hole had been bored in the bottom and filled with some kind of substance that slowly dissolved in the water. With a tin dipper Geoffrey worked away with all his might, but he could only keep the water from rising higher, and knew that the exertion would soon tell upon him.

"Help!" he cried. "Help! help! help!"

He ceased to call as suddenly as he had begun. What was the use of calling so long as nobody could hear him? And why waste the breath that would be so precious to him later? He could not see that the mass of wreckage and seaweed had drifted close to the boat. He saw nothing till a line thrown into the boat struck him smartly on the face. He looked up.

"Can you manage to keep her afloat?" a hoarse voice came from the [illegible] perhaps," Geoffrey replied. "Why?"

"That will do," said the other. "I've got a paddle here. Hitch the rope on to the nose of the boat and bail out for all you are worth. This is another of the princess's little tricks. I expected it; only it hasn't turned out quite in the way that I anticipated. Now, bail away."

"Tchigorsky!" Geoffrey gasped. "Tchigorsky!"

"Very much at your service. I rigged up this contrivance this morning and pushed off with it, not long before you came down. But never mind me. Stick to your dipper, and I'll tell you all about it when we are ashore."

It was hard and weary work for both of them, but it was accomplished at last. Geoffrey was utterly exhausted when the boat was safely beached, and Tchigorsky, too, felt the effects of his exertions. He lifted himself cautiously off his raft and made a dart for one of the caves.

Inside he had dry clothing, long, flowing robes, wig, and hair for his face, pigments that changed the hue of one hemisphere to that of another. Geoffrey, limp and exhausted, watched the artistic transformation with admiration.

"It's wonderful," he said, but then you are a wonderful man, Tchigorsky. How did it all happen? Who did it?"

Tchigorsky smiled as he touched up his face.

"It was inspired by a woman and carried out by a woman," he said. "I dared not warn you before you started, and indeed I expected further developments. But a woman doctored your boat for you."

Geoffrey started as an idea came to him.

"Was she young and good-looking?" he asked. "Dressed in——"

"Dressed," Tchigorsky smiled, "in a blue serge dress and a red tam-o'-shanter. I need not ask if you have met the lady before."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Princess Zara's Terms.

Geoffrey had no reason to fear anything from his adventure in the way of catching cold, seeing that beyond his feet he was not in the least wet. But the exertion had brought the great beads to his forehead, and he lay at the entrance to the cave exhausted.

Meanwhile Tchigorsky had appeared again clad in the long Oriental robes that suited him so well. Even in the strong light that filtered through a crack on to his face Geoffrey found it impossible to recognise him.

"Are you feeling better?" he asked.

"All right," Geoffrey gasped. "I'm a little bit pumped, of course."

Tchigorsky pointed to the boat pulled over the ledge of rock.

"Then oblige me by shoving her off and letting her sink in shallow water," he said. "It is not pleasant and may cause your friends a great deal of anxiety, but for a little while it will be necessary for the world to regard you as one who has met with a watery grave."

"But surely this does not apply to my family?" Geoffrey asked anxiously.

"To your family most of all," said Tchigorsky coolly. "It is all part of the scheme. I am the last man in the world to cause unnecessary suffering—goodness knows I have had enough of my own—but one must be cruel to be kind sometimes. I have worked out the scheme; I have seen the enemy's cards, and I am playing mine accordingly. I tell you the step is imperative."

"But Vera," groaned Geoffrey. "It will kill Vera. In normal circumstances the shock would be great; with a girl who had been so awfully tried the news may mean loss of reason."

"I have thought of that," Tchigorsky said. "At least your uncle Ralph and I have worked it out between us. Miss Vera is not to know anything of our scheme, but she is to know that you are safe and well. Come; I fancy you can trust Ralph Ravenspur."

Geoffrey nodded. He felt easier in his mind. Not that he was satisfied; but it would be flying in the face of Providence to interfere with the delicate and deeply laid scheme of a man like Tchigorsky.

"All right," he said. "I'll do as you desire."

"Then push the boat off without further delay. You will understand why I don't want to be seen in the matter. Go, before any one comes along."

Geoffrey went obediently. He had not much fear of anybody passing. Nevertheless he did not neglect proper precautions. As he reached the cave again he found Tchigorsky lying on a heap of dry seaweed smoking a cigarette.

"I suppose I have to think Mrs. May for this?" Geoffrey asked.

"For this and other things," Tchigorsky nodded. "I knew it was coming; in fact, very little can happen now that I am not in a position to discount. My ruse succeeded capitally. Behold in me Ben Heer, one of the two miscreants who succeeded in destroying Voski. My colleague perished in the attempt."

"The princess is convinced of that?"

"Absolutely. She is certain that I, Sergius Tchigorsky, have gone over to the great majority. Besides, I have placed proofs of my alleged crime in her hand—the Garuda stone all the fuss was about. It is a clever imitation, but that is beside the question."

"So you have been taken into her confidence?"

"Well, not exactly that. But every new scheme is relegated, so far as details are concerned, to some of us, and therefore I am in a position to discount the future. In ordinary circumstances I should simply have warned you against going fishing to-day, and thus check-mated the foe again; but that would have been inartistic.

"Besides, I wanted the princess to regard you as another victim—hence the whole of this rather cheap dramatic business. You will come to life again in a few hours—when we shall have to be guided by events."

"Who was it who tampered with the boat?"

"You will learn in good time. Let us, meanwhile, assume that it was the work of one of my dusky companions. For the present you and I remain where we are—till dark probably—when it will be possible to smuggle you up to your uncle's room. I have not been regardless of your creature comforts. Here are cold meat and a bottle of champagne. We dine together."

Geoffrey accepted his portion with resignation. And Tchigorsky was an entertaining companion. There was no dullness in his presence.

"Very well," Geoffrey said as he lighted a cigarette. "We are safe here. Now's the time for a further recital of your thrilling adventures in Lassa."

"Agreed," Tchigorsky cried. "Where did I leave off?"

"You had been gagged and bound at the instigation of the princess."

"True. It is also true that but for the intervention of the same princess we should have been torn to pieces on the spot; and incidentally, I may mention that that would have resulted in the absolute extinction of the house of Ravenspur. The men who a moment before had been grave, reserved priests were transformed instantly into raging fiends.

"Had they been possessed by devils they could not have flamed out more suddenly. They were made to know that the secrets of all ages had passed into the hands of Christian dogs—dogs who had defiled their altars. And yet much the same kind of barbarous fanaticism has been displayed in civilised dominions. They were not any worse than the bigots who burned your English martyrs.

"We should have been torn to pieces on the spot, as I told you, but for the authority of the princess. So commonplace a death did not suit her ideas of the eternal fitness of things. Many and many a time afterwards, when racked by agony, I deeply deplored that supposed act of clemency. It would have been a far more merciful death.

"Well, we were spared for the moment and cast into a loathsome dungeon, where we were overrun with vermin, great rats which we had constantly to drive off, and spiders whose bites were very painful.

"How long we lay without food I don't know; anyway, it seemed days. Perhaps it was only so many hours. Try lying in the pitch dark fighting with nameless, unseen terrors, and see how many bitter years can be crammed into a minute. And yet we knew there was far worse to come. But for the fact that we were together and could cheer the black hours with the sound of each other's voices, we should have gone mad. One moment we were cast down in the depths of gloom, the next we prayed for death; anon we laughed and sang sketches of gay songs. We were not insane, but were treading perilously near to the borderland.

"Then, after many years—or so it seemed to us—they fetched us again. We were not led into the banqueting-hall, but to a long, low, vault-like place on the floor of which were two shallow tanks or baths covered over with a frame of iron, and from the frame of iron ran long, sliding rods to fill the world like a bird-cage, only the sliding wires of the cage ran far into the room.

"Around these cages were glowing charcoal fires, the greater part of the sliding bars or wires growing red and crocus blue from the heat. What did it mean?

"I wondered. Ah! I was very soon to know."

Tchigorsky drew a deep breath, and a shudder passed over his powerful frame. The moisture on his forehead was not due to the heat alone.

"On a throne of stone the princess was seated. A few of the higher-grade priests were grouped around her. Evidently they had been discussing us, and had made up their minds. We were not going to be tried even.

"'Stand there!' the princess commanded. 'Dogs, do you want to live?'

"Ralph Ravenspur said nothing. He was ever a man of few words.

"'We have no desire to die,' I replied. 'Nothing that breathes ever has. Even if I were an old man with one foot in the grave the desire for life would be as strong upon me as it is now!'

"The princess smiled. I will not try to describe that smile. If you had seen it you would have given ten years of your life to forget it again.

"'It is in your hands to live,' the woman said; 'it is for you to say whether or not you return to your people. But you shall not carry our cherished secrets to the West. You shall live, you shall go free, but you shall take no memory of the past with you!'

"I guessed at once what she meant. There were attendants upon the priests—poor fools who fetched and carried, who would undertake errands one at a time, but who had no reasoning powers, no wits of their own.

"They were not born idiots; they had been made so. They are put under drugs, a portion of the scalp is removed, and then some small fragment of the brain is destroyed. We could have our liberty if we chose, but at what price! We could go free, but for the rest of our lives we should never know the blessed light of reason again.

"I tell you it came to me like a cold shock, and turned me faint and giddy. As I glanced at my companion I saw that he was ghastly as myself. What use was life to us under such conditions! And the fiends were equal to the cruelty of getting us to consent to this operation and then detaining us afterwards. We should be a mockery among them and a warning to others.

"There was no reason to discuss this refined cruelty, this vile offer. We glanced at each other and shook our heads. Far better death than this. We knew how to die; we could have drawn our revolvers and shot each other then and there. But we did not. While there was life there was hope."

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS ON BUSINESS.

It doesn't pay to be too busy. Unless a man has some time to think in a natural way about things in general he loses a great measure of mental growth. It is well to be active, a wholesome thing for every faculty of the mind. But as trees and flowers need both periods of rain and periods of sunshine, so men need to be sometimes busy and sometimes able to stop and think. Quiet thought is refreshing to the busy man.

A great many men in business do not at all appreciate this fact, however commonplace it may seem. They drive themselves, or let themselves be driven by their work all day long, day in and day out, year in and year out. What time they have away from their work is often spent in an endless round of social and pleasurable activities, leaving practically no half-hour without its impending purpose, no time to stop and think and set their minds in order; no time to reflect, or to let the mind act from impulses other than the purposes with which it is being driven continuously. Such a man's mind gets into a whirl, revolving in a very small orbit, and making him oblivious to greater themes that lie wholly outside of the limited circle of his own strenuous activity.

On a strictly business basis this does not pay. It deprives the man of thoughts and ideas that might open up new opportunities of immeasurable value to his work. Whatever chokes up thinking retards progress.

AT A SPANISH BULL FIGHT.

Not long ago Mr. X., the great Chicago provision merchant, principal partner in the firm which bears his name, and whose tins of compressed beef are universally known, was making a prolonged tour through Europe.

While he was visiting Spain an amusing incident occurred in Madrid. Mr. X. was taken by a Spanish grandee to witness what was promised to be an unusually fine display of the national sport. When, however, the first bull made its appearance in the arena he sank down on the ground, and, in spite of the united efforts of toreador and attendants, obstinately refused to move.

Everything being at a standstill, the grandee summoned the toreador and inquired the cause of the trouble. For the benefit of the American visitor the toreador replied in broken English:

"Ah, senor, ze bull 'ave seen ze great beef merchant of Chicago sitting with your Excellency, and zere is no fight left in 'im!"

IN THE PRESENCE OF DEATH

I once (writes a traveller) saw an Indian in a birch-bark canoe, drifted down the Niagara River and swept over the terrible Falls. I shall never forget the sight.

This is how it happened. The Indian, who was on the bank some miles above the Falls, had moored his boat securely to the shore, and lay in it, fast asleep. In this condition he was found by an enemy who nursed in his heart a deadly grudge against him. Silently he loosed the little craft, and with one long, silent push sent it out into the river, where the current began to carry it slowly towards the yet far-distant Falls. Gradually the speed of the drifting boat increased.

Its occupant slept on, all unconscious of the fearful doom to which he was hastening with ever-increasing speed, till some men on the banks, I among them, seeing him pass, raised a yell of horror. He awoke, sat up, looked about him.

But it was too late!

One glance of his keen, practised eye sufficed to show him that all was lost, and that nothing remained but to meet death as a brave man should.

He uttered no vain cries, made no frantic gestures, not a muscle of his dusky countenance gave one twich of fear.

With the strong self-control of his race he calmly resumed his seat while his frail bark danced on the forewarning ripples, drank the last drop of spirit in his gourd, folded his arms, and the next moment was hurled headlong into the boiling abyss below.

ONLY A TRAMP.

An incident which holds in its simple outlines the tragedy of the past and present is described in a contemporary. The other day a railway platelayer was run over by a train.

The company's constable was on the spot to which the sufferer had been conveyed, watching the man bleeding to death. A typical tramp sauntered along. He touched the policeman's elbow.

"May I ask what's the matter, officer?" he inquired.

"Man bleeding to death," replied the policeman.

"Would you mind if I looked at him?" asked the tramp. "I might be of service."

"Go ahead," responded the officer.

Bending over the wounded man, the tramp called for water to wash his hands, and then begged those who had gathered round for clean handkerchiefs. With a half-dozen deft, rapid twists he made a tourniquet and stopped the flow of blood.

"Are you a doctor?" some one asked as the man slipped away through the crowd.

"I used to be," he replied as he hurried off.

An Irishman gave a thrilling account of the wreck of a vessel on board which he and a friend were passengers. "When I saw that the vessel was sinking," he related, "I swam ashore and saved myself first, then I swam back to the ship and saved my friend!"

"Do you think it's dangerous to dye the hair?" asked an elderly gentleman.

"Oh, very!" replied a friend. "I knew a fellow of about your age who did it, and soon after he was married to a widow with six children!"

GRAVE AND GAY.

"Wouldn't you like to be a man?" inquired a male writer of a lady novelist.

"No," was the reply—"would you?"

Edna: "When I marry it will be to a brave hero who fears nothing."

May: "Yes, dear; I am sure you will never wed any other kind of man."

Old Lady (to district visitor): "It's my 'ead that's been troublin' me so' miss, but the doctor, 'e says: 'You take these 'ere pills, and you'll soon shake it off.'"

Aunt: How vain you are, Effie—looking at yourself in the glass!

Effie: Vain, Aunt Emma? Me vain? Why, I don't think myself half as good-looking as I really am!

Citiman: "Yes, she's married to a lawyer, and a good, honest fellow, too."

Subbubs: "Good gracious! Married to two different men? That's bigamy!"

Mr. Peck: I wonder where the money is coming from for that new dress of yours, my dear?

Mrs. Peck: From the Mint, I hope. I'd be sorry to think you were a counterfeiter.

Friend: You really must impress upon John the folly of his line of action.

Wife: What's the use? He won't pay the least attention to me; he'll only listen to fools now. (After a pause.) You speak to him.

"Ma, you said that I shouldn't eat that piece of cake in the pantry—that it would make me ill."

"Yes, Bobby."

"But, ma, it hasn't made me ill," said Bobby, convincingly.

"Mr. Scatterton prides himself on being strictly impartial."

"Yes," answered the unamiable man, "I once went shooting with him. He didn't seem to care whether he hit the rabbit, the dog, or one of his friends."

"No, sir, I regret that I cannot pay you this quarter," said a man to his landlord.

"That is what you told me last quarter!"

"Well, I'm a man of my word, am I not?"

"My parents may come between us," she faltered.

"If they do," he exclaimed, hotly, "they must be pretty small."

And he pressed her still closer to his manly breast.

Fair Artist: I hope you don't mind my sketching in your field?

Farmer: Lor, no, missie! You'll keep the birds off the peas better'n a' ordinary scarecrow!

Head of the Establishment: David, you are a fool!

David: Well, sir, I can't help it. When you engaged me you told me to imitate you, and I've done the best I could.

Tom: I don't see why the doctors all recommend bicycle riding. If it makes people healthier it is a loss to the doctors.

Jack: I know; but they calculate that one sound, healthy rider will disable at least five pedestrians per week.

"Didn't Wiggins forget his lines at the amateur theatricals last evening?"

"No; he only got them mixed up a little. Instead of saying, 'I hear the tramp of approaching footsteps,' he said, 'I hear the footsteps of approaching tramps.'"

"Dr. Blank, the church is on fire!" called the sexton from the vestry-room.

"Very well, William; I will retire," replied Dr. Blank, from the pulpit. "Perhaps you'd better wake up the congregation."

"I'd like to go away for the rest of the week, sir," said the tired bookkeeper.

"There is no need for you to do that," replied the employer. "Stay here, and the rest of the week will come to you."

Terrified Lady Cyclist: The district council ought to put up a notice on that hill saying it's dangerous to cyclists.

Milkman: Well, marm, you see there's an undertaker on the council, an' he won't let them.

Irate customer: "See here! That suit of clothes I bought of you yesterday is full of moth-holes."

Hebrew dealer: "Dat is all right, mine frient. Moths neffer eat cotton, an' ven ladies an' shentlemens view dose holes dey knows you vears only high-priced, all-vool goots! See?"

At the close of a lengthened and bitter wrangle between a judge and a prominent counsel, the former said, "Well, sir, if you do not know how to conduct yourself as a gentleman, I'm sure I can't teach you."

To which the barrister replied, "That is so, m'lud!"

"Don't you sometimes long for your childhood's happy days?" said the sentimental person.

"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne, "there are times when I would enjoy hanging on the fence and making faces at people I don't like, instead of having to say, 'How do you do, dear? So glad to see you?'"

A minister had travelled a long way to address a village gathering and was asked by the squire if he would like a whisky-and-soda to keep out the cold.

"No," replied the lecturer emphatically—"for three reasons. First because I am chairman this year of a big temperance society, secondly because I am just going to enter a chapel and thirdly because—I have just had one!"

Experientia Docet."

"Johnnie," said a man to his son, "I am surprised to hear that you have dared to dispute with your mother."

"But she was wrong, pa," replied the boy.

"That has nothing to do with it," rejoined the father; "you might just as well profit by my experience, and learn once for all that when a woman says a thing is so, it is so whether it is so or not!"

Pat and the Whisky.

An Irishman was careless enough to let the parish priest catch him coming out of a public-house with a jug under his arm.

"Pat, what is it you have in that jug?" asked the reverend gentleman.

"Whisky, sor," answered Pat.

"To whom does it belong?" asked the good man.

"To me and me bruther Moike, sor."

"Well, Pat, pour yours out and be a sober man."

"I can't, sor; mine's at the bottom!" answered Pat.

AGRICULTURE.

BACK TO THE LAND.

WHAT IS BEING DONE IN THE STATE SCHOOLS TO HELP THIS.

The soil is the source of the greater part of the wealth of our country. The lands of Victoria are capable of supporting many thousands more than are at present engaged in farming pursuits. By the use of fertilisers, rotation of crops, irrigation in some districts, good tillage, and scientific methods generally, the yields will be increased and a much larger population will be supported.

Farm work is regarded by many people as uninteresting and monotonous; but it is not necessarily so. Scientific men are busily engaged in finding out the secrets of the soil and the best methods of treating it. Efforts are being made continually to improve economic plants and animals. But there is no reason why every farmer should not be a scientific man and carry out experiments on his own account.

The results of scientific investigations and experiments are published in the form of reports or text-books on Agriculture. Men who have had some training in scientific methods will be able to read this literature to the best advantage. "Experimental Agriculture" is now taken as one of the subjects of instruction in the State schools of Victoria and some of the other States, and by this means the boys will become familiar with the methods of experimenting with soils and plants, and will realise that there is a great deal of interesting and useful work to be done in connection with soils and farming generally. This is part of the policy of the present administration of the Education Department, by which it is sought to bring the school life of the children into touch with their surroundings. The work is intensely interesting, and exerts a wholesome influence in keeping the boys interested in farm work.

To most people, soil is probably the most uninteresting thing in the world; they have walked over it every day of their lives; it is so commonplace that it has come to be regarded as "dirt"—something unclean and to be shunned. But when it is investigated and its secrets are unfolded, it possesses a new interest. Often the most commonplace things are the most wonderful. A class is taken to a cutting in a hill, or to a quarry, and shown the gradual change of rock into soil. The agencies that have aided in breaking down the solid rock are discussed. The parts that wind and water have played in the forming of soils are learned. Along runnels, creeks or rivers, the deposition of alluvial soil is seen, and it is realised that the formation of soil is still going on. The influence that humus has on the fertility of the land is learned from actual experiments. A quantity of soil is taken and roasted until the humus is burned out; then by planting a seed in the original soil and in the burnt-out one, the effect of the humus on the plant is seen. A mechanical analysis of the local soil is made, the sample being divided into sand, silt, clay and perhaps gravel. It is shown by experiments that many of the soil properties depend on the size of the particles: a clay soil has a greater water-holding capacity than sand; there is more capillarity in clay than in sand. The reason why stirring the surface soil in summer conserves the moisture is shown by experiments. This practice is carried out in the experimental plots; the soil in one-half of a plot of maize is neglected, while the other half is frequently stirred; the contrast between the plants in the two parts of the plot is generally very marked.

By means of a well-thought-out series of experiments, a good deal of useful knowledge relating to agriculture is gained. The experimental plot usually contains a quarter of an acre, and is located either in the school-grounds or on an adjoining farm. Here the effects of various manures are tested. It is demonstrated that the best results from manuring or irrigating are not obtained without good cultivation or tillage. In some instances experiments are conducted with the object of ascertaining the most suitable varieties of certain crops, such as potatoes, clovers, wheat, oats, barley, etc. In one district Up-to-date potatoes are found to be the best; in another it may be Coronation.

At schools in dairying districts lessons in milk-testing are given, and the boys are able to test a sample of milk just as well as an expert.

Teachers corelate the work in agriculture with other school work, such as arithmetic, geography, composition, and drawing.

This work will train the boys to unite science with practice, and to lead others to do likewise. It will add dignity to farming and pleasure to farm life.

DR. YOUNG AND THE LADIES.

Dr. Young, the celebrated author of "Night Thoughts," which earned him the high position he occupies in English literature of the eighteenth century, was for some time Vicar of Welwyn, that quaint little village near Hatfield, on the Great North road.

The fragrant limes which are to be seen in the churchyard were planted by him; Dr. Young was a lover of his garden and the beautiful in nature, and was not the gloomy nature to be expected after reading the more or less sad "Night Thoughts."

There is an amusing story connected with him which will bear repeating. One day Dr. Young was showing his garden to two ladies when his servant brought a message that a visitor wished to see him. Dr. Young was very reluctant to leave his companions, so the ladies playfully took him by the arm and led him out of the garden.

When the garden gate was reached. Dr. Young laid his hand upon his heart, and spoke to them thus:—

"So Adam looked when from the garden driven,
And thus disputed orders sent from heaven,
Like him I go, but yet to go am loth,
Like him I go, for angels drove us both;
Hard was his fate, but mine still more unkind,
His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."

THE VOICE AND THE HAND.

In a study, which purports to be entirely scientific, of the alleged connection between the physical and mental character of an individual and his handwriting, Monsieur Solange Pellat, an expert attached to the Tribunal of the Seine, Paris, maintains that distinct relations exist between the handwriting and the voice. An expert, he declares, can determine from the handwriting whether the writer's voice is high or low in pitch, sonorous or veiled, harsh or soft and agreeable. But he remarks that in all cases where it is sought to determine character from handwriting great pains should be taken to choose for examination only writing that has been done under normal conditions.

THE VALUE OF WORK.

Let me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
Of all who live, I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way."
Then shall I see it not too great nor small,
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
Then shall I cheerful greet the laboring hours
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because I know for me my work is best.

—Henry Van Dyke.

THE APPROACH OF THE ENEMY.

Foretold by a Gipsy.

The late Archduke Joseph of Austria, father of the Duchess of Orleans, used to relate many interesting stories of his experience with the gipsies. On one occasion the archduke, just before the battle of Sadowa, in 1866, was awakened in the peasant's cottage in which he was lodging by a gipsy in the middle of the night.

On the man being brought to his presence, the dusky visitor informed the Archduke in Romany that the enemy was approaching with the object of surprising the Austrians.

"The outposts have not heard anything suspicious," the archduke remarked.

"No," replied the Zingari, "because the enemy is still a long way off."

"How do you know this?"

"Come to the window," exclaimed the gipsy, leading the archduke forward to the narrow opening in the rough wall and directing his gaze to the dark sky illumined by the silver rays of the moon. "You see those birds flying over the wood towards the south?"

"Yes," replied the archduke, "I see them. What of it?"

"What of it?" retorted the gipsy. "Do not birds sleep as well as men? They would certainly not fly about at night-time thus had they not been disturbed. The enemy is marching through the woods southwards, and has frightened and driven the birds before it."

The archduke at once ordered the outposts to be reinforced and his camp to be alarmed. Two hours later the outposts were fighting fiercely with the foe, and the prince was able to realise that his camp and his division had been saved from surprise and destruction by the keen observation and sagacity of a gipsy.

THE CANDIDATE'S ONLY VOTE.

An Election Story.

A story is related of an ambitious gentleman who, rather unwisely, stood as a candidate for some office, and who at the close of the poll was found to have received only one vote. The candidate was excessively mortified, and to increase his chagrin his neighbors talked as if it were a matter of course that he had given that one vote himself. This annoyed him so much that he offered a two and a-half guinea suit of clothes to his only supporter if the individual would come forward and declare himself.

An Irishman responded to this appeal, proved his claim, and called for the reward.

"How did it happen?" inquired the candidate, taken quite by surprise. "How did it happen that you voted for me?"

The Hibernian hesitated, but on being pressed he answered:

"If Oi tell yez, ye won't go back on the suit o' clothes?"

"Oh, no. I promise that you shall have the suit, anyhow."

"Faix, then, yer 'anner," replied Pat, "shure Oi made a mistake in the ballot-paper."

THE DISCOVERY OF TROUSERS.

A Hint from the Elephant.

To Alexander the Great, it is said, is due the discovery of trousers. It seems that the Conqueror had retired for a while, during his campaign in India, from his suite, and was pondering in an open space of the jungle on the great riddle of life and the littleness of man, when he was aware of the contiguity of an elephant, wild but friendly, with what he conceived to be its back towards him. As he looked he was struck by the negligence and ease with which this vast animal wears the skin on its legs, at once so loose and well-fitting, so serviceable and unpretentious. Feeling at the same moment a chilliness about his own knees, Alexander at once signalled for the court tailor and bade him make him a garment on similar lines. Alexander the Great improved the original idea, in the press of battle, and his best trousers were carefully creased.

A CURIOUS LAWSUIT.

Some years ago a clergyman was made the defendant in a lawsuit in consequence of his ordering the postman not to leave a letter addressed to one of his maid-servants because it bore the prefix "Miss" before the woman's name. The contents of the letter which she thus failed to receive were of such importance that the damages claimed in the suit were placed at £500.

The letter was an offer of marriage on the part of a prosperous young farmer who waited a sufficient time for a reply, and then concluded that the young woman's silence was to be construed as a negative. Whether he married someone else does not appear, but at all events the maiden lost the opportunity to change her name and way of life, and hence the lawsuit.

The clergyman had very positive notions as to the impropriety of addressing a serving woman as Mrs. or Miss, or a serving-man as Mr., and had given a general order to the local postman not to deliver at his house any letters thus addressed to his employees.

The trial was twice postponed, but the maiden ultimately won the day, and rightly too.

One day a celebrated barrister was arguing before a brusque old judge, who pointed out with a forefinger to one of his ears, and with the other to the opposite one.

"You see this, Mr. X.?"

"I do, m'lud," said the advocate.

"Well, it just goes in here and comes out there"—and his lordship smiled.

"I don't doubt it, m'lord," replied the advocate; "what is there to prevent it?"

THE LOVE THAT WON

I.

"Brakes!"

The driver of the down night express, nearing the summit of the steep gradient preceding the eight mile descent into Blackboro', snapped the word at his fireman as he whirled the regulator with one hand and gripped the reversing lever with the other. Railway men, like sailors, act in emergency without talking, and neither of these two spoke until their charge had been stopped.

"Get thee down, lad," ordered the driver then, "and see what that red light means."

The fireman, joined by the guard who had run forward, walked ahead until the lamp the latter carried revealed a man prone across the metals. Beside him stood a girl, tall and weirdly pallid in the dimness, bearing a lantern, hastily transposed into a danger signal by being enveloped in a diaphanous wrap of reddish hue.

"What's all this, miss?" demanded the guard, curtly.

"My brother—Mr. Vincent Vizore, of Vizorfield, near here," the girl explained with evident effort, "rushed out to—to do what you see. I followed, but could not move him, so I stopped the train."

The guard flashed his lamp on the strongly-marked features of the would-be suicide.

"Come to my van," he said, gripping his shoulder firmly, "and I'll see you safe to Blackboro'."

The man obeyed sullenly. His sister followed, scanning the faces at the carriage windows as she passed. Presently she gave a little cry, for a young man, opening one of the doors, leaped down to greet her.

"Vida!" he exclaimed. "How came you here?"

She whispered hurriedly; then turned to the guard.

"We need not go to Blackboro' now," she said, slipping some coins, with golden tinkle, into his palm. "This gentleman will assist me to take my brother home."

The official touched his cap.

"I must report the stoppage, miss," he remarked.

"Certainly," she assented. "You have our address."

The express moved on as the three left behind struck silently into a woodland path bordering the line, Vizore leading, as though quite himself again. The wood merged into a small park, and that, in turn, upon a lawn fronting a little ivy-covered manor house, which they entered, through a French window, into a lighted room.

There Vizore swung about upon their companion.

"That train was not stopped to save my life, Ballure," he said sharply, "but because there are detectives waiting on Blackboro' platform to arrest you."

Bertram Ballure's face became suddenly white.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"You know that, close to my property here, is some belonging to your grand-uncle, old Mr. Amos Turdon of Blackboro', whose legal heir you are. I look after it along with my own, and to-day I learned from his solicitors that, having been surprised to hear of mortgages in connection with it, they had traced the documents so described and had discovered Mr. Turdon's signature to be forged. He is too ill to be consulted, so the holders of the mortgages, who state that you negotiated the loan and received the proceeds, applied for a warrant."

The speaker, who was several years older than the other, ended with some show of emotion.

Ballure sprang forward, his hand raised; then suddenly checked himself.

"How do you come into this, Vida?" he demanded.

II.

He turned with an odd abruptness to the girl, who had dropped exhausted into a chair. Her steadfast grey eyes, black-rimmed with care circles, met his momentarily; then dropped as she answered:

"When Vincent told me, he said your one chance of escape lay in stopping the train by which we, as well as the police, knew you were travelling, and he suggested the wild scheme by which we have succeeded in procuring you that chance. He wished to assist you, he said, because you are his closest friend, and I helped—as his sister."

"I am your deep debtor," Ballure interpolated.

"If you really mean that," she continued hurriedly, "you will not render useless what I—what we have risked for you. He thinks that, by leaving here at once for Bustleport—only seven miles by road—you can catch to-night's steamer from there to the Continent, with little chance of being traced or detained until you are beyond risk of arrest. To save yourself—to save scandal to everyone concerned—I beg of you to do this."

Her tone was indicative of intense appeal, and the man paused, seeking words to respond to it.

"If you are guilty," her brother began, "some——"

"I am not," Bertram interjected.

"If you are," the other persisted, "some arrangement may be possible in your absence. If you are innocent the fact will be duly established without your being subjected to personal unpleasantness. I advise you strongly to disappear for a time."

There was a tense silence; then Ballure held out his hand to the girl.

"Vincent knows," he said, his lips twitching, "what the errand was which brought me down this time—it had his assent and approval. This extraordinary development has frustrated my object—I hope only temporarily. My strong inclination is to remain to meet what is a wicked charge, but as you desire me to go I shall do so. Perhaps it will show you a little of all I would willingly undertake for—for your service."

He raised her hand to his lips—then without another word, walked out by the way they had entered into the darkness. Vincent moved over and closed the window.

"It is best so," he remarked. "Both of us, Vida, will now be able to say that we cannot tell which direction he has taken."

But no inquiries on that point were ever made. On the contrary, the morning following, an officer came out from Blackboro' to give rather than to receive information.

"Of course we immediately suspected, from the guard's description, that it was our man who had got out to assist Miss Vizore," he explained; "but the Blackboro' stop being only a brief one, the guard did not report until his journey ended, and by the time the information was wired back to us, we had reason to believe that the warrant would never be executed."

Vincent Vizore shook as though with palsy—it was plain the man had bad news to break.

"Just as the report arrived advice came up from Bustleport that, as the outward steamer was canting round the pierhead on her way seaward, a young man, well dressed, rushed hurriedly down, attempted to jump aboard, and fell into the water."

"You think that was Ballure?"

"We are sure of it. He was carrying a small handbag, which was picked up, and its contents are conclusive as regards identification. Nothing has been seen of the body."

Vizore's trembling hands covered his face.

"I have another message," added the officer presently. "As I was leaving, Mr. Deede, the solicitor, passed on his way from Mr. Amos Turdon's, and he desired me to tell you, as the speediest way, that the old gentleman is conscious, that he has had to be informed that his grand-nephew is dead, and that he expressed a strong wish to see you immediately."

"I shall drive back with you now," said Vincent.

III.

"Mr. Bertram Ballure is in the drawing-room, miss."

None of these happenings had become known to the servants at Vizorfield, and the maid thus announced the visitor to her mistress as a matter of course. Vincent had left for Blackboro' not long before, without taking any steps to inform his sister of the news he had received, but to Vida the return of the fugitive was startling enough without that.

It was an awkward meeting for both of them.

"Forgive me for returning," he said.

Pity overwhelmed her as she saw him, weary-eyed and haggard, thus pleading for pardon.

"There is nothing to forgive," she answered, her eyes filling with tears. "Tell me why you have come?"

"Chiefly because I could not help it. I reached Bustleport some time before the steamer sailed, and rather than court observation by going on board or to an inn, I sheltered in a roadside shed on the outskirts of the town. There I fell asleep, and when I woke, my bag, containing everything I had of value to pay my way, had disappeared—appropriated, doubtless, by some thievish passer-by. I rushed down to the pier to find the steamer gone, and some boats hunting about for someone who had fallen in. There seemed nothing for it but to return—perhaps I was unwise to go."

"You were," Vida concurred impetuously; "but I did wrong to urge you. Now"—she hesitated, regarding him intently, her voice sinking, "will you do what is your duty—along with me?"

"I will do anything along with you," he responded eagerly. "You, Vida—you must know—how much I——"

She held up her hand; her cheeks were crimson.

"Vincent has gone to Blackboro'," she interrupted hastily. "Let us follow him that you may—may give yourself up."

* * * * *

"As my grand-nephew, my only relative, is dead, I wish you to substitute for his name in my will that of Vincent Vizore, whose father was my dearest friend."

From his deathbed old Amos Turdon was giving his last directions to Mr. Deede with conciseness due to knowledge that his remaining words were to be few.

"Where can I get writing materials?" asked the solicitor of Vincent, who was present.

"Come to the library," he whispered.

He led the way and threw open its door—to stagger backwards, his face ghastly.

"Ballure!" he cried—"and Vida!"

They had just arrived, following him, and had been shown into this room. It was Mr. Deede who first recovered presence of mind, being a man of prompt action.

"I take it," he said, "that the police have been mistaken in imagining that this gentleman here had got beyond reach. You'd better send for them, Mr. Vizore."

Vida put her back to the door.

"If they come," she asserted bravely, "it will be to arrest my brother—he is the forger. He wished to get Bertram to fly in order to fix the guilt more firmly upon him. I suspected Vincent, but without proof, and was willing to shield him last night. Now I cannot, because——"

She stopped in confusion, and Bertram continued:

"Because Vida has promised to be my wife—to ask her was my errand—as Vincent knew. And I have told her—as I did not last night because I fancied she knew all, and, knowing, desired me to go away—how these mortgages came to me through her brother, who alleged that it was my uncle's desire that I should receive the proceeds, and pass them on to Vincent as a loan from myself to him, raised in this way in token of my uncle's friendship for his father, and my own for him. I never dreamt of doubting him, and acted accordingly."

The lawyer turned to Vizore.

"I am not your adviser," he remarked coldly; "but will venture to say that if you cannot contradict this extraordinary story you had better do what you urged upon Mr. Ballure, and take to-night's steamer from Bustleport before worse comes to you."

And Vincent Vizore did so.

A COMEDY IN FETTER LANE.

A young man was walking up Fetter-lane, London, eating grapes, when an unwashed urchin ran in front of him crying persuasively:

"Give us a grape, mister!"

The young man looked down over the bag and then into it.

"Here you are, then," he said, carelessly; "but there are only two left."

And he was passing on when a shabby, genteel, elderly person, with a benevolent beard, clapped a fat hand on his shoulder and exclaimed with emotion:

"Kind hearts are more than coronets! Nobly done, my young friend!"

"Oh!" protested the young man, bashfully, "it was only two——"

"Same principle as if it had been a complete grape-vine!" the other interrupted warmly; "let me shake hands with you, sir."

The young man let him.

"I am proud to shake the hand of a noble heart. May I show my appreciation of a simple but beautiful action?" asked the stranger, with enthusiasm. "Will you do me the favor to ——"

The young man demurred, but yielded, secretly pleased with himself.

In a select establishment, the enthusiastic gentleman ordered port, and with a flattering ejaculation, emptied his glass at a gulp.

The young man drank also, and when the barmaid repeated the price the benevolent one thrust his hand into his pocket, started, suddenly horrified, and said:

"My dear young friend, I have come out without my purse. I am ashamed to ask you to pay, but give me your card, and I will send it on in stamps directly I get home. I insist! You are having this with me."

But the young man is still waiting for the stamps.

Moral: It is good to be young, but not to be too young!

His Brothers.

At the usual monthly Petty Sessions Court, held in a certain provincial town some weeks ago, the following incident occurred:—

One of the local police constables had summoned a neighboring farmer on a charge of "having a number of asses wandering at will on the public road." The defendant failed to appear, but his brother was present in the person of the Clerk of Petty Sessions, who, on hearing the sentence of the presiding magistrate—"Fined 2/6 and costs," rose to the occasion by replying: "They're my brother's, your worship; I'll pay the fine!"

He was shocked when his becoming exhibition of fraternal love for the asses was rewarded with an outburst of laughter.

"I am obliged to sentence you to a month's imprisonment," a magistrate informed an old offender. "Now, follow my advice—try to keep more sober in future."

"Your worship," was the earnest reply, "I will. I promise to keep sober for a whole month!"

Hard-Hearted Elizabeth.

By Dora Chapman.

CHAPTER I.

Elizabeth never concealed the fact that she would rather get married than not. Her candor on the subject was disconcerting—at any rate to an old-fashioned sort of man like me.

"It is not my fault I am unmarried," she would explain, regretfully. "I have always looked forward to my wedding-day, ever since I was just so high! At this moment I know just what I should wear, who I'd have for my bridesmaids, what color I should go in, and where, if my husband"—she blushed exquisitely as she said the word—"if my husband agreed, we should spend the honeymoon.

"Oh, I've everything planned out in detail; the only trouble is—I haven't got the man!"

"If an ordinary, average, harmless sort of man like me would do!" I began tentatively. But Elizabeth did not blush again, so I went on hastily: "I suppose you have some wonderful hero in your mind's eye, the sort of chap who never was on land or sea, don't you know'"

"Not at all!" said Elizabeth severely. "I should not dream of being so silly! I yearn for no unattainable ideal! I have not even any prejudices in the matter of size or coloring; I could survive his being bald. I am most modest, most reasonable. All I require is——"

"Well?" I said, as she seemed to be stuck in her description.

"The man I've fallen in love with!"

"I suppose my face fell. I was never one of those strong, silent, wooden fellows who can hide their feelings under a calm, superior smile.

"Who's the happy man?" I asked miserably. "We've been friends so long, I think you might confide in me, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth only laughed at me.

"You goose," she said; "there isn't any man—yet! I am waiting for him, waiting to fall in love with him, because I can't get married till I do—but I haven't met him yet. That's why I am so unfortunate. All the other girls I know fall in love—often with the most preposterous people, and sometimes when they have careers and duties to occupy them, and are most anxious to remain single. While here am I, only too willing to reciprocate somebody's affection and rejoice him with the gift of my heart and my hand and my fortune and estate, and I shall be four-and-twenty in April, and I've never been in love yet! Never!"

"What, never?" I repeated, for it did seem a bit of a tall order.

But Elizabeth did not make the usual reply.

"Never!" she said firmly. "Not once has my hard heart thrilled to any man's footstep, nor have I ever lost my sleep or my appetite even for a day. I am never absent or dreamy and the best love-poetry leaves me cold. The arrival and departure of even the nicest young men I know—of you, Tom, for instance—does not agitate me nearly as much as the arrival of Aunt Jane, who is a perfect dear and my pet relation; but still could not be expected to take precedence of 'Mr. Right' if I had ever met him.

"I begin to fear I shall die an old maid!" And Elizabeth sighed in the most ridiculous way. She is not the sort of girl of whom old maids are made, and she must know that just as well as I do. "I'm afraid you're not as sympathetic as you might be, Tom!" was what she had the cheek to say next.

"No, I am not!" I said savagely. "I'm delighted to hear your heart's so hard, and the longer you stay so the better I'll be pleased."

Elizabeth laughed mischievously.

"Poor old Tom!" she said, in that caressing voice of hers. "It is a shame to tease you so; but, then, I do enjoy it, and you know, it's my misfortune, not my fault, that my heart doesn't beat for you. You're quite the most eligible party who's ever proposed to me!"

"I got up and went away then. Elizabeth is really too outrageous; sometimes the things she says are hardly decent, let alone ladylike. If she hadn't such a way with her, one simply couldn't overlook them.

CHAPTER II.
An Authority on Love.

I made up my mind I wouldn't call again for a week, but I had to pass her house two days after, and I thought I might just as well drop in and have some tea. It was beastly wet, and Elizabeth does know how to make things cosy. And after all, it's no use sulking with her, for she always pretends not to see it.

So up I went. There was another man there, a dark, foreign-looking idiot I'd never seen before. He looked like a poet. I don't mean his hair was long, or that he hadn't a collar; but his eyes were so big and soft—silly they looked in a man's face with a moustache under them—and his voice had so many tones in it, and his hands were long and thin and manicured—can't stand a man who manicures, myself—and he waved them as he talked.

He did not look very pleased to see me, but I stayed and stayed, and at last he had to go, as he was dining out, and had a long drive back to his rooms to dress.

He made the usual foreign fuss at parting; and I expected Elizabeth would laugh at it with me after he had gone; but no, if you please, she began practically to scold me for arriving when I did. The count was an authority on love, she said, and had put it in quite a new light to her, which made her have hopes of herself, and that she might not be so hard-hearted as she feared, after all.

"He says that one may be in love, if one is a girl and inexperienced—quite deeply in love without knowing it," she said enthusiastically; "and without going off one's food or mooning around or wanting to read poetry. And that one may not find it out until some shock comes, some touch of jealousy perhaps, or some unexpected adventure, and so forth.

"He really is a charming man, Tom," she went on provokingly. "And you were hardly civil to him. If you will be such a bear I shall really have to say I'm not at home to other callers when the count comes to tea."

Well, it was my own fault for coming to see her, so I couldn't complain; but you may fancy I was not anxious to stay on any longer after that.

But, oddly enough, Elizabeth seemed quite surprised when I got up to go, and asked me if I wouldn't stay to dinner as I was here and the count had gone away? She had a box for the new musical comedy—James Duruthy had sent it to her. I always was weak where Elizabeth is concerned, as I dare say you've observed, so I stopped on.

She was pleased, I suppose, as old Lady Jones, the newest companion, was upstairs with a headache, and she'd have had but a dull evening of it alone—so she was unusually amiable to me. Didn't talk about love any more. Sometimes, too, I caught her looking at me in an inquiring way, as if she were puzzled about something and thought the answer might be written in my face.

CHAPTER III.
The Count Claims Elizabeth.

I enjoyed my dinner so much; Elizabeth's conversation—when she isn't in a teasing mood—is much more entertaining than the best musical comedy on the boards, or at any rate, I found it so. I wasn't in any hurry to get to the theatre, but she'd ordered the carriage beforehand, and round it came with painful punctuality, so we got there well before they'd finished the overture.

Elizabeth watched the play as enthusiastically as she does everything. Fortunately, there was sufficient light reflected from the footlights to see her profile by, so I was able to watch her. I never did care for musical pieces—so unnatural. The hero of this particular one was an earl and a guardsman, just like me, as Elizabeth was careful to point out, but a more improbable ass never wrestled with a collar-stud. And the way he had of standing in the centre of the stage, with limelight showing up the conceited simper on his painted face, singing love-songs to the world at large, made me positively sick. I do not sing; but if I did, much as I love Elizabeth, I'd die before I sang to her in the middle of the barrack-yard with a squad of Tommies in the background. So would any man. And yet the silly audience swallowed it like lambs and asked for more!

Of course, I had an exceptionally pleasing profile to look at, so the foolishness of the play did not matter to me personally, and I should have had a perfectly happy evening but for a most unpleasant incident that happened in the interval.

I bought some chocolates for Elizabeth, and the girl left the door of the box ajar as she went out. If she had not we might not have heard so clearly what some French dudes in the corridor were saying, although I've noticed when people are talking French they always raise their voices an octave or two. I do myself. There seemed to be three or four of them, and they were congratulating one of their number on his speedy conquest of a petite heritiere anglaise, and upon his coming marriage and happy release from penury and debts.

It was rather amusing, and Elizabeth leant forward to listen too, and presently the happy man chipped in, and it was the count. No mistaking his silky voice with the purr in it. And what he said was—in French, of course—"You congratulate me on the fortune only, but I am doubly happy, for the heiress has beauty, too, as you will all acknowledge when I introduce you to the charming Elizabeth!"

I looked at Elizabeth, and she looked at me.

Then another Frenchman spoke up and said:

"I have already seen her! Ce cher Gaston has the luck of the devil. Assuredly this Miss Lancaster is the only jeune fille on either side the Manche who is at once supremely beautiful and extremely rich. Happy Gaston! Would she had a sister, and I no wife that I might imitate thee!"

By this time Elizabeth was on her feet, and so was I. She moved towards the door of the box, but I got in front of her and held her back. It wasn't fit that she should speak to the count, especially with his caddish friends around and no other woman with her. I simply shoved her back into her seat by main force.

"Don't you dare to get up!" I whispered.

It was not like Elizabeth to take orders from anyone, still less from me, but I fancy she was too surprised to think of remonstrating till I was outside the door and held it close behind me.

I bowed very politely to the little knot of men, all strangers to me except the count. He did not appear charmed, but I gave him no time to start a conversation.

"Pardon, messieurs," I said; "but I could not help overhearing some part of your talk. Did I understand aright that Monsieur le Count claims to be betrothed to Mlle. Lancaster?"

"What is that to do with you?" the count began; but in the same breath one of his friends who scented, I imagine, a scene, and took malicious pleasure in provoking it, replied:

"But yes, certainly; Monsieur le Count is so happy a man."

"The Count is a liar!" I said drily. "His acquaintance with mademoiselle is of the slightest, and never likely to improve——"

The count did not allow me time to finish.

"A liar!" he cried, striking an attitude, copied to the life from the musical comedy idiot we'd just been admiring. "He has called me a liar!" He produced a ridiculous mother-of-pearl card-case and solemnly handed me his card. "I demand the satisfaction of a gentleman!" he went on excitedly. "You shall hear from me to-morrow, milord!"

"Bosh!" I said. "Englishmen don't fight duels! And I don't need to wait till to-morrow to assure you, monsieur, that if ever I hear again you have bragged of your acquaintance with Miss Lancaster, much less of being engaged to her, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life. And now you'd better go back to your box!"

I spoke calmly, I think; but I was not really at all peaceful inside. I was deadly afraid he'd come at me and I should have to knock him down; and though the corridor we stood in was at the moment deserted, some attendant would be sure to appear and have us turned out, perhaps taken up; then it might all get into the papers, and just look how beastly that would be for Elizabeth!

But I might have known that a braggart is always a coward. And, besides, his friends were no more anxious for a public fracas than I was. They drew him off, cursing at me in French and threatening all sorts of hair-curling things; but really nothing loth to get well out of range of my fist, which is an out size, even for anyone six feet high; and I went back to Elizabeth.

I started to apologise to her for the way I had forced her to remain behind, but she only laughed.

"I didn't mind a bit, Tom," she said. "On the contrary, I was lost in admiration of the way you shone. You settled him splendidly; it was thrilling!"

I was a bit excited still, and I suppose that helped me to rise to the occasion. I leant forward and asked:

"Did it make your heart beat, Elizabeth?"

Elizabeth blushed delightfully.

"Well—it did, rather," she said.

"Then, on your own showing, that means you love me," I said triumphantly.

"I suppose it does," she admitted. "I hope you feel properly grateful to the count, Tom. Think what ages it might have taken me to find out if he hadn't intervened!"

Wasn't it just like Elizabeth to make fun at such a moment? But I don't mind her teasing ways now we're engaged and she's discovered she isn't really "Hard-hearted Elizabeth."

A Bostonian bought an estate without having seen it. He believed that he could trust the man he bought it from. And last summer he went over to have a look at the place.

The drive from the nearest railway station to Glen Acora was a matter of twelve miles. The Bostonian hired a Highlander to drive him.

As the cart jogged along, the Bostonian said:

"I suppose you know the country hereabouts pretty well, friend?"

"Aye, ilka foot o' it," the Scot answered.

"And do you know Glen Acora?"

"Aye, weel," was the reply.

"What sort of a place is it?" the American asked.

The Scot smiled grimly.

"Aweel," he said, "if ye saw the de'il tethered on it, ye'd juist say, 'Poor brute!'"

"He pretends to be a philosopher."

"Yes; but I notice one peculiar thing about his philosophy."

"What's that?"

"It's only other people's hard luck that he is able to accept philosophically!"

CHORLEY'S ADVENTURES.

THE ATTACK OF GHOSTS.

By Arnold Golsworthy.

"We've had to clear most of the things out of your shed, Henry," said Mrs. Chorley to her husband as he came home one evening. "These heavy rains lately have found the weak spots in the top—and that thin boarding is no good for a roof, anyway."

Chorley went out into the garden and unlocked his shed, which stood against the wall under one of the windows at the back of the house. As his wife had said, the rain had found its way through the thin roof, and it was clear to him that he would have to find another "den" for his carpentering and mechanical operations. He, therefore, locked the shed up again, and came back into the house.

After a family council, it was decided that the spare bedroom should be cleared and turned into a workshop, and Chorley was busy helping his wife and Mary Ann to effect the clearance, when there came a loud knock at the door. Mary Ann went down to answer it, and Mrs. Pobsley, who lived next door but two, dashed into the hall and called for Mrs. Chorley in a voice shaken with emotion.

"Oh, Mrs. Chorley," she gasped, as that lady hurried downstairs, followed by her husband, "there's something going on in the empty house next door to us, and Mrs. Pobsley hasn't come home, and I'm so frightened——"

"What d'ye mean—something going on?" asked Chorley, with a mystified air.

"People do say the house is haunted," explained Mrs. Pobsley, as she sank into the chair that Chorley had brought to her.

"Rubbish," said Chorley, shivering a little in spite of himself. "There aren't such hings. I mean——"

"Oh! but I've heard it myself," protested Mrs. Pobsley.

"Heard what?" asked Chorley, turning a shade paler, and looking over his shoulder furtively, in case anything might be there.

"A mysterious voice," said Mrs. Pobsley in a tone that made Mrs. Chorley start and abruptly request her not to do that kind of thing.

Chorley didn't half like the idea, but presently his curiosity got the better of his fears, and he said he would go out and collect a few neighbors, and fathom the mystery with them. As a matter of fact, however, as soon as he got out into the road, he found that the interesting news had spread itself abroad already. Three of his neighbors were approaching the house cautiously with lanterns, and Chorley, feeling that there was safety in numbers, joined them.

"Is the house really haunted?" he asked tremulously of Mr. Margetts, who lived over the way.

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Margetts, bursting into a roar of laughter, in which his companions joined. "We have found out that it's old Miss Mabson's parrot. The thing must have got shut in there, and it's talking to itself all the words it knows."

Chorley joined in the laugh, and his courage having returned, he led the way into the house, and walked boldly upstairs. Now that he had been told what the matter was, he recognised the parrot's voice in a moment; though to anyone who had not had the phenomenon explained, it might certainly have sounded a little eerie. The bird, which had apparently got through one of the upper windows and could not get out again, was fluttering about, and remarking at intervals, "Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" which was apparently the limit of its vocabulary.

The party were just debating between themselves as to how the fugitive could best be secured, when Mr. Wimbleby, who had, it seemed, followed the procession at a distance, was heard at the foot of the stairs, calling to know who was there. Chorley, passing the word round among his friends, replied:

"Hush! Wimbleby. We think it's a ghost."

"D-d-don't make an idiot of y-y-yourself, Chorley," gasped Wimbleby, cautiously mounting the stairs. "W-w-what is it?"

By way of reply the captive bird began to murmur rapidly, "Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!"

Wimbleby had to grasp the banisters firmly to save himself from falling downstairs, and the others, observing the effect of Chorley's joke, exploded with laughter at Wimbleby's expense.

"Hush!" gasped Wimbleby. "Listen. You fellows don't understand these things. It is a ghost, right enough."

"Yes," agreed Chorley. "Of course, it is, Mr. Wimbleby. I'd whistle for the dog, only I've always understood that ghosts haven't anything a dog can bite."

"Don't make yourself ridiculous, Chorley," said Wimbleby sternly. "The ghost might hear you."

"It might," said Chorley, "if it was there. But there aren't such things. This is Miss Mabson's parrot."

After another laugh at Wimbleby's expense, the party proceeded to the room where the bird was imprisoned, and promptly secured it. Mr. Wimbleby, convinced that Chorley's apparent pluck was only due to the fact that he had known what the matter was all along, went back home, after remarking that if Chorley should ever meet a ghost when he was alone, he would probably die of fright. This, however, Chorley indignantly denied; and fortified by the presence and support of his friends, amongst whom Wimbleby was not at all popular, he added:

"I don't think I should take fright and fall downstairs over it anyhow, old chap."

Wimbleby went off growling, as another laugh at his expense went up from the party, and while one of the neighbors undertook to return the parrot to its owner, the others separated and proceeded to their homes.

Chorley went back to the spare room and resumed the work of clearance. Mary Ann was just helping Mrs. Chorley to move a chest of drawers when she happened to look up at the window. At the same moment she gave a wild yell, and bolted out on the landing. Mrs. Chorley, following her eyes, gave a scream in the same key and hurried after her. Then Chorley, wondering what the matter was, looked at the window himself, and cold beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead as he did so.

For there, just on the other side of the glass, was a pale, white face, half-hidden by some filmy veiling material. The eyes which glittered through the veil glared reproachfully at Chorley, and in that moment he recalled Wimbleby's warning. But the next instant he felt more cheerful. In spite of the disguise he recognised Wimbleby himself, with his face elaborately chalked over to give it a ghostly look. Wimbleby had evidently taken the law into his own hands, and seeing a light at the window, had climbed up the shed to begin his career as a scarer.

Chorley moved towards the window, and as he did so, the ghostly apparition started back suddenly. Then there was a crashing sound, and the ghost disappeared as if by magic, just as if it had descended through a trap-door. As a matter of fact, something of the kind had happened. Chorley saw how it was in a moment. The dilapidated roof had suddenly given way, and let Wimbleby through into the empty shed, where he was, of course, now a close prisoner.

"It's all right," said Chorley, who had now so far recovered his courage as to be able to chuckle over the way in which Wimbleby literally had fallen into his own trap. "It was only Wimbleby making an idiot of himself. Let's go down and see how he's getting on."

"You can go yourself, if you like," said Mrs. Chorley, only partially reassured. "I'm not coming."

Chorley, therefore, went down. As he came near the shed he could hear Wimbleby trying to climb the sides of it, so that he could effect his escape before he was caught.

Chorley saw how the case stood in a moment, and as he had got the laugh on his side, he determined to make the most of it. Pretending to be addressing Mrs. Chorley, he said, in a stage whisper:

"Amelia, there's something got into my shed. Run and get me my gun."

As a matter of fact, Chorley hadn't got a gun, and wouldn't have known how to use it if he had. But the remark had the effect anticipated on Wimbleby, whose muffled voice filtered through the shed as he gasped out:

"It's all right, Chorley—it's me—Wimbleby."

Chorley pretended not to hear, but continued his instructions to an imaginary hearer.

"By jove, Amelia," he said, "it must be a big bird or something. It must have hit that broken roof and gone right through. You get a kettle of boiling water, and go upstairs and pour it out of the window through the hole in the shed, and then I can pot the animal as it runs out."

"Whoa!" screamed Wimbleby, in a voice that to Chorley's delight betrayed every sign of anguish. "Don't you know me, Chorley? It's me—Wimbleby——"

"Dear, dear!" said Chorley, talking to no one in particular in a loud voice; "there's dear Mr. Wimbleby calling me from his back window. I wonder what he wants. Look here, Amelia, while I go and talk to Mr. Wimbleby over the fence, you send Mary Ann to borrow Mr. Margett's bulldog. It's a fierce creature, and we can drop it through the roof——"

"Look here, Chorley," shrieked Wimbleby, "I've had enough of this nonsense. If you don't open the door, I shall burst it open."

While this conversation was going on, Chorley was quietly dragging in front of the door a heap of garden rubbish, consisting mostly of old rose-bushes that he had dug up for burning. Having got the thorny things in a nice little heap all round the front of the shed, he said, with an affectation of anger:

"Burst the door open? You daren't do it, Wimbleby!"

"Daren't I?" retorted Wimbleby in desperation. "You just see if I daren't. One—two—three!"

At the word "three!" the door, which was a slight thing at best, splintered like tinder before Wimbleby's effort, who shot out into the heap of brambles obligingly prepared for him. He gave a yell of distress as he sat down on them, and another yell as he put his hand out in order to help himself up.

And as Chorley was very tender-hearted, and did not like to hear the cry of a fellow-creature in pain, he went indoors and locked up for the night. And a few moments later he heard Wimbleby scrambling dismally over the fence that separated their gardens.

DON'T FIDGET AT HOME.

"My dear, do sit down!"

How often that pathetic plaint is uttered by a tired husband to the most excellent wife in the world.

Kitty doesn't mean to be a nuisance, and worry the dear, hard-working fellow who has been out all day—it's only that she is, perhaps, over-zealous. She hoards round the drawing-room [illegible] varnish—that button on Paul's waistcoat, it must be done now. Oh! where's that receipted bill for Gaeetam's, for which they had the audacity to send in another account? In the morning-room, of course! etc., etc.

And thus things continue till the tired husband takes refuge behind his newspaper.

There is a time to be active, and a time to be inactive; and the woman who realises this truth is the retainer of her husband's companionship as well as his affection.

Most volatile, artistic, energetic, and brilliant women have a tendency towards "the fidgets," but it is a tendency which can be repressed if they will only force themselves to realise that it is there.

Now just observe yourself, my charming little friend with the flashing, dark eyes, dainty, white, nervously-moving hands, and ready, brilliant smile. Watch yourself; listen how you tell your servant at least a dozen times that only "the smallest pinch" of herbs is necessary in the soup; how you give your husband quite seven reminders concerning the posting of a letter; and how you confuse your dressmaker with over-repeated instructions—and realise what a charming and pretty but utterly jerky and unrestful person you are!

And now you have realised, begin to cure your failing as quickly as possible—for it can be done without any great difficulty and with quite lasting results.

To begin with (this if you are the mistress of a house), take one solid half-hour, or more, to settle all those matters which keep you jumping up and worrying everybody from breakfast to bedtime; and if your memory, and the memories of those with whom you have to deal, are not good, make lists. Look through your desk to see what bills and papers require attention; and, in fact, get everything in order, and look ahead.

The fidgety woman should also compel herself to take brief spells of sitting right back in her chair with motionless hands and closed eyes. This treatment after a while causes tranquility to become a lesson which can be learnt.

Robbins: Highbee must be one of those men who are always looking for trouble.

Mack: Why?

Robbins: He has been married only a month, and now he has bought a motor-car!

"Johnny, you must comb your hair before you come to school," a teacher enjoined upon one of her pupils.

"I ain't got no comb."

"Then use your father's."

"Pa ain't got no comb neither."

"Nonsense! Doesn't he comb his hair?"

"He ain't got no hair!"

"In some circles of old," said the pedantic person, "it was the custom to have a skeleton at the feast."

"We follow the same custom," said Mr. Meekton. "We have a turkey one day, and the skeleton for the next four."

Not long ago a client entered a lawyer's office.

"Why, sir, your office is as hot as an oven!" he exclaimed irritably.

"Why shouldn't it be?" responded the lawyer smilingly. "It's here that I make my bread!"

"I suppose your son will adopt a profession?" said one farmer to another.

"Well," was the answer, "that's the way Josh talks about it now. But I shouldn't be surprised if he'd see the wisdom of lookin' for a profession that'll adopt him!"

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

From a large Victorian city comes quite a thrilling tale of breach of promise and elopement in one story, but two chapters. The hero, although legally of age, does not—under the terms of his father's will—inherit the estate until he reaches his twenty-fifth birthday, when he will receive a large fortune. Although young, he had a heart, which he bestowed upon a damsel who spent her daily hours behind a counter, which counter—in mamma's opinion—formed a bridgeless gulf between himself and his sweetheart. He could not marry because he had not a penny-piece of his own to marry on, so at last consented—cunning boy—to break it off. Result: a bomb in the shape of a threat for breach of promise of marriage. It was rather terrifying, but money is the ointment to grease such breaches; so the mother, feeling that this was merely a sprat to catch a mackerel, willingly offered through her lawyers three thousand pounds (to be increased on demand), which sum was immediately accepted, to the matron's astonishment, as she fully expected to be asked to plank down a further two thousand. When the cheque was duly sent and cashed, the lady sang "Te Deum"—too soon, alas! for her peace of mind, for a second bomb followed the first, the latter being a deadly affair which blew her hopes and thanks sky high, for it was no less than an announcement of the marriage of her faithless son with the little lady of his desire. The three thousand pounds just did the trick, for the intervening years between twenty-one and twenty-five will be provided for thereby. (Seven hundred odd a year it will work out at.) It is a sad story—for the mamma.

He is a well-known figure in the city, and is usually found draped against a verandah post, with a far-away look in his face. He is a confirmed dead-beat. He would rather not live at all than have to earn an honest living, and the only effort he ever makes to get his bread is occasional pilfering, when the act calls for no particular energy. There are records against him, but he likes to keep out of gaol because they wash you in gaol, and there is nothing he hates worse than water, unless it is work. He is the dirtiest man in the Commonwealth, and is rather proud of the fact. On New Year's eve a crowd of boys got about him. "Why don't you wash yourself, Jack?" asked one. Jack grew confidential. "I don't wash myself, young gentleman," he said, "because it would not be policy so to do. Some day it may be necessary for me to hide from the police, then I shall wash myself. Besides, I would not care to have my people recognise me, so as an ex-soldier, sir, I am disposed to remain behind my earthworks."

A good yarn is told of a St. Kilda sportsman, who was invited down Sandringham way to shoot hares. "You plant yourself there," said one of the party; "don't stir, and we'll round 'em up." "Righto!" assented the seaside marksman, and he patiently stayed until he got cramps all over him. Then he cautiously arose, but saw no sign of the practical jokers, who had departed for the nearest pub as soon as they had "planted" their victim.

The new Marquis of Linlithgow was a harum-scarum as a boy, and often led little Lord Charles Melbourne into scrapes. One day the painters were in Government House, and a man was up a ladder busily at work, his paint-pots being below. To one of these his lordship attached a string, which [illegible] to a spaniel's tail [illegible] whistle [illegible] said than done, and the result took an awful lot of cleaning up—in every way.

In the old days of Melbourne's "Rotten Row" at Albert Park, Lord Hopetoun and an aide were trying the paces of a couple of polo ponies, and fell in with two other horsemen. The result was that they all took part in a test of speed, in which His Lordship came out on top. The quartette kept together chatting horse-talk until they reached the Domain Hotel, when one of the citizens remarked to the Governor: "Well, we're just going to have a taste; will you and your friend join us?" "No, thanks," genially replied His Excellency, "we're just going to have lunch." A moment or two after the citizens were told who their chance acquaintances were, whereupon one of them galloped after the Governor to assure him that such a liberty would not have been taken had he known. "Oh! that's all right, old chap," Lord Hopetoun pleasantly remarked; "if we hadn't been so near home we would have been only too glad to have had that drink. Perhaps some day we shall." Next time they met was at a polo match, and they did.

Bookseller Cole has a great liking for monkeys, and runs a sort of monkey branch of his large city business. The monkery is upstairs, and a big family of simians has a compartment all to itself. The exterior of this room is decorated with sage reflections by Mr. Cole, asserting the monkey's claim to consideration as a poor relation, however distant, and pointing out some of its peculiarly human traits. The other night, long after closing-time, there arose a fearful hubbub upstairs, where Mr. Cole runs an immense china department. The crashing, clattering, jabbering, and general pandemonium continued while people were jumping into a few clothes. Then there was a rush for the glassware flat. Alas! the monkey branch had broken loose, had penetrated to the china department, and fearful work of devastation was in full blast. A bull in a crockery shop is a mild item beside a large family of robust monkeys loose among a thousand pounds' worth of dainty glassware. Before those monkeys were roped in about £50 worth of damage was done.

"Where is your master this morning?" inquired a man of a barber's assistant.

"Gone out to get a shave, sir!" was the latter's reply.

"Strange that he should have white hair and a black beard!"

"Not at all! You forget that the one is twenty years older than the other!"

"Oh, for the wings of a dove!" sighed the poet with the unbarbered hair.

"Order what you like," rejoined the prosaic person; "but, as for me, give me the breast of a chicken."

A man with a mission is a devouring lion who pays no heed to time, or place, or feelings, or individuals.

"Here, my man, I have told you what to do, I have shown you how to do it, and still you go wrong! Are you a downright fool, or am I?" asked an adjutant of a raw recruit.

"I bain't, sir!" replied the man.

With hisses and groans an audience greeted the first act of a new drama. All hope of success was at an end.

"It's hard to tell what the public wants," murmured the author.

"It's easy enough to tell in this case," said the manager grimly. "It wants its money back!"

The fool who recognises his folly as folly is wise—the wise man who mistakes his folly for wisdom is a fool.

BEDS AND BEDDING IN RUSSIA.

Not Appreciated by Travellers.

The Russian bed, in the usual run of hotel or lodging-house, is an affair out of which, or rather, off which, you cannot possibly help tumbling, however still you lie. It is an iron or wooden frame, destitute of rails, and about the width of an ordinary coffin. Upon this is placed a mattress, and the entire arrangement is deposited in the middle of the room. To get on to it is easy enough, for it is quite low. But to fall asleep on it is inevitably to fall on the floor. It is too narrow to turn in, and there is no one who does not turn in his sleep, unless he is a Russian, who, one may assume, has been weaned from the habit by countless flops in the days of his youth, when he didn't mind that sort of thing. He has brought himself into harmony with his environment, as the evolutionists say, and is quite comfortable. The stranger has not, and suffers accordingly.

We suppose most people, before they enter the land of Nod, are occasionally apt to dream that they have fallen over a precipice, and are going down, down, down; and just as they are about to touch bottom they wake with a start, and heave a sigh of relief as they realise that they are on nothing harder than feathers. In Russia that dream has a terribly actual termination. The visionary wakes with a start to find that he has "gone over" in a very literal sense, and is wallowing among his portmanteau, wearing apparel, and boots.

A cunning man will shift his bed from the centre of the room to the wall. That saves him on one side; but he is still open to disaster on the other. The narrow bed is general.

"But what about the bedclothes?" it will be asked. Well, they are much more easily described than the bed, the fact being that they are invariably conspicuous by their absence. It is not the fashion in Russia to supply bedclothes, even in the best hotels. The traveller is expected to bring his sheets and his blankets with him, if he requires them; and the same is the case in private houses. A Russian would no more think of offering you second-hand bedclothes than you would of offering him a second-hand toothbrush.

The only exception to the rule is to be found in the sleeping compartments of the railways, and this must be a modern innovation. The railway officials supply one pillow, one sheet, and one blanket to each first-class passenger. Elsewhere, however, as stated, the stranger, let him be invited guest or paying lodger, is understood to provide his own bed-clothing.

There are considerations which render this system highly desirable. But it is not without its drawbacks; and, when we remember that the mean annual temperature of Northern Russia is below freezing point, it will be admitted that no one should be left in ignorance of the custom. Its discovery creates no small consternation among tourists, who are quite unprepared for it.

An appliance hardly less puzzling and annoying than the Russian bed is the Russian washstand. It is not ungraceful to the eye, and it is all right when you understand its mechanism. But, as the minor poet observes, "You have got to know it first." It is a high, narrow, upright piece of furniture, with a marble back and slab, a small basin in the centre of the slab, and above the basin an inverted spout. At the bottom is a pedal similar to those fitted to a cottage pianoforte.

Investigation proves that the washstand is hollow, and is entirely filled with water. The latter is liberated by [illegible] from a considerable height and, consequently, with considerable force, through the inverted spout aforesaid, full into one's face. When you expect it the effect is not unpleasant; but when you do not expect it, and are sleepy and grump, it is decidedly irritating. In any case, the arrangement is not to be commended, since, if you are not very careful in your pedalling when the machine is full of water, the miniature fountain plays far beyond the basin on to neighboring articles, which it is inconvenient to don wet.

It should be stated that guests at a Russian hotel, or in a private house, for that matter, ought, if they are particular, to fasten their bedroom doors before engaging in serious ablutions. Russian servants and waiters, male and female, give no warning of their approach. It is no more the custom to knock at the door than it is to supply bedclothes; and a "boots" or a chambermaid will invariably enter a room without any intimation, "as if," as one writer has expressed it, "intentionally ignoring such obstacles to movements as doors." The fact that the room is a bedroom makes no difference whatever.

A Stubborn Wife.

Gilhooly: So Ferguson's wife is dead?

Gus de Smith: Yes; she died yesterday. She was an awful contrary woman. She was that, about everything, and she kept it up to the last. In fact, I don't think that she would have died at all if it hadn't been for her perverseness.

Gilhooly: Why, how was that?

Gus de Smith: She was very sick, and her husband, with tears in his eyes, said, "Dear Jane, you must not die." Then she looked at him and said, "I'll show you whether I will die or not," and turning her face to the wall was dead soon after.

Barnum's Ready Retort.

The late Mr. Barnum once appeared at Oxford to lecture on "Humbug." The rowdy students would not give him a hearing. At length, in a momentary lull, he shouted:

"Then you don't want to hear anything about humbug?"

"We don't!" was the answer in a roar.

"Well," retorted Barnum, "I've got your money, and there's no humbug about that!"

The disturbance came to a sudden finish, and Barnum proceeded in peace.

Next, Please!

Two rival safe-makers were once arguing as to the merits of their respective safes for withstanding fire.

Said the first: "During a great fire which occurred some time ago a chicken had somehow happened to get into one of our safes, and after the fire it was taken out alive and unhurt."

"Oh!" rejoined the other, "that is nothing! During a fire a chicken got into one of ours somehow, and when taken out it was found standing on one leg frozen to death!"

Mrs. Ascum: I'm surprised to find you looking for another servant. I thought you engaged one yesterday.

Mrs. Hiram Offen: Oh! she's a lady's maid. She merely waits on me. I'm looking for another one to wait on her.

With friends, even poverty is pleasant.

Be warned against nursing revengeful thoughts; they are apt to develop sharp stings.

He laughs last who is slow to see the joke.

The more uncles, aunts and grandparents there are, the bigger the row when it comes to naming the first baby.

The younger the man, the more he thinks he knows about women.

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The Mystery of the Ravenspurs.

By F. M. WHITE,
Author of "The Ends of Justice," "The Law of the Land," etc.

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CHAPTER XL.
The Iron Cage.

Tchigorsky made a long pause before he resumed his story. His nerves appeared to require composing. It was impossible to shake off the horror of the past. At length he went on again.

"I saw the cruel light flame into the eyes of the princess; I saw that she was pleased and yet sorry to learn our decision. She gave a sign and we were brought nearer to her.

"'You understand what your refusal means!' she said. 'You have been here long enough to know how carefully our secrets are guarded, and also how we punish those who try to read them. Where are those scripts?'

"We had no scripts, and I said so. As a matter of fact, such formulae and papers as we had managed to become possessed of had been smuggled beyond Lassa to Ralph Ravenspur's servant, Elphick, who had conveyed them to a place of safety. But my statement was without effect.

"She turned sharply to her attendants.

"'Strip them,' she said, 'and put them in the baths.'

"We were going to learn then what those cages were for.

"'There is no need to remove our clothing,' I cried. 'We will do it ourselves!'

"I was afraid our revolvers should be discovered, or the cartridges be rendered useless by immersion. Ralph seemed to understand, for, like myself, he quickly discarded his robes and slippers and professed himself to be ready.

"Then the grating was raised, and we were placed on our backs in a shallow bath formed in the shape of a coffin, and not more than ten inches deep. At first the baths were empty, but gradually they were filled with water until we had to raise our faces and press them against the bars to breathe. I thought that we were to be suffocated in this shallow water—a dreadful idea that filled me with stifling anxiety—but there was worse to come."

Again Tchigorsky paused and wiped his brow.

"The suspense was torture; the terrible uncertainty of what was going to happen was agony. Imagine being drowned with a bare half-inch of water over your lips and nostrils! I turned my head a fraction of an inch on one side, and then I saw that the water could not rise quite high enough to drown me without overflowing the edge of the bath. Evidently this was but the first chapter in the book of lessons. We could breathe by placing our faces against the bars. What next

"There was no occasion to ask the question. Though my heart was drumming like the wings of an imprisoned fly, and though there was the roar of a furnace in my ears, I could make out the crack and rattle of machinery, and the bars over the cage began to move. My face, to escape the water, was so closely pressed to the bars that the friction was painful.

"The bars slid along, and as they did so I remembered the long projecting ends which were glowing yellow and blue in the braziers. My heart ceased drumming, and then seemed to stand still for the moment. I had guessed the riddle. A second later and the horizontal bars over my face were white hot.

"Here was the situation, then—I had either to press my face against those cruel bars or drown in a few inches of water. Could the mind of man imagine a more diabolical torture? I cried aloud; I believe my friend did also, but I cannot say. My face flinched involuntarily from the scar of the blistering iron; I held my breath till the green and red stars danced before my eyes.

"Flesh and blood could stand it no longer, and I was literally bound to raise my head. Into the flesh, as you have seen for yourself, those hot barriers pressed, while I filled my lungs with a deep draught of delicious air. But the agony was so great that I had to go down again. The water cooled the burns for the moment. But you can imagine how it intensified the agony afterwards.

"When I raised myself again the bars were cool. But only for an instant, for they came hot once more, this time in a horizontal direction. The same ghastly business was enacted; again there was the sense of semi-suffocation, again the long draught of pure air and the pain from the bars. And then while wondering, half-delirious, how long it could last, something gave way and I fainted.

"That I deemed to be death; but it was nothing of the kind. When I came to I was lying on the floor writhing in agony from my wounds. Fortunately I had not lost my sight, nor had Ralph at that time. He was to discover later that the injuries received were fatal to his eyes.

"He was lying by my side and groaning with pain like myself. A more hideous and repulsive sight than my companion's face I never wish to look upon. And doubtless he had the same thoughts of me. But I did not think of that at the moment.

"We were alone. I staggered to my feet and across to the door. It was fastened, of course. For a time we were too maddened by pain to take heed of anything, but gradually reason came back to us. My first idea was of revenge. Ralph had grasped for his robes and his revolver was in his hand.

"'Heaven help the first man who comes in!' he yelled.

"Like a drunken lunatic, I applauded the sentiment. For a minute we were both mad as the drugged Malay who runs amok. Fortunately nobody did come in for some time, and gradually wiser counsels prevailed. We slipped into our garments and hid our revolvers. Then from raging madmen we passed to tears. We were so spent and exhausted that we cried like little children.

"But men like ourselves are not easily daunted. The pain was still great, but this only stimulated our desire to live and gain the better of those who had so cruelly used us. Later a priest conducted us into another room, where the princess awaited us.

"She smiled as she looked into our faces. That smile was nearly the end of her. Many a time since have I regretted that I didn't finish her career then and there. Had she betrayed the least sign of fear I should have done so. And by so doing your people would have been saved many a bitter sorrow."

"At the expense of your life," Geoffrey said.

"Tchigorsky shrugged his shoulders. "What matter?" he said. "The few suffer for the many. Well, as I was saying——"

The speaker paused suddenly as his eye caught something moving along the beach. It was the figure of a woman creeping along as if in search of some missing object. She proceeded very slowly until she approached the spot where the boat lay filled and sunk, and then she paused abruptly.

For a minute she stood fascinated by the sight, then she flung her hands high in the air, and a bitter wailing cry escaped her. If she had been a fisherman's wife suddenly brought face to face with the dead body of her husband or lover, her wail of anguish had not been more poignant.

"Who can she be?" Geoffrey asked.

Tchigorsky said nothing. The woman stood with her hands raised. As she turned and ran towards the cliffs, moaning as she went, Geoffrey started.

"Marion," he said. "Marion."

He would have dashed forward, but Tchigorsky restrained him.

"That is not your Marion," he said. "Your Marion does not dress like that."

Geoffrey looked again. It was Marion, and yet not Marion. It was the girl in the blue serge dress and red tam-o'-shanter who resembled her so strikingly. What did this girl know about him, and why did she stand wailing over the boat? He felt he must solve this mystery.

"Sit down," Tchigorsky said slowly. "Sit down."

"But," Geoffrey cried, "I insist upon knowing——"

"And spoiling everything. Sit down, I say, or I shall have to detain you. I don't fancy you would care to measure your strength with mine."

Geoffrey dropped into his seat.

"Perhaps not," he said. "I don't believe you want me to know who that girl is."

"I have heard worse guesses," Tchigorsky said drily.

CHAPTER XLI.
Waiting.

They were growing uneasy at the castle. There was a forced cheerfulness about the small party that testified to the nervous tension that held them. For some years now there had been a tacit understanding on the subject of punctuality. Such a thing was necessary when any moment might precipitate the next catastrophe. The mere fact of anybody being late for five minutes put the rest in a fever. And Geoffrey had not come into tea at all.

The thing was almost in itself a tragedy. Geoffrey was always so considerate of others. Nothing in the world would have induced him to stay away without first saying he was going to do so or sending a message. And tea had been a thing of the past for a good hour. What could have become of him?

Nobody asked the question; but it was uppermost in the minds of all. Vera was chattering with feverish gaiety, but there was a blazing red spot on her ghastly white face, and her eyes were wild and restless.

Marion had slipped away. The only one who betrayed no anxiety was Ralph. He sat sipping his cold tea as if he had the world to himself and there was nobody else in it.

Presently, with one excuse or another, all slipped away until Vera was alone with Ralph. He was so quiet that she had almost forgotten his presence. When she thought herself alone she rose to her feet and paced the room rapidly.

She pressed her hands to her throbbing temples.

"God spare him!" she whispered; "spare him to me! Oh! it is wicked to feel like this and so utterly selfish. But if Geoffrey dies I have nothing to live for."

The tears rose to her eyes, tears of agony and reproach and self-pity. Ralph crossed the room silently. He was upon the girl ere she had heard the soft fall of his footsteps. He laid a hand on Vera's arm.

"Geoffrey is not going to die," he said.

Vera suppressed a scream. She might have cried out, but something in the expression of Ralph's face restrained her.

"Are you sure of that?" she asked.

"As sure as one can be certain of anything, child. We are alone?"

"There is nobody else here, uncle."

"One cannot be too careful," Ralph muttered. "Then Geoffrey is safe."

"Thank Heaven. You have sent him somewhere, uncle?"

"No; I have not sent him anywhere. And you are not going to ask any questions. I have told you so much to spare you the agony and suspense that will overtake the others. I tell you because, had you not known, the mental strain might have broken you down," continued Ralph.

"Before long it will be proved almost beyond a demonstration that Geoffrey had become a victim to the family foe. There will be evidence to convince a jury, but all the time Geoffrey will be safe."

Vera said nothing. She could only gasp. Ralph's hand lay on her shoulder with a grip that was not devoid of pain.

"You are not to show your feelings to any one," he croaked. "You are not to betray your knowledge by a single sign. Ah! if I could tell you how much depends upon your courage, reticence, and your silence!"

"I think you can trust me, Uncle Ralph."

"I think I can, dear. I like the ring of your voice. You are to be quiet and subdued as if you were unable to comprehend the full force of the disaster. Much, if not everything, depends upon the next few hours. Now go, please."

Ralph slipped away into the grounds. A little later he was making his way along the cliffs towards the village. For a brief time Vera stood still. She was trying to realise what Ralph had said.

"What did it mean?" she asked herself again and again. But she could find no answer to the puzzle. Still Geoffrey was safe. Whatever sensation the next few hours might produce Geoffrey had come to no harm. It would be hard to see the others suffer, hard to witness their grief, and not lighten it by so much as a sign.

But Ralph had been emphatic on this point. Had he not said that everything hinged upon her reticence and silence? Vera went slowly to her room, her feet making no sound on the thick pile carpet. A flood of light streamed through the stained-glass windows into the corridor. In the big recess at the end a white figure lay face downwards on the cushions.

Vera approached softly. She saw the shoulders rise and fall as if the girl lying there were sobbing in bitter agony. It was Marion—Marion the ever-cheerful! Surely her grief must be beyond the common?

"Marion," Vera whispered. "Dear Marion."

She bent over the prostrate figure with heartfelt tenderness.

Marion raised her face at length. It was wet with tears, and her eyes were swollen. At first she seemed not to recognise Vera.

"Go away," she said hoarsely. "Why do you intrude upon me like this? Am I never to have a minute to myself? Am I always to carry the family troubles on my shoulders?"

She spoke fiercely, with a gleam in her eyes that Vera had never seen before. She drew back, frightened and alarmed. It semed incredible that gentle Marion could repulse her like this. But she did not go.

Marion was beside herself with grief; she did not know what she was saying. It was impossible to leave her in this condition.

"You are grieving for Geoffrey," she said. "He will come back to us."

"Geoffrey is dead," Marion wailed. "He will never come back. And I——"

She paused; she had not lost control of herself entirely. But the look in her eyes, the expression of her face, the significant pause, told Vera a story. It burst upon her with the full force of a sudden illumination.

"Marion," she whispered, "you love him as well as I do——"

So her secret was known at last! And Marion was only a woman after all. The selfishness of her grief drove away away all other emotion.

"As you do?" she cried. "What do you with your gentle nature know of love? You want the wild, hot blood in your veins to feel the real fire of a lasting, devouring affection. I tell you I love him ten thousand times more than you do. Look at me; I am utterly lost and abased with my grief and humiliation. Am I not an object of pity? Geoffrey is dead, I tell you; I know it; I feel it. Love him as you do! And you stand there without so much as a single tear for his dear memory."

Vera flushed. The words stung her keenly. How cold and callous Marion must think her! And yet Marion would have been equally cold and self-contained had she known. And it was impossible to give her a single hint.

"My heart and soul are wrapped up in Geoffrey," she said. "If anything happens to him I shall have nothing to live for. But I am not going to give way yet. There is still hope. And I shall hope to the end."

Marion sat up suddenly and dried her tears.

"You are a reproach to me," she said with a watery smile. "Not one word of reproof has passed your lips, and yet you are a reproof to me. And to think that you should have learnt my secret! I could die of shame."

Vera kissed the other tenderly.

"Why?" she asked. "Surely there is no shame in a pure and disinterested affection?"

"From your point of view, no," said Marion. "But if you could place yourself in my position you would not regard it in the same light. I have cared for Geoffrey ever since I came here; all along I have loved him. I knew that he was pledged to you, and knew that he could never be anything to me and still I loved him. Who shall comprehend the waywardness of a woman's heart? And now he is dead."

Once more the tears rose to Marion's eyes; she rocked herself to and fro as if suffering from bitter anguish.

"I do not believe that Geoffrey is dead," said Vera. "Something tells me that he will be spared. But why go on like this? Anybody would imagine that you had something to do with it from the expression of your face."

Marion looked up suddenly.

"Something to do with it?" she echoed dully, mechanically.

"I wasn't speaking literally, of course," Vera went on. "But your curious expression——"

"What is curious about my expression?"

"It is so strange. It is not like grief, so much as remorse."

Marion broke into a queer laugh, a laugh she strangled. As she passed her handkerchief across her face she seemed to wipe out that strange expression.

"I hope remorse and I will remain strangers for many a long day," she said more composedly. "It is so difficult to judge from faces. And I must try to be brave like yourself. I have never given way before."

"I believe you are the bravest of us all, Marion."

"And I that I am the greatest coward. I have even been so weak as to allow the secret of my life to escape me. Vera, I want you to make me a most sacred promise."

"A dozen if you like, dear."

"Then I want you to promise that Geoffrey shall never know of your discovery. At no time are you to tell him. Promise."

Marion looked up eagerly and met Vera's eyes. They were clear and true and honest; they were filled with frankness and pity.

"I promise from my heart," she said. "Not now nor at any time shall Geoffrey know what I have learnt to-day."

Marion blessed the speaker tenderly.

"I am satisfied," she said. "He will never know."

CHAPTER XLII.
The Search.

Mrs. May sat out on the lawn before the rose-garlanded windows of her sitting-room. A Japanese umbrella was over her dainty head, a scented cigarette between her lips. For some time she had been long and earnestly sweeping the sea with a pair of binoculars.

She rose at length and made her way down the garden. There was a rugged path at the bottom, terminating in a thicket that overhung the cliffs.

Here it would be possible for a dozen men to hide without the slightest chance of being discovered. Nobody ever went there by any chance. Shaded from the house, Mrs. May paused.

A softened whistle came from her lips, and then there sprang up from the ground the dusky form of the man who called himself Ben Heer. He salaamed profoundly.

"Well?" the woman demanded impatiently. "Well?"

"Well, indeed, my mistress," the sham Ben Heer replied calmly. "It fell out as you arranged. Behold a puff of wind carried away the masts, and behold the oars came into fragments. Then the boat began to fill, and it now lies bottom upwards at the foot of the cliff."

"But he might have been a powerful swimmer."

"He was no swimmer at all. I saw everything."

"It was not possible for him to be picked up?"

"Not possible, my mistress. There was no boat, no sail to be seen. The boat foundered and there was an end of it. I waited for some time, and I saw no more."

Mrs. May nodded carelessly. She might have been receiving the intelligence of the drowning of a refractory puppy She betrayed neither regret nor satisfaction.

"Of course, they will guess," she said. "When they come to examine the boat and the oars they will see at once that there has been foul play. Once more they will know that the enemy has struck a blow."

"My mistress is all-powerful," Ben Heer murmured.

"They will try to trace us once more, Ben Heer."

The sham Asiatic shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"And they will fail," he said. "They know not the powers arrayed against them; the dogs know not my gracious mistress. Meanwhile, thy slave can see through the bushes that somebody awaits your presence."

Mrs. May glanced in the direction indicated by Ben Heer. On the lawn Rupert Ravenspur was standing. The woman smiled. There was the head of the hated house actually seeking out the foe.

"Your eyes are sharper than mine," she said. "Well, you have need of them. Meanwhile, you had better discreetly disappear for the time being."

Mrs. May advanced to greet her guest, who bowed with his old-fashioned grace.

"This is an unexpected honor," the woman said.

"I can claim nothing on the score of politeness or gallantry," Rupert Ravenspur replied. He was quiet and polished as usual; but there was a look of deep distress on his face. "I came here not to see you, but in the faint hope of finding my nephew Geoffrey. I have ascertained that he came to see you sometimes."

"He has been so good," Mrs. May murmured. "I assure you I appreciate the company of a gentleman in this deserted spot."

"Then he has not been here to-day?"

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing Mr Geoffrey to-day."

Ravenspur groaned. He turned his face away, ashamed that a woman should see him in a moment of weakness. Out of the corner of her eye she regarded him. There was not an atom of pity in her heart for him.

"I hope you don't anticipate anything wrong," she said. "Mr. Geoffrey is not a boy that he cannot——"

"Oh, you do not understand! It is not that at all. In ordinary circumstances I could trust Geoffrey to the end of the world. He is a good fellow, and capable of taking care of himself and upholding the family honor. But others as strong and more cunning have fallen before the dreaded foe, until all confidence has left us. I fear that harm has come to Geoffrey."

"But surely in the broad daylight——"

"Daylight or darkness, it is the same. You know nothing of the boy?"

"Nothing, save that he was going fishing to-day."

Ravenspur started.

"Oh!" he cried. "Then I shall soon know the worst. I am sorry to have troubled you; I will go down to the beach. The others are searching in all directions. Nobody will return to the house until we know the lad's fate."

Ravenspur bowed and was gone. Mrs. May smiled after him. So the castle was going to be left for the time being.

"This is a chance not to be lost," she murmured. "The full run of the castle! Fate is playing into my hands with a vengeance."

Full of the wildest apprehensions, Ravenspur made his way to the beach. It was no easy task for a man of his years, but he made light of it, as he used to half a century ago. Two fishermen coming up touched their hats.

"Have you been out to the west of Gull Point to-day?" Ravenspur asked.

"No, sir," was the reply. "Not one of us. The mackerel came in from the east, and there were so many we had every bottom afloat. I did hear as Mr. Geoffrey had gone out in the West Bay, but I can't say for sure."

Again Ravenspur groaned; no longer had he the least doubt about what had happened. There had been more foul play, and Geoffrey had gone down under the dark waters. The old man's heart was full to bursting, but his grief was for Vera more than for himself.

"I am afraid there has been another of those tragedies that are so mournfully identified with our name," he said. "Wass and Watkins, will you come with me?"

The fishermen dropped the brown, tangled nests upon their shoulders and followed. They were all tenants, vassals almost, of the Ravenspurs and ready to do their bidding. The foe would have had a hard time did he fall into the clutches of these veterans.

"I am going down to search the beach," Ravenspur explained. "I know that my nephew went out fishing this afternoon. I shall know his fate soon."

It was some time before anything was found. Wass came stumbling over the rocks, and there in a clear pool he saw the boat bottom upwards. At the cry of dismay that came from him, Watkins hurried up.

"Give a hand with the painter, Bill," Wass said hoarsely. "There's the boat right enough, with a good round hole under the gunwale."

Ravenspur watched in silence. He saw the boat beached; he saw the hole in her side. Wass pointed to the mast where it had been sawn off.

"Poor young gentleman," he exclaimed, with a heavy outburst of grief. "And to think that we shall never see him again. Look at this, sir."

"The mast seems to have been sawn off," said Ravenspur.

"Almost off, sir," said Watkins. "Enough to give if a puff of wind came. And that hole has been plugged with soft glue or something of the kind. If I could only lay a hand on 'em!"

He shook his fist in the air in impotent rage; tears filled his eyes. Ravenspur stood motionless. He was trying to bring the force of the tragedy home to himself, trying to shape words to tell Vera without cutting her to the heart. He was long past the more violent emotions.

He turned to Wass like a man in a dream.

"Go up to the castle," he said. "See my son Gordon and bid him come here. They must all come down, all aid in the search. Not a word more; please go."

CHAPTER XLIII.
Nearer.

To Geoffrey the position was a strange one. There was something unreal about the whole thing. Nor was it pleasant to remember that by this time the family had missed him, and were doubtless bewailing him for dead.

"I am afraid there is no help for it," said Tchigorsky. "I could not see my way to certain conclusions and ends without inconvenience."

"Something more than inconvenience," Geoffrey murmured.

"Anxiety, troubles, what you like," Tchigorsky replied coolly. "It is necessary. I want to have the castle cleared for a time, and I could think of no better and less suspicious way of doing it. The anxiety and suspense will not last long, and by daylight your people shall see you again. And the one who is most likely to suffer has already been relieved."

So Geoffrey was fain to wait in the cave listening to Tchigorsky's piquant conversation, and waiting for the time to come for action.

"There will be plenty to do presently," the Russian said. "Meanwhile, I am going to leave you to yourself for a space. The woman who regards me as her servant may need me. And, remember, you are not to leave the cave in any circumstances, else all my delicately laid plans will be blown to the winds."

So saying, Tchigorsky disappeared. It seemed hours before anything happened. It was safe in the cave. Nobody was likely to come there, and if they did there was not the slightest chance of discovery, for the cave went far under the cliff, and was dark as the throat of a wolf.

By-and-bye there came the sound of voices on the beach, and Rupert Ravenspur, followed by the two fishermen, appeared. Geoffrey's heart smote him as he saw his grandfather. Then they found the boat, and directly afterwards the two fishermen rushed away, leaving Ravenspur behind.

It was only the strongest self-control that prevented Geoffrey from making his presence known to the figure gazing so sadly at the boat. But he remembered Tchigorsky's warning.

After all, he reflected, it would only be for a little time. And the head of the family knew nothing of the great conspiracies working themselves out around him. His open, honorable nature would have shrunk from the subtle diplomacy and cunning that appealed so powerfully to Tchigorsky.

Rupert Ravenspur would not have tolerated the position for a moment. He would have insisted upon going to Mrs. May and having the matter out at once, or he would have called in the police. And that course would be fatal.

So Geoffrey was constrained to stay and watch. Presently he saw the fishermen return, followed by the family. There was a gathering about the foundered boat, and then Geoffrey turned his eyes away, ashamed to witness the emotion caused by what they regarded as his untimely death.

He had seen them all, and beheld their grief. He could see Marion bent down with a handkerchief to her streaming eyes and the head of the family comforting her. He saw Vera apart from the rest, gazing out to sea.

Beyond, a fleet of boats were coming round the point. They were small fishing smacks in search of the drowned Ravenspur.

Geoffrey pinched himself to make sure he was awake. It is not often than a live man sits watching people search for his dead body.

But there was comfort in the knowledge that Vera was aware of everything. Geoffrey could see that she had been told. That was why she kept apart from the rest. She walked along the sands past the mouth of the cave, her head bent down.

Flesh and blood could stand it no longer; in the mouth of the cave Geoffrey stood and called Vera softly by name.

The girl started and half turned.

"Don't be alarmed," Geoffrey whispered. "I am in the cave. It is safe here. Watch your opportunity and come in, for I must have a few words with you. Only do it naturally, and don't let anybody suspect."

Vera had turned her back to the cave, and appeared to be sadly gazing over the sea. Gradually she slipped back, watching the others, who apparently had forgotten her, until she was lost in the gloom of the cavern.

A moment later and Geoffrey had her in his arms. It was good to feel her heart beating against his, to feel her kisses warm on his lips.

"Did Tchigorsky tell you?" he asked.

"No, Uncle Ralph. Oh! I am so glad to see you again, Geoffrey. I knew you were not lost, that you would be safe after what uncle said, and yet all the time there was a strange void in my heart."

"But my darling, I am safe."

Vera laid her head restfully on his shoulder.

"I know, I know!" she said. "But I have had a foretaste of what might have been. When Wass and Watkins came and told me that your overturned boat had been found, I began to realise what it might be to live without you. Dear Geoff, will it be long before all this anxiety is disposed of?"

Geoffrey kissed her trembling lips.

"Not long, so Tchigorsky says, and I have implicit faith in him. The present situation is all part of the plot for our salvation. And the others?"

"Are heartbroken. My poor grandfather looks ten years older. You know how entirely he has been wrapped up in us. I feel sure that if he could have saved us by sacrificing the rest, himself included, he would have done so."

"I know," Geoffrey said hoarsely. "I know, dear. And Marion?"

"Marion is sorely disturbed. I hardly know what to make of her. For the first time she positively appears to be frightened. And Marion is not the girl who cries. I was alarmed about her a little time ago," replied Vera.

"Ah! well, it won't be very long," Geoffrey said consolingly. "To-morrow morning Tchigorsky has promised that I shall be safe and sound in the bosom of the family again. What are they going to do now?"

"They are going to search until they find you. All the boats from the village are out, even the servants are assisting. You can understand how I should feel it I did not know everything. I could not stay in the house, I could do no more than wander along the shore feeling that I was helping. It would be impossible to remain in the house, and that is what they all feel. There is a full moon to-night, and they will be here till they are exhausted."

Geoffrey nodded. He was wondering how he was going to account for his absence and for the manner in which he was finally to turn up safe and sound again. He would have to concoct some story of being picked up by a passing boat and landed some way down the coast.

"They guess I am a victim to the vendetta?" he asked.

"Of course. They say the mast and oars were partly sawn away. It will be the talk of the country in a few hours. Geoffrey, I must go. Don't you see that they have missed me?"

Vera had been missed. Already Marion was calling her. There was just the chance that she might be yet another victim. Vera slipped out of the cave, walking backwards as if she were looking for something.

"You won't betray yourself?" said Geoffrey.

"I'll try not to, dear. I understand how necessary it is that the truth should be concealed. And yet it is hard not to be able to ease their minds."

Vera was clear of the cave by this time, and her voice ceased. A few yards farther on, and Marion came up to her. She was looking pale and ghastly; there were rings under her eyes; her nerves had had a terrible shock.

"I couldn't imagine where you had got to," she said. "I looked round, and you had disappeared. I feared you had been spirited away."

"By the cruel foe, Marion? One by one we go. It may be your turn next."

"Would to Heaven that it was!" Marion whispered vehemently. "A little time ago I fancied that I was strong enough to bear up against anything. Now I know what a feeble creature I am. Before this happened I would a thousand times have been the victim myself. And I—I——"

She paused, and beat the air impotently. Vera wondered. Could this really be the strong, self-reliant Marion, who had uplifted them in so many troubles?—this the girl who always had a smile on her face and words of comfort on her lips? This was a weak, frightened creature, with eyes that were haunted.

"Be brave," said Vera, "and be yourself. What should we do without you? Why, you are so full of remorse you might have been responsible for Geoffrey's death yourself."

Marion looked up quickly, and then her eyes fell.

"It is because I love him," she said. "And I love him, too. But I try to be brave."

Marion was silent under the reproof. Vera was calm and collected. What a reaction there would be later, Marion thought.

"You have not given up all hope?" she asked.

"No, I cannot. It would be too cruel. I cannot imagine that anything really serious has happened to Geoffrey. I cannot feel anything for the present, save for you. And my heart is full for you, Marion."

"Aye," Marion said, drearily. "It need be."

Vera turned and walked swiftly across the sands. She wanted to be alone now that no danger threatened.

Then presently the moon rose and shone upon the people gathered on the fringe of the sea. To the impatient Geoffrey came Ralph Ravenspur with a cloak and slouch hat over his arm.

(To be continued.)

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

Passing a Racing Motor Car.

To pass a competitor in an automobile race is an exciting and often dangerous undertaking. The motor carriages when travelling at a high rate of speed are often followed by a cloud of dust so dense that the driver of one coming up from behind cannot see the vehicle ahead of him. Monsieur Fournier, who, several years ago, won the celebrated Paris-Berlin race, tells of the way in which the passing is accomplished.

"I drive into the cloud and do not lose my direction because I am familiar with certain movements in the vortex of dust. These dust cyclones present a different appearance in the wake of a vehicle from that at the side of it, and I am guided by that knowledge. When I get within ten or fifteen yards of the vehicle I wish to pass the dust is so thick that the air is almost dark with it; but when I am closer yet I begin to see the outline of the vehicle in front. It would be useless to signal for room, since I should not be heard. The combined roar of the motor gears and chains of the two vehicles makes a din which is inconceivable to one who has not been in the midst of it. I have to take my chances on a good road ahead, and then I put on my highest speed and shoot past, entirely ignoring what I may meet in the several hundred feet to be traversed before I am in front."

Charles Jarrott describes his experience in the race:—"The overtaking of a car in front became a serious matter. It meant that for some miles one had to drive in the thick dust thrown up by it, and for a time it was quite impossible to see anything, and one had to get a rough idea as to the exact location of the road. A very serious accident happened to one of the cars through the driver's recklessness in running into the dust of the car just in front. He thought the road was straight. Instead, it took a sharp turn to the left. The result was that he cleared the road, went into a ditch, and upset the car in a field."

A TERRIBLE ADVENTURE.

The great ocean liner Majestic was two days out from Southampton. The sea was calm, and on the upper deck the passengers were idling away the hours. Life at such times is liable to become monotonous, with nothing to relieve the gaze but the vast, seemingly endless, glimmering ocean. Suddenly a shrill, fearful shrieking startled even the drowsiest into wakefulness. A huge figure, black and grimy with coal dust, his straight red hair dishevelled, and eyes aflame, rushed frantically on to the upper deck.

Women fled in horror, and men paled at the apparition. Following closely on the heels of the maniac came Dr. French, the ship's surgeon. To him it was evident that the man was delirious, yet the cool sea air might calm the madman. And the doctor waited watchfully.

Presently the frenzied stoker became calm, and leading the way to his own cabin Dr. French bade the man sit down. Fiendish looks of hate shot over the stoker's face. A door banged violently, a key clicked, and the doctor realised that he was imprisoned with the man, now once more raving mad.

A long surgical knife lay on the table. The madman seized it, and hoarsely bade the doctor prepare to die.

Then silence followed. Unharmed, barred from all escape, the doctor faced the huge stoker.

To leap upon the man and to endeavor to disarm him, now gifted with frenzied strength, would surely have been but to court certain death. To call for help would have proved equally fruitless. Outside the cabin door stood the captain and purser, not daring to break the door down, lest in doing so they should goad the madman to attack.

The doctor slowly began to roll a cigarette, whilst the maniac, screeching threats, flourished the knife.

"Prepare to die!"

A cold shudder passed through the men listening outside.

The slightest tremor at this critical moment, the least manifestation of fear, and there would have been little hope for the madman's unfortunate victim.

But the man the stoker had to deal with was no coward, and faced the wildly-flourished knife with apparent indifference.

The doctor moistened the edge of his cigarette and cooly struck a match. Louder and more threateningly the maniac raged.

The doctor smiled, blew rings of smoke, and chatted easily, as if oblivious of his peril. Yet the while, his eyes glanced from the knife to the grating above his head that he could see was being unscrewed.

Suddenly a cloud of dust descended on the maniac's head. The doctor leaped back as a pungent odor of pepper assailed his nostrils. The madman rushed at the doctor. His eyes were blinded by the pepper, and he lunged wildly with the knife.

But help was at hand. The throwing of the pepper coincided with a determined assault on the doctor's stateroom by a storming party outside.

At last the door burst open, and men hurled themselves at the madman. A desperate struggle ensued, and not until wounded in the leg by a bullet was the man overcome.

Then the doctor finished his cigarette.

"And so your son is going to become a violinist. With whom is he studying?"

"Oh! we haven't got so far as that yet. We are letting his hair grow first."

"Nagg is very fond of entertaining, isn't he?"

"Yes; his wife has to be pleasant when there's company present!"

THE LADIES' COLUMN.

WOMEN AND ACCOUNTS.

The question of "ways and means" is always interesting, not only to those experienced in the difficulties of making both ends meet, but to those who with a liberal income still understand the necessity of adjusting their expenditure in due proportion to it. In matters of housekeeping most women consider themselves authorities, and as far as accounts go the accuracy of the newly-married woman is unsurpassed in a city ledger. Once, however, that the excitement of having an income at all at one's disposal has abated, the interest in the subject is apt to wane, and if the majority of women still enter the various items of their expenditure in an elaborately-bound volume, few after a little time have the necessary courage or the energy to add the columns up, or to go into bewildering calculations on the subject of debit and credit.

MARRIAGE WEATHER LORE.

Married in rain, you'll be a bride again;
Married in shower, love for your dower;
Married in snow, wed to your woe;
Married in frost, you've staked all and lost;
Married in sun, happiness won;
Married in shade, you'd best stayed a maid;
Married in sleet, the world's at your feet;
Married in fog, life cat-and-dog;
Married in hail, across seas to sail;
Married in thunder, hearts drift asunder.

A SOCIAL FUNCTION.

The following description of a new social function is capable of being varied in any way to suit local or financial circumstances:—

A pretty party recently given by one girl for several friends had a novel feature. The girls were invited for three o'clock, and on arriving each was given a ten-inch square of white India silk, together with a choice of silks from a box of vari-colored embroidery materials. Each was then expected to embroider a design of her own sketching, all to be finished ere six o'clock. At that hour the squares were all placed on a table, the workers' names being pencilled on the hidden side. Dinner followed, to which was bidden a number of young men, who were afterwards made judges in the embroidery contest. Silver scissors and thimbles were given as prizes, with a steel bodkin for the "booby," and then came a carpet dance to end this pretty entertainment.

ADVICE ON MARRIAGE.

An authority who claims that he has studied the subject thoroughly warns men never to marry a woman who fidgets with her hands, and the woman with nervous hands is the woman who frets.

Marry a woman whose hands lie quietly in her lap. Marry a woman who has the art of resting. Marry a woman who knows what repose is. Notice her hands first; then notice her lips. If she fidgets with her hands and bites her lips, you may be sure that she is not of the even-tempered, good-natured sort. She is a woman who does not know what it is to enjoy life.

Notice a woman's hair, if you are looking out for a wife. A bad-tempered woman never dresses her hair nicely. A woman who is ill-natured does not wear her hair becomingly. It is rough, and does not look appropriate to her face. She does not understand herself. The bad-tempered woman is too selfish to know what is becoming to her, and is too wrapped up in herself to learn anything new.

MIRRORS NOT ALWAYS TRUE.

Girls who are woefully dissatisfied with their personal appearance, as seen in a looking-glass, may gain comfort from the fact that they are much better-looking than their mirror tells them. Even the very best plate-glass has a greenish tinge, which does not impart a flattering hue to the complexion, and waves and ripples on the hair are not seen to full advantage in the reflection. Another comforting assurance is that no one criticises a face so severely as the owner does herself, when close to the mirror, and therefore aggravating little blemishes which annoy the scrutiniser are not patent. So girls who are despairing of your looks, take consolation from this, and believe that you are far nicer in others' eyes than you are in your own.

A NECKBAND HINT.

The neck of a bodice is often extremely uncomfortable, not because of a bad cut, but because of the manner in which the band has been applied. Two precautions are necessary: First, to see that the back is not too tight; next, to see that the front is not too loose. If you see on another woman a blouse with a crosswise pleat up at the neck, you may know that the band is too tight from shoulder to shoulder. Many home dressmakers think that this defect arises from the neck being too high, and they trim it down a little. This, instead of curing the trouble, rather accentuates it.

The rule is simple: In applying a neckband hold the band toward you from shoulder to shoulder in the back, and the waist toward you from shoulder to shoulder in the front. A bit of stretching in the back and an imperceptible pulling of the front cause no trouble, while the reverse has been known to spoil a gown.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO PRODUCE A BACONER?

Mr. White, a well-known N.Z. pig-breeder (according to the Manawatu correspondent of "Dominion"), says that it is practically all profit to fatten pigs, provided a farmer breeds all the stock and grows feed on the farm; but to buy feed, except for the finishing touches, was a foolish undertaking. It did not pay a man to buy feed to fatten a pig except for his own use and to build up a good firm side of bacon. Even then it would almost pay him best to go and purchase his bacon from a store, provided he could judge a good piece of bacon.

Why has so much inferior bacon found its way into the market?

"Oh! that is easily explained," said the breeder. "Pigs fed on skim-milk, without any hard feed, produce bacon, which, when put upon the pan to fry, suddenly seems to disappear up the chimney. But there is also such a thing as getting bacon too firm, so that a little milk is useful. To get a pig well fattened and ready for the factory during the present season would cost about 2d. per pound. That is, assuming that the farmer grows his own feed and has a good supply of milk at hand. This leaves a margin of profit of about 2d. per pound, and in some cases 2¼d., so that it pays any small farmer to give plenty of attention to pigs."

Love is a lesson we always learn by heart.

AMUSING INCIDENTS.

Sharper than the Scissors.

The other night a little lad went into a barber's shop to get his hair cut. The operator was slow in his method.

"How much more have you got to do?" asked the lad after some twenty minutes had elapsed.

"Only the front," replied the barber.

"Well, you had better be sharp about it, or else it will be growing at the back again!" said the smart youngster.

First-Hand Knowledge.

A young farm laborer called one market day at the registrar's office to record his father's death. The registrar asked the date of death.

"Well, father ain't dead yet," was the reply, "but he will be dead before morning, and I thought it would save me another journey if you would put it down now."

"Oh, that won't do at all," said the registrar. "Why, your father may take a turn before morning and recover."

"Ah! no he won't," said the young laborer. "Doctor says he won't; and he knows what he's given father."

A Saucy Proceeding.

A traveller who had just dined in a refreshment-room, regretting having to leave something on the table, slipped the remainder of a chicken surreptitiously into his pocket.

The waiter, who noticed the action, said nothing, but coolly emptied the sauce tureen into the diner's pocket.

The traveller, feeling a strange warmth come over him, turned round and queried:

"What are you doing there, waiter?"

"Sir," coolly replied the latter, "you have forgotten the gravy; the two go together."

Would Just Suit Her.

A lady with a forbidding cast of countenance bustled into a bank recently. On reaching the counter she jerked a bag down, and handed a cheque to the cashier.

"Cash this, please," she said.

But the cashier, after one glance at the cheque, pushed it back.

"I can't cash it, madam," he said; "it isn't filled in."

"There is my husband's signature on it," the woman said, excitedly.

"Yes, I know," admitted the official; "but there is no amount stated—it has been omitted."

"Oh, never mind that," said the woman, impatiently. "Give me all there is."

Most Unfortunate.

Old Farmer Peapod always believed that Parliament "oop in Melbourne" could do anything and everything.

So on his last visit to market, a few of his friends were discussing the latest news when he came on the scene.

"Weel," he said, "an' what's Parliament doin' now, Bill?"

Bill gave the wink to his friends.

"A bad thing for us, Dan," he replied. "They've just passed a Bill adding two months on to the winter."

A look of horror came over Dan's face.

"Well, I never," he said; "if that beant the onluckiest thing that ever 'appened. An' 'ere am I right out o' fodder."

Sorry For Her.

The new pupil teacher had arrived at the school, and the budding geniuses and others were doing their best to form an accurate estimate of her abilities, temper, and general character. The first lesson was to be one of natural history, and the teacher had chosen the interesting but complex subject of the cat.

"Now, children," she said, "tell me what sort of clothes pussy wears."

No reply.

"Come, now," said the new teacher, determined to extract the right answer by naming everything that pussy didn't wear, "does she wear feathers?"

A pained expression crossed the face of a little boy in the front row.

"Please, ma'am," he said, pityingly, "ain't you never seen a cat?"

From Bad to Worse.

The following is a good story concerning one of our most eminent actresses and a theatrical critic equally well known:—

A number of ladies and gentlemen were the other day travelling together in a railway carriage. Only two of the passengers knew each other, but the conversation soon became general, and a certain theatre became the subject of discussion. One lady who had been present the evening before at the representation of a piece was loud in her expressions of disapproval.

"Worse than all," she exclaimed, "that Miss S—— is much too old for her part; her singing is becoming unbearable. Don't you think so too?"

"Would you not rather tell all this to Miss S—— herself? She is sitting opposite to you!" replied the person addressed coldly.

After the general silence which followed, the critical lady turned to the actress with many confused apologies.

"It is that horrible critic, T——," she said, "who has influenced my judgment concerning your singing. I believe it is he who is always writing against you. He must be a most disagreeable and pedantic person."

"Had you not better tell all that to Mr. T—— himself?" calmly asked the actress. "He is sitting next to you!"

He Had Suffered.

"I'm in love!" sighed the pensive young man as he threw himself into a chair in his friend's apartment.

"I know it," calmly replied the friend.

"You don't know anything of the kind! Why, I didn't know it myself until last night."

"Nevertheless, I know it. Furthermore, I knew it the minute you came in the door. And I can describe the girl."

"Suppose you try," said the young man.

"To begin with, she's neither short nor tall, but just the right height. Her figure is slender and perfectly well-proportioned. Her eyes—why, when one looks into those eyes he thinks of all the shameful, wicked things he has done in the past and resolves to execute many brave, manly deeds in the future. Her cheeks—ah! they flame instantly into wonderful crimson when by accident you touch her trembling hand. And her hair! Why, my boy, her hair is the most beautiful sight on the face of this old earth! To secure a lock of it, any fellow would endure ——"

"Stop!" cried the young man, his face livid with jealousy; "what right—why—how long have you known Marguerite?"

"Known her? I never saw her!"

"Then how——"

"Oh, it's easy," said the friend. "Once I was in love myself."

She (indignantly): You had no business to kiss me!

He: But it wasn't business; it was pleasure!

THE REVENGE OF THE DEAD.

HOW TWO REMITTANCE MEN ROBBED A BANK.

By Vernon Ralston.

The two remittance men made a fine contrast as they stood in the bar at Carristown—Alger big, burly and brutal-looking, and Menzies with his slim figure and sly, foxy face. Amongst the mob of shearers and stock-riders their clothes of London cut, their white hands, and untanned faces marked them as men apart.

They had soon sought each other out. In half a minute Alger had stood Menzies a drink. In half an hour they were as thick as—remittance men.

It was not long before Alger asked his new acquaintance: "What are you doing here, old man?"

"Looking about for a station," replied Menzies promptly, who always had a lie ready.

"Rot!" said Alger, who grew comparatively straightforward when the drink was in him. "What did your people send you here for? Mine got sick of me because of a confounded cheque. Who'd have thought that a fellow's own father would have given him away for a miserable hundred or so. Here I am with two pounds a week allowed to me, and even that's stopped if I go down to Sydney. Won't have me in any port for fear I should slip home and turn up like the blooming prodigal. But what did you do?"

"Financial troubles brought me here," said Menzies, with a quiet smile.

Alger slammed him on the back with his great fist. "I'll lay it wasn't for a matter of a hundred or so that you went under. What do they allow you while you keep up here?"

Menzies shrugged his shoulders "A hundred and fifty a year, paid weekly, conditionally on my not communicating with my family in any way. Rather an amusing allowance, isn't it? I should think I've spent as much as that in button-holes when I was in London."

"Man," cried Alger, "I've lost more than that at poker in the race-train coming from Ascot. If I'd got my old governor out here who makes me starve in this hole, I'd have more than half a mind to throttle him. Think of the way they pay me—two pounds every blessed week. Now, if I had it in a lump I could enjoy life for a week if I starved all the rest of the year."

A prim-looking gentleman stepped up to the bar, nodded quietly to Alger, ordered a whisky, drank it quickly, and as speedily left the bar.

"Who is your highly-respectable friend?" sneered Menzies.

"That—why, he's no friend of mine He's Burke, the bank manager, who pays me my money every Monday. A miserable old creature, he is. Won't give a fellow an advance if you go on your knees to him. It'd make no earthly difference to him—it isn't his money. But all he says is, 'Business is business—I must carry out my instructions, Mr. Alger.' The brute! He lives alone at his blessed office with a lot of beastly pets and things. Never speaks to anyone except on business. Drops in here for his one drink every evening, and spends the rest of his time rooting after ferns and insects."

"Lives alone at the bank," said Menzies thoughtfully. "Wonder he isn't afraid of being held up!"

"Pooh! He isn't afraid. They say that twenty years ago, when he was in another up-country branch, some fellows tried to rush him. He shot two dead and lamed the third. The bank people would have promoted him twenty times over, but he only wants a place where he can collect his beastly plants and insects."

"The old fogey's the wrong man to hold up then," commented Menzies; and with that the matter dropped.

For a few weeks the remittance men lounged round Carristown. On Mondays, when they drew their money, Alger got gloriously drunk, and Menzies gambled with anyone who happened to be on the spree in town. By Friday they were usually penniless, and the landlord of the Carristown saloon knew better than to give credit to remittance men.

One Friday afternoon they lay together in the shade of the bush, idly smoking and talking over the good old times they had had in England. The heat was intense, and suddenly Alger gasped: "I'd give ten years of my life for a long drink."

"This can't go on," said Menzies. "I've stood this place about as long as I can. It's enough to make a fellow take to work."

"Or to holding up people in the bush," grunted Alger.

"Are you game for anything that means money—big money?" said Menzies quickly.

"Am I game? Why, I'd half-murder a man for a drink."

"You know the bank," said Menzies quietly. "Old Burke goes out botanising every Sunday. It's left alone all day, and there's no one at that end of the town in the morning. All the people are either in church or at the saloon."

"Well, what of that?"

"Didn't you hear of the bank robbery at Speedwell last week? It's only a hundred miles away. If we could get at this bank and loot it, people will put it down to the same gang. There's only a trumpery safe in the bank office. A strong man with a sledge-hammer and a cold chisel could break into it in half an hour."

"How do you make out people would not suspect us?"

"We'll go away to-morrow 'possum hunting, pretending that we are going to camp out for a day or so. Then we will sneak back at night and lie under cover of the bush at the back of the bank. It runs up quite close there. When Burke clears out, we could break into the premises at the back, force the safe, take all the cash, and hide it in the bush."

"Hiding be hanged! I'd run for Sydney."

"You might as well go and ask to be arrested. People know just how we're fixed about money. If we cleared for Sydney after the robbery, everyone would put it down to us. No! We'd hide the money and stay here for a month or so. Then we could pretend that we were sick of doing nothing, and apply for a job at some station fifty miles off. We'd chuck the job in a week or two, dig up the money and then have the time of our lives in Sydney."

"Six weeks more up-country here! I can't stand it!"

"You'll have to stand it for the rest of your life, or exchange it for a gaol, if you can't endure it for six weeks. Why, it's monthly pay-day at the stations round about next week. There'll be thousands of pounds of gold at the bank."

"But can we get the tools?"

"Simmons, the blacksmith, has gone to Blantyre station to set right their shearing-machines. I heard him say he'd be a week away. We can get what tools we like by just unlatching his smithy door. He never bothered to lock it."

"Can we break into the safe, though? Wouldn't it be better if we got in, laid old Burke out, and took the keys from him."

"He wouldn't be laid out without a fight. You know yourself what he did twenty years ago. And we should have to kill him, or he'd recognise us and set the police on our tracks."

"You're afraid of your blessed skin, Menzies. The old beast's lived long enough."

"Look here, I'll risk a gaol, but I'm not going to risk my neck. Is it a deal?"

Alger nodded assent, and then burst forth: "But I should like to take it out of the old miser for the way he's treated me."

That night Menzies was asking the constabulary sergeant about the places in the bush where opossums were most likely to be found. He thought it well to let the head of the mounted police in Carristown have full information about his future movements.

"Can scarcely say, Mr. Menzies. Keep to the bush tracks myself. Scarcely time to go looking for 'possum. But here's Mr. Burke—he can tell you if any man can."

Menzies repeated his question to the bank manager.

Burke gazed interestedly at him through his spectacles. "The best place I should say, Mr. Menzies, is amongst the gum-trees by Tara Creek, about twenty miles north-west from here. Going 'possum-hunting are you? Well, it's an occupation of a sort, but I wonder that a man of your intelligence and leisure doesn't study the remarkable plants of this district, instead of smoking opossums out of hollow trees."

The sergeant interposed:

"There are not so many as keen on plants as you, Mr. Burke. By the way, aren't you a bit afraid of leaving your bank on Sundays to go looking for plants after this raid at Speedwell?"

The bank manager's eyes twinkled.

"Well, considering the girls from miles round come to church, I don't think many of the mounted police are likely to leave Carristown on Sundays. But, besides the police, I have an efficient guard. Good-night, sergeant. Good-night, Mr. Menzies."

"An efficient guard!" thought Menzies. "What the dickens does the old fellow mean? I never saw anyone on watch on a Sunday."

As he lounged about the town that evening talking to idlers he artfully drew the conversation to Burke and the bank. From no one, however, could he get a hint of what the "efficient guard" might be. Finally he made up his mind that it was all bluff on the part of the bank manager.

The next morning Menzies and Alger borrowed horses and rode away. People chaffed them as they left about their hunting prospects. The landlord of the "Shearers' Rest" playfully promised to eat all the opossums they brought back at one sitting. The remittance men took all the chaff in good part. It was their game that the departure from town should be well advertised.

They rode along the vague bush-tracks till they reached Tara Creek. Then they spent a few hours 'possum-hunting with some success. Afterwards they lit a camp-fire and let it burn itself out, so that it might seem as if a party had spent the night around it. Then they concealed their horses in the thickest and loneliest bush they could find, and set off on their walk back to Carristown. Alger grumbled unceasingly at the exertion.

"I don't see why we shouldn't ride back within five miles," he complained.

"Can't you see that the police will be out looking for tracks directly the robbery is discovered? If they found that we had ridden back close to town they'd be suspicious at once; but they will never suspect us of tramping back from Tara Creek."

So they continued their weary walk through the bush, now stopping to consult their compass by the light of the moon, now making a detour to avoid an impervious mass of wait-a-bit thorns. By dawn on Sunday morning they were safely concealed in the bush behind Carristown Bank. They found the tools that Menzies had conveyed from the blacksmith's shop safe in the hollow tree in which he had concealed them. Then they had to wait to see if Burke moved out.

What if he should stay at home that day? They had an anxious hour, till at seven o'clock they saw him stroll out with his tin plant case in his hand. He turned into the bush not fifty yards from them, and the remittance men gave a sigh of relief. They gave him half an hour to get clear away, and then crept to the back of the bank premises. They soon wrenched open a small window, and Menzies slipped in and opened the door for Alger, whose huge shoulders could not be forced through the window.

"Now we're all right," said Menzies; "an hour's work and we shall be able to loot the safe. Lucky it's in the back room, else someone passing before the bank might hear us at work. But we'll look all round before we begin. The old fellow said something about 'an efficient guard.' I think he was bluffing, but we must make sure that there is no alarm of any kind connected with the safe."

They looked at the safe minutely, but could find nothing suspicious. Then they piled rugs round the inner door so that they might prevent any noise they made being heard in the street.

"Now, Alger," said Menzies, "we'll put that strength of yours to a good use for once. You take the sledge, whilst I hold the cold chisels. Now strike just where I show you. The weak part of a safe is always at the side where the hinges are fitted."

Alger looked at his accomplice and grinned. "You seem to know all about it," he said. "I should reckon this isn't the first safe you've tampered with."

Menzies smiled. "I judge both of us have had interesting careers," he answered quietly.

At first the safe did not seem to yield to Alger's furious blows. The sweat ran down his forehead. He dashed it out of his eyes, and the expression of his face grew more and more savage as he battered the safe.

At last a lucky blow hit the safe at the exact point where it was welded, and the chisel penetrated.

"That's all right," said Menzies. "Now follow the line of the weld, and it will split right down."

Just as they were both levering together and the safe was yielding to their efforts, Menzies started, and held up his hand for silence.

"What's up?" whispered Alger.

"Someone is unlocking the outer door," replied his companion.

They heard a key turning in the lock.

Alger gripped his heavy sledge-hammer, and stood by the inner door with a savage look.

They heard Burke's voice, apparently talking to himself, as he crossed the outer room: "To think that I should have forgotten you, my pet. But you shan't go without your breakfast. I'm bringing the milk for you."

He pushed open the door of the inner room. As he did so Alger brought down the heavy sledge-hammer full tilt upon his head. Burke fell like a stone. A saucer that was in his hand smashed on the floor.

"You fool; you've hit too hard! You've killed him!" exclaimed Menzies.

"Shouldn't have got in my way," grumbled Alger. "What's he come back to feed his blessed cat for?"

"Come on," said Menzies, with a shudder; "let's clear the safe and get away from this. It means the gallows now if we're caught here."

In another minute they had greatly increased the crevice in the safe.

"I can get my hand in," said Alger, suiting the action to the word. "Let's see if I can reach the coin without doing anything more. Can't reach anything," he continued. "We must open it six inches more. Aye—what's that? Scratched myself on something."

He grasped his lever and bent furiously to work. Soon they had the safe open to a practicable extent.

"There it is—the gold all in bags; but, look, man—look!"

Menzies peered through the cleft, and saw a little flat-headed snake curled up on the floor of the safe. It was watching them with its wicked little eyes.

"Smash it with your hammer, man," Menzies exclaimed.

"But it's bitten me; it bit me when I first put my hand in. That's what the old fool was going to feed. I settled him, anyhow."

Directly the snake was killed Menzies hastily grabbed the bags of gold from the safe and piled them on the table.

"Here, Menzies," cried Alger, "my arm's turning stiff. You must go and get me a doctor and some whisky at once—a lot of whisky—gallons. They say it cures snake-bites."

"You forget the dead man lying there! Fetch a doctor, and we both hang."

"Fetch a doctor—this isn't a death for a man. I'd rather die a clean death by hanging. Get one, hang you, or it will be the worse for you! The stiffness is creeping over me."

"I'll go," said Menzies, with a quick glance at his accomplice writhing in pain.

Menzies turned to leave the room, and as he did so grabbed the bags of gold from the table.

The dying man swore a fearful oath. "Leaving me to die like a dog whilst you get away with thousands. You'll stop with me."

By a tremendous effort he staggered across the room, snatched his revolver from the table, and fired almost at random.

A bullet hit Menzies in the spine. He gasped, dropped the gold, and, throwing up his hands, fell a convulsive heap on the floor.

"Done you!" groaned Alger. "You won't go doing the grand in Sydney now—the room's going dark."

And then the revenge of the dead was complete.

THE RUNAWAY BUFFALO MOTHER.

One day the Buffalo family in the Central Park in New York, consisting of two Mr. Buffalos, two Mrs. Buffalos, and a baby, were at home in the early morning, waiting to be fed. The man went into the enclosure with a great armful of cut grass for the two families. He left the gate open while he went out after a second armful. The mother of the baby made up her mind to take a stroll. Through the gate she went, and began cropping the grass as if she enjoyed it. The man turned to carry the grass to the house where the buffalos lived. In his path, gazing calmly at him, was the mother of the baby. He dropped the grass in his arms, rushed to shut the gate, lest the rest of the family should escape, and ran for help. Just then some boys saw Mrs. Buffalo, and began screaming. This frightened Mrs. Buffalo, and she ran out on the bridle-path, where the horses were so frightened that they almost threw their riders. Through the gateway, out on to the streets, right in the midst of tram-cars. The motormen rang the bells. Now Mrs. Buffalo doubtless wished herself at home. Men and boys screaming and running, bells ringing, horses snorting and prancing, and the hard stones of the street under her tender feet. Back to the park she turned, with the hope, perhaps, of finding her way home, and to the baby. On and on came the crowds, shouting and throwing missiles. Right ahead was the lake; into it plunged Mrs. Buffalo. The crowd could get no nearer than the shore, and Mrs. Buffalo was wise enough to keep in the middle. The crowd shouted, but she was getting used to that. Suddenly she made a plunge; the crowd scattered, and with a great shake which made the water fly, she ran back and forth under the trees. At last a lasso was thrown; it settled about her throat, and then Mrs. Buffalo had to go home, which she did as if she were glad to go. Mr. Buffalo met her with a long, low grunt, but her baby was delighted. Mrs. Buffalo looked the next day as if nothing would tempt her to leave home again.

SOME POINTERS FOR BOYS.

It is a great thing to be a boy—a bright, honest, healthy and happy boy, anywhere between 10 and 18 years of age. We once heard a college president, while addressing a Sunday-school, exclaim: "I would rather be a twenty-year-old-boy to-day than a general in the army."

Boys, there is not a sixty-year-old man living to-day, who has good sense, who would not endorse that sentiment. Not that they would wish to live their lives over again exactly as they would have lived them; but because they would like to go back and in living their lives over, avoid the mistakes they have made, the wrongs they have done, and make more out of their lives for good than they have made.

With you, it is different. Life is yet before you. Your life record is yet to be made. What will it be? That is for you to determine. What it is by the time you are 60 or 70 years old is to be determined by what you say, think, choose, and do between now and the time you are 40 years old.

What kind of character are you building? A very wise man once wrote: "Sow a thought, and you reap an act; sow an act and you reap character."

Here are some valuable hints given by an editor to his boy; read them, think them over, apply them to your hearts, and may God bless you. He said:—

"Yesterday my boy was 16 years of age. What can I say to him, and boys like him, through the printed page? First, I can urge him to be a boy as long as he can be; and he can be a boy a long time. In many things I would like to have him to be a boy always. In some respects I want always to be a boy myself. Never get too old to kiss your mother, my boy, nor to salute your dad with affection."

FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Does the trade or profession of a man influence his facial characteristics?

That is, can you tell by a man's outward characteristics how a man makes his living? It would seem that the only profession which stamps a man as its own is that of the actor. The mouths of all good actors are peculiarly alike. It is not easy to describe. There is a certain indication that the lips are subject to the will of the owner. The effect is different from the set firmness of a reticent man. Von Moltke, who could keep silent in seven languages, had a mouth that looked like a gash in his face.

Lawyers watch the mouth for any betrayal of emotion in the witness-box. "Keep a stiff upper lip" is proverbial, but the lower lip is the traitor. A man may be able to control his eyes, his voice, even make them express the contrary to his thought or emotion, but at an unexpected move the lower lip is sure to tell the truth.

Actors learn to control the muscles of the lips. The player must spend hours before his mirror studying make-up and the expression of the face. The looking-glass is his only unbiassed critic.

"Thomas," said a sponging friend of the family to a footman, who had been lingering about the room for half an hour, to show him the door—"Thomas, my good fellow, it's getting late, isn't it? How soon will the dinner come up, Thomas?"

"The very moment you be gone, sir," was the unequivocal reply.

Scene, a Russian ballroom.—"Sir, you have just stepped on my partner's foot. I demand satisfaction!"

"Oh, certainly. Yonder sits my wife; go and step on her foot."

A TRAGIC JEST.

By H. Jamieson.

I.

The wind from the sea blew chill, for the month was October. Arthur Renfield sat down in a vacant corner on the landward side of the cliff-shelter. In his hand was a little volume of poetry, but he did not open it. Far more pleasant was the company of his own thoughts. He leant forward, digging with his walking-stick a small hole in the sandy soil. Renfield was thirty-five, and his hair was greying fast, but the expression of the face was that of a much younger man.

This was the secret. Love had lately brought back the youth which he had reckoned lost. For years he had been living the life of a blind mole, money-grubbing with the rest of us; then suddenly his eyes had been opened, and he had seen. Dora Sandeman had swept into his ken, captured his heart. What matter if there were fifteen years' difference in their ages? In love's realm one must reckon time only by heart-beats.

In three days now Dora would be his. He would lift her from poverty to share the wealth he had gathered. And she would lift him out of an existence of barren selfishness into the life of love.

He looked absently at the title of the book in his hand. Poetry! He smiled to himself. It was ludicrous, and yet it was very wonderful. A few months ago he had found it an effort to read fiction even, or anything except the newspapers. Now he was studying poetry and liking it. Oh, Arthur Renfield!

Suddenly a voice—voices—reached him from the seaward side of the shelter. When he had sat down all the seats on that side were empty. The wooden partition dividing the shelter was high enough to screen the speakers from his observation, but it stopped short of the roof, and through the space that was left every word floated.

"Nurse," said the one voice in the world that had power to thrill him to the core, "if when we meet again I should be different, will you try to remember me as I was?"

"Different, Miss Dora? Of course you'll be different. Why, you're utterly different now from the child I dangled on my knees, and when a girl marries—well, marriage does change, you know."

"You don't quite understand. Perhaps this will explain. Suppose I went into a church and took the sacrament without any feeling—just the wish to please father—shouldn't I be doing wrong? It's like that now. I've got such a terrible dread"—the voice broke.

The man, who in spite of himself had been forced to listen, threw off the spell that bound him, and rose shakily to his feet. All light, all hope, all youth had suddenly passed out of his face.

In front of him stretched a path, leading directly inland. It was his readiest way of escape. He walked along it with bowed back and bent head, as an old man might, and passed out of sight—unobserved. He had slipped unconsciously the little book into his pocket.

II.

"Misty mornin', sir! Goin' for a bathe as usual?"

"Yes. Where's the boat?"

"Down at the water, sir. Got 'er all ready, 'cause I guessed you'd be comin' along. 'Spects I shan't see you to-morrow, sir."

"Oh! Why not?"

"Well I did 'ear—if you'll excuse the liberty, sir—it was your marriage-day."

"How stupid of me! For the moment I entirely forgot. No; you won't see me to-morrow, John; but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Ha! ha! How's the tide to-day?"

"Comin' in, sir. Bathin' at the Cove will be fust-rate this mornin'. I wish this mist would clear, though. You'll 'ave to feel your way round, so to speak."

"Well, I know every inch of it, anyhow. Shove her off, please! Thanks!"

The boat grated over the shingle, shot into deepening water. Renfield waved a hand to the boatman. How little did the old man know it was to be a farewell for life!

A sleepless night following that overheard conversation, and Renfield had determined on his line of action. To let Dora Sandeman give into his keeping to-morrow the keys of her heart without its citadel—never! Marriage on such terms would be no marriage at all—a hollow insincerity, a soulless sham. Those citadel gates must be flung open from within, or the lover must stand without.

Renfield pulled lustily. The shore was merely a dim line now. To reach the bathing cove a line of jutting rocks, only submerged at high water, must be rounded. It would be awkward if, to round them, he would need to lose sight of the shore. A light wind blew in his face. The mist lifted a little, as a woman shaking her skirts. The shore was plainer now.

He was glad that several days ago he had arranged that money settlement with his solicitor. Dora and her father would have plenty to live on. There the irony of it came in; lovers would pour in, of course, when Dora was rich, and the money that had been his would be the magnet. Well, he hoped that the right man—the man of her heart—would be among them.

It was lucky that no relative of his own needed his money. A few distant ones would recognise his name when they saw it in the papers, but he did not remember one who would go the length of putting on a black tie for him. True, one or two philanthropic societies that he had helped would, on reading their newspapers to-morrow, expect something which they would not get, but for them was left a number of millionaires.

He was thinking of his own death as imminent, and it wasn't; his lungs were good, his heart strong, and he would yet reach three-score-years-and-ten. He did not want to die; who could, with health in his veins? People who, disappointed in love, sought refuge in suicide, were quite outside the pale of his sympathies. Only those with morbid temperaments or feeble bodies sought relief from life that way.

What a picturesque exit he had arranged! He was always fond of acting, and had taken part in many amateur performances, but this would be his finest role. He was not only actor to-day, but brilliant stage-manager as well. Everybody would mistake it for the real thing. He must get hold of a few English papers in France to-morrow, if only to read his own obituary notices. "Sad Drowning Accident at Beachend. Prospective Bridegroom Drowned whilst Bathing."

It was time for the scene to be arranged. Everything must be in place before he beached the boat at the bathing-cove, and made tracks for a railway station. Ah! there was a streak of sun, shedding appropriate lime-light.

He shipped the sculls, and moving to the stern, unrolled a voluminous towel. In the secret heart of the towel had been carefully packed a flannel suit, a red necktie, socks, canvas shoes—all exact counterparts of the clothes he was wearing. These he proceeded to distribute over the adjacent seats and at the bottom of the boat.

Whish! What was that? The boat, which now had been drifting for several minutes, was suddenly borne onward by a swift current. It felt for all the world as if the keel were sliding from under him. He had been sitting in the stern, with the bow half out of the water. What was that straight ahead, looming out of the mist? A porpoise? No; a rock. There were rocks all around. He was driving hard on to that dreadful belt.

He jumped forward, swung round on the seat, and unshipped the sculls. The boat was gathering impetus every second; he could not head her round; all he could do was to back water with all his might. Suddenly there was a horrible crunching. The boat stopped dead, flinging him out of the seat. His sudden weight in the stern set the bow free of the rock it had struck. He breathed again; the boat floated. He was scrambling back into his seat, when he saw—good God! that rock had jagged a horrible rent in the frail material. Water was pouring in!

Again the boat struck the rock. The rent was enlarged. He knew the gravity of his position. The shore was a good half-mile away, and he was by no means a first-class swimmer. He jumped up and began flinging off his clothes.

A comedy had suddenly become a dreadful tragedy; pretence was changed to grim reality. Here, on a stage set for a screaming farce, he was face to face with death. Thus did the gods avenge themselves.

Water was pouring in. The boat was half-full now. Again the mist had conquered the sun; the grey water looked terribly chilly. Now the boat seemed to shiver, preparatory, he feared, to settling down. He took one glance around and sprang overboard.

He had cast from him all his outer garments, so was lightly weighted. Once free of the current, which he could feel surging between his legs, perhaps he might yet reach the shore safely. Then a rock with jagged teeth seemed to rise and meet him. He protected the upper part of his body with his hands; but the suction drew his legs sharply forward against the rock. Suddenly he felt an appalling pain, crippling the whole of his right leg from the hip downwards. He turned faint, and a strong sensation of nausea came over him. Unable to do anything else, he turned on his back and floated. He felt that he was doomed now.

III.

When the news came to Dora Sandeman that the wrecked boat had been found, she went with stony face to her room and cried her eyes out.

In sinful moments lately she had prayed for liberty, and now her sin had found her out. She had even imagined Renfield dying and setting her free at the eleventh hour, and now that he was dead and she free, her conscience was terrible to live with. Thus had the gods avenged themselves upon her.

But the avenging stroke was more complete than that. She wanted him back. Not to receive, like a stately queen, the homage of his lips, but to feel the human thrill of his kisses. Ah! naught was a sacrilege now; everything a sacrament. With this sudden grief her humanity had come to her. She dare drink with him the rich, red cup of loving now—and he was dead.

A rapping at the door. She raised herself on the bed.

"Yes; what is it?"

"A boatman to see you, miss."

She unlocked the door in a trice and was flying downstairs. The tears were wet upon her cheeks as she faced old John, the boatman.

"You've news? Good news? I read it in your face."

"Yes, miss; I've runned to tell you. 'E's alive."

"Thank God!"

"So says I, miss. We found 'im on the shore. The tide brought 'im up."

"How is he?"

"Pretty knocked up, of course; but 'e'll be all right in a few days. Been a-askin' for you, miss. I thought p'raps I might take 'im some message."

"Thank you! I think, John, I'll go to him. I can't send a message very well."

For the message was written in her eyes.

HAS NIAGARA A RIVAL?

From time to time, during the past hundred years or more, the world has been startled by the news of discoveries, in various parts of the world, of mighty waterfalls that are alleged to rival or surpass Niagara in point of size and volume of water.

The latest "find" of the kind has been made in the hinterland of British Guiana by the late Dr. Carl Bovallius, managing director of a rubber concern known as the New Essequebo Exploration Company.

The new giant cataract, which, by the bye, has been named Chamberlain Falls, after the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, is said to be 200 feet wide by 300 feet in height. This would make it about twice as high as Niagara, but rather less than one-eleventh as wide, and in no sense, therefore, can it be considered a rival, since in cataracts it is width, plus volume of water, that counts.

There are plenty of higher falls in the world than Niagara. Even British Guiana itself can boast of one, the Kaiteur to wit, which is 740feet high. But, then, the volume of water flowing over it is comparatively insignificant.

The Yosemite Falls, in California, the highest in the world, descend 2,660 feet in what is practically one continuous leap. Yet the volume of water falling over them in a year, it has been computed, is considerably less than that flowing over Niagara in a single day.

And this same comparison holds good, in a slightly greater or less degree, with the other great cataracts of the world. Niagara, in short, has no rival, nor ever will have, in all human probability. The nearest to approach it are probably the Victoria Falls, on the Zambezi; but even these, although both higher and wider, are far less stupendous as regards the actual water fall.

USEFUL INFORMATION.

A little whiting put on a damp cloth will clean paint easily and well.

Never neglect to season foods well before sending to the table to be served.

Cut flowers will keep fresh much longer if a small quantity of alum is added to the water in which they are placed.

If in sprinkling clothes a whisk-broom is used, the clothes will be dampened much more evenly than by sprinkling with the fingers.

A cloth very slightly moistened with kerosene may be used for dusting all furniture and picture frames. It keeps them looking like new.

Spoons used in cooking should, as far as possible, be of wood. A few metal ones should be kept for measuring, and basting spoons must be of metal.

Borax water is excellent for washing the hair.

Buy articles of the best quality; they are the cheapest in the end.

If stockings are very much soiled, a little borax in the water will quickly cut the dirt.

Coarse salt sprinkled occasionally on the floor before sweeping is said to be a good preventive for moths.

There should be a proper proportion between the money set apart for food, clothing, rent, and other necessities.

When a man really comes to know himself, he prefers to do it in silence. Youth may fancy any mention better than none, and that any form of notoriety confers distinction, but it is an unavoidable truth that those of whom there is most to say are those who most persistently court privacy.

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

A quaint little incident occurred lately. The dramatis personae were some artistic souls away holiday making. Apparently they possessed the true excitable temperament, as events will show. One evening they were sitting star-gazing and sentimentalising, when the hollow below them gradually grew misty with smoke. Springing to their feet a weird and lurid glare became apparent to their eager eyes! Straightway they leaped to the conclusion that the neighboring holiday camp was on fire, and their ears—led astray by their excited imaginations—heard cooees and cries for help echoing through the night air. Here was a chance to prove their heroism. Wildly they rushed to the house, hurriedly they seized rugs and towels, one devoted soul grabbed the blankets from her bed. (What lacking foresight! Why didn't she choose someone else's?) Madly they stampeded to the tank and soaked their "weapons," and then broke the record for the quarter-mile in their race downhill towards the fire. Breathless and gasping they arrived on the spot at last—to discover a scene of delightful domesticity and peace. The family was sitting round a huge camp-fire—skinning rabbits! Here was the cause of the smoke, the meaning of the glare, the tragedy which they were determined to avert. You can imagine how they all slunk home.

A well-known commercial traveller got what schoolboys call a "shunt" the other day from an old customer. The latter had started as a baker, and worked himself, through good luck and management, to independence, and retired from trade. Meeting him and his wife in Chapel-street, the commercial pulled up to have a chat about old times, but was met with a stony stare from the lady and a chilling rebuke in best Toorak style. "'Scuse us, Mr. ——," she said, "but me an' 'im ain't in business now." And the crushed commercial drove on.

It is a mistake to suppose there is no open sea-bathing of a mixed character in Melbourne waters. Between Williamstown and Mordialloc a great deal of it occurs at one place or another. A big drag picnic that went by moonlight down to the sea between Black Rock and Beaumaris (writes "Punch") recently took bathing gowns with it. The evening was very warm and bright. The covered drag afforded a dressing-room for the ladies, but the sands were good enough for the men, and by nine o'clock about twenty couples were sporting in the sea. The party had been prancing in the briny shallows for about half an hour, when an enemy appeared in the shape of an angry red cow. Evidently the cow had conscientious objections to mixed bathing in the open, or her bathing-place was being invaded. Anyhow, she was very much disgusted, and bellowed at the bathers in a most disturbing way. She pranced up and down the edge of the water, kicking and bellowing and tossing her horns, and the bathers retreated precipitately to deeper water. But the angry cow was determined on dealing with the disturbers o the peace, and she plunged in after them. She jumped through the waves, bucking fore and aft, and kicking up a deuce of a spray. The bathers yelled in many keys, and retreated still further; but many of them could not swim, and there was a limit to the retreat. Then, with a great rush and splash, the cow got more distracted, and there followed a mad but highly comical disturbance. The picnic scattered in all directions, and the cow went flouncing after individuals, bucking and tossing. She humped a few over, and trod on a few more, and the shrieks and bellowings might have been heard a mile off. When she had run many of the bathers down, had succeeded in nearly drowning one chaperone, and had horned half the bathing costume off several mixed swimmers, and the frightened picnic was scattered to every point of the compass, the lurid cow bounced out of the sea again, and went prospecting amongst the men's clothing on the beach. Harrowed men in the ti-tree yelled abuse at her, and threw sticks and stones, but the cow didn't care. She was out for entertainment, and amused herself tossing the clothes all about the place, chasing them and tossing again. If a wretched bather made a dash to save his pants, she got after him and rushed him into the ti-tree again. There were some lively runs, but the cow had her way, and before she was through, men's raiment was scattered over a hundred yards of sand and sea. Finally the bovine went off with two pairs of trousers on her horns, and eating a white shirt. Five bathers failed to recover their most important garments, and had to return in the bottom of the drag in bathing trunks and other fragments. The misery of that picnic as it drove back to town eloquently testified the mischief one distempered cow could do.

"And ivery wan of us," said an Irish angler, winding up his story of the day's work, "wint away wid fifteen foine fish on his string."

"How many fish did the party catch?" some one asked.

"Sixty. There were four of us."

"Who were they?"

"Well, I was wan, the two Kelleys was two, and Finnegan was three, and—Finnegan, he was three, and—and—I'm sure there were four of us! But who was the other fellow? I'll thry it this way," he continued. "Finnegan was wan, and the two Kelleys was two, and I was three, and—and—I'm blest if I can think who was the other wan!" Then the raconteur began counting off the members of the fishing-party on his disengaged hand. "I was wan," he said, doubling up a finger as he went along, "and the two Kelleys was two, and Finnegan was three——"

"But the two Kelleys was three!" interrupted one of the listeners.

"Do you know the two Kelleys?" asked the Irishman warmly.

"No."

"Well, then, how can you say the two Kelleys was three?"

Then the puzzled disciple of old Izaak found a way out of the problem.

"I'm blest," he said, wagging his head, "if the rascals didn't do me out of—three in sixty's twenty times—I should have had five more!"

On one occasion when Shirley Brooks was on a visit to Mark Lemon at Crawley, a discussion arose between the two men upon noses, their shapes and characteristics. Turning kindly to one of his host's little daughters, and looking at her delicate little retrousse nose, Brooks said:

"When they were looking about for a nose for you, my dear, they chose the first one that turned up!"

She: Te'l me, Bertie, is it true you proposed to Miss Belsize last night? I didn't know you were in love.

He: Oh, it wasn't that. She was in bad spirits, and looked so seedy I couldn't think of anything else to say to cheer her up!

RANJITSINHJI'S PRINCEDOM.

Some Information About His Territory.

Mr. C. B. Fry gives, in "Fry's Magazine," an interesting account of the rather complicated details of Ranjitsinhji's claim to the Princedom of Nawanagar.

"In the sixteenth century A.D.," he says, "one of the Jareja families crossed the Gulf of Cutch into the peninsula of Kathiawar, and with their followers established themselves there. In 1540 a certain Jareja chief, named Rawal, founded the State of Nawanagar, and became the first Jam. He, then, was the founder and the ancestor of the ruling dynasty of the State, and the subsequent Jams have descended from him, or from members of his family. The members of this family have for hundreds of years been strict observers of Hindu and Rajput customs. Ranjitsinhji is one of Jam Rawal's descendants. The State of Nawanagar is about as large as Kent and Sussex combined. It has a population of between three and four hundred thousand, of whom by far the larger number are Hindus. Its principal products are grain and cotton, its manufactures cloth and silk. There are marble and stone quarries, and a certain amount of copper, iron and silver. There is a valuable pearl fishery, and some of the fisherfolk are very skilful divers; they are, too, much employed round the Indian coast as dredges. But the resources of the country have never been developed, agriculturally or otherwise, as they would be under the rule of an able, energetic, and enlightened man like Ranjitsinhji. The revenue of this State, which is paid chiefly in kind, varies according to the success of the crops, from £180,000 to £230,000 a year. These are six towns and over six hundred villages. The chief town is called Nawanagar, the same as the State. It is built of stone, and surrounded by a fort, erected in 1778. It is a flourishing place, about four miles in circuit, and is noted for silken and gold embroidery, and for incense and perfumed oils. Politically, the State ranks as one of the first-class tributare State of Kathiawar. Its chief, the Jam, is entitled to a salute of 11 guns, and has power of life and death over all but British subjects. The Jam administers the State in person.

WHY CIGAR BOXES ARE MADE OF WOOD.

The spice that you notice in the cigar-box comes from the wood of which it is made. It is not because it is impregnated with the tobacco. On the contrary, the tobacco takes the flavor of the wood. That is why a particular kind of wood is used for the boxes of all best cigars. It is Spanish cedar. It is an expensive wood, porous and spicy, and the only kind which can improve the flavor of a cigar.

MENTAL LAZINESS.

Mental laziness is fatal to all growth. Many people never think down deeply into any subject. They just browse around on the surface. They never have trained themselves to concentrate vigorously, to hold the mind tenaciously upon one subject; their thinking is of the hop-skip-and-jump order. This desultory surface dulling sort of brain action is not real thinking. To really think, we must focus the mind upon one subject and hold it there. One reason why the majority of people lead such superficial lives is because their minds are not trained to think deeply and broadly. They do not go far enough into subjects to get a comprehensive view of them. Their thinking is so superficial that their whole lives are shallow. It does not matter how good a brain one has; before it can accomplish anything worth while, it must be trained until concentration becomes an automatic habit.

Man's Ingratitude.

Mr. Blossom had been very ill, and by the time he was able to get downstairs again his hair had grown to a considerable length. Then it was that Mrs. B. volunteered to cut it for him; and Blossom, probably owing to his weak condition, consented to the experiment. Mrs. B. fastened the tablecloth under Blossom's chin, and got to business. Then Blossom repented his rashness.

"Great Scott! Martha," he yelled, as Mrs. B. jammed the point of her scissors into his neck, "what the dickens do you think you're doing?"

"Am I hurting you, dear?" murmured Mrs. B. "It's only these corners behind your ears that bother me. Do keep still;" and then she sliced a bit off his ear.

"Thundering Jumbo!" shouted Blossom, jumping about the room like a cat on hot bricks. "Oh, no! I'm only doing this for fun," and he dashed upstairs and plunged his head in the bath.

"That's the worst of Tom," sighed Mrs. B., as she took up her knitting. "He's always so ungrateful!"

No Help For It.

See the man! Oh, see how many bundles he is holding! Four in his right hand, and six in his left, to say nothing of several stuck under his arm.

And see the lovely lady at his side! Yes; she is his wife. Otherwise, she would have permitted the shopkeepers to send the packages home for her.

Let us move a little closer and hear what she is saying to her husband. No doubt she is thanking him for his courtesy in carrying the result of her shopping tour. Listen!

"My dear," she is saying. (How affectionate! How cheering to the husband!) "My dear, you have a speck of soot on your nose."

Observe his helpless look; nay, almost it is anger. But, see, the flush of passing wrath fades from his face, and with a loving smile he replies:

"Well, if there weren't so many people about to be curious over my actions, I would try to brush the speck off with my foot, but as it is I suppose I'll have to leave it on my nose until I get home."

One day, as the editor and manager stood in the office of the magazine, discussing rather sadly its gloomy prospects, a funeral went by at a slow pace.

The editor leaned out of the window and looked at the funeral anxiously. Then he turned to his companion, and said with a worried frown:

"Can that be our subscriber?"

"I want a good revolver," began the determined-looking man.

"Yes, sir," said the salesman. "Six chambers?"

"Why—er—you'd better make it a nine-chamber. I want to use it on a cat next door."

Fortunes with cards are more easily told than made.

"That dress is becoming, my dear," said the man who thinks he is a diplomat.

She looked at him coldly for a moment, and then replied:

"Yes. It is becoming threadbare."

Mother: To think that my little Ethel should have spoken so impertinently to papa to-day at dinner! She never hears me talk in that way to him.

Ethel (stoutly): Well, but you choosed him, and I didn't.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

HINTS FOR HOME.

Tweed and serge goods may be made impervious to damp at a small cost. Into a gallon of rain-water stir one ounce each of powdered alum and sugar of lead, and when the mixture is clear, pour off the upper liquid. Immerse the fabric to be water-proofed for twenty-four hours, then take out, dry and press. This application will answer for any closely-woven goods, without injury to color or texture.

Black stockings will keep a good color if, after washing, they are rinsed through blue water.

A hot dish can be made cool more quickly by immersing it in cold, salty water than simply cold water.

Boiling liquids may be safely poured into a glass jar without fear of breaking if a silver spoon is first put into the vessel.

Paint or varnish stains may be removed from white or colored cotton or woollen goods by applying oil of turpentine or benzine, and afterwards washing them in soapsuds.

To clean large mirrors quickly, rub all over with spirits of wine on a clean rag, after which they will not require polishing.

To freshen gilt frames.—With one and a-half pints of water, mix flour of sulphur until it assumes a golden tinge, then boil four bruised onions in it; strain off, and when cold, wash the frames with a soft brush, and when dry they will be bright.

The secret of a light omelette is to add a tablespoonful of cold water to every egg that is used.

To whiten the throat, wear a bandage at night, coated with a paste of one ounce of spermaceti, half an ounce of almond oil. A quarter of an ounce of bitter almond oil. Melt slightly, and beat up. Let it gradually cool.

Quick pudding.—One cup of flour, one cup of sugar, one teaspoonful of baking-powder, one egg, one slice of butter (melted), milk to mix to a batter. Bake in a quick oven for twenty minutes.

Butter which has just turned may be made quite sweet again if kneaded well in new milk. The acid causing the rancidity is soluble in milk. Afterwards the butter should be washed in cold spring water, and will be found quite fit for use.

The copper should always be wiped dry after using, as if a little water is left in the bottom while the fire is burning out, the deposit encrusts the bottom, and directly it becomes hot again, when in use, this deposit curdles the water and stains the clothes. It is by far the best plan to draw out all the fire, and then with a dry cloth rub the sides and bottom of the boiler, and leave in good condition.

To cure a sore throat.—So many people this time of the year suffer with a sore throat. This preparation will be found simple, cheap, and highly efficacious when used in the early stage. Pour a pint of boiling water upon twenty-five or thirty leaves of common sage; let the infusion stand for half an hour. Add vinegar sufficient to make it moderately acid, and honey according to the taste. This combination of the astringent and the emollient principle seldom fails to produce the desired effect. The infusion must be used as a gargle several times a day. It has this advantage over many gargles—it is pleasant to the taste, and may be swallowed occasionally, not only without danger, but with advantage.

Boiled or Steamed Puddings.

Boiled puddings should always be put into boiling water, and as this evaporates boiling (not cold) water should be added.

Fill the basin quite full of the mixture, or it will fill with water.

For a boiled pudding, tie up in floured cloth; for a steamed pudding, tie a piece of greased paper over the top.

Puddings are lighter if breadcrumbs are used instead of flour.

Always add a little ginger; it helps to produce lightness.

Steamed puddings take half as long again to cook as boiled puddings.

Boiled puddings with apples or other fruit take from 1½ to 2½ hours to cook, according to size. Christmas puddings, six to eight hours.

To re-heat boiled or steamed puddings, add a little milk, place in a basin, cover with greased paper, and steam.

OLD FRIENDS ON NEW SUBJECTS.

Robinson Crusoe on the Simple Life.

Simplicity is the key which unlocks the gateway to happiness, and those whose lives are mapped out on simple lines will find that they avoid many of the inconveniences, many of the discomforts, and many of the sorrows which fall to the lot of those who indulge in luxury.

Most of the ills which beset the present generation arise from their possessing too much. The only serious illness I experienced during my long sojourn on my island followed my partaking rather plentifully of turtle. It was the first I ever found there, though I have every reason to believe it was by no means the last that has brought pain and suffering in its train. There is abundance of everything in the world for everybody, and if one man has too much, it follows as a corollary that another has too little; and he who has more than he wants generally finds his property a burden to him.

The soft beds used in the present day are not conducive to that repose which is to be had, for example, by sleeping under or in a tree. Although I have slept thus only once or twice in my life, I found myself more refreshed in the morning after having done so than when I had reclined on an easier couch.

My lady's lap-dog, when he is over-fed and over-petted, becomes disagreeable and snappish, but after he has been handed over to the tender mercies of John the coachman, and shut up in the stable for a few days with little or nothing to eat, he becomes himself again, and his good humor is restored.

If a man has enough for his immediate wants, he should be happy. When I could grow enough corn, gather enough fruit, kill enough flesh, and obtain enough water for my needs, the London meat market, with Covent Garden thrown in, would have been of less value to me than a pick-axe.

Mrs. Upperton: What a fine gallery of ancestors! And what a strong family likeness in the faces!

Mrs. Gotitt-Quick: Yes; you see the artist had only one old photograph to go by.

It's when a fellow is crooked that he is apt to go straight to the bad.

When you have an opportunity of getting something for nothing, look carefully for the concealed price-mark.

Some men are determined to stand their ground, even though they haven't any.

Success only knocks once at each man's door, but adversity will hammer away all day.

It is not exactly necessary to be an idiot in order to act like one.

Some fellows are so full of hot air that they ought to wear stove-pipe hats to let it out.

As children grow older, do not encourage over-daintiness or err in the extreme of want of change with diet, which should be plain and wholesome, but serve it daintily.

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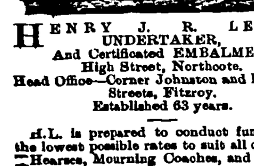

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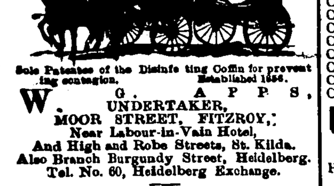

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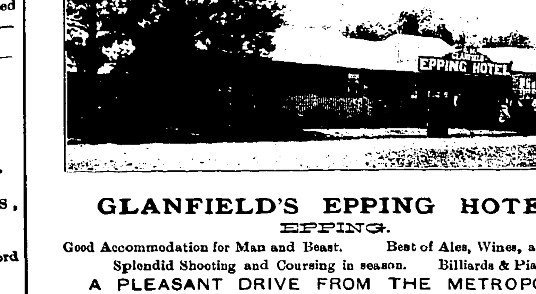

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To Sell One Article Requires Experience, To Sell the Hundred and One Articles Contained in the Furnishings of a Home Requires Many Years' Experience.
THIS
BEAUCHAMP'S
The Well-Known Auctioneers of
319-321 COLLINS STREET
(Close to Elizabeth Street)
HAVE.
Messrs. C. F. & H. L. Beauchamp have each had about 30 years' experience in AUCTIONEERING FURNISHINGS, the only Firm in Melbourne with this Record. BEAUCHAMP BROS. make a Specialty of Conducting Sales of Furniture at Private Residences.
—THEY Realise the Best Prices.
—THEY are Economical in their Charges.
—THEY do their Business straightforwardly.
—THEY pay you your Cheque the day following Sale.
—THEY have an Efficient Staff.
BEAUCHAMP BROTHERS
Charge 10 per cent. to cover all charges on Outdoor Sales of Furniture. This includes Commission, Advertising, Catalogues, Posters, Labor, &c.
Cash Settlement Day After Sale.
Tel. 97 (Central).

W. Q. HING,
TEA, COFFEE,
and
FANCY GOODS Merchant,
Bailey's Buildings,
HIGH STREET, NORTHCOTE SOUTH.
Best Blends of China, Ceylon, and Indian Tea.
Guaranteed Pure and Unadulterated.
None Better.
No. 1, 1/6 lb. No. 2, 1/3 lb. No. 3, 1/- lb.
CHINESE & ORIENTAL FANCY GOODS
Your patronage respectfully solicited.

ASHES, ASHES, ASHES, ASHES.
Ashes delivered in Northcote and Fairfield Park, 2/6 per load. Sand and General Carting done. Horses and Tip Drays for Hire.
GRIFFIN, Edwin St., Fairfield, and 69 Rielly Street, Collingwood.

Boots & Shoes

The best of all Attraction Is to give Satisfaction.

William Pearl,
BOOT MANUFACTURER AND IMPORTER,
181 Brunswick St., Fitzroy.
REPAIRS DONE IN A FEW HOURS TIME.
Business Established 50 Years.

Revolution
IN
FOOTWEAR.
"The Old Order Changeth."
BOOTS
Guaranteed to
Wear 12 months.
THE Advantages to the People by reason of the invention of
Rubberised Leather
cannot be over-estimated. It is not a composition. It is a pure leather permeated with pure rubber, and is invaluable for its elasticity, comfort, and durability.
REMEMBER—
That a Guarantee is given with every pair of Boots that they will wear a certain period—Ladies,' 12 months; Gents', 10 months. If they fail to do this the Manufacturers undertake to replace or repair the boots free of charge.
DIMMICK
Is the Local Agent and is showing a large variety of these goods in his windows,
243 HIGH STREET, NORTHCOTE

BRING YOUR REPAIRS TO
A. Parker,
PRACTICAL BOOTMAKER,
HIGH STREET, NORTH PRESTON
(between Tyler & Regent Sts.)
Good Leather.—Reasonable Prices.
Rubber Heels, Cream, Nugget, Laces, Leather & Grindery stocked.
BOOTS MADE TO ORDER.
A Trial Solicited.

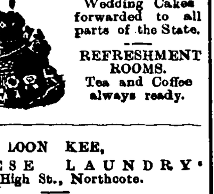
Milk Suppliers.

Pure Country Milk
ABSOLUTELY
Free from Suburban Contamination.
Our Milk Supply is drawn from Epping, 16 miles from the City and beyond the radius of City filth.
W. J. DOUTCH,
"ACME" DAIRY,
HENRY STREET, NORTHCOTE.

PRESTON DAIRY,
GOWER ST., PRESTON.
M. Walsh,
Cowkeeper and Dairyman.
Cattle and Premises under inspection of the Board of Public Health.
Pure Milk Direct from the Cow to the Consumer. Strippings and One Cow's Milk a Speciality. Absolutely free from coloring matter or preservatives.
No second dealing or with other traders.
Deliveries twice daily in Northcote and surroundings.

Picture Framer.
Wholesale & Retai
Art Overmantels, Frames, &c., Made to Order.
Enlargements Framed from 2/6.
G. H. JACOBS,
254 JOHNSTON STREET, FITZROY
(5 doors from Smith St.)

T. KERR,
PASTRYCOOK AND CONFECTIONER
76 and 328 Smith Street,
COLLINGWOOD.



Wedding and Christmas Cakes a Speciality.
Wedding Cakes forwarded to all parts of the State.
REFRESHMENT ROOMS.
Tea and Coffee always ready.

LOON KEE,
CHINESE LAUNDRY,
216 High St., Northcote.
Washing and Laundry Orders promptly attended to.
Good Workmanship and Polish Guaranteed.
Prices Moderate.
White Shirt, ironed and washed, 4d
ironed only, 3d
Collars ironed only, 9d per doz.
Collar washed and ironed, 1d

Business Notices.

FOR GOOD FURNITURE

Spring Cleaning always reveals the need or new furnishings—sometimes only little odd things, other times whole suites. Whatever it is, you'll be able to get it here good, at a price well within your reach. Why not pay a visit of inspection here—it's a house noted for its artistic designs, fine finish and solid construction.

Oak Suite.
Comprising six small and two carver's chairs, with loose seats, grill backs, heavy undercarriage, and square tapering legs, with diamond-shaped feet. The suite is handsomely upholstered in red moroccoline and wax finished throughout. —— £10 15/.

Blackwood Leather Suite.
A very handsome 9-piece suite, comprising a couch, two large chairs and six small chairs, all covered in real leather and castored. The wood is thoroughly seasoned, and will last and look well. A really high-grade suite, at an economical price. —— £13 10/.

Inlaid Chippen. Chairs.
These exquisitely-designed chairs are beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl and colored woods. In the silk tapestry upholstering of recent art shades they look particularly attractive, and are priced from —— 24/.

Japanese Screens.
We're showing a collection of beautiful hand-painted Screens. The design is most artistic, and the adjustable folds are quite a new idea. —— 10/6.

CLAUSCEN & Co.
194-6 Bourke St., Melbourne.

Established 1872. Phone 48 (Brunswick).
J. McLean's New Premises,
Plenty Road & High Street, South Preston.

J. McLEAN, in thanking his numerous friends and patrons for their past favors, desires to notify them and other residents of Preston and surrounding districts that he has erected commodious and up-to-date premises—Grain Crushing and Chaff Cutting Mills and Produce Stores—on the site of the old original flour mills. The machinery and appliances (22 h.p. gas engine) are of the most improved and labour saving type.

The new premises are now open for business, and we trust that by strict attention to the requirements of the people we may continue to receive the liberal patronage so long bestowed upon us.

No effort will be spared to give customers every satisfaction in the supply of first class quality goods, and delivery of same at most reasonable rates.

Call and inspect our new premises and our up-to-date machinery, which cannot be surpassed in Melbourne or Suburbs.

Estate Agents

TOWN HALL ESTATE AGENCY.
W. Freebairn & Co.
(Sworn Valuer),
HOUSE & LAND
Agents,
HIGH ST., NORTHCOTE.
Houses for Sale—small deposit; balance as rent.
Rents Collected. Insurances Effected.
Loans Negotiated.
Commissions executed.
Valuations made. Auction Sales arranged.
Agents for the Manchester Fire Assurance

Membrey & Deane
(J. G. Membrey—J. V. Deane),
Estate, Financial & Insurance Agents,
Accountants, &c.,
HAVE much pleasure in informing the general public they have commenced business at York Buildings, 43 Queen St., Melbourne.
Mr Membrey has had a lengthened experience as a municipal valuer and is also a sworn valuer under the Transfer of Land Act.
Mr. Deane has had over 17 years' experience with two leading city firms of solicitors.
Fire and Life Insurance a speciality.
Large and small sums of trust monies to lend. Loans negotiated on usual terms.
All business placed in the hands of the above firm will receive prompt attention.

NORTHCOTE and PRESTON
Auction & Estate Agency.
GORDON GARRETT & CO.
600 HIGH ST., UPPER NORTHCOTE
(Tram Terminus),
Agents for The Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society, and the South British Fire and Marine Insurance Co., of N.Z.

Nurse Phillips,
CERTIFICATED MIDWIFE,
HAS Vacancies for Ladies during Accouchment. Fees, £3 3/. Every home comfort, doctor if required. Patients admitted any hour.
Outdoor cases attended. Fee, £1.
"St. Heliers,"
Merri St., Northcote (near P.O.)

Private Hospital,
22 HIGH ST., NORTHCOTE SOUTH
(3 doors from Walker St).
ALL Patients carefully treated. Outside Cases visited. Doctor if desired.
Midwifery and Surgical.
MRS. SPARROW,
Women's Hospital, Melbourne.
Reg. R.V.T.N.A. Terms Moderate.

Russell's Suits
Have a Distinctive Style.
EVERY GARMENT CUT and FITTED by MR. RUSSELL PERSONALLY.
New Goods. New Designs.
Our INDIGO TWILL SAC SUITS at 75/- and 80/- ARE VALUE for MONEY.
CROMWELL BUILDINGS, 366A BOURKE ST., MELB.
Tel. 4169. Bike Knickers are a Speciality.

HOWSE BROS.
BUTCHERS,
PLENTY ROAD, SOUTH PRESTON,
will sell
PRIMEST QUALITY MEAT
at
GREATLY REDUCED PRICES.

FOR
FRESH FRUIT
and
VEGETABLES
GO TO
J. H. MICAH,
Corner PLENTY RD. and BELL ST., SOUTH PRESTON.
He guarantees to satisfy you, both as to price and quality—so kindly send your orders along.
Johnson's Cele rated Lunch and Fruit and Almond Cakes kept in stock.

FARMERS AND GRAZIERS
Of Preston & Epping shires.
PLEASE NOTE!
——THAT——
T. HERLEY & CO.,
Woolscourers, &c.,
Oakover Rd., South Preston,
ARE CASH BUYERS OF
WOOL AND SKINS.
Highest Price Paid No Commissions Charged.
Write or Call if you have Anything to Sell—*it will pay you.*
T. HERLEY & CO., South Preston.

Good Printing Pays.
Effective Advertising ditto.

Tailors

INCE BROS.
Clothes do not make the man, perhaps,
But if he's poor in dress,
The world will sure to notice it,
And somehow love him less.
WE GUARANTEE TO PLEASE YOU In Every Detail.
Call and I spect our £3 3/- Suitings.
174 SWANSTON ST., MELBOURNE.

IF YOU are are looking for a really good stylish Suit, write at once to
"OUR TAILORS,"
VEREY & CROSS,
242 Smith St., Collingwood,
Where you get a fashionably-cut and serviceable Suit at bed-rock prices. Every article made on the premises by experienced workmen and under personal supervision.
Country orders attended to with utmost despatch.
Don't forget the only address—
"Our Tailors,"
VEREY & CROSS,
242 SMITH ST., COLLINGWOOD.

Tailor and Outfitter,
PLENTY ROAD and GARNET ST.
SOUTH PRESTON.
ARCH. WILKINSON
Has opened the above premises with a first-class Stock of Woollens and Mercery.
SUITS to ORDER.
Hats, Shirts, Ties, Hosiery, in great variety.
Ladies' Tailoring a Speciality.

Established 20 years.
W. FIRTH
GENERAL DRAPER,
344 SMITH STREET,
COLLINGWOOD
(Below Johnston St).

Announcements

W. T. ROWE,
(Over 17 years with F. Yann, also large English experience),
COACHBUILDER, WHEELWRIGHT, and GENERAL BLACKSMITH,
Corner of HIGH and DUNDAS STS., UPPER NORTHCOTE
(opposite Tram Terminus, Preston).
Buggies, Jinkers, Waggons, Drays, and Carts of every description built on the most reasonable terms.
Repairs Promptly Executed.
Vehicles Bought, Sold, and Exchanged.
Horses Carefully Shod, called for and and Returned.
Best Materials Used. All Work Guaranteed.

J. McCarthy, Jun.,
PRACTICAL FARRIER
corner of
BEAVER'S ROAD and HIGH STREET, NORTHCOTE,
solicits a share of patronage.
Horses Carefully Shod and Ailments of the Foot scientifically treated.
Hunters', Trotters' and Racing Plates a Speciality.

J. A. Kreitling,
FARRIER AND GENERAL BLACKSMITH,
DESIRES to notify the residents of Thomastown and surrounding district that he has started business on the Main Road, Thomastown.
All kinds of Farming Machinery and Implements Repaired.
Best Workmanship at Moderate Prices.

IF YOUR
WATCH
DOES NOT KEEP TIME
Take It to
GEO. H. ARMFIELD,
128 SMITH STREET, COLLINGWOOD
(next to Foy & Gibson's).
Satisfaction Guaranteed.
SPECTACLES to SUIT ALL SIGHTS.

Plumbers.

PUBLIC NOTICE.
J. DENYER.
LICENSED PLUMBER & GASFITTER, TINSMITH & IRONWORKER,
Next Wesleyan Schoolroom,
232 HIGH STREET, NORTHCOTE.
Water Meters Fixed and Repaired.
Gas and Water Laid On
Estimates Given for General Repairs.

To Landlords, Householders, and Builders.
Edwards & Howard,
Licensed
PLUMBERS, GASFITTERS,
Mechanical and Electric Bell Hangers, Steam, Hot, and Cold Water Engineers and Sanitary Plumbers,
Guarantee All Work for Twelve Months.
Gas & Water laid on. Estimates submitted Work promptly executed.
Corner High and Clarke Streets, NORTHCOTE.

Does Your
WATER-PIPE LEAK
GAS-PIPE LEAK!
OOF LEAK?
S. McDOUGALL,
LICENSED PLUMBER,
Next Railway,
NORMANBY AVENUE,
NORTHCOTE,
WILL SET MATTERS RIGHT——
Promptly—Reli bly—Cheaply.
Water Meters Fixed. Gas & Water laid on