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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FIFTY-TWO STORIES FOR GIRLS ***



THE KING'S TRAGEDY. [See p. 434.]

FIFTY-TWO STORIES FOR GIRLS

Edited by
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SCHOOL AND HOME.

GLORIA DENE'S SCHOOLFELLOWS.

BY NORA RYEMAN.

I.—NARDA: THE NIGHTINGALE.

I.

"Here you are, miss," said the red-faced cabby, putting his head in at the cab window, "this is Miss Melford's school."

It was a large, many windowed, white house on Hertford Green, in sight of the famous spires of Silverbridge, and was for some six months to be both home and school to me, Gloria Dene.

I was late in my arrival, and I was tired, for I had come all the way from Erlingham in the heart of Norfolk, and moreover, I was hungry, and just a little homesick, and already wanted to return to the old homestead and to Uncle Gervase and Aunt Ducie, who had taken the place of my parents.

The cabman gave a loud rat-a-tat with the lion-headed knocker, and in due course a rosy-faced servant maid opened the door and ushered me in.

Then she preceded me through a broad flagged hall, lit by crimson lamps. And as I went I heard a

sweet and thrilling voice singing,

"Home, home, sweet, sweet home,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home."

The words naturally appealed to me, and I exclaimed:

"How lovely! Who is singing?" only to be told that it was Mamselle Narda, the music mistress.

I thought of the nightingale which sang in our rose bush on summer nights at home, and found myself wondering what Mamselle was like.

The next day I saw her—Bernarda Torres; she was a brown beauty, with dark rippling hair, soft dark eyes, and a richly soft complexion, which put one in mind of a ripe peach on a southern wall.

She was of Spanish extraction, her father (a fruit merchant) hailing from Granada, her mother from Seville. Narda's path had been strewn with roses, until a bank failure interrupted a life of happiness, and then sorrows had come in battalions. Mamselle had really turned her silver notes into silver coins for the sake of "Home, Sweet Home."

This love of home it was which united Narda and myself. She told me all about the house at home, about her brother, Carlos, and his pictures, and *maman*, who made point lace, and Olla Podrida, and little Nita, who was *douce et belle*. And I, in my turn, told her of the thatched homestead near the Broads, of the bay and mulberry trees, of Aunt Ducie's sweet kind face, and Uncle Gervase's early silvered hair.

And she called me "little sister," and promised to spend her next vacation where the heron fishes and the robin pipes in fair and fresh East Anglia.

But one May morning, when the lilacs in our playground were full of sweet-scented, purple plumes, a bolt fell from the blue. A letter came to Narda telling her of her mother's failing health, her father's apathy, her brother's despair.

"It is enough," said Mamselle, "I see my duty! An impresario once told me that my destiny was to sing in public. I will do it for 'Home, Sweet Home,' I will be La Narda the singer, instead of Miss Melford's Mamselle. God who helps the blind bird build its nest will help me to save mine."

II.

There had been the first fall of the snow, and "ye Antiente Citie" looked like some town in dreamland, or in fairyland, as Miss Melford's boarders (myself amongst the number) went through its streets and wynds to the ballad concert (in aid of Crumblebolme's Charity), at which Mamselle, then La Narda, the *cantatrice*, was announced to sing. We were naturally much excited; it seemed, as Ivy Davis remarked, almost as though we were all going to sing in public.

We had front seats, quite near the tapestried platform from whence we took note of the audience.

"Look, look!" whispered Milly Reed eagerly. "The Countess of Jesmond, and the house-party at Coss have come to hear *our* Mamselle. That dark, handsome man next the countess is Count Mirloff, the Russian poet. Just think I——"

What more Milly would have said I really cannot say, for just then there was a soft clapping of hands, and La Narda came down the crimson steps of the Justice Room, and advanced to the footlights.

"She's like a fairy queen! She's just too lovely!" said the irrepressible Ivy. And though Miss Melford shook her head, I am sure she also was of the same opinion, and was proud of my dear brown nightingale.

The *petite* figure was robed in white silk, trimmed with frosted leaves and pink roses, and wore a garland of the same on her dark bright head.

"Tell me, thou bonnie bird,
When shall I marry me?
When three braw gentlemen
Churchward shall carry ye,"

sang the sweet full voice, and we listened entranced. The next song was "Robin Adair."

Then came an encore, and as Narda acknowledged it, an accident occurred which (as the newspapers say) might have had a fatal termination.

A flounce of the singer's dress touched the footlights, and the flame began to creep upwards like a snake of fire.

Narda glanced downward, drew back, and was about to try to crush it out with her hands, when in less time than it takes to tell it, the Russian gentleman sprang forward, wrapped his fur-lined coat about her, and extinguished the flame.

The poet had saved the nightingale, and Miss Melford's romantic girls unanimously resolved "that he ought to marry her."

III.

And he did shortly after. Our some time music-teacher who was good enough for any position became a *grande dame* with a mansion in St. Petersburg, and a country house in Livania. She went to balls at the Winter Palace, and was present at all the court ceremonies.

Yet was she still our Narda, she sent us girls presents of Viennese bonbons and French fruit, bought brother Carlo's paintings, sent *petite* Nita as a boarder to Miss Melford's, and studied under a great *maestro*.

When a wee birdie came into the Russian nest she named it Endora Gloria, and her happiness and my pride were complete.

Then came a great—a terrible blow. The count, whose opinions were liberal, was accused of being implicated in a revolutionary rising. He was cast into prison, and sent to the silver mines to work in the long underground passages for twenty years.

Ivy Davis, who was very romantic, was grievously disappointed because the countess returned to her profession instead of sharing her husband's exile. But there came a day and an hour when she honoured as well as loved the *cantatrice*; for she with Heaven's help freed the count, and obtained his pardon from the Czar—she herself shall tell you how she gained it.

Read the letter she sent to me:—

"Gloria, Alexis is free; he is nursing Endora as I write.

"When the officers took him from me I felt half mad, and knew not where to go.

"One morning as I knelt by my little one's white bed an inspiration came; over the mantel was a picture of 'The Good Shepherd,' and I clasped my hands, and cried aloud:

"'O bon Pasteur, help me to free Thy sheep.'

"And lo, a voice seemed to answer: 'Daughter, use the talent that you have.'

"I rose from my knees knowing what course to pursue. I sought new opportunities for the display of my one talent, I was more than successful, I became Narda the prima donna, and won golden guineas and opinions.

"At last came my opportunity. I was to sing at Bayreuth in Wagner's glorious opera, I was to sing the Swan Song, and the Czar was to be present.

"The house was crowded, there was row upon row, tier after tier of faces, but I saw one only—that of the Czar in his box.

"I stood there before the footlights in shining white, and sang my song.

"The heavenly music rose and fell, died away and rose again, and I sang as I had never done before. I sang for home, love, and child.

"When the curtain fell the Czar sent for me and complimented me graciously, offering me a diamond ring which I gratefully refused.

"'Sire,' I said, 'I ask for a gift more costly still.'

"'Is it,' he asked, 'a necklace?'

"'No, sire, it is my husband's pardon. Give my little daughter her father back.'

"He frowned, hesitated, then said that he would inquire into the matter.

"Gloria, he did, God be praised! The evidence was sifted, much of it was found to be false. The pardon was made out. Your nightingale had sung with her breast against a thorn, 'her song had been a prayer which Heaven itself had heard.'"

II—ESTELLA: THE HEIRESS.

Her Christian name Estella Marie, her starry eyes and pale, earnest face, and her tall, lissom figure were the only beautiful things about Estella Keed. Everything else, dress, home, appointments, were exceeding plain. For her grandfather in whose house she lived was, though reputedly wealthy, a miserly man.

He lived in a large and antique house, with hooded windows, in Mercer's Lane, and was a dealer in antiques and curios. And his popular sobriquet was Simon the Saver (Anglicè, miser).

Stella was the only child of his only son, a clever musician, who had allied himself with a troupe of wandering minstrels, and married a Spaniard attached to the company, and who, when he followed his wife into the silent land, bequeathed his little girl to his father, beseeching him to

overlook the estrangement of years, and befriend the orphan child. She inherited her name Estella from her Spanish mother, but they called her Molly in her new home—it was part of her discipline.

Simon Keed had accepted, and fulfilled the trust in his own peculiar way. That is to say, he had sheltered, fed, and clothed Estella, and after some years' primary instruction in a elementary school, had sent her to Miss Melford's to complete her studies.

Farther than this he had not gone, for she was totally without a proper outfit. In summer her patched and faded print frocks presented a pathetic contrast to the pink and blue cambrics, and floral muslins, of the other girls; and in winter, when velvets and furs were in evidence, the contrast made by her coarse plain serge, and untrimmed cape of Irish frieze, was quite as strong; indeed, her plainness was more than Quakerish, it was Spartan, she was totally destitute of the knicknacks so dear to the girlish heart, and though she had grown used to looking at grapes like Reynard in the fable, I am sure she often felt the sting of her grandfather's needless, almost cruel, economy. This was evidenced by what was ever after spoken of by us girls as the garden-party episode.

Near the old city was a quaint and pretty village, one famed in local history as having in "teacup," Georgian, times been honoured by a visit by Mrs. Hannah More, who described it as Arcadian.

It had a fine, well-timbered park, full of green hollows in which grew the "rath primrose," and which harboured a large, Jacobean mansion, occupied, at the period of this story, by Dr. Tempest as a Boys' Preparatory School, and as Mrs. Tempest was an old friend of Miss Melford's, the senior pupils (both boarders and day scholars) were always invited to their annual garden- or breaking-up party, which was held in the lovely park.

Stella, as one of the senior girls, was duly invited; but no one deemed that she would accept the invitation, because her grandfather had been heard to say that education was one thing, and frivolity another.

"I suppose *you* won't go to the party," said impulsive Ivy Davis, and Estella had answered with a darkened face:

"I cannot say. When I'm not here I have to stay in that gloomy old house, like a mouse in its hole. But if I can go anyhow, Ivy, I shall, you may depend upon *that*."

Then we heard no more about the matter until the eventful day, when, to our surprise, Estella presented herself with the other day scholars, in readiness to go.

"Look, Gloria, look," said Ivy, in a loud whisper, as we filed through the hall, "Stella's actually managed to come, and to make herself presentable. *However* did she do it?"

"Hush," I whispered back, but, all the same, I also marvelled at the girl's appearance.

Her heliotrope and white muslin skirt was somewhat faded, it was true, but still, it was good material, and was pretty. The same could be said of her cream blouse. The marvel and the mystery lay in hat, necklet, and shoes.

The hat was of burnt straw, broad brimmed, low crowned, and of the previous summer's fashion. It was simply trimmed with a garland or band of dull black silk, and large choux of the same, all of which might have been fresher; but in front was an antique brooch, or buckle, of pale pink coral and gold, which was at once beautiful and curiously inconsistent with the rest of the costume. Round Estella's throat was a lovely gold and coral necklace, and her small, worn shoes boasted coral and gold buckles. She had got a coral set from somewhere, where and how we all wondered.

Even Miss Melford was astonished and impressed by Estella's unwonted splendour, for touching the necklet, I overheard her say:

"Very pretty, my dear! Your grandfather, I presume, gave you the set? Very kind of him!"

Stella, with a flushed face, replied:

"He did not give it, ma'am," and the matter dropped.

Miss Melford and I presumed that Mr. Keed had simply lent his grand-daughter the articles—which likely enough belonged to his stock of antiquities—for the day.

It was a delightful fête—one of those bright and happy days which are shining milestones along the road of life. The peacocks strutted about on the terrace and made us laugh when they spread out their tails. We ate strawberries and cream under the elms, played all kinds of outdoor games on the greensward, and when we were tired rested in the cool, pot-pourri scented parlours.

I am of opinion that Estella enjoyed herself as much as any of us, though she became strangely quiet and downcast on our way home. But, as Ivy truly remarked, it was not to be wondered at; the fairy palace was left behind, and the rôle of Cinderella awaited her on the morrow.

Upon the day succeeding the party, we broke up. I went home to spend the vacation with my uncle and aunt, and when I returned to school I found as usual, on reassembling, that there were a few vacant places, amongst them that of Estella Keed. I wondered how this was, though I did not presume to question Miss Melford on the subject; but one autumn morning, when passing

through Mercer's Lane, I came across Estella. She looked shabby and disconsolate, in her faded gown and worn headgear, and I asked her if she had been unwell.

"Oh dear no," was the response, "only very dull. I never go anywhere, or see any one—how can I help being so? I am only Molly now. No one calls me by my beautiful mother's name, Estella. I want to learn to be a typewriter, or something, and go and live in a big city, but grandpa says I must wait, and then he'll see about it! I detest this horrid lane!" she added passionately.

I looked down the long, mediæval street, with its gabled houses, and then at the old church tower (round which the birds were circling in the distance), and replied with truth that it was picturesque, and carried one back into the storied past.

"I am tired of the past—it's all past at ours—the jewels have been worn by dead women, the old china, and bric-à-brac, has stood in empty houses! It's all of the dead and gone. So is the house, all the rooms are old. I should like to live in a new house."

"Perhaps you want a change?" I said. "Why don't you come back to school?"

She shook her head, and glanced away from me—up at the old Gothic church tower, and then said hurriedly:

"I must hurry on now, Gloria—I am wanted—at home."

One December evening not long after, during Miss Melford's hour with us, at recreation, she said:

"Young ladies, you will be pleased to hear that your old schoolmate, Estella Keed, returns to us to-morrow."

On the morrow Estella came, but how different was she from the old and the former Estella!

She wore a suitable and becoming costume of royal blue, and was a beautiful and pleasant looking girl! Her own natural graces had their own proper setting. It seemed indeed as if all things had become new to her, as if she lived and breathed in a fresher and fairer world than of yore!

Perhaps because I had been sympathetic in the hour of trouble, she attached herself to me, and one day, during recess, she told me why she had been temporarily withdrawn from school.

"Gloria," she said, "grandfather never gave me his permission to go to the garden-party—indeed, I never asked for it, for I was quite sure that he would not give it.

"But I meant to go all the same, and persuaded Mrs. Mansfield, the housekeeper, to help me. She it was who altered and did up an old gown of mother's for me to wear. But without the coral set I should not have been able to go; for, as you know, I had no adornments. I'd often seen them when on sale and wished for them; but I knew that they would neither be given nor lent for the party.

"Then Fate, as it seemed, befriended me; my grandfather had to go to London about some curios on the date fixed for the party, and I determined to borrow the set and make myself look presentable. All I had to do was to go to the window and take them out of their satin-lined case.

"I hoped to replace them before my grandfather returned from town, but when I got home from the fête I found that he had returned by an earlier and quicker train than he himself had expected to. He looked at me from head to foot, then touched the necklace and the clasp, and demanded of me sternly where I had been.

"I was tongue-tied for a few moments, and then I blurted out the truth:

"'Grandfather,' I said, 'I've been to Dr. Tempest's garden-party as one of Miss Melford's senior girls, and as I didn't want to be different from the other girls I borrowed the coral set for the day. They are not hurt in the least.'

"The room seemed going round with me as I spoke, even the dutch cheese on the supper table seemed to be bobbing up and down.

"At last my grandfather spoke:

"'Take the set off and give them to me,' he said shortly.

"I yielded up the treasures with trembling hands, and when I had done so he told me I should not return to school, and then added:

"'Go to your room and don't let me hear of this affair again. I fear you are as fond of finery as your mother was.'

"You know the rest. I did not return to Miss Melford's, and I should not have been here now but for Dr. Saunders. Soon after the garden-party my grandfather was taken ill, and the doctor had to be called in. I think he must have taken pity on me, and must have spoken to my grandfather about me. Anyhow, my grandfather called me to his bedside one day, and told me that he knew that he could not live many years longer, and that all he wanted was to leave me able—after he was gone—to live a good and useful life without want, and that if he had been too saving in the past, it was all that my future should be provided for. There was a strange tenderness in his voice. Strange at least it seemed to me, for I had never heard it there before, and I put my face

down upon the pillow beside him and cried. He took my hand in his, and the silence was more full of hope and promise than any words of either could have been. I waited upon him after that, and he seemed to like to have me about him, and when he got better he told me that he wished me to return to school and to make the best use of my opportunities while I had them. He told me that he had decided to make me an allowance for dress, and that he hoped that I should so use it as to give him proof before he died that I could be trusted to deal wisely with all that he might have to leave."

Estella remained at school until I left, and the last time I saw her there she was wearing the red coral set which had estranged her from her grandfather as a token of reconciliation; and she told me that the old man's hands trembled in giving them to her, even more than hers did in giving them up, as he said to her with tears in his eyes and voice:—

"All that I have is thine."

III.—MAURA: THE MUNIFICENT.

I.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.

Maura was the most popular girl in the school. She would have been envied if she had not been so much loved. The reason was that she was amiable as well as pretty, she had plenty of pocket-money, and was generous to a fault. If a girl had lost, or mislaid, her gloves, Maura would instantly say, "Oh, don't make a fuss, go to my glove-box and take a pair." Or if a pupil's stock of pin-money ran out before the end of the quarter, she would slip a few shillings into her hand, merrily whispering:

"For every evil under the sun,
There's either a remedy, or there's none;
I've found one."

Maura was heiress of Whichello-Towers, in the north, with the broad lands appertaining. She was an orphan, her nearest relative being her uncle, a banker, who was her guardian, and somewhat anxious about his charge. So anxious indeed that he sometimes curtailed her allowance, in order to teach her prudence.

"Maura, my dear, waste is wicked even in the wealthy; you need wisdom as well as wealth," said Miss Melford to her one day. And indeed she did, for sometimes the articles she bought for others were singularly extravagant and inappropriate.

When Selina, the rosy-cheeked cook, was married from the school, the teachers and pupils naturally gave her wedding presents. My gift took the form of a teapot, Margot's of a dozen of fine linen handkerchiefs, and the others (with the exception of Maura) of things useful to a country gardener's wife.

Maura bought a dress of heliotrope silk, elaborately trimmed with white lace, and as the bride truly observed, "Fit for a princess."

But the heiress of Whichello had a lodging in all our hearts, and when I, one midwinter morning, saw her distraught with a troubled look in her soft brown eyes, I was grieved, and begged her to confide in me.

"If I do, you cannot help me, Gloria," said Maura. "The fact is, I'm short of money."

"Not an unusual state of affairs," rose to my lips, but the words changed as I uttered them.

"Poor Maura! Surely *you* have a little left?"

"Only these," and she drew out two shillings.

"Well, you must draw on my little bank, until your uncle sends your next remittance," was my reply.

"It isn't any use. Gloria, you are nice, and sweet, but *your* money would only be a drop in the ocean! I'm not to have any money all next quarter. This letter came this morning. Read it."

I did. It was a letter from Maura's guardian, who informed her that he desired to give her an object lesson in thrift, and, therefore, would hold her next remittance—which had already been anticipated—over. He also intimated that any applications to him would be useless.

"Well, things might be worse," was my comment, as I returned the letter. "You must let *me* be your banker and must economise, and be prudent till the next cheque arrives."

"Yes, I will—but—"

"But what, Maura?"

"I'm in debt—dreadfully in debt. See."

With this she drew some papers from her pocket, and handed them to me.

One by one I looked them over. The first was a coal dealer's bill for a fairly large load of coal.

"*That*," said Maura, "was for old Mrs. Grant, in Black-Cross Buildings. She was *so* cold, it made me quite creepy to look at her."

I opened another. This was from a firm of motor-car and cycle dealers, and was the balance due upon a lady's cycle. I was perplexed.

"Why, you said you never intended to cycle," I said, with amazement, "and *now* you have bought this Peerless bicycle!"

"Yes, but it was not for myself," she said, "I gave it to Meg Morrison to ride to and from her work in the City! Trams and 'buses don't run to Kersley, and it was a terrible walk for the poor girl."

"Could not Meg have bought one on the instalment system for herself?"

"Why, Gloria, how mean you are! She has seven brothers and sisters, and four of them are growing boys, with appetites! The butcher and baker claim just all she earns."

I opened the third yellow envelope, and was surprised to see a bill with: To Joseph Greenaway, Furniture Dealer, one child's mahogany cot £1 10s, upon it.

"Maura," I cried, "this is the climax. Why ever did you buy a baby's cot—and how came Mr. Greenaway to trust you? You are only a minor—an infant in law!"

"Oh, do stop," said Maura; "you're like Hermione or Rosalind, or—somebody—who put on a barrister's gown in the play—"

"Portia, I suppose you mean?"

"Yes, Portia. Mr. Greenaway let me have the cot because I once bought a little blue chair from him, for Selina's baby, for which I paid *cash down*."

It is impossible to describe the triumphant manner in which she uttered "cash down," it was as if she had said, *I* paid the national debt.

"Now," she proceeded, "I'll tell you why I bought it—I was one day passing a weaver's house in Revel Lane, when I saw a young woman crying bitterly but silently at the bottom of one of the long entries or passages. 'I fear you are in trouble' I said. 'Is any one ill?'"

"She shook her head. She couldn't speak for a moment, then whispered:

"'Daisie's cot has followed the loom!'"

"I asked her what following the loom meant.

"'O young lady,' she replied, 'the weaver's trade has been mortle bad lately, and last week I sold Daisie's cot for the rent—and when the broker took it up I thought my heart would break; but hearts don't break, missie, they just go on achin'.'"

"Daisie was her only child, and the cot was a carved one, an heirloom in which several generations of the family had slept!

"I had only a florin in my purse, but I gave her that, took her name and address and walked on.

"But the woman haunted me. All the rest of the day I seemed to see her weeping in the long, grey street, and to hear *her* sobbing above the sound of the music in the music-room, and when I woke up in the middle of the night, I thought I would go to Mr. Greenaway the next day, and ask him to let me have a cot, and I'd pay him out of my next quarter's pocket-money. The very next day he sent the crib—'From an unknown friend.' That's all, Gloria! Now, what shall I do?"

"Go and tell Miss Melford all about it," said I. "Come, *now*."

Maura shrank from the ordeal, but in the end I persuaded her to accompany me to the cedar parlour, where the Lady Principal was writing.

A wood fire burned cheerily on the white marble hearth, and the winter sunlight fell brightly on the flower-stand full of flowers—amidst which the piping bullfinch, Puffball, hopped about.

Miss Melford, with her satin-brown hair, and golden-brown silk dress, was a pleasant figure to look upon as she put down her pen, and said sweetly:

"Well, girls, what is it?"

Maura drew back and was silent, but I was spokeswoman for her; and when I concluded my story there was silence for a few moments.

Then Miss Melford rose, and putting an arm round Maura's shoulders, gravely, but at the same time tenderly, in her own sweet way, pointed out the moral of the situation, and then added:

"You shall accompany me to see the people who have generously (if unwisely) allowed you to have the goods, and I will explain matters, and request them to wait."

Maura was a quiet, subdued girl for a time after this, but a few days later she knocked timidly at

Miss Melford's door. Miss Melford was alone, and bade her enter. Once in the room Maura hesitated, and then said:

"Please, Miss Melford, may I ask a favour?"

"Certainly, my dear! What is it?"

"If I can find any right and honourable way of earning the money to pay the bills with, may I do so?"

"Assuredly," said Miss Melford, "if you will submit your plan to my approval; but, Maura, I am afraid you will find it is harder to earn money than you think."

"Oh yes, I know money is hard to get, and very, very easy to spend. What a queer world it is!" was Maura's comment, as she left the room.

II. THE BAL MASQUÉ.

There was to be a Children's Fancy Dress Ball—a Bal Masqué, to which all Miss Melford's senior pupils were going, and little else was talked of weeks before the great event was due!

Margot was to go as Evangeline, and I was to be Priscilla the Puritan Maiden, but none of us knew in what character Maura Merle was to appear. It was kept secret.

Knowing the state of her finances, both Miss Melford and the girls offered to provide her costume, but she gratefully and firmly rejected both proposals, saying that she had made arrangements for a dress, and that it would be a surprise.

And indeed it was, for when we all assembled in the white drawing-room, in readiness for our escort to the Town Hall, Maura was what newspapers style "the cynosure of all eyes."

She wore a frock of pale blue silk! and all over it in golden letters were the words: "Sweets from Fairyland."

Her waving golden hair was adorned by a small, white satin, Trigon hat, ornamented with a blue band, on which were the words: "Fairy Queen."

From her waist depended an elaborate bonbonnière, her sash was dotted all over with imitation confections of various kinds, her blue satin shoes had rosettes of tiny bonbons, and her domino suggested chocolate cream.

There were of course loud exclamations of—"What does this mean, Maura?"

"Why, you are Fairy Queen, like the Fairyland Confectioner's Company's advertisements!" but all Maura said was:

"Girls, Miss Melford knows all about it, and approves."

At this juncture, Miss Melford's voice was heard saying: "Follow me, my dears," and we all filed out of the room, and down the stairs to the carriages in waiting. The Town Hall was beautifully decorated, and the costumes were delightful. There were cavaliers, sweeps, princesses, and beggar-maids, but no one attracted more notice than Fairy Queen, who instead of dancing glided about amongst the company, offering fondants and caramels from her big bonbonnière.

The young guests laughed as they ate the sweetmeats, and rallied her upon the character she had chosen.

"Why have you left Fairyland?" asked a musketeer, and Fairy Queen replied:

"Because I want you all to have fairy fare."

"Won't you dance, Fairy Queen?" asked Bonnie Prince Charlie, persuasively, but Fairy Queen curtsied, and answered:

"I pray you excuse me, I'm on duty for the Company in Wayverne Square."

I guessed that there was something behind all this, and the sequel proved my conjecture true.

For when the Bal Masqué was a golden memory, Maura came to me with a little bundle of receipted bills in her hand, saying:

"Look, Gloria, "Fairy Queen" paid *these*. I was with Ivy in a confectioner's one day when the mistress told us that a member of the newly started firm of sweetmeat manufacturers, who traded as the Fairyland Company, had said that he wished *he* had a daughter who could go to the ball as Fairy Queen, and exploit his goods.

"I thought to myself: 'Well, Maura Merle could do it,' and I went to the Company and offered to undertake the duty, subject, of course, to Miss Melford's permission.

"They said they would give me a handsome sum, and provide the dress, and I wrote to Uncle Felix, and begged him to let me have his sanction.

"His answer was: 'The money will be honestly earned, earn it.'

"So I did! The Company were much pleased with me, and here are the receipted bills. I need hardly tell you how much I enjoyed being what a newsboy in the street called me, 'The Little Chocolate Girl!'"

IV.—MARGOT: THE MARTYR.

I.

AT SCHOOL.

"Mademoiselle Margot, Professor Revere's daughter, who has come to share your English studies, girls," said Miss Melford, presenting a tall, clear-complexioned, sweet-faced girl one May morning on the opening of school.

The new-comer bowed gracefully, and then took a vacant seat next to me, and we all took good-natured notice of her, for her black frock was worn for her newly lost mother, and her father, our popular French master, was an exile, who for a supposed political offence had forfeited his estate, near La Ville Sonnante, as the old city of Avignon is often called. Margot would have been *une grande demoiselle* in her own country had not monsieur fallen under the displeasure of a powerful cabinet minister during a change of *régime*, and Miss Melford's girls were of opinion that the position would have suited her, and she the position.

Mademoiselle Margot soon interested us all, not only in herself, but in her antecedents and prospects. She was never tired of talking of her old associations, and that with an enthusiasm that aroused our sympathy and inspired our hopes.

"Picture to yourself," she would say, "Mon Désir on a summer's day, the lawns spreading out their lovely carpet for the feet, the trees waving their glorious foliage overhead, the birds singing in the branches, the bees humming in the parterre, and the water plashing in the fountains. *Maman* loved it, as I did, and the country people loved us as we loved them. *Maman* used to say, 'A little sunshine, a little love, a little self-denial, that is life.' Even had we been poor there, walked instead of ridden, ate brown bread in lieu of white, we should have been amongst our own people. But now——"

Then we would all crowd round her and spin romances about the Prince Charming who would come her way, and present her with Mon Désir, with all its dear delights, and with it—his own hand.

Margot's failing was a too sensitive pride. She was proud both of and for the professor. She could not forget that he was, as she would say, *un grand gentilhomme*, that his ancestors had fought with Bayard and Turenne, had been gentlemen-in-waiting to kings, had wedded women who were ladies of the court.

I discovered this slight fault of my darling's on one occasion in this way: as we girls were going our usual noonday walk, we came to a large, red-brick house, standing alone in its own grounds; it was not a cottage of gentility, but a place which an estate agent would have described as a desirable mansion. Everything about it, mutely, but eloquently, said money. Big glass-houses, big coach-houses, big plate glass windows, spacious gardens, trim lawns, etc., etc., etc.

As the school filed past, an elaborate barouche drew up to the iron gateway, and a lady, who was about entering it, stared at our party, and then looked keenly at Margot. She was a pretty woman, blonde, with a mass of fluffy, honey-coloured hair, and a cold, pale blue pair of eyes. Her costume was of smooth, blue-grey cloth, the flowing cloak lined with ermine, and her hat a marvel of millinery; indeed, she presented a striking contrast to the professor's daughter in her plain, neat black coat and frock, and small toque, with its trimming of white narcissi, and I cannot say that I was favourably impressed by the unknown, she was far too cold and purse-proud looking to please me.

After a close and none too polite scrutiny, the lady bowed, approached, and held out her hand.

"Good-morning, Miss Revere," she said graciously, yet with more than a suspicion of patronage, "I trust the professor is well," and without waiting for an answer, "and your mother? We have been so busy entertaining, that I have been quite unable to call, or send! However, tell her that I am going to send for her to Bellevue, the very *first* day I'm alone, the *very first!*"

We two girls were alone (the rest having gone on with Fräulein Schwartz), and there was silence for a moment, during which the lady turned toward her well-appointed carriage; then Margot spoke, with some asperity, though I heard the tears in her silvery voice.

"Mrs. Seawood," she said, "there is no more need to trouble; *maman* has gone where no one will be ashamed of her because she was poor."

The lady turned a little pale, and expressed herself as shocked, and then, having offered some cold condolences, spoke to the coachman; and as we passed on we heard the quick rattle of the horses' hoofs, as the barouche rolled down the long drive.

There are times when silence is golden, and *this* was one! I did not speak until we came to a five-barred gate, on the topmost rung of which Margot laid her arms, bent her head, and sobbed like

a little child.

I put my arm round her neck to comfort her.

"Margot, *chérie*," I whispered, "tell me why you weep."

It appeared that the professor had been used to teach the little delicate son of the purse-proud lady, and that he had taken great interest in the little fellow both on account of his backwardness and frail health.

"After he died," said Margot, "his mother seemed grateful for these small kindnesses, and called upon us. Sometimes she sent the carriage for *maman* to spend a few hours at Bellevue, but always when the weather was unpleasant. Then, you see, I used to go to the Seawoods for my mother, take bouquets of violets, Easter eggs, and other small complimentary tokens of regard, and madame would exclaim, 'How sweet!' or 'How lovely!' but always in a patronising manner. I only told the 'How sweet!' and 'How beautiful!' to mother, because *she* used to look wistfully at me, and say how glad she was that I had some English friends.

"Once, I remember, I was passing Bellevue at night with papa; it was a cold, January evening, with snow falling, and we shivered a little. They were giving a grand party, the house was lit up like an enchanted palace, and papa (who is often as sweetly simple as Don Quixote) said:

"I cannot understand why your friends have overlooked you, *petite*, you could have worn the little grey frock with blue trimmings, eh?"

"They never understood how hollow a friendship it was. They could not realise that others could display a meanness of which they themselves were incapable, and I suppose it was only my own proud heart, less free from the vanity of human weakness than theirs, which made me detect and resent it; and so I had to endure the misery of this proud patronage and let my parents think I was enjoying the friendship of love. To be proud and dependent, Gloria, is to be poor indeed. But I must conquer my pride, if only that I may conquer my poverty, and as Miss Melford told us at scripture this morning, he that conquers his own proud heart is greater than he that taketh a city."

Then she linked her arm in mine, and said:

"The Good God has allowed me to become poor, but he has given me *one* talent, I can paint, and if only for papa's sake I must overcome evil with good and try to win a victory over myself."

II.

THE PALM-BEARERS.

Miss Melford, and a chosen party of the senior girls (of whom I was one), stood in our beautiful Art Gallery attentively studying a water colour on the line. The picture was numbered 379 in the catalogue, was called "Palm-Bearers," and was painted by Miss Margot Revere! *Our Margot*, the girl who had been my classmate, whom I had loved as a sister. The scene portrayed was a procession of early Christians entering an Eastern city at Eastertide. There were matrons and maids, golden-haired children, and white-haired men, all bearing green palm branches, under an intense, cerulean sky.

"Well done, Margot," said Miss Melford softly, with a suspicious dimness in her eyes, and there was a general chorus of approval from all beholders.

Margot, who was much older than I, had left school long since, had studied, worked, copied in the great Art Galleries, exhibited, and sold her works.

She was then in Rome with her father, who had become blind, and I had at that moment a long letter from her in my bag, as I stood looking at her picture. In one passage of it she had written: "the girl with the crown of white roses in my last painting is my little Gloria, my girl comrade, who consoled me when I was sad, who watched next my pillow when I was sick, and when sad memories made me cry at night crept to me through the long dormitory and knelt beside me, like a white-robed ministering angel. Apropos of palms, mama was a palm-bearer; I must win one before I look on her dear, dear face." As I thought on these words, Miss Melford's voice speaking to Gurda broke in on my thoughts.

"Dear, dear, how extremely like to Gloria is that figure in the middle of Margot's painting!"

"Of course, Miss Melford, Margot will have sketched it from her. She was her chum, her soul's sister."

"Her soul's sister!" Those three words went with me through the gallery; into the sculpture room, amidst white marble figures, into the room full of Delia Robbia and majolica ware, everywhere!

Even when we descended the flight of steps, and came into the great white square, I seemed to hear them in the plashing of the fountains.

III.

THE RAIN OF FIRE.

It was August, and rain had fallen on the hot, parched earth.

The bells in the church tower were ringing a muffled peal, and as I listened to the sad, sweet music, I thought of Margot, lonely Margot, who had seen her father laid under the ilex trees, and then gone to visit a distant relative at Château Belair in the West Indies. It was a strange coincidence, but as I thought of her the servant brought in a card, bearing the name, M. Achille Levasseur, beneath which was pencilled:

"Late of Château Belair, and cousin of the late Mademoiselle Margot Revere."

So Margot was dead, had gone to join her loved ones where there are no distinctions between rich and poor.

Stunned, and half incredulous, I told the maid to show him in, and in a few minutes a tall, dark, foreign looking man stood in the bright, flower-scented room which (it being recess), I occupied in Miss Melford's absence.

I rose, bowed, and asked him to be seated, then, with an effort, said:

"M'sieu, I am Gloria, Margot's chum, and chosen sister. Tell *me* about her."

The story was a short one, we had neither of us a desire to dwell upon the details. The island had been subject to the fury rain of a quenchless volcano. Whole villages had been overwhelmed and buried in the burning lava, and hundreds had met with a fiery death. In the midst of the mad confusion, Margot's calm presence and example inspired the strong, reassured the terrified, aided the feeble, and helped many on the way to safety. How many owed their lives to her, her cousin could not say, but that it was at the cost of her own, was only too terribly true. She had helped her cousin's family on to the higher ground, which ensured safety from the boiling lava, only to discover that one little one had been left behind peacefully sleeping in her cot, the little baby who had been christened Gloria at Margot's desire in memory of me. It was a terrible moment to all but Margot, and to her it was the moment of a supreme inspiration. She dashed down the hill before she could be stayed, though the ground shook under her feet, and the burning sea of fiery rain was pouring down the valley below. She reached the house and seized the infant, and started with frenzied speed to ascend the hill again. Her cousin, who had seen to the safety of the others of his family, had now started out to meet her. They saw each other and hurried with all the speed they could to meet. Within touch a terrific explosion deafened them as the father seized his child, and Margot, struck by a boulder belched from the throat of the fierce volcano, sank back into the fiery sea.

As M. Levasseur ceased, there came through the open window the silvery sound of the minster bells. They were playing the lovely air,

Angels ever bright and fair,
Take, O take, me to your care.

It came to me that they had taken Margot in a chariot of fire, and I seemed to see her in an angel throng with a palm branch in her hand.

My favourite trinket is a heart-shaped locket, containing a lock of dark brown hair, intermixed with golden threads. It is both a souvenir, and a mascot; for the hair is from the head of my girl chum Margot.

V.—IRENE: THE SNOW FLOWER.

I.

BEDFELLOWS.

Amongst Miss Melford's intimate friends, when I was a boarder at her school, was a silvery-haired, stately lady, known as Mrs. Dace, who in her early life had been *gouvernante* to the Imperial children at the court of the Czar. Her old friends and pupils wrote to her frequently, and she still took a keen interest in the Slav, and in things Slavonic.

When her Russian friends—the Petrovskys—came to England, they left their youngest child, Irene, as a pupil at Miss Melford's school, to pursue her education while they travelled in Western Europe for a while.

Irene Petrovsky was a pretty little thing, with flaxen hair and clear blue eyes, and we called her the Snow Flower, after that beautiful Siberian plant which blooms only in midwinter. I have never forgotten her first appearance at the school. When Miss Melford led her into the classroom we all looked up at the small figure in its plain white cloth frock trimmed with golden sable, and admired the tiny fair curls which clustered round her white brow. She made a grand court curtsy, and then sat silently, like a wee white flower, in a corner.

We elder pupils were made guardians of the younger ones in Miss Melford's school, and it was my duty as Irene's guardian to take her to rest in the little white nest next to mine in the long dormitory. In the middle of the first night I was disturbed by a faint sobbing near me, and I sat up to listen. The sobs proceeded from the bed of the little Russian girl, and I found she was crying for her elder sister, who, she said, used to take her in her arms and hold her by the hand until

she fell asleep. A happy thought came to me; my white nest was larger than hers. So I bade her creep into it, which she readily did, and nestled up to me, like a trembling, affrighted little bird, falling at last into a calm, sweet sleep.

From that time forward we two were firm friends, and the girls used to call the Little Russ, Gloria's shadow.

She was very grateful, and I in my turn grew to love her dearly; so dearly that when her father, the count, came to take her home, in consequence of the death of her mother, I felt as if I had lost a little sister.

Ever after this our little snow flower was a fragrant memory to me. I often thought of her, and wondered as I watched the white clouds moving across the summer sky, or the silver moon shining in the heavens, whether she too was looking out upon the same fair scene from the other side the sea and thinking of her some time sister of Miss Melford's school.

II. AFTER MANY DAYS.

Some years after I had left the school financial difficulties beset my uncle's affairs. Aunt Ducie died in the midst of them, and Uncle Gervase did not long survive. Our household gods went under the auctioneer's hammer, our beautiful home became the home of strangers, and I went to live in an obscure quarter of a distant town. My means being exceeding small, I took rooms in a small house in a semi-rural suburb, and from thence began to look for work for pen and pencil. I had learned to draw, and had succeeded in one or two small attempts at story telling, and with my pen and pencil for crutches, and with youth and hope on my side, I started out with nervous confidence upon the highway of fame.

Cherry-Tree Avenue was a long, narrow street within a stone's throw of the grim, grey castellated towers of the county gaol, and the weekly tenants who took the small, red-brick houses were continually changing.

Facing us was No. 3, Magdala Terrace, a house which was empty for some weeks, but one April evening a large van full of new furniture drove up to it, followed by a respectable looking man and woman of the artisan class, who soon began to set the house in order. Before sleep had fallen on the shabby street a cab drove up to No. 3, and from it stepped a woman, tall, slight, and closely veiled. I had been to the pillar box to post an answer to an advertisement, and it happened that I passed the door of the newly let house as the cab drew up. Without waiting to be summoned, the trim young woman came out to welcome the new-comer, and said in French:

"Madame, the place is poor, but clean, and quiet, and," lowering her voice, "fitted for observation."

In spite of my own anxieties I wondered who the stranger could be, and why the little house was to be an observatory. Then I remembered the vicinity of the big gaol, and thought that madame might have an interest in one of the black sheep incarcerated there.

Very soon strange rumours began to circulate amongst the dwellers in the avenue. The bright young woman was madame's foster sister; madame herself was of high degree, a countess, or one of even nobler rank, travelling in disguise; the quiet, dark young man, her foster sister's husband, was a woodcarver, who was out of work and only too glad to serve the foreign lady, who out of generous pity had come to stay with them.

I, of course, gave no credence to these seemingly absurd reports, but, all the same, I was aware that there was a mystery at No. 3. The lady was young, beautiful, and distinguished looking, she had dark, pathetic, haunting eyes, which reminded me forcibly of other eyes I had seen, but when and where I could not recall; and though her dresses were dark, they were *chic*, the word Paris was writ plain on all her toques.

Madame made no friends, and it was clear from the first that she desired to be undisturbed, at any rate by her neighbours. Every now and again there were visitors at No 3, but these were strangers, foreign looking visitors, cloaked, swarthy and sombre men who came and went, one of whom I overheard say in French as he flicked the ash from his cigar: "Chut! the rat keeps in his hole, he will not stir."

At Maytime, in the early gloaming, the foreign lady and I met in the narrow street.

We met face to face, and passed each other with a slight bow of recognition; a moment after I heard soft, hurried footfalls, and the strange lady was by my side.

She held out an envelope addressed to me, saying:

"Pardon me, if I mistake not, you dropped this. Is it not so?"

I thanked her, and took the letter, saying:

"It *is* mine, and I should have troubled had I lost it."

This little incident broke down our old-time reserve, and saying:

"I go to-morrow," she placed a bunch of amber roses she was carrying in my hand. I thanked her,

and asked by what name I might remember her?

"As Nadine," she whispered softly. "I need not ask you yours."

The mention of the name electrified me. Here was I bidding farewell to Nadine, whose little sister Irene, our sweet snow flower, I had loved and lost at the old school far away.

Nadine noticed my excitement, and putting her finger to her lips, cautioned me to silence. But I was not to be denied.

"Irene?" I said in a whisper, "Irene, where is Irene?"

"Hush!" she said, taking me by the arm and drawing me in at the open doorway of No. 3. "Speak of it not again. Irene fell a victim to our cruel Russian laws, and lies beside her husband among the snow tombs of Siberia."

The next morning the strange dark house was empty. The woodcarver and his wife, and the beautiful Nadine, had vanished with the shadows of the night.

VI.—NADINE: THE PRINCESS.

I.

WHICHELLO TOWERS.

It was between the lights. I was looking down the dingy street from behind the curtains of my little window at the postman who was working his way slowly from side to side delivering his messages of hope and fear, and was wondering whether I was among those to whom he bore tidings of joy or sorrow. I had few correspondents, and no expectations, and so it was with surprise that I saw him ultimately turn in at our little garden gate and place a letter in our box.

I was not long in breaking the seal, and it was with real delight and surprise that I discovered that it was from my old schoolfellow, the generous and sometimes extravagant Maura. It ran thus:

"WHICHELLO TOWERS,
October 3rd.

"MY DEAR ABSURD LITTLE GLORIA,—

"Why have you hidden away from your friends so long? Was it pride, self-styled dignity? Never mind, I have found you out at last, and I want you to join our house-party here. We have some interesting people with us of whom you can make pencil sketches and pen pictures (they call them cameos or thumbnails, do they not?). Amongst them are the beautiful Princess Milontine, who wrote, 'Over the Steppes,' and the famous Russian General, Loris Trakoff.

"The change will do you good. Name the day and time of your arrival, and I will meet you at the station. There are surprises in store for you, but you must come if you would realise them.

"Your affectionate MAURA."

I put by the missive, and meditated over the pros and cons. My wardrobe would need replenishing, and I had none too much money to spend. I could manage this, however, but there arose another question.

I was a worker—would it do me harm to disport myself in the flowery mead with the butterflies? Should I feel a distaste for the bread earned by labour and pain after the honey placed, effortless, on my plate?

So much for the cons. The pros were these:

Black, being most inexpensive in a smoky town, was my wear, relieved by a few touches of blue. And I should not go as a butterfly, but as a quiet worker in my dark things. I need only buy a new walking costume, and a fresh dinner dress. The costume difficulty was disposed of. Then again, I had been without a day's change for five years; and here was the prospect of one I should enjoy. The pros had the victory, I went.

I arrived at the station in the gloaming, when twilight veiled the everlasting hills, and found two figures waiting on the narrow platform.

One of these had a fresh, fair, bonnie face, framed in hair of a golden brown, and I knew her for Maura Merle, my old schoolfellow, the lady of Whichello Towers. The other was darker, taller, and the very dark blue eyes had a pensive expression, she could have posed as a study for Milton's *Il Penseroso*, and I did not recognise her for an instant, and then I exclaimed: "Not—not 'Stella.'"

"Yes, 'Stella,'" said Maura. Our own beautiful Estella and the miser's heiress came forward and kissed my first surprise away. As she did so I noticed that she was wearing the beautiful coral set

which had wrought the tragedy of her school days.

We had naturally much to say to each other, and as we walked towards Whichello Towers together, Maura said:

"You have worked and suffered, Gloria, since we were last together. You look thoughtful, are graver, and there are violet circles under your eyes, which used to be so merry."

"Yes," I said, "I've had to fight the battle of life for myself since I left school, but it makes the more welcome this reunion with my old schoolfellows."

"Speaking of them," interposed Maura, "we have Princess Milontine staying with us—little Irene's sister—I left her doing the honours on my behalf when I came to meet you."

This then was the second surprise in store for me. Neither of my companions had the slightest idea how great a surprise it was.

Naturally, we had much to talk of during our walk up to the Towers, Miss Melford had passed away, and one or two of my old companions had followed her across the border. Irene was, of course, one of them, but I took the news of her death as though I had not heard it before.

I had not heard of Miss Melford's death previously, and the angel of memory came down and troubled the waters of my soul, so I was silent for a time.

The silence was broken by Maura, saying:

"There is something painful, if not tragical, connected with Irene's death, of which the princess refuses to speak; so the subject is never mentioned to her." And then, as if to change the subject, she added, "I have named my little daughter Cordelia after Miss Melford, but we call her Corrie."

As she spoke we came in sight of The Towers—a large, four-winged mansion, with pepper box turrets, oriel windows, a square lawn, and many tree-lined walks.

"Home," said Maura, and in a few minutes I found myself in the large warm hall, bright with firelight, and sweet with autumn flowers.

Standing by a table, and turning over the leaves of a book, stood a graceful woman in fawn and cream, who turned round upon our entrance, saying:

"There is tea on the way, you will take some?"

"Thank you, princess, yes, directly we come down," said Maura, and then she added: "See, I have brought an old friend to see you, Gloria, Princess Milontine."

The foreign lady held out her hand, and as I took it I found myself almost involuntarily murmuring, "Nadine." For the dark pathetic eyes of the Russian princess were those of the mysterious foreigner who had lodged in Cherry-Tree Avenue. She kissed me (foreign fashion) on both cheeks, and as she did so whispered: "Hush! let the dead past sleep."

Wondering much, I held my peace and went to inspect the sunshine of Whichello Towers, the pretty dimpled Corrie; and though I forgot the incident during the evening, I remembered it when I found myself in my own room.

Why had Nadine lived in the mean street with the so-called woodcarver and his wife? She was a widow, true, but widows of rank do not usually lodge in such humble places for pleasure. Then again, what was the mystery attaching to Irene? Would the tangled skein ever be unravelled? Time would show.

Whichello Towers was more than a great house, it was a home, a northern liberty hall, surrounded by woods and big breezy moors. There was something for every one in this broad domain. A fine library full of rare editions of rare books, a museum of natural history specimens, a gallery of antiquities, a lake on which to skate or row, preserves in which to shoot, a grand ball-room with an old-world polished floor, a long corridor full of pictures and articles of vertu, and a beautiful music-room.

Princess Nadine and I were much together, we talked of her little sister's school-days, but never of her latter ones, the subject was evidently tabooed.

General Trakoff (a stern, military man who had once been governor of the penal settlement of O —) was evidently devoted to the beautiful Russ, and I found myself hoping that she would not become "Madame la Générale," for though the general was the very pink of politeness, I could not like him.

I had spent a happy fortnight at the Towers when the incident occurred which will always remain the most vivid in my memory. A sudden and severe frost had set in. All the trees turned to white coral, the lake was frozen stone hard. There were naturally many skating parties organised, and in these Nadine and I generally joined. One morning, after we had been skating for nearly half an hour, the princess averred herself tired, and said she would stand out for a time. The general declared that he would also rest awhile, and the two left the lake together, and stood watching the skaters at the edge of the pine wood.

By-and-by I too grew a little weary, and thought I would go for a stroll by myself through the woods I loved so much. The air was fresh and keen, squirrels jumped about in the trees, and the

storm-cock sang blithely. Through an opening in the glade I saw the princess and the general chatting *en tête-à-tête*.

As I came up the former was saying, in a tone of earnest raillery:

"Now, tell me, general, is there nothing you regret doing, or having allowed to be done, when you were administrator of O——?"

She spoke with a strange, almost tragic, earnestness, and when her companion replied:

"No, on my honour, princess."

She bowed gravely. A moment later, with a careless laugh, she opened a gold bonbonnière full of chocolate caramels, and held it temptingly towards him.

He hesitated, and as he did so I put my arm through the branches, and with a playful:

"By your leave, princess," attempted to help myself.

Nadine started, and closed the box with a snap, a strange pallor coming over her white, set face. The general looked gravely at her, and then, raising his hat, with a "Till we meet again," walked leisurely away.

I must own to being slightly offended, I was childishly fond of chocolate, and the act seemed so inexplicably discourteous. We walked to the house in silence, neither of us speaking, until we reached the side entrance. Here the princess paused by the nail-studded oaken door, and said:

"There will come a day when things done in secret will be declared upon the housetops, then (if not before) you will know the secret of the gold bonbonnière. Say, 'Forgiven, Nadine.'"

And I said it with my hand in hers.

How glad I was afterwards that I had done so.

II.

THE PASSING OF NADINE.

Throughout the great house of Whichello Towers there was a hush. Soft-footed servants went to and fro, all the guests save Estella and I went away with many condolences. The Princess Nadine was passing away in the room overlooking the pine woods. She had been thrown from her horse whilst hunting with the Whichello hounds, and the end was not far off.

I was sitting in the library with a great sadness in my heart, when the door opened, and Canon Manningtree, the white-haired rector of Whichello, came into the room.

"Miss Dene," he said gravely, "in the absence of a priest of the Greek Church, I have ministered to Princess Milontine. She is going to meet a merciful Saviour who knows her temptations, and the singular circumstances in which she has been placed. She desires to see you. Do not excite her. Speak to her of the infinite love of God. Will you please go to her *now*."

Weeping, I went.

Sitting beside the sufferer was Maura, who rose when I came in, and left us two alone, save for that unseen Angel who calls us to the presence of our God.

The princess looked at me with her beautiful wistful eyes, as she had looked when she gave me the amber roses in the narrow street.

"Gloria, little sister, I am going to tell *how* Irene died."

"No, no, not if it distresses you."

"I would rather tell you. Listen! I have not much time to speak. As you know, we are of a noble Russian family, and Irene and I were the only children. I was ten years older than Irene, and was educated in France; she came to England, and was your schoolmate!

"I was passionately fond of the child I had seen an infant lying in her pink-lined cot, and when she came out and married Prince Alex Laskine, I prayed that God's sunshine might light on my darling's head. Then, I myself married, and travelled with my husband in all kinds of strange, out-of-the-way places; in one of which he died, and I came back to St. Petersburg, a childless, lonely widow!

"But there was no Irene; her husband had been implicated in a plot, and had been sent to O——, one of the most desolate places in Siberia, and my sister had voluntarily accompanied him!

"When I heard this, I never rested until I too was en route to Siberia! I wanted to take Irene in my arms and to console her as her dead mother would have done. O—— was a fearful place, just a colony of dreary huts by the sea. Behind were the wolf-infested forests; in the midst of it, the frowning fortress prison! When I showed my ukase, and demanded to see my relations, they simply showed me two graves. Irene and Alex rested side by side, in the silent acre, and an exile told me *how* they had died! Alex had been knouted for refusing to play the part of Judas, and had passed away in the fortress. Irene was found dead inside their small wooden hut, kneeling beside her bed. Her heart had broken! My little Snow Flower had been crushed under the iron heel of

despotism.

"He by whose mandate this iniquity was done was General Loris Trakoff, the governor of the province! I was turned to stone by Irene's grave, and afterwards became a partisan of the Nihilists.

"Night and day I pondered upon how I could be revenged upon Trakoff, and at last Fate seemed to favour me.

"The general (so it was reported) was coming to visit a former friend of his. I made up my mind to be there also, and to shoot him, if opportunity served.

"So, two members of our society, a young mechanic and his wife, rented a house in Cherry-Tree Avenue, to which I came, and whilst waiting for my revenge I became acquainted with you."

She paused, whispered, "The restorative," and I gave her the medicine.

The sweet, faint voice spoke again.

"I knew that you were Irene's friend because I saw your name upon the letter that I picked up, and I loved you, Gloria, aye, and was sorry for you."

I laid my cheek next hers.

"Dear, I knew it, and was fond of you."

"Fond of the Nihilist Princess, my little English Gloria! 'Tis a strange world!"

"After all, the general did not come, and then we all left. I bided my time. No outsider knew me for a *Révolutionnaire*, so I mixed in society as before, and accepted the invitation to Whichello, on purpose to meet him here.

"The bonbonnière was filled with poisoned caramels, prepared by a Nihilist chemist, and it was my intention to destroy myself after I had destroyed my enemy. I gave him one chance; I asked him if he repented of anything, and he answered 'No.'

"At the great crisis your little hand, as a hand from another world—as Irene's hand might have done—came between us.

"Your coming saved him. I could not let you share his fate."

"Oh, thank God!" I said. "Nadine, tell me—tell God, that you are sorry, that you repent your dreadful purpose."

"I do, I do," she whispered. "Lying here I see all the sins, the errors, the mistakes. I do not despair of God's mercy though I am myself deserving of His wrath. Irene used to tell me that when she fell asleep, in the new world of school life, it was in your arms. Put them round me, Gloria, and let me fall asleep."

I placed my arm gently, very gently, under her head, and then sat very still.

I heard the big clock in the clock-tower slowly and distinctly strike the hour of twelve, I saw the pale lips move and heard them murmur: "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere mei."

But save for this, all was silence! And in the silence Princess Nadine slept.

MY YEAR AT SCHOOL.

BY MARGARET WATSON.

I was rather old to start out as a school-girl, for I was seventeen, and had never been to school before.

We lived in the heart of the country, and my education had been rather casual—broken into now for a day's work, and now for a day's play, now for visitors staying in the house, now for a visit to friends or relations; as is the way when you are one of a large family, and do your lessons at home—especially if your tastes lie rather in the line of doing than thinking.

I did not love books. I loved gardening and riding the pony, and making cakes, and minding the baby. My sisters were much cleverer than I, and I had never believed it possible that I could excel in anything requiring study, so I satisfied myself with being rather clever with my hands.

However, I didn't really mind work of any kind, and I worked at my lessons when I *was* at them, though I was always ready enough to throw them aside for anything else that might turn up. When my mother said I must go away to a good school for a year I was quite willing. I always loved a change.

The school chosen was a London High School, and I was to board with some people we knew. They had no connection with the school, so I was thrown pretty much on my own resources, and

had to find my way about for myself.

I had to go up first for the entrance exam., and I shall never forget my feelings that day. The headmistress had a sharp, quick manner, and I thought she set me down as very stupid for my age. I was put in a room with a lot of girls, mostly younger than myself, and given a set of exam. papers to do. The way the questions were put was new to me, I was nervous and worried, but I worked on doggedly with the courage of despair, certain that I was showing appalling ignorance for a girl of seventeen, and that I should be placed in a form with the babies.

Two very pretty girls were working beside me. They had curly black hair, and bright complexions, and lovely dark eyes, and there was a fair girl, who wrote diligently all the time, and seemed in no difficulty. When it was over I asked her how she had got on, and she said she had found it quite easy, and answered most of the questions. We compared notes, and I saw that if she was right I must be wrong, and as she was quite sure she was right I went home very despondent indeed, but determined to work my way up from the bottom if need be.

Next morning I hardened my heart for what was to befall me, and started for school. I had to go by omnibus, and found one that ran just at the right time.

I was met at the school entrance by a tall, thin, small-featured lady, who wore glasses, and spoke in a sharp, clear voice, but quite kindly, telling me that I was in the Fifth Form, and my desk was that nearest the door.

There was a good deal of crush and confusion as there were a lot of new girls, and I sat at my desk and wondered whether the Fifth Form was the highest or the lowest. I could hardly believe I was in the highest form, but the other girls sitting at the desks looked as old as myself. The two pretty dark girls were there, but I saw no sign of the fair girl who had worked so easily.

I sat and watched for her, and presently she came in, but she was moved on to the form behind. She was in the Fourth Form, and I heard her name—Mabel Smith.

I had a good report at the end of the first term, and went home happy—very happy to get home again, for I had never been so long away before, and I found my little brothers grown out of knowledge. But the Christmas holidays were soon over, and I went back in a cold, snowy week; and London snow is a miserable spectacle, not like the lovely pure white covering which hides up all dirt and ugliness in the country.

However, I knew my way about by this time, and found my old familiar bus waiting for me, and the conductor greeted me with great friendliness. He was a most kind man, and always waited for me as long as he could.

This term we had a new mistress for mathematics, and I didn't like her a bit.

I was always very slow and stupid at mathematics, and the new mistress was so quick, she worked away like lightning, and I *could* not follow her. She would rush through a proposition in Euclid, proving that some figure was, or was not equal to some other figure, and leave me stranded vainly trying to understand the first proof when she was at the last, and I *couldn't* care, anyhow, whether one line could be proved equal to another or not, I felt it would be much simpler to measure it and have done with it. It was the same in arithmetic; she took us through innumerable step-fractions with innumerable steps, just as fast as she could put the figures down, and all I could do was to stare stupidly at the blackboard and hope that I might be able to worry some sense out of it all at home; and she gave us so much home-work that I had to toil till after ten at night, and then had to leave my sums half done, or neglect my other work altogether.

I was slow and stupid, I knew, but the others all suffered too, though not so much, and presently complaints were made by all the other mistresses that their work was not done, and all the girls had the same reason to give, the arithmetic took so long.

So Miss Vinton made out a time-table for our prep., and said we were to leave off when the time was up, whether we'd finished or not. It was a great relief, my hair was turning grey with the work and worry! But I did not get on at all with mathematics, and in the end of term exam. I came out very badly in that and in French.

As most of us had done badly in those subjects our poor madame and the mathematical mistress did not come back next term.

Miss Vinton gave us mathematics herself, and a splendid teacher she was, letting some daylight even into my thick head, which was not constructed for that kind of work, and her sister gave us French, and we really began to make progress. Some of the girls had done well before, those who sat near madame and talked to her, but most of us had not learnt much from her.

Altogether it was with regret that I saw the end of my school-year drawing near; and I was very anxious to do well in the final exams.

They were to be rather important, as we were to have a university examiner, and there were two prizes offered by people interested in the school, one for the best literature paper, and one for the best history. I *did* want a prize to take home.

There was great excitement in the school, and we all meant to try our best. The Fourth and Fifth Forms were to have the same papers, so as to give the Fourth Form girls a chance for the prize, and Mabel Smith said she was determined to win that offered for literature.

The exam. week began. Geology, arithmetic, Latin, French, German. We worked through them all conscientiously but without much enthusiasm. Then came the literature, you could hear the girls hold their breaths as the papers were given to them.

I read the questions down the first time, and my head spun round so that I could not understand one.

"This won't do," I said to myself, and set my teeth and clung to my desk till I steadied down. Then I read them through again.

I found one question I could answer right away, and by the time I had done that my brain was clear, and I knew the answers to every one.

Alice Thompson was sitting next me, she was one of the pretty dark girls, and very idle.

"What's the date of Paradise Lost?" she whispered.

I didn't know what to do. I wouldn't speak, and of course I knew that it was very mean of her to ask, but I was sure of the date, and I thought it would be mean of me not to tell her. Just then Miss Vinton walked up the room and glanced round at us.

Alice bent over her work, writing diligently. Miss Vinton went down the room again, and Alice edged up to me, questioning me with her pretty dark eyes.

I hesitated, then I pushed the sheet I had just finished close to the edge of my desk so that she could read the date, which she did quickly enough. After that she looked over my papers freely whenever Miss Vinton wasn't looking.

I was rather worried about it, but I didn't think she could win the prize, for I knew she hadn't worked at the subject at all, and if she didn't I thought it couldn't matter much to any one.

I had answered all the questions a good while before the time was up, I thought we had been allowed too long, and was surprised to see Mabel Smith and one or two more scribbling away for dear life till the last minute. However, the time was up at last, and we all gave in our papers.

"How did you get on, Margaret?" asked Miss Vinton, smiling kindly at me.

"I think I answered all the questions right," I replied.

"That's good," she said.

The history paper was given us next day, and it filled me with despair. The questions were so put that short answers were no use, and I was afraid to trust myself to write down my own ideas. However, after a bit the ideas began to come, and I quite enjoyed scribbling them down.

Alice had been moved to another desk, so I was left in peace, for Joyce, who was a friend of mine, was next to me, working away quietly.

I was getting on swimmingly, when all at once the bell rang, and I had only answered three quarters of the questions.

I *was* vexed, for I could see one or two more I could have done. However, there was no help for it. The papers must be given up.

"I wish I had had a little more time," I said to Miss Vinton, as I gave in my work.

"You had as much as the rest," she answered, rather sharply, and I went away feeling sad and snubbed.

The exams. were over, and we were to know the result next day.

I don't think any of us wanted that extra half hour in bed in the morning, which generally seemed so desirable; and we were all waiting in the cloak-room—a chattering throng, for discipline was relaxed on this occasion. When the school-bell rang, and we hurried in to take our places, Miss Vinton made us a speech, saying that the general results of the examinations had been very satisfactory. Our term's work had been on the whole good.

We could hardly listen to these general remarks when we were longing for particulars. At last they came:

Alice Thompson was awarded the literature prize. Her work was so very accurate, and her paper so well written.

There was a silence of astonishment.

Alice turned scarlet. I felt horrified to think what mischief I had done by being so weak-minded as to let her copy my work. Mabel Smith was white. But Miss Vinton went on calmly:

"Mabel Smith comes next. Her paper was exceptionally well written, but there were a few blunders which placed it below Alice's."

Then came Nelly, Joyce, and the rest of the Fifth Form, and one or two of the Fourth—and I began to get over the shock of Alice's success and to wonder what had happened to me. At last my name came with just half marks.

My cheeks were burning. I was dreadfully disappointed and ashamed. Miss Vinton saw what I was feeling and stopped to explain that the examiner had not wanted mere bald answers of dates and names, but well-written essays, showing thought and intelligence. This was how I had failed, while Alice, cribbing my facts, had worked them out well, and come out first. I felt very sore about it, and almost forgot the injustice done to Mabel Smith.

There was still the history prize, and a hush of excited expectation fell on us when Miss Vinton began again:

"The history prize has been awarded to Nelly Gascoyne for a very good paper indeed. Margaret and Joyce have been bracketed second. Their papers were excellent, and only just behind Nelly's in merit."

I gasped with surprise. I had left so many questions unanswered that I had had no hope of distinction in history.

This was some consolation for my former disgrace—and then my mind went back to the question of what was to be done about the literature prize.

As soon as the business of the morning was concluded Mabel Smith touched my arm. She was still quite white, and her eyes were blazing.

"I must speak to you," she said.

"Come to the cloak-room," I answered, "we can get our books after."

"You *know* Alice Thompson cheated," she said, the moment we were alone. "I sat just behind, and I saw you push your papers over to her, and she leant over, and copied whatever she wanted."

"I never dreamt she'd get the prize," I answered, "I only wanted to help her out of a hole."

"Well, she *did* get it—and it's my prize, and what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Of course I oughtn't to have let her copy—but I thought it wouldn't hurt any one."

"You'll have to tell Miss Vinton now. It's not fair I should be cheated out of the prize I've honestly won, and I'd worked so hard for it too. I can't think how I came to make those mistakes."

"I wish to peace you hadn't!"

"But, anyhow, Alice could never have got it if she hadn't cheated, and you must tell Miss Vinton."

"Oh! that's too much," I cried. "It's for Alice to tell Miss Vinton, I can't. I'm willing to tell Alice she must."

"And if she won't?"

"Then I don't quite see what's to be done."

"You'll let her keep my prize?"

"Well, you can tell Miss Vinton if you like."

"It's you that ought to tell her. It was all your fault, you'd no right to help Alice to cheat."

"I know that's true. But it makes it all the more impossible for me to tell on her."

Just then Alice came in:

"Oh, Margaret!" she cried.

Then she saw Mabel and stopped.

"Are you going to tell Miss Vinton you cheated?" said Mabel, going up to her with flaming eyes.

"*Margaret*, did you tell?" said Alice.

"I saw you!" said Mabel, "I sat just behind and saw you! You're not going to try to keep my prize, are you?"

"No, of course not," said Alice, "I never thought of getting the prize. I only wanted to write a decent paper and not have Miss Vinton pitching into me as usual. You're welcome to the prize, if that will do."

Mabel said nothing.

"I'm afraid that won't quite do," I said. "It would be too difficult for Mabel to explain at home without telling on you. You'd much better tell on yourself."

"I can't," said Alice, "I'm as sorry as I can be, now, that I did it—but I can't face Miss Vinton."

She looked ready to cry.

"Well, I shall have to confess too," I said. "It was partly my fault. Let us go together."

"I daren't," said Alice.

But I could see she was yielding.

"Come along," I said, taking her arm. "It's the only way out. You know you won't keep Mabel's prize, and it's as bad to keep her honour and glory. This is the only way out. Let's get it over."

She came then, but reluctantly.

Fortunately we found Miss Vinton alone in her room, and between us we managed to stammer out our confession.

Miss Vinton, I think, was not surprised. She had feared there was something not quite straight. But she was extremely severe with us both, as much with me as with Alice, and as it was to be my last interview with her I was heart-broken.

However, I lingered a moment after Alice, and then turned back and said:

"Please forgive me, you can't think how sorry I am."

"Remember, Margaret," she replied, "that it is not enough to be honourable in your own conduct—you must as far as possible discourage anything dishonourable in other people. I know you would not cheat yourself, but if it is wrong to cheat, it is equally wrong to help some one else to cheat—don't you see? Will you remember this in future—in big things as well as in small? You must not only do right yourself. Your influence must be on the right side too. Certainly, I forgive you. You've been a good girl all this year, and I'm sorry to lose you."

So I went away comforted.

And I came home with never a prize to show. But I had what was better. I had acquired a real love of study which I have never lost. I don't know what became of Alice Thompson, I only hope that she never had to earn her living by teaching. Nelly Gascoyne went home to a jolly family of brothers and sisters and gave herself up to the pleasures and duties of home. Joyce became assistant mistress in a school, and Mabel followed up her successes at school by winning a scholarship at Cambridge a year later.

And I—well, I've never come in first anywhere, but I'm fairly contented with a second place.

THE SILVER STAR.

BY NELLIE HOLDERNESS.

Maysie Grey had set her heart on the Drawing Society's Silver Star. She kept her ambition to herself as a thing too audacious to be put into words. That she possessed talent, the school fully recognised. She was only thirteen, and by dint of steady perseverance was making almost daily progress. Her painting lessons were a source of unmixed pleasure to her, for hers was a nature that never yielded to discouragement, and never magnified difficulties.

"You must aim at the Bronze Star this year," her science mistress had said to her, while helping her to fix the glass slides she was to paint from, under the microscope, "and next year you must go on to the Silver——"

"Look, how beautiful the colours are!" Maysie exclaimed in delight. The delicate, varying tints fascinated her. She set to work with enthusiasm, never having done anything of the kind before. "'Mycetozoa,' do you call them?" she asked.

"Yes. Be sure you spell it rightly."

The next day, when the first of her three sheets was finished, Miss Elton came in to examine it. Though she said little, she was evidently more than satisfied. It was nearly tea-time, and Maysie spent the few minutes before preparation was over in tearing up some old drawings. After breakfast, on the following morning, before the bell rang for class, she went over to Ruth Allen's desk to ask her how to spell "Mycetozoa." Ruth was her particular chum, and the best English scholar in the form.

"I've got something to show you, Maysie," she said, when she had furnished the desired information. She brought out a piece of paper as she spoke, and passed it on to her friend behind the cover of her open desk. It was a fragment of one of Maysie's zoological drawing-sheets, evidently picked up out of the waste-paper basket—a wasp with wings outspread, showing the three divisions of an insect's body. The head was roughly altered so as to form a caricature of a human face, and above was printed, in letters that might have done credit to Maysie herself: "Miss E. in a tantrum," and below: "How doth the little waxy wasp rejoice to snap and snarl!"

Maysie did not share Ruth's unreasonable animosity towards Miss Elton, but she could not repress a smile at this specimen of school-girl wit. Just then the bell rang, and she went back to her own desk, while Ruth, letting the lid of hers slip down, was so startled by the noise it made in the sudden silence that she did not see a piece of paper flutter out on to the ground, and gently glide underneath the platform of the mistress's desk, which was just in front of her.

That morning Maysie began her second sheet, and joined the others in the garden after dinner. Molly Brooks, another of her friends, came eagerly running up to her.

"Why didn't you come to botany?" she asked.

"I've been doing my exhibition work."

"Oh, of course! I suppose it's nearly finished?"

"About half. It hasn't to be sent off till next week, so there's plenty of time."

At that moment Ruth Allen linked her arm in Maysie's.

"I'm in my third row," she began casually.

"What, already?" asked Maysie.

"Yes, haven't you heard?" Molly chimed in.

"Oh, it's Miss Elton again!" went on Ruth. "We never can hit it off. You weren't at botany class this morning."

"No, what happened?"

Ruth shrugged her shoulders. Molly looked expressively at Maysie. Ruth seldom got through a botany class without an explosion.

"I hate botany," said Ruth recklessly, "and I hate Miss Elton. I'm supposed to be in silence now, but as Miss Bennet came in and told us all to go out, I thought I'd better not risk another disobedience mark."

Miss Elton, who had been stooping down over some flower-beds, in search of museum treasures, came up at this point. Her face was grave and white, and her manner very stern and quiet.

"What are you doing out here, Ruth?" she demanded.

"Miss Bennet sent us all out; she said it was such a lovely day," answered Ruth carelessly.

"Then you can go and explain to Miss Bennet why I told you to remain in this afternoon."

Ruth looked at Miss Elton, and then looked away; she slowly withdrew her arm from Maysie's, and walked off without a word. At the door she came face to face with Miss Bennet, the headmistress.

"Where are you going to, Ruth?" asked the latter.

"Miss Elton sent me in."

"Why?" There was grave rebuke in Miss Bennet's voice.

"Because I'm in silence."

"I do not understand why you were out at all."

Ruth made no attempt to defend herself.

"You'd better come to my room," continued Miss Bennet. "There is something here that needs explaining.... Now, what were you in silence for?" she continued, seating herself in her chair by the fire.

"I got sent out of botany class."

"And how many times have you been sent out of botany class?"

Ruth did not answer.

"Well, it has come to this, Ruth," Miss Bennet went on gravely, "that a girl of your age—you are fourteen now, I believe—can no longer be allowed to go on setting an example of insolence and disobedience to the younger girls in the school. Now, remember, this is the last time. Let me have no more complaints about you, or it will be my unpleasant duty to write to your mother, and tell her that you cannot remain here."

There was a pause. The colour had left Ruth's face, and she was staring moodily into the fire.

"You will apologise to Miss Elton," added Miss Bennet, rising, "and you will remain in silence at meals for the rest of the week. And try to make an effort over your botany. Your other work is good: you were top last week. Now, promise me that you will make an effort."

Ruth, moved to penitence at the thought of her mother, promised to do her best. That afternoon she apologised to Miss Elton, and made a resolution to keep out of rows for the rest of the term. Maysie and she walked about in the garden as usual, and talked things over. Maysie looked grave when Ruth told her what Miss Bennet had said about sending her away.

"Oh, Ruth!" she said, "you really must be careful! Why, if you got expelled, it would be almost as bad for me as if I were expelled myself. Miss Elton's awfully nice, if you only knew. I had such a lovely talk with her on Sunday, all about home, and drawing. And then she's so jolly at games,

and she's never cross when you don't cheek her. And think how horrid it must be for her whenever she comes to botany class, always knowing that you're going to be dense! And you do do it on purpose sometimes, dear, you know you do."

Ruth forced a laugh.

"Oh, I'm going to be awfully good," she said. "You'll see!"

It was Saturday the next day, and Maysie was just settling down to her drawing in the music-room, when Miss Elton appeared. Maysie looked up and smiled at her. It was no unusual thing for her science-mistress to come in and remark on her progress. But on this occasion no answering smile greeted her. Maysie was puzzled. Her inquiring grey eyes fell before Miss Elton's; she began to search her conscience. What had she done?

"I think it is a pity, Maysie," began Miss Elton, "that you put your talents to such an unprofitable use."

As she spoke she laid before Maysie the paper that Ruth had exhibited to her in such triumph the day before. Maysie grew scarlet, and remained quite speechless. Her name up in the corner, the neat, even printing, so like her own, the altered diagram that Miss Elton had seen in its original form—they stared her in the face, condemning her beyond hope of appeal. She raised her head proudly, and tossed back the thick curly hair that hung over her shoulder.

"Where did it come from?" she asked.

"I picked it up from under the edge of my platform, but that is of no concern."

"But, Miss Elton——" stammered Maysie, growing suddenly confused.

"You have no excuse," put in Miss Elton, and her voice was all the harder because of the disappointment that she felt. "This is a piece of your paper, is it not?"

Maysie admitted that it was.

"And your diagram?"

"Yes; at least——"

"Is it, or is it not?"

Maysie's voice was very low.

"Yes, it is," she said.

Silence ensued, a brief, awkward silence. It was at this moment that Maysie made up her mind. She would not clear herself at the expense of her chum! Ruth should not be expelled through her!

Miss Elton believed *her* guilty; she would not undeceive her.

Miss Elton waited with her eyes on Maysie's paintings.

They were done as no other girl in the school would have done them, but the thought afforded her no satisfaction, though she had always prophesied great things of Maysie. Then she glanced at the child's downcast face.

"I am sorry about this, Maysie," she said, with the faintest suspicion of reproach in her voice, "I thought we were better friends."

A lump came into Maysie's throat, and the tears into her eyes. She looked at the microscope, at the tiny glass slides, at her unfinished sheet; but she had nothing to say.

"Of course," continued Miss Elton, "I shall have to show it to Miss Bennet. This comes, no doubt, of your friendship with Ruth. I have always said that she would do you no good."

Maysie listened with a swelling heart. Supposing Ruth should be sent for, and hear the whole story? Miss Elton was at the door; she ran up to her in desperation.

"Miss Elton," she faltered, "don't say anything to the girls, will you?"

Miss Elton made no promise. The petition made her think no better of Maysie.

The Fourth Form girls soon discovered that Maysie was in trouble, but no one could get anything out of her. Ruth was forbidden to join her in recreation, but on Sunday evening she managed to get a few minutes' talk with her.

"Do tell me what the row's about, Maysie," she said.

"Oh, nothing much," said Maysie. "Do let's talk about something else."

"But I always thought you liked Miss Elton?"

"So I do. Can't you get into a row with a mistress you like?"

"Well, I'd apologise, if I were you. She was very nice to me."

"I can't, so it's no good." And Maysie sat silent, confronting this new difficulty with a sinking

heart. For how could she apologise, she asked herself, for what she had never done?

"Well, I think you might tell me," Ruth went on. "I told you about my row; and what's the good of being chums if we can't keep each other's secrets?"

But Maysie only sighed impatiently, and took up her library book.

"I wish you'd hurry up and finish those paintings of yours, and come back properly to class," went on Ruth. "Aren't they nearly done?"

Maysie grew white, and turned away her face.

"I'm not going to try this year," she said.

"Why, I thought——" began Ruth. "Oh, I see! What a shame!"

Maysie choked down a sob. After a pause she said:

"Perhaps I shall have more chance of a Star next year."

"You'd have got one this!" said Ruth indignantly. "How mean to punish you like that! And it's the only thing you care about!"

Maysie smiled. "Oh, never mind, dear," she said. "Everything seems mean to us. You don't understand."

"But if you apologised it would be all right?"

"I daresay it might, but I don't think so. Besides, they've got to be sent in by Wednesday, and I should hardly have time to do another sheet."

Things went on like this until Monday evening. Though there was only one day left, Maysie made no attempt to apologise. Miss Elton gave her every opportunity, for she, too, hoped that Miss Bennet might thus be induced to allow Maysie to finish her exhibition work, even at the last moment.

Maysie went to bed early that night. Her head had been aching all day, and by the time tea was over she could hardly hold it up. Ruth was greatly concerned about her, and, as a last resource, determined to speak to Miss Bennet.

Maysie soon got into bed, and, being alone in the dormitory, hid her face under the bed-clothes and sobbed. She was terribly homesick, poor child, and now, for the first time, she began to doubt whether she had done right after all; whether it would not have been wiser to have taken Miss Bennet into her confidence, and trusted to her to set things right. And then, there was that Silver Star! And a year was such a long time to have to wait. But, thinking of Ruth, she grew ashamed of herself, and dried her tears, and tried to go to sleep, though it was still quite light out of doors.

Ruth, meanwhile, was sitting on the floor in front of Miss Bennet's fire.

"It's about Maysie, Miss Bennet," she was saying. "I don't understand what she has done, but I'm sure there must be some reason for her not apologising."

Miss Bennet made no remark.

"She's so fond of Miss Elton, too. I don't see how she could have meant to be rude to her."

"I'm afraid there is not much doubt about that," was the answer.

"It seems to me," went on Ruth nervously, "that there's some mystery about it. Maysie won't tell me anything."

"Maysie has no reason to be proud of herself," replied Miss Bennet coldly.

"It seems so horrid her not going in for the exhibition, and she's so good at painting."

"There are various ways of making use of one's talents," said Miss Bennet, rising. "Now this——"

Ruth jumped to her feet, and stood gazing. There, on Miss Bennet's writing-table, lay the identical scrap of paper that she had shown to Maysie the Friday before. "Miss E. in a tantrum!" There, too, was Maysie's name in the corner. In a moment everything was clear.

"That!" she exclaimed. "Maysie didn't do that!"

Miss Bennet looked at her doubtfully.

"I did it!" she went on. "Oh, if I'd only known! Why didn't some one tell me about it?"

"My dear child," began Miss Bennet.

"Yes, I did it!" repeated Ruth passionately. "It's Maysie's drawing, but I altered it, I made up the words. Poor little Maysie! And she was so keen on trying for the exhibition! It's so horribly unfair, when I did it all the time!" She broke off with a sob, hardly knowing what she was saying.

"But why——"

"I didn't know, and of course she wouldn't sneak about me—catch Maysie sneaking! I told her I should be expelled if I got into another row."

Miss Bennet tried to calm her.

"Come, dear child," she said gravely; "if Maysie has been punished for your fault, we must do our best to set things right at once. Tell me how it happened."

Ruth explained as well as she could.

"And now Maysie's gone to bed," she added regretfully.

"Then I will go up to her. You can go back to your class-room."

Miss Bennet found Maysie asleep, with flushed cheeks, and eyelashes still wet with tears. She stooped down, and kissed her gently. Maysie opened her eyes with a sigh, and then sat up in bed. It had seemed almost as if her mother were bending over her. "I am going to scold you, Maysie," said Miss Bennet, but her smile belied her words.

Maysie smiled faintly in answer.

"Why have you allowed us to do you an injustice?"

The child was overwrought, and a sudden dread seized hold of her.

"Why—what do you mean, Miss Bennet?" she faltered.

"Ruth has explained everything to me. It is a great pity this mistake should have been made——"

Maysie interrupted her.

"It was before she got sent out of class, Miss Bennet," she said. "Oh! don't be angry with her! Don't send her away, will you?"

In her earnestness she laid her hand on Miss Bennet's arm. Miss Bennet drew her to her, and kissed her again.

"Poor child!" she said. "So that's what you've been worrying your little head about. No, I won't send her away, Miss Elton tells me that she has improved already, and I am sure she will forgive her when she knows everything."

Maysie thanked her with tears in her eyes.

"And now, I have one other thing to say," Miss Bennet continued. "You must go to sleep at once, and wake up quite fresh and bright to-morrow morning, and you shall give up the whole day to your painting. What do you say to that?"

"How lovely!" exclaimed Maysie. "I shall get it done after all! Thank you very, very much, Miss Bennet. Oh, I am so happy!" And she put her arms round Miss Bennet's neck, and gave her an enthusiastic hug.

Maysie worked hard at her "Mycetozoa" the next day, and finished her third sheet with complete success. Some weeks afterwards, Miss Bennet sent for her to her room.

"I am glad to be able to tell you, Maysie," she said, "that you have gained the Drawing Society's Silver Star."

Maysie drew a long breath; her heart was too full for words. The *Silver Star*! Could it be true?

Ruth was one of the first to congratulate her.

"I always said you'd get it, dear," she remarked as they walked round the garden together. "And I'm just as glad as you are about it. I haven't forgotten that it was through me you nearly lost the chance!"

Maysie returned the pressure of Ruth's hand without answering. Was not the Silver Star the more to be prized for its association in thought with those hours of lonely perplexity that she had gone through for the sake of her friend?

UNCLE TONE.

BY KATE GODKIN.

"Mother darling! Is Uncle Tone really coming to see us at last? I heard you tell father something about it," I said to my mother as she sat by my couch, to which I had been tied for some weeks in consequence of a cycling accident.

I had broken my leg, but had now so far recovered as to be able to move cautiously with a stick. It was the first illness that I could remember, and I was an only child, much loved, and I suppose

much spoiled by the most indulgent of fathers and mothers. I therefore made the most of my opportunities and called freely on their resources for entertainment.

"Yes, love, I am happy to say he is. He has not been here now since you were quite a little girl, eight years ago. You were just eight."

"Mother," I continued coaxingly, for I loved a story, "why are you so fond of him, he is only your step-brother?"

"Step-brother!" she exclaimed. "He has been more than a brother to me. He has been a father, far far more," she added sadly, "than my own father was. He is, you know, nearly twenty years older than I."

"Will you tell me something about it?" I asked softly.

It was twilight in July, and I lay at the open French window which led from the drawing-room to the lawn, and from which we had a view across the park, far out over the country, bounded by the twinkling lights of Southampton in the distance, for our house was situated on an elevation in one of the loveliest spots in the New Forest. Dinner was over and father was in the library clearing off some pressing work, as he had to leave home for a day or two. It seemed to me the very time for reminiscences.

"I think I will," said my mother slowly and thoughtfully.

She was a small, graceful woman, of about forty then, whose soft, dark hair was just beginning to be touched with grey, but her face was as fresh and dainty-looking as a girl's; a strong, sweet face that I loved to look at, and that now, that she is no longer with me, I love to remember.

"You ought to know what he did for your mother, and how much you owe him indirectly. I should like him, too, to feel that he has his reward in you."

My curiosity was excited, for I had never heard my mother speak like that before, and so I settled myself to listen, and to enjoy what she had to say.

"My childhood was a very wretched one, Cora," she began. "For that reason I have spoken little of it to you, but endeavoured, assisted by your father, to make yours the very opposite to it as far as lay in my power, and that I could do so is due, I may say wholly, to your Uncle Tone, who taught me to be happy myself, and to endeavour to make others so."

I slipped my hand into my dear mother's; she was the best, most loving, and wisest mother that ever lived.

"My mother died when I was born," she continued, "and my father took his loss so to heart that he shut himself off from all society, grew silent and morose, and," she added after some hesitation, "became in time a drunkard."

She brought these words out with such an effort, such difficulty, that the tears came to my eyes, and I whispered, "Don't go on, mother darling, if it hurts you." She continued, however, without appearing to notice my interruption.

"I ran wild till I was twelve or thirteen years of age, I had no society but my father's and the servants', and I got no regular education. He would not send me to school, but the vicar's daughter came over for an hour or two every day to teach me what I could be induced to learn, which was little enough. I was hot-tempered, headstrong, self-willed, accustomed to fight for what I wanted, getting nothing by any other means, and doing without what I could not get in that way. No softening, no refining influence came into my life. My one pleasure even then was music. I had a passion for it. Miss Vincent, the vicar's daughter, taught me to play the piano, and I used to spend hours in the deserted drawing-room, playing what I knew, and picking out tunes by myself, while my father was shut up in his study. We had no near relation, no one who cared enough to take pity on an unruly, troublesome, little girl, with a drunken father. When I was between twelve and thirteen he died, and a godmother who lived in Scotland took charge of me, and sent me to a boarding-school, at which I spent the next four years. Schools were not then what they are now, particularly in Scotland, and between the time spent there and the holidays with Miss Clark, who was a stern, old maid and a confirmed invalid, my life was very dreary; I was becoming harder, and harder. I did not know in fact that I had any feelings; they were not cultivated amongst the people who had to do with me. She, also, died before I was seventeen, and then something happened which was to change my whole life. My step-brother, whom I had never seen, wrote to Miss McDougall, with whom I was at school, saying that my home would, henceforth, be with him. Your Uncle Tone was my father's son by his first marriage, and when his father married my mother, Tone went to live with his maternal grandfather, who, on his death, left him the beautiful place in Derbyshire to which I was to go. He lived there with an old aunt. This news affected me very little; I had never had a happy home, a real home; I did not know what that was, but I presumed I should go somewhere on leaving school.

"My love of music had, in the meantime, increased. I had had a very good master, a real musician, and I had worked hard for him. To me it was a delight, but I never thought nor cared that it could give pleasure to any one else. I used to shut myself up for hours in the holidays, out of hearing of my godmother, who seldom left her room, and play, and play, till my arms ached.

"I remember well the day he came for me. I was ready, waiting, when the maid brought me the

message that Sir Tone Wolsten was in the drawing-room. He was standing on the hearth-rug talking to Miss McDougall, and looked so tall to me. He is over six feet. I can see him now as he stood there, erect, broad-shouldered, with bright chestnut hair, clear, keen, dark blue eyes, and bronzed skin, a strong, kind, fearless face. He looked a thorough man, one to be trusted. He greeted me very kindly as his little sister, and took me home with him. Goldmead Park was the loveliest place I had ever seen. His Aunt Evangeline, whom I also called 'aunt,' was a frail, querulous old lady, whom he treated as his mother. He did not marry till after her death, five years later. I was planted in entirely new surroundings, with everything pleasant about me, everything that I could desire, or ought to have desired. Your uncle was kindness itself. He taught me to ride and to drive, supplied me with books, took the greatest interest in me; but the restrictions of every well-ordered home which would have been nothing to a properly trained girl were unendurable to me. I resisted from sheer perverseness and dislike of control. I do not mean to say that I was always ill-tempered; I was lively and merry enough, and your uncle used to tease me, and jest with me, which I enjoyed very much, and responded to willingly.

"Some weeks had passed like this, my step-brother being most kind and indulgent. Frequently Aunt Evangeline had asked me to play to them in the evening after dinner, but I had refused obstinately. I liked to play to myself, but I had never been accustomed to do so before any one, and it never entered my head that it could give them pleasure, or that I was bound to do it out of politeness. At last she became more irritable and frequently made sarcastic remarks about the young people of the present day. This happened again one evening, and I answered sharply, not to say rudely.

"The next morning I wandered through the woods belonging to the park, gathering violets, and had sat down, hot and tired, under a lovely chestnut, with my lap full of flowers which I was arranging and tying up in bunches in order to carry them home more easily. I heard footsteps, which I recognised by their briskness and firmness, and looking up I saw my brother approach, walking, as usual, erect, with his head well thrown back but with stern lines in his face which I had not seen there before. I looked up smiling, expecting his usual kind greeting, but instead of that he strode straight up and stopped in front of me.

"'I was just thinking of you, Elfie,' he said, looking down at me, 'I have something to say to you which I can as well say here as any place else. I don't know why you should be so unamiable and discourteous to my aunt, as you are, and I cannot allow it to continue. I will say nothing of your manner to me. You receive here nothing but kindness. My great desire is to make you happy, but it does not seem as if I succeeded very well. At any rate, Aunt Evangeline must not be made uncomfortable, and I should be doing you a wrong if I allowed you to behave so rudely.'

"'Why can't she leave me alone?' I exclaimed angrily, 'I don't want to play to her.'

"'One does not leave little girls alone,' he answered calmly and sternly, 'and such behaviour from a young girl to an old lady is most unbecoming. It must come to an end, and the sooner the better! To-night,' he continued in a tone that made me look up at him, 'you will apologise to my aunt and *offer* to play.'

"'I shall do nothing of the sort!' I exclaimed, turning crimson.

"'Oh yes, you will,' he answered quietly, 'I am accustomed to be obeyed, and I don't think my little sister will defy me.'

"And with that he strode away, leaving me in a perfect turmoil of angry feelings. I jumped up, scattering my lapful of violets, and started to walk in the opposite direction. At lunch we met, he ignored me completely, but I did not care, I felt hard and defiant.

"After dinner, he conducted Aunt Evangeline to the drawing-room as usual, and as soon as she was seated he turned and looked at me, and waited. I made no move, though I felt my courage, which had never before forsaken me, ebb very low. He waited a few moments, and then said in a tone, which in spite of all my efforts I could not resist:

"'Now, Elfie!'

"I rose slowly, with his eyes fixed on me all the time, crossed the room to Aunt Evangeline, and stopped in front of her. 'I am sorry, Aunt Evangeline, that I have been so rude to you,' I said in a low, trembling voice. 'If you wish, I will play to you now.'

"I felt as if it were not I myself, but some one outside me that was moving and speaking for me. I wished not to do it, but I was compelled by my brother's force of will, as much as if I had been hypnotised.

"'Do, dear, do!' the old lady exclaimed kindly and eagerly. 'I am so fond of music, we both are, and we rarely have any one here who can play.'

"I chose a piece in which I could give vent to the stormy feelings raging within me. When I had finished I rose from the piano.

"'Thank you, dear,' she exclaimed. 'That was a treat!'

"'Such a treat,' remarked my brother, 'that it is hard to understand the discourtesy and want of amiability that have deprived us of it so long. Play something else, Elfie!' This was said quietly, but I was as powerless to resist as if it were the sternest command.

"So I played three or four more pieces at his request, and then getting up, took my work and sat down in silence at some distance from them, while they 'talked music' In about half an hour he turned to me again and asked me to play a particular piece which they had been discussing. 'Perhaps she is tired,' suggested Aunt Evangeline kindly.

"'It does not tire her to play for hours by herself,' was the quiet rejoinder.

"I went to the piano in a mutinous, half desperate mood, thinking I would go on till they were sick of it, so I played on and on. Presently I forgot them, got lost in my music, and as usual my angry feelings died away. I had no idea how long I had been playing when I became conscious of a feeling of emotion I had never experienced before. I felt my heart swell and my face flush, and with a sudden sob I burst into tears. I was more startled than they were, for I had never, as far as I could remember, shed a tear except with anger, and this was certainly not anger. I started up and was about to leave the room hastily, when Tone said in the same calm tone:

"Stay here, Elfie, you have no need to be ashamed of those tears.'

"At home I should have rushed from the room, banging the door after me: I could give myself no account of my reason for going and sitting down quietly instead; I did so, nevertheless, though I could not suppress my sobs for some time. At last I became, outwardly at least, calm.

"Aunt Evangeline always retired to her room about nine o'clock, and at first I did the same, but then my brother detained me for a game of chess which he taught me to play, and to talk about some books that he had given me to read, so that we usually sat together till ten o'clock. That night, however, I had no mind to sit alone with him for an hour, so I turned to say good-night as aunt was leaving the room. He held the door open for her, bade her 'good-night,' and then closed it as deliberately as if he had not seen my outstretched hand. He then turned to me, and took it, cold and trembling as it was, in his own firm, warm grasp, but with no intention of letting me go. Holding it, he looked searchingly, but with a kind smile, into my face.

"'Is this revenge or punishment, Elfie?' he asked.

"'I don't know what you mean,' I exclaimed in confusion.

"'My game of chess?'

"'You won't want to play with me to-night, and I can't play either,' I said, pressing my disengaged hand to my hot forehead. 'My stupidity would try your patience more than ever.'

"'You must not say that,' he replied quietly, 'you are not stupid, and as I have never felt the slightest shade of impatience, I cannot have shown any. You play quite well enough to give me a very good game, but I daresay you cannot to-night. One wants a cool, clear head for chess. Let us talk instead.' So saying he led me to the chair aunt had just left, put me in it, and drew his own chair nearer.

"'I don't want you to go to your room feeling lonely and upset,' he said, 'I should like to see your peace of mind restored first. I should like you to feel some satisfaction from the victory you have won over your self-will to-night.'

"'The victory, such as it is, is yours!' I blurted out, looking away.

"'You say that,' he replied very gently, 'as if you thought it a poor thing for a man to bully a young girl. Don't forget, Elfie, that I am nearly old enough to be your father, that, in fact, I stand in that position to you—I am your only relative and protector—that *I* am right and *you* are wrong, and above all that it is for your own sake that I do it. Poor child! you have had far too little home life and home influence. I want you to be happy here, but the greatest source of happiness lies in ourselves. What Milton says is very true, "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell." You cannot be happy and make those around you happy, as long as you are the slave of your will. A strong will is one of the most valuable gifts we can have, but it must be our servant, not our master, or it will prove a curse instead of a blessing. It must be under our control, or it will force us to do things of which our good sense, good feeling, and our consciences all disapprove. We must be able to use it *against* ourselves if need be. You are nearly grown up, Elfie, and still such an undisciplined child! What you will not learn with me and let me teach you in the next two or three years, the world will teach you very harshly later. We none of us can go through life, least of all a woman, doing what we like, knocking against every one as we go along. We get very hard knocks back, and they hurt. We miss, too, the best happiness that life can give. It contains none to equal that of making other people happy. As we treat them, they treat us.

"'It is not in the least your fault, little one,' he added very kindly, 'you have had no chance of being different. You have, I am afraid, received very little kindness, but help me to change all this. Don't think for a moment that I want to subdue your will to mine, that I want forced obedience to my wishes—that is the last thing I desire. I want to place *your* will under *your* control. I forced you to do to-night what I wanted, to make a beginning, to show you it was possible, to let you feel the pleasure of being agreeable, to stir some gentler, softer feelings in you. They came, much to your surprise, though not to mine. We all have them, and it is not good to crush them.'

"While he was talking, a strange, subdued feeling came over me, such as I had never known before. He spoke gently and impressively, in a deep, soft tone peculiar to him when very much in

earnest. I felt I wanted to be what he wished me to be, to do what he wanted, and this sensation was so new to me, that I could not at all understand it. I felt impelled to tell him, but I was ashamed. I had never in my life been sorry for anything I had done, still less acknowledged a fault. It was a new and strange experience, I felt like a dumb animal as I raised my eyes piteously to his.

"What is it, little one? You want to say something, surely you are not afraid?' he asked gently.

"Forgive me, Tone,' I gasped, as two big tears rolled down my cheeks, 'I am sorry.'

"I am glad to hear you say you are sorry,' he said, taking my hand, 'but between us there is no question of forgiveness. I have nothing to pardon, I am not angry, I want to help you.'

"I never felt like this before,' I muttered, 'I don't understand it, but I will try to do what you want.'

"You feel like this, Elfie, because you know that I am right, and that I only want what is good for you. I want you to be happy, to open your heart to the kindness we wish to show you, and to encourage feelings of kindness in yourself towards other people. When you feel hard, and cross, and disobliging, try to remember what I have been saying, and let me help. Even if I have to appear stern sometimes, don't misunderstand it.'

"He then talked about my mother, my home, told me something of my father as *he* had known him, until he actually succeeded in making me feel peaceful and happy.

"From that day he never for a moment lost sight of the object he had in view. He had me with him as much as possible, for long walks, rides and drives. With infinite patience but unvarying firmness, he helped me along, recognising every effort I made, appreciating my difficulties, never putting an unnecessary restriction on me. So he moulded and formed my character, lavishing kindness and affection on me in which, I must say, Aunt Evangeline was not far behind, awakening all that was best and noblest in my nature, never allowing simple submission of my will to his.

"On my wedding-day, as we were bidding each other 'Good-bye!' he said:

"You will be happy now, little sister, I know it. You have striven nobly and will have your reward.'

"The reward should be yours, Tone, not mine,' I answered, as I put my arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Do you wonder now, Cora, that I love him so dearly, though he is my step-brother?" my mother asked as she concluded, "and that I should like him to see that I have endeavoured to do for you what he did for me?"

A NIGHT ON THE ROAD.

BY MARGARET WATSON.

The summer holidays had begun, and I was to travel home alone from Paddington to Upperton.

I was quite old enough to travel alone, for I was fourteen, but it so happened that I had never taken this journey by myself before. There was only one change, and at Upperton the pony-cart would be waiting for me. It was all quite simple, and I rather rejoiced in my independence as my cab drew up under the archway at Paddington. But there my difficulties began.

There was a raging, roaring crowd going off for holidays too. The cabman demanded double the legal fare. It was a quarter of an hour before I could get a porter for my luggage, and then I had almost to fight my way to the ticket-office. When at last I had got my ticket the train was due out.

"Jump in anywhere," said the porter; "I'll see that your luggage goes."

The carriages were crammed full. I raced down the platform till I saw room for one, and then tore open the door, and sank into my seat as the train steamed out of the station.

I looked round for sympathy at my narrow escape, but my fellow-travellers were evidently one party. They looked at me coldly, as at an unwelcome intruder, and drew more closely together, discussing the day's doings; so I curled up in my corner and gave myself up to anticipations of the holidays.

These were so engrossing that I took no count of the stations we passed through. I was just picturing to myself the delights of a long ride on the pony, when, to my amazement the stopping of the train was followed by the loud exhortation:

"All change here!"

"Why, where are we?" I asked, looking up bewildered.

"At Lowford," replied one of my fellow-passengers.

But they gathered up their parcels, and swept out of the carriage without a question as to my destination.

I seized on a porter.

"How did I get here?" I asked him; "I was going to Upperton. What has happened?"

"Upperton, was you?" said the man. "Why, you must ha' got into the slip carriage for Lowford. I s'pose 'twas a smartish crowd at Paddin'ton."

"It was," I replied, "and I hadn't time to ask if I was right. I suppose my luggage has gone on. But what can I do now? How far is it to Upperton? Is there another train?"

"Well, no, there ain't another train, not to-night. It's a matter of fifteen mile to Upperton by the road."

"Which way is it?"

"Well, you couldn't miss it, that goes straight on pretty nigh all the way. You've only got to follow the telegraph-postes till you comes to the "Leather Bottle," and then you turns to the right."

"I know my way from there."

"But you could never walk all that way to-night. You'd better by half stay at the hotel, and go on by rail in the morning."

"I'll wire to them at home to drive along the road and meet me, and I'll walk on till they do."

"Well, it's fine, and I dessay they'll meet you more'n half way, but 'tis a lonely road this time o' night."

"I'm not afraid," said I, and walked off briskly.

I bought a couple of buns in a baker's shop, and went on to the telegraph office—only to be told it was just after eight o'clock, and they could send no message that night.

I turned out my pockets, but all the coins I had were a sixpenny and a threepenny piece—not enough to pay for a night's lodging, I was sure. The cabman's extortion, and a half-crown I had given to the porter at Paddington in my haste, had reduced me to this.

What should I do? I was not long deciding to walk on. Perhaps they would guess what had happened at home and send to meet me. The spice of adventure appealed to me. If I had gone back to the porter he would probably have taken me to the hotel, and they would have trusted me. But I did not think of that—I imagine I did not want to think of it. I had been used to country roads all my life, and it was a perfect evening in late July.

My way lay straight into the heart of the setting sun as I took the road. In a clear sky, all pale yellow and pink and green, the sun was disappearing behind the line of beech-covered hills which lay between me and home, but behind me the moon—as yet only like a tiny round white cloud—was rising.

I felt like dancing along the road at first. The sense of freedom was intoxicating. The scent of wild honeysuckle and cluster roses came from the hedgerows. I ate my buns as I walked along; I had made three and a half miles by the milestones in the first hour, and enjoyed every step of the way.

"If they don't meet me," I thought, "how astonished they will be when I walk in! It will be something to brag of for many a day, to have walked fifteen miles after eight o'clock at night."

The daylight had faded, but the moon was so bright and clear that the shadows of my solitary figure and the "telegraph-postes" were as black and sharp as at noonday. Bats were flitting about up and down. A white owl flew silently across the road. Rabbits were playing in the fields in the silver light. It was all very beautiful, but a little lonely and eerie. I hadn't passed a house for a mile.

Then I heard wheels behind me.

If it were some kind person who would give me a lift!

But I heard a lash used cruelly, and a rough, hoarse voice swearing at the horse.

I hurried on, but of course the cart overtook me in a minute.

The man pulled up. He leaned down out of the cart to look at me, and I saw his coarse, flushed face and watery eyes.

"Want a lift, my dear?" he asked.

"No, thank you," I answered, "I much prefer walking."

"Too late for a gal like you to be out," he said; "you jump up and drive along o' me."

"No, thank you," I repeated, walking on as fast as I could.

He whipped his horse on to keep pace with me; then, leaning on the dashboard, he made as

though he would climb out of the cart. But just at that moment a big bird rustled out of the hedge—the horse sprang aside, precipitated his master into the bottom of the cart, and went off at a gallop. Very thankful I was to see them disappear into the distance!

I was shaking so with fear that I had to sit down on a stone heap for a while.

I pulled myself together and started on again, but all joy was gone from the adventure—there seemed really to be too much adventure about it.

Three miles, four miles more I walked; but they did not go as the first miles had gone. It was eleven o'clock, and I was only halfway; at this rate I could not be home before two in the morning. If they had been coming to meet me they would have done so before this. They must have given me up for the night, every one would be in bed and asleep, and to wake them up in the small hours would frighten them more than my not coming home had done.

Moreover, the long road over the hill and through the woods was before me. The thought of the moonlit, silent woods, with their weird shadows, was too much for me; I looked about for a place of refuge for the night.

I soon found one.

A splendid rick of hay in a field close to the road had been cut. Halfway up it there was a wide, broad ledge—just the place for a bed. I did not take long to reach it, and, pulling some loose hay over myself in case it grew chilly at dawn, I said my prayers—they were real prayers that night—and was soon asleep in my soft, fragrant bed.

The sun woke me, shining hot on my nest. I looked at my watch, it was six o'clock. Thrushes and blackbirds were singing their hearts out, swallows were darting by, high in air a lark was hovering right above my head, with quivering wings, singing his morning hymn of praise. I knelt, up there on the hayrick, and let my thanks go with his to heaven's gate.

I had never felt such a keen sense of gratitude as I did that summer morning: the dangers of the night all past and over, and a beautiful new day given to me, and only seven miles and a half between me and home.

'Tis true that I was very hungry, but I started on my way and soon came to a cottage whose mistress was up giving her husband his breakfast. She very willingly gave me as much bread-and-butter as I could eat, and a cup of tea. I did not quarrel with the thickness of the bread or the quality of the butter, or even with the milkless tea—I had the poor man's sauce to flavour them.

When she heard my story, the woman overwhelmed me with pity and regrets that I had not reached her house overnight and slept there. But I did not regret it. I would not have given up my "night on the road" now it was over for worlds.

She was grateful for the sixpence I gave her—having learnt wisdom, I reserved the threepenny bit—and I went on.

The air was delicious, with a spring and exhilaration in it which belongs to the early morning hours. The sunlight played hide-and-peek in the woods. Patches of purple heath alternated with lilac scabious and pale hare-bells. The brake ferns were yellow-tipped here and there—a forewarning of autumn—and in one little nook I found a bed of luscious wild strawberries. My heart danced with my feet, and I wondered if the tramps ever felt as I did, in the summer mornings, after sleeping out under a hedge.

I reached home by nine o'clock, and then there was a hubbub, and a calling out of, "Here's Muriel!" "Why, Muriel, where have you sprung from?" "What happened last night? We were so frightened, but they told us at the station that it was an awful crowd at Paddington, and you must have missed the train, and of course we thought you would go back to Miss Black's, but you ought to have wired."

It was ever so long before I could make them believe that I had been out all night, and slept in a hayrick; and then mother was almost angry with me, and father told me if ever I found myself in such a predicament again I was to go to a respectable hotel and persuade them to take me in. But he said he would take very good care that no child of his should ever be in such a predicament again. But I could not be sorry, the beginning and the end were so beautiful.

THE MISSING LETTER.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL.

The Briars was a very old-fashioned house, standing in its own grounds, about ten miles from Smokeytown. It was much dilapidated, for Miss Clare the owner and occupier, had not the necessary means for repairing it, and as she had lived there from her birth—a period of nearly sixty years—did not like to have the old place pulled down. Not more than half the rooms were habitable, and in one of them—the former dining-room—there sat, one January afternoon, Miss

Clare, with her young nephew and niece. They were having tea, and the firelight danced cosily on the worn, once handsome furniture, and the portly metal teapot, which replaced the silver one, long since parted with for half its value in current coin. The only modern article in the room, excepting the aforesaid nephew and niece, was a pretty, though inexpensive, pianoforte, which stood under a black-looking portrait of a severe-visaged lady with her waist just under her arms, and a general resemblance, as irreverent Aubrey said, to a yard and a half of pump water.

Just now Miss Clare was consuming toast in silence, and Kate was wondering if there was any way of making bows that had been washed twice and turned three times look like new; while Aubrey's handsome head was bent over a book, for he was addicted to replenishing mind and body at the same time. Suddenly Miss Clare exclaimed, "Dear me; it is fifty years to-day since Marjorie Westford died!"

Kate glanced up at the pump-water lady, with the laconic remark, "Fancy!"

"It's very likely that on such an interesting anniversary the fair Miss Marjorie may revisit her former haunts," said Aubrey, raising a pair of glorious dark eyes with a mischievous smile; "so if you hear an unearthly bumping and squealing in the small hours, you may know who it is."

"The idea of a ghost 'bumping and squealing,'" laughed Kate. "And Miss Marjorie, too! The orthodox groan and glide would be more like her style." Then her mind wandered to a story connected with that lady, which had given rise to much speculation on the part of the young Clares. Half a century ago there lived at the Briars a family consisting of a brother and two sisters; the former a gay young spendthrift of twenty-five; the girls, Anna, aged twenty, and Lucy, the present Miss Clare, nine years old respectively. With them resided a maiden sister of their mother's, Marjorie Westford, an eccentric person, whose property at her death reverted to a distant relative. A short time before she died she divided her few trinkets and personal possessions between the three young people, bequeathing to Anna, in addition, a sealed letter, to be read on her twenty-first birthday. The girl hid the packet away lest she should be tempted to read it before the appointed time; but ere that arrived she was drowned by the upsetting of a boat, and never since had the concealed letter been found, although every likely place had been searched for it. Lucy never married, and George had but one son, whose wife died soon after the birth of Kate, and in less than a year he married again, this time to a beautiful young heiress, subsequently mother to Aubrey, who was thus rather more than two years Kate's junior.

The younger George Clare, a spendthrift like his father, speedily squandered his wife's fortune, and died, leaving her with barely sufficient to keep herself and little son from want. Yet such was Mrs. Clare's undying love for the husband who had treated her so badly, that in their greatest straits she refused to part with a locket containing his likeness and hers which was valuable by reason of the diamonds and sapphires with which it was encrusted. This locket was the only thing she had to leave her little Aubrey when she died, and he, a lovely boy of nine summers, went with his half-sister (who had a small sum of money settled on her by her maternal grandfather) to reside with their great-aunt, Miss Clare.

Presently the quietness at the tea-table was disturbed by a loud single knock at the front door, and Aubrey bounced out of the room.

"A note from Mr. Green," he said, returning. "I wonder what's up now? No good, I'm afraid."

This foreboding was only too fully realised. The agent for Miss Clare's little property at Smokeytown wrote to tell her that during a recent gale one of her best houses had been so much injured by the falling of a factory chimney, that the repairs would cost quite £30 before it could again be habitable. This was a dire misfortune. So closely was their income cut, and so carefully apportioned to meet the household expenses, that, after fullest consideration, Miss Clare could only see her way clear for getting together about £15 towards meeting this unexpected demand, and three very anxious faces bent around the table in discussion.

Presently Aubrey slipped away and ran upstairs to his own room. He then lit a candle, and pulling a box from under an old horse-hair chair, unlocked it, taking out a small morocco case, which, when opened, revealed something that sparkled and scintillated even in the feeble rays of the cheap "composite." It was the precious locket, placed in his hands by his dying mother four years before. Inside were two exquisite miniatures on ivory—the one a handsome, careless-looking man, the other, on which the boy's tender gaze was now fixed, was the portrait of a lady, with just such pure, bright features, and sweet, dark-grey eyes as Aubrey himself.

"Mother, my own darling," he murmured, pressing the picture to his lips, "how *can* I part with you?" And dropping his head on the hard, prickly cushion, by which he knelt, he cried in a way that would considerably have astonished the youths with whom he had, a few hours earlier, engaged in a vigorous snowball fight. They only knew a bright, mirthful Aubrey Clare, the cleverest lad in his class, and the "jolliest fellow out;" none but Kate had any idea of the deepest affections of his boyish heart, and she truly sympathised with her half-brother in his love for the only portrait and souvenir remaining of the gentle creature who had so well supplied a mother's place for her. Something in Aubrey's face when he left the room had told her of his thoughts, so presently she followed him and tapped at the half-open door. Obtaining no answer, she entered, and saw the boy kneeling before the old chair with his head bent. The open case lay beside him, and Kate easily guessed what it was held so tightly in his clenched hand. She stooped beside him, and stroked his wavy hair caressingly as she said, "It can't be that, Aubrey."

"It must," replied a muffled voice from the chair cushion.

"It *sha'n't* be," said Kate firmly. "I've thought of a plan——"

But Aubrey sprang to his feet. "See here, Katie," he said excitedly, but with quivering voice; "I've been making an idol of this locket. It ought to have gone before, when aunt lost so much money by those Joneses; but you both humoured my selfishness."

"Being fond of anything, especially anything like that, isn't making an idol of it, I'm sure," said Katie.

"It is if it prevents you doing what you ought, I tell you, Katie; it's downright dishonest of me to keep this," he continued, with burning cheeks, "living as I am upon charity, and aunt so poor. I see it plainly now. Mr. Wallis offered to buy it of me last summer, and if he likes he shall have it now."

"He is gone to Rillford," said Kate, in whose mind an idea was beginning to hatch.

"He'll be back on Saturday, and then I'll ask him. It won't be *really* losing mamma's likeness, you know," he added, with a pathetic attempt at his own bright smile. "Whenever I shut my eyes I can see her face, just as she looked when——" but he was stopped by a queer fit of coughing and rubbed the curl of his hair that always tumbled over his forehead; so Katie couldn't see his face, but she knew what the sacrifice must cost him, and, girl-like, exalted him to a pedestal of heroism immediately; but when she would have bestowed an enthusiastic embrace, he slipped away from her and ran downstairs.

Left alone, Kate stood long at the uncurtained window, gazing at the unearthlike beauty of the moonlit snow. When at last she turned away, the afore mentioned idea was fully fledged and strong.

She found her hero with his nose ungracefully tucked into an uncut magazine, and his chair tilted at a perilous angle with the floor, just like any ordinary boy, and felt a tiny bit disappointed. Presently she turned to the piano, which was to her a companion and never failing delight. She had a taste for music, which Miss Clare had, as far as was practicable, cultivated; and although Kate had not received much instruction, she played with a sweetness and expression that quite made up for any lack of brilliant execution. This evening her touch was very tender, and the tunes she played were sad.

By-and-bye Katie lingered, talking earnestly with her aunt long after Aubrey had gone to bed; and when at last she wished her good-night, she added, anxiously, "Then I really may, auntie; you are sure you don't mind?"

And Miss Clare said, "I give you full permission to do what you like, dear. If you love Aubrey well enough to make so great a sacrifice for him, I hope he will appreciate your generosity as he ought; but whether he does or not, you will surely not lose your reward. I am more grieved than I can tell you to know that it is necessary."

Two days later, Aubrey was just going to tear a piece off the *Smokeytown Standard* to do up a screw of ultramarine, when his eye was arrested by an advertisement which he read two or three times before he could believe the evidence of his senses; it was this,—

"To be sold immediately, a pretty walnut-wood cottage pianoforte, in excellent condition, and with all the latest improvements. Price 15*l*. Apply at 'The Briars,' London Road."

He rushed upstairs to Kate, who, with her head adorned by a check duster, was busy sweeping (for they had no servant), and burst in upon her with, "What on earth are you going to sell it for?"

There was no need to inquire what "it" was, and Kate, without pausing in her occupation, replied, "To help make up the money aunt wants."

"But if Mr. Wallis buys the locket;" then the truth flashed upon him, and he broke off suddenly, "Oh, Katie, you're *never* going to——"

"Sell the piano because I don't want the locket to go," finished Katie, with a smile, that in spite of the check duster made her look quite angelic.

Aubrey flew at her, and hugging her, broom and all, exclaimed,—

"Oh, how *could* you! You are too good; I didn't half deserve it. Was there ever such a darling sister before?" and a great deal more in the same strain, as he showered kisses upon her till he took away her breath, one moment declaring that she shouldn't do it and he wouldn't have it, and the next assuring her that he could never thank her enough, and never forget it as long as he lived. And Katie was as happy as he was.

It was rather a damper, however, when that day passed, and the next, and no one came to look even at the bargain. Aubrey said that if no purchaser appeared before the following Wednesday, he should certainly go to Mr. Wallis about the locket; and it really seemed as if Katie's sacrifice was not to be made after all.

Tuesday afternoon came, still nobody had been in answer to the advertisement. It was a pouring wet day, and Aubrey's holiday hung heavily on his hands. He had read every book he could get at, painted two illuminations, constructed several "patent" articles for Kate, which would have been great successes, but for sundry "ifs," and abandoned as hopeless the task of teaching Cæsar, Miss Clare's asthmatic old dog, to stand upon his hind legs, and was now gazing drearily out on

the soaked garden, almost wishing the vacation over. Suddenly he turned to his sister, who was holding a skein of worsted for her aunt to wind, exclaiming, "Katie, I've struck a bright!"

"What is it?" she asked, understanding that he had had an inspiration of some sort. "An apparatus for getting at nuts without cracking them; or a chest-protector for Cæsar to wear in damp weather?"

"Neither; I'm going to rummage in the old bookcase upstairs, and see if I can come across anything fit to read, or an adventure." And not being in the habit of letting the grass grow under his feet (if vegetation was ever known to develop in such unfavourable circumstances), he bounded away; while Miss Clare observed, rather anxiously, "When that boy goes adventure-seeking, it generally ends in a catastrophe; but I don't think he can do much mischief up there."

Ten minutes afterwards, Katie went to see how Aubrey was getting on, and found him doing nothing worse than polishing the covers of some very dirty old books with one of his best pocket-handkerchiefs. When she remonstrated with him, he recommended her to get a proper, ordained duster, and undertake that part of the programme herself. So presently she was quite busy, for Aubrey tossed the books out much faster than she could dust and examine them. Very discoloured, mouldy-smelling old books they were, of a remarkably uninteresting character generally, which perhaps accounted for their long abandonment to the dust and damp of that unused apartment. When the case was emptied, and the contents piled upon the floor, Aubrey said, "Now lend us a hand to pull the old thing out, and see what's behind."

"Spiders," replied Katie promptly, edging back.

"I'll have the satisfaction of a gentleman of the first spider that looks at you," said Aubrey, reassuringly. "Come, catch hold!"

So Katie "caught hold;" and between them they managed to drag the cumbrous piece of furniture sufficiently far out of the recess in which it stood for the boy to slip behind. The half-high wainscoting had in one place dissolved partnership with the wall; and obeying an impulse for which he could never account, Aubrey dived behind, fishing out, among several odd leaves and dilapidated covers, a small hymn-book bound in red leather. Kate took it to the window to examine, for the light was fading fast. On the fly-leaf was written in childish, curly-tailed letters, "Anna Clare; July 1815," followed by the exquisite poetical stanza commencing,—

"The grass is green, the rose is red;
Think of me when I am dead,"

which she read aloud to her brother. A minute afterwards, as she turned the brown-spotted leaves, there fell out a packet, a letter superscribed, "Miss Anna Clare; to be read on her twenty-first birthday, and when quite alone." Katie gasped, "Oh, look!" and dropped the paper as if it burned her fingers. Aubrey sprang forward, prepared to slay a giant spider, but when his eyes fell upon the writing which had so startled his sister, he too seemed petrified. They gazed fixedly into each other's eyes for a minute, then Aubrey said emphatically,—

"It's *that!*" And both rushed precipitately downstairs, exclaiming, "Auntie, auntie, we've found it!"

Now Miss Clare was just partaking of that popular refreshment "forty winks," and was some time before she could understand what had so greatly excited her young relations; but when at last it dawned upon her, she hastily brought out her spectacles, and lit the lamp, while every moment seemed an hour to the impatient children. When would she leave off turning the yellow packet in her fingers, and poring over the faded writing outside? At last the seal is broken, and two pairs of eager eyes narrowly watch Miss Clare's face as she scans the contents.

"It *is* the long-lost letter!" she exclaimed in astonishment. "Where did you find it?"

Both quickly explained, adding, "Do read it, auntie; what does Miss Marjorie say?"

So in a trembling voice Miss Clare read the words penned by a dying hand fifty years before,—

"MY DEAREST ANNA,—I feel that I have but a short time longer to live, and but one thing disturbs my peace. It is the presentiment that sooner or later the thoughtless extravagance of your brother George will bring you all into trouble. It is little I can do to avert this calamity, but years of economy have enabled me to save 280*l.* (which is concealed beneath the floor in my room, under the third plank from the south window, about ten inches from the wall). I wish you, niece Anna, to hold this money in trust, as a profound secret, and to be used *only* in case of an emergency such as I have hinted. In the event of none such taking place before your sister is of age, you are then to divide the money, equally between yourself, George and Lucy, to use as you each may please. Hoping that I have made my purpose clear, and that my ever trustworthy Anna will faithfully carry out my wishes, I pray that the blessing of God may rest richly on my nephew and nieces, and bid you, dearest girl, farewell.

"MARJORIE WESTFORD.

"January 2nd, 1825."

Miss Clare's eyes were dim when she finished these words, sounding, as they did, like a voice from the grave, while Kate and Aubrey sat in spellbound silence. The boy was the first to speak.

"Do you think it is still there?"

"There is no reason why it should not be," replied Miss Clare; "indeed it seems that this legacy, so strangely hidden for half a century, and as strangely brought to light, is to be the means by which our Father will bring us out of our present difficulties."

"Get a light, Katie, and let's look for the treasure; that will be the best way of making sure that our adventure isn't the result of a mince-pie supper," suggested Aubrey, producing his tool-box.

So they all proceeded to the room, now seldom entered, where Marjorie Westford breathed her last. It was almost empty, and the spot indicated in the letter was soon determined upon. Aubrey knelt down on the floor, and commenced, in a most unsystematic way, his task of raising the board; while Katie, trembling with excitement, dropped grease spots on his head from her tilted candlestick.

Aubrey's small tools were wholly inadequate to their task, and many were the cuts and bruises his inexperienced hands received before he at length succeeded in prising the stubborn plank.

There lay the mahogany box, which, with some trouble, owing to its weight, they succeeded in bringing to the surface. It fastened by a simple catch, and was filled with golden guineas.

When Kate bade Aubrey good-night upon the stairs, he detained her a minute to murmur with a soft light in his dusky eyes,—

"I'm so very, very glad your sacrifice isn't to be made, darling, but the will is just the same as the deed. I shall love you for it as long as you live; and better still," he added, with deepening colour and lowered voice, "God knows, and will love you too."

"THE COLONEL."

BY MARION DICKEN.

Dick was only thirteen years of age, but he was in love, and in love too with Captain Treves's wife, who, in his eyes, was spick-span perfection. In their turn Mrs. Treves's two little boys, aged six and five respectively, were in love with Dick, who appeared to them to be the model of all that a schoolboy ought to be.

It was in church on Easter Sunday that Dick first realised his passion, and then—as he glanced from Mrs. Treves to the captain's stalwart form—the hopelessness of it! He remarked, afterwards, to his brother Ted, a lieutenant in Treves's regiment, that Mrs. Treves looked "ripping" in grey. But Ted was busy with his own thoughts, in which, if the truth be told, the sermon figured as little as in those of his younger brother.

Dick was on very friendly terms with the Treves and was rather surprised to find that the captain and his wife treated him more like a little boy than a "chap of thirteen—in fact, almost fourteen," as he put it to himself. He used to take Jack and Roy out on the river and to the baths, where he taught them both to swim. To use Ted's own expression to a brother-sub, "Dick was making a thorough nursemaid and tutor of himself to those kids of the captain's." He *was* teaching them certainly, unconsciously, but steadily, a great many things.

Jack no longer cried when he blistered his small paws trying to scull, and when Roy thought of Dick, or the "colonel," as they called him, he left off making grimaces at, and teasing, his baby sister, because Dick had answered carelessly when Jack once offered to fight him, "No thanks, old boy, I only hit a chap my own size." Roy recognised the difference between tormenting a girl and fighting a boy.

About three weeks after Dick went back to school for the summer term, both the little Treves's fell ill, and Jack cried incessantly for "the colonel." Yet when kind old Colonel Duke came to see him one afternoon, and brought him some grapes, the child turned fretfully away and still cried, "'Colonel'; I want the 'colonel'!"

"But, Jack dear, this is the colonel," remonstrated his mother, gently smoothing the crumpled pillow.

But Jack still wailed fretfully, and would not be comforted.

Colonel Duke happened to remark on the incident at mess that evening, and Ted Lloyd knitted his brows, as if trying to solve some mental mystery. The result of his cogitations was an early visit to Mrs. Treves next day.

The children were worse. Roy was, indeed, dangerously ill; and neither his father nor mother could persuade Jack to take his medicine.

"We cannot think whom he means by 'colonel'," added the poor lady despairingly.

"That's just what I've come about, Mrs. Treves; they used to call my young brother that at Easter."

"You are sure, Mr. Lloyd?"

"Quite. I heard them myself more than once. I'll trot round and see the Mater, and we will wire for him if it will do any good."

That afternoon Dick received a telegram which sent him off full speed to his housemaster for the necessary permission to go home.

"Is Mater ill?" he asked breathlessly, as he bundled out of the train on to Ted, who bore the onrush heroically.

"No, she's quite well, only Treves's kids are ill."

"Well?" queried Dick rather indignantly, as he thought of the cricket-match on the morrow, in which he had hoped to take part.

"Well, you see, Dick, they're seriously ill, and they can't make the little 'un take his physic."

"Well, I can't take it for him, can I?" queried Dick, as they started home.

"Nobody wants you to, you little duffer. But the kids used to call you 'colonel,' and now he keeps crying for you. Perhaps if you order him to take the physic, he will—that's all."

"Oh!" briefly responded Dick.

He was sorry to hear that his whilom chums, the "captain" and "lieutenant," were ill. But weren't kids always having something or other, and would he always be sent for to dose them? "Rot!"

However, these thoughts abruptly left him, when, directly after tea, he went to the captain's and saw Mrs. Treves' pale and anxious face, and instead, his old allegiance, but deeper and truer, returned.

"Thank you, Dick," she said kindly in reply to his awkward tender of sympathy. And then they went upstairs.

By Jack's bed a glass of medicine was standing. A nurse was turning Roy's pillow, and Captain Treves stood by her, gnawing his long moustache.

Just then Jack's fretful wail sounded through the room for "'Colonel!' Daddy, Jack wants the 'colonel!'"

"I'm here, old man," said Dick, sitting down on the edge of the bed. "Drink this at once," he added, taking up the glass, as he remembered his brother's suggestion.

But Jack had clutched Dick's hand and now lay back sleepily.

Dick felt desperate. He glanced round. Captain and Mrs. Treves and the nurse were gathered round the other little white bed. Was Roy worse? With what he felt to be an unmanly lump in his throat, he leaned over the boy again.

"Jack, I say, Jack" (hurriedly), "if you drink this you shall be a captain."

Jack heard, and when Dick raised him up, he drained the glass.

"But Roy, Dick, he's a captain?"

"Roy shall be promoted too," replied Dick.

And just then the captain left the other bed and came over to Jack. Dick could see Mrs. Treves bending over Roy, and the nurse leaving the room. He looked up and saw that there were actually tears in the captain's eyes. He had never seen a soldier cry before, and guessed what had happened. Roy had indeed been promoted. He would never again "play soldiers" with Jack or Dick.

Jack was now sleeping quietly, and the doctor, who came in an hour later, pronounced him out of danger.

"Goodbye, my boy. We thought you'd like Roy's watch as you were fond of him," said the captain next day; and then Mrs. Treves not only shook hands, but stooped and kissed him.

Dick flushed, muttered some incoherent thanks, and went off to the station.

Dick reached school in time for the cricket-match, after all; but, fond as he was of cricket, he absented himself from the ground that afternoon, and spent the time printing off some photos of "two kids," as a chum rather scornfully remarked.

One of those "kids" is now a lieutenant in the regiment of which Dick is a captain, and, indeed, in a fair way to become a colonel—for the second time in his life.

NETTIE.

BY ALFRED G. SAYERS.

Nettie was a bright, fair girl of fifteen years of age, tall and graceful in movement and form, and resolute in character beyond her years. She was standing on the departure platform of the L. & N. W. Railway at Euston Square, watching the egress of the Manchester express, or rather that part of it which disclosed a head, an arm, and a cap, all moving in frantic and eccentric evolutions.

Tom, her brother, two years her senior, was on his way back to school for his last term, full of vague, if big, ideas of what he was going to be when, school days over, he should "put away childish things." "Most of our fellows," he had said loftily, as he stood beside his sister on the platform a few moments before, "go into the Army or Navy and become admirals or generals or something of that sort." And then he had hinted with less definiteness that his own career would probably combine the advantages of all the professions though he only followed one. But Tom soon dropped from these sublime heights to more mundane considerations, and his last words concerned a new cricket bat which Nettie was to "screw out of the gov'nor" for him, a new pup which she was to bring up by hand under his special directions, and correspondence, which on her part at least, was to be regular, and not too much occupied with details about "the kids."

Nettie sighed as she turned her steps homewards, and her handkerchief was damped by at least one drop of distilled emotion that bedewed the rose upon her cheek. Poor Nettie, she too was conscious of a destiny, and had bewildered thoughts of what she was going to be! She had opened her heart on this subject to her brother Tom during the holidays; but she had not received much encouragement, and at the present moment she was inclined to murmur at the reflection that the world was made for boys, and after all she was only a girl.

"What will you be?" Tom had said in answer to her question during one of their confidential chats. "You? why, you—well, you will stay with the mater, of course."

"Yes; but girls do all sorts of things nowadays, Tom," she had replied. "Some are doctors, some are authors, some are——"

"Blue-stockings," responded the ungallant Tom. "Don't be absurd, Net," he added patronisingly; "you'll stay with the pater and mater, and some day you will marry some fellow, or you can keep house for me, and then, when I am not with my ship or my regiment, of course I shall be with you."

Poor Nettie! She had formed an idea that the possibilities of life ought to include something more heroic for her than keeping house for her brother, and she had determined that she would not sink herself in the hum-drum of uneventful existence without some effort to avoid it; and so it happened that that same evening, after doing her duty by the baby pup and Tom's new cricket bat, she startled her father and mother by the somewhat abrupt and altogether unexpected question,—

"Father, what am I going to be?"

"Be?" repeated her father, drawing her on to his knee, "why, be my good little daughter as you always have been, Nettie. Are you tired of that, dear?"

But no, Nettie was not tired of her father's love, and she had no idea of being less affectionate because she wanted to be more wise and useful, and so she returned her father's caresses with interest, and treated her mother in the same way, so that there might be no jealousy; and then, sitting down in the armchair with the air of one commanding attention, harked back to the all-absorbing topic. "You know, father, there's Minnie Roberts, isn't there?"

"What if there is?" replied her father.

"Well, you know she's going to the University, don't you, dad?"

"No, I didn't."

"Well, she is. Then she'll be a doctor, or professor, or something. That's what I should like to be."

Mr. Anderson looked from his wife to his daughter with somewhat of surprise on his face. He was a just man; and he and his wife had but recently discussed the plans (including personal sacrifices) by which Master Tom's advancement was to be secured. Really, that anything particular needed to be done for Nettie had hardly occurred to him. He had imagined her going on at the High School for another year, say, and then settling down as mother's companion. His desire not to be harsh, coupled with his unreadiness, led Mr. Anderson to temporise. "Well, little girl," he said, "you plod on, and we'll have a talk about it." Nettie was in a triumphant mood. She had expected repulse, to be reminded of the terrible expense Tom was, and was to be, and she felt the battle already won. Doubtless the fact that Nettie was heartened was a great deal toward the success that was unexpectedly to dazzle her. She worked hard at school, and yet so buoyant was her spirit, that she found it easy to neglect none of her customary duties at home. She helped dust the drawing-room, and ran to little Dorothy in her troubles as of yore; and Mrs. Anderson came to remark more and more often to her husband, what a treat it would be when Nettie came

home for good. "You can see she has forgotten every word about the idea of a profession," said that lady; "and I'm very glad. She's the light of the house." Forgotten! Oh no! Far from it! as they were soon to realise. The end of the term came—Tom was expected home on the morrow, Saturday. In the afternoon Nettie walked in from school, her face ablaze with excitement. For a moment she could say nothing; so that her mother dropped her work and wondered if Nettie had picked up a thousand-pound note. Then came the announcement—"Mother! I've won a Scholarship!"

"You have?"

"Yes, mother dear, I'm the QUEEN VICTORIA SCHOLAR!" Nettie stood up and bowed.

"And what does that do for you?"

"Why, I can go on studying for my profession for three years, and it won't cost father a penny!"

"What profession, dear?"

"I don't know, mother, what. But I want to be a doctor."

"A what!"

"A doctor, mother. Minnie Roberts is studying for a doctor; and I think it's splendid."

"What! cut people open with a knife!"

"Yes, mother, if it's going to do them good."

"But, my dear——"

However, Nettie knew very little about the medical profession; she only knew that Minnie Roberts went about just in the independent way that a man does, and was studying hard, and seemed very lively and witty. So detailed discussion was postponed to congratulation, inquiry, and surmise. "What *will* Tom say?" Nettie found herself continually asking herself, and herself quite unable to answer herself. What Tom did actually say we must detail in its proper place, which comes when Mr. Anderson and Nettie go to meet him at the station. They were both rather excited, for Mr. Anderson had, to tell the truth, felt somewhat guilty towards his little daughter over the question of the profession. While he had flattered himself that the idea was a passing fancy, she had cherished his words of encouragement, and had made easier the realisation of her dream by her steady improvement of the opportunity at hand, viz., her school work.

Tom kissed Nettie and shook hands with his father, and then it was that Nettie said,—

"Tom, I've won a Scholarship!"

And then it was, standing beside his luggage, that Tom replied,—

"Sennacherib!"

Though not strictly to the point, no other word or phrase could have shown those who knew Tom how much he was moved. Nettie knew. She was rather sorry Tom had to be told at all, for he had been quite unsuccessful this term, a good deal to his father's disappointment; and Nettie was sure he must feel the contrast of her own success rather keenly. They talked of other things on the way home, and directly Tom had kissed his mother and Dorothy and Joe, Nettie said, "Now shall we go and get the pup? I can tell you he's a beauty!"

"What a brick you are, Net, to think of it!" said Tom. "Yes; let's go."

These holidays were very delightful to Nettie and Tom; that young man permitted, even encouraged, terms of perfect equality. He forgot to patronise or disparage his sister or her sex. Perhaps his sister's success and his own lack of it had made him feel a bit modest. Nettie had explained her achievement both to herself and others by the fact that she had been so happy. And she was right. Some people talk as though a discipline of pain were necessary for all people in order to develop the best in them. That is not so. There are certain temperaments found in natures naturally fine, to whom a discipline of pleasure is best, especially in youth, and happily God often sends pleasure to these: we mean the pleasure of success; the pleasure of realising cherished plans; the pleasure of health and strength to meet every duty of life cheerfully. And now Nettie began to build castles in the air for Tom. Tom would go to Sandhurst; he would pass well; he would have a commission in a crack regiment. And Tom's repentance of some former disparagement of the sex was shown in such remarks as "that Beauchamp major—you know, the fellow I told you a good deal about."

"Oh yes, a fine fellow!"

"Well, I don't know, Net—I begin to think he's a beastly idiot. That fellow was bragging to me the other day that he bullied his sisters into fagging for him when he was at home. I think that's enough for me." And so holidays again came to an end, to Nettie's secret delight. She hated parting with Tom, but she longed to be back at her work.

Six years passed away and Nettie's career had been one of unbroken success. She had proceeded

to Newnham and had come out splendidly in her examinations. Only one thing clouded her sky. Tom had not been successful. In spite of all that coaching could do, he had been plucked at Sandhurst, and the doctor had prohibited further study for the present. Nettie wrote to him constantly, making light of his failure, and assuring him of ultimate success. And now she was to make her start in her chosen profession. Before long she would be able to write herself "Nettie Anderson, M.D." and she was then to go into practice with her elder friend, Minnie Roberts. Little paragraphs had even appeared in some of the papers that "for the first time in the history of medicine in England, two lady graduates in medicine are to practise in partnership." Miss Roberts was already settled in one of the Bloomsbury squares, and had a constantly increasing circle of clients.

One Saturday afternoon in October the inaugural banquet was held. Nettie had a flat of her own in the house, and here the feast was spread. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Tom, and the two doctors formed the company. They were all so proud of Nettie that they almost forgot Tom's lack of success. There was what is understood as a high time. Who so gay and bright as Nettie! Who so gentle and courteous as Tom! (I am afraid a discipline of failure is best for some of us!) How the time flew! How soon mother and Nettie had to go to Nettie's room for the mother to don her bonnet and get back home in decent time!

"But you'll be marrying, you know, some day, Nettie."

"Ah! time will show, mother dear," was Nettie's answer; and then she added, "but if I do it will be from choice and not necessity."

THE MAGIC CABINET.

BY ALBERT E. HOOPER.

"A castle built of granite.
With towers grim and tall;
A castle built of rainbows,
With sunbeams over all:—
I pass the one, in ruins,
And mount a golden stair,—
For the newest and the truest,
And the oldest and the boldest,
And the fairest and the rarest,
Is my castle in the air."—M.

I. ON TWO SIDES OF THE CABINET.

"Plenty of nourishment, remember, Mr. Goodman," said the doctor; "you must really see that your wife carries out my instructions. And you, my dear lady, mustn't trouble about want of appetite. The appetite will come all in good time, if you do what I tell you. Good-afternoon."

Little Grace Goodman gazed after the retreating figure of the doctor; and when the door closed behind him and her father, she turned to look at her mother.

Mrs. Goodman looked very pale and ill, and as she lay back in her cushioned-chair she tried to wipe away a tear unseen. But Grace's sight was very sharp, and she ran across the room and threw her arms impetuously round her mother's neck.

"Oh, mother, are you very miserable?" she asked, while her own lip quivered pitifully.

"No, no, my darling, not 'very miserable,'" answered her mother, kissing the little girl tenderly. "Hush! don't cry, my love, or you will make father unhappy. Here he comes."

Mr. Goodman re-entered the room looking very thoughtful; but as he came and sat down beside his wife, he smiled and said cheerfully, "You will soon be well now, the doctor says. The worst is over, and you only need strengthening."

Mrs. Goodman smiled sadly.

"He little knows how impossible it is to carry out his orders," she said.

"Not impossible. We shall be able to manage it, I think."

A sudden light of hope sprang into the sick lady's eyes.

"Is the book taken at last, then?" she asked eagerly.

"The book? No, indeed. The publishers all refuse to have anything to do with it. It is a risky business, you see, to bring out such an expensive book, and I can't say that I'm surprised at their

refusal."

"How are we to get the money, then?" asked his wife. "We have barely enough for our everyday wants, and we cannot spare anything for extras."

"We must sell something."

Mrs. Goodman glanced round the shabbily furnished room, and then looked back at her husband questioningly.

"Uncle Jacob's Indian cabinet must go," said he.

Mrs. Goodman looked quickly towards a large black piece of furniture which stood in a dusky corner of the room, and after a moment's pause, she said: "I don't like to part with it at all. It may be very foolish and superstitious of me, but I always feel that we should be unwise to forget Uncle Jacob's advice. You know what he said about it in his will."

"I can't say that I remember much about it," answered her husband. "I have a dim remembrance that he said something that sounded rather heathenish about the cabinet bringing good luck to its owners. I didn't pay much attention to it at the time, because I don't believe in anything of the sort. And besides, your Uncle Jacob was a very peculiar old gentleman; one never knew what to make of his odd fancies and whims."

"Yes, you are quite right; he was a strange old man; but somehow I never shared the belief of most people that his intellect was weak. I think he had gathered some out-of-the-way notions during his life in India; but his mind always seemed clear enough on practical questions."

"Well, what was it he said about the Indian cabinet?"

"He said that he left it to us because we had no need for any of his money—we had plenty of our own then!—that the old Magic Cabinet, as he called it, had once been the property of a rich Rajah, who had received it from the hands of a wise Buddhist priest; that there was something talismanic about it, which gave it the power of averting misfortune from its owners; and that it would be a great mistake ever to part with it."

Mr. Goodman laughed uneasily.

"I wonder what Uncle Jacob would say now," said he. "When he amused himself by writing all that fanciful rubbish in his will, he little thought that we should be reduced to such want. It is true, he never believed that my book would be worth anything; but he could not foresee the failure of the bank and the loss of all our money. I scarcely think, if he were alive now, that he would advise me to keep the cabinet and allow you to go without the nourishment the doctor orders."

The invalid sighed.

"I suppose there is no help for it," she answered. "The old cabinet must go; for I am useless without strength, and I only make the struggle harder for you."

All the time her father and mother had been talking, little Grace had been looking from one to the other with eager, wide-open eyes; and now she cried: "Oh, mother! must the dear old black cabinet be taken away? And sha'n't we ever see it again!"

Her father drew her between his knees and smoothed back her fluffy golden hair as he said gently: "I know how you will miss it, dear; you have had such splendid games and make-believes with it, haven't you? But you will be glad to give it up to make mother well, I know."

"Will mother be quite well when the old cabinet is gone away?" asked Grace. "Will her face be bright and pink like it used to be? And will she go out of doors again?"

"Yes, darling, I hope so. I am going out now to ask a man to come and fetch away the cabinet, and while I am gone I want mother to try and get 'forty winks,' so you must be very quiet."

"Yes, I will," answered Grace quickly. "I must go and say 'good-bye' to the cabinet."

Saying this, the little girl ran to the corner of the room in which the cabinet stood; and Mr. Goodman, bending down, kissed his wife's pale face very tenderly, whispered a word of hope and comfort in her ear, and then left the room; and a moment later the sound of the house-door told that he had gone out.

Gradually the twilight grew dimmer and dimmer in the little room; and as the dusky shadows, which had been lurking in the corners, began to creep out across the floor and walls and ceiling, Mrs. Goodman fell into a peaceful sleep.

But little Grace sat quite still on the floor, gazing at the Indian cabinet.

It was a large and handsome piece of furniture made of ebony, which looked beautifully black and shiny; and the folding doors in front were carved in a wonderful fashion, and inlaid with cunning silver tracery. The carvings on these doors had always been Grace's special delight; they had served as her picture books and toys since her earliest remembrance, and she knew every line of them by heart. All the birds, and beasts, and curly snakes were old friends; but Grace paid little attention to any of them just now. All her thoughts were given to the central piece of carving, half of which was on each of the doors of the cabinet.

This centre piece was carved into the form of an Indian temple, with cupolas and towers of raised work; and in front of the temple door there sat the figure of a solemn looking Indian priest.

Of all Grace's toy friends this priest was the oldest and dearest, and as she looked at him now, the tears began to gather in her eyes at the thought of parting with him. And no wonder. He was really a most delightful little old man. His long beard was made of hair-like silver wire, the whites of his eyes were little specks of inlaid ivory, and in his hand he balanced a small bar of solid gold, which did duty as the latch of the cabinet doors.

Grace gazed at the priest long and lovingly, and at last, shuffling a little nearer to the cabinet, she whispered: "I don't like saying 'good-bye' a bit. I wish you needn't go away. Don't you think you might stay after all if you liked, and help mother to get well in some other way? You belong to a magic cabinet, so I suppose you are a magic priest, and can do all sorts of wonderful things if you choose."

The priest nodded gravely.

Then, of course, Grace gave a sudden jump, and started away from the cabinet with a rather frightened look on her face.

It was one thing to talk to this little carved wooden figure in play, and make believe that he was a real live magic priest, but it was quite another to find him nodding at her.

She felt very puzzled, but seeing that the figure was sitting quite still in front of the temple, she drew close up to the cabinet again, and presently she whispered: "Did you nod at me just now?"

The ebony priest bowed his head almost to the ground.

There could be no doubt about it this time. He was a magic priest after all. Grace did not feel frightened any more. A joyful hope began to swell in her heart, and she said, "Oh, I'm so glad! You won't go away and leave us, will you?"

For a moment the figure sat motionless, and then the head gave a most decided shake, wagging the silver beard from side to side.

"What a dear old darling you are," exclaimed Grace in delight. "But you know how ill poor mother is, and how much she wants nice things to make her strong. You will have to get them for her, if you stay, you know."

Again the priest nodded gravely.

"It isn't a very easy thing to do," said Grace, holding up a warning finger. "My father is ever such a clever man, and he can't always manage it. Why, he has written a great big book, all on long sheets of paper—piles, and *piles*, and *PILES* of them, and even that hasn't done it! I shouldn't think you could write a book."

The figure of the priest sat perfectly still, and as she talked Grace thought that the expression on his face grew more solemn than ever, and even a little cross, so she hastened to say, "Don't be offended, please. I didn't mean to be rude. I know you must be very magic indeed, or you couldn't nod your head so beautifully. But do you really think you can get mother everything the doctor has ordered?"

A fourth time the priest nodded, and this time he did it more emphatically than ever.

Little Grace clapped her hands softly.

"Oh! *do* begin at once, there's a dear," she whispered coaxingly.

Very slowly, as if his joints were stiff, the priest raised his arms, and allowed the golden bar in his hands to revolve in a half-circle; and then the Indian temple split right down the middle, and the two doors of the Magic Cabinet swung wide open.

Grace lost sight of the little priest, and the temple, and all the other wonderful carvings as the folding doors rolled back on their hinges; and she gazed into the cabinet, wondering what would happen next. She had often seen the inside of the cabinet, so, beautiful as it was, it was not new to her, and she felt a little disappointed. Half of the space was filled up by tiny drawers and cupboards, all covered with thin sheets of mother-of-pearl, glowing with soft and delicate tints of pink and blue; but the other half was quite unoccupied, and so highly polished was the ebony, that the open space looked to Grace like a square-cut cave of shiny black marble.

For some moments the little girl sat quite still, gazing into the depths of the cabinet; but as nothing happened she got upon her feet, and, drawing a step nearer, put her head and half her body inside the open space. Everything looked very dark in there, and she felt more disappointed than ever; but, just as she was about to draw out her head again, she noticed a shining speck in one of the top corners at the back of the cabinet. This was not the first time she had seen it, and she had always determined to look at it closer; but the cabinet stood on carved feet, like the claws of an alligator, and Grace's outstretched hand could not quite reach the back. But now the cabinet might be going away she felt that she must delay no longer, so she quickly crossed the floor and fetched the highest hassock from under the table, and planted it in front of the dark opening. Getting upon this, she climbed right into the open space, and a moment later she was sitting on the ebony floor of the Magic Cabinet.

It was rather a tight squeeze; but Grace did not mind that in the least: she drew her feet close in under her, and laughed with glee. Now she could see the shining speck plainly. It was only a tiny bright spot in the centre of a tarnished metal knob. The knob was an ugly, uninteresting-looking thing, and it was fixed so high up in the dark corner that she would never have noticed it if it had not been for the bright speck in the centre.

Wondering what the knob could be for, Grace gave it a sharp pull; but she could not move it. Next she pushed it; and then——

Bang!

The folding doors fell to with a slam, everything became suddenly dark, and Grace found herself shut inside the Magic Cabinet. Just for an instant she felt too startled to move; but when she recovered from her surprise, instead of trying to open the doors of the cabinet, she felt for the little metal knob again, and then pushed at it with all her might.

First there was a sharp snap, like the turning of a lock; and then she heard a harsh, grating sound, as the back of the cabinet slid slowly aside and revealed—what do you think?

The wall of the room behind? A secret cupboard?

No, neither of these.

Directly the back of the cabinet moved aside a sudden and brilliant flash of light dazzled Grace's eyes, and she was obliged to cover them with her hands. But it was not long before she began to peep between her fingers, and then she almost cried out for joy.

It seemed that a scene of fairyland had been spread out before her, but not in a picture, for everything she saw looked as real as it was beautiful. Grace found that she was no longer sitting in a dark and narrow cabinet, but on the top step of a marble stairway, which led down to a lake of clear and shining water. This lake, on which numbers of snowy swans swam in and out among the lily beds, stretched out far and wide, and on its banks, among flower-decked trees and shrubs, stately palaces and temples were built, whose gilded domes and marble terraces glistened brightly in the sunshine.

All this Grace took in with one delighted glance, but it was as quickly forgotten in a new and greater surprise that awaited her.

Gently but swiftly over the surface of the shining lake there glided a wonderful boat which glimmered with a pearly lustre, and as the breeze, filling its sails of purple silk, brought it closer to the steps, Grace gave a glad cry and sprang to her feet. A tall, white-bearded man, who stood in the prow of the boat, waved a long golden wand over his head, and Grace clapped her hands in glee.

"It's my dear, dear Indian priest off the door of the cabinet," she cried. "But how tall and beautiful he has grown!"

Before she could say another word the boat of pearl sailed up alongside the bottom marble step, and the old man beckoned to her to come down. She needed no second bidding, but ran lightly down the stairs and sprang into his outstretched arms.

"What a dear, good magic priest you are to come," she said, as he put her into a cosy place on some cushions at the bottom of the boat. "And what a lovely place this is! Do you live here?"

"Sometimes," answered the old man, with a grave smile.

"Oh, of course; I forgot. You live on the door of the Magic Cabinet sometimes. You have been there quite a long time. Ever since I can remember anything you have sat in front of the little carved temple. Don't you find it dull there sometimes?"

"How do you know I don't go away while you are asleep?"

"I never thought of that," said Grace. "But please tell me, where is the Magic Cabinet now?"

The old priest was busy attending to the sails of the boat, which was now shooting swiftly away from the shore; but at the question he looked up and pointed towards the top of the steps with his golden wand.

Grace looked and saw a lovely little temple built of inlaid coloured marbles.

"Is that really the back of our dear old black cabinet?" she cried. "How pretty it is! I wonder why we have never found it out."

"Everything has two sides," said the old man, "and one is always more beautiful than the other; and, strange to say, the best side is generally hidden. It can always be found if people wish for it; but as a rule they don't care to take the trouble."

Grace looked very earnestly into the priest's face while he spoke; and after he had finished she was so long silent that at last he asked, "What are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking about your face," she answered. "You won't think me rude, will you?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, of course, you are just my dear old Indian priest, with the strange, dark face and nice white beard, exactly like I have always known you, only ever so much bigger and taller; and I'm sure that long wand is much finer than the little gold bar you generally hold; but I can't help thinking you are just a little like my mother's Uncle Jacob, who left us the Magic Cabinet. I have often looked at him in the album, and your eyes have a look in them like his. You don't mind, do you?"

"Not at all," answered the old man, smiling kindly; and then he went back to the sails again, because the boat was nearing a little island.

"Are we going to get out here?" asked Grace.

"Yes; you want me to do something for you, don't you?" And then, without waiting for an answer, he pulled some silken cords, which folded up the purple sails like the wings of a resting-bird, and the boat grounded gently, and without the slightest shock, on a mossy bank.

Taking the little girl in his arms, the old man sprang ashore. Bright flowers and ripe fruits grew in abundance on this fairy-like island, and birds of gorgeous plumage flew hither and thither, filling the sunny air with music.

But the old priest did not seem to notice any of these things. He led Grace by the hand up the mossy bank, and through a thicket of flowering shrubs into a glade, in the centre of which he halted and said, "Now, what is it to be?"

"Oh, I can't choose," said Grace, looking eagerly up into his face. "You know I want mother to be quite well; and I don't want you or the Magic Cabinet to go away from us. But I don't know what you had better do. Please, please, do whatever you like; I know it will be nice."

The old priest smiled, and struck the ground with his golden wand. Then there was such a noise that Grace had to cover up both her ears; and at the same time, out of the ground, at a little distance, there rose a great red-brick house, with queer twisted chimneys and overhanging gable-ends.

Grace stared with astonishment from the house to the gravely-smiling priest; and at last she cried, "Why, it is our dear old home where we used to live before we got so poor! I must be asleep and dreaming."

"Well, and if you are, don't you like the dream?" asked her old friend.

"Yes, yes, it's a beautiful dream; it can't be true," said Grace; and then she added quickly, "May we go into the house?"

"Yes, if you like," he answered; and he took her by the hand, and led her up the steps and through the doorway.

II. UNCLE JACOB'S GIFT.

When Grace passed through the doorway of the red-brick house, which the old priest had raised in such a magical fashion out of the ground, she looked eagerly round the hall, and then clapped her hands and cried, "Why, I do believe everything is here just as it used to be. I don't remember all these beautiful pictures and things; but mother and father have often told me about them. Oh, I wish they could be here to see!"

Her guide did not answer, but still holding her by the hand, he led her into a spacious room. It was so pretty that it almost took Grace's breath away. The softness of the carpets, the colours of the curtains and other drapery, the glittering mirrors on the walls, everything she saw was new and wonderful to her, and seemed like nothing so much as a story out of the "Arabian Nights."

But before she could do anything more than give one little gasp of delight, the old Indian priest at her side waved his golden wand.

Then a curtain which hung before a doorway at a little distance was suddenly looped up, and, with a light step, Grace's mother, looking rosy and well, came into the room.

Grace gave the old man's hand a hard squeeze, but although she had a great longing to run straight into her mother's arms, some strange feeling held her back. After feasting her eyes for a moment on her mother's bright and happy face, she whispered, "Where's father?"

Again the wonderful golden wand was raised, and then the curtain which had fallen into its place before the doorway was pushed hastily aside, and Grace saw her father.

All traces of sorrow and care had left his face; he held his head high, his eyes shone with a glad light, and in his hands he carried a large book bound in white and gold.

As he entered the room, Mrs. Goodman turned, and with a little cry of joy went to meet him. Then an expression came into her father's face which Grace could not understand, as silently, and with bowed head, he gave the beautiful book into his wife's hands.

"At last!" cried Grace's mother, taking it from him, and her voice was broken by a sob, while the

tears gathered in her eyes; but still Grace could see that she was very happy.

Grace was very happy, too, and she could scarcely take her eyes from her father and mother when she heard the voice of the Indian priest speaking to her.

"Is there anything more you would like?" the old man asked.

"Oh, how kind and good you are!" cried Grace, squeezing his hand harder than ever; "and how ungrateful I am to forget all about you. You have chosen the loveliest things."

"But don't you want anything for yourself?" asked her strange friend. "You may choose anything you like."

Grace looked all round the big room, and it seemed so full of pretty things that at first she could not think of anything to wish for; but suddenly she gave a little jump and cried: "The Magic Cabinet! It isn't here; and I would like to have it, please."

The old man looked grave; but he answered at once: "You have chosen, so you must have it; for in this country a choice is too serious a thing to be taken back. If you don't like it you must make the best of it. But you know you can't be at both sides of the cabinet at one and the same time. Come with me."

Grace felt a little uncomfortable as the old man led her quickly across the room and through the curtained doorway by which her father and mother had entered.

Directly the curtain fell behind them she found that they were in the dark; and, although she still held her friend's hand, she began to be afraid.

"Oh, whatever is going to happen? I can't see anything at all!" she cried.

"I am going to wave my golden wand," answered the slow and solemn voice of the Indian priest.

As he spoke there was a vivid flash of light. Little Grace gave a violent start, and rubbed her eyes; and then—and then she burst into tears.

For what do you think that sudden flash of light had shown her?

It had shown her that she was back again in the shabby little home she had known so long; that her mother, pale and ill as ever, was just awakening from her sleep; that her father had returned and was lighting the lamp; that the little carved figure of the Indian priest was sitting motionless before the temple on the doors of the Magic Cabinet; and, showing her all this, it also showed her that she had been fast asleep and dreaming.

It was too hard to bear. To think that the wonderful power of the magic priest, the beautiful fairy-like country, the dear old home, her mother's health and happiness, and her father's book,—to think that all these delightful things were only parts of a strange dream was a terrible disappointment to Grace, and she cried as if her heart would break.

"Why, darling," said her father, crossing the room and lifting up the little girl in his strong arms, "is it as bad as all that? Can't you bear to part with the old cabinet, even for mother's sake?"

"It's—it's not that," sobbed Grace, hiding her face on his shoulder. "I—I wish we could keep the cabinet; but it's not that. It's my dream."

"Your dream, dear? Well, come and tell mother and me all about it."

Mr. Goodman sat down in a chair beside his wife, and when she could control her sobs, Grace told them the whole story of her strange journey to the other side of the Magic Cabinet.

When she had finished her father said: "Well, darling, it was a very pleasant dream while it lasted; but beautiful things can't last for ever any more than ugly ones. It is no wonder that you should have had such a dream after all our talk about Uncle Jacob's fancies, and the Buddhist priest, and the good fortune that was supposed to come to the owners of the Magic Cabinet."

"Yes, I'm not surprised about all that, especially as Grace has always made-believe about that funny little priest," said Mrs. Goodman; "but I can't think what set her dreaming about a knob inside the cabinet."

"Oh, that's not only a dream," cried Grace. "I have often seen the little knob, and I have pushed it and pulled it, but I can never make it move."

"Why didn't you tell us about it? I'm sure I have never seen it," said her mother.

"Come and show it to me now," said Mr. Goodman, putting Grace off his knee, and taking the lamp from the table.

Grace, followed by her mother and father, crossed over to the corner in which the Magic Cabinet stood. The lamp was placed on a chair just in front of it; and then Grace, with rather a reproachful glance at the figure of the Indian priest, twisted round the little gold bar, and opened the two ebony doors.

"There!" cried Grace, stooping down, "I can just see the knob; but you can't get low enough. You can feel it, though, if you put your hand into this corner."

Guided by the direction in which her finger pointed, Mr. Goodman thrust his hand right back into the darkest corner of the cabinet; and presently he said, "Yes, I can certainly feel something hard and round like a little button. But I can't move it."

As he spoke he pulled at the little knob with a force that shook the cabinet in its place.

"Push it, father!" cried Grace eagerly. "That's what I did in my dream."

Mr. Goodman obeyed, and instantly there was a low musical "twang," like that caused by the striking of a Jew's harp, or the quick vibration of a piece of watch-spring; a sharp click followed, and something was heard to fall on to the ebony floor of the cabinet.

Mrs. Goodman held the light closer, and in a moment her husband said, "Here is a little secret door hinged down to the bottom of the cabinet. The knob must have been fixed to a spring, and in pressing it I have released the catch of the door, which has fallen flat, leaving a small square opening."

"Is there anything inside?" asked Grace, in a hurried, excited whisper.

"Let me see," said her father, thrusting in his hand again. "Ah, yes! A little drawer!"

A moment later he stood upright, holding a tiny drawer of sweet-smelling sandal-wood in his hand.

"Come along to the table," he said; "we will soon see if there is anything nice inside."

Although it was evident that he was trying to speak carelessly, there was a strange eagerness in his manner; and as Mrs. Goodman set the lamp on the table, the light revealed a spot of bright colour on each of her pale cheeks; and as for Grace, she was in raptures.

"I know—I *know* it's something beautiful," she cried; "and I believe my priest is a magic priest after all."

They all three gathered round the light, and Mr. Goodman laid the little secret drawer on the table.

The drawer seemed to be quite full, but its contents were completely covered by a neatly-folded piece of Indian silk. This was quickly removed; and under it there lay an ivory box of delicate workmanship. It fitted closely into the drawer, and Mr. Goodman lifted it out with great care. On opening the lid he revealed a second box; and this was so beautiful that it drew exclamations of delight from both Grace and her mother. The inner box was made of gold, and it was covered with fruit and flowers and birds, all wrought in wonderful *repoussé* work.

There was some difficulty in finding how this golden box was to be opened; but a little examination brought to light a secret spring, and at the first pressure the lid of the box flew back and the central treasure of the Magic Cabinet was exposed to view.

Grace gave a cry of disappointment, for, lying in a snug little nest of pink cotton-wool, she saw only a dull, ugly-looking stone.

Mrs. Goodman did not speak, but looked earnestly at her husband as he took the stone from its resting-place and held it close under the light. He took a glass from his pocket and examined it carefully for a moment, and then laid it back in the golden box again, and said, "It is a diamond, and, I believe, a very valuable one."

"But it isn't a bit pretty and sparkly like the diamonds in the shop windows," said Grace. "What is the good of it?"

"It is a wonderful magic gift," answered her father. "All that money can do for us, this dull-looking stone can do. It can buy all the things mother needs to make her strong and well."

"And it can print father's book, and make us all as happy as we were in your dream," said her mother.

Mr. Goodman now took the little sandal-wood drawer in his hand again, and, under another piece of Indian silk, he found a letter.

"My dear, this is for you," he said; "and see—surely this must be your Uncle Jacob's writing?"

Mrs. Goodman took the envelope from his hand, and read the inscription, which was written in strange, angular characters:

"TO MY NIECE."

Her hand shook a little as she broke the seal and drew out a small sheet of paper covered closely with the same writing, and her voice was unsteady as she read the old man's letter aloud.

"My dear Niece,—When my will is read you may be surprised to find that I have left you only one gift—my old Indian cabinet. But I value it very highly, and I believe that for my sake you will never willingly part with it. I am rich, and if you needed money I could leave you plenty; but you have enough and to spare at present, and I hope you will never know the want of it. But still, I mean to make one slight provision for you. Authors are not always good men of business, and

your husband may lose his money; and however great and good his book may be, it may be rejected by the world, and you may some day be poor. I shall place an uncut diamond of some value in the secret drawer of the old cabinet, hoping that you may find it in a time of need. You may wonder why I trust to such a chance; but some wise man has said that *all chance is direction which we cannot see*, and I believe he is right, so I shall follow my whim. If you should discover the secret at a time when you are not in need of money, keep the gem uncut as a wonderful work of nature; there are not many like it in the world. But if the money it can bring you will be useful, do not hesitate to sell it; it will fetch a high price. In any case, accept it as the last gift of your affectionate

"UNCLE JACOB."

There was silence in the little room for a few moments after Uncle Jacob's letter had been read. Mr. Goodman led his wife back to her chair, and Grace stood solemnly waiting for somebody to speak.

At last her father looked at her with a bright smile.

"We must be very thankful to Uncle Jacob for his gift," he said; "but we mustn't forget that it was your wonderful dream which led us to the discovery."

"I can't help thinking that my dear Indian priest had something to do with it. You know he is a magic one; and he did look something like Uncle Jacob in my dream, you know."

Her mother and father smiled; and Mr. Goodman rose briskly and said, "I must make haste and tell the man he needn't come to look at the cabinet."

"Oh, father," cried Grace, who was feeling a little puzzled, "won't it have to go away, after all?"

"No, my child," he answered; "mother will be able to get well without losing it now. We shall keep the Magic Cabinet."

"There, I thought my Indian priest wouldn't tell a story. I asked him to promise not to go away and leave us, and he shook his hand most beautifully."

Mr. Goodman bent down and kissed her; and then he left the room, and Grace, after taking a peep at her little Indian priest, ran and threw her arms lovingly round her mother's neck.

Uncle Jacob's gift was the means of making Grace's dream come true in a wonderful way. First of all her mother got well and the roses came back into her cheeks again; and then, instead of going on a magic journey through the back of the cabinet, the father and mother and their little girl went into the country, which was quite as beautiful, if not so strange, as the island in the shining lake. A little later the dear old red-brick home was bought again, and they all went to live there; Mr. Goodman's book was published, and it was bound in white and gold, just as Grace had seen it in her dream. And after it had been examined and admired, at Grace's suggestion it was put away under the watchful care of the little Indian priest in the Magic Cabinet.

GIRLHOOD AND YOUTH.

ONLY TIM.

BY SARAH DOUDNEY.

CHAPTER I.

"I say, Bee, are you coming?"

Claude Molyneux, in all the glory of fourteen summers and a suit of new white flannels, stands looking up with a slight frown of impatience at an open bay-window. It has been one of the hottest of August days; and now at four o'clock in the afternoon the haze of heat hangs over the sea, and makes a purple cloud of the distant coast. But, for all that, it is splendid weather; just the kind of weather that a boy likes when he comes to spend his holidays at the seaside; and Claude, who is an Indian-born boy, has no objection to a good hot summer.

As he stands, hands in pockets, on the narrow pebbled path under the window, you cannot help admiring the grace of his slim, well-knit figure, and the delicate moulding of his features. The fair skin is sun-tanned, as a boy's skin ought to be; the eyes, large and heavy-lidded, are of a dark grey, not brilliant, but soft; the light, fine hair is cropped close to the shapely head. He is a lad that one likes at the first glance; and although one sees, all too plainly, that those chiselled lips can take a disdainful curl sometimes, one knows instinctively that they may always be trusted to tell the simple truth. Anything mean, anything sneaky, could not live in the steady light of those dark-grey eyes.

"I say, Bee-e!" he sings out again, with a little drawl, which, however, does not make the tone less imperative. Master Claude is not accustomed to be kept waiting, and is beginning to think himself rather badly used.

"Coming," cries a sweet treble; and then a head and shoulders appear above the row of scarlet geraniums on the window-sill.

She is worth waiting for, this loitering Bee, whose thirteen years have given her none of the airs of premature womanhood. Her smooth round cheeks are tinted with the tender pink of the shell; her great eyes, of speedwell blue, are opened frankly and fearlessly on the whole world. Taken singly, not one of her features is, perhaps, quite faultless; but it would be hard to find a critic who could quarrel with the small face, framed in waves of ruddy golden hair that go tumbling down below her waist. You can see a freckle or two on the sides of her little nose, and notice that her slender hands are browned by the sea-side sun; for Bee is one of those lucky girls who are permitted to dabble freely in salt-water, and get all the benefit that briny breezes can bestow.

"I couldn't come sooner," she says in a tone of apology. "We always have to learn a hymn on Saturdays, and I've had *such* a bother with Dolly. She *would* want to know where 'the scoffer's seat' was, and if it had a cushion? And it does so worry me to try to explain."

"Oh, you poor thing—you must be quite worn out!" responds Claude, with genuine sympathy. "But make haste; you haven't got your hat on yet."

Bee makes a little dive, and brings up a wide-brimmed sailor's hat with a blue ribbon round it. She puts it on, fastens it securely under the silken masses of her hair, and then declares herself to be quite ready.

In the next instant the girl and boy are walking side by side along the shore, near enough to the sea to hear the soft rush of the tide. The blue eyes are turned inquiringly on Claude's face, which is just a shade graver than it ought to be on this delightful do-nothing day.

"Bee," he says after a silence, "I don't quite approve of your being great friends with Crooke—Tim Crooke. What a name it is! He may be a good sort of fellow, but he's not in our set at all, you know."

"He *is* a good sort of fellow," she answers. "There's no doubt about that. Aunt Hetty likes him very much. And he's clever, Claude; he can do ever so many things."

"I dare say he can," says Mr. Molyneux, throwing back his head and quickening his pace. "But you needn't have got so *very* intimate. We could have done very well without him to-day."

"He's Mr. Carey's pupil," remarks Bee quietly. "Aunt Hetty couldn't invite Mr. Carey and leave out Tim."

"Well, we could have been jolly enough without Mr. Carey. It's a mistake, I think, to see too much of this Tim Crooke; he isn't a gentleman, and he oughtn't to expect us to notice him particularly."

"He doesn't expect anything; we like him; he's our friend." The soft pink deepens on Bee's cheeks, and her ripe lips quiver a little. She loves Claude with all her heart, and thinks him the king of boys; but, for all that, she won't let him be unjust if she can help it.

Claude tramps on over sand, and pebbles, and seaweed, with lips firmly compressed and eyes gazing steadily before him. Bee, as she glances at him, knows quite well what Claude feels when he looks as if his features had got frozen into marble. And she knows, too, that he will be painfully, frigidly, exasperatingly polite to her all the evening.

Matters cannot go on like this, she says to herself in desperation. Claude arrived only yesterday, and here they are beginning his holiday with a dreadful disagreement. She has been counting the days that must pass before she sees him; writing him little letters full of sweet child-love and longing; wearing a pinafore over her newest frock, that it may be kept fresh and pretty for his critical eyes. And now he is here, walking by her side; and she has offended him.

Is it Heaven or the instincts of her own innocent little heart that teach this girl tact and wisdom? She doesn't proceed to inspire Claude with a maddening desire to punch Tim's head, by recounting a long catalogue of Mr. Crooke's perfections, as a more experienced person would probably have done. But she draws a shade closer to her companion, and presently he finds a tiny brown hand upon his white flannel sleeve.

"You dear old Empey," she says lovingly, "I've been wanting you for, oh, *such* a long time!"

The frozen face thaws; the dark grey eyes shine softly. "Empey" is her pet name for him, an abbreviation of "Emperor;" and he likes to hear her say it.

"And I've wanted you, old chap," he answers, putting his arm round the brown-holland waist.

"Empey, we always do get on well together, don't we?"

"Of course we do,"—with a squeeze.

"Then, just to please me, won't you be a little kind to poor Tim? He's not a splendid fellow like you, and he knows he never will be. I do so want you to forget that he's a nobody. We are all so much more comfortable when we don't remember things of that sort. You're not angry, Empey?"

"Angry; no, you silly old thing!"

And then she knows, without any more words, that he will grant her request.

The little boat that Claude has hired is waiting for them at the landing-place, and Bee steps into it with the lightest of hearts. Aunt Hetty and the rest will follow in a larger boat; but Mr. Molyneux has resolved to row Miss Beatrice Jocelyn himself.

He rows as he does everything, easily and gracefully, and Bee watches him with happy blue eyes as they go gliding over the warm sea. How still it is to-day! Beyond the grey rocks and yellow sands they can see the golden harvest fields full of standing sheaves, and still farther away there are low hills faintly outlined through the hot mist. The little town, with its irregularly-built terraces, looks dazzlingly white in the sunshine; but the church, standing on high ground, lifts a red spire into the hazy blue.

"I could live on the sea!" says Bee ecstatically. "You don't know what it costs me to come out of a boat; I always want this lovely gliding feeling to go on for ever. Don't you?"

"I like it awfully," he replies; "but then there are other things that I want to do by-and-by. I mean to try my hand at tiger-shooting when I go out to the governor."

"But, oh, Empey, it'll be a long time before you have to go out to India!"

Her red mouth drops a little at the corners, and her dimples become invisible. He looks at her with a gleam of mischief in his lazy eyes.

"What do you call a long time?" he asks. "Just a year or two, that's nothing. Never mind, Bee, you'll get on very well without me."

"Oh, Empey!"

The great blue eyes glisten; and Claude is penitent in an instant.

"You ridiculous old chap!" he says gaily. "Haven't you been told thousands of times that my dad is your guardian, and as good as a father to you? And do you suppose that I'd go to India and leave you behind? You're coming too, you know, and you'll sit perched up on the back of an elephant to see me shoot tigers. What a time we'll have out there, Bee!"

"Do you really mean it?" she cries, with a rapturous face; blue eyes shining like sapphires, cheeks aglow with the richest rose.

"Of course I do. It was all arranged, years ago, by our two governors; I thought Aunt Hetty had told you. But I say, Bee, when the time *does* come, I hope you won't make a fuss about leaving England!"

"Not a bit of it," she says sturdily. "I shall like to see the Ganges, and the big water-lilies, and the alligators. But what's to become of Dolly?"

"I don't know; I suppose she'll have to stay with Aunt Hetty. You belong to *us*, you see, old girl; so you and I shall never be parted."

"No, never be parted," she echoes, looking out across the calm waters with eyes full of innocent joy.

CHAPTER II.

As soon as the boat grates on the shallows, two small bare-legged urchins rush forward to help Miss Jocelyn to land. But Bee, active and fearless, needs no aid at all, and reaches the pebbled beach with a light spring.

"Is tea nearly ready, Bob?" she asks, addressing the elder lad, who grins with delight from ear to ear.

"Yes, miss."

"And has your mother got an immense lobster, and a big crab, and heaps of prawns?"

"Yes, miss; whoppers, all of 'em."

"That's right; the sea does give us such appetites, doesn't it, Empey? I hope the others will be here soon."

"If they don't make haste they'll find only the shell of the lobster," he answers, joining her on the

shore. "I shall never be able to control myself if I take one look at him!"

"Then don't look at him, greedy!" she cries, clapping her hands, and dancing round and round him, while the fisherman's children stare at her wonderful golden locks. "I didn't forget your weakness for lobster; Aunt Hetty said I might arrange it all; and we shall have a splendid tea!"

He looks at her with his quiet smile, half amused, wholly loving.

"Don't be whirling like a Dervish, and making yourself too hot to eat anything," he says, putting a stop to her evolutions. "Let's saunter along the beach, and sit down a bit, my Queen Bee."

It is a bright, glistening beach, strewn with many-coloured pebbles and stones, brown, yellow, purple, crimson, and snow-white; there are empty shells in abundance, out of which charming pincushions can be constructed by skilful fingers; and, best of all, there are little heaps of delicate sea-weed, capable of being pressed out into tiny tree-like forms of coral-pink. Altogether, this strip of shore is a very treasury for children, and Bee can never come here without wanting to load her own pockets and everybody else's with heavy spoils.

Claude, who has already been presented with seven shell pincushions, a polished pebble, and three copy-books filled with gummed sea-weed, does not care to add to this valuable collection of marine treasures. He arrests the little hand that is making a grasp at a clam, and says persuasively, "Stop till we come here again, Bee; don't pick up things this afternoon. It's so jolly to loaf about and do nothing, you know."

She obeys, after casting one regretful glance at that fascinating scalloped shell; and they stroll on in placid contentment. From this part of the coast they get a wide ocean outlook, and can gaze far away to the faint sea-line dissolving into the sky.

How calm it is! Beautiful, infinite sea, suggesting thoughts of voyages into unknown climes; of delightful secrets, yet unfathomed; of that enchanting "by-and-by" which is the children's Promised Land! The boy and girl are quiet for a time, dreaming their tranquil little dreams in the silence of utter satisfaction, while the waves wash the beach with the old lulling sound, and the rock-shadows are slowly lengthening on the sand.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Drake, the fisherman's wife, is busy with her preparations indoors. The cottage stands in a sheltered nook, a wooden dwelling, coated with tar, with nets hanging outside its walls, and a doorstep as white as snow. A few hardy geraniums in pots brighten the windows, but garden there is and can be none; the pebbly shore must serve the children as a playground. Rosy cheeks and sound lungs give proof that the little Drakes are thriving in their seaside home; and the youngest, a baby of two, lies placidly sucking its thumb on the sunny beach.

The boat containing Aunt Hetty and her party nears the landing, and just for one second Claude's brow darkens again. A sturdy lad is pulling strong strokes, with arms that seem almost as strong as Drake's; and the lad has a merry brown face and black curly hair, and wears a scarlet cap set jauntily on his head. It is Tim Croke, looking provokingly at his ease among his aristocratic friends, and quite prepared to enjoy himself.

Aunt Hetty, gentlest and kindest of elderly ladies, is assisted to land by the clergyman; while Tim takes up Dolly in his strong arms and places her safely on the shore. And then they all make for the cottage, Bee lingering in the rear with Claude, and winning him back to good-humour with a pleading look from the sunny blue eyes.

Surely this tea in the fisherman's kitchen is a banquet fit for the gods! It is a happy, hungry group that gathers round the deal table; Bee, doing the honours, pours out tea, and has a great deal of business on her hands; Aunt Hetty, at the other end of the board, keeps anxious watch over Dolly, who consumes prawns with frightful rapidity; Tim Croke beams on everybody and ministers to the wants of everybody, like the good-natured fellow that he is. And Claude, true to his unuttered promise, is kind to Tim in a pleasant, natural way.

At length the meal comes to an end; lobster, prawns, and crab are all demolished! and the last drop is drained out of the teapot. The party stroll out of doors, and revel in the cool of the evening air.

How is it that they begin to talk about heroes and heroism? Nobody can remember afterwards who started the subject; but certain it is that all, save Dolly, become interested in the conversation, and each has a word to say. Mr. Carey, the clergyman, is the leading talker; and he talks well, not priggishly, nor prosily, but speaks the right words in the right way, and wins the attention of his companions.

"Charles Kingsley has told us," he says, "'that true heroism must involve self-sacrifice;' it is the highest form of moral beauty. And it's a good thing when girls and boys fall to thinking about heroes and heroines; the thinking begets longing to do likewise. What was it that you were saying last night about your favourite hero, Tim?"

Tim lifts his head, and a rush of colour comes suddenly into his brown face.

"Jim Bludso is the fellow I like," he says, speaking quickly. "Wasn't it grand of him to hold the bow of the *Prairie Belle* against the bank, while she was burning? The passengers all got off, you know, before the smoke-stacks fell; only Bludso's life was lost. He let himself be burnt to save the rest."

"It was grand!" murmurs Bee, drawing a long breath.

"Yes," says Claude, bringing out his words slowly; "but I like Bert Harte's 'Flynn of Virginia' better still. You see, it was Jim Bludso's own fault that the steamer caught fire. Nothing would stop him from running a race with the *Movestar*; and so the *Prairie Belle* came tearing along the Mississippi—

"With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine!"

Jolly fun it must have been, but anybody could have foretold the end. As to Flynn, he was working on the Central Pacific Railway with his mate, a married man, when they found the whole concern giving way. And Flynn set his back against the wall in the dark drift, and held the timbers that were ready to fall, and sang out to Jake to run for his wife's sake."

"Oh, that was beautiful!" Bee sighs, with her blue eyes full of tears. "Flynn was only Flynn, wasn't he? But Jake had got somebody who couldn't live without him."

"That was just what Flynn felt, he was only Flynn," Claude replies, pleased that his hero is appreciated. "There was something splendidly deliberate in his self-sacrifice, don't you think so, sir?" he adds, turning to Mr. Carey.

"You are quite right," Mr. Carey answers thoughtfully.

Dolly comes running up to the group with shrill cries showing a little live crab in her small palm. A faint breeze is blowing off the sea, the west grows golden, and Aunt Hetty rises from her seat on the beach.

"We must be going home now," she says. "Claude, dear boy, will you look for my shawl?"

Claude obediently goes into the cottage to bring out the wraps; Mr. Carey hastens off to summon Drake; and Tim finds himself, for a few seconds, by Bee's side.

"Hasn't it been a lovely afternoon?" she says. "I've been so happy, haven't you? Oh, Tim, Claude has told me something!"

"Is it a secret?" Tim asks.

"No, he didn't say so. He says it was arranged years ago that he is to take me out to India, by-and-by. I'm so glad, Tim; I'd go anywhere with Claude."

The golden glow that shines on Tim's face seems to dazzle him, and he turns his head away from the speaker.

"I'm glad that you are glad, Bee," he says quietly. And that is all.

CHAPTER III.

Sunday morning dawns, hot and still, but clearer than the day before. Aunt Hetty and her nieces are sitting in the bay-windowed room, which has the usual furniture of seaside lodgings. They have just gone through their morning readings, and are ready to begin breakfast when Claude comes downstairs.

"How is the wrist, dear boy?" Aunt Hetty asks tenderly.

In jumping out of the boat last night he has managed to get a sprain, but is disposed to treat the matter lightly.

"Oh, it will soon be well, thanks," he says, taking his place, and giving a smile to Bee.

A little later they all set out for church, and Bee and Claude attract many an admiring glance as they walk together along the terraces. She wears her new frock, of some soft creamy stuff, and a quaint "granny" bonnet of ivory satin lined with pale blue; her short skirts display silk stockings and dainty little shoes of patent leather. Aunt Hetty, her tall thin figure draped with black lace, follows with Dolly, that little witch of eight years old, who is the pet and plague of the good lady's life. Other seaside visitors look after the party from Nelson Lodge, and discuss them freely among themselves; but they do not speak from personal knowledge of Lady Henrietta Jocelyn and her charges. All they know is that Lady Henrietta is the maiden aunt of the two girls, and that they were committed to her care by her brother who died in India.

The church is large, recently built, and smells strongly of mortar and varnish. In winter Mr. Carey has to preach to a scanty congregation; but in summer, when the lodging-houses are full, there is always a goodly number of worshippers.

The Jocelyns, whose home is in town, are accustomed to attend St. George's, Hanover Square, and never feel perfectly comfortable in this seaside church, which is, as Bee says, "so dreadfully new, and so unfurnished." She wishes they could all worship out of doors, among the rocks, with the blue sea murmuring near them; and yet she likes to hear Tim's voice, as he stands among the other surpliced boys and leads the singing.

Not that Tim is by any means an ideal chorister. His surplice makes his brown skin look browner,

and his curly head blacker than ever; and there is not a heavenly expression in his quick dark eyes. He is not in the least like one of those saintly boys we read of sometimes, who sing and lift their glances upward, and pass gently and speedily away from this wicked world. Judging from Tim's robust appearance he has many a year of earthly life before him, and many a hot battle to fight with the flesh and the devil.

But it is a marvellous voice that comes from the lad's massive throat; a voice that goes up like a lark's song, carrying heavy hearts to higher regions with its notes. In future days there are some who will remember that morning's anthem, which Tim sings with all his triumphant power and thrilling sweetness. A few fishermen, standing just within the doors, listen entranced, and one rugged old fellow puts up a hard hand to hide his eyes.

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

"Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever."

The service comes to an end, and Aunt Hetty and her children walk homeward along the terraces, under a glaring sun. The sea is still calm, but a light breeze is stirring, creeping off the water and breathing across the hot sand and shingle. Bee gives a deep sigh of satisfaction as the zephyr kisses her rosy cheeks.

"It's going to be just a little cooler, Empey," she says, as they draw near Nelson Lodge.

"Yes; it must be jolly on the sea to-day," he remarks, following a little cutter with longing eyes.

When the midday meal is ended, Aunt Hetty repairs to the sofa to read Jeremy Taylor; and Dolly, having discovered an illustrated copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress," is silently gloating over a picture of Apollyon, dragon-winged, with smoke coming out of his nostrils. For fifteen or twenty minutes Claude and Bee whisper by the open window, and then a gentle sound from the sofa tells them that good Jeremy has lulled Aunt Hetty to repose.

Claude gives Bee an expressive glance which plainly says, "Come along." Dolly's back is turned towards them; moreover, she has just lighted upon a whole family of fiends, and cannot take her eyes off the book. So the pair slip out of the room unheard and unseen, and gain the beach without let or hindrance.

They shun the pier, and foot it briskly along the shore till they have left most of the promenaders behind. On and on they go till they get to the low rocks, and the smooth yellow sands strewn with mussel and cockle shells; and then they sit down to rest, and listen to the music of the tide.

"You must take me to White Cove one day, Empey," says Bee, after a pause. "There are the most lovely shells to be found there, and agates, and things. Mr. Carey said that somebody once picked up a bit of amber there."

"I could row you there at once," returns Claude, "if it wasn't for this wrist of mine."

"Oh, but it's Sunday; Aunt Hetty wouldn't like us to go."

"She wouldn't mind it if I reasoned with her," responds Mr. Molyneux with perfect confidence in his own powers of argument. "All those little prejudices of hers could soon be got rid of."

"Drake says it's rather dangerous near White Cove," observes Bee after another silence; "because of all the sunken rocks, you know."

"No, I don't know: I've never been there. But you've set me longing to see the place, old chap."

"Oh, it's lovely!" she cries, with enthusiasm. "Thousands and thousands of sea-birds sit on the cliffs; and there are lots of little caves, all hung with silky green sea-weeds, so quiet and cool."

Claude leans back against the low rock behind him, and looks out across the sea with eyes half-closed. The horizon line is sharp and clear to-day; the blue of the sky meets, but does not mingle with the deeper blue of the ocean; a few white sails can be distinctly seen. Now and then a gull flashes silvery wings in the sunshine, and its cry comes wailing across the water to the shore.

"Why, there's Tim!" says Bee, pointing to a broad-shouldered figure moving leisurely along the sand.

He hears the well-known voice, and turns instantly.

"Well, he may make himself useful to-day," remarks Claude, with a sudden inspiration. "I daresay he'll be glad enough to row to the cove if we ask him."

Tim is more than glad, he is delighted to be included in the plans of Claude and Bee. To tell the truth, Sunday afternoon is generally rather a lonesome time to Tim Croke. He has no vocation for Sunday-school teaching, and always feels intensely grateful to Mr. Carey for not bothering him to take a class. The little vicarage is, however, a dreary house when master and servants are out; and Tim is usually to be found wandering on the shore till the hour for tea.

"Bill Drake is down yonder," says Tim, waving his hand towards a block of stone some distance

off. "And he's got a little boat, a battered old thing, but——"

"Any old thing will do," interrupts Claude, rising eagerly. "We are not going to show off in front of the pier, you know; we only want to get away to White Cove and enjoy ourselves. Do you know the place, Crooke?"

"Yes, very well. I've been there several times with Mr. Carey; it's a wonderful place for gulls. I suppose there are thousands of them."

"Well, come along," cries Claude; and Bee springs gladly to her feet. It delights her to see the magnificent Empey growing so friendly with that good old Tim, and as she trips on, leaving dainty footprints on the sands, her mind is busy with plans for the coming days. "This is only the beginning of pleasures," she says to herself; the holidays will last a long time, and they can enjoy many excursions about the coast. It is all going to be perfectly jolly, now that Claude has really consented to accept Tim; for Tim is so good-natured and useful that she hardly knows what they would do without him.

The little boat is a battered old thing indeed, but nobody is inclined to find fault with it. Bill Drake is quite ready to let the young gentleman have his way; Bee steps in lightly enough, and seats herself; the lads follow, and then Tim pushes off, leaving Bill standing grinning on the shore.

A happy girl is Bee Jocelyn as the boat glides on, and the fresh air fans her face. She has put on her broad-brimmed hat again; and the light breeze lifts her bright silky tresses, and spreads them round her head like a golden veil. She dips one little hand in the water—the beautiful sunny water that is as green as an emerald when you look deep into its depths; and then she trails her fingers in the sea and smiles at Claude.

"Oh, Empey," she says, "how nice it would be if one of Undine's sea-relations were to put a coral necklace, all red and glittering, into my hand!"

"Or some strings of pearls," suggests Tim.

"She will have a set of pearls one day," remarks Claude, in that quiet tone of his. "They were my mother's, and they are waiting in India for Bee."

There is an unwonted softness in Tim's black eyes. He is a stout-hearted, matter-of-fact lad, people say, not given to dreaming; and yet he is seeing visions this afternoon. He sees Bee, not in her sailor's hat and girlish frock, but in white robes, with all her wealth of hair plaited up, and the pearls glistening on her neck. He sees the merry face grown graver, yet lovelier than ever; and then he tries to picture her home in that far-off land that he will never behold; a land of dark faces, and temples, and palms, and flowers.

And Claude will be with her always; what a beautiful poetical life these two will live together! All the poetry is for them, and all the prose for Tim. His thoughts don't shape themselves into these very words, perhaps; but he does certainly feel that it is a dull path which lies before Tim Crooke.

While he dreams, he pulls as steadily as usual, and they are drawing nearer and nearer to the little cove. Soon they gain a full view of those cliffs where the sea-birds sit, tier upon tier, like spectators in a circus, and the calm air is filled with strange cries. Bee claps her hands in delight; the sight is so novel, and the birds that have taken wing sweep so gracefully around their rocky haunts, that there is a charm, past explaining, in the whole scene.

Meanwhile the tide is rising fast and floats the boat onward to White Cove. They are making for a landing-place just at the foot of the sea-birds' cliff, and Tim pulls cautiously, telling Claude to keep a sharp look-out for the rocks that lie treacherously hiding under the flood.

"There's the Chair!" cries Bee suddenly. "Look, Empey, we are quite close to it! It was Mr. Carey who gave it that name, because you see it's exactly like a chair, and it has a seat, and a little ledge where your feet may rest. Mr. Carey got up there once; it's quite easy to climb."

"At high water the tide comes almost up to the footstool of the Chair," says Tim. "I've noticed it standing up out of the sea with a bird or two perched on its seat. It looks very funny then, when all the rocks near it are quite covered."

"It really is curious," Claude is beginning to say, when there is a bump and a terrible grating noise. The boat has struck against one of those traitorous rocks, and her rotten planks have given way. Long before they can reach the landing-place she will be full of water; there is already a stream flowing in through the rent in her side, and Tim, quiet and cool, takes in every detail of the case before Claude has begun fully to realise their condition. Without a moment's hesitation he pulls straight towards the little strip of sand that is to be seen at the base of the Chair.

"Quick, Claude," he says in decided tones, "the wind is rising, and the tide is coming in fast. You must get Bee up into the Chair, and you'll have to follow her; although there's hardly room for two."

"Do you mean that we shall have to stay up there till the tide goes out?" asks Claude. "Why, it's absurd! Is there no other way to——"

"There *is* no other way to save your lives, so far as I can see. Now don't lose time; the Chair isn't so easy to climb, after all. There are little dents in the rock where your toes may go, but no projections anywhere. It's just a smooth block of stone."

Poor Bee, who knows that Tim must have good reasons for being serious, tries to obey him without delay. But how could she ever have fancied that this dreadful rock was easy to climb! It is nearly as slippery as glass, and affords so little hold for hands or feet that she is almost in despair. The boys encourage her with their voices; Claude is scrambling up after her—not without difficulty, however, for his sprained wrist gives him many a sharp twinge. And then at last, after terrible efforts, the "footstool" ledge is gained, and Bee drags herself up to the seat of the chair.

But what a seat it is! Merely a niche which looks as if it had been scooped out of the solid stone and furnished with a narrow shelf. How will it be possible for her to make herself very small, and leave space for Claude?

Even in these fearful moments she finds herself thinking of the eleven swan princes in the fairy tale, and that little rock in mid ocean on which they stood crowded together when the sun went down. Claude is here, squeezed into the narrow niche by her side, and he is calling out to Tim, down below.

"Come up, Tim," he cries, and there is a ring of agony in his voice now.

But Tim's answer reaches them, clear and loud, above the roar of the advancing tide.

"I shall not come; there isn't room for three. You know that well enough."

"But, Tim, what will you do? I'll come down, and give you my place."

"Stay where you are," Tim shouts sternly. "You've got Bee to take care of. And there's a heavy sea rolling in, she'll have to sit fast."

As Tim speaks the flood is surging up to his knees, and the wind, too, is rising higher and higher. All around him the waves are foaming over the sunken rocks, and the sea-thunder grows louder and more terrible every moment.

"I'll come down," cries Claude, making a desperate movement to descend. "You sha'n't stop there and drown alone! Do you think I'll be such a hound as to let you?"

But Bee with all her strength, holds him back. "Empey, *dear* Empey," she moans, "stay for my sake!"

"I'll take my chance," Tim sings out cheerily. "I can swim; I mean to try for the landing-place."

"You're mad; the tide will dash you on the rocks!" groans Claude, in despair. And then, so slight is his foothold that he nearly loses his balance in looking downward; and Bee, clinging to him, screams with terror.

"I can't bear it!" he says wildly.

How fast the waters rise! Great waves are breaking against the sides of the Chair, and leaping up nearer and nearer to the ledge whereon the pair support their feet. Once more Claude calls to Tim, passionately, almost fiercely,—

"I'll never forgive myself if you are lost! Tim, Tim, where are you?"

And the clear voice comes up, somewhat faintly, from below. "It's all right. God bless you and Bee."

A mighty billow flings its cloud of foam over the faces of Claude and the shrinking girl by his side, and blinds them with salt spray. But high as the tide is, the Chair is still above its reach, and although the wave may sprinkle them, it cannot swallow them up. Only they are deafened as well as blinded, and Bee feels that she is losing her senses. Surely her brain is wandering, else she could never hear the notes of the anthem again, and Tim's voice singing the words of the old psalm in such exulting tones,—

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

When night is closing over the little watering-place there are rejoicings and lamentations in Nelson Lodge. Aunt Hetty's heart is full of gratitude; Claude and Bee brought safely home by old Drake, have fallen asleep at last in their rooms, while she steals from chamber to chamber to look first at one tired young face and then at the other. But the tears hang on Claude's lashes as he sleeps; and more than once Bee moves restlessly on her pillow and murmurs Tim's name.

The wind, that has been blowing hard all through the night, subsides soon after sunrise. Clouds clear away from the east, and the golden morning shines upon the creamy cliffs of White Cove. Just at the foot of one of the low rocks lies Tim; his brown face turned up to the sky, and his curly hair matted with sea-weed. His life-work is done.

Only Tim;—yes, Master Claude; but what would the world be without such souls as Tim's? Fine manners, fine speech, and fine clothes, of these he had none, but he had what glorifies the earth's greatest sons, he had what the angels rank highly and what God loves, a brave, true,

unselfish heart.

SMITH'S SISTER

A STORY BY A BOY ABOUT A GIRL.

BY ROBERT OVERTON.

Before I tell you the story about Smith's sister in particular (said Stanislaus Yarrow), I wish to make a few remarks about sisters in general.

Sisters are of two kinds—your own and other fellows'. There are boys—especially older ones—who consider their own sisters worse than other fellows' sisters.

("Hear, hear," cried Martin Abbott, who was strongly suspected of having fallen in love with Dr. Audlem's maiden aunt, who was not much more than forty).

But the general opinion amongst boys is that all sisters—all girls, in fact—are muffs and nuisances.

("So they are," agreed a number of voices cordially).

I thought so myself once. But Smith's sister taught me to take a higher view of girls. I admit that they have defects—they can't help 'em. There are times when I doubt if even boys are perfect. I freely admit that there is a certain amount of idiocy in the ways and manners of girls in general. Far be it from me to deny that they squeak and squeal when there is no occasion for squeaking and squealing. There is no use in denying that they are afraid of mice. Even Smith's sister visibly shuddered when I offered to give her my biggest piebald rat, to be her very own for ever. But we ought to be charitable and try to overlook these things, for, as I said just now, they can't help 'em.

What I insist upon is that there's real grit in girls all the same. This is how I work it out: Smith's sister was a brick—Smith's sister is a girl—therefore, as one girl can be a brick, so can other girls, other sisters, be bricks.

Now for my true yarn. To separate the circumstances of the story from the story itself, I will first give you the circumstances.

Smith and I lived next door to each other, and were close chums, especially at intervals. He was a very generous chap—he'd give a friend anything he'd got. When he was laid low with illness last summer, I slipped into his bedroom by way of the verandah, to have a look at him, and he gave me the scarlet fever. He was such a very generous chap that he never wanted to keep anything all to himself. The fever stayed with both of us as long as it could, and left us a good deal weaker than it found us. Finding us both in need of a long and thorough change, Smith's father and mine put their heads together, and finally decided to send us to North Wales for the rest of the summer and the autumn. The idea was promptly carried out.

They didn't, strictly speaking, "send" us, for they came with us. In fact, it was quite a carriage-ful of us that steamed away north-west from Paddington—namely, Smith, myself, Smith's father and mother, my father and mother, a number of boxes, portmanteaux, and parcels, and Smith's sister. I put her last because at the time she was last in my estimation.

We had a lovely journey, to a lovely little out-of-the-way and out-of-the-world station, which was spelt with all consonants, and pronounced with three sneezes, a cough and two gasps. From the station we had a long drive to the remote farmhouse in which our fathers had taken apartments.

In this delicious old farmhouse we soon made ourselves—Smith and I—quite at home. It was in a beautiful valley. Tremendous hills rose all round it. On the very tops of some of the mountains there was snow almost all the year round. Glens, and brooks, and streams, and waterfalls simply abounded.

After a fortnight our two fathers had to return to London, leaving behind them our mothers, us, and Smith's sister.

Oh, what a time we had then! Smith shot me by accident in the leg with the farmer's gun—Smith himself got almost drowned in two different streams, and was once carried over a waterfall, and dashed against the stones. On all three occasions he was getting black in the face when pulled out. I fell down a precipice in the mountains, and was rescued with the greatest difficulty. On another occasion a neighbouring farmer caught us trespassing, and thrashed us with a stick till he was too tired to hold it any longer. Smith got bitten by a dog supposed to be mad, and a horse kicked me in the stomach.

All was gaiety and excitement. Ah! when shall we have such times again? We made inquiries as to whether we were likely to catch scarlet fever a second time.

Now Smith's sister screamed at our accidents; she was afraid to join us in any of our adventures.

She was as old as myself, and only a year younger than Smith, but as timid as a chicken—or so we thought her, for so she seemed. We tried at first to encourage her, to bring her out a little; but it was no good—we just had to leave her to herself.

"She hasn't pluck enough to come with us," Smith used to say as we set off on our rambles—"let her stop at home and play with the fowls."

You must understand that we didn't dislike her—we simply despised her. I think contempt is worse than dislike—at all events, it is harder to bear. Week after week passed away, till at length the end of September approached. In a few days we were to go home again.

Now high as all the hills were, there was one that towered above the others. From the very first, Smith and I had been warned not to attempt to scale this monarch of the mountains, whose crown was sometimes visible, sometimes hidden in the clouds. Being warned not to do it, we naturally wanted to do it. We had made, in fact, several tries, but had always been frustrated. Once or twice Mr. Griffiths—the farmer at whose house we were staying—caught us starting, and turned us back.

"Up towards the top of that mountain," he said, on the last occasion, "is a place so difficult of access, except by one way, that it is called the 'Eagles' Home.' Lives have been lost there. The hill is dangerous—the clefts are steep and deep. Leave it alone. There are plenty of other hills to climb that are not so dangerous."

That reference to the Eagles' Home was more than we could stand. We could make out the very spot he meant. Fancy being up there with the eagles near the sky—fancy birds-nesting in the clouds!

"Yarrow," said Smith firmly, "we must do it."

"Or perish in the attempt," I agreed recklessly, quoting from a book I'd read.

What we meant was, of course, that before our visit ended we must climb that hill, at all events as high as the Eagles' Home.

Our approaching return to London left us with no time to lose. We had only four clear days before us.

"We'll make the ascent immediately after dinner to-morrow," said Smith.

"Right you are," replied I.

The next day arrived. Dinner was always over soon after one at the farmhouse, and by two o'clock, having slipped quietly and secretly off, we were beginning our climb up the hillside. For more than an hour we made slow but easy progress, taking a rest every now and then for a minute or two. We must have got up a considerable distance, but neither the mountain-top nor the Eagles' Home seemed much nearer. On and up we trudged, walking faster and determined to take no more rests. We noticed how much colder it was, and cast uneasy glances at the dipping sun.

We met a shepherd going down, and stopped him to ask some questions. He told us that there was an easy way and a hard way to reach the Eagles' Home. The easy way was to follow the path worn up the hill to the left. That would take us *above* the spot. Still following the path as it curved round to the right, we should find a comparatively easy way down to the "home of the eagles," unless we lost the road, and tumbled down one of the many steep declivities.

"Which was the hard way?" we asked.

With a smile, he pointed straight up the mountain-side. It wasn't far that way, he said—only that way would take us farther than we wanted to go. We looked up the frowning pathless mountain—and knew what he meant. We must take the safer and longer way.

"Not that we're *afraid* of the other," said Smith.

"Of course not," I replied.

In vain the shepherd tried to dissuade us from going any further in the failing light: in vain he told us of the dangers we should run. We thanked him, put him off with some excuse about going "a little" further, and turned resolutely on up the "path" he had pointed us to. It was by no means the sort of path we were accustomed to.

On and on and on—I don't know how far we went. But the farther we went the more silent we became. Each knew the other knew that he was getting more and more uneasy at every step. Each knew the other wasn't going to be the first to admit that he was funky.

It grew so awfully cold. It became so awfully dark.

"The moon will be up by-and-by," Smith said.

"Yes," said I; "we shall be all right then. What's this?"

It was too dark to see it, but we felt it in our faces. We put our hands on our sleeves and felt it there.

Snow!

We both gave in then, and funk'd it without disguise. We turned to go down, to get home. We tried at first to disbelieve it, but it wasn't long before we both gave up the pretence.

"We're lost!" we cried together.

That was just our position. In the cold, dark night, in the midst of a rapidly-rising storm and fast-falling snow, we were lost on the wild Welsh mountains.

We stumbled about. For a long time—I don't know how long, but it was a long time—we stumbled about. That is the only expression I can use, for soon we didn't know whether we were moving up or down, left or right. We were so numbed, so bewildered. It was so cold up there, though October had not yet set in, that we had a vague idea that if we didn't keep on moving we should be frozen still, meeting the fate of many other mountaineers.

You must bear in mind that we had nothing to eat, nothing to drink, and only our summer clothes on. Neither of us had a watch, so we could only judge what the time was. Smith's hope that the moon would soon rise hadn't been realised, for everything above was as dark and black as everything was beneath.

At last a frightful thing happened. Our feet slipped at the same moment, and the next moment we were both falling through space. My previous slip down a precipice was nothing compared with that awful fall in the darkness. Only one thing saved us. Before we struck the ground, we managed to break the full force of our fall by grasping the roots and branches of some low-growing shrubs and bushes which we felt without seeing. We slipped then less rapidly from hold to hold, until, with a thud, we struck the earth. It seemed more like the earth striking us.

Smith gave a loud scream of pain—then all was silent.

Smith fainted. I cried. Smith recovered and cried. I left off crying, and took his turn at fainting. There's nothing like telling the truth. We both prayed. I won't tell you about that, because praying is a thing to *do*, not to talk about.

We didn't move about any more. That fall proved that moving about was too dangerous. Poor old Smith *couldn't* move. He couldn't even stand up. He tried to once and sank down again with a yell. He had sprained his ankle.

Please imagine for a moment that this adventure is being played on the stage, and let the curtain fall. Now imagine the curtain raised again.

In the meantime, the storm has died down. The winds are not howling now, the snow is not falling. The heavens above us are not so black we can see parts of the mountain that drops from our feet into the deep invisible valley below. We can see enough to make out where we are. We are in the Eagles' Home. Our ambition has been realised—but in what a way! We reached the spot neither by the pathway nor up the rugged steep—we rolled from the top; we came through the air with the snowflakes.

Pretty snowflakes! Smith is hopelessly crippled, and I—the other snowflake—am simply a living collection of bumps and bruises. We must spend the rest of the bleak night strung up on this dizzy height. We must wait till the morning—if we can live through the night.

What's that, down there—far away down there?

A light! a number of lights. They're moving—moving up. They've reached the spot where we met the shepherd who told us of the two ways.

They've stopped. Hark! What's that?

A shout—a hail—loud and long continued, as though a lot of people are calling together.

Hurrah! We're saved. The farmer has turned out a rescue party to find and save us. Hurrah!

Gathering all my strength—all I have left—I answer the hail. Smith joins me as well as he can. Once, twice, thrice we shout. We catch the distant cry that tells us we have been heard.

For a minute the lights are stationary. Then—their bearers sending up another great hail as though to tell us they know where we are and are coming—we see the lanterns flashing forward up the track which leads above our heads, and then round to the Eagles' Home. Mr. Griffiths, who knows the hills as well as he knows his own farm lands, has told them where we are from the direction of our frantic voices.

So cheer up, Smith—they're coming.

But they'll be such a long time coming—and we're so cold and numbed. Smith is fainting again. So am I, I'm afraid—you must remember I am knocked about. It will be such a long time before the coming help reaches us.

Will it? Then what's that solitary light stealing up the jagged steep below us? Who is it coming to us by the "hard" way, straight up the precipitous mountain-side? It must be Griffiths—he's crawling up the rough boulders—he's clinging hold of roots and branches, swinging himself over the clefts. The shepherd said it couldn't be done—but Griffiths is doing it. How torn his hands must be!

I can't be quite fainting, because I can see that Griffiths' lantern is coming nearer and nearer.

Listen! I can hear his voice—only it sounds such a weak voice. That is because I am getting so weak now myself, though I manage to call back, that Griffiths may know just where we are....

Griffiths has reached us. Griffiths is attending to poor old Smith. Now he's got his arm round me. Griffiths is pouring a cordial down my throat that brings life back into me. I can feel my heart beating again. I'm better now. I'll shake Griffiths by the hand. I dare say I shall by-and-by. But this is the hand of SMITH'S SISTER!

The strain of this theatrical style, and of the present tense, is more than I can stand any longer, so I hope it is quite clear to you what had happened. Just a few words to sum up.

When the rescue party formed by Mr. Griffiths—as soon as it was obvious that Smith and I had lost ourselves—set out, Smith's sister set out with them. Griffiths ordered her back. She went back, collared a lantern and a flask all to herself (in view of the party separating—what a thoughtful girl!), followed and rejoined them. When they stopped and halloaed to find whereabouts we were, he ordered her back again, but not until she had heard the hasty consultation which resulted in the party sticking to the safer way to us. She heard about the "two ways," and she dared the one that everybody else was afraid of. The ascent up the mountain's face was suggested, but only Smith's sister had the pluck to make it. This was the girl we had scorned and laughed at. This was the girl whom we had told to stop at home and play with the chickens!

About an hour after she reached us with the "first help" that may have saved our lives, we saw the lights of Griffith's party on the crest above us. We exchanged shouts, and they let down a rope at once, and hauled us up. Long before this, Smith's sister had bound up his injured ankle neatly and lightly with her own handkerchief and our handkerchiefs.

You should have seen the farmer's face—and, indeed, the faces of all the others too—when they realised how she had reached us.

It is all very well for her to say that she didn't know what she was doing—that she couldn't have done in the light what she did in the dark. All I am concerned with is the fact that she did do what I have told you she did.

Referring to the proposition I laid down soon after I started—about there being real grit in girls after all—you will understand what I meant when I wind up my yarn with the familiar quotation, Q. E. D.

THE COLONEL'S BOY.

BY H. HERVEY.

Marjorie had never got on well with her brother's guardian. He was a bachelor, stern and autocratic, and with no admiration for woman's ways, and she instinctively felt that he did not understand her.

His love for Miles Weyburne, the son of a brother officer who had fallen in a skirmish with an Indian frontier tribe thirteen years ago, was a thing recognised and beyond question.

Even at the age of ten the boy's likeness to his father had been remarkable. He had the same dark, earnest eyes, the same frank, winning manner, the same eager enthusiasm; he was soon to develop, to the secret pride of his guardian, the same keen interest in his profession, with a soundness of judgment and a fearless self-reliance peculiarly his own.

He had gained his star after scarcely a year's service, and had then got an exchange into his guardian's regiment.

Colonel Alleson held the command of a midland regimental district. He had the reputation of being somewhat of a martinet, and was not altogether popular with his men.

Marjorie generally spent her holidays with her aunt in the town, and the Colonel occasionally went to see her; but he was nervous and constrained, with little to say for himself, and Marjorie always did her best to show to a disadvantage when he was there. "He's such a crabby old thing," she would say, when Miles grew enthusiastic over the grave, taciturn officer,— "besides, he hates girls, you know he does, and I'm not going to knuckle under to him." Her brother had explained that the Colonel's ideas were old-fashioned, so she sometimes talked slang on purpose to shock him. She listened to his abrupt, awkward sentences with a half listless, half criticising air. She was a typical school-girl at the most characteristic age,—quick to resent, impatient of control, straightforward almost to rudeness. The Colonel might be a father to her brother—he never could be to her. She often thought about her father and mentally contrasted the two: she thought, too,

though less often, of the mother who had died the very day that that father had fallen in action, when she herself was little more than a year old.

Miles had been spending his leave with his aunt, and the day before his return to Ireland to rejoin the battalion, he biked over to the barracks in company with his sister to say good-bye to his guardian.

"I suppose this is another of the Colonel's fads," Marjorie remarked, glancing at the notice board as she got off her bicycle outside the gates. "What an old fuss he is, Miles."

"Has he been giving you a lesson in manners?"

"Not he." She tossed back her wavy, golden-brown hair as she spoke. "I should like to see him try it on."

Miles gave a short little laugh.

"He got into an awful rage the other day because somebody came through here on a bicycle. How are you to read the notice all that way off?"

Miles was not listening to her. Hearing the sound of wheels, he had turned round and caught sight of the Colonel's dog-cart. Marjorie glanced mischievously at him, and just as the Colonel entered the gateway, she deliberately mounted her bicycle and rode through before his eyes. There was just room for her to pass. The Colonel reined in, and looked sternly round. "Stop!" he said. Marjorie obeyed. Wheeling her bicycle forward, she said in her politest manner:

"I beg your pardon. Did you want me?"

"This is quite contrary to regulations."

"Yes, I know," she answered, looking straight at him. "I read the notice, but I don't see the sense of it."

There were one or two soldiers standing near, and they exchanged glances and smiled. Miles coloured up with shame and vexation. The Colonel gave the reins to his groom and got down without another word. He held out his hand to Miles as the dog-cart passed on.

"I want to speak to you," he said shortly, and he walked on in front of them.

"I hope I shall see you again, Miles," he began, as they ascended the steps leading to his quarters. "I have only a few minutes to spare now. Come up this evening, will you?"

"Yes, Colonel."

Marjorie moved towards the door. The colour mounted to her cheeks as the Colonel stepped forward to open it for her. Miles, feeling that he ought to say something, waited behind a minute.

"I'm sorry about—about this," he said. "I don't understand it."

"I do, perfectly—well, good-bye, my boy."

His grave, stern face softened wonderfully as he grasped Miles' hand.

"What an old crosspatch he is," began Marjorie as her brother came up with her. "I daren't for the life of me ride through there again. Did you see, Miles, he was quite white with rage when I cheeked him? Those Tommies thought it awful sport."

"What a little ass you are," said Miles crossly, "to make all that row before the men."

Marjorie looked away. "It served him jolly well right," she said, pedalling faster.

They rode home the rest of the way in silence.

Miles was away with his battalion at the front, and Marjorie was spending a fortnight of the Christmas holidays with a school friend at Eastbourne. The two girls were hurrying down the esplanade together one bright, frosty morning in January when Marjorie suddenly found herself face to face with the Colonel. His eyes were bent down, and he passed without recognising her. With a few hurried words to her chum, she ran after him.

"How do you do, Colonel? I didn't know you were here."

He started as she addressed him. "I only came yesterday," he said; "I have got a few days' leave."

"Did you hear from Miles last mail? I did."

"Yes. He has been very regular so far."

"You must miss him awfully. Are you going this way?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll come a little way with you, if I may; I wanted to say something."

Putting her hands into her jacket pockets, she looked very gravely at him.

"I am sorry I was rude that day I came into the Barracks," she said hurriedly. "I have been thinking about it. It was horrid of me, when the soldiers were there. Will you forgive me?"

"Certainly," he said nervously, putting his hands behind him, and walking faster.

"You see, I want to be friends with you," she added frankly, "because of Miles. He thinks such a lot of you—the dear boy; good-bye."

Her dark eyes, generally so mocking and mischievous, had grown suddenly earnest, and his heart warmed towards her, as he held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Marjorie," he said, "you are very much alike, you and Miles."

"Are we?" she said simply, flushing a little. "I didn't know. I am glad."

She walked back to her chum with a beating heart. "He's not so bad," she said to herself. "I wish he liked girls."

Spion Kop had been abandoned, and the British Army was in orderly retreat, when Miles found himself cut off with the remnant of his company, by the enemy. The death of his captain had left him in command, and realising his responsibility, he made up his mind to act promptly. "We are cut off, men," he explained briefly to his soldiers; "will you hoist the white flag, or trust to me to bring you through?"

"No surrender, and we stand by you, sir," answered the serjeant major gruffly. "Is it agreed, boys?"

There was a general assent.

It was a gallant deed, that desperate dash to rejoin the division, though accomplished at a terrible cost. Miles, leading the forlorn hope, was soon to pay the price of his daring. They were all but through when he fell, shot by a chance bullet.

An hour later his battered troops came up with the British forces. Three or four stragglers dropped into camp as the serjeant major was making his report.

"Ah!" said the colonel, expressively—"you got through?"

"Yes, sir, beastly hard work, too."

"Who brought you?"

"Lieutenant Weyburne, sir."

"I thought so. He's the kind of fellow for that sort of thing. Is he in?"

"He was shot, sir."

"Shot, poor boy. What will Alleson say?"

It was Wednesday morning, and the entire strength of the Depôt had turned out on parade. The Colonel, tall and dignified in the faultless neatness of undress uniform, was standing in his characteristic attitude, with his hands behind him and his head thrown slightly back. His blue eyes looked out, grave and watchful, from under the peak of his fatigue cap, and the tense interlocking of his gloved fingers was the only sign of his mental unrest.

Yet the vision of Miles was before him—Miles bold, earnest, high-spirited, Miles in the full joy of life and strength, with the light of affection in his eyes; Miles again with his boyish face white and drawn and his active young form still in death.

He had loved the boy, his boy as he always called him, more even than he had realised, and life seemed very blank without the hope of seeing him again.

It was two days since his name had appeared in the lists of killed and wounded, and that afternoon the Colonel went down to see Marjorie, who had returned from Eastbourne a few days before. She looked unusually pale when she came into the room, and though she ran forward eagerly enough to greet him, her eyes were tearful and her lips quivering, as she put her hand into his.

"I thought of writing to you"—began the Colonel nervously, "but——"

"I'm glad you came," said Marjorie, "very glad. I shouldn't mind so much if we knew just how he died," she added sorrowfully.

"We know how he would face death, Marjorie!"

She put her arms on the table, and hid her face with a stifled sob.

"He was your boy, and you'll miss him so," she went on. "There's no one like him, no one half so dear or half so brave. If I were only a boy I might try to be like him and make you happy—but I can't, it's no use."

She was looking up at him with those dark eyes of hers, just as his boy had looked at him when he said good-bye three months ago, and he could not trust himself to speak.

"I suppose you get used to things," she said with a sigh.

The Colonel put his hand on her head. "Poor child," he said in a husky voice, "don't think about me."

"Miles loved you," she answered softly, going up close to him. "I'm his sister. Let me love you, too."

He drew her to him in a tender fatherly manner, that brought instant comfort to her aching, wilful little heart.

"Your father was my friend, Marjorie," he said,—*"the staunchest friend man ever had. I have often wondered why we failed to understand each other."*

"You don't like girls," said Marjorie, *"that's why."*

The Colonel smiled grimly.

"I didn't," he said. *"Perhaps I have changed my mind."*

Lord Roberts had entered Pretoria, and the Colonel sat in his quarters looking through the list of released prisoners. All at once he gave a start, glanced hastily around, and then looked back again. About half way down the list of officers, he read:

"Lieut. M. Weyburne (reported killed at Spion Kop)."

Miles was alive: there had been some mistake. The bugle sounded. It was a quarter past nine. He walked out on to the parade-ground with his usual firm step, smiling as he went. Miles was alive. He could have dashed down the barrack-square like a bugler-boy in the lightness of his heart.

People who met him that day hastened to congratulate him. He said very little, but looked years younger.

Three weeks later there came a letter from Miles, explaining how he had been left upon the ground for dead, and on coming to himself, had fallen unarmed into the hands of the Boers. He had never fully recovered from his wounds, and by the doctor's orders had been invalided home, so that his guardian might expect him about ten days after receiving his letter.

It was a happy home-coming. The Colonel went down to Southampton to meet him, and when he reached his aunt's house he found a letter from Marjorie awaiting him. *"The Colonel's a dear,"* she wrote; *"I understand now why you think such a lot of him."*

Miles turned with a smile to his guardian.

"You and Marjorie are friends at last, Colonel," he said.

"Yes, my boy," he returned gravely; *"we know each other better now."*

'TWIXT LIFE AND DEATH.

A MANX STORY.

BY CLUCAS JOUGHIN.

PART I.

Deborah Shimmin was neither tall nor fair, and yet Nature had been kind to her in many ways. She had wonderful eyes—large, dark, and full of mute eloquence—and if her mouth was too large, her nose too irregular, and her cheeks too much tanned by rude health, and by exposure to the sun as the village gossips said, I, Henry Kinnish, poetic dreamer, and amateur sculptor, thought she had a symmetry of form and a grace of movement which wrought her whole being into harmony and made her a perfect example of beauty with a plain face; and every one knew that Andrew, the young village blacksmith and rural postman, loved her with all the might of his big, brawny soul.

These two ideas of Deborah's beauty and Andrew's love for her, were revealed to me one day when, with Deborah's master, his lumbering sons and comely daughters, and my chum Fred Harcourt, an artist from "across the water," we were cutting some early grass in May, just before

the full bloom of the gorse had begun to fade from the hillsides and from the tops of the hedges where it had made borders of gold for the green of the fields all the spring.

A soft west wind, which blew in from the sea, made waves along the uncut grass to windward of the mowers, and played around the skirts of Deborah, making them flutter about her, while the exertion of the haymaking occasionally let loose her long, strong black hair.

But the face of Deborah was sad; for the village policeman had laid a charge against her before his chief to make her account for her possession of a large number of seagulls' eggs, to take which the law of the Island had made a punishable offence, by an act of Tynwald passed to protect the sea fowl from extinction.

The eggs, all fresh, and newly taken from the nests, had been found on Deborah's dressing-table; but Deborah indignantly denied all knowledge of the means by which they had got there. There was a mystery about it to every one, for fresh clutches were seen there every morning, and the innocent Deborah made no attempt to conceal them. Where, then, could they come from but from some nests of the colony of seagulls which lived in the haughs that dropped down into the sea from Rhaby Hills? But no woman, young or old, could climb the craigs where the gulls had their nests. It was a feat of daring only performed by reckless boys and young men who were reared on the littoral, and who were strong and spirited craigsmen by inheritance and by familiarity with the dangerous sport of egg-collecting among the giddy heights of precipices on which, if they took but one false step, they might be hurled to certain destruction below.

When the mowers had made all but the last swath, and there were only a few more rucks of the early hay to be made in the field, Cubbin, the rural constable, came in from the highroad with Andrew, the smith. The hot and sweated mowers did not stop the swing of their scythes, but they talked loudly amongst themselves in imprecations against the new law which made it a criminal offence for a lad to take a few gull's eggs, which they, and their fathers before them, had gone sporting after in the good old times when men did what they thought right.

The bronzed face of Deborah Shimmin paled, her lips set into a resolve of courage when she saw Andrew in the hands of the police; and I learnt for the first time that Andrew was looked upon as the robber and Deborah as the receiver of the stolen eggs. I saw more than this, I saw, by one look, that the heart of Deborah and the heart of the tall, lithe lad, who now stood before me, were as one heart in love and in determination to stand by each other in the coming trial.

The big hands of the young smith were thrust into his pockets, and a smile played over his honest face; but Deborah looked at the constable with a hard, defiant look, and then bent over her work again as if waiting to hear him say something dreadful which she was resolved to throw back into his face, though her hand trembled as she held the fork, which moved now faster and stronger than before.

But Cubbin was a man of the gospel of peace though he was an officer of the law, and he only looked sadly on the face of Deborah as he asked her whether it would not be better for her to say where she got her supply of eggs from than allow him to get a summons against Andrew.

"I have told you before that Andrew never gave me the eggs!" cried the girl, her face flushed with the crimson setting of the sun, "and I don't know where they came from. I can't say anything different, and I wish you would not trouble me, Mr. Cubbin!"

Fred and I called Cubbin, the constable, to one side, and asked him to allow us a day or two to solve the mystery of the eggs—a little arrangement which may seem strange to dwellers in towns, but which was quite practicable at this time in this far-off place, and which he soon agreed to allow.

I had been out shooting corncrakes that day, and Fred Harcourt had come with me for a day in the meadows, as his brush and palette had wearied him of late, and he longed to stretch his limbs and to see my spaniels work in the weedy hedges and in the meadows, where the grass had stood the test of the dry spring. We had taken off our coats to help our neighbour with his sunburnt grass, and our guns were laid across them. The spaniels had fallen asleep—using the coats as beds. While conversing with Cubbin we had walked quietly to get our coats, and I saw that one of the sleeping dogs was still hunting in his dreams. There was nothing uncommon about this, for dogs will hunt in their sleep; but some inner voice said to me that Deborah Shimmin, being a highly strung, nervous girl, might hunt in her sleep also, and that such things as somnambulists walking the roofs of high houses had been heard of, and I remembered a lad in my own boyhood's days who was awakened early one morning by the riverside with his rod in his hand and his basket slung over his nightshirt. But I did not communicate my theory of the solution of the mystery of the eggs to Cubbin, the constable.

When the policeman left the field I entered into a kindly talk with Deborah Shimmin, and was not long in learning what the girl herself had probably never thought of, that on the public reading of the Act for the protection of sea-fowl, on the Tynwald day of the previous year, she had been impressed by the thought that Andrew would now be forbidden to employ his agility and his courage in a form of sport she often tried to dissuade him from.

I knew before this that she had recently lost her mother, and had suffered a bereavement through a favourite brother being lost at sea one stormy night at the back-end herring fishing off Howth Head.

"Poor Deborah," I said to Fred, "she is all nerves, and the hand of life's troubles is holding her; surely she must be innocent of encouraging her lover in risking his life—the only precious life left to her now!"

"And the jolly Andrew," said Fred, "certainly looked the most amusing picture of innocence, as Cubbin trotted him along the grass! But your theory of the somnambulant business is a bit fanciful, all the same."

PART II.

At ten o'clock that night Fred Harcourt and I were bivouaced within sight of the only door of the house where Deborah Shimmin worked as a domestic help in the family of her uncle. The night was not dark, it seldom is dark in these northern islands so late in May, but there was a light of the moon at its first quarter, and a glint of some stars shone down upon us as we hearkened to the stillness of the air and to a frequent movement of a tired horse in the stable.

Our bivouac was a clump of trammon trees (elders) at the corner of the orchard which adjoined the farm buildings. Between us and the dwelling house there was a disused pigsty. At about a quarter to eleven o'clock a man, with a red setter dog at his heels and a fowling piece on his arm, came sneaking up, and crept into the sty.

Then there was another long spell of silence, not broken, but rather intensified, by the words which I whispered to Fred Harcourt that the fellow who crept into the sty was Kit Kermode, and that he could be after no good.

At midnight a cock crew at the far end of the village, and a dog barked. Then there was silence again, save that every now and again a sedge warbler, far away by the stream near Shenvarla, sang a faintly audible song. Our position on the slope of the foot-hill at Gordon House was between the village and the hills which girt the sea coast. This made my theory of the sleep-walking to the cliffs more plausible. But while we lay low in the clump of trammon trees the appearance of Kit Kermode, with his cat-like walk and his eyes that could wink slander faster than any old woman's tongue could wag it, gave me a theory, or at least a speculation, in another direction.

In soft whispers to Fred Harcourt, who was new to the village, I told him how the rascal Kermode hated Andrew the blacksmith. "He hates him," I said, "I do verily believe, for his good honest face, his manly outspoken tongue, his courage, and his power of arm, but most of all he hates him since Andrew, years ago as an innocent and unthinking lad, ran after him in the village street and handed him a reminder of some money which he owed his master."

"But what can that have to do with Deborah Shimmin's gulls' eggs?" asked Fred, whose mind never seemed to see anything but pictures of divers colours and inspiring outlines in the happy dreamland he lived in, all unconscious of the world's cruelty, and hate, and love of evil.

I had just finished telling him that a man like Kermode might bribe a boy to get him gulls' eggs, and sneak up to Deborah's window and quietly reach in and place the eggs on her dressing-table, as a means of getting Deborah and Andrew into trouble. I had just finished giving this outline of the thought in my mind, I say, when the door of the farmhouse opened and Deborah Shimmin, clad only in her nightdress, stepped lightly forth and started up the hillside.

The next moment the man, his gun in the hollow of his arm and the red setter dog at his heels, crawled forth from the pigsty, looked round as if to make certain he was not watched, and followed the white figure of the girl as she glided up the zig-zag path in the direction of the haughs which formed the wild sea coast.

It did not take Fred and me very long to take off our boots and noiselessly follow, guided by the figure in white, rather than by the man who went before us, for the dim light of the moon and the northern night made his dark dress difficult to see in the shadows of the hedges and trees.

I knew that Deborah would take the usual path to the rocks, and bade Fred follow close behind me while I took a shorter route. In ten minutes we were again under cover when the girl passed close by us, her long hair knotted roughly into a mass of rolls about her large and well-formed head. Her eyes were open, and fixed in a glassy stare straight ahead. She seemed to move along, rather than walk, and had no appearance of either hesitation or haste; and Kermode, with his dog and his gun, stealthily followed in her wake not twenty yards behind.

While we were crossing the field bordering the Gordon haughs, keeping under the shadow of a gorse-clad hedge, Deborah disappeared over the cliff, and the man, watched by Fred and myself, crept up to the edge of the cliffs down which the poor girl had descended.

Before another minute had elapsed, Kermode had stretched himself out his full length on a Craig which overlooked the precipitous rocks down which Deborah had disappeared. We then secured the cover of a mound not thirty feet away from him.

The dog gave a low whine when he saw the head of his master craned out to watch the movements of the white figure descending the rocks, and then all was quiet as before.

Fred's suspense and anxiety for the safety of the girl was apparent in his hard breathing; but my own were inconsiderable, for I knew that if undisturbed by any noise unusual to the night, or any

interference by the fellow who now held the future happiness of Andrew, the smith, in his hands she would safely climb up the haugh and make her way home to bed, all unconscious of the awful position she had placed herself in.

Wicked as I knew the man to be, I did not now imagine that he had any other intention in watching around the house than to try to discover Andrew paying a nocturnal visit, with some gulls' eggs for his sweetheart. This would have been a mean enough act, but it seems a small thing beside the cruel and murderous deed he would have committed but for the providential presence and prompt action of Fred Harcourt and myself.

Fred and I lay low, with our chins resting on our hands, not daring even to whisper. The dog whined a little now and again, and we heard the subdued cries of seagulls as they flew off, alarmed in the darkness, over the sea. Still Deborah did not make her appearance on the top of the cliff. It seemed a long time that we lay and watched thus, but it could not have been so long as it seemed.

Then Kermode, without raising himself from watching the climbing girl, reached back for the gun which he had placed on the ground by his side. He raised it to the level of his face, resting his left elbow on the ground, and I heard the click of the hammer as he cocked it. Then I saw his thumb and finger go into his waistcoat pocket.

"Good God!" I said in a loud whisper, as I sprang to my feet, for I knew in one awful moment that the villain was feeling for a cap to discharge a shot in the air above the head of Deborah, who would wake up at the shock, and fall to the base of the craig in her terrible fright. So intent was Kermode in his fell design of frightening the girl to her destruction that he did not hear me, or notice the growl of his dog, or feel the vibration of our tread as we both bore down upon him. We should have been too late if it had not been for the life-long habit of the wretch to secure himself from danger or suspicion. With his finger on the trigger, all ready to pull, he paused one moment to raise himself and look about. That moment saved the life of Deborah Shimmin, for the would-be murderer was the next instant under the knee of Fred Harcourt and his throat in his grip, while my hand was over the nipples of the gun. While we were all on the ground together, and the setter dog had a hold of Harcourt's leg, the tall form of Cubbin, the policeman, bent over us. I had lowered the hammers of the gun and thrown it to one side to grasp the dog, for Harcourt would not let go his hold of Kermode's throat lest he should shout and wake the girl.

"Gag Kermode," I said to Cubbin, as I hit the dog just above the snout with a stone, killing him by one blow.

Then Deborah Shimmin, holding something in a fold of her nightdress with one hand, and climbing with the other, came up over the edge of the cliff a few yards away from us.

She looked very beautiful as she stepped up on the sloping sward above the haugh, with the pale moonlight just lighting her airy dress, and her face all sad and careworn.

Leaving Kermode to the care of the constable, Fred and I noiselessly followed the girl home, and saw her step over the obstacles in her path as by instinct, turning her face neither to the right nor left.

We decided to awaken her before she reached the door of the farmhouse, so that, according to the popular notion, she might never again become somnambulant.

With this view I stepped before her as she approached the door, but was astonished to find that she paused as if my presence blocked the way before she yet saw me or touched me. But there was no misunderstanding the blank stare in her wonderful eyes.

I gently put out my hand and took hers, as she put it out before her to feel the influence of a presence she could not see.

She did not scream or faint. She awoke with a start, and let the eggs fall on the ground.

At first she could not understand where she was, and just thought she was dreaming; but by degrees it came to her that she was standing before me in the pale moonlight when she thought she ought to be in bed.

Then I softly told her where she had been in her sleep, keeping back all knowledge of Kermode's attempted revenge on Andrew, and how we had decided to awake her. Then, with a little pleasant laugh, we both told her that the mystery of the seagulls' eggs was solved, and that neither Andrew nor she would be troubled again.

She fell to sobbing a little, and for the first time seemed to shiver with the cold; then she lifted the latch and we bade her good night.

Nothing was done to Kermode, for the fellow swore he had no intention of discharging the gun, and we could not prove he had, though the case was clear enough in our eyes, and the deed would have been done had we not, in God's providence, been there to prevent it.

Cubbin, the constable, it transpired afterwards, had overheard me giving my theory of the sleep-walking to Fred in the hayfield, and he, too, had been in hiding at the farm, and had watched and followed us all.

So there was a wonderful story for him to tell of how Deborah had made good her defence

against the charge he had laid against Andrew and her. And the beautiful Deborah with the plain face became the bride of the jolly Andrew, who was neither an artist nor an amateur sculptor, but only a village blacksmith who had an eye for beauty of form and character.

ROSE'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

A TRUE STORY.

BY MARIE E. C. DELBRASSINE.

"Where is Rose?"

"Busy, as usual, with her mice and beetles, I suppose, father," answered Ethel; "we have not seen her all this afternoon."

"She will probably be with you at teatime," said Dr. Sinclair, "after which I should like you to ask her to come to me for a little while in the surgery."

"Very well, father, I won't forget."

Dr. Sinclair retreated again to his surgery, which was arranged also as his library, knowing that his willing helper would not fail to join him there.

"I cannot think," said Maud, Ethel's sister, "what that girl finds to interest her in all those horrid creatures—beetles and toads, and even snakes, when she can get one; the other day I saw her handling a slowworm as if it were a charming domestic pet. It was enough to make one feel cold all over."

"Well, there is no accounting for taste; Rose never seems to care if she is asked to a party or not," continued Ethel, "and she does not mind helping father with his work, which I always find so tiresome, for he is so dreadfully particular about it. Perhaps biologists are different from other folks; I sometimes think there is something uncanny and queer about them."

"I'm sure Rose is neither uncanny nor queer, she's just a brick," said Jack, a schoolboy of fourteen, who was enjoying a Saturday half-holiday at home with a new book, it being too wet to play cricket. "She is always willing to do anything to help a fellow."

"Which means," said Ethel, "that you always expect girls to be your slaves, when you are at home."

At this moment the door opened and Rose herself appeared.

"Well, Rose," said Maud, "have you pinned out a beetle, or taught your pet ants to perform tricks?"

"Not this afternoon," said Rose; "I have had a delightful time with my microscope, studying spiders and drawing slides for the magic lantern to be used at my next little lecture to the G.F.S. girls."

"That sounds dry and uninteresting," yawned Maud. "Ah, here comes tea. By the way, father would like you to go to his study afterwards. Poor Rose, I expect he has some more tiresome work for you."

"Oh, don't call it tiresome, Maud dear; I quite enjoy it."

"It's a good thing you do. I hate being shut up there; it's such a bore."

A quarter of an hour later a middle-aged man, whose snow-white hair made him appear at first sight much older than he was in reality, might have been seen busy over a manuscript, whilst a fair girl sat beside him, reading out to him the notes he had made, and which he was working into the book he was writing. The two seemed to work in perfect harmony.

Rose's father had been the rector of a remote country parish in Cornwall. Most of his friends said that he was lost in such a neighbourhood, and that it was a shame to have sent so able a man to such a parish; but Mr. Sinclair never complained himself; he may sometimes have thought it strange that other men were chosen before him to occupy positions which he felt conscious he might well have filled, but as his lot was cast in that Cornish nook, he had thrown himself heart and soul into whatever work he found to do. The affection he won from the rough fisherfolk, who regarded him as the father of the parish, whose joys and sorrows, cares and anxieties, were all well known to him, was as much to him as any brilliant worldly success. His means were small, too small for his generous heart. He wished to give as good an education as possible to his two children, Henry and Rose, and devoted much time and trouble to that end. For several years he taught the boy and girl together himself, Rose learning much the same lessons as her brother; this laid the foundation of the accuracy which characterised her in any task she undertook—a quality often lacking in feminine work.

Mr. Sinclair had been a good student of natural history, and had written books and magazine

articles which had been well thought of. Rose tried to follow her father's pursuit; she would spend hours in reading about birds and butterflies, and in making little researches herself. One of her greatest pleasures had been to help her father, either by taking notes for him or by writing at his dictation. She hoped herself some day to add to her pecuniary resources by writing for biological papers or even by giving lectures.

But the happy home life in the Cornish rectory was to end all too quickly. Rose lost both her parents within a short time of each other; her brother was at Oxford, working hard; and Rose was left alone, and had to leave the home which was so dear to her.

It was then that her uncle, Dr. Sinclair, without a moment's hesitation, offered her a home in his house. He did not listen to warning voices, cautioning him against burdening himself with the charge of another girl, for his own means were not large, and his family made many demands upon his purse. He was a physician whose career might have been a brilliant one had his practice been in London; but a fanciful and invalid wife had rendered this impossible, as she declared she could only exist in the pure air of the country.

So he had reluctantly abandoned his cherished hope of working as a London doctor, and had settled near a small country town in Gloucestershire, where he soon obtained most of the practice round; but his scope was narrow. He nevertheless managed to keep in touch with his profession, a profession in which he had entered heart and soul, making various scientific researches in his laboratory, and sending the fruit of them in clearly-written articles to medical papers. Now for this work, either in writing short articles from his notes, or from his dictation, a patient helper was of great assistance to him. His own daughters, as already seen, disliked the work, and showed their father no sympathy in it, whereas to Rose it was real enjoyment, filling, in a measure, the void she felt in no longer helping her father. Between uncle and niece a tacit sympathy had grown up. He encouraged her in her natural history pursuits, and helped her to start the lectures she gave to the G.F.S. girls in the neighbourhood. The suggestion had seemed little likely to interest them, but Rose had been so clear and explicit that the girls soon became eager for them.

Time went on in this way, when something happened which was again to change Rose's circumstances. Truly it is that often trifles light as air have an unknown weight of importance in them. One morning the letter-bag brought a circular announcing that some "University Extension Lectures" were to be given at C——, their nearest town, by a professor from Oxford, the subject chosen being "Spiders," with notes from the microscope.

When Dr. Sinclair had read it, he passed it, smiling kindly, to Rose.

"This is not for me," he said, "but I think I know some one whom it may interest."

"Oh, uncle! how delightful," said Rose, when she had looked at it; "the very thing I should enjoy!"

So it came to pass that Rose attended the lectures, entering very fully into them, and taking careful notes.

At the close of the course, the lecturer said he would like any of the students who felt sufficiently interested in the subject to write a paper, and send it in to him, giving a summary of the lectures, and asking any questions they might care to ask, at the end.

Rose and several others responded to the invitation, and wrote their papers.

For some time Rose heard no more about it, but one morning she was surprised to receive the following note:—

"DEAR MADAM,—I have felt much satisfaction in reading your paper, which I return, with a few notes and answers to your questions. It shows me with what intelligent interest you have followed my lectures.

"It may interest you to know that an examination for a scholarship at St. Margaret's Hall, the new college for women, is shortly to be held at Oxford; and if you care to pursue a subject for which you show much understanding, I would suggest your trying for it. I don't promise you success, but I think it is worth the venture. A friend of mine, a lady living in Oxford, receives lady students recommended by me, and would, I am sure, make you comfortable on very moderate terms. Yours truly,

"B. FIELDING."

Rose read the letter two or three times and then passed it to her uncle. Had she the means to go there—if, oh, *if* she could only get the scholarship, how delightful it would be!

"Come to my study," said Dr. Sinclair.

And as soon as the door was shut he said kindly,—

"I don't like you to lose this opportunity, dear child, so write and tell Mr. Fielding you will go up to Oxford, if he will introduce you to the lady he mentions."

"Oh, but, uncle," she said, "what Mr. Fielding may call moderate terms may really mean a great deal more than should be paid for me."

"Never mind, little Rose," said Dr. Sinclair, "I meant to give my kind little helper a birthday present, and this shall be it."

"Dear uncle, how kind of you. But remember, that whatever help, as you term it, I may have given you, has always been a pleasure to me."

"And so, dear, is anything that I may do for you to me."

Thus it was settled, and a few days later, Dr. Sinclair himself started for his own beloved Oxford with his niece. Jack and Maud went to the station to see them off.

"Keep up your courage, Rose," said Jack, "you're pretty sure to pass, for if any girl in England knows about creepy, crawley things, you do!"

When Rose returned some days later, she looked rather overstrained and pale, and, to the surprise of Ethel and Maud, never looked at her microscope, or at any of her treasures in the way of beetles and tadpoles, but spent her time in complete idleness, except when she helped them to do up some of their evening clothes for some forthcoming dances; and they were surprised to see how deftly a biologist could sew.

One Saturday, as the three girls were sitting working together, Jack, who was spending his half-holiday at home again, said, "Why, here comes the telegraph boy!"

"Run and see who it is for," said Ethel, who had lately shown much more sympathetic interest in Rose, and who began to realise that if Rose obtained what she was so keenly set on, she, as well as others, might miss the cousin who had been so kind and so unselfish an inmate of their home. "Run and see, Jack; and if it is for any of us, bring it here."

Rose looked very white, but did not look up from her work.

"Addressed to Miss Rose Sinclair," said Jack, who soon returned.

Rose took the telegram with trembling fingers, and then tore it open.

It announced the following:—

"Rose Sinclair passed first. Awarded scholarship St. Margaret's for three years."

"Oh, Ethel!" said Rose, "it is too good to be true."

"I knew you would pass," said Jack, "I always said you would, didn't I, now?"

"Well," said Ethel, "we ought to be very glad for your sake."

"Yes," said Maud, "I congratulate you, Rose—but, I am very, very sorry you are going away."

"Are you, dear?" said Rose; "I also shall feel lonely without all of you, in this my second home. But let us go and tell uncle, for I consider this his special birthday gift to me."

"So it is," said Dr. Sinclair, who appeared at that moment.

"Then your old uncle is much gratified in sending his niece to Oxford; but he will miss his little girl very much."

Rose distinguished herself even far above Jack's expectation. After she had concluded her college course, she devoted her time and knowledge to giving lectures, for which she received remuneration, also to writing articles for magazines, and subsequent events led to her settling in Oxford. Whenever Dr. Sinclair wants an especially enjoyable holiday, he goes to spend a few days with Rose, and the two compare notes on their work. When he expresses his pleasure at her success, Rose loves to remind him that she owes it greatly to his kindness that she was placed in the way of obtaining it, through the birthday gift, which was to be so helpful to her.

DOLLY HARDCASTLE'S ROSEBUDS.

A CITY IDYLL

BY CHARLES E. PEARCE.

Jack Cameron's office was a handsome apartment. It was approached by a broad staircase, the balusters of which were impressive from their solidity and design. The office door had a species of ornamental pediment over it, and the room itself had panelled walls of a pale green, a chimney-piece of portentous size, and a highly ornamental ceiling.

Up the staircase tripped a little lady—a pleasant vision of a silk blouse, butter-coloured lace, golden hair, fawn gloves, and tan bottines, leaving behind her an atmosphere redolent of the latest fashionable perfume mingled with the more delicate scent of the Marechal Niel roses in her corsage.

She knocked at the door, and, as there was no response from within, turned the handle.

"May I come in, please?" she said laughingly.

A young man was standing in a corner of the room opposite the telegraphic machine, from which the "tape" was issuing with a monotonous click. On this "tape"—a narrow strip of paper seemingly endless, which fell on the floor in serpentine coils—were inscribed at regular intervals some cabalistic characters unintelligible to the general public, but full of meaning to the initiated.

He turned at the sound of the voice. "What! Dolly?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Jack; didn't you expect me?"

"Of course—of course," answered Jack Cameron, rather confusedly.

The girl crossed the room, and, taking both the hands of the young man, looked into his eyes.

"You are worried," said she softly.

"Oh, only a little. One is bound to have worries in business, especially when the market's feverish. But I'm awfully glad you've come. I shall forget all my bothers now you are here."

His tone brightened, and the shadow that was beginning to steal over the girl's face disappeared.

They were engaged. The wedding-day was fixed for the following week; naturally there was much to do in the way of house furnishing, and the bride elect was happy. Shopping before marriage has a distinct charm of its own. The feminine mind attaches to each purchase an ideal pleasure. Then there is the special joy of being entrusted by her future husband with money, and the pride of showing him how well she can bargain.

Jack Cameron was a stockbroker, and had done fairly well in South Africans. But like a good many others he had kept his "Narbatos" too long, and he saw his way to lose some money; not enough to seriously damage his stability, but enough to inconvenience him at this especial time when he was thinking of taking a wife.

Dolly Hardcastle knew nothing at all about this. Indeed, she knew nothing about stockbroking. It seemed to her simply a pleasant, light, gentlemanly profession, consisting principally in standing in Throgmorton Street, with one's hat tilted backwards, smoking cigarettes, eating oranges or strawberries according to the season, and talking about cricket or football.

This was the first time she had been to Jack's office, and she was prettily curious about everything—especially the telephone. She was not satisfied until Jack had shown her how to work the apparatus.

The "ticker" was also an all-absorbing object of attention. The continuous "click, click," and the issuing of the tape without any apparent motive power, had something of the supernatural about it. Dolly looked at the white strips with wonder.

"What does this say, Jack? N-a-r-Narbatos, 2½. What does it mean?"

Alas! Jack Cameron knew too well what it meant. Narbatos had gone down with a "slump." When Miss Hardcastle called he was debating whether he should sell. This quotation decided him.

"Dolly," said he hurriedly, "do you mind me leaving you for five minutes alone while I run into the 'House'?"

No, Dolly did not mind. Business, of course, must be attended to. Jack seized his hat, snatched a kiss, and vanished.

"Dear old Jack," said Dolly, seating herself at the office table and staring at the ticker. "I wonder whether he has many callers? Whatever shall I do if anybody comes?"

She was considering this matter, with the assistance of the paper-knife, pressed against her pretty lips, when the sharp ting, ting, ting, of the telephone startled her.

Somebody wanted to speak to Jack. It might be important. Hadn't she better go to the telephone? It was so nice to be able to help her future husband.

"I wonder whether I could imitate Jack's voice?"

She went to the telephone and did exactly as Jack had instructed her to do. She heard a sepulchral voice say, "Are you there?"

"Yes," said Dolly boldly.

"I have an offer of 5,000 Rosebuds. Will you take the lot, as you said you would when we were talking about them the other day? Wire just come."

"Five thousand rosebuds!" cried Dolly, with flashing eyes and cheeks like the flowers just mentioned. "Then Jack is going to have the church decorated after all. Darling fellow; he hasn't even forgotten the wire for fastening them."

The man at the other end was evidently impatient, for he shouted that Jack must decide at once. As the matter was one which concerned Dolly, she had no hesitation what answer to give.

"Yes," she declared, in as bass a tone as she could assume.

She felt half inclined to waltz round the room, but she was afraid of disturbing the occupant of the office below. Gradually she sobered down, and by the time Jack Cameron returned she was quite sedate.

Jack had sold his *Narbatos*, and had lost £500 over the deal. But it was no use crying over spilt milk. The immediate effect was that he would have to be very economical over his honeymoon expenses. However, he wouldn't say anything about the matter to Dolly that day. He would carry out his promise—give her a nice luncheon at Birch's.

And so, putting on a mask of gaiety to conceal his real feelings, he piloted his fiancée across Broad Street and Cornhill.

That luncheon took a long time. Basking in the smiles of his Dolly, he gradually forgot stocks, shares, backwardations, and contangoes. Then, when they came from Birch's, Dolly wanted to see the new frescoes at the Royal Exchange, and she had to be obeyed.

It was quite three o'clock when he bethought himself that, though wooing was very pleasant, he had several important letters to write, and must return to his office.

"Thank you, Jack, dear, for being so nice to me to-day," whispered Dolly, as they strolled towards the entrance of the Exchange; "and thank you especially for letting me have the church decorated. The roses will make the dear old place look sweetly pretty."

Jack stared. Had his Dolly taken leave of her senses?

"Decorations—roses!" he exclaimed, mechanically. "I don't understand."

"Ah, that's very clever of you," laughed Dolly, "pretending you know nothing about it. You wanted to surprise me."

"Upon my word I had no intention of having the church decorated. I should like to please you, of course, but—"

Well, he had already decided that the church decoration was one of the expenses he would do without.

"Come now, confess. Haven't you ordered a quantity of rosebuds? You must have forgotten. Anyway, it's all right, for while you were away from your office there came a message through the telephone asking whether you'd take 5,000 rosebuds you were talking to somebody about the other day and of course I said yes. Gracious! Jack, dear, what is the matter?"

"Rosebuds—telephone. Of course, I see what has happened," faltered the young stockbroker. "Oh, Dolly—Dolly."

"What have I done? Nothing very serious, I hope. If you don't want to have the church decorated, why, I—I—shan't mind very—very much."

"It isn't that at all," said Jack, looking very queer. "Of course you didn't know. Unluckily the message didn't mean flowers, but shares in the 'Rosebud Gold Mining Company.'"

"Oh!"

It was quite true that Jack had contemplated speculating in "Rosebud" shares, but he had heard some disquieting rumours about the mine, and had decided not to touch them. And here he was the prospective owner of 5,000! Only two days before the quotation was 10s., with a tendency to drop. To take them up was impossible, to sell would mean a loss.

"Dolly," said he hurriedly, "let me see you into an omnibus." And, after a hasty farewell, he packed the young lady into a Kensington 'bus, and rushed to the Mining door of the Stock Exchange in Broad Street.

"What are Rosebuds?" he inquired excitedly of a well-known stockbroker.

"15s. 6d., buyers, 14s. 6d., sellers."

And they were 7s. 6d., 7s., when the market opened that morning. What did it mean, and at what price had he, or rather, had Dolly, bought them?

He knew from whom the telephonic message had come. He dashed into his office and rang up the man, a member of a West End firm of brokers.

"Eight shillings," was the reply. "Congratulate you. Your profit already will pay for your honeymoon and a little more besides. Of course you'll sell. It's a market rig, and I happen to be in the know."

Sell? Of course he would. A profit of over £1,800 would recoup him for his loss of that morning, and leave him a handsome balance in the bargain.

"Dolly, dearest," he whispered that night, "the rosebuds are all right. The old church shall be smothered in them from end to end."

And so it was, but like a prudent man he never explained that but for Dolly's unconscious assistance there might have been no roses and perhaps very little honeymoon. He was afraid

Dolly might want to help him again!

A TALE OF SIMLA.

BY DR. HELEN BOURCHIER.

There was a dinner-party that night at the lieutenant-governor's, and those of the governed who had followed him from his territory of Lahore up to Simla were bidden to the feast. In one of the pretty private sitting-rooms of the Bellevue Hotel three ladies were discussing chiffons in connection with that function.

"Elma doesn't care for dinner-parties," Mrs. Macdonald said regretfully.

Elma was her daughter, and this was her first season in Simla.

"Oh, mother, I like the parties well enough!" said Elma. "What I hate is the horrid way you have of getting to parties."

"What do you mean?" the third lady asked.

"Elma means that she doesn't like the jampan," Mrs. Macdonald explained.

"I am always frightened," said Elma in a low voice, and a little of the delicate colour she had brought out from England with her faded from her lovely face. "It seems so dreadful to go rushing down those steep, narrow lanes, on the edge of a precipice, in little rickety two-wheeled chairs that would turn over in a minute if one of the men were to stumble and fall; and then one would roll all down I don't know how many feet, down those steep precipices: some of them have no railings or protection of any kind, and in the evening the roads are quite dark under the overhanging trees. And people have fallen over them and been killed—every one knows that."

"Elma cannot speak Hindustani," the mother further explained, "and the first time she went out she called '*Jeldi, jeldi!*' to the men, and of course they ran faster and faster. I was really rather alarmed myself when they came tearing past me round a corner."

"I thought *jeldi* meant 'slowly,'" said Elma.

"Well, at any rate you have learnt one word of the language," said Mrs. Thompson, laughing.

"I should not mind so much if mother was with me," said the girl; "but those horrid little jampan only hold one person—and mother's jampannis always run on so fast in front, and my men have to keep up with them. I wish I wasn't going this evening."

"She has the sweetest frock you ever saw," said Mrs. Macdonald, turning to a pleasanter aspect of the subject. "I must say my sister-in-law took great pains with her outfit, and she certainly has excellent taste."

"Didn't you ever feel nervous at first," Elma asked, "when you went out in a jampan on a dark night down a very steep road?"

Mrs. Thompson laughed. "I can't say I remember it," she said. "I never fancied myself going over the *kudd*—the 'precipice' as you call it. I suppose I should have made my husband walk by the side of the jampan if I had been afraid."

Then she got up to go, and Mrs. Macdonald went out with her and stood talking for a minute in the long corridor outside her rooms.

"She is a very lovely creature," said Mrs. Thompson pleasantly. "I should think she is quite the prettiest girl in Simla this year."

"I think she is," the mother agreed; "but I am afraid she will be very difficult to manage. She is only just out of the schoolroom, you know, and girls are so unpractical. She doesn't care to talk to any one but the subalterns and boys of her own age—and it is so important she should settle this year. You know we retire next year."

"It is early days yet," said the other cheerfully.

She had come out to India herself as the bride of a very rising young civilian, and she knew nothing of the campaign of the mothers at Simla.

Elma indeed looked a lovely creature when she came out of her room an hour or two later to show herself to her mother before she stepped into the hated jampan. Her dress was a delicate creation of white lace and chiffon, with illusive shimmerings of silver in its folds that came and went with every one of her graceful movements. She was a tall and slender girl, with a beautiful long white throat, smooth and round, that took on entrancing curves of pride and gentleness, of humility and nobleness. She had splendid rippling hair of a deep bronze, that had been red a few years earlier; and dark blue dreamy eyes under broad dark eyebrows; a long sweep of cool fair cheek, and a rather wide mouth with a little tender, pathetic droop at the corners.

"That frock certainly becomes you to perfection," said the mother. "I hope you will enjoy yourself; and do try not to let the boys monopolise you this evening. It is not like a dance, you know, and really, it is not good form to snub all the older men who try to talk to you."

Elma lifted her long lashes with a glance of unfeigned surprise. "Oh, mother," she said humbly, "how could I snub any one? I am afraid of the clever men. I like to talk to the boys because they are as silly as I am myself, and they would not laugh at me for saying stupid things."

"No one is going to laugh at you, goosey," said her mother.

"I wish I was not going," said Elma.

The ayah came out of the bedroom, and wrapped the tall young figure in a long white opera-cloak; and then they all went down together to the front verandah, where the jampans waited with the brown, bare-legged runners in their smart grey and blue liveries.

Mrs. Macdonald started first. "Don't call out *jeldi* too often, Elma," she called back, laughing: "I don't want to be run over."

And the ayah, hearing the word *jeldi*, explained to the jampannis that the Miss Sahib desired, above all things, fleetness, and that she had no mind to sit behind a team of slugs.

Elma got in very gingerly, and the ayah settled her draperies with affectionate care. The dark little woman loved her, because she was gentle and fair and never scolded or hurried.

The night was very dark. The road was by narrow backways, rough, heavily shadowed, and unprotected in many places. The jampannis started off at a run down the steep path as soon as they had passed through the gate, and Elma sat trembling and quaking behind them, gripping both sides of the little narrow carriage as she was whirled along. Once or twice it bumped heavily over large stones in the road; and when they had gone some little distance a dispute seemed to arise between the runners. They stopped the jampann and appealed to her, but she could not understand a word they said. She could only shake her head and point forward. Several minutes were lost in this discussion, and when at length it was decided one way or the other, the men started again at a greater speed than ever, to make up for the lost time.

They bumped and flew along the dark road, and whirled round a corner too short. One of the men on the inner side of the road stumbled up the bank, and, losing his balance, let go the pole, and the jampann heeled over. Elma's startled scream unnerved the other runners, who swerved and stumbled, and in a moment the jampann was overturned down the side of the *kudd*. The white figure in it was shot out and went rolling down the rough hillside among the scrub and thorny bushes and broken stakes that covered it.

The jampannis ran away; and after that one scream of Elma's there was silence on the dark road.

It seemed to her that she was years rolling and buffeting down that steep hillside, which happily at that point was not precipitous. Then something struck her sharply on the side and stopped her farther progress. She did not faint, though the pain in her side gripped her breath for a moment. For all her delicate ethereal appearance, she was a strong girl, and, like many timid people, found courage when a disaster had really happened. She could not move. She was pinned down among the short, stiff branches of a thorny shrub; but she screamed again as loud as she could—not a scream of terror, but a call for help. Then she lay and listened. All about her there was no sound but the rustling murmur of the leaves and the tiny, mysterious noises of the little creatures of the night whose realm she had invaded. Now and again she tried to move and disentangle herself from the strong branches that held her; but they pressed her down, the thorns pinned her clothes, and her bruised side ached with every movement—and she was forced to lie still again and listen for some sound of the jampannis, who must surely be looking for her.

Presently, on the road above, there sounded, very faint and far off, the tramp of shod feet. She called again, and the tramp quickened to a run, and a man's voice shouted in the distance: "Hullo! Hullo!"

As the steps came nearer above her, she cried again: "Help! I am here—down the *kudd*."

In the leafy stillness her shrill young voice rang far and clear.

"Where are you?" came the answering voice.

"Down the *kudd*."

The steps stopped on the road above.

"Are you there?" the voice called. "I see something white glimmering."

"I am here," she answered; then, as the bushes crackled above her, she called a warning: "It is very steep. Be careful."

Very slowly and cautiously the steps came down the steep side of the *kudd* to an accompaniment of rolling stones and crashing and tearing branches, and now and then a muttered exclamation. Then she was aware of a white face glimmering out of the darkness.

"Are you there?" said the voice again, quite close to her.

"Yes, I am here, but I cannot move; the branches hold me down."

"Wait a moment. I will get a light."

She was lying on her back, and, turning her head a little, she could see a match struck and the face it illuminated—a strong, dark, clean-shaven face; a close-cropped, dark, uncovered head. The match was held over her for a moment, then it went out.

"I see where you are," said the rescuer, "we must try to get you out. Are you hurt?"

"I have hurt my side, I think," she said.

Without more words he knelt down beside her and began to tear away and loosen the short, sturdy branches; then he took her under the shoulders, and drew her slowly along the ground. There was a great rending and tearing in every direction of her delicate garments; but at last she was free of the clinging thorns and branches.

"I am afraid the thorns have scratched you a good deal," he said in a very matter-of-fact voice. "Will you try if you can stand up now? Lean on me."

Elma scrambled to her feet, and stood leaning against him—a glimmering, ghostly figure, whose tattered garments were happily hidden by the darkness.

"Do you think you can manage to climb back to the road now?" he asked; "there may be snakes about here, you know."

"I will try," said Elma.

"I will go first," he said. "You had better hold on to my coat, I think. That will leave my hands free to pull us up."

Very slowly and laboriously they clambered back again to the road above; there was no sign of the jampannis, and the jampan itself had gone over the *kudd* and was no more to be seen.

They sat down exhausted on the rising bank on the other side of the road.

"How did you get here?" he asked.

"My jampan went over the side, down the precipice," said Elma, "and I am afraid those poor jampannis must have been killed."

The stranger laughed long and loud, and Elma, in the reaction of her relief, laughed too.

"I have not the slightest idea what you are laughing at," she said.

"You have not been long in this country?" he asked.

"Why?"

"You do not know the jampanni. As soon as the jampan tilted they let go, and directly they saw you had gone over they ran away. Killed! Well, that is likely! I daresay they will come back here presently to pick up the pieces, when they have got over their panic: they are not really bad-hearted, you know. We will wait a little while and see."

There was silence between them for a few peaceful moments; then Elma said gently, "I thank you with all my heart."

"Oh, not at all!" said the stranger politely.

They both laughed again, young, heart-whole, clear laughter, that echoed strangely on those world-old hills.

"Words are very inadequate," said Elma presently.

"Oh, one understands all right without words," said he; "but where is the rest of your party, I wonder? I suppose you were not alone?"

"Mother has gone to a dinner-party," she answered. "Oh dear, what ought I to do? She will be so frightened! She is waiting for me. I must get some one to go and tell her I am all right. How could I sit here and forget how frightened she will be when I don't come!"

"We had better wait a little longer, I think," he said. "You cannot walk just yet, can you?"

"My shoes are all cut to pieces," she owned ruefully. "I suppose we must wait. It was very lucky for me you were passing just then."

"Yes, I had just cut the shop for an hour or two, and I came round here to have a quiet smoke. Lost my way, as a matter of fact."

"They must keep open very late at your shop," she remarked.

He hesitated a moment before he answered, "Very late."

"And I suppose you haven't dined?" she went on. "You must come back with me, and dine at the hotel. I cannot go on to the party now, at any rate; my clothes are in rags, and, besides, it must be quite late."

"Do you know your way back to the hotel?" he asked, as the time went on and the jampannis

remained, to all appearance, as dead as ever.

"No, I have never walked down this way, and it is far too dark to attempt it now," said Elma very decidedly.

The time passed pleasantly enough while they waited, and more than once their light-hearted laughter rang out into the night.

At last they heard a pattering of bare feet coming down the road. The stranger hailed in Hindustani, and the natives stopped and began an excited jabbering all together, which the stranger answered in their own language.

"These are the jampannis who were killed," he announced to Elma. "If you wish it, I will send one of them with a message to your mother, and the others can fetch a couple of jampanns to take us to the hotel."

"You seem to know Hindustani very well," she remarked, when the men had been sent on their various errands.

"Yes, I have been some little time in India," he answered, "though I have only been a few days at Simla. Will you allow me to introduce myself? My name is Angus McIvor."

"And I am Elma Macdonald. I hope we shall not meet any one at the hotel before I can get to my room. Oh! and will you let me go on in front, and get out before you come?—I am so dreadfully tattered and torn."

"I promise not to look at you at all until you give me leave," he answered gravely. "And what about me? I have lost my hat, and as yet I have no idea of the extent of the damage my garments have sustained."

"Then I won't look at you either," said Elma, and they laughed together again in the gayest *camaraderie*.

Dinner was over at the Bellevue when they got back there; but they neither of them felt the want of other company. They had a very merry little dinner-party all to themselves, and Angus was able to look at the damsel errant he had rescued. Her beauty came upon him with a shock of surprise. He had seen many beautiful women in his time, but never anything so enchanting as the droop of her mouth, or the lovely curves of her throat, or the transparent candour of her sweet blue eyes.

What Elma saw was a tall, well-knit young fellow, with a dark, plain face, a hawk nose, and grey eyes. He was clean-shaven; no moustache or beard concealed the masterful squareness of his jaw or the rather satirical curve of his thin lips.

Directly dinner was over he left her, though she begged him to stay till her mother came home.

"Mother would like to thank you for what you did for me," she said.

"I will come and be thanked to-morrow morning, then," he said, laughing. "I shall want to know how you are after your accident, you know—that is, if I can get away from the shop."

Mrs. Macdonald came home rather early, and not in the best of tempers. She had been a good deal alarmed and upset when Elma failed to arrive at Government House; and even after the jampanni had brought the message that her daughter was safe at the hotel she was extremely annoyed at Elma's absence from the party. There were several bachelor guests whom she would have been glad to introduce to her; and when she thought of the radiant figure in the shimmering white robe that she had last seen on the hotel verandah, she was ready to cry with vexation and disappointment.

She listened with ill-concealed impatience to Elma's account of her accident. "And pray who is this Mr. McIvor who roams about rescuing distressed damsels?" she asked. "I never heard his name before."

"He said he came out of a shop," said Elma simply.

"A shop!" cried Mrs. Macdonald. "Really, Elma, you are no better than an idiot! The idea of asking a man who comes out of a shop to dine with you here! What will people say? You must be mad."

"But he was very kind to me, mother," said Elma, "and he missed his own dinner by helping me. And, you know, I might have lain in that horrible place all night if he had not helped me out. I don't see that any one here can complain about his shop; they were not asked to meet him: we dined quite by ourselves, he and I."

Mrs. Macdonald stamped her foot. "You are hopeless, Elma—quite hopeless!" she cried. "What was your aunt dreaming of to bring you up to have no more sense than a child of three years old?"

"He is very gentlemanly," said Elma, still gently expostulating. "You will see for yourself: he is coming to call on you to-morrow, and to ask how I am."

"Elma, I forbid you to see him again!" said the mother, now tragically impressive. "If he calls to-morrow, I shall see him alone. You are not to come into the room."

"I am afraid he will think it very unkind and rude," said Elma regretfully; "and I can never forget how kind he was and how glad I was to see him when he came down the *kudd* after me."

But she made no further resistance to her mother's orders, having privately decided in her own mind to find out what shop in Simla had the advantage of his services, and to see him there herself and thank him again.

Angus McIvor duly called next morning, and was received by Mrs. Macdonald alone; but what passed between them at that interview remains a secret between him and that lady.

After lunch Elma strolled out for her usual solitary walk while her mother was enjoying her siesta. She wandered idly along under the trees down the road along which the jampannis had whirled her the evening before, and so to the broken edge of the *kudd* where she had rolled over.

There, sitting on the bank, smoking serenely, was Angus McIvor. He threw away his cigar, and got up as soon as she saw him.

Her lovely face flushed, her blue eyes darkened with pleasure, as she held out her hand in greeting.

"I thought you would be sure to come here," he said, smiling down upon her.

"Oh, you expected me, then?" she said, and her eyes fell before his.

"Why weren't you there this morning when I came to be thanked?" he asked.

She turned her head away uneasily. "Mother did not wish me to come in," she said.

"Why not?"

No answer.

"Well, never mind that now," he said. "I will ask you again some other time. Now let us go up towards the top of Jacko; there are some pretty views I should like to show you."

And, nothing loth, Elma went with him.

"Why did your mother not wish you to see me this morning?"

"I cannot tell," said Elma lamely.

"Was it because of the shop?" he persisted. "Tell me. I promise you I will not mind. Was it?"

The fair head drooped a little, and the answer came in a whisper he could hardly hear: "Yes."

"And do you mind about the shop?"

She raised indignant blue eyes to his. "Of course not!" she said. "You ought to know that without asking me."

"Then will you meet me again to-morrow outside here?" he asked.

"No, I cannot do that."

"Then you are ashamed of the shop?"

"Indeed, I am not!"

"But I cannot meet you any other way," he urged. "I cannot come to see you, and you have not been to my shop yet since I came to Simla. So where can I see you? Will you meet me again?"

"Indeed, I cannot!"

"Then it is the shop?"

The blue eyes were full of distress, the tender mouth grew more pathetic. "I will come just once," she said, "to show you I care nothing about the shop. But you must not ask me again to do what I know my mother would not like. I cannot deceive her."

And on the next day they met again and walked together.

He did not ask her to meet him again, but on the third day he joined her at the gate.

"This is quite accidental, you know," he said, laughing down into her happy eyes.

And as they walked in the tender green shadows upon wooded Jacko, his eyes said, "I love you," and hers faltered and looked down.

And on the homeward way he took her hand. "I will not ask you to meet me again in secret, my sweetest," he said, "because I love you. I am ashamed that for one moment I doubted your innocent, unworldly heart. I will woo and win you openly as you should be wooed."

And without waiting for an answer, he kissed her hand and left her.

That evening there was a great reception at Government House, and the Viceroy's new aide-de-camp, Lord Angus McIvor Stuart, helped to receive the guests.

"This is my 'shop,' Mrs. Macdonald," he said. "It was a silly and slangy way to speak of it; but, upon my honour, I never meant to deceive any one when I said it first."

Then was Elma Macdonald openly wooed and won by the man who loved her.

THE TREVERN TREASURE.

BY LUCY HARDY.

A garden in the west of England some two and a half centuries ago; an old-world garden, with prim yew hedges and a sundial, and, in one shady and sequestered nook, two persons standing; one, a man some forty years of age, tall and handsome, the other a lady of grace and beauty some fifteen years his junior. Both were cloaked and muffled and spoke in low and anxious tones.

"An anxious task well done, sweetheart," the husband said at length, in tones of satisfaction; "and now, my darling, remember that this secret lies betwixt thou and I. Be heedful in keeping it—for thine own sake and that of our little babe. Should evil times arise, this hidden treasure may yet prove provision for our boy and for thee." So saying, he drew her arm within his own and led her into the house.

Sir Ralph Trevern had strongly espoused the Royal cause from the commencement of the Civil troubles, and was now paying a hurried visit to his home, to conceal his chief valuables, and to arrange for the departure of his wife Sybil and his baby heir to Exeter; a town still loyal to the king, and where he hoped his wife and babe would be safer than in their remote Devonshire Manor House amid neighbours of Parliamentary sympathies.

At Exeter Sybil Trevern remained until the city was forced to capitulate in the spring of 1646; and then, widowed and landless (for Sir Ralph had fallen at Marston Moor and his estate had been confiscated), she was thankful to accept the invitation of some Royalist friends, who had accompanied the queen, Henrietta Maria, in her secret flight to France some while before, and journeyed, with her babe, to join them in Paris.

There was no opportunity for Sybil Trevern to return to her old home, now in the possession of enemies; and, remembering her husband's strict charge of secrecy, she was reluctant to mention the hidden treasure, even to her friends.

"I will reveal it to our boy when he is of an age to understand it," thought Lady Trevern; but she never lived to see her son grow into manhood, or even into youth.

The trials and sorrows which had befallen her had told upon the gentle woman; and while the little Ralph was still a child, his mother passed into the Silent Land.

The concealment of valuables in secret places frequently results in misadventure. Sybil had often described to her little son the concealed valuables, which, if the exiled Royalists were ever able to re-visit England, she hoped to recover for herself and for him; and, in later years, Sir Ralph could still recall the enigmatical words in which his mother had (possibly with the idea that the rhyme might, as it did, cling to his childish memory) spoken to him of the hidden treasure.

"Near the water, by the fern,
The Trevern secret you shall learn,"

had often been whispered into his childish ears, and this rhyme was now the only clue that he possessed to the hiding-place of all that remained of his family's fortunes. The articles heedfully concealed by the elder Sir Ralph were of no small value. Besides papers and documents of some moment to the family, and some heirlooms (antique silver so prized as to have been exempted, even by the devoted Royalists, from contribution to the king's "war treasure chest," for which the University of Oxford, and many a loyal family, had melted down their plate), Sir Ralph had hidden a most valuable collection of jewels, notably a necklace of rubies and diamonds, which had been a treasured possession of the Treverns since the days of Elizabeth, when one of the family had turned "gentleman adventurer," become a companion of Drake and Hawkins, and won it as a prize from a Spanish galloon.

In his childhood, the present Sir Ralph had heard (from old servants as well as from his mother) descriptions of these treasured jewels; but the secret of their hiding-place now rested with the dead.

Sir Ralph grew to manhood, returned to England at the Restoration, and finally, after much suing and delay, succeeded in obtaining repossession of his small paternal estate. Then, for many months, did he devote himself to a careful, but utterly unavailing, search about his property, vainly seeking along the lake-side and all round the big pond for the concealed valuables—but never finding aught but disappointment. The neighbours said that the silent, morose man, who spent his days walking about the estate with bent head and anxious, searching eyes, had become a trifle crazed; and indeed his fruitless search after his hidden wealth had grown into a monomania.

As the years rolled by, Sir Ralph became a soured and misanthropic man; for his estate had returned to him in a ruinous and burthened condition, and the acquisition of his hidden treasure was really necessary to clear off incumbrances and to repair the family fortunes.

Lady Trevern often assured her husband that it was more than probable that the late Cromwellian proprietor had discovered the jewels during his occupancy, and that, like a prudent man, he kept his own counsel in the matter. But Sir Ralph still clung to the belief that somewhere in his grounds, "near the water and by the fern," the wealth he now so sorely needed lay concealed. That in this faith Sir Ralph lived and died was proved by his will, in which he bequeathed to the younger of his two sons, "and to his heirs," the jewels and other specified valuables which the testator firmly believed were still concealed *somewhere* about the Trevern property. The widowed Lady Trevern, however, was a capable and practically-minded woman, little inclined to set much value upon this visionary idea of "treasure trove." She was most reluctant to see her sons waste their lives in a hopeless search after the missing property, and succeeded in impressing both her children with her own views regarding the utter hopelessness of their father's quest. And, as the years passed away, the story of the "Trevern Treasure" became merely a kind of "family legend." The ferns said nothing, and the water kept its secret.

Fortune was not more kindly to the Treverns in the eighteenth century than she had been in the seventeenth. Roger Trevern, the elder son and inheritor of the estate, found it a hard struggle to maintain himself and his large family upon the impoverished property, while the younger son Richard, the designated heir of the missing treasure, became implicated in the Jacobite rising of 1715, was forced to fly to Holland after Mar's defeat, and died in exile, a few years after the disaster of Sherrifmuir, bequeathing a destitute orphan girl to his brother's charge.

Roger Trevern, a most kindly man, welcomed this addition to his already large family without a murmur; and little Mary Trevern grew up with her cousins, beloved and kindly treated by all in the household. It was only as the child grew into womanhood that a change came over Madam Trevern's feelings towards her young niece; for Madam Trevern was a shrewd and sensible woman, a devoted, but also an ambitious, mother. Much as she liked sweet Mary Trevern, she had no desire to see her eldest son, the youthful heir of the sadly encumbered estate, wedded to a portionless bride, however comely and amiable. And Dick Trevern had lately been exhibiting a marked preference for his pretty cousin, a fact which greatly disturbed his mother's peace of mind.

Mary herself knew this, and did not resent her aunt's feelings in the matter. The girl, as one of the elders among the children, had long been familiar with the story of the family straits and struggles, and could only acquiesce (though with a stifled sigh) in Madam Trevern's oft repeated axiom that "whenever Dick wedded, his bride must bring with her sufficient dowry to free the estate" from some of the mortgages which were crushing and crippling it. Mary knew that a marriage between herself and Dick could only result in bringing troubles upon both—and yet—and yet—love and prudence do not often go hand-in-hand—and although no word of actual wooing had ever passed between the young folk, both had, unfortunately, learned to love each other but too well. Wistfully did she think of that hidden treasure, now but a forlorn hope, yet all the hope she had.

"And had the poor child but a dowry there is none to whom I would sooner see our Dick wedded," Madam Trevern once remarked to her husband; "for Molly is a good girl, and like a daughter to us already. But, Roger, 'tis but sheer midsummer madness to dream of such a marriage now; truly 'twould be but 'hunger marrying thirst.' Dick must seek for a bride who at least brings some small fortune with her; and is there not Mistress Cynthia at the Hall, young and comely, and well dowered, casting eyes of favour upon him already?"

Roger Trevern sighed a little; he honestly liked Mary, and would have welcomed her heartily as a daughter-in-law, though prudent considerations told him that his wife spoke truly regarding the hopelessness of such a marriage for his son.

And then Madam Trevern went on to discuss with her husband the scheme she had now much at heart, viz., the separation of the young folks by the transference of Mary to the family of a distant kinsman in London.

"You do but lose your youth buried here with us, child," said Madam Trevern to Mary, with kindly hypocrisy one day, "while with our cousin Martin, who would be glad enough to take a bright young maid like thee to be companion to his ailing wife, thou mayst see the world, and perchance make a great marriage, which will cause thee to look down upon us poor Devon rustics." But Mary wept silently, though she was ready, even willing, to go to London as desired.

It was the girl's last day in the old home; her modest outfit had been prepared and packed, and the old waggoner was to call on the morrow to convey Mary and her uncle (who was to be her escort to the wonderful, far-off "London town") to Exeter; whence, by slow and tedious stages, the travellers would reach the metropolis at last.

Dick, who had been astutely sent away from home for a few weeks, knew nothing of his cousin's intended departure—Madam Trevern had purposely schemed thus to escape any "farewells" between the young people, arranging Mary's London visit very suddenly; and "perhaps 'twas the wisest," the girl sighed to herself as she wandered for the last time round the old, familiar garden, and seated herself, *alone!* on the mossy well curb, where she and Dick had so often sat and talked together on sweet summer evenings in the past.

Mary's heart was indeed sad within her, and visions of what "might have been" would keep welling up before her. Oh! if only some good fairy had been keeping back the secret of the hidden treasure to reveal it now, how happy it would be.

Her solitary musings were, however, put to flight by the appearance of the younger children, with whom she was a great favourite, and who had gained an hour's respite from their usual "bed-time" upon this, their cousin's last night at home. Tom, and Will, and Sally, and Ben, had indeed received the tidings of their beloved "Molly's" impending departure with great dismay; and their vociferous lamentations were hardly to be checked by their mother's assurances that one day "Cousin Molly" might come back to see them, when she was "a great lady, riding in her coach and six," and would bring them picture-books and gilt gingerbread.

It was with a strange pang at her heart that Mary now submitted to the loving, if rather boisterous, caresses of the urchins who climbed her lap and clung around her neck.

But Mary had not chosen her quiet seat with a view to childhood's romps or she had chosen a safer one. As it was the shout of merriment was quickly followed by a sudden cry, a splash, and a simultaneous exclamation of dismay from Mary and the children. Will, the youngest, most troublesome, and therefore best beloved of the family, the four-years-old "baby," had slipped on the curb of the well, overbalanced himself, and fallen in; dropping a toy into the water as he did so. In a moment Mary was on her feet. Seizing the bucket, she called the elder boys to work the windlass, and, with firm, but quiet instructions and a face as white as death, consigned herself to the unknown deep.

Near the bottom of the well, which was not very deep, she came upon her little cousin suspended by his clothes to a hook fastened in the well side. She was not long in disengaging the little fellow's clothes from the friendly hook, and was about to signal to be drawn up, when beneath the hook, and explanatory of it—"near the water, by the fern"—what was it? A large hole in the side of the well, and in it—the Trevern treasure, found at last!

Though the lapse of many years had rotted some of the leather covering of the jewel casket, the gems themselves, when lifted out, flashed forth in undimmed beauty; the silver cups and flagons, if discoloured, were still intact, and the papers in the metal case were well preserved.

These last proved of great importance to Roger Trevern, enabling him to substantiate his claim to some disputed property, which was quite sufficient to relieve his estate of all its embarrassments.

And as for Mary, she restored her youngest cousin to his mother's arms, and took the eldest to her own.

A MEMORABLE DAY.

BY SARAH DOUDNEY.

Miss Tillotson's grey parrot had called "Clarissa" a dozen times at least, and was listening with his cunning head on one side for footsteps on the stairs. Breakfast was ready; an urn, shaped something like a sepulchral monument, was steaming on the table, and near it stood an old china jar filled with monthly roses. It was a warm, bright morning—that twenty-ninth of August in the year 1782. The windows at each end of the room were wide open, but scarcely a breath of air wandered in, or stirred the lilac bushes in the garden. For the Tillotsons' house could boast of a respectable strip of ground, although it stood in a street in Portsea.

At a quarter past eight Clarissa Tillotson came downstairs, and entered the room with a quick, firm step, taking no notice of the parrot's salutation. She was a tall, fair girl of nineteen; her hair, worn according to the fashion of that period, in short curls, was almost flaxen; her eyes were clear blue, her features regular, and, but for a certain hardness and sternness about the mouth, she might have been pronounced beautiful. She was dressed in a short-waisted gown of white muslin, with a blue girdle; her bodice was cut square, leaving her neck uncovered; her tight sleeves reached to the wrists. The gown was so scanty, and the skirt clung so closely to her figure, that it made her appear even taller than she really was. And at this day, on the wall of a modern London mansion, Clarissa's grandchildren and great-grandchildren behold her in a tarnished gilt frame, habited in the very costume which she wore on that memorable morning.

"Good-morning, Anthony," she said stiffly, as a young man, two years older than herself, made his appearance.

"Good-morning, sister," he answered in a cheery tone, drawing a step nearer as if he meant to give her a kiss. But Clarissa drew up her stately figure to its full height, and turned quickly to the table.

Her brother coloured with annoyance. There had been a quarrel between them on the preceding day, and Anthony was willing to make the first advance towards reconciliation. But he saw that Clarissa intended to keep him at a distance, and he knew the obstinacy of her nature too well to renew his attempt. He took his seat with a sigh, thinking how bright the home-life would be if the

cloud of her unyielding temper did not too frequently darken the domestic sunshine.

"I find that father is not well enough to come down yet," he said at last, breaking an awkward silence. "He means to leave his room this afternoon."

"Dr. Vale charged him to be very cautious," rejoined Clarissa.

These young people were motherless; the daughter reigned as mistress of her father's house, acknowledging no control save his, and that was of the mildest kind. Captain Tillotson was the most indulgent of parents; his wife had died while Clarissa was still too young to realize her loss, and the child had been entirely left to the care of an old servant, who allowed her to have her own way in all things. At school she had been forced to submit to discipline; but her strong will was never conquered, and she generally contrived to gain an ascendancy over her companions. Having retired from long and honourable service in the Royal Navy, the captain settled himself at home, to pass his old age in peace; and Clarissa proved herself an affectionate daughter. But Anthony was scarcely so easy to manage as her father; to him, his sister's word was not always law, and she sometimes found herself good-humouredly contradicted.

"If I give in," thought she, going over the before-mentioned quarrel, "he will think that he has got the mastery. No; I will treat him with marked coldness until he makes an apology."

Thoroughly chilled by her frigid tone and manner, Anthony made few efforts to sustain the conversation. Breakfast was finished in silence, and he rose rather hastily from his seat at the table.

"I am going on board the *Royal George* this morning," he said, moving towards the door. "If my father asks for me, Clarissa, please tell him that I wanted to say a few words to Lieutenant Holloway. He will have to sail again shortly."

"Very well," replied Clarissa, indifferently.

The hall-door closed behind him, and she rung the bell to have the breakfast-table cleared. Then the sunshine tempted her to saunter into the garden, and gather a bunch of sweet lavender, but from some unexplained cause her mind was ill at ease. She could take no pleasure in her flowers; no interest in the vine which had been her especial care; and she returned to the house, determined to spend the morning at her worsted-work. Seating herself near the open window, she drew her frame towards her, and arranged her crewels. The shining needle darted in and out, and she was soon deeply absorbed in her occupation.

Every piece of work has a history of its own; and this quaint representation of the woman of Samaria was fated to be of great interest to succeeding generations. But the busy worker little guessed what memories would hereafter cling to that morning's labour, nor dreamed that some day those very stitches would remind her of the darkest hours in her life.

She worked on until the old clock in the hall struck ten; and at the same moment a sudden gust of wind swept through the room, strewing the table with petals from the over-blown roses in the jar, and blowing Clarissa's curls about her head. It was a welcome breeze, coming as it did after the sultry stillness, and she stood up between the two windows to enjoy the draught. Then, after pacing the long room to and fro for awhile, she sat down to her frame again, and began to think about her brother Anthony.

Had she been quite right after all? Would it not have been well to have received that kiss of peace? Was it such a very meritorious thing to hold out until her adversary had humbled himself before her? Even if the apology were made, would it not be rather a poor victory—one of those conquests which degrade instead of exalting the conqueror? Anthony was a noble fellow, a brother of whom most girls would be proud. His only fault was that determination to maintain his own opinion; but was that indeed a fault? She worked faster, and almost decided that it was not.

So busy was her brain that time flew by unheeded, and she started to hear the clock striking one. Scarcely had the stroke died away, when a shrill cry came ringing through the quiet street, driving the colour out of her face in an instant. Springing up from her chair, she hurried to the window that overlooked the pavement, and saw that people had come to their doors with dismayed faces, for a woman was standing on the causeway, raising that terrible wail.

"It's all true—it's all true!" she shrieked. "The *Royal George* has gone down at Spithead."

The two maid-servants rushed upstairs in affright, for the cry had reached their ears. The captain heard it in his room overhead, and came down in his dressing-gown and slippers; but his daughter scarcely stayed to exchange a word with him. Mechanically seizing the garden-hat and shawl that hung in the hall, she put them on, and ran out into the street, setting off at full speed for the dockyard gates. Could it be true? Alas! the news was confirmed before she reached her destination, and the first wail was but the herald of many others. Even in that hour of universal distress and consternation people took note of the tall, fair young lady whose face and lips were as white as the dress she wore.

The *Royal George* had lately arrived at Spithead after a cruise, and on that fatal morning she was undergoing the operation known as a "parliament heel." The sea was smooth and the weather still, and the business was begun early in the morning, a number of men from Portsmouth dockyard going on board to assist the ship's carpenters. It was found necessary, it is said, to strip off more of the sheathing than had been intended; and the men, eager to reach the defect in the

ship's bottom, were induced to heel her too much. Then indeed "the land-breeze shook her shrouds," throwing her wholly on one side; the cannon rolled over to the side depressed; the water rushed in; and the gallant ship met her doom. Such was the story, told in hurried and broken words, that Clarissa heard from the pale lips of an old seaman; but he could give no other tidings. The boats of the fleet had put off to the rescue; that was all he could tell.

There was no hope in Clarissa's heart as she turned her steps homewards. Anthony had gone down—gone down with Admiral Kempenfeldt and his eight hundred. The same breeze that had scattered the rose-petals and played with her curls had a deadlier mission to perform. She remembered how she had stood rejoicing in that sudden gust of cool wind, and the thought turned her faint and sick as she reached her father's house.

"Clarissa," cried the captain, meeting her at the door, "what is all this? Surely it can't be true. Where's Anthony?"

Ay, where was Anthony? She threw her arms round the old man's neck, and hid her eyes upon his shoulder that she might not see his face.

"Father—dear father! He said he was going to see Lieutenant Holloway on board——"

She could not finish her sentence, and there was no need of more words. Captain Tillotson was a brave man; he had faced death many a time without flinching, but this was a blow which he was wholly unprepared to meet. Putting his daughter gently aside, he sat down on a sofa, and looked straight before him with that terrible blank look that tells its own tale of a stroke that has crushed out all strength. The servants, glancing from the father to the daughter, saw that on both faces this sudden sorrow had done the work of years. What was time? Was it months or minutes ago that the first cry had sounded through the street?

"If I had only kissed him!" Clarissa did not know that she was saying the words aloud. To her, indeed, this cup was doubly bitter, for it was mingled with the gall of remorse. But for that hard nature of hers, she might have had the sweetness of a kind parting to think upon. Had he forgiven her, in his loving heart, while the great ship was going down, and the water was taking away his life? Ah, she might never know that, until the cruel sea gave up its dead.

There was a noise of wheels in the street; but what were noises to her? The sound drew nearer; the wheels stopped at the door, but it could be only some friend, who had come in haste to tell them the bad news which they knew already.

Battered, and bruised, and dripping with water, a man descended from the hackney coach, and Clarissa started up.

The face was so pale, the whole aspect so strange, that she could not receive the great truth all at once. It was not until he entered the room, and knelt down, wet and trembling as he was, at his father's feet, that she realized her brother's safety.

Anthony had been on the upper deck when the ship sank, and was among that small number who escaped death. All those who were between decks shared the fate of the great Admiral who went down with his sword in its sheath, and ended his threescore years and ten of hard service, in sight of shore. The many were taken, the few left; but although hundreds of homes were made desolate that day, there were some from whence the strain of thanksgiving ascended, tempered by the national woe.

People were wont to say afterwards that Clarissa never again looked so young and fair as she did before the blow fell. But if that day's agony robbed her of her bloom, it left with her the "meek and quiet spirit" which never comes to some of us until it is gained through a great sorrow.

DORA.

AN OSTLER'S STORY.

BY ALFRED H. MILES.

Tell you a story, Master 'Arry? Ah! there's only one story as ought to be told in this yer stable, and that's the old un as allus hupsets me to tell. But I don't mind a-goin' over the old ground once ag'in, Master 'Arry, as you know werry well, if these yer gents 'as a mind to listen to a hold man's yarn. It beats all the printed stories as ever I see, but then, as I ain't no scholar, and can't see werry well neither, p'raps that ain't no much wonder arter all. Reading ain't much in my line, yer see, sir, and, as the old master used to say, "Bring up yer boys to the prerfishuns yer means 'em to foller." 'Osses is my prerfishun, sir, and 'osses I was brought up to.

Excuse me just a minute, sir, if yer don't mind a-settin' on this yer stool. I don't like to see nobody a-leanin' ag'in that there post. That were "Snowflake's" stall, sir, in the old time, and "Snowflake" were little Dora's pony.

My father were os'ler here, sir, afore I were born, and I growed up to the stable, Master 'Arry,

just as your ole father growed up to the 'All. It were in ole Sir Markham's time, this were—ole Sir Markham, whose picture hangs above the mantel in the dinin'-'all, as fine a hold English gen'leman as ever crossed a 'unter and follered the 'ounds. The first time as ever I see Sir Markham were when I were about four year old. O' course, we lived on the estate, but I don't know as I'd ever been up to the 'All till that partickler mornin', when I came wi' a message for my father, and meets ole Sir Markham in the park. Now, yer know, Sir Markham were a queer ole chap when he liked. He didn't take no nonsens from nobody, he didn't. I've seen him thrash the keeper afore now with his own ridin' whip, and he wouldn't 'a' stood partickler about a boy or two, and as there'd been a deal of fruit stole out o' the orchard about that time, he thought he'd jist up and frighten me a bit. So he hollers out—"Hi! there, you boy, what right 'a' you got in my park?" but I see a sort o' twinkle in his eye, so I knowed he weren't real cross, and so I up and says, "Ain't boys got a right to go where their fathers is?" He didn't say nothing more to me then, but when he sees my father he says, "That's a smart boy o' yours, Jim," he says, "and when he's a bit older yer must 'ave 'im up 'ere to 'elp."

Well, sir, I got a bit older in time, and I come up 'ere to 'elp, and, 'ceptin' for a very little while, I've been 'ere ever since.

I were a boy of fourteen when the things 'appened as make up the rest o' my story. Sir Markham he were a matter o' sixty year old, I should say, and Miss Dora, as I see it said in a book, once, "sweet, wery sweet, wery, wery sweet seventeen."

I allus 'ad a hadmiration for Miss Dora. "Darling Dora" they called 'er at the 'All, and so did I, when nobody wasn't listenin'. Nobody couldn't know 'er without admirin' 'er, but I 'ad a special sort of hadmiration for 'er as 'ad made me do any mortal thing she asked me, whatever it might 'ave costed.

Yer see, when I were quite a little chap, and she were no much bigger, she ses to me one day, when I were a bit scolded, she ses, "Never mind, Jim," she ses, "cheer up; you'll be a man o' some sort some day;" and I tell you, though I allus 'ad a hidea that way myself, when she said it I grow'd a hinch straight off. If yer believes in yourself, Master 'Arry, yer can do a lot, but if somebody else believes in yer there ain't nothink in the whole world what yer can't do.

My particler business in the stable were Miss Dora's pony, Snowflake, darling Dora's darling, as it got called o' times. She rode out a great deal, did Miss Dora, and she rode well, and I generally 'ad to foller 'er on the bay cob. She'd spend a lot o' time about this yer stable, one way and another, and we got to be werry partickler friends. Not as I presum'd, mind yer, nor as she forgot 'er station; she were just a hangel, she were, what couldn't be spoilt by nobody's company, and what couldn't 'elp a-makin' o' other people wish as they were summut in the hangel line, too.

But yer a-gettin' impatient I see, gents, and I ax yer pardon for a-ramblin' a bit.

Well, it were Chris'mas time, as it might be now, and young Markham (that were your father, Master 'Arry) he were 'ome from Oxford for 'is 'olidays, with as nice a young fellow as ever stepped, as 'ad come with him to spend Chris'mas at the 'All. They called 'im the "Captain," not that he were a harmy captain, or anythink of that, he were a captain of summut at the college—maybe football or summut else. Somehow he often came 'ome with young Markham at 'oliday times, and 'im and Miss Dora was partickler friendly like.

It were not a werry snowy Chris'mas that year, though there were plenty of frost, and the lake in the park would 'a' borne the London coach and four without a crack. Young Markham and the Captain and Miss Dora did a deal o' skatin', and ole Sir Markham invited a lot o' friends to come and stay Chris'mas for the sake o' the sport. They did say as Aunt Dorothy as Miss Dora were called arter 'ad been a-preachin' at 'im for a-neglectin' o' Miss Dora and a-keepin' 'er at the 'All without no society, and I s'pose that's why Sir Markham were a-aggitatin' himself a bit cos' we never 'ad no fuss at Chris'mas as a rule.

Well, we was werry busy at that time, I can tell yer; several of the wisitors brought their own 'osses with them, and me and my father had plenty to do a-lookin' arter 'em.

Among the wisitors as come from London were a real military hofficer, a reg'lar scaff'ld pole he were, for length and breadth, with mustaches as 'ud 'a' done for reins, if 'e'd only been a 'oss. He weren't no favourite o' mine, not from the fust. He were a bit too harbitry for me. He were a-thinkin' he were a-goin' to hintroduce 'is harmy regerlations into our stables; but he allus 'ad to wait the longest, for all 'is hinterferin'. But what used to rile me the most with him were 'is nasty, sneerin' ways at young Markham's friend, the Captain. Yer see, sir, he were a real harmy captain, and so I s'pose he were a bit jealous o' our young Captain, as was a lot better than 'im, arter all. O' course I didn't see it at the time, but I've said to myself lots o' times since, it were a reg'lar plant, that's what it were, that Aunt Dorothy 'ad brought the big soldier down o' purpose for Miss Dora to fall in love with; but 'e were just a little bit too late.

Well, yer know, gents, I told yer as I were quite a youngster at the time, and though ole Sir Markham said as I were werry sharp, I must confess as I didn't quite understand 'ow things were a-goin' on. I noticed that the two captains kept pretty clear of each other, and that Miss Dora never came near the stables for three days together, which were a werry unusual thing for 'er; and one of the ole servants at the 'All told me as the hofficer 'ad been hasking Sir Markham if he might pay his addresses to Miss Dora, and that Sir Markham 'ad said he might.

My ole father were a-hactin' a bit queer about that time, too; he kept a-hasken' me if I'd like to be

a postboy, or drive the London coach, or anything o' that, cos', he ses, "Yer know, Jim, Miss Dora 'll be marryin' somebody one o' these days, and maybe you'll 'ave to find summut else to do when Snowflake's gone." "Well," I ses, "if Miss Dora got married and go'd away, I reckon she'd take me with 'er to look arter 'er 'osses, so I sha'n't want no postboy's place, nor coachun's neither, as I sees." And father he seemed pretty satisfied, he did, only 'e says, "If ever you should want to drive to Scotland, Jim," he ses, "you go across the moor to the Burnley Beeches, and then yer bears off to yer right by the Ambly Arms, three mile along you'll fine the great North Road, and there yer are."

Well, I didn't take no notice of this, though father he kept on sayin' o' summut o' the sort all day long, and when it came to evenin', bein' Chris'mas Eve, we went up to the 'All to 'ave supper in the kitchen, and drink ole Sir Markham's 'elth. Sir Markham come down in the servants' 'all and made a speech, and some o' the gents come down too; but while things were a-goin' at their 'ighest, my father he says to me, "Jim," 'e says, "if ever you want to go to Scotland you go across the moor to the Burnley Beeches, and then yer bears off to yer right by the Ambly Arms, three mile along you'll fine the great North Road, and there yer are." "All right," I says, angry like, "I don't want no Scotland; what d'yer want to bother me for with yer Burnley Beeches, and yer Ambly Arms?" "Jim," 'e ses solemn, "yer never know how useful a bit of hinformation may come in sometimes; now," he says, "you'd better run over to the stables, and see if all is a-goin' on right." Well, I see it was no use argifyin', so off I starts. I sees as I comes near the stables as there were a light there, as ought not to be, and o' course, I run back'ard to tell my father, but lor, I thought he were off 'is 'ed, for all he ses was, "If ever you wants to go to Scotland, Jim, it's across the moor to the Burnley Beeches, off to yer right, by the Ambly Arms, three mile along you'll fine the great North Road, and there yer are."

They'd been a-drinkin' a bit 'ard some of 'em, and I ses to myself father's been a'elpin' of 'em, and I tears off to the stables to see what was up.

Well, when I gets here, I comes in at that there door behind yer, sir, and what should I see, but Miss Dora in Snowflake's stall, a-kissin' and a-cryin' over 'im like mad. She didn't take no notice o' me no more'n if I hadn't been there at all, and I came and stood ag'in that there post as you were a-leanin' ag'in just now, sir. Little Dora were a-sobbin' as if 'er 'art would break, and she were a-tryin' to say "Good-bye." They're only little words, sir, at the most, but werry often they're the 'ardest words in all the world to say.

Well, sir, to make a long story short, it were just this: Sir Markham had told 'er as she mustn't think nothink of young Markham's college friend, 'cos 'e were poor and 'adn't nothink but 'is wits and 'is learnin' to live on, and that the tall soldier 'ad been a-haskin' for 'er, and he'd promised 'er to 'im; and it 'ad clean broke 'er 'art, and so she 'ad come down to this yer stable where everythink loved 'er to tell 'er sorrows to her old pet Snowflake, to bury her face in his snowy neck, and wipe 'er eyes on his flowin' mane.

But, afore I 'ad time to say anythink, who should foller me in at the door but the young Captain hisself, and 'e come and stood by me a moment without sayin' a word. He were werry pale, and 'is eyes shone like fire, and at last he ses, in a hoarse sort of a whisper, "Jim," 'e ses, "they wants to marry darling Dora to the big swaggerin' soldier, and I want yer to 'elp me prewent 'em." "'Elp yer prewent 'em," I ses; "why, I'll prewent 'em myself. I ain't werry big, p'r'aps, and maybe I couldn't reach 'is bloated face, but a stone 'ud find 'is head as quickly as it did the big Bible chap as David killed; and maybe I can shie." I hadn't practised on ole Sir Markham's apples for nothink.

Well, sir, I needn't say as it didn't come to that. The fact is, everythink were arranged. It were a matter o' seventy miles to Scotland by the road, and they'd made up their minds to start for Gretna Green as soon as the wisitors 'ad gone to bed. Father were in the swim, and that's why he'd been a-'intin' to me all day and 'ad sent me to see what the light meant. My father 'e were a artful ole man, 'e were; he knowed better nor to 'ave anythink to do with it hisself. Why, I b'leave Sir Markham 'ud a murdered 'im if he 'ad, but me, o' course,—I was only a boy, and did as I were told.

Well, sir, a-hactin' under horders, I were a-waitin' with the post-chaise at them Burnley Beeches at eleven o'clock. I'd been a-waitin' some time, and I begun to be afraid as they weren't a-comin'. At last I see a white somethink comin' along, and in another minute they was alongside. I shall never forget that night. Miss Dora fainted directly she were inside the carriage, and to me she looked as if she were dead. "For God's sake, and for Dora's sake, drive for your life, Jim!" said the young Captain, and I just did drive for my werry life. It was werry dark and I couldn't see much, and it must a bin a-rainin' or summut else,—anyhow there were a preshus lot o' water got in my eyes, till I couldn't see nothink. Father had taken care to git the 'osses in good condition, and they went away as though they knew as they were a-carryin' their darlin' Dora from death to life.

From the Burnley Beeches I drove as I 'ad been directed, past the Ambly Arms, and three mile further I found the great North Road, and there I wore. You never know how useful a bit o' information may come in sometimes. It were pretty straight work now, and the only thing I 'ad to fear was a-wearin' out me 'osses afore we reached the Border. At two o'clock we stopped and baited, and the young Captain he give me the tip. He says, "Don't go *too* fast," he ses; "they won't be arter us for an hour or two yet, if they come at all. I've given 'em summut else to look for fust," 'e ses, "and it'll take 'em all their time."

Weil, there ain't no need to make a long story out o' our run to Scotland; we got there safe

enough arter imaginin' as we was follered by highwaymen, and goblins, and soldiers, and hall sorts o' other hevil sperits, which were nothink but fancy arter all.

Why, bless yer, we 'adn't no real need to fear; the young Captain he were one too many for 'em, he were, in more ways nor one. Afore he came away he smashed a big hole in the ice, in the middle of the lake, and put 'is 'at and Miss Dora's muff on the edge of the hole; and they were a-breaking up the ice and dragging the lake all Chris'mas Day instead of a-follerin' us.

Next thing came the weddin' in the blacksmith's shop, where the young Captain took our darling Dora all to hisself, with ne'er a bridesmaid but me to give 'er away and everythink else. Poor little Dora, she fainted right off ag'in directly it were all over; and the young Captain he flushed up regular, like one o' them hero chaps as they put in books. I never see such a change in any one afore or since. 'E seemed as if 'e could do anything now Miss Dora were hall 'is own. I tell yer, sir, you can't fight nothing like 'arf so 'ard for yourself as yer can if you've got some one else to fight for.

After the weddin', the Captain put up at the "Blacksmith's Arms," where 'e writes a long letter to ole Sir Markham, and one to your father, Master 'Arry, which he give me to deliver, and with which I started 'ome ag'in.

Ole Sir Markham never forgave the young Captain for a-runnin' off wi' Miss Dora, and if it 'adn't 'a' bin for your father, Master 'Arry, I shouldn't never 'a' come back to the 'All. Arter that they went abroad to some foreign place as I never heerd of, and they lost track of 'em up at the 'All too arter a bit; though I know as your father, Master 'Arry, used to send 'em lots o' things without Sir Markham a-knowin' anythink about it. And then came the letter with the black edge as said as our Dora 'ad died o' one of them furren fevers as I didn't even know the name of, and arter that we never heard no more. Poor ole Sir Markham began to break up werry soon arter that. He were not like the same man arter Miss Dora went, and werry soon 'e kept to the 'ouse altogether, and we never saw nothink of 'im out o' doors.

Next thing we 'eard as he were ill, and everybody were a-wishin' as Miss Dora 'ud come back and comfort 'im. At last, when he were really a-dyin', 'e kep' on a-callin' her, "Dora, Dora," in 'is wanderin's like, and nobody couldn't answer 'im, their 'arts was that full as there weren't no room for words. I remember that night, sir, as if it were yesterday, and yet it were forty year ago, Master 'Arry, ten year afore you were born. It were Chris'mas Eve, and ole Sir Markham he were keepin' on a-haskin' for Miss Dora, and I couldn't stand it no longer, so I come over 'ere to smoke my pipe and be to myself, yer see, and bide my feelin's like. Well, I were a-sittin' on a stool in that there corner, a-thinkin' about ole Sir Markham and our darlin' Dora, when I looks up, and as true as I ever see anythin' in my life I see her a-standin' there afore me. She didn't take no notice of me, though, but she run into Snowflake's stall there, sir, and buried her pretty face in 'is neck and stroked his mane and patted his sides, then she laughed one o' her silv'ry laughs and clapped 'er 'ands and calls out, "'Ome again, 'ome again at last; happy, happy 'ome. Jim, Jim, where's that lazy Jim?" But lor', sir, she were gone ag'in afore I could get up off the stool. I rushed up to the 'All like lightnin', I can tell yer, and I see a bright light a-shinin' in ole Sir Markham's bedroom. I never knowed 'ow I got up them stairs, but I heerd ole Sir Markham cry out as loud as ever I heerd 'im in my life, "Dora, Dora, come at last; darling Dora, darling!" 'E never said no more, did ole Sir Markham, she had taken 'im away.

You'll excuse me a-haskin' you not to lean ag'in that post, won't you, sir? It's a kind o' sort o' friend o' mine. There ain't a sorrow as I've ever had these forty year that I haven't shared with that post. It 'ave been watered by little Dora's tears, and it 'ave been watered by mine, and there ain't nothink in the 'ole world as I walue more. It ain't for the likes o' me to talk o' lovin' a hangel like 'er, sir, but I 'av'n't never loved no one else from that day to this, and maybe when my turn comes at last, Master 'Arry, to go where there ain't no difference between rich and poor, I may 'ear 'er bright sweet voice cry out ag'in to me: "'Ome ag'in, Jim: happy, happy 'ome!"

LITTLE PEACE.

BY NORA RYEMAN.

In the heart of England stands a sleepy hollow called "Green Corner," and in this same sleepy hollow stands a fine old English manor house styled "Green Corner Manor." It belongs to the Medlicott family, who have owned it for generations. In their picture gallery hangs a most singular picture, which is known far and wide as "The Portrait of Little Peace." It depicts a beautiful child in the quaint and picturesque costume of the age of King Charles II. A lamb stands by her side, and a tame ringdove is perched on her wrist. Her eyes are deeply, darkly blue, the curls which "fall adown her back are yellow, like ripe corn." Beneath this portrait in tarnished golden letters are these words of Holy Writ, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and if you read the chronicles of the Medlicott family you will read the history of this child. It was written by Dame Ursula, the wife of Godfrey Medlicott, and runs as under:—

"It was New Year's Eve, and my heart was heavy, so also was my husband's. For 'Verily our house had been left unto us desolate.' Our son Hilary had died in France, and our daughter, Grace, slept in the chancel of the parish church with dusty banners once borne by heroic Medicotts waving over her marble tomb. 'Would God, that I had died for thee, my boy,' said dead Hilary's father when he looked at the empty chair in the chimney corner; 'and, my darling, life is savourless without thee,' I cried in bitterness of spirit, as I looked at the little plot of garden ground which had been known as Mistress Gracie's garden when my sweet one lived. Scarcely had this cry escaped my lips when a most strange thing befel. Seated on the last of the terrace steps was a little child, who as I passed her stretched out her hand and caught fast hold of my gown. I looked down, and there, beside me, was a most singular and beautiful child. The moonlight fell on her small, pale face and long, yellow hair, and I saw that she was both poorly and plainly clad. 'What do you want, my little maid?' I asked. 'You, madam,' she said serenely. 'From whence have you come?' was my next query. 'From a prison in London town,' was the strange reply. Doubtless this child (so I reasoned) was the daughter of some poor man who had suffered for conscience' sake; and, mayhap, some person who pitied his sad plight had taken the girl and thrown her on our charity, or, rather, mercy. 'Child,' said I, 'wilt come into the Manor with me, and have some chocolate and cake?' 'That will I, madam,' she answered softly. 'I came on purpose to stay with you.' The little one has partly lost her wits, I thought, but I said nothing, and the stranger trotted after me into my own parlour, just as a tame lamb or a little dog might have done. She took her seat on a tabouret at my knee, and ate her spiced cake and sipped her chocolate with a pretty, modest air. Just so was my Gracie wont to sit, and even as I thought of her my dim eyes grew dimmer still with tears. At last they fell, and some of them dropped on the strange guest's golden head, which she had confidingly placed on my knee. 'Don't, sweet madam,' she said, 'don't grieve overmuch! You will find balm in giving balm! You will find comfort in giving comfort! For *I am Peace*, and I have come to tarry with you for a little space!' I perceived that the child's wits were astray, but, somehow, I felt strangely drawn to her, and as she had nowhere else to go I kept her with me, and that New Year's Eve she slept in my Grace's bed, and on the succeeding day she was clothed in one of my lost ewe lamb's gowns, and all in the household styled her Little Peace, because she gave no other name at all.

"Time passed on—and the strange child still abode with us, and every day we loved her more, for she 'went about doing good,' and, what is more, became my schoolmistress, and instructed me in the holy art of charity. For my own great woe had made me forgetful of the woes and afflictions of others. This is how she went about her work. One winter day, when the fountain in the park was frozen, the child, who had been a-walking, came up to me and said, 'Dear madam, are apples good?' 'Of a surety they are—excellent for dessert, and also baked, with spiced ale. Wherefore dost ask?' 'Because old Gaffer Cressidge, and the dame his wife, are sitting eating baked apples and dry bread over in Ashete village, and methinks that soup would suit them better. Madam, we must set the pot boiling, and I will take them some. And, madam, dear, there must be a cupboard in this house.' 'Alack, my pretty one,' said I, 'of cupboards we already have enow. There is King Charles's cupboard in which we hid his Majesty after Worcester fight, and the green and blue closet, as well as many others. Sure, you prattle of that of which you do not know.' She shook her fair, bright head, and answered, 'Nay, madam, there is no strangers' cupboard for forlorn wayfarers, and there must be one, full of food, and wine, and physic, and sweet, health-restoring cordials. And the birdies must have a breakfast daily. Dorothy, the cookmaid, must boil bread in skimmed milk, and throw it on the lawn; then Master Robin and Master Thrush and Mistress Jenny Wren will all feast together. I once saw the little princes, in King Edward's time, feed the birdies thus; and so did Willie Shakespeare, in Stratford town.' Alas, I thought, alas, all is *now too* plain. This child must have been akin to some great scholar, who taught her his own lore, and too much learning hath assuredly made her mad; but I will humour her, and then will try to bring her poor wits home. Thus reasoning, I placed her by my side, and cast my arms around her, and then I whispered, 'Tell me of thyself.' 'That will I,' she replied. 'I am Peace, and I come both in storms and after them. I came to Joan the Maid, on her stone scaffold in the Market Place of Rouen. I came to Rachel Russel when she sustained her husband's courage. I came to Mère Toinette, the brown-faced peasant woman, when she denied herself for her children. I came to Gaffer and Grannie Cressidge as they smiled at each other when eating the apples and bread. And I came to a man named Bunyan in his prison, and lo! he wrote of *me*. Now I have come to you.' 'Yea, to stay with me,' I said, but she answered not, she only kissed my hand, and on the morrow, when the wintry sunlight shone on all things within the manor house, it did *not* shine upon her golden head! Her little bed was empty, so was her little chair; but the place she had filled in my heart was *still* filled, and so I think it will be for ever! Some there are who call her a Good Fay or Fairy, and some there are who call her by another and sweeter name, but I think of her always as Little Peace, the hope giver, who came to teach me when my eyes were dim with grief. For no one can tell in what form a blessing will cross his threshold and dwell beside him as his helper, friend, and guest."

THE STORY OF WASSILI AND DARIA.

A RUSSIAN STORY.

BY ROBERT GUILLEMARD.

Whilst staying in Siberia, on one occasion, when returning from an evening walk in the woods I was surprised at seeing a young Russian girl crying beside a clump of trees; she seemed pretty, and I approached; she saw me not, but continued to give vent to her tears.

I stopped to examine her appearance; her black hair, arranged in the fashion of the country, flowed from under the diadem usually worn by the Siberian girls, and formed a striking contrast, by its jet black colour, with the fairness of her skin. Whilst I was looking at her, she turned her head, and, perceiving me, rose in great haste, wiped off her tears, and said to me:

"Pardon me, father—but I am very unfortunate."

"I wish," said I, "that it were in my power to give you any consolation."

"I expect no consolation," she replied; "it is out of your power to give me any."

"But why are you crying?"

She was silent, and her sobs alone intimated that she was deeply afflicted.

"Can you have committed any fault," said I, "that has roused your father's anger against you?"

"He is angry with me, it is true; but is it my fault if I cannot love his Aphanassi?"

The subject now began to be interesting; for as Chateaubriand says, there were love and tears at the bottom of this story. I felt peculiarly interested in the narrative.

I asked the young Siberian girl who this Aphanassi was whom she could not love. She became more composed, and with enchanting grace, and almost French volubility, she informed me that the summer before a Baskir family had travelled further to the north than these tribes are accustomed to do, and had brought their flocks into the neighbourhood of the zavode of Tchornaia; they came from time to time to the village to buy things, and to sell the gowns called *doubas*, which their wives dye of a yellow colour with the bark of the birch tree. Now her father, the respectable Michael, was a shopkeeper, and constant communications began to be established between the Baskir and the Russian family. This connection became more close, when it was discovered that both families were of that sect which pretends to have preserved its religion free from all pollution or mixture, and gives its members the name of *Stareobratzi*. The head of the Baskir family, Aphanassi, soon fell in love with young Daria, and asked her in marriage from her father; but though wealthy, Aphanassi had a rough and repulsive look, and Daria could not bear him; she had, therefore, given him an absolute refusal. Her father doated on her, and had not pressed the matter farther, though he was desirous of forming an alliance so advantageous to his trade; and the Baskir had returned to his own country in the month of August to gather the crops of hemp and rye. But winter passed away, and the heats of June had scarcely been felt before Aphanassi had again appeared, with an immense quantity of bales of rich *doubas*, Chinese belts, and kaftans, and a herd of more than five hundred horses; he came, in fact, surrounded with all his splendour, and renewed again his offers and his entreaties. Old Michael was nearly gained by his offers, and Daria was in despair, for she was about to be sacrificed to gain, and she detested Aphanassi more than she had done the year before.

I listened to her with strong emotion, pitied her sorrows, which had so easily procured me her confidence, and when she left me, she was less afflicted than before.

The next day I returned to the spot where I had seen her, and found her again; she received me with a smile. Aphanassi had not come that morning, and Daria, probably thinking that I would come back to the spot, had come to ask me what she ought to reply to him, as well as to her father. I gave her my advice with a strong feeling of interest, and convinced that pity would henceforward open to me the road to her heart, I tried to become acquainted with her family. The same evening I bought some things from old Michael, and flattering him on his judgment and experience, endeavoured to lay the foundation of intimacy.

During several days I went regularly to the same spot, and almost always found Daria, as if we had appointed a meeting. Her melancholy increased; every time she saw me she asked for further advice, and although she showed me nothing but confidence, yet the habit of seeing her, of deploring her situation, of having near me a young and beautiful woman, after hearing for many, many months no other voices than the rough ones of officers, soldiers, and smiths—all these circumstances affected my heart with unusual emotion.

The sight of Daria reminded me of the circumstances of my first love; and these recollections, in their turn, embellished Daria with all their charms.

One day she said to me:

"You have seen Aphanassi this morning at my father's; don't you think he is very rough, and has an ugly, ill-natured countenance?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, I will show you whom I prefer to him." She smiled in saying this, and I was powerfully affected, as if she had been about to say, "You are the man!" She then threw back the gauze veil that flowed from her head-dress, and instantly, at a certain signal, a young man sprung from behind the trees and cried out to me:

"Thank you, Frenchman, for your good advice! I am Wassili, the friend of Daria!"

This sight perfectly confounded me. So close to love, and to be nothing but a confidant after all! I blushed for shame, but Daria soon dispelled this impulse of ill-humour. She said to me:

"Wassili, whom I have never mentioned to you, is my friend; I was desirous of making you acquainted with him. But he was jealous because you gave me consolation and I wished him to remain concealed from you, that he might be convinced by your language of the worthiness of your sentiments. Wassili will love you as I do; stranger, still give us your advice!"

The words of Daria calmed my trouble; and I felt happy that, at a thousand leagues from my native land, in the bosom of an enemy's country, I was bound by no tie to a foreign soil, but could still afford consolation to two beings in misfortune.

Wassili was handsome and amiable; he was also wealthy; but Aphanassi was much more so, and old Michael, though formerly flattered with the attentions of Wassili to his daughter, now rejected them with disdain. We agreed upon a plan of attack against the Baskir. I talked to Michael several times on the subject, and tried to arrange their differences; but it was of no avail.

Meanwhile took place the feast of St. John, the patron saint of Tchornaïa, which assembled all the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages.

Early in the morning of the holiday, the whole of the inhabitants, dressed in their finest clothes, get into a number of little narrow boats, made of a single tree, like the canoes of the South Sea savages. A man is placed in the middle with one oar in his hands, and strikes the water first on one side and then on the other, and makes the boat move forward with great velocity. These frail skiffs are all in a line, race against each other, and perform a variety of evolutions on the lake. The women are placed at the bow and stern, and sing national songs, while the men are engaged in a variety of exercises and amusements on the shore. A large barge, carrying the heads of the village and the most distinguished inhabitants, contains a band of music, whose harmony contrasts with the songs that are heard from the other boats.

Beautiful weather usually prevails at this season, and the day closes with dances and suppers in the open air; and the lake of Tchornaïa, naturally of a solitary aspect, becomes all at once full of life and animation, and presents an enchanting prospect.

Wassili had got several boats ready, which were filled with musicians, who attracted general attention, and were soon followed by almost all the skiffs in the same way as the gondolas in the Venetian lagoons follow the musical amateurs who sing during the night. Wassili knew that Michael would be flattered to hear an account of the success he had obtained: but Aphanassi had also come to the festival. As soon as he learned that the musicians of Wassili were followed by the crowd, and that his rival's name was in every one's mouth, he collected twenty of his finest horses, covered them with rich stuffs, and, as soon as the sports on the lake were over, began, by the sound of Tartar music, a series of races on the shore, which was a novel sight in the summer season, and was generally admired. His triumph was complete, and at Tchornaïa nothing was talked of for several days but the races on the shore of the lake, and the Baskir's influence with Michael increased considerably.

The grief of Daria made her father suspect that she met Wassili out of the house, and he confined her at home. I saw none but the young man, whose communications were far from being so pleasing to me as those of Daria. Towards the end of July he informed me that Aphanassi had made another attempt to get her from her father; but that the old man was so overcome with her despair that he had only agreed that the marriage should take place the ensuing summer, delaying the matter under the pretext of getting her portion ready, but, in truth, to give her time to make up her mind to follow the Baskir.

About this period Wassili was sent by M. Demidoff's agent, at the head of a body of workmen, to the centre of the Ural Mountains to cut down trees and burn them into charcoal. He was not to return till the middle of September. During his absence I saw Daria almost daily; she had lost the brilliancy of her look, but it seemed to me that her beauty was increased, her countenance had assumed such an expression of melancholy. I had gradually obtained the goodwill of Michael, and dispelled, as far as lay in my power, the sorrows of his daughter. I was a foreigner, a prisoner, little to be feared, and pretty well off in regard to money, so that Michael felt no alarm at seeing me, and neglected no opportunity of showing me his goodwill.

I received a strong proof of this about the middle of August. He brought me to a family festival that takes place at the gathering of the cabbage, and to which women only are usually admitted; it is, in fact, their vintage season.

On the day that a family is to gather in their cabbage, which they salt and lay up for the winter season, the women invite their female friends and neighbours to come and assist them. On the evening before, they cut the cabbages from the stem, and pull off the outside leaves and earth that may be adhering to them. On the grand day, at the house where the cabbages are collected, the women assemble, dressed in their most brilliant manner, and armed with a sort of cleaver,

with a handle in the centre, more or less ornamented, according to the person's rank. They place themselves round a kind of trough containing the cabbages. The old women give the signal for action; two of the youngest girls take their places in the middle of the room, and begin to dance a kind of allemande, while the rest of the women sing national songs, and keep time in driving their knives into the trough. When the girls are tired with dancing, two more take their place, always eager to surpass the former by the grace with which they make their movements. The songs continue without intermission, and the cabbages are thus cut up in the midst of a ball, which lasts from morning till night. Meanwhile, the married women carry on the work, salt the cabbages, and carefully pack them in barrels. In the evening the whole party sit down to supper, after which only the men are admitted, but even then they remain apart from the women. Glasses of wine and punch go round, dancing begins in a more general manner, and they withdraw at a late hour, to begin the same amusement at another neighbour's till all the harvest is finished.

Amidst all these young girls Daria always seemed to me the most amiable! she danced when called upon by her mother; her motions expressed satisfaction, and her eyes, scarcely refraining from tears, turned towards the stranger, who alone knew her real situation, though amidst so many indifferent people who called themselves her friends.

Towards the end of September, Wassili returned from the woods. Daria had a prospect of several months before her before the return of Aphanassi, if ever he should return at all; and she gave herself up to her love with pleasing improvidence.

At this period there came to Tchornaïa two Russian officers, with several sergeants, who were much more like Cossacks than regular soldiers. Their appearance was the signal of universal mourning—they came to recruit. They proclaimed, in the Emperor's name, that on a certain day all the men in the district, whatever their age might be, were to assemble in the public square, there to be inspected.

At the appointed day every one was on the spot; but it was easy to see by their looks that it was with the utmost repugnance that they had obeyed. All the women were placed on the other side, and anxiously waited for the result of the inspection, and some of them were crying bitterly. I was present at this scene. The officers placed the men in two rows, and passed along the ranks very slowly. Now and then they touched a man, and he was immediately taken to a little group that was formed in the centre of the square. When they had run over the two rows, they again inspected the men that had been set apart, made them walk and strip, *verified* them, in a word, such as our recruiting *councils* did in our departments for many years. When a man was examined he was allowed to go, when the crowd raised a shout of joy; or he was immediately put in irons, in presence of his family, who raised cries of despair—this man was fit for service.

These unfortunate beings, thus chained up, were kept out of view till the very moment of their departure. No claims were valid against the recruiting officer; age, marriage, the duties required to be paid to an infirm parent, were all of no avail; sometimes, indeed, it happened, and that but rarely, that a secret arrangement with the officer, for a sum of money, saved a young man, a husband, or a father from his caprice, for he was bound by no rule; it often happened, also, that he marked out for the army a young man whose wife or mistress was coveted by the neighbouring lord, or whom injustice had irritated and rendered suspected.

To finish this description, which has made me leave my friends out of view, at a very melancholy period, I shall add a few more particulars.

Wassili, as I said before, was at the review; the recruiting officer thought he would make a handsome dragoon, or a soldier of the guard, and, having looked at him from top to toe, he declared him fit for the army.

Whilst his family were deploring his fate, and preparing to make every sacrifice to obtain his discharge, some one cried out that the officer would allow him to get off because he was wealthy, but that the poor must march.

The Russian heard this, and perhaps on the point of making a bargain, felt irritated, and would listen to no sort of arrangement, as a scoundrel always does when you have been on the point of buying. Wassili was put in irons, and destined to unlimited service—that is, to an eternal exile, for the Russian soldier is never allowed to return to his home.^[1] Daria nearly fell a victim to her grief, and only recovered some portion of vigour when the recruits were to set out.

[1] He is enrolled for twenty years—that is, for a whole life.

On that day the recruiting party gorge them with meat and brandy till they are nearly dead drunk. They are then thrown into the sledges and carried off, still loaded with irons. A most heart-rending scene now takes place; every family follows them with their cries, and chants the prayers for the dead and the dying, while the unfortunate conscripts themselves, besotted with liquor, remain stupid and indifferent, burst into roars of laughter, or answer their friends with oaths and imprecations.

Notwithstanding the force that had been shown to him, Wassili had drunk nothing, and preserved his judgment unclouded; he stretched out his arms towards Daria, towards his friends, and towards me, and bade us adieu with many tears. Amidst the mournful sounds that struck upon her ears, the young girl followed him rapidly, and had time to throw herself into his arms before the sledge set out; but the moment he was beyond her reach, she fell backward with violence on the ice. No one paid the least attention to her; they all rushed forward and followed the sledges

of the recruiting party, which soon galloped out of sight. I lifted Daria up; I did not attempt to restrain her grief, but took her back to her father's, where she was paid every attention her situation required. In about a month's time she was able to resume her usual occupations, but she recovered only a portion of her former self.

Winter again set in. I often saw Daria, either at her father's house, or when she walked out on purpose to meet me, which her father allowed, in the hope of dissipating her sorrows. How the poor girl was altered since the departure of Wassili! How many sad things the young Siberian told me when our sledges glided together along the surface of the lake! What melancholy there was in her language, and superstition in her belief!

I attempted to dissipate her sombre thoughts; but I soon perceived that everything brought them back to her mind, and that the sight of this savage nature, whose solitude affected my own thoughts with sorrow, contributed to increase her melancholy. Within her own dwelling she was less agitated, but more depressed; her fever was then languid, and her beautiful face despoiled of that expression, full of agreeable recollections, that animated her in our private conversation. These walks could only make her worse, and I endeavoured to avoid them. She understood my meaning. "Go," said she, "kind Frenchman, you are taking fruitless care; Wassili has taken my life away with him; it cannot return any more than he can."

I still continued to see her frequently. Old Michael was unhappy because she wept on hearing even the name of Aphanassi; he foresaw that it would be out of his power to have this wealthy man for his son-in-law, for his promises had gained his heart long ago. However this may be, he made his preparations in secret, bought fine silks, and ordered a magnificent diadem to be made for his daughter. She guessed his object, and once said to me, "My father is preparing a handsome ornament for me; it is intended for the last time I shall be at church; let him make haste, for Daria won't keep him waiting."

About the middle of June Aphanassi returned, more in love and more eager than ever, and, as soon as he appeared, the daughter of Michael was attacked by a burning fever that never left her. In a few days she was at the gates of death. All the care bestowed upon her was of no avail, and she died pronouncing the name of Wassili.

Full of profound grief, I followed her body to the church of the Stareobratzi, at Nishnei-Taguil. It had been dressed in her finest clothing, and she was placed in the coffin with her face uncovered. The relations, friends, and members of the same church were present. The men were ranged on one side, and the women on the other. After a funeral hymn, in the language of the country, the priest, who was bare-headed, pronounced the eulogium of the defunct. His grey hair, long beard, Asiatic gown, and loud sobs, gave his discourse a peculiar solemnity. When it was finished, every one came forward silently to bid farewell to Daria, and kiss her hand. I went like the rest; like them I went alone towards the coffin, took hold of the hand I had so often pressed, and gave it the last farewell kiss.

PLUCK, PERIL & ADVENTURE.

MARJORIE MAY: A WILFUL YOUNG WOMAN.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN.

"How perfectly delightful! Just fancy riding along those lovely sands, and seeing real live Bedouins on their horses or camels! I declare I see camels padding along now! I wish it wouldn't get dark so fast. But the city will look lovely when the moon is up."

"Is it quite safe?" asked a lady passenger, eager for the proposed excursion, but a little timid in such strange surroundings. For Mogador seemed like the ends of the earth to her. She had never been for a sea voyage before.

"Oh, yes; safe enough, or Captain Taylor would never have arranged it. Of course, it might not be safe to go quite alone; but a party together—why, it's as safe as Regent Street."

"What is this excursion they are all talking about?" asked Marjorie May, who had been standing apart in the bow of the boat, trying to dash in the effect of the sunset lights upon the solemn, lonely African mountains, with the white city sleeping on the edge of the sea, surrounded by its stretch of desert. It was too dark for further sketching, and the first bell had sounded for dinner. She joined the group of passengers, eagerly discussing the proposed jaunt for the morrow. Several voices answered her.

"Oh, the captain is going to arrange a sort of picnic for us to-morrow. We have all day in harbour, you know, and part of the next. So to-morrow we are to go ashore and take donkeys, and ride out along the shore there for several miles, to some queer place or other, where they will arrange lunch for us; and we can wander about and see the place, and get back on board in time for dinner; and next day we can see the town. That only takes an hour or so. We leave after lunch, but it will give plenty of time."

"I think the town sounds more interesting than the donkey-rides," said Marjorie. "I had not time to sketch in Tangiers, except just a few figures dashed off anyhow. I must make some studies of the Arabs and Nubians and Bedouins here. I shan't get another chance. This is the last African port we stop at."

"Oh, I daresay you'll have plenty of time for sketching," answered her cabin companion to whom she had spoken; "but I wouldn't miss the ride if I were you. It'll be quite a unique experience."

The dinner-bell rang, and the company on board the *Oratava* took their seats in the pleasant upper deck saloon, where there was fresh air to be had, and glimpses through the windows of the darkening sky, the rising moon and brightening stars.

Marjorie's next-door neighbours were, on one side, the lady whose cabin she shared, on the other a Mr. Stuart, with whom she waged a frequent warfare. He was an experienced traveller, whilst she was quite inexperienced; and sometimes he had spoken to her with an air of authority which she resented, had nipped in the bud some pet project of hers, or had overthrown some cherished theory by the weight of his knowledge of stern facts.

But he had been to Mogador before, and Marjorie condescended to-night to be gracious and ask questions. She was keenly interested in what she heard. There was a Jewish quarter in the city as well as the Arab one. There was a curious market. The whole town was very curious, being all built in arcades and squares. It was not the least like Tangiers, he told her, which was the only African town Marjorie had yet visited. This cruise of the *Oratava* had been a little unfortunate. The surf had been so heavy along the coast, that the passengers had not been able to land at any port of call since leaving Tangiers. They had had perforce to remain upon the vessel whilst cargo was being taken on and shipped off. But the sea had now calmed down. The restless Atlantic was quieting itself. The vessel at anchor in the little harbour scarcely moved. The conditions were all favourable for good weather, and the passengers were confident of their pleasure trip on the morrow.

As Marjorie heard Mr. Stuart's description of the old town—one of the most ancient in Africa—she was more and more resolved not to waste precious moments in a stupid donkey-ride across the desert. Of course it would be interesting in its way; but she had had excellent views of the desert at several ports, whereas the interior of the old city was a thing altogether new.

"I suppose it's quite a safe place?" she asked carelessly; and Mr. Stuart answered at once:

"Oh, yes, perfectly safe. There are several English families living in it. I lived there a year once. Of course, a stranger lady would not walk about there alone; she might get lost in the perplexing arcades, and Arab towns are never too sweet or too suitable for a lady to go about in by herself. But I shall go and look up my friends there. It's safe enough in that sense."

Marjorie's eyes began to sparkle under their long lashes. A plan was fermenting in her brain.

"I think I shall spend my day there sketching," she said.

"All right; only you mustn't be alone," answered Mr. Stuart in his rather imperious way. "You'd better take Colquhoun and his sister along with you. They're artists, and he knows something of the language and the ways of the Arabs."

A mutinous look came over Marjorie's face. She was not going to join company with Mr. and Miss Colquhoun any more. She had struck up a rather impulsive friendship with them at the outset of the voyage, but now she could not bear them. It was not an exceptional experience with her. She was eager to be friends with all the world; but again and again she discovered that too promiscuous friendship was not always wise. It had been so in this case, and Mr. Colquhoun had gone too far in some of his expressions of admiration. Marjorie had discovered that his views were much too lax to please her. She had resolved to have very little more to do with them for the future. To ask to join them on the morrow, even if they were going sketching, was a thing she could not and would not condescend to.

No, her mind was quickly made up. It was all nonsense about its not being safe. Why, there were English families and agents living in the place, and she would never be silly and lose herself or her head. She would land with the rest. There were about five-and-twenty passengers, and all of them would go ashore, and most would probably go for the donkey-ride into the desert. But she would quietly slip away, and nobody would be anxious. Some would think she had gone with the Colquhouns, who always sketched, or perhaps with Mr. Stuart, who had taken care of her in Tangiers. She was an independent member of society—nobody's especial charge. In the crowded streets of an Arab town nothing would be easier than to slip away from the party soon after landing; and then she would have a glorious day of liberty, wandering about, and making her own studies and sketches, and joining the rest at the appointed time, when they would be going back to the ship.

So Marjorie put her paints and sketching pad up, provided herself with everything needful, and

slept happily in her narrow berth, eagerly waiting for the morrow, when so many new wonders would be revealed.

The morning dawned clear and fair, and Marjorie was early on deck, watching with delight the beautiful effects of light as the sun rose over the solemn mountains and lighted up the wide, lonely desert wastes. She could see the caravans of camels coming citywards, could watch the sunbeams falling upon the white walls, domes, and flat roofs of the ancient town. She watched the cargo boats coming out with their loads, and the familiar rattle of the steam crane and the shouts of the men were in her ears. The deck was alive with curious forms of Arabs come to display their wares. A turbaned man in one of the boats below was eagerly offering a splendid-looking, sable-black Nubian for sale, and Mr. Colquhoun was amusing himself by chaffering as though he meant to buy, which he could have done for the sum of eight pounds; for there is a slave market yet in Mogador, where men and women are driven in like cattle to be bought and sold.

A duck had escaped from the steward's stores and was triumphantly disporting himself in the green water. The steward had offered a reward of half a dozen empty soda-water bottles to the person who would recapture the bird, and two boats were in hot pursuit, whilst little brown Arab boys kept diving in to try to swim down the agile duck, who, however, succeeded in dodging them all with a neatness and sense of humour that evoked much applause from the on-lookers.

Marjorie heard afterwards that it took three hours to effect the capture, and that at least a dozen men or boys had taken part in it, but the reward offered had amply contented them for their time and trouble.

Breakfast was quickly despatched that morning. Marjorie was almost too excited to eat. She was full of delightful anticipations of a romantic, independent day. Mr. Stuart's voice interrupted the pleasant current of her thoughts.

"Would you like to come with me, Miss May? My friends would be very pleased, I am sure. We could show you the town, and you would be sure of a good lunch." He added the last words a little mischievously, because Marjorie was often annoyed at the persistent way in which people made everything subservient to meals. A bit of bread and a few dates or an orange seemed to her quite sufficient sustenance between a ship's breakfast and dinner.

But such a commonplace way of spending a day was not in the least in accord with Marjorie's views. She thought she knew exactly what it would be like to go with Mr. Stuart—a hurried walk through the town, an introduction to a family of strangers, who would wish her anywhere else, the obligation to sit still in a drawing-room or on a verandah whilst Mr. Stuart told all the news from England, and then the inevitable lunch, with only time for a perfunctory examination of the city. She would not have minded seeing one of the houses where the English families lived, but she could not sacrifice her day just for that.

"Oh, thank you, but I have made my plans," she answered quickly; "I must do some sketching. I've not done half as much as I intended when I started. I am a professional woman, you know, Mr. Stuart; I can't amuse myself all day like you."

This was Marjorie's little bit of revenge for some of Mr. Stuart's remarks to her at different times, when she had chosen to think that he was making game of her professional work.

Marjorie was not exactly dependent upon her pencil and brush. She had a small income of her own; but she would not have been able to live as she did, or to enjoy the occasional jaunts abroad in which her soul delighted, had it not been that she had won for herself a place as illustrator upon one or two magazines. This trip was taken partly with a view to getting new subjects for the illustration of a story, a good deal of which was laid abroad and in the East. An Eastern tour was beyond Marjorie's reach; but she had heard of these itinerary trips by which for the modest sum of twenty guineas, she could travel as a first-class passenger and see Gibraltar, Tangiers, several African ports, including Mogador, the Canary Islands, and Madeira, and be back again in London within the month. She was a good sailor, and even the Bay had no terrors for her; so she had enjoyed herself to the full the whole time. But she had not done as much work upon Arab subjects as she had hoped, and she was resolved not to let this day be wasted.

Mr. Stuart would have offered advice; but Marjorie was in one of her contrary moods, and was afraid of his ending by joining her, and sacrificing his own day for her sake. She had a vaguely uneasy feeling that what she intended to do would not be thought quite "proper," and that Mr. Stuart would disapprove rather vehemently. She was quite resolved not to allow Mr. Stuart's prejudices to influence her. What was he to her that she should care for his approval or good opinion? After the conclusion of the voyage she would never see him again. She never wanted to, she said sometimes to herself, rather angrily; he was an interfering kind of autocratic man, for whom she felt a considerable dislike—and yet, somehow, Marjorie was occasionally conscious that she thought more about Mr. Stuart than about all the rest of the passengers put together.

It was very interesting getting off in the boats, and being rowed to the city by the shouting, gesticulating Arabs. Marjorie liked the masterful way of the captain and ship's officers with these dusky denizens of the desert. They seemed to be so completely the lords of creation, yet were immensely popular with the swarms of natives, who hung about the ship the whole time she was in harbour. The quay was alive with picturesque figures as they approached; but they did not land there. They passed under an archway into a smaller basin, and were rowed across this to another landing-place, where the same swarms of curious spectators awaited them.

Marjorie's fingers were itching after brush and pencil. Everything about her seemed a living picture, but for the moment she was forced to remain with her fellow-passengers; and Mr. Stuart walked beside her, vainly offering to carry her impedimenta.

"No, thank you," answered Marjorie briskly; "I like to have my own things myself. I am not used to being waited on. Besides, you are going to your friends. Oh, what a curious place! what big squares! And it's so beautifully clean too! Call Arab towns dirty? Why, there's no dirt anywhere; and oh, look at those people over yonder! What are they doing?"

"Washing their clothes by treading on them. They always chant that sort of sing-song whilst they are trampling them in the water. That is the custom-house yonder, where they are taking the cargo we have just sent off. Now we must go through the gate, and so into the town; but you will find it all like this—one square or arcade leading into another by gateways at the end. That's the distinguishing feature of Mogador, and you will find some of them pretty dirty, though it's more dust than mud this time of year."

Marjorie was enchanted by everything she saw. She only wished Mr. Stuart would take himself off, for she saw no chance of slipping away unobserved if he were at her side. Luckily for her, a young man came hurriedly to meet them from somewhere in the opposite direction, and, greeting Mr. Stuart with great effusion, carried him off forthwith, whilst Marjorie hurried along after the rest of the party.

But they had no intention of exploring the wonderful old town that day. They turned into a little side street, where there was nothing particular to see, but where, outside the agent's office, a number of donkeys were waiting. Marjorie caught hold of Miss Craven, her cabin companion, and said hastily:

"I'm not going this ride; I don't care for being jolted on a donkey, with only a pack of straw for a saddle and a rope for a bridle. I must get some sketches done. The Colquhouns are going to sketch. I can find them if I want. Don't let anybody bother about me. I'll join you in time to go back to the boat at five."

"Well, take care of yourself," said Miss Craven, "and don't wander about alone, for it's a most heathenish-looking place. But you will be all right with the Colquhouns."

"Oh, yes," answered Marjorie, turning away with a burning face. She felt rather guilty, as though she had gone near to speaking an untruth, although no actual falsehood had passed her lips. Nobody heeded her as she slipped through the crowd of donkey boys and onlookers. Some offered her their beasts, but she smiled and shook her head, and hurried back to the main route through the larger arcades. Once there, she went leisurely, eagerly looking into shop doors, watching the brass-beating, the hand-loom weaving, and dashing off little pencil sketches of the children squatting at their tasks, or walking to or fro as they performed some winding operations for an older person seated upon the floor.

Nobody molested her in any way or seemed to notice her much. Sometimes a shopkeeper would offer her his wares in dumb show; but Marjorie had very little money with her, and, knowing nothing of the value of these things, was not to be tempted.

The sun poured down hot and strong, but there was shade to be had in these arcaded streets; and though some of them were anything but clean or sweet, Marjorie forgave everything for the sake of the beauty and picturesqueness of the scene. She wandered here, there, and all over; she found herself in the long, straggling market, and made hasty sketches of the men and women chaffering at their stalls; of camels, with their strange, sleepy, or vicious faces, padding softly along, turning their heads this way and that. She watched the lading of the beasts, and heard their curious grunts of anger or remonstrance when the load exceeded their approval. Everything was full of attraction for her, and she only waited till she had explored the place to set herself down and make some coloured sketches.

She soon had a following of small boys and loiterers, all interested in the doings of the strange lady with her sketchbook, but Marjorie did not mind that. She made some of the children stand to her, and got several rather effective groups.

Then she set herself to work in greater earnest. She obtained a seat in one or two places, and dashed in rapid coloured studies which she could work upon afterwards. Her *forte* was for bold effects rather than for detail, and the strange old city gave her endless subjects. She did not heed the flight of time. She passed from spot to spot, with her following growing larger and larger, more and more curious: and so engrossed was she in her task, that the lengthening of the shadows and the dipping of the sun behind the walls did not attract her attention. It was only when she suddenly found herself enveloped in the quick-coming, semi-tropical shades of darkness that she realised the necessity to beat a retreat.

She rose quickly and put up her things. There was a ring many deep about her of curious natives, Arabs, Moors, Jews, Turks—she knew not how many nationalities were gathered together in that circle. In the broad light of day she had felt no qualm of uneasiness at the strange dusky faces. Nobody had molested her, and Marjorie, partly through temperament, partly through ignorance, had been perfectly fearless in this strange old city. But with the dimness of evening gathering, she began to wish herself safe on board the *Oratava* again; and though she retained her air of serene composure, she felt a little inward tremor as she moved away.

The crowd did not attempt to hold her back, but walked with her in a sort of compact bodyguard; and amongst themselves there was a great deal of talking and gesticulating, which sounded very heathenish and a little threatening to Marjorie.

She had realised before that Mogador was a larger place than she had thought, and now she began to discover that she had no notion of the right way to the quay. The arcades hemmed her in. She could see nothing but walls about her and the ever-increasing crowd dogging her steps. Her heart was beating thick and fast. She was tired and faint from want of food, and this sudden and unfamiliar sense of fear robbed her of her customary self-command and courage. She felt more like bursting into tears than she ever remembered to have done before.

It was no good going on like this, wandering helplessly about in the darkening town; she must do something and that quickly. Surely some of these people knew a few words of English.

She stopped and faced them, and asked if nobody could take her to the ship. Instantly they crowded round her, pointing and gesticulating; but whether they understood, and what they meant, Marjorie could not imagine. She remembered the name of the ship's agents, and spoke that aloud several times, and there were more cries and more crowding and gesticulation. Each man seemed struggling to get possession of her, and Marjorie grew so frightened at the strange sounds, and the fierce faces—as they seemed to her—and the gathering darkness, that she completely lost her head. She looked wildly round her, gave a little shrill cry of terror, and seeing the ring thinner in one place than another, she made a dart through it, and began to run as if for her very life. It was the maddest thing to do. Hitherto there had been no real danger. Nobody had any thought of molesting the English lady, though her behaviour had excited much curiosity. Anybody would have taken her down to the quay, as they all knew where she came from. But this head-long flight first startled them, and then roused that latent demon of savagery which lies dormant in every son of the desert. Instantly, with yells which sounded terrific in Marjorie's ears, they gave chase. Fear lent her wings, but she heard the pursuit coming nearer and nearer. She knew not where she was flying, whether towards safety or into the heart of danger. Her breath came in sobbing gasps, her feet slipped and seemed as though they would carry her no farther. The cries behind and on all sides grew louder and fiercer. She was making blindly for the entrance to the arcade. Each moment she expected to feel a hand grasping her from the rear. There was no getting away from her pursuers in these terrible arcades. Oh, why had she ever trusted herself alone in this awful old city!

She darted through the archway, and then, uttering a faint cry, gave herself up for lost, for she felt herself grasped tightly in a pair of powerful arms, and all the terrible stories she had heard from fellow-passengers about Europeans taken captive in Morocco, and put up for ransom recurred to her excited fancy. She had nobody to ransom her. She would be left to languish and die in some awful Moorish prison. Perhaps nobody would ever know of her fate. That was what came of always doing as one chose, and making one's friends believe a falsehood.

Like a lightning flash all this passed through Marjorie's mind. The next instant she felt herself thrust against the wall. Some tall, dark figure was standing in front of her, and a masterful English voice speaking fluent Arabic was haranguing her pursuers in stern and menacing accents.

A sob of wonder and relief escaped Marjorie's white lips. She had not fallen into the hands of the Moors. Mr. Stuart had caught her, was protecting her, and when the mists cleared away from her eyes she saw that the crowd was quickly melting away, and she knew that she was safe.

"Take my arm, Miss May," said Mr. Stuart; "they have sent back a boat for you from the ship. Captain Taylor is making inquiries for you too. Had you not been warned that a lady was not safe alone in Mogador—at least, not after nightfall?"

Marjorie hung her head; tears were dropping silently. She felt more humiliated than she had ever done in her life before. Suppose Mr. Stuart had not come? It was a thought she could not bear to pursue.

They reached the boat. The captain listened to the story, and he spoke with some grave severity to Marjorie, as he had a right to do; for he had done everything to provide for the safety of his passengers, and it was not right to him, or the company, for a wilful girl to run into needless peril out of the waywardness of her heart.

Marjorie accepted the reproof with unwonted humility, and Mr. Stuart suddenly spoke up for her:

"She will not do it again, captain; I will answer for her."

"All right, Mr. Stuart; I don't want to say any more. All's well that ends well; but——"

He checked further words, but Marjorie's cheeks whitened. She seemed to see again those strange, fierce faces, and hear the cries of her pursuers. In the gathering darkness Mr. Stuart put out his hand and took firm hold of hers. She started for a moment, and then let it lie in his clasp. Indeed, she felt her own fingers clinging to that strong hand, and a thrill went through her as she felt his clasp tighten upon them.

They reached the side of the vessel; officers and passengers were craning over to get news of the missing passenger.

"Here she is, all safe!" cried the captain rather gruffly, and a little cry of relief went up, followed

by a cheer.

Mr. Stuart leant forward in the darkness and whispered:

"You see what a commotion you have made, Marjorie, I think you will have to let me answer for you, and take care of you in the future."

"I think I shall," she answered, with a little tremulous laugh that was half a sob, and in the confusion of getting the boat brought up alongside Marjorie felt a lover's kiss upon her cheek.

FOURTH COUSINS.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

In the early summer of 1860 I went upon a visit to a distant relative of mine, who lived in one of the Shetland Islands. It was early summer with myself then: I was a medical student with life all before me—life and hope, and joy and sorrow as well. I went north with the intention of working hard, and took quite a small library with me; there was nothing in the shape of study I did not mean to do, and to drive at: botany, the *flora* of the *Ultima Thule*, its *fauna* and geology, too, to say nothing of chemistry and therapeutics. So much for good intentions, but—I may as well confess it as not—I never once opened my huge box of books during the five months I lived at R —, and if I studied at all it was from the book of Nature, which is open to every one who cares to con its pages.

The steamboat landed me at Lerwick, and I completed my journey—with my boxes—next day in an open boat.

It was a very cold morning, with a grey, cold, choppy sea on, the spray from which dashed over the boat, wetting me thoroughly, and making me feel pinched, blear-eyed, and miserable. I even envied the seals I saw cosily asleep in dry, sandy caves, at the foot of the black and beetling rocks.

How very fantastic those rocks were, but cheerless—so cheerless! Even the sea birds that circled around them seemed screaming a dirge. An opening in a wall of rock took us at length into a long, winding fiord, or arm of the sea, with green bare fields on every side, and wild, weird-like sheep that gazed on us for a moment, then bleated and fled. Right at the end of this rock stood my friend's house, comfortable and solid-looking, but unsheltered by a single tree.

"I sha'n't stay long here," I said to myself, as I landed.

An hour or two afterwards I had changed my mind entirely. I was seated in a charmingly and cosily-furnished drawing-room upstairs. The windows looked out to and away across the broad Atlantic. How strange it was; for the loch that had led me to the front of the house, and the waters of which rippled up to the very lawn, was part of the German Ocean, and here at the back, and not a stone's throw distant, was the Atlantic! Its great, green, dark billows rolled up and broke into foam against the black breastwork of cliffs beneath us; the immense depth of its waves could be judged of by keeping the eye fixed upon the tall, steeple-like rocks which shot up here and there through the water a little way out to sea: at one moment these would appear like lofty spires, and next they would be almost entirely swallowed up.

Beside the fire, in an easy chair, sat my grey-haired old relation and host, and, not far off, his wife. Hospitable, warm-hearted, and genial both of them were. If marriages really are made in heaven, I could not help thinking theirs must have been, so much did they seem each other's counterpart.

Presently Cousin Maggie entered, smiling to me as she did so; her left hand lingered fondly for a moment on her father's grey locks, then she sat down unbidden to the piano. My own face was partially shaded by the window curtain, so that I could study that of my fair cousin as she played without appearing rude. Was she beautiful? that was the question I asked myself, and was trying hard to answer. Every feature of her face was faultless, her mouth and ears were small, she had a wealth of rich, deep auburn hair, and eyes that seemed to have borrowed the noonday tints of a summer sea, so bright, so blue were they. But was she beautiful? I could not answer the question then.

On the strength of my blood relationship, distant though it was, for we were really only third or fourth cousins, I was made a member of this family from the first, and Maggie treated me as a brother. I was not entirely pleased with the latter arrangement, because many days had not passed ere I concluded it would be a pleasant pastime for me to make love to Cousin Maggie. But weeks went by, and my love-making was still postponed; it became a *sine die* kind of a probability. Maggie was constantly with me when out of doors—my companion in all my fishing and shooting trips. But she carried not only a rod but even a rifle herself, she could give me lessons in casting the fly—and did; she often shot dead the seals that I had merely wounded, and her prowess in rowing astonished me, and her daring in venturing so far to sea in our broad, open boat often made me tremble for our safety.

A frequent visitor for the first two months of my stay at R— was a young and well-to-do farmer and fisher, who came in his boat from a neighbouring island, always accompanied by his sister, and they usually stayed a day or two. I was not long in perceiving that this Mr. Thorforth was very fond of my cousin; the state of her feelings towards him it was some time before I could fathom, but the revelation came at last, and quite unexpectedly.

There was an old ruin some distance from the house, where, one lovely moonlight night, I happened to be seated alone. I was not long alone, however; from a window I could see my cousin and Thorforth coming towards the place, and, thinking to surprise them, I drew back under the shadow of a portion of the wall. But I was not to be an actor in that scene, though it was one I shall never forget. I could not see *his* face, but hers, on which the moonbeams fell, was pained, half-frightened, impatient. He was telling her he loved her and asking her to love him in return. She stopped him at last.

What she said need not be told. In a few moments he was gone, and she was standing where he left her, following him with pitying eyes as he walked hurriedly away.

Next day Magnus Thorforth said goodbye and left: even his sister looked sad. She must have known it all. I never saw them again.

One day, about a month after this, Maggie and I were together in a cave close by the ocean—a favourite haunt of ours on hot forenoons. Our boat was drawn up close by, the day was bright, and the sea calm, its tiny wavelets making drowsy, dreamy music on the yellow sands.

She had been reading aloud, and I was gazing at her face.

"I begin to think you are beautiful," I said.

She looked down at me where I lay with those innocent eyes of hers, that always looked into mine as frankly as a child's would.

"I'm not sure," I continued, "that I sha'n't commence making love to you, and perhaps I might marry you. What would you think of that?"

"Love!" she laughed, as musically as a sea-nymph—"love? Love betwixt a cousin and a cousin? Preposterous!"

"I daresay," I said, pretending to pout, "you wouldn't marry me because I'm poor."

"Poor!" she repeated, looking very firm and earnest now; "if the man I loved were poor, I'd carry a creel for him—I'd gather shells for his sake; but I don't love anybody and don't mean to. Come."

So that was the beginning and end of my love-making for Cousin Maggie.

And Maggie had said she never meant to love any one. Well, we never can tell what may be in our immediate future.

Hardly had we left the cave that day, and put off from the shore, ere cat's-paws began to ruffle the water. They came in from the west, and before we had got half-way to the distant headland a steady breeze was blowing. We had hoisted our sail, and were running before it with the speed of a gull on the wing.

Once round the point, we had a beam wind till we entered the fiord, then we had to beat to windward all the way home, by which time it was blowing quite a gale.

It went round more to the north about sunset, and then, for the first time, we noticed a yacht of small dimensions on the distant horizon. Her intention appeared to be that of rounding the island, and probably anchoring on the lee side of it. She was in an ugly position, however, and we all watched her anxiously till nightfall hid her from our view.

I retired early, but sleep was out of the question, for the wind raged and howled around the house like wild wolves. About twelve o'clock the sound of a gun fell on my ears. I could not be mistaken, for the window rattled in sharp response.

I sprang from my couch and began to dress, and immediately after my aged relative entered the room. He looked younger and taller than I had seen him, but very serious.

"The yacht is on the Ba,"^[2] he said, solemnly.

[2] *Ba* means a sunken rock.

They were words to me of fearful significance. The yacht, I knew, must soon break up, and nothing could save the crew.

I quickly followed my relative into the back drawing-room, where Maggie was with her mother. We gazed out into the night, out and across the sea. At the same moment, out there on the terrible Ba, a blue light sprang up, revealing the yacht and even its people on board. She was leaning well over to one side, her masts gone, and the spray dashing over her.

"Come!" cried Maggie, "there is no time to lose. We can guide their boat to the cave. Come, cousin!"

I felt dazed, thunderstruck. Was I to take active part in a forlorn hope? Was Maggie—how

beautiful and daring she looked now!—to assume the *rôle* of a modern Grace Darling? So it appeared.

The events of that night come back to my memory now as if they had happened but yesterday. It is a page in my past life that can never be obliterated.

We pulled out of the fiord, Maggie and I, and up under lee of the island; then, on rounding the point, we encountered the whole force of the sea and wind. There was a glimmering light on the wrecked yacht, and for that we rowed, or rather were borne along on the gale. No boat, save a Shetland skiff, could have been trusted in such a sea.

As we neared the Ba, steadying herself by leaning on my shoulder, Maggie stood half up and waved the lantern, and it was answered from the wreck. Next moment it seemed to me we were on the lee side, and Maggie herself hailed the shipwrecked people.

"We cannot come nearer!" she cried; "lower your boat and follow our light closely."

"Take the tiller now," she continued, addressing me, "and steer for the light you see on the cliff. Keep her well up, though, or all will be lost."

We waited—and that with difficulty—for a few minutes, till we saw by the starlight that the yacht's boat was lowered, then away we went.

The light on the cliff-top moved slowly down the wind. I kept the boat's head a point or two above it, and on she dashed. The rocks loomed black and high as we neared them, the waves breaking in terrible turmoil beneath.

Suddenly the light was lowered over the cliff down to the very water's edge.

"Steady, now!" cried my brave cousin, and next moment we were round a point and into smooth water, with the yacht's boat close beside us. The place was partly cave, partly "*noss*." We beached our boats, and here we remained all night, and were all rescued next morning by a fisherman's yawl.

The yacht's people were the captain, his wife, and one boy—the whole crew Norwegians, Brinster by name.

My story is nearly done. What need to tell of the gratitude of those Maggie's heroism had saved from a watery grave!

But it came to pass that when, a few months afterwards, a beautiful new yacht came round to the fiord to take those shipwrecked mariners away, Cousin Maggie went with them on a visit.

It came to pass also that when I paid my very next visit to R— in the following summer, I found living at my relative's house a Major Brinster and a Mrs. Brinster.

And Mrs. Brinster was my Cousin Maggie, and Major Brinster was my Cousin Maggie's fate.

THE PEDLAR'S PACK.

BY LUCIE E. JACKSON.

Colonel Bingham was seated in his library facing the window that looked out on to the green sloping lawn, the smiling meadow, and the dark belt of firs which skirted the wood. There was a frown on his brow, and his eyes wore a perplexed look. On the opposite side of the room stood a young girl of seventeen balancing herself adroitly on the ridge of a chair, and smiling with evident satisfaction at her own achievement.

The colonel was speaking irritably.

"You see, you can't even now sit still while I speak to you, but you must poise yourself on your chair like a schoolboy. Is it a necessary part of your existence that you must behave like a boy rather than a girl?"

Patty hung her head shamefacedly, and the smile left her lips.

"And then, what is this that I hear about a rifle? Is it true that Captain Palmer has lent you one?"

"Only just to practise with for a few weeks. Dad, don't be angry. He has a new one, so he doesn't miss it. Why"—warming to her subject and forgetting for the moment that she was in great danger of still further disgracing herself in her father's eyes by her confession—"I can hit even a small object at a very considerable distance five times out of six."

The perplexed look deepened in her father's eyes, but the irritability had cleared away. He toyed with the open letter that he held in his hand. "I suppose it is for this as well as for your other schoolboy pranks that your aunt has invited only Rose. But I don't like it—it is not right. If it were not for the unfairness to Rose, I should have refused outright. As it is, the invitation has been accepted by me, and it must stand, for Rose must not be deprived of her pleasures because you

like——"

"Invitation! What invitation?" interrupted Patty.

"Your aunt is giving a big ball on the 13th, and she is insistent that Rose should be present. It will be the child's first ball, and I cannot gainsay her. But, Patty, I should like you both to go. You are seventeen, are you not?"

"Seventeen and a half," returned Patty with a little choke in her voice.

It was the first she had heard of the invitation, and it stung her to think that Lady Glendower thought her too much of a hoyden to invite her with the sister who was but one year older. Patty was girl enough to love dancing even above her other amusements, and the unbidden tears came into her eyes as she stood looking forlornly at her father.

Colonel Bingham coughed, and tapped his writing-desk with the letter.

"Seventeen and a half," he repeated, "quite old enough to go to a ball. Never mind, Patty, I've a good mind to give a ball myself and leave out her younger daughter, only that it would be too much like *tu quoque*, and your aunt has a reason for not extending her invitation here which I should not have in relation to your cousin Fanny, eh, Patty?"

But Patty's eyes were still humid, and she could only gaze dumbly at her father with such a pathetic look on her pretty face that Colonel Bingham could not stand it.

"Look here, child," he said, "why aren't you more like your sister Rose? Then her pleasures would be always yours——"

"Who's talking about me?" asked a gay voice, and into the room walked Patty's sister Rose.

"I am. I have been telling Patty about the invitation."

"Poor Patty!" said Rose, and she put her arm sympathetically round Patty's neck. "Aunt Glendower is most unkind, I think."

"It can't be helped," murmured Patty, choking back the rising sob. "If I had been born a sweet maiden who did nothing but stitch at fancy-work all day long perhaps she would have invited me, but I can't give up my cricket, my riding my horse bare-backed, my shooting, just for the sake of a ball or two that Aunt Glendower feels inclined to give once a year. Much as I love dancing, I can't give up all these pleasures for an occasional dance."

"Rose has pleasures too," said her father quietly, "but they are of the womanly kind—music, painting, reading, tending flowers."

Rose laughed gaily as Patty turned up her pretty nose scornfully.

"Let Patty alone, dad. You know very well that you would grow tired of too much sameness if Patty showed the same tastes that I have."

Colonel Bingham glanced fondly at her and then at Patty, whose face, in spite of her brave words, was still very tearful-looking. He knew that in his heart he loved his two daughters equally—his "two motherless girls," as he was wont to call them—and although he belonged to the old school of those who abhor masculine pursuits for women, yet he felt that Rose's words were true, and for that very dissimilarity did he love them.

"Heigho," said Patty, jumping off her chair, "I am not going to grieve any more. Let's talk of Rose's dress, and when she is going."

"We both start to-morrow."

"To-morrow? And do you go too, dad?"

"Yes, Patty. I have business in town with my lawyer, which I have been putting off from day to day, but now I feel I shall take the opportunity of transacting it with him on the occasion of taking Rose up with me. Besides, I can't let her go to her first ball without being there to see how she looks."

"And what about the dress?"

"Aunt says she will see to that, so we have to start a few days before the ball takes place for Céline to get a dress ready for me," said Rose, looking tenderly at Patty as she spoke, for the two girls loved each other, and it hurt her to think that Patty must be left behind.

"You won't be nervous, child?" asked her father.

"Nervous, father! dear me, no, a tomboy nervous? Why, I have Mrs. Tucker, cook, and Fanny to bear me company, and if you take the groom we shall still have the stable boy," returned Patty triumphantly.

"I am glad you sent away that new coachman, dad," said Rose earnestly. "I never liked his face, it always looked so sly and sneaking."

"Yes, I am glad too, and we must endeavour to find one when we are in town, and perhaps bring him back with us, Rose—the place is a lonely one without a man when I am away." He spoke the

last words to himself, but the girls heard him and laughed. They knew no fear. Why should they? Nothing had ever come near to harm them during the short years of their existence in their country home.

Colonel Bingham had of late questioned the wisdom of continuing to live with his daughters in his beautiful, isolated house. It was three miles from the nearest village, post-office, and church, and there was not another habitation within that distance; it was five miles from the nearest market town. But his heart clung to it. Hadn't he and his bride, twenty years before, chosen this beautiful spot of all others to build their house upon and make it their home? Had not his wife loved every nook and cranny, every stick and stone of the home they had beautified within and without? And therein lay the colonel's two chief objections to leaving the place—it was beautiful—and—his wife had loved it.

So did his daughters too, for that matter; but they were growing up, and newer scenes and livelier surroundings were now needed for them. The colonel often caught himself pondering over the matter, and one of the reasons for his wishing to visit his sister was that of laying the matter open before her, and hearing her opinion from her own lips.

At an early hour the next morning Colonel Bingham, Rose, and the groom, with two of the horses, had left the house.

There was nothing to alarm Patty. The beautiful home with its peaceful surroundings was perfectly quiet for the two days that followed, and if Patty, in spite of her brave heart, had felt any qualms of fear, they had vanished on the morning of the third day, which dawned so brilliantly bright that she was eager to take her rifle and begin practising at the target she herself had set up at the end of the short wood to the left of the house.

Meanwhile, the housekeeper had set both maids to work in turning out several unused rooms, and a great amount of brisk work was going on. The trim housemaid, Fanny, who was the housekeeper's niece, had come down the back stairs with an armful of carpets, and had brushed into the flagged yard before she noticed a pedlar-like-looking man standing before the back door with a pack upon his back.

"What do you do here?" she called out sharply.

The man appeared weighted down with his bundle, which looked to Fanny's eyes a good deal bigger than most of the pedlars' packs that she had seen.

"I am on my way through the country-side selling what maids most love—a bit of ribbon, a tie, a good serviceable apron, a feather for the hat, and many a pretty gown; but on my way from the village I met a friend from my own part of the country, which is not in this county, but two counties up north, who tells me that my wife is lying dangerously ill. If I wish to see her alive I must needs travel fast, and a man can scarce do that with as heavy a pack on his back as I bear. What I venture to ask most respectfully is that I may place my pack in one corner of this house, and I will return to fetch it as soon as ever I can."

He gave a furtive dab to his eyes with the corner of a blue-checked handkerchief he held in one hand, and hoisted his bundle up higher with apparent difficulty.

Fanny looked gravely at him "Why didn't you leave your pack at the village inn?" was all she said.

"I would have done so had I met my friend before leaving the village, but I met him just at the entrance to the wood, and it seemed hopeless to trudge all that way back with not only a heavy burden to bear, but a still heavier heart."

He sighed miserably as he spoke, and Fanny's soft heart was touched.

The man spoke well—better than many pedlars that Fanny had met with, and his tone was respectful, albeit very pleading. Fanny's heart was growing softer and softer. He looked faint and weary himself, she thought, and oh! so very sad—

"Fanny, Fanny, what are you about? Ain't those carpets finished yet?" The housekeeper's voice sounded sharply at the top of the back staircase.

The pedlar looked scared. Fanny beckoned him with one finger to follow her.

"Coming, aunt," she called back. And, still silently beckoning, she conducted the pedlar into the small breakfast-room.

"Put it down in this corner," she said, "and come for it as soon as you can."

"May I beg that it will remain untouched," said the pedlar humbly. "It contains many valuables—at least to me—for it comprises nearly all that I possess in the world."

"No one will touch it in here, for this room is never used."

"I cannot thank you enough for your compassion—" began the pedlar, when the sharp voice was heard again.

"Fanny, cook's waitin' for you to help her move some things. Are you comin' or not?"

"Coming now," was Fanny's answer, and, shutting the breakfast-room door, she hustled the pedlar out into the flagged yard without ceremony.

With a deferential lifting of his cap the pedlar again murmured his grateful thanks, and made his way out the way he had come in. Fanny waited to lock the yard gate after him, murmuring to herself: "That gate didn't ought to have been left open—it's just like that lazy boy Sam to think that now Britton's gone off with the horses he can do as he likes."

It was not until the furniture in the room had been moved about to her satisfaction that the housekeeper demanded to know the reason for Fanny's delay downstairs.

"It isn't cook's business to be waitin' about for you," she said sharply, "she's got her other duties to perform. What kept you?"

Then Fanny told what had caused the delay, and was aghast at the effect it produced upon her aunt.

"I wouldn't have had it happen just now for all my year's wages," the housekeeper exclaimed hotly. "What do we know about the man and his pack?"

"He looked so white and quiet-like, and so sad," pleaded her niece half tearfully.

"That's nothin' to us. I promised the master before he went away that I wouldn't let a strange foot pass over the doorway while he was away. And here you—a mere chit of a housemaid—go, without sayin', 'With your leave,' or, 'By your leave,' and let a dirty pedlar with his pack straight into the breakfast-room. He's sure to have scented the silver lyin' on the sideboard for cleanin' this afternoon. If I didn't think he'd gone a long way from here by this I would send you after him to tell him to take it away again."

Having delivered herself of this long, explosive speech, the housekeeper proceeded in the direction of the breakfast-room to review the pack, and Fanny and the cook followed in her wake.

"As I thought," she ejaculated, eyeing the pack from the doorway, "a dirty pedlar's smellin' pack." But the tone of her voice was mollified, for the pack looked innocent enough, although it was somewhat bulky and unwieldy in appearance.

Her niece took heart of grace from her tone, and murmured apologetically:

"He's got the loveliest things in that bundle that ever you'd see, aunt. Feathers, ribbons, dresses, aprons, and he'll unpack them all when he comes back to let us see them."

"A pack o' tawdry rubbish, I have no doubt," was her aunt's reply; "only fit for flighty young girls, not for gentlemen's servants."

Thus silenced, Fanny said no more, and the three women betook themselves to their different occupations.

After half an hour's work her girlish glee was still unabated, and on passing the door of the breakfast-room mere curious elation impelled her to open it softly and to look in. A perplexed look stole into her eyes as they rested on the black object in the corner. It was there sure enough, safe and sound, but had it not been shifted from the corner in which the pedlar had placed it, and in which her aunt had seen it in company with herself and the cook? No, that was impossible. She had only fancied that it was right in the corner, and Fanny softly shut the door again without making a sound, and went on with her daily duties.

This time her aunt employed her, and she was not free again till another two hours had passed. It was now close on the luncheon hour, and Fanny thought she would just take one little peep before setting the luncheon-table for the young mistress who would come home as usual as hungry as a hunter.

Gently she turned the handle, and stood upon the threshold. Her eyes grew fixed and staring, her cheek blanched to a chalky white. Without all doubt—*the pack had moved!*

Fanny stood rooted to the spot. Wild, strange ideas flitted through her brain. There was something uncanny in this pack. Was it bewitched? She dared not call her aunt or the cook: she was in disgrace with both, and no wonder, the poor girl thought miserably, for the very sight now of that uncouth-looking object in the corner was beginning to assume hideous proportions in the girl's mind. She must watch and wait, and wait and watch for every sign that the pack made, but oh! the agony of bearing that uncanny secret alone! Oh for some one to share it with her!

A figure darkened the window of the breakfast-room, and Fanny caught sight of her young mistress's form as it passed with the rifle over her shoulder.

With a soft step she left the room, and intercepted her on the other side of the verandah. "Miss Patty," she whispered miserably.

Patty turned, her pretty face lighting up with a good-humoured smile as she nodded and said, "Luncheon ready, Fanny? I am simply ravenous."

"Ye-es, I think so, miss. But oh! miss, I want to speak to you badly."

Fanny came forward with the smile still on her lips. "Has Mrs. Tucker been scolding you dreadfully, you poor Fanny?"

"Then she's told you?" gasped the girl.

"She's told me nothing. I haven't seen her, but you look so woebegone that I thought she had been having a pitch battle with you for neglecting something or other, and you wanted me to get you out of the scrape."

Fanny groaned inwardly. No, her aunt had said nothing, and she must brace herself up, and tell the whole story from beginning to end. The beginning, she began to think, was not so dreadful as the end. Oh that she could dare to disbelieve her eyes, and declare that there was no end—no awful, uncanny end!

At length, in the quiet of the verandah, the story was told, and Fanny's heart misgave her more and more as she observed the exceeding gravity of her young mistress's bright face as the story neared its finish. When the finish did come, Patty's face was more than grave; the weight of responsibility was on her, and to young, unused shoulders that weight is particularly difficult to bear.

"Come and show me where it is," was the only remark she made, but Fanny noticed that the red lips had lost some of their bright colour, and the pink in the soft cheeks was of a fainter tinge than when she had first seen her.

Without making the slightest sound, without one click of the handle, Fanny opened the door, and Patty looked in. Her courage came back with a bound. Fanny was a goose, there was nothing to be alarmed about.

She looked up to smile encouragingly at Fanny, when the smile froze on her lips, for Fanny's face was livid. Without a word she beckoned her young mistress out of the room, and as softly as before closed the door. Then, turning to her, she whispered through her set teeth:

"It has moved again!"

A cold shiver ran down through Patty's spine, but she was no girl to be frightened by the superstitious fancies of an ignorant serving maid.

"Nonsense, Fanny!" she said sharply, "you are growing quite crazed over that stupid pack. I saw nothing unusual in it, it looked innocent enough in all conscience."

"You never saw it move," was the answer, given in such a lifeless tone that Patty was chilled again.

"I'll tell you what, Fanny. I'll go in after luncheon, and see if it has moved from the place I saw it in."

"Did you notice the place well where it stood?" asked Fanny.

"Yes," replied Patty, "I'd know if it moved again. Don't tell Mrs. Tucker or cook anything about it. You and I will try to checkmate that pack if there is anything uncanny in it. Now tell cook I am ready for luncheon if she is."

But when the luncheon came on the table Patty had lost all hunger. She merely nibbled at trifles till Fanny came to clear away.

"I'm going to that room," she whispered. "If Mrs. Tucker should want me, or perhaps Sam might, for I told him I was going to see how well he had cleaned the harness that I found in the loft, then you must come in quietly and beckon me out. Don't let any one know I am watching that pack."

"Yes, miss," was Fanny's answer, given so hopelessly that Patty put a kind hand on her shoulder with the words:

"Cheer up, Fanny. I don't believe it's so bad as you make out. It is my belief you have imagined that the pack moved."

"It isn't my fancy, it isn't," cried the girl, the tears starting to her eyes. "If anything dreadful happens, then it is me that has injured the master—the best master that a poor girl could have." And with her apron to her eyes Fanny left the room.

She came back a minute later to see Patty examining the priming of her rifle. "Miss Patty," she whispered aghast, "you ain't never going to shoot at it!"

"I am going to sit in that room all the afternoon," said Patty calmly, "and if that pack moves while my eyes are on it I'll fire into that pack even if by so doing I riddle every garment in it." And without another word Patty stalked out of the room with her rifle on her shoulder.

At the door of the breakfast-room she set her teeth hard, and opened the door.

The pack had moved since she saw it.

It was with a face destitute of all colour that Patty seated herself upon the table to mount guard over that black object now lying several yards away from the corner. Her eyes were glued to the bundle; they grew large and glassy, and a film seemed to come over them as she gazed, without daring even to wink. How the minutes passed—if they revolved themselves into half hours—she did not know. No one called her, no one approached the door, she sat on with one fixed stare at the pedlar's pack.

Was she dreaming? Was it fancy? No, the pack was moving! Slowly, very slowly it crept—it could

hardly be called moving, and Patty watched it fascinated. Then it stopped, and Patty, creeping nearer, stood over it, and watched more closely. Something was breathing inside! Something inside that pack was alive! Patty could now clearly see the movement that each respiration made. She had made up her mind, and now she took her courage in both hands.

She retreated softly to the opposite side of the room, and raising the rifle to her shoulder fired.

There was a loud, a deafening report, a shrill scream, and a stream of blood trickled forth from the pack. Fanny was in the room crying hysterically, Mrs. Tucker and cook were looking over her shoulder with blanched faces.

Patty, with her face not one whit less white than any of the others, laid the smoking rifle on the table, and spoke with a tremulousness not usual to her.

"Mrs. Tucker, some vile plot has been hatched to rob this house while your master is away. That pack doesn't hold finery as Fanny was at first led to believe, but it holds a man, and I have shot him."

With trembling hands and colourless lips Mrs. Tucker, with the help of her maids, cut away the oilcloth that bound the pack together, and disclosed the face of a short sturdy man, it was the face of the late coachman, Timothy Smith! With one voice they cried aloud as they saw it.

"Dead! Is he dead?" cried Patty, shuddering and covering her face with her hands. "Oh, Mrs. Tucker, and it is I who have killed him!"

A groan from the prostrate figure reassured the party as to the fatality of the adventure, and aroused in them a sense of the necessity of doing what they could to relieve the sufferings of their prostrate enemy.

The huddled-up position occupied by the man when in the pack made him, of course, a good target, and made it possible for a single shot to do much more mischief than it might have done in passing once through any single part of his body. It was, of course, a random shot, and entering the pack vertically as the man was crouching with his hands upon his knees, it passed through his right arm and left hand and lodged in his left knee, thus completely disabling him without touching a vital part.

With some difficulty they managed to get the wounded man on to a chair bedstead which they brought from the housekeeper's room for the purpose, and such "first aid" as Patty was able to render was quickly given.

"And now," said Patty, "the question is, who will ride Black Bess to the village and procure help, for we must have help for the wounded as well as aid against the ruffians who no doubt intend to raid the house to-night."

"Sam, miss?" questioned the housekeeper timidly. All her nerve seemed to have departed from her since the report of that shot had rung through the house, and there was Timothy Smith's face staring up at her. Usually a stout-hearted woman, all her courage had deserted her now.

"Yes," said Patty gravely, "I think we shall have to take Sam into our confidence, unless I go myself. Perhaps, Mrs. Tucker, I had better go myself. Sam is only a boy, and he might be tempted to tell the story to everybody he met, and if the thieves themselves get wind of what has happened we shall have small chance of ever catching them. Would you be afraid if I rode off at once?"

Without any false pride the young girl saw how much depended on her, and saw too the blanched faces of the two women as they looked in turn at each other at the thought of their sole protector vanishing.

But it was only for a minute. Mrs. Tucker shook off with a courageous firmness the last remnant of nervousness that possessed her.

"Go, and the Lord go with you, Miss Patty," she said.

As she rode along through the quiet country lanes smelling sweet of the honeysuckle in the hedge and the wild dog-rose bursting into bloom, Patty's thoughts travelled fast and furiously, every whit as fast as Black Bess's hasty steps. Should she draw bridle at the village? No. She made up her mind quickly at that. In all probability the would-be thieves had made the village inn their headquarters for that day and night, and the pedlar—the man she wished most to avoid—would be the very person she would encounter. The village was small. Only one policeman patrolled the narrow-street, and that only occasionally, and how quickly would the news fly from mouth to mouth that a would-be robbery had been detected in time to save Colonel Bingham's valuable silver!

No, the pedlar would not be allowed to escape in that way if she could help it. Every step of the five miles to the town of Frampton would she ride, and draw help from there.

As she neared the village she walked her horse at a quiet pace, albeit her brain was throbbing, and her nerves all in a quiver to go faster. She nodded smilingly to the familiar faces as she met

them in the street, although she felt very far from smiling, and everywhere she seemed to see the face of Timothy Smith. Then her heart gave a bound as she saw, leaning against the wicket-gate of the village inn, three men—two with the most villainous faces she had ever seen, and the third bore the face of the man that Fanny had described as the pedlar. She was not mistaken, then, when she thought they would make this their headquarters.

She drew bridle as she neared the inn. Her quick brain saw the necessity of it, if but to explain her presence there.

"Will you be so good as to ask the landlady to come out to me?" she asked, with a gracious smile—the smile that the villagers always said was "Miss Patty's own."

The pedlar lifted his cap with the same air that Fanny had so accurately described, and himself undertook to go upon the mission.

"Bless you, Miss Patty," exclaimed the buxom landlady as she came out, curtsying and smiling, followed in a leisurely manner by the pedlar, "where be you a-ridin' that Black Bess be so hot and foam-like about the mouth?"

Patty stooped forward and patted her horse's neck, fully aware that three pairs of ears at the wicket-gate were being strained to catch her answer.

"It is too bad of me to ride her so fast, Mrs. Clark. The fact of the matter is I ought to be at Miss Price's this moment for tennis and tea, but I am late, and have been trying to make up for lost time. However, I must not breathe Black Bess too much, must I, or else I shall not be allowed to ride her again?" and Patty smiled her bewitching smile, which always captivated the heart of the landlady of the Roaring Lion.

An order for supplies for the servants' cellar, given in a firm voice, justified her appearance in the village and satisfied the eager listeners as to the object of her visit, after which, with a nod and a smile, Patty rode onwards.

Not till she was out of sight and hearing of the village did she urge Black Bess to the top of her bent, and they flew onwards like the wind.

Thud, thud, thud went the horse's hoofs, keeping time to the beating of Patty's heart as she recalled again and again the villainous faces leaning over the wicket-gate.

Even Black Bess seemed to realise the importance of her mission and it was not long before Patty's heart grew lighter as she caught sight not very far off of the spire of Trinity Church, and the turreted roof of the Town Hall of Frampton. Reaching the town she drew rein at Major Price's house, where, with bated breath, her story was received by the major and his two grown-up sons. A message was sent to the police station, and in a short while two burly sergeants of police presented themselves, to whom Patty repeated her tale.

Arrangements were soon made. A surgeon was sent for and engaged to drive over with the police.

"They rascals won't break in till darkness falls, miss," said one of the men. "But we'll start at once in a trap. Better be too early than too late."

The Prices would not hear of Patty riding Black Bess back. They themselves would drive her home in the high dog-cart, and Black Bess would be left behind to forget her fatigue in Major Price's comfortable stables.

Of course they didn't go the way that Patty had come. It would never have done to go through the village and meet those same ruffians, who would have understood the position in the twinkling of an eye. Instead, they took a roundabout way, which, although it took an extra half hour, brought them through the wood on the other side of Colonel Bingham's house.

"It is lonely—too lonely a place," muttered Major Price, as the two conveyances swung round to the front of the house.

"But it's lovely, and we love it," answered Patty softly.

Then the door was opened cautiously by Sam, and behind him were the huddled figures of Mrs. Tucker, cook, and Fanny. What a sigh of relief ran through the assembly when the burly forms of the two policeman made their appearance in the hall! And tears of real thankfulness sprang to poor Fanny's eyes, whose red rims told their own tale.

Poor Patty's heart beat painfully as she conducted the six men to the breakfast-room where the wounded coachman lay. She stood with averted face and eyes as they bent over him, twining and re-twining her fingers with nervous terror as she thought that it was her hand that had perhaps killed him.

"Ah! this tells something," exclaimed one of the officers in uniform, detaching as he spoke a small whistle fastened round the neck of the man who lay all unconscious of that official attention. "This was to give the alarm when all in the house were asleep. We shall use this when the time comes to attract the men here."

Beyond the discovery of the whistle, and a revolver, nothing more of importance was found, and all caught themselves wishing for the time for action to arrive.

The surgeon dressed the man's wounds and declared him to be in no immediate danger, after which they carried him upstairs to a remote room, where it would be quite impossible for him to give any warning to his confederates, even if he should have the strength.

The hour came at last when poor Patty felt worn out with suspense and fearful anxiety; came, when Mrs. Tucker and her two maids were strung up to an almost hysterical pitch of excitement; came, when Sam was beginning to look absolutely hollow-eyed with watching every movement of the police with admiring yet fearful glances.

It was twelve o'clock. The grandfather's clock on the stairs had struck the hour in company with several silvery chimes about the house, making music when all else was still as death.

Up to that time the sky had been dark and lowering, causing darkness to reign supreme, till the full moon, suddenly emerging from the heavy flying clouds, lighted up the house and its surroundings with its refulgent beams. Then suddenly throughout the silent night there rang forth a low, soft, piercing whistle. Only once it sounded, and then dead silence fell again. The wounded man started in his bed, but he could not raise his hand, and the whistle was gone.

The eyes of the women watchers looked at each other with faces weary and worn with anxiety and fear.

Then another sound broke the stillness. Another whistle—an answering call to the one that had rung forth before! It had the effect of startling every one in the house, for it came from under the very window of the room in which they were gathered.

With an upraised finger, cautioning silence, the sergeant stepped to the window and raised it softly.

"Hist!" he said in a thrilling whisper, without showing himself, "the lib'ry winder."

He softly closed the casement again, having discerned in that brief moment the moonlit shadows of three men lying athwart the lawn.

In stockinged feet the five men slid noiselessly into the library where the Venetians had been so lowered as to prevent the silvery moonrays from penetrating into the room. Placing the three gentlemen in convenient places should their assistance be needed, one of the men in uniform pushed aside the French window which he had previously unfastened to be in readiness.

"Hist! softly there," he growled; "the swag is ours."

With a barely concealed grunt of satisfaction the window was pushed farther open, and the forms of three men made their way into the room.

With lightning-like celerity the arms of the first man were pinioned, and when the others turned to fly they found their egress cut off by the three Prices, who stood pointing menacing revolvers at them.

"The game's up!" growled the sham pedlar. "Who blabbed?"

"Not Timothy Smith," said the elder sergeant lightly, as he adroitly fastened the handcuffs on his man.

"What's come of him?"

"He's in bed, as all decent people ought to be at this time o'night," and the sergeant laughed at his own wit.

The police carried their men off in triumph in the trap, and the wiry little pony, rejoiced to find his head turned homewards, trotted on right merrily, requiring neither whip nor word to urge him on to express speed, in total ignorance of the vindictive feelings that animated the breasts of three at least of the men seated behind him.

Major Price and his two sons remained till the morning, for Patty had broken down when all was over, and then a telegram summoned Colonel Bingham to return.

"I am not exactly surprised," he said at length, when he had heard the story; "something like this was bound to occur one day or other, and I cannot be too thankful that nothing has happened to injure my dear brave girl, or any of the household. Patty, I have felt so convinced of something dreadful happening during one of my unavoidable absences from home that I have made arrangements with an old friend of mine in town to lease this place to him for three years."

"And when does he come?" asked Patty breathlessly.

"Next month. He is going to make it a fishing- and shooting-box, and have bachelor friends to stay with him. So, my dear, we all clear out in a month's time."

Patty gave a long-drawn sigh. Her father did not know whether it was one of pleasure or regret.

"We can come back if we like after the three years," he whispered.

"I am glad we are going just now," she whispered back. "That pedlar's eyes haunt me, and they are all desperate men."

These words were sufficient to make Colonel Bingham hurry on his arrangements, so that before

three weeks were over he and his whole household were on their way to their new home.

As they got out of the train Colonel Bingham turned to Patty. "You and I will drive to Lady Glendower's, where we shall stay the night."

"Oh, dad, darling dad, don't take me there. Aunt Glendower won't like a hoyden to visit her."

"She will like to welcome a brave girl," answered her father quietly.

But as Patty still shrank away from the thought he added:

"I have told her all that has happened, and she herself wrote asking me to bring you, and I promised I would."

Rose met her with soft, clinging kisses, and then Lady Glendower folded her in an embrace such as Patty had not thought her capable of giving.

"I am proud of my brave niece," she whispered. "Patty, go upstairs with Rose, and get Céline to measure you for your ball-dress. I am going to give another ball next month, and you are to be the heroine."

Under skilful treatment Timothy Smith recovered his usual health, though the injury to his hand and knee made him a cripple for the rest of his life. The trial was another terrible experience for Patty, and Fanny thought she would have died when she saw the prisoners stand forward in the dock to receive sentence. "Five years' penal servitude," said the judge, and Patty sometimes shudders to think that the five years are nearly up.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

BY F. B. FORESTER.

"No, sir," the old keeper said reflectively. "I don't know no ghost stories; none as you'd care to hear, that is. But I could tell you of something that happened in these parts once, and it was as strange a thing as any ghost story I ever heard tell on."

I had spent the morning on the moor, grouse shooting, and mid-day had brought me for an hour's welcome rest to the lonely cottage, where the old superannuated keeper, father to the stalwart velvet-jacketed Hercules who had acted as my guide throughout the forenoon, lived from year's end to year's end with his son and half-a-dozen dogs for company. The level beams of the glowing August sun bathed in a golden glow the miles of purple moorland lying round us; air and scenery were good to breathe and to look on; and now, as the three of us sat on a turf seat outside the cottage door enjoying the soft sleepy inaction of the afternoon, a question of mine concerning the folk-lore of the district, after which, hardened materialist though I called myself, I was conscious of a secret hankering, had drawn the foregoing remark from the patriarchal lips.

"Let's hear it, by all means," said I, lighting my pipe and settling myself preparatory to listening. A slight grunt, resembling a stifled laugh, came from Ben the keeper.

"You'll have to mind, sir," he put in, a twinkle in his eye. "Dad believes what he's agoing to tell you, every word of it. It's gospel truth to him."

"Ay, that I do," responded the old man warmly. "And why shouldn't I? Didn't I see it with my own eyes? And seein's believin', ain't it?"

"You arouse my curiosity," I said. "Let us have the story by all means, and if it is a personal experience, so much the better."

"Well, sir," began the old man, evidently gratified by these signs of interest, and casting a triumphant glance at his son, "what I've got to tell you don't belong to this time of day, of course. When I says I was a little chap of six years old or thereabouts, and that I'll be eighty-five come Michaelmas, you'll understand that it must have been a tidy sight of years ago.

"Father, he was keeper on these moors here, same as his son's been after him, and as *his* son"—with a glance of fatherly pride at the stalwart young fellow beside him—"is now, and will be for many years to come, please God. Him and mother and me, the three of us, lived together in just such another cottage as this one, across t'other side of the moor, out Farnington way. The railway runs past there now, over the very place the cottage stood on, I believe; but no one so much as dreamt o' railways, time I talk on. Not a road was near, and all around there was nothin' but the moors stretching away for miles, all purple ling and heather, with not a living soul nearer than Wharton, and that was a good twelve miles away. It was pretty lonely for mother, o' course, during the day; but she was a brave woman, and when dad come home at night, never a word would she let on to tell him how right down scared she got at times and how mortally sick she felt of hearing the sound of her own voice.

"'Been pretty quiet for you, Polly?' dad would say at night sometimes, when the three of us would be sitting round the fire, with the flame dancing and shining on the wall and making black

shadows in all the corners.

"'Ye-es, so, so,' mother would answer, kind of grudging like, and then she'd start telling him what she'd been about all day, or something as I'd said or done, so as to turn his attention, you see, sir. And as a woman can gen'rally lead a man off on whatever trail she likes to get his nose on dad would never think no more about it; and as for mother and me being that lonely, when he and the dogs were all away, why, I don't suppose the thought of it ever entered his head. So, what with her never complaining, and that, dad grew easier in his mind, and once or twice, when he'd be away at the Castle late in the afternoon, he'd even stay there overnight.

"Well, sir, one day when dad comes home to get his dinner he tells mother as how there's a lot of gentlemen come down from London for the shooting, and as he'd got orders to be on hand bright and early next morning,—the meaning of that being that he'd have to spend the night at the Castle. Mother didn't say much; 'twasn't her way to carry on when she knew a thing couldn't be helped, and dad went on talking.

"'To-morrow's quarter-day, Polly, and you've got our rent all right for the agent when he comes. Put this along wi' it, lass, it's Tom Regan's, and he's asked me to hand it over for him and save the miles of walking.'

"I don't know what come to mother, whether something warned her, or what, but she give a sort of jump as dad spoke.

"'Oh, Jim,' says she, all in a twitter, 'you're never going to leave all that money here, and you away, and the child and me all alone. Can't you—can't you leave one of the dogs?'

"Dad stared at her. 'No,' he says, 'I can't, more's the pity. They're all wanted to-morrow, and I've sent them on to the Castle. Why, Polly, lass, what's come to you? I've never known you take on like this before.'

"Then mother, seeing how troubled and uneasy he looked, plucked up heart and told him, trying to laugh, never to mind her—she had only been feeling a bit low, and it made her timid like. But dad didn't laugh in answer, only said very grave that if he'd ha' known she felt that way, he'd have took good care she wasn't ever left alone overnight. This should be the last time, he'd see to that, and anyhow he'd take the rent money with him and wouldn't leave it to trouble her. Then he kissed her, and kissed me, and went off, striding away over the moors towards Farnington—the sunset way I called it, 'cause the sun set over there; and I can see him big and tall like Ben here, moving away among the heather till we lost him at the dip of the moor. And I mind how, just before we saw no more of him, he pulled up and looked back, as if mother's words stuck to him, somehow, and he couldn't get them out of his mind.

"Mother seemed queer and anxious all that afternoon. Long before dusk she called me in from playing in the bit of garden in front of the door, and shut and barred it closely, not so much as letting me stand outside to watch the sunset, as I always liked to do. It was getting dark already, the shadows had begun to fall black and gloomy all round the cottage, and the fire was sending queer dancing gleams flickering up the wall, when I hears a queer, scratching, whining noise at the door.

"Mother was putting out the tea-cups, and she didn't hear it at first. But I, sitting in front of the fire, heard it well enough, and I tumbled off my stool and ran to the door to get it open, for I thought I knew what it was. But mother had pulled the bar across at the top and I couldn't stir it.

"'There's something at the door that wants to come in,' I says, pulling at it.

"'There ain't nothing of the sort,' says mother shortly, and goes on putting out the tea. 'Let the door alone.'

"'Yes, there is,' I says. 'It's a dog. It's Nip, or Juno,' meaning the brace of pointers that dad had usually in the kennels outside.

"Then mother, thinking that perhaps dad had found that one of the dogs could be spared after all, and had told it to go home, went to the door and opened it. I had been right and wrong too, for on the doorstep there was a large black dog.

"My word! but he was a beautiful creature, sir, the finest dog I ever set eyes on. Like a setter in the make of him, but no setter that ever I saw could match him for size or looks. His coat was jet-black, as glossy as the skin of a thoroughbred, with just one streak of white showing down the breast, and his eyes—well, they were the very humanest, sir, that ever I see looking out of a dog's face.

"Now mother, although she had expected to find a dog outside, hadn't dreamt of anything except one of ourn, and she made like to shut the door on him. But the creature was too quick for her. He had pushed his head through before she knew it, and she scarcely saw how, or even felt the door press against her when he had slipped past and was in the room.

"Mother was used to dogs, and hadn't no fear of them, but she didn't altogether like strange ones, you see, sir, me being such a child and all; and her first thought was to put the creature out. So she pulled the door wide open and pointed to it, stamping her foot and saying, 'Be off! Go-home.'

"It was all very well to say that, but the dog wouldn't go. Not a step would he budge, but only

stood there, wagging his tail and looking at her with them beautiful eyes of his, as were the biggest and beautifullest and softest I ever see in dog before or since. She took up a stick then, but his eyes were that imploring that she hadn't the heart to use it; and at last, for the odd kind of uneasiness that had hung about her ever since dad had gone was on her still, and the dog was a dog and meant protection whatever else it might be, she shut the door, barred it across, and said to me that we would let it stop.

"I was delighted, of course, and wanted to make friends at once; but the queer thing was that the dog wouldn't let me touch him. He ran round under the table and lay down in a corner of the room, looking at me with his big soft eyes and wagging his tail, but never coming no nearer. Mother put down some water, and he lapped a little, but he only sniffed at a bone she threw him and didn't touch it.

"It was quite dark by this time, and mother lit a candle and set it on the table to see to have tea by. Afterwards she took her knitting and sat down by the fire, and I leaned against her, nodding and half asleep. The dog lay in the corner farthest from us, between the fireplace and the wall; and I'd forgotten altogether about him, when mother looks up sudden. 'Bless me,' says she, 'how bright the fire do catch the wall to-night. I haven't dropped a spark over there, surely!' And up she gets and crosses over to t'other side to where the firelight was dancing and flickering on the cottage wall.

"Now, sir, whether it was no more than just the light catching them, mind you, I can't say. I only know that as mother come to the corner where that dog was a-lying, and he lifted his head and looked at her, his eyes were a-shining with a queer lamping sort of light, that seemed to make the place bright all round him. But it wasn't till afterwards that she thought of it, for at that moment there came a sudden sharp knock at the door.

"My eye! how mother jumped; and I see her face turn white. For in that lonely out-of-the-way place we never looked for visitors after dark, nor in the day time, many of 'em; and the sound of this knock now give her quite a turn. Presently there come a faint voice from outside, asking for a crust of bread.

"Mother didn't stir for a moment, for the notion of unbarring the door went against her. The knock come a second time.

"'For pity's sake—for the sake of the child,' the voice said again, pleading like.

"Now, mother was terrible soft-hearted, sir, wherever children were concerned, and the mention of a child went straight home to her heart. I see her glance at me, and I knowed the thought passing through her mind, as after a moment's pause she got up, stepped across the room and unbarred the door. On the step outside stood a woman with a baby in her arms.

"Her voice had sounded faint-like, but there was nothing in the fainting line about her when she had got inside, for she come inside quick enough the moment mother had unbarred the door. She looked like a gipsy, for her face was dark and swarthy, and the shawl round her head hid a'most all but the wild gleam of her eyes; and all the time she kep' on rock, rocking that child in her arms until I reckon she must have rocked all the crying out of it, for never a word come from its lips. She sat down where mother pointed, and took the food she was given, but she offered nothing to the child. It was asleep, she said, when mother wanted to look at it.

"Yes, she was a gipsy, and on the tramp across the moor she had missed her way in the fog; for there was a heavy fog coming up. 'How far was it to Farnington? Twelve miles? She'd be thankful to sit and rest by the fire a bit, then, if mother would let her.' And without waiting for yes or no, she turned round and put the child out of her arms down on the settle at her back. Then she swung round again and sat staring with her black eyes at the fire. I was sat on my stool opposite, and, child-like, I never so much as took my eyes off her, wondering at her gaunt make, the big feet in the clumsy men's boots that showed beneath her skirts, and the lean powerful hands lying in her lap. Seems she didn't altogether like me watching her, for after a bit she turns on me and asks:

"'What are you staring at, you brat?'

"'Nothin',' says I.

"'Then if you wants to look at nothin',' says she with a short laugh, 'you can go and stare at the kiddy there, not at me.' And she jerked her head towards the settle, where the baby was a-lying.

"'Ah, poor little thing,' says mother, getting up, 'it don't seem natural for it to lie there that quiet. I'll bring it to the fire and warm it a drop o' milk.'

"She bent down over the baby and was just about to take it in her arms, when she give a scream that startled me off my stool, and stood up, her face as white as death. For it was nothing but a shawl or two rolled round something stiff and heavy as was lying on the settle, and no child at all.

"I was a-looking at mother, and I had no eyes for the woman until I see mother's face change and an awful look of fear come over it. And when I turned to see what she was staring at with them wild eyes, the woman had flung off her shawl and the wrap she wore round her head, and was stood up with a horrid, mocking smile on his face. For it was no woman, sir, as you'll have guessed, but a man.

"Well, mistress,' he says, coming forward a pace or two, 'I didn't mean to let the cat out of the bag so soon; but what's done's done. There's a little trifle of rent-money put by for the agent, as I've taken a fancy to; and that's what's brought me here. If you hand it over quietly, so much the better for you; if not.... I'm not one to stick at trifles; I've come for that money, and have it I will.'

"I have not got it,' mother said, plucking up what heart she could, and speaking through her white and trembling lips.

"That don't go down with me,' said the fellow with an oath. 'I didn't sleep under the lee of Tom Regan's hayrick for nothin' last night, and I heard every word that was spoken between him and your Jim. You'd better tell me where you've got it stowed, or you'll be sorry for it. You're a woman, mind you, and alone.'

"Mother's lips went whiter than ever, but she said never a word. I had begun to cry.

"Hold your row, you snivelling brat,' the fellow said with a curse. 'Come, mistress, you'd best not try my patience too long.'

"Now, mother was a brave woman, as I've said, and I don't believe, if the money had been left in her charge, as she'd have given it up tamely and without so much as a word. But of course, as things were, she could do no more than say, over and over again, as she hadn't got it. Then the brute began to threaten her, with threats that made her blood run cold; for she was only a woman, sir, and alone, except for me, a child as could do nothing in the way of help. With a last horrid threat on his lips the fellow turned towards the settle—there was a pistol hid in the clothes of the sham baby we found out afterwards—when he was stopped by something as come soft and noiseless out of the corner beyond and got right in his way. I see what it was after a minute. Between him and the settle where the pistol was lying there was standing that dog.

"The creature had showed neither sight nor sound of itself since the woman had come in, and we'd forgotten about it altogether, mother and me. There it stood now, though, still as a stone, but all on the watch, the lips drawn back from the sharp white teeth, and its eyes fixed, with a savage gleam in them, on the fellow's face. I was nothing but a child, and no thought of anything beyond had come to me then; but I tell you, sir, child as I was, I couldn't help feeling that the grin on the creature's face had something more than dog-like in it; and for nights to come I couldn't get the thought of it out of my head.

"Our visitor looked a bit took aback when he saw the creature, for most of his sort are terrible feared of a dog. But 'twas only for a moment, and then he laughed right out.

"He's an ugly customer, but he won't help you much, mistress,' he said with a sneer. 'I've something here as'll settle *him* fast enough.' With that he stretched out his hand towards the bundle on the settle.

"The hand never reached it, sir. You know the choking, worrying snarl a dog gives before he springs to grip his enemy by the throat, the growl that means a movement—and death! That sound stopped the scoundrel, and kept him, unable to stir hand or foot, with the dog in front of him, never moving, never uttering a sound beyond that low threatening growl, but watching, only watching. He might have been armed with a dozen weapons, and it would have been all the same. Those sharp, bared fangs would have met in his throat before he could have gripped the pistol within a foot of his hand; and he knew it, and the knowledge kept him there still as a stone, with the dog never taking its watching, burning eyes from his face.

"I'm done,' he owned at last, when minutes that seemed like hours had gone by. 'I'm done this time, mistress, thanks to the dog-fiend you've got here. I tell you I'd not have stopped at murder when I come in; but that kid of yours could best me now. Make the devil brute take his eyes off me, and let me go.'

"All trembling like a leaf, mother got to the door and drew back the bar. The fellow crossed the kitchen and slunk out, and the dog went with him. It followed him with its nose close at his knee as he crossed the threshold, and the two of them went like that, out into the fog and over the lonely moorland into the night. We never saw nor heard of the dog again.

"There were gipsies in the neighbourhood, crossing the moor out Wharton way, and when the story got about folk told us as 'twas known they had some strange-looking dogs with them, and said that this one must have belonged to the lot. But mother, she never believed in nothin' of the sort, and to the day of her death she would have it as the creature had been sent to guard her and me from the danger that was to come to us that night. She held that it was something more than a dog, sir; and you see there was one thing about it uncommon strange. When dad come back that next morning, our two pointers, Nip and Juno, followed him into the cottage. But the moment they got inside a sort of turn came over them, and they rushed out all queer and scared; while as for the water mother had set down for the black dog to drink, there was no getting them to put their lips to it. Not thirsty, sir? Well, sir, seeing as there warn't no water within six mile or so, and they'd come ten miles that morning over the moor, you'll excuse me saying you don't know much about dogs if you reckon they warn't thirsty!

"Coincidence you say, sir? Well, I dunno the meaning of that—maybe it's a word you gentles gives to the things you can't explain. But I've told you the story just as it happened, and I'd swear it's true, anyhow. If a gentleman like you can't see daylight in it, t'ain't for the likes of me to try; but I sticks to it that, say what folks will, the thing was uncommon strange.... Not tried the west side,

haven't you, sir? Bless your heart, Ben, what be you a-thinking of? The birds are as thick as blackberries down by the Grey Rock and Deadman's Hollow."

"That's a gruesome name," I said, rising and lifting my gun, while Ben coupled up the brace of dogs. I noticed a glance exchanged between father and son as the younger man lifted his head.

"Yes, sir," responded the former quietly; "the morning after that night I've been telling you of, the body of a man was found down there, and that's how the hollow got its name. Mother, she knew him again the moment she set eyes on the dead face, for all he'd got quit of the woman's clothes; and there warn't no mark nor wound on him, to show how he'd come by his death. Oh, yes, sir; I ain't saying as the fog warn't thick that night, nor as how it wouldn't have been easy enough for him to ha' missed his footing in the dark; though to be sure there were folks as would have it 'twarn't *that* as killed him.... Good-day to you, sir, and thank you kindly. Ben here'll see to your having good sport."

It was vexing to find so much gross superstition still extant in this last decade of the nineteenth century, certainly. Yet for all that, and though the notion of a spook dog was something too much for the materialistic mind to swallow, there is no use denying that, as I stood an hour later in Deadman's Hollow, with the recollection of the weird story I had just heard fresh in my memory, I was conscious of a cold shiver, which all the strength of the August sunshine, bathing the moorland in a glow of gold, was quite unable to lessen or to drive away.

THE WRECK OF THE *MAY QUEEN*.

BY ALICE F. JACKSON.

There was something in the air. Something ominous. A whisper of which we heard only the rustle, as it were—nothing of the words; but when one is on the bosom of the deep—hundreds of miles from land—in the middle of the Pacific Ocean—ominous whispers are, to say the least of it, a trifle disconcerting.

"What is it?" whispered Sylvia.

"I don't know," I said.

"Anything wrong with the ship?"

But I could only shrug my shoulders.

Sylvia said, "Let us ask Dr. Atherton."

So we did. But Dr. Atherton only smiled.

"There was something behind that smile of his," said Sylvia, suspiciously. "As if we were babies, either of us," she added, severely.

Yes, there was something suspicious in that smile. And Dr. Atherton hadn't looked at us full in the face while he talked. Besides, there was a sort of lurking pity in his voice; and—yes, I'm sure his lip had twitched a little nervously.

"Why should he be nervous if there is nothing the matter with the ship?"

"And why should he look as if he felt sorry for us?"

"Let's ask the captain," I said.

"Just leave the ship in my keeping, young ladies," said the captain, when we asked him. "Go back to your fancy-work and your books."

The *May Queen* was not a regular passenger ship. Sylvia, and I, and Dr. Atherton were the only passengers. She was laden with wool—a cargo boat; but Sylvia and I were accommodated with such a pretty cabin!

We had left Sydney in the captain's charge. Father wanted us to have a year's schooling in England; and we were coming to Devonshire to live with Aunt Sabina, and get a little polishing at a finishing school.

Of course we had chummed up with Dr. Atherton, though we had never met him before. One's obliged to be friendly with every one on board, you know; and then he was the only one there was to be friendly with. He was acting as the ship's surgeon for the voyage home. He was going to practise in England. He was, perhaps, twenty-five—not more than twenty-six, at any rate, and on the strength of that he began to constitute himself a sort of second guardian over us.

We didn't object. He was very nice. And, indeed, he made the time pass very pleasantly for us.

Sylvia was sixteen, and I was fifteen; and the grey-haired captain was the kindest chaperon.

For the first fortnight we had the most delightful weather; and then it began to blow a horrid gale. The *May Queen* pitched frightfully, and "took in," as the sailors said, "a deal of water."

For three days the storm raged violently. We thought the ship would never weather it. I don't know what we should have done without Dr. Atherton. And then quite suddenly the wind died away, and there came a heavenly calm.

The sea was like a mill-pond. It was beautiful! Sylvia and I began to breathe again, when, all at once, we felt that ominous something in the air.

"Thud! thud! thud!" All day long we heard that curious sound—and at dead of night too, if we happened to be awake. "Thud! thud! thud!" unceasingly.

The sailors, too, forgot their jocular sayings, and seemed too busy now to notice us. Some looked flurried, some looked sullen; but all looked anxious, we thought. And they were working, working, always working away at the bottom of the ship. And always that "thud! thud! thud!"

And then we learned by accident what the matter was.

"Five feet of water in the well!" It was the captain's voice.

And Dr. Atherton's murmured something that we did not catch.

We were in the cabin, and the door was just ajar. They thought we girls were up on deck, I suppose. Sylvia flung out her hand and pressed me on the arm; and then she put her finger on her lip.

"All hands are at the pumps," the captain said. "Their exertions are counteracting the leak. The water in the well is neither more nor less. I've just been sounding it again."

"Can't the leak be stopped?" asked Dr. Atherton.

"Yes, if we could find it. We've been creeping about her ribs all the better part of the morning, but we cannot discover the leak."

"And the water's still coming in?"

"Still coming in. They're working like galley-slaves to keep it under, but we make no headway at all. I greatly fear that some of her seams have opened during the gale."

"And that means——"

"That means the water is coming in through numerous apertures," said the captain grimly.

"Is the *May Queen* in danger, captain?" asked Dr. Atherton in a steady voice.

There was a pause. We could hear our own hearts beat. And then:

"I would to Heaven that those girls were not on board!"

"But we are!" It was Sylvia's voice. With a bound she had flung open the door, and stood confronting the astonished pair. "We are here. And as we are here, Captain Maitland, oh! don't, don't keep us in the dark!"

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the doctor.

And the captain said in his severest tones:

"Young lady, you've been eavesdropping, I see. Let me tell you that's a thing I won't allow."

"Oh! Captain Maitland, is the ship in danger?" I cried.

But the captain only glared at me. He looked excessively annoyed.

Then Sylvia ran up and put her hand upon his arm.

"We could not help hearing," she said. "If the ship is in danger really, it is better for us to know. Please, don't be vexed with us; but we'd rather be told the truth. We—we——"

"Are not babies," I put in, with my heart going pit-a-pat.

"Nor cowards," added Sylvia, with a lip that trembled a little.

It made the captain cough.

"The—the *May Queen* has sprung a leak?" she said.

"You heard me say so, I suppose."

"And the ship is in danger, Captain Maitland?"

"Can you trust me, young lady?" was his answer.

Sylvia put her hand in his.

"You know we trust you," she said.

He caught it in a hearty grasp; and gave me an encouraging smile.

"Thank you for that, my child. The *May Queen's* got five feet of water in her well, because she got damaged in that gale. So far we're managing to pump the water out as fast as the water comes in. D'you follow me?"

"Yes," fluttered to her lips.

"So far, so good. Don't worry. Try not to trouble your heads about this thing at all. Just say to yourselves, 'The captain's at the helm.' All that can be done *is* being done, young ladies. And," pointing upwards, "the other CAPTAIN'S aloft."

He was gone. In a dazed way I heard Dr. Atherton saying something to Sylvia. And a few minutes after that he, too, had disappeared. "Gone," Sylvia said in an awe-struck whisper, "to work in his turn at the pumps."

No need to wonder now at that unceasing "Thud! thud!" The noise of it not only sounded in our ears, it struck us like blows on our hearts.

We crept up on deck. We could breathe there. We could see. Oh! how awful was the thought of going down, down—drowning in the cabin below!

Air, and light, and God's sky was above. And we prayed to the CAPTAIN aloft.

The sea was so calm that danger, after having weathered that fearful gale, seemed almost impossible to us. The blue water reflected the blue heaven above; and when the setting sun cast a rosy light over the sky, the sea caught the reflection as well.

It was beautiful.

"It doesn't seem so dangerous now, Sylvia," I whispered, "as it felt during the gale."

"No," came through her colourless lips.

"There's not a ripple on the sea," I said; "and if they keep on pumping the water out, we'll—we'll get to land in time."

"Yes," she said, and held my hand a little tighter. After a while, "I wonder if we're very far from land."

"Nine hundred miles, I think I heard Mr. Wheeler say." She shuddered.

Mr. Wheeler was the first mate.

I looked across the wild waste of water, and shuddered too. So calm—so endless!

The men were working like galley-slaves down below, pumping turn and turn about, watch and watch. We saw the relieved gang come up bathed in perspiration. They were labouring for their lives, we knew.

Now and again some sailor, passing by, would say:

"Keep a good heart, little leddies," and look over his shoulder with a cheerful smile.

It made us cheer up too.

We heard one say they were pumping one hundred tons of water every hour out of the ship. It sounded appalling.

In a little while a light breeze began to blow. "From the south-west," somebody said it was.

And then we heard the captain give an order about "making all sail" in the ship.

Every man that could be spared from the pumps set about it directly; and soon great sails flew up flapping in the breeze, and the *May Queen* went flying before the wind.

By-and-by Dr. Atherton came, and ordered us down to the saloon, and made us each drink a glass of wine. And then Mr. Wheeler joined us; and we sat down to supper just as we had done many a happy evening before—only that the captain didn't come to the table as usual, but had his supper carried away to him.

We learned that the captain had altered the ship's course, and "put the *May Queen* right before the wind," and that he was "steering for the nearest land."

It comforted us.

"We have gained a little on the leak," the first mate said. "Three inches!"

"Only three inches!" we cried.

"Three inches is a great victory," Mr. Wheeler replied. "I think it's the turn of the tide."

"Thank God!" muttered Dr. Atherton.

We lay down in our narrow berths still comforted, and slept like tops all night. I'm not sure that the doctor hadn't given us something to make us sleep when he gave us a drink, as he innocently

said, "to settle and soothe our nerves."

"Thud! thud! thud!" The ominous sound was in my ears the moment I opened my eyes, and all the terror of the preceding day came crowding into my mind.

"Sara, are you awake?"

"Yes, Sylvia."

"Did you sleep?"

"Like a top."

"So did I."

Yes, we had slept, and while we slept the sailors had worked all night. And all night long, like some poor haunted thing, the *May Queen* had glided on.

"Mr. Wheeler, has the water lessened in the well?"

"Good-morning, Miss Redding," was his reply.

His face was pale. Great beads of perspiration were rolling down his cheeks. He began to mop them with a damp handkerchief.

At that moment Dr. Atherton came on the scene. "Good-morning, young ladies," he said.

Such a slovenly-looking doctor! And we used to think him such a sprucely-got-up man. There was no collar round his neck, and his hair hung in damp strings on his forehead. And he had no coat on, not a waistcoat either, nor did he look a bit abashed.

"Sleep well?" he said.

Mr. Wheeler seized the opportunity to slink away.

"*You* haven't slept!" we cried.

He didn't reply. His haggard face, the red rims round his tired eyes were answer enough.

"You've been up all night?" said Sylvia calmly.

I burst into a whimpering wail.

"No, don't, Miss Sara," urged the doctor soothingly.

Sylvia said, "Has more water come into the ship?"

"The water has gained on us a trifle," he said reluctantly.

"But Mr. Wheeler said we'd gained three inches yesterday."

"Go back into your cabin," he said. "Some breakfast will be sent to you there directly. We—we are not fit to breakfast with ladies this morning," he added.

"Oh! not to the cabin. Please let us go on deck."

"The captain's orders were the cabin," he said. "Hush, hush! Don't cry any more, Miss Sara," patting my shoulder, "there's a good girl. It would worry the captain dreadfully to hear you. His chief anxiety is having you on board. You wouldn't make his anxiety greater, would you now? See, Miss Sylvia, I rely on you. Take her to the cabin, and eat your breakfast there. After breakfast," he added soothingly, "I daresay you will be allowed to go on deck."

We went back. We sat huddled together. We held each other's hands. Sylvia didn't cry. Her face was white. Her eyes were shining. "Don't, Sara," she kept on saying, "crying can do no good."

Breakfast came. Neither of us ate much. How callously we sent the greater part of it away! Afterwards we remembered it. At present we could think of nothing but the leaking ship.

And "Thud! thud! thud!" It was like the heart of the *May Queen*, beating, beating! How long would it take to burst?

After breakfast we were allowed to go on deck. Oh! how the brilliant sunshine seemed to mock us there! And such a sea! Blue, beautiful, peaceful, smiling! A vast mill-pond. And water, water everywhere!

Sea and sky! Nothing but sea and sky! And not a little, littlest speck of Mother Earth!

"Mr. Wheeler, are we nearer land?"

"A little nearer, Miss Sylvia."

"How much nearer?"

"She's run two hundred and fifty miles," he said.

"Two hundred and fifty miles! And yesterday we were nearly a thousand miles from land!"

"Yes, Miss Sara."

I could have screamed. It was sheer despair that kept me silent—perhaps a little shame. Sylvia stood beside him with her hands clenched tight.

"Isn't there any likelihood of some ship passing by?"

"Every likelihood," he said.

At that moment the relieved gang came up. They were changed. Not the brave hopeful men we had seen yesterday. They were disheartened. Indeed, we read despair in many faces.

One big burly fellow lighted a pipe. He gave a puff or two. "No use pumping this darned ship," he said. "She's doomed."

And as if to corroborate this awful fact a voice sang out:

"Seven feet o' water in the hold!"

This announcement seemed to demoralise the sailors. One burst out crying. Another cursed and swore. Others ran in a flurried way about the ship. For ten minutes or so all was confusion. And then a stentorian voice rose above the din.

"All hands to the boats!" It was the captain's. And immediately every man came scrambling from the pumps, and I felt my hand taken in an iron grasp.

"We're going to abandon the ship. We're going to take to the boats. Come down to your cabin and gather all you value. Be quick about it," said the doctor, "there isn't much time to spare. They're going to provision the boats before they lower them, so you can pack up all you want."

He spoke roughly. He pushed me along in front of him. I was so dumfounded that I could not resent it. Down in the cabin he looked at me. His stern eye dared me to faint.

I heard Sylvia say, "Can we take that little box?"

And I heard him answer, "Yes."

He was gone. I saw Sylvia, through a mist, pushing things into the box. And the doctor was back again.

A fiery something was in my mouth, and trickling down my throat. I tasted brandy.

"That's better," said the doctor, patting my back. "Make haste and help your sister. Yes, Miss Sylvia, shove it all in." And then he began to drag the blankets from our berths.

"The leddies ready? Leddies fust!" And down tumbled a sailor for the trunk.

Up the companion-ladder for the last time, the doctor prodding me in the back with his load of blankets. Sylvia, with a white face, carrying a little hand-bag. And the captain coming to meet us in the doorway.

"This one first." And I was picked up in his arms as if I'd been a baby. "Ready, Wheeler?" And I was lowered into the first mate's arms, and placed on a seat in the cutter.

The next thing I knew was that Sylvia was by my side; and that the doctor was tucking a blanket about our knees. After that four or five sailors jumped into the boat, and the captain shouted in a frantic hurry:

"Shove her off!"

The cutter fell astern. The long-boat then came forward, and all the rest of the sailors crowded in. The captain was left the last.

"Hurry up, sir!" shouted Mr. Wheeler. But the captain had disappeared. He had run down to his cabin for some papers.

"She's full of water!" cried one of the sailors in the long boat. And as he spoke the *May Queen* stopped dead, and shook.

With a yell one of the men cut the rope that held the long-boat to the ship, and shoved off like lightning from the sinking vessel.

Only in time.

The next moment the *May Queen* pitched gently forward. Her bows went under water.

"Captain!" shrieked the sailors in a deafening chorus.

Then her stern settled down. The sea parted in a great gulf. The waves rolled over her upper deck. And with her sails all spread the *May Queen* went down into the abyss.

A hoarse cry burst from every throat; and the boats danced on the bubbling, foaming water. The sailors stood up all ready to save him, crying to each other that he'd come to the surface soon. But he never did.

They rowed all round and round the spot, but not a vestige of the captain did we see.

"Sucked under—by Heaven!" cried the first mate in a tone of horror.

And we were adrift on the Pacific.

ADRIFT ON THE PACIFIC.

BY ALICE F. JACKSON.

I.

The captain was drowned, and the *May Queen* was wrecked, and we were adrift on the ocean. Adrift in a cockle-shell of an open boat more than six hundred miles from land! No—*no!* It's some horrible nightmare!

For the first few moments everybody sat benumbed, staring awe-struck into each other's faces.

Then—"Christ have mercy on his soul!" somebody said.

And, "Amen!" came the answer in a deep whisper.

Then Mr. Wheeler gave some order in a voice that shook, and we rowed from the fatal spot.

Sylvia sat with one hand covering her face. Her other arm crept round my waist. I was so dazed I could hardly think—too bewildered to grasp what had happened.

"Poor child!" said Dr. Atherton.

"Sara, Dr. Atherton is speaking to you ... Sara!"

I raised my head.

"Poor child!" I heard again. "Sit up and drink this," said the doctor's voice, and I felt him chafing my hand.

"Miss Sara, won't you try to be brave? Look at Miss Sylvia," he said.

"She be a rare plucked 'un, she be. Cheer up, you poor little 'un!"

"While there is life, there's 'ope, little miss. Thank the Lord, we're not all on us drowned."

I burst into tears, I was ashamed that I did; but it was oh! such a relief to cry.

When I came to myself they were talking together. I heard in a stupefied way.

"No immediate peril, thank God."

"Not in calm weather like this."

"Two chances for life—she must either make land, or be picked up by some vessel at sea."

"... Beautifully still it is, Miss Sylvia. Might have been shipwrecked in a storm, you know."

It came to my confused senses that they were very good—these men; for they, too, were in peril of their lives; yet the chief anxiety of one and all was to calm mine and Sylvia's fears.

Another blanket was passed up for us to sit upon. And then they started an earnest consultation among themselves.

There were four sailors in our boat. Gilliland—the big, burly fellow who had lighted his pipe—and Evans, and Hookway, and Davis. Dr. Atherton and the first mate made six; and Sylvia and I made eight.

The long-boat was a good deal bigger than the cutter; and she held eighteen to twenty men.

We gathered from their talk that the *May Queen*, after Captain Maitland had altered her course, had run two hundred and fifty miles out of what they termed "the track of trade"; and that unless we got back to the old track again, there was small chance of our being picked up by another vessel.

On the other hand, to make for the nearest land, we would have to traverse the ocean for some six hundred miles, and Mr. Wheeler, it seemed, was hesitating as to which course to take.

The men in the long-boat bawled to the men in the cutter, and the men in the cutter shouted their answers back, the upshot of which was that Mr. Wheeler decided to get back into the track of trade.

"Make all sail," he shouted to the men in the long-boat, "and keep her head nor' east."

And, "Ay, ay, sir," came the answer over the water.

The men in the cutter ran up the sails too, and soon we were sailing after the long-boat. The longboat, however, sailed much faster than the cutter. Sometimes she lowered her sails on

purpose to wait for us.

The weather was perfect. The sea was beautiful. In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and hardly a ripple on the waves!

"We could hold out for weeks in weather like this!" cried the doctor cheerfully. And then to Gilliland:

"The boats are well provisioned, you say?"

"A month's provisions on board, sir. That was the captain's orders. Me and Hookway had the doing of it."

"And water?" asked the doctor anxiously.

"Plenty of water, and rum likewise," replied the sailor, with an affectionate glance at one of the little barrels.

"I see only two small casks here," said the doctor sharply.

"Plenty more on board the long-boat. Ain't there, Hookway?"

"Plenty more, sir. The long-boat can stow away a deal more than the cutter. When we've got through this keg of spirit," putting his hand on one of the little casks, "and drunk up that there barrel of water, we've only got to signal the long-boat, and get another barrel out of her."

"The food is on the long-boat, too, I suppose?"

"Right you are, sir. And here's a lump o' corned beef. And here's a loaf o' bread. And likewise a bag o' biscuit for present requirements."

"Humph!" said the doctor, "I'm glad of that. Hand me up that loaf, Davis, if you please. Mr. Wheeler, the spirits, of course, are in your charge. May I ask you to mix a small mug of rum and water for these ladies?"

"Oh! I couldn't drink rum, doctor," objected Sylvia.

"Oh! yes, you can. And you're going to eat this sandwich of corned beef and bread. Excuse fingers, Miss Sara," he added, handing me a sandwich between his finger and thumb. "Fingers were made before knives and forks. And now you're to share this mug of rum and water."

"It's very weak, I assure you," said Mr. Wheeler, smiling. "Drink up every drop of it," he added kindly. "It will do you both good."

We thanked him and obeyed. And while we ate our sandwiches the men ate biscuit and beef; and then Mr. Wheeler poured them out a small allowance of rum.

The cutter sailed smoothly. And the men told yarns. But every eye was on the look-out for the smoke of some passing ship.

We saw none. Not a speck on the ocean, save the long-boat ahead. And by-and-by the sun set, and a little fog crept up. And the night came on as black as pitch and very drear.

Sylvia and I huddled close in the blanket that Dr. Atherton had tied about our shoulders; and whispered our prayers together.

"To-morrow will be Sunday, Sylvia," I said.

And she whispered back: "They will pray for those that travel by water in the Litany."

II.

I couldn't sleep. Every time I began to lose consciousness I started up in a fright, and saw the *May Queen* going down into the sea again; and fancied I saw the captain struggling in the cabin. It was terrible.

I could hear the men snoring peacefully in the boat. They were all asleep except the helmsman.

At midnight he roused up another man to take his place; and after that I remembered no more till I started up in the grey dawn with a loud "Ahoy!" quivering in my ears.

"Ahoy! A-hoy!"

Everybody was wide awake. Everybody wanted to know what the matter was. And everybody was looking at the helmsman who was peering out at sea.

It was Gilliland. He turned a strange, scared face to the others in the cutter, and:—" *The long-boat's not in sight!*" said he.

Somebody let out an oath. And every eye stared wildly over the sea. It was quite true. Not a speck, not a streak we saw upon the ocean—the long-boat had disappeared!

"God in heaven!" ejaculated the first mate. "She must have capsized in the night!"

"And if we don't capsize, we'll starve," said the doctor, "*for she had all our provisions on board!*"

There was an awful silence for just three minutes. Then the man who had sworn before shot out another oath. Hookway began to rave like a madman. Evans burst into sobs. Davis began to swear horribly, and cursed Gilliland for putting the provisions in the other boat.

It was terrible.

Suddenly Sylvia's voice rose trembling above the babel, quaveringly she struck up the refrain of the sailor's hymn:

*"O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea."*

"God bless you, miss!" cried Gilliland. And taking up the tune, he dashed into the first verse:

*"Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave.
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:"*

The doctor and the first mate joined in the refrain. And Hookway ceased to rave. They sang the hymn right through. The last verse was sung by every one. The "*Amen*" went up like a prayer at the end. And the sailors, with their caps in their hands, some of them with tears in their eyes, looked gratefully at Sylvia and murmured, "Thank you, miss."

Oh! the days that followed, and the long, hungry nights! Even now I dream of them, and start up trembling in my sleep.

Sylvia and I have very tender hearts when we hear of the starving poor.

To be hungry—oh! it is terrible. But to be thirsty too! And to feel that one is dying of thirst—and water everywhere!

For those first dreadful days Mr. Wheeler dealt out half a biscuit to each—half a biscuit with a morsel of beef that had to be breakfast, and dinner, and tea! And just a little half mug of water tintured with a drop of rum!

And on that we lived, eight people in the cutter, for something like eleven days! Eleven days in a scorching sun! Eleven calm, horrible nights!

We wanted a breeze. And no breeze came, though we prayed for it night and day. The remorseless ocean was like a sheet of glass. The sun shone fiercely in the heavens. It made the sides of the cutter so hot that it hurt our poor hands to touch it.

And all those days no sign of a sail! Not a vestige of a passing ship!

Evans and Davis grumbled and swore. And so did Hookway sometimes. Gilliland was the most patient of the sailors; and tried to cheer up every one else with stories of other people's escapes.

On the *May Queen* Sylvia and I had thought Mr. Wheeler rather a commonplace sort of man. We knew him for a hero in the cutter. Often he used to break off pieces of his biscuit, I know, to add to Sylvia's and mine.

"Friends," he said on the eleventh day, "the biscuit is all gone." His face was ghastly. His eyes were hollow. His lips were cracked and sore.

"And the water?" asked the doctor faintly.

"Barely a teaspoon apiece."

"Keep it for the women then," suggested Dr. Atherton.

"No!" shouted Davis with an oath.

And, "We're all in the same boat," muttered Evans.

Gilliland lifted his bloodshot eyes. "Hold your jaw!" he said.

Hookway groaned feebly.

They looked more like wild beasts than men, with their ghastly faces, and their glaring eyes—especially Davis.

He looked at me desperately. He thought I was going to have all the water.

"I won't take more than my share, Mr. Wheeler," I said. And I looked at Sylvia. She was lying in the stern muttering feebly to herself. She didn't hear.

"God bless you, miss!" said Davis, and burst into an agony of sobs.

The last spoonful of water was handed round, the doctor forcing Sylvia's portion into her mouth.

And we wafted on, only just moving along, for there was no breeze. And the sun beat on us. And the sea glared. And Davis cursed. And Hookway writhed and moaned.

"Take down the sails," said the first mate. "They are useless without any wind. Rig them up as an

awning instead."

The men obeyed.

Then the doctor seized a vessel, and filling it with sea-water poured it over Sylvia as she lay, soaking her, clothes and all.

"Oh, doctor!" I expostulated, wonderingly.

"I'm going to drench you too, Miss Sara. It will relieve the thirst," he said.

Sylvia opened her eyes. "Oh! it's bliss!" she said.

Dr. Atherton then poured some salt water over me, and then over Mr. Wheeler and himself, and told the sailors to drench themselves as well.

It was a little relief—only a very little; and the heat gradually dried us up again.

"Here, give me the baler!" cried Davis in a little while, and he caught it out of Gilliland's hand. "D'ye think I'm going to die o' thirst with all this water about?" And dipping it over the side of the cutter, he lifted it to his mouth.

"Stop him!" shouted the doctor in a frenzy. "The salt water'll make him mad!"

And Gilliland, with a desperate thrust, tipped it over his clothes instead.

Davis howled. He tried to fight; but Gilliland was too strong for him, and soon he was huddled up in the fore part of the boat, cursing and swearing dreadfully.

After a time he quieted down, and then he became so queer.

"Roast beef!" he murmured, smacking his lips. "An' taters! An' cabbage! An' gravy! An' Yorkshire pudden! My eye! It's prime! And so's the beer, my hearties!"

He smiled. The anguish died out of his face. He thought he was eating it all. And then he began to finish off his dinner with apple pie.

"Stow your gab!" snarled Evans. "Wot a fool he is!"

And, indeed, it was maddening to hear him.

An hour later he struggled into a sitting posture and turned a rapturous face upon the sea. "Water!" he shouted. "Water! Water!" And before any of the sailors could raise a hand to stop him he had rolled over the side of the boat.

The first mate shouted. The men, feeble though they were, sprang to do his bidding. They were not in time. With a gurgling cry Davis was jerked under the water suddenly. Next moment the water bubbled, and before it grew calm again the surface was stained with blood.

"A shark's got him!" shrieked Hookway. And as he cried the great black fin of some awful thing came gliding after the cutter.

"He's had *his* dinner," said Gilliland grimly; "and he's waiting for his supper now!"

III.

Oh! that terrible night, with the full moon shining down upon the quiet water! So still! So calm! Not a ripple on the wave! And that awful black something silently following us!

Sylvia lay with her head upon the doctor's knee—one poor thin arm, half bared, across my lap. And so the morning found us.

There was something the matter with Evans—something desperate. He was beginning to look like Davis—only worse. Something horrible in his ghastly face. It was wolfish. And his eyes—they were not like human eyes at all—they were the eyes of some fierce, wild beast. And they were fastened with a wolfish glare on Sylvia's half-bared arm. *He wanted to eat it!*

Stealthily he had got his clasp knife out. And stealthily he was crouching as if to make a spring. And I couldn't speak!

My tongue, as the Bible expresses it, clave to the roof of my mouth. I was powerless to make a sound. And none of the others happened to be looking at him.

I put my hand on Mr. Wheeler's knee and gave him a feeble push. I pointed dumbly at Evans.

"Put down that knife!" cried Mr. Wheeler in a voice of command. "Evans!"

With a cry so hideous—I can hear it now—the man lunged forward. Mr. Wheeler tried to seize the knife; but Evans suddenly plunged it into his shoulder; and the first mate fell with a groan.

Then there was an awful struggle.

Gilliland and Hookway fighting with Evans. And the doctor trying to protect Sylvia and me; and dragging the first mate away from the scuffling feet. And I praying out loud in my agony that death might come to our relief.

He was down at last. Lying in the bottom of the boat, with Gilliland sitting astride him, and Hookway getting a rope to tie him up! The doctor leaning over Mr. Wheeler and trying to staunch the blood, and the first mate fainting away!

And then—Oh! heavens! with a cry—Gilliland sprang to his feet, shouting! gesticulating! waving his cap! Had he, too, now, suddenly gone mad?

"Ship ahoy! ahoy!" he shrieked, and we followed his pointing hand.

And there, on the bosom of the endless sea, we saw a ship becalmed.

I suppose I swooned.

When I recovered my senses, the cutter was creeping under her lee, and the crew were throwing us a rope.

"The women first," said somebody in a cheerful voice. "And after them send up the wounded man."

And soon kind, pitying faces were bending over us. And very tender hands were feeding Sylvia and me.

"They've had a pooty consid'able squeak, I guess," said the cheerful voice.

And somebody answered, "That's so."

We had been picked up by an American schooner.

A STRANGE VISITOR.

BY MAUD HEIGHINGTON.

The Priory was a fine, rambling old house, which had recently come into Jack Cheriton's possession through the death of a parsimonious relative.

Part of the building only had been kept in repair, while the remainder had fallen into decay, and was, in fact, only a picturesque ruin.

The Cheritons' first visit to their newly acquired property was a sort of reconnoitre visit. They had come from Town for a month's holiday, bringing with them Thatcher—little Mollie's nurse—as general factotum.

They had barely been in the house an hour when a telegram summoned Thatcher to her mother's deathbed, and a day or two later urgent business recalled Jack to Town.

"I'll just call at the Lodge and get Mrs. Somers to come up as early as she can this morning, and stay the night with you, so you will not be alone long," he called as he hurried off.

His wife and Mollie watched him out of sight, and then returned to the breakfast-room—the little one amusing herself with her doll, while her mother put the breakfast things together.

Millicent Cheriton was no coward, but an undefinable sense of uneasiness was stealing over her. The Priory was fully half an hour's walk from the Lodge, which was the nearest house. Still further off, in the opposite direction, stood a large building, the nature of which they had not yet discovered.

Jack had never left her even for one night since their marriage—and now she had not even Thatcher left to bear her company.

"Mrs. Somers will soon be here," she said in a comforting tone to Mollie, who, however, was too intent upon her doll to notice, and certainly did not share her mother's uneasiness.

Meanwhile, Jack had reached the Lodge and made his request to Somers, the gamekeeper.

"I'm main sorry, sir, but the missus thought as you would want her at eleven—as usual, so she started off early to get her marketing done first. I'll be sure and tell her to take her things up for the night as soon as she gets home."

"Ten o'clock! No Mrs. Somers yet!"

Mrs. Cheriton picked up her little daughter and carried her upstairs.

"We'll make the beds, Mollie, you and I," she said, tossing the little maid into the middle of the shaken-up feather bed.

This was fine fun, and Mollie begged for a repetition of it.

"Hark! That must be Mrs. Somers," as a footstep sounded on the gravel path.

"That's right, Mrs. Somers, I am glad you have come," called Millicent, but as she heard no reply,

she thought she had been mistaken, and finished making the bed, then tying a sun-bonnet over Mollie's golden curls, took her downstairs, intending to take her into the garden to play.

What was it that came over Millicent as she reached the hall? Again that strange uneasiness, and a feeling that some third person was near her. She grasped Mollie's hand more firmly, with an impatient exclamation to herself, for what she thought was silly nervousness, and walked into the dining-room.

There, in the large armchair, lately occupied by her husband, sat a tall, gentlemanly looking man. He had already removed his hat, and was about to unlock a brown leather bag, which he held on his knee. He rose and bowed as Mrs. Cheriton entered the room.

"I must apologise for intruding upon you, madam, but I do so in the cause of science, so I am sure you will pardon me."

The words were fair enough, but something in the manner made Millicent's heart seem to stand still. Something also told her that she must not show her fear.

"May I know to whom I am speaking?" she said, "and in what branch of science you take a special interest?"

"Certainly, madam. My name is Wharton. I am a surgeon, and am greatly interested in vivisection."

"Indeed!" said Millicent, summoning all her presence of mind, for as he spoke his manner grew more excitable, and he began to open his bag.

"I called here," he said, "to make known a new discovery, which, however, I should like to demonstrate," and he fixed his restless eye on little Mollie, who was clinging shyly to her mother's gown.

"I am sure it is very kind of you to take an interest in us—but it is so early, perhaps you have not breakfasted? May I get you some breakfast?"

Would Mrs. Somers never come? and if she did, what could she do? for by this time Millicent had no doubt that she was talking to a madman.

"Thank you, I do not need any," replied her visitor, as he began to take from his bag all kinds of terrible looking surgical instruments, and laid them on the table.

In spite of the terror within her, Millicent tried to turn his attention from his bag, speaking of all kinds of general subjects as fast as they came to her mind, but though he answered her politely, it was with evident irritation, and he seemed to get more excitable every minute.

"This will never do," she thought, "I must humour him," and with sinking heart she ventured on her next question.

"What is this wonderful discovery, Mr. Wharton? if I may ask."

"Certainly, madam. It is a permanent cure for deafness."

Millicent began to breathe more freely as the thought passed through her mind "then it can't affect Mollie," for she forgot for a moment that her guest was not a sane man. Again his eye rested on Mollie, and he rose from his chair.

"The cure is a certain one," he said, "the right ear must be amputated, and the passages thoroughly scraped, but I will show you," and he took a step towards Mollie.

Millicent's face blanched.

"But Mollie is not deaf," she said; "it will hardly do to operate on her."

"It will prevent her ever becoming so, madam, and prevention is better than cure," and he stepped back to the table to select an instrument.

The mother's presence of mind did not desert her—though her legs trembled so violently that she feared her visitor would see her terror.

"It would be a very good thing to feel sure of that," she said. "You will want a firm table, of course, and good light. You might be interrupted here. I will show you a better room for the operation."

"Thank you, madam, and I shall require plenty of hot water and towels."

"Certainly," said Millicent, and leading him to the hall, she directed him to a room which had at one time been fitted as a laundry, and in which was an ironing bench.

With sinking heart, she followed him to the top of the house—pointing the way through two attics into a third.

"I will just leave you to arrange your things while I get hot water and towels, and put on Mollie's nightdress," she said, and closing the door, turned the key. It grated noisily, but the visitor was too much occupied to notice it, and rushing through the other rooms, Millicent locked both doors, and fled downstairs.

Snatching her little one in her arms, she hurried through the garden—pausing at the gate to shift Mollie from her arms on to her back.

She had barely left the gate when a horrible yell of baffled rage rent the air, making her turn and glance up at the window of the attic.

The maniac had just discovered that the door was locked, and rushing to the window caught sight of his hostess and desired patient fleeing from the house.

One glance showed Millicent that he was about to get out of the window, but whether he intended to clamber down by the ivy, or creep in at the next attic, she did not stop to ascertain; only praying that she might have strength to gain a place of safety she sped on, staggering under the weight of her little one, who clung to her neck in wonder.

On and on, still with the wild yells of rage ringing in her ears, until she had put three fields between herself and the house, when she stopped for breath in a shady lane.

Hark! Surely it was the sound of wheels coming towards her. "Help! oh, help!" she shouted. "Help! help! help!"

In another moment a brougham, drawn by two horses, appeared, coming slowly up the hill towards her.

The coachman at a word from his master drew up, and Millicent, now nearly fainting from terror and exhaustion, was helped into the carriage.

Giving directions to the coachman to drive home as quickly as possible, Dr. Shielding, for it was the medical superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum, the long building already referred to, drew from her between sobs and gasps the story of her fright.

At length they drew up before the doctor's house, in the grounds of the asylum, and with a hasty word of introduction, Dr. Shielding left Millicent and Mollie with his wife and daughter.

Summoning two burly-looking keepers, he stepped into his brougham again.

"To the Priory," he said, and then related the story to the men, describing the position of the attic as told him by Millicent, adding that he had just returned from a distant village, where he had been called for consultation about a case of rapidly developed homicidal mania of a local medical man, but the patient had eluded his caretaker, the previous day, and could not be found.

"I have no doubt it is the same man," he said, "and there he is!" he added, as they stopped before the Priory gate, to find the strange visitor was trying to descend from the window by the ivy.

There he clung, bag in hand, still five-and-twenty feet from the ground. When hearing their voices, he turned to look at them, and in so doing lost his hold, falling heavily to the ground.

They hastened to the spot, just in time to see a spasmodic quiver of the limbs as he drew his last breath. He had struck his head violently against a huge stone and broken his neck.

The body was removed to the mortuary of the asylum, with all speed, and the relatives of the poor man telegraphed for, and when Dr. Shielding returned home he found that his wife had insisted upon keeping Mollie and Millicent as their guests until Jack's return, to which arrangement he heartily assented.

Jack's face blanched as he read a paragraph describing the adventure in his morning paper the following day, and when his letters were brought in, he hastily broke the seal of one in his wife's handwriting, and read the story in her own words, finishing with, "Oh, Jack, dear, I never, never can go back there again; do come and fetch us home."

They never did return to the Priory, for on his way to the station, Jack put it into the hands of an agent for sale, and when he reached Beechcroft, he begged Mrs. Somers to go and pack up all their personal belongings and send them back to Town.

It was with feelings of deep thankfulness that he clasped his wife and little one in his arms once more, inwardly vowing that come what might, he would never again leave them without protection, even for an hour.

THE THIRD PERSON SINGULAR.

BY LUCY HARDY.

"You remember the old coaching days, granny?"

"Indeed I do," replied the old lady, with a smile, "for one of the strangest adventures of my life

befell me on my first stage-coach journey. Yes, you girls shall hear the story; I am getting into my 'anecdote,' as Horace Walpole calls it," and granny laughed with the secret consciousness that her "anecdotes" were always sure of an appreciative audience.

"People did not run about hither and thither in my young days as you girls do now," went on the old lady, "and it was quite an event to take a coach journey. In fact, when I started on my first one, I was nearly twenty years old; and my father and mother had then debated a good while as to whether I could be permitted to travel alone by the stage. My father was a country parson, as you know, and we lived in a very remote Yorkshire village. But an aunt, who was rich and childless, had lately taken up her residence at York, and had written so urgently to beg that I might be allowed to spend the winter with her, and thus cheer her loneliness, that it was decided that I must accept the invitation. It was the custom then for many of the local country gentry to visit the great provincial towns for their 'seasons' instead of undertaking the long journey to the metropolis. York, and many another country town, is still full of the fine old 'town houses' of the local gentry, who now go to London to 'bring out' their young daughters; but who, in the former days, were content with the gaieties offered by their own provincial capital. Very lively and pleasant were the 'seasons' of the country towns in my youth; and I think there was more real hospitality and sociability found among the country neighbours than one meets with in London society nowadays. I, of course, was delighted at the prospect of exchanging the dull life of our little village for the gaieties of York; but when it actually came to saying good-bye to my parents, from whom I had never yet been separated, I was half inclined to wish that Aunt Maria's invitation had been refused. Farmer Gray, who was to drive me to the neighbouring town, where I should join the coach, was very kind; and pretended not to see how I was crying under my veil. We lumbered along the narrow lanes and at length reached the little market town where I was deposited at the 'Blue Boar' to have some tea and await the arrival of the mail. I had often watched the coach dash up, and off again, when visiting the town with my father; but it seemed like a dream that I, Dolly Harcourt, was now actually to be a passenger in the conveyance. The dusk of a winter's evening was gathering as the mail came in sight, its red lamps gleaming through the mist. Ostlers prided themselves upon the celerity with which the change of horses was effected, and passengers were expected to be equally quick; I was hustled inside (my place had been taken days previously) before I had time to think twice. Fortunately, as I thought, remembering the long night journey which lay before me, I found the interior of the coach empty, several passengers having just alighted; but, as I settled myself in one corner, two figures hurried up, a short man, and a woman in a long cloak and poke-bonnet, with a thick veil over her face.

"'Just in time,' cried the man. 'Yes, I've booked two places, Mr. Jones and Miss Jenny,' and the pair stumbled in just as the impatient horses started.

"'Miss Jenny.' Well, I was glad that I was not to have a long night journey alone with a strange man. I glanced at the cloaked and veiled figure which sank awkwardly into the opposite corner of the vehicle, and then leaned forward to remove some of my little packages from the seat; in so doing I brushed against her bonnet.

"'I beg your pardon, madam,' I said politely; 'I was removing these parcels, fearing they might incommode you.'

"'All right, all right, miss,' said the man, a red-faced, vulgar-looking personage; 'don't you trouble about Jenny, she'll do very well;' and he proceeded to settle his companion in the corner rather unceremoniously.

"'Is she his sister or his wife, I wonder,' I thought; 'he does not seem particularly courteous to her;' and I took a dislike to my fellow-passenger on the spot. He, however, was happily indifferent to my good or evil opinion; pulling a cap from his pocket, he exchanged his hat for it, settled himself comfortably by his companion's side, and, in a few moments, was sound asleep, as his snores proclaimed. I could not follow his example. I felt terribly lonely, and not a little nervous. As we sped along at what appeared to my inexperience such a break-neck rate (ten miles an hour seemed so *then*, before railways whirled you along like lightning), I began to recall all the dismal stories of coach accidents, and of highwaymen, which I had read or heard of during my quiet village existence. Suppose, on this very moor which we were now crossing, a highwayman rode up and popped a pistol in at the window. I myself had not much to lose, though I should have been extremely reluctant to part with the new silk purse which my mother had netted for me, and in which she and father had each placed a guinea—coins not too plentiful in our country vicarage in those days. And suppose the highwayman was not satisfied with mere robbery, but should oblige me to alight and dance a minuet with him on the heath, as did Claud Duval; suppose—here my nervous fears took a fresh turn, for the cloaked lady opposite began to move restlessly, and the man, half waking, gave her a brisk nudge with his elbow and cried sharply,—

"'Now, then, keep quiet, I say.'

"This was a strange manner in which to address a lady. Could this man be sober, I thought, and a shiver ran through me at the idea of being doomed to spend so many hours in company with a possibly intoxicated, and certainly surly man. How rudely he addressed his companion, how little he seemed to care for her comfort! As I looked more carefully at the pair (the rising moon now giving me sufficient light to do this) I noted that the man's hand was slipped under the woman's cloak, and that he was apparently holding her down in her seat by her wrist. A fresh terror now assailed me—was I travelling with a lunatic and her keeper? I vainly tried to obtain a glimpse of the woman's countenance, so shrouded by her poke-bonnet and thick veil.

"The man was speedily snoring again, and I sat with my eyes fixed on the cloaked figure, wondering—speculating. Poor thing, was she indeed a lunatic travelling in charge of this rough attendant? Pity filled my heart as I thought of this afflicted creature, possibly torn from home and friends and sent away with a surly guardian; who, I now felt *sure*, was not too sober. Was the woman old or young, of humble rank or a lady? I began to weave a dozen romantic stories in my head about my fellow-passengers, quite forgetting all my recent fears about the 'knights of the road.' So sorry did I feel for the woman that I leant across and addressed some trivial, polite remark to her, but received no reply. I gently touched her cloak to draw her attention, but the lady's temper seemed as testy as that of her companion; she abruptly twisted away from my touch with some inarticulate, but evidently angry exclamation, which sounded almost like a growl. I shrank back abashed into my corner and attempted no more civilities. Would the coach never reach York and I be freed from the presence of these mysterious fellow-passengers? I was but a timid little country lass, and this was my first flight from home. It was certainly not a pleasant idea to believe oneself shut up for several hours with a half-tipsy man and a lunatic; as I now firmly believed the woman to be. I sat very still, fearing to annoy her by any chance movement, but my addressing her had evidently disturbed her, for she began to move restlessly, and to make a kind of muttering to herself. I gradually edged away towards the other end of the seat, so as to leave as much space between myself and the lady as possible, and in so doing let my shawl fall to the floor of the coach. I stooped to pick it up, and there beheld, protruding from my fellow-passenger's cloak, *her foot*. Oh horrors! I saw no woman's dainty shoe—but a hairy paw, with long nails—was it *cloven*?

"The frantic shriek I gave stopped the coach, and the guard and the outside passengers were round the door in a moment. For the first time in my life I had fainted—so missed the first excited turmoil—but soon revived to find myself lying on the moor, the centre of a kindly group of fellow-travellers, who were proffering essences, and brandy, and all other approved restoratives; while in the background, like distant thunder, were heard the adjurations of the guard and the coachman, who were swearing like troopers at the other—or rather at the *male*, inside passenger. Struggling into a sitting position, I beheld this man, sobered now by the shock of my alarm, and by the vials of wrath which were being emptied upon him, standing in a submissive attitude, while beside him, her cloak thrown back and her poke-bonnet thrust on one side, was the mysterious 'lady'—now revealed in her true character as a *performing bear*. It seemed that a showman, desirous of conveying this animal (which he described as 'quiet as an hangel') with the least trouble and expense to himself, bethought him of the expedient of booking places in the coach for himself and the bear, which bore the name of 'Miss Jenny'; trusting to her wraps and to the darkness to disguise the creature sufficiently. I will not repeat the language of the guard and coachman on discovering the trick played; but after direful threats as to what the showman might 'expect' as the result of his device, matters were amicably arranged. The owner of the bear made most abject apologies all round (I fancy giving more than *civil words* to the coach officials), I interceded for him, and the mail set off at double speed to make up for lost time. Only, with my knowledge of 'Miss Jenny's' real identity, I absolutely declined to occupy the interior of the coach again despite the showman's assertions of his pet's harmlessness; and the old coachman sympathising with me, I was helped up to a place by his side on the box, and carefully wrapped up in a huge military cloak by a young gentleman who occupied the next seat, and who was, as he told me, an officer rejoining his regiment at York. The latter part of my journey was far pleasanter than the beginning; the coachman was full of amusing anecdotes, and the young officer made himself most agreeable. It transpired, in course of conversation, that my fellow-traveller was slightly acquainted with Aunt Maria; and this acquaintanceship induced him to request that he might be permitted to escort me to her house and see me safe after my disagreeable adventure. I had no objection to his accompanying myself and the staid maidservant whom I found waiting for me at the inn when the coach stopped at York; and Aunt Maria politely insisted on the young man's remaining to partake of the early breakfast she had prepared to greet my arrival."

"Well, your fright did not end so badly after all, granny," remarked one of her listeners.

"Not at all badly," replied the old lady with a quiet smile; "but for my fright I should never have made the acquaintance of that young officer."

"And the officer was——"

"He was *Captain Marten* then, my dears—he became *General Marten* afterwards—and was *your grandfather*."

"HOW JACK MINDED THE BABY."

BY DOROTHY PINHO.

The *Etruria* was on its way to New York. The voyage had been, so far, without accidents, or even

incidents; the weather had been lovely; the sea, a magnificent stretch of blue, with a few miniature wavelets dancing in the sunlight.

Amongst the passengers of the first-class saloon everybody noticed a slight girlish figure, always very simply attired; in spite of all her efforts to remain unnoticed, she seemed to attract attention by her great beauty. People whispered to each other, "Who is she?" All they knew was that her name was Mrs. Arthur West, and that she was going out to New York with her two babies to join her husband.

Every morning she was on deck, or sometimes, if the sun was too fierce, in the saloon, and she made a charming picture reclining in her deck-chair, with baby Lily lying on her lap, and little Jack playing at her feet. Baby was only three or four months old; hardly anything more than a dainty heap of snowy silk and lace to anybody but her mother, who, of course, thought that nothing on earth could be as clever as the way she crowed and kicked out her absurd pink morsels of toes.

Master Jack was quite an important personage; he was nearly four years old and very proud of the fact that this was his second voyage, while Lily had never been on a ship before, and, as he contemptuously remarked, "didn't even know who dada was." He was a quaint, old-fashioned little soul, and though he rather looked down upon his little sister from the height of his dignity and his first knickerbockers, he would often look after her for his mother and pat her off to sleep quite cleverly.

We must not forget to mention "Rover," a lovely retriever; he was quite of the family, fairly worshipped by his little master, and the pet of the whole ship. He looked upon baby Lily as his own special property, and no stranger dare approach if he were guarding her.

On the afternoon my story opens baby Lily had been very cross and fretful; the intense heat evidently did not agree with her. Poor little Mrs. West was quite worn out with walking up and down with her trying to lull her off to sleep. Jack was lying flat on the floor, engrossed in the beauties of a large picture-book; two or three times he raised his curly head and shook it gravely. Then he said, "Isn't she a naughty baby, mummie?"

"Yes, dear," answered his mother, "and I'm afraid that if she doesn't soon get good, we shall have to put her right through the porthole. We don't want to take a naughty baby-girl to daddy, do we?"

"No, mummie," answered Jack very earnestly, and he returned once more to his pictures.

"There, she has gone off," whispered Mrs. West, after a few moments. "Now, Jackie, I am going to put her down, and you must look after her while I go and see if the stewardess has boiled the milk for the night. Play very quietly, like a good little boy, because I don't think she is very sound asleep." And, with a parting kiss on his little uplifted face, she slipped away.

The stewardess was nowhere to be found; so Mrs. West boiled the milk herself, as she had often done before, and after about ten minutes, returned to her cabin.

Little Jack was in a corner, busy with a drawing-slate; he turned round as his mother came in. The berth where she had put the baby down was empty.

"Was baby naughty? Has the stewardess taken her?" she asked.

"No, mummie; baby woke up d'rectly you went, an' she was so dreff'ly naughty—she just *wouldn't* go to sleep again; so I thought I'd better punish her, an' I put her, just this minute, through the porthole, like you said; but I dessay she'll be good now, and p'raps you'd better—but what's the matter, mummie? Are you going to be seasick?" for his mother had turned deathly white, and was holding on to the wall for support.

"My baby, my little one!" she gasped; then, pulling herself together with a sudden effort, she rushed towards the stairs; little Jack, bewildered, but suddenly overcome by a strange feeling of awe, following in the rear. As she reached the deck, she became aware that the liner had stopped; there was a great commotion among the passengers; she heard some one say, "Good dog! brave fellow!" and Rover, pushing his way between the excited people, brought to her feet a dripping, wailing bundle, which she strained to her heart, and fainted away.

Need I narrate what had happened? When little Jack had "put naughty baby through the porthole," Rover was on deck with his two front paws up on the side of the vessel, watching intently some sea-gulls dipping in the waves. He suddenly saw the little white bundle touch the water; some marvellous instinct told him it was his little charge, and he gave a sudden leap over the side. A sailor of the crew saw him disappear, and gave the alarm: "Stop the ship! man overboard!"

A boat was lowered, and in a few seconds Rover was on deck again, holding baby Lily fast between his jaws.

Mrs. West never left her children alone after that; and when, a few days later, on the quay at New York, she was clasped in her husband's arms, she told him, between her sobs, how near he had been to never seeing his little daughter.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S ADVENTURE.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY ALFRED H. MILES.

My grandmother was one of the right sort. She was a fine old lady with all her faculties about her at eighty-six, and with a memory that could recall the stirring incidents of the earlier part of the century with a vividness which made them live again in our eager eyes and ears. She was born with the century and was nearly fifteen years old when Napoleon escaped from Elba, and the exciting circumstances that followed, occurring as they did at the most impressionable period of her life, became indelibly fixed upon her mind. She had relatives and friends who had distinguished themselves in the Peninsula war, in memory of one of whom, who fell in the last grand charge at Waterloo, she always wore a mourning ring.

But it was not at Waterloo that my grandmother met with the adventure which it is now my business to chronicle. It was a real genuine adventure, however, and it befell her a year or so after the final fall of Napoleon, and in a quiet, secluded spot in the county of Wiltshire, England, not far from Salisbury Plain; but as I am quite sure I cannot improve upon the dear old lady's oft-repeated version of the story, I will try and tell it as it fell from those dear, worn lips now for ever silent in the grave.

"I was in my sixteenth year when it was decided that, all fear of foreign invasion being over, I should be sent to London to complete my education and to receive those finishing touches in manners and deportment 'which a metropolis of wealth and fashion alone can give.'

"Never having left home before, I looked forward to my journey with some feeling of excitement and not a little of foreboding and dread. I could not quite make up my mind whether I was really sorry or glad. The quiet home life to which I had been accustomed, varied only by occasional visits from the more old-fashioned of the local country families, made me long for the larger life, which I knew must belong to the biggest city in the world (life which I was simple enough to think I might see a great deal of even from the windows of a boarding-school), and made me look forward with joyful anticipation to my journey; while the fear of flying from the humdrum that I knew, to discipline I knew not of, made me temper my anticipations with misgivings and cloud my hopes with fears. To put the matter practically, I think I was generally glad when I got up in the morning and sorry when I went to bed at night.

"My father's house stood about a hundred yards from the main road, some three miles west of Salisbury, and in order to take my passage for London, it was necessary that I should be driven into Salisbury in the family buggy to join the Exeter mail. I well remember the start. My carpet-bag and trunk had been locked and unlocked a great many times before they were finally signed, sealed, and delivered to the old man-servant who acted as gardener, coachman, and general factotum to our household, and when we started off my father placed a book in my hands, that I might have something with me to beguile the tedium of the journey. My father accompanied me as far as Salisbury to bespeak the care and attention of the guard on my behalf, but finding that the only other inside passenger was an old gentleman of whom he had some slight knowledge, he commended me to my fellow-passenger's protection, and with many admonitions as to my future conduct, left me to pursue the journey in his company.

"I was feeling rather dull after my companion had exhausted the commonplaces of conversation, and experienced a strange loneliness when I saw that he had fallen fast asleep in his comfortable corner enveloped in rugs and furs. Driven in upon my own resources I opened my book, and began to read, though the faint light of the coach lamp did not offer me much encouragement.

"The volume was one of 'Travel and Adventure,' and told of the experiences of the writer even in the lion's mouth. It recounted numerous hair-breadth escapes from the tender mercies of savage animals, and described them with such thrilling detail that I soon became conscious of those creepy sensations which are so well calculated to make us take fright at the least unusual circumstance. I had just got to a part at which a wounded lion had struck down his intrepid hunter and was standing with one paw upon his breast roaring his defiance to the four winds of heaven, when suddenly the coach pulled up with a suddenness that threw me into the arms of my companion and somewhat unceremoniously aroused him from his slumber. The next moment the coach rolled back a few paces and the next plunged forward a few more. Meanwhile, the shouts and cries of the outside passengers and the rumbling and clambering on the roof of the coach made it clear that something terrible had happened. Naturally nervous, and rendered doubly so by the narrative I had been reading, I concluded that all Africa was upon us and that either natives or wild animals would soon eat us up. My companion was no less excited than I was, excitement that was in no way lessened by his sense of responsibility for my welfare, and perceiving a house close to the road but a few yards in the rear of the coach, he hurried me out of the vehicle with more speed than ceremony, and in another moment was almost dragging me towards the door. As we alighted, our speed was suddenly accelerated by the unmistakable roar of some wild beast which had apparently leapt out of the leaves of the book I had been reading and was attempting to illustrate the narrative which had so thrilled my imagination. There was no mistake about it now; some wild beast had attacked the coach, and I was already, in thought, lying prostrate beneath his feet. The next thing that I remember was awakening in the presence

of an eager and interested group gathered round a fire in the waiting-room of a village post-house.

"Many versions of the story were current for years among the gossips of the country-side, and they differed very materially in the details of the narrative. One said it was a tiger which was being conveyed to the gardens of the Zoological Society in London, another that it was a performing bear which had suddenly gone mad and killed its keeper while on its way to Salisbury Fair. Of course the papers published various accounts of it, and the story with many variations found its way into several books. As you know, I was not an eye-witness of the circumstances any further than I have described them, so I am dependent upon others for the true account of the facts. The fullest account that I have seen in print appeared in a book I bought many years after the event, and now if you will get me my spectacles I will read you the remainder of the story from that volume.

"Not many years ago, a curious example of the ferocity of the lioness occurred in England. The Exeter mail-coach, on its way to London, was attacked on Sunday night, October 20th, 1816, at Winter's Law-Hut, seven miles from Salisbury, in a most extraordinary manner. At the moment when the coachman pulled up, to deliver his bags, one of the leading horses was suddenly seized by a ferocious animal. This produced a great confusion and alarm. Two passengers, who were inside the mail, got out, and ran in the house. The horse kicked and plunged violently; and it was with difficulty the coachman could prevent the carriage from being overturned. It was soon observed by the coachman and guard, by the light of the lamps, that the animal which had seized the horse was a huge lioness. A large mastiff dog came up and attacked her fiercely, on which she quitted the horse, and turned upon him. The dog fled, but was pursued and killed by the lioness, within about forty yards of the place. It appears that the beast had escaped from a caravan, which was standing on the roadside, and belonged to a menagerie, on its way to Salisbury Fair. An alarm being given, the keepers pursued and hunted the lioness, carrying the dog in her teeth, into a hovel under a granary, which served for keeping agricultural implements. About half-past eight, they had secured her effectually by barricading the place, so as to prevent her escape. The horse, when first attacked, fought with great spirit; and if he had been at liberty, would probably have beaten down his antagonist with his fore-feet; but in plunging, he embarrassed himself in the harness. The lioness, it appears, attacked him in front, and springing at his throat, had fastened the talons of her fore-feet on each side of his gullet, close to the head, while the talons of her hind-feet were forced into the chest. In this situation she hung, while the blood was seen streaming, as if a vein had been opened by a lancet. The furious animal missed the throat and jugular vein; but the horse was so dreadfully torn, that he was not at first expected to survive. The expressions of agony, in his tears and moans, were most piteous and affecting. Whether the lioness was afraid of her prey being taken from her, or from some other cause, she continued a considerable time after she had entered the hovel roaring in a dreadful manner, so loud, indeed, that she was distinctly heard at the distance of half a mile. She was eventually secured, and taken to her den; and the proprietor of the menagerie did not fail to take advantage of the incident, by having a representation of the attack painted in the most captivating colours and hung up in front of his establishment."

My dear old grandmother quite expected to see "the lions" when she reached London, but she was not quite prepared to meet a lioness even half way.

A TERRIBLE CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY LUCIE E. JACKSON.

I was always a very fearless girl. I do not say I never knew what fear was, for on the occasion I am about to relate I was distinctly frightened; but I was able to bear myself through it as if I felt nothing, and by this means to reassure my poor mother, who perhaps realised the danger more thoroughly than I did.

Norah says if it had happened to her she would just have died of fright, and I do think she would have, for she is so delicate and timid, and has such very highly-strung nerves. Mother and I always call it our adventure. I, with a laugh now; but mother, always with a shudder and a paling of her sweet face, for she and Norah are very much alike in constitution. She says if I had not been her stay and backbone on that occasion she must surely have let those awful French people rob her of all she possessed. But I am going on too fast.

It happened in this way. Father had some business to transact in France in connection with his firm, and had gone off in high spirits, for after the business was finished and done with he had arranged to do a little travelling on his own account with Mr. Westover—an old chum of his.

We had heard regularly from him as having a very good time till one morning the post brought a letter to say he had contracted a low fever and was lying sick at a wayside inn. He begged us not to be alarmed for his friend was very attentive, and he hoped soon to be himself again. Mother was unhappy, we saw that, but Norah and I tried to cheer her up by saying how strong father always was, and how soon he shook off any little illness. It was his being sick away from home

and in a foreign country that troubled her.

A few days after a telegram arrived from Mr. Westover. He said mother must come at once, for the doctor had serious misgivings as to the turn the fever might take.

"Mother, you must take Phyllis with you," decided Norah, who was trembling from head to foot, but trying to appear calm for mother's sake.

I looked up at mother with eager eyes, for though the thought of dear father lying dangerously ill chilled me all over, yet the idea of travelling to France made my heart leap within me.

Mother was packing a handbag when Norah spoke. She looked up and saw my eyes round with delight.

"Yes," she said, "I would prefer a companion. Phyllis, get ready at once, for we haven't much time."

Her voice sounded as if tears were in it, and I sprang up and kissed her before rushing away to my room.

My little bag was packed before mother's, but then she had money arrangements to make which I had not.

Two hours after the receipt of the telegram we were driving down the road to the railway station two miles from our home.

Our journey was of no moment at first starting. We crossed the water without any mishap, and on arriving at Dunkirk bore the Custom-house officers' searching of our handbags with a stoical calmness. What mattered such trifles when our one thought, our one hope lay in the direction of that wayside inn where father lay tossing in delirium?

We spent one night at an hotel, and the next morning, which was Christmas Eve, we were up early to catch the first express to Brives. From Brives to Fleur another train would take us, and the rest of our journey would have to be accomplished by *diligence*.

It was cold, bitterly cold, and I saw mother's eyes look apprehensively up to the leaden sky. I knew she was fearing a heavy fall of snow which might interrupt our journey.

We reached Fleur at three o'clock in the afternoon, and took the *diligence* that was awaiting the train. Then what mother feared took place. Snow began to fall—heavy snow, and the horses in the *diligence* began to labour after only one hour's storm. Mother's face grew paler and paler. I did not dare to look at her, or to think what we should do if the snow prevented us getting much farther. And father! what would father do! After two hours' weary drive we sighted the first stopping place.

"There is the inn!" said a portly fellow-traveller. "And a good thing, too, that we'll have a roof over our heads, for there will be no driving farther for some days to come."

"We must make a jovial Christmas party by ourselves," said another old gentleman, gathering all his belongings together in preparation for getting out.

I looked at mother. Her face was blanched.

"But surely," she said, "this snow won't prevent the second *diligence* taking my daughter and myself to the *Pomme d'Or* at Creux? It is only a matter of an hour from here."

"You'll get no *diligence* either to-day or to-morrow, madame," was the answer she received.

The inn was reached—a funny little old-fashioned place—and we all descended ankle deep into the newly-fallen snow.

The landlord of the inn was waiting at the door, and invited us all in with true French courtesy. The cosy kitchen we entered had a lovely wood fire in the old-fashioned grate, and the dancing flames cast a cheery light upon the whitewashed walls. Oh, if only this had been the inn where father was staying! How gladly we would have rested our weary limbs and revelled in that glorious firelight. But it was not to be.

Mother's idea of another *diligence* was quite pooh-poohed.

"If it had been coming it would have been here before now," announced the landlord.

"Then we must walk it," returned my mother.

"Impossible," was the landlord's answer, and the portly old gentleman seconded him. "It is a matter of five miles from here."

"If I wish to see my husband alive I must walk it," said my mother in tremulous tones.

There was a murmur of commiseration, and the landlord, a kindly, genial old Frenchman, trotted to the door of the inn and looked out. He came back presently, rubbing his cold hands.

"The snow has ceased, the stars are coming out. If Madame insists——" he shrugged his shoulders.

"We shall walk it if you will kindly direct us the way."

As she spoke my mother picked up her handbag, and I stooped for mine, but was arrested by a deep voice saying,—

"I am going part of the way. If madame will allow me I will walk with her."

I saw the landlord's open brow contract, and I turned to look at the speaker. He was a tall, dark, low-browed man, with shaggy black hair and deep-set eyes. He had been sitting there on our arrival, and I had not liked his appearance at first sight. I now hoped that mother would not accept his company. But mother, too intent on getting to her journey's end, jumped at the offer.

"*Merci, monsieur,*" she said gratefully. "We will start at once if you have no objection."

The fellow got on his feet at once, and stretching out his hand took a slouched hat off the chair behind him and clapped it on his head. I did see mother give him one furtive look then—it gave him such a brigand-like appearance, but she resolutely turned away, and thanked the landlord for the short shelter he had afforded us. She was producing her purse, but the landlord, with a hasty glance in the direction of our escort, motioned her to put it away. He and the two gentlemen came to see us start, the landlord causing me some little comfort by calling after us that he would make inquiries as soon as he was able, as to whether we had reached our destination in safety.

Our escort started ahead of us, and we followed close on his footsteps. We had journeyed so for two miles, plodding heavily and slowly along, for the snow was deep and the wind was cutting. Our companion never once spoke, and would only look occasionally over his shoulder to see if we were keeping up with him, and I was beginning to lose my fear of him and call myself a coward for being afraid, when suddenly the snow began again. This time it came down in whirling drifts penetrating through all our warm clothing, and making our walking heavier and more laboured than before. It was all we could do to keep our feet, for the wind whistled and moaned, threatening at every turn to bear us away.

Then only did our companion speak.

"*C'est mauvais,*" he shouted above the storm, and his voice, sounding so gruff and deep and so unexpected, made me jump in the air.

Mother assented in her gentle voice, and we plodded on as before, I wishing with all my heart that we had never left that cosy kitchen, for I could not see how we were to cover another three miles in this fashion. I said not a word, however, for I would not have gainsaid mother in this journey, considering how much there was at stake.

It was she herself who came to a standstill after walking another half mile.

"Monsieur," she called faintly, "I do not think I can go farther."

He turned round then and, was it my fancy? but I thought, as he retraced his steps to our side, that an evil grin was making his ugly face still uglier.

"Madame is tired. I am not surprised, but if she can manage just five minutes' more walk we shall reach my own house, where she can have shelter."

Mother was grateful for his offer. She thanked him and continued her weary walk till a sudden bend in the road brought us almost upon a small house situated right on the road, looking dark and gloomy enough, with just one solitary light shining dimly through the darkness.

The fellow paused here with his hand on the latch, and I noticed a small sign-board swaying and creaking in the wind just above our heads. This then was an inn too? Why then had the landlord of that other inn cast such suspicious glances at the proposal of this man?

Such questions were answerable only the next morning, for just now I was too weary to care where I spent the night as I stumbled after mother into a dark passage, and then onwards to a room where the faint light had been dimly discernible from outside.

In that room there was an ugly old woman—bent and aged—cooking something over a small fire; and crouched upon a low seat near the stove sat a hunchbacked man, swarthy, black-haired, and ugly too. My heart gave one leap, and then sank down into my shoes. What kind of a house had we come into to spend a whole night?

Our escort said something rapidly in French—too rapidly for me to follow, and then motioned us to sit down as he placed two wooden chairs for us. Mother sank down, almost too wearied to return the greeting which the old hag by the fire accorded her.

The hunchback eyed us without a word, but when I summoned up courage to occasionally glance in his direction I fancied that a sinister smile crossed his face, making him look curiously like our escort.

Two bowls of soup were put down before us, and the old woman hospitably pressed us to partake of it. The whole family sat down to the same meal, but the hunchback had his in his seat by the fire. It was cabbage soup, and neither mother nor I fancied it very much, but for politeness' sake we took a few spoonfuls, and ate some of the coarse brown bread, of which there was plenty on the table.

The warmth of the room was beginning to have effect on me, and my body was so inexpressibly

weariness that I felt half dozing in my seat, and my eyelids would close in spite of myself.

All of a sudden I heard mother give a little scream. I was wide awake in an instant, and to my amazement saw the hunchback crawling on his hands and knees under the table. My mother's lips were white and trembling as she stooped to pick up the purse she had let fall in her fright, but before she could do so our escort stooped down and handed it to her with a—

"Permettez moi, madame."

At the same time he kicked out under the table, muttering an oath as he did so, and the hunchback returned to his seat by the fire and nursed his knees with his sinister grin.

Mother began to apologise for her little scream.

"I am very tired," she said, addressing the old woman; "and if it will not inconvenience you, my daughter and I would much like to retire for the night, as we wish to be up early to continue our journey."

The old woman lighted a candle, looking at our escort as she did so.

"Which room?" she asked.

He gave a jerk of his head indicating a room above the one we were in; and then he opened the door very politely for us, and hoped we'd have a pleasant night.

I could not resist the inclination to look back at the hunchback. He had left off nursing his knees, but his whole body was convulsed with silent laughter, and he was holding up close to his eyes a gold coin.

The room the old woman conducted us to was a long one, with half-a-dozen steps leading up to it. She bade us good night and closed the door, leaving us with the lighted candle.

The minute the door closed upon her, I darted to it. But horrors! there was no key, no bolt, nothing to fasten ourselves in. I looked at mother. She was sitting on the bed, and beckoned me with her finger to come close. I did so. She whispered,—

"Phyllis, be brave for my sake. I have done a foolish thing in bringing you to this house. I distrust these people."

"So do I," I whispered back.

"That purse of mine that fell—they saw what was in it."

"Did it fall open?"

"Yes, and a napoleon rolled out—that hunchback picked it up and put it into his pocket. He did not think I saw him."

"How much money have you got altogether?"

"Twenty napoleons, and a few francs."

"And they saw all that?"

"I am afraid so. Of course they could not tell how much there was. They saw a number of coins. If they attempt to rob us of it all to-night we shall have nothing to continue our journey to-morrow. And how we can keep it from them I don't know."

Mother's face was white and drawn. Father and Norah would not have recognised her.

"We shall hide it from them," I answered as bravely as I could. I would not let mother see that I was nervous.

The room was bare of everything but just the necessary furniture. A more difficult place to hide anything could not easily be found. Every article of ours would be ransacked, I felt sure. Our handbags would be searched; our clothes ditto. Where on earth could we put that purse?

I was sitting on the bed as I looked round the room. We would, of course, be lying in the bed when they came to search the room, and even our pillows would not be safe from their touch. Stay! What did the bed clothes consist of? A hasty examination disclosed two blankets and a sheet, and under those the mattress. That mattress gave me an idea. I had found a hiding-place.

"Have you scissors and needle and cotton in your bag?" I whispered.

Mother nodded. "I think Norah put my sewing case in."

She opened it. Yes, everything was to hand.

With her help I turned the mattress right up, and made an incision in the middle of the ticking.

"Give me the money," I said in a low voice.

She handed it silently. I slipped each coin carefully into the incision.

"We'll leave them the francs," mother whispered. "They might ... they might ... wish to harm us if they found nothing."

I nodded. Then with the aid of the needle and cotton I stitched up the opening I had made, and without more ado we took off our outer clothes, our boots and stockings, and lay down in the bed.

But not to sleep! We neither of us closed an eyelid, so alert were we for the expected footstep on the other side of the door.

They gave us a reasonable time to go to sleep. Our extinguished candle told them we were in bed. Near about twelve o'clock our strained hearing detected the sound of a slight fumbling at the door. It opened, and the moonlight streaming in through the uncurtained windows showed us, through our half-shut eyelids, the figures of our escort and the hunchback. They moved like cats about the room. It struck me even then that they were used to these midnight searches.

A thrill of fear went through me as the hunchback passed the bed, but a dogged persistency was with me still that they should not have our money. Our handbags were taken out of the room, doubtless to be examined at leisure by the old woman, and mulct of anything valuable. We heard a slight clink of money which meant the purse was emptied. Our clothes were shaken and examined, even our boots were looked into.

Lastly they came to the bed. My eyes were glued then to my cheeks, and mother's must have been so as well. I could not see what they did, but I could feel them. They were practised though in their handling of our pillows, for had I been really asleep I should never have felt anything.

They looked everywhere, they felt everywhere, everywhere but in the right place, and then with a hardly-concealed murmur of dissatisfaction they went from the room, closing the door after them. Mother and I lay quiet. The only thing we did was to hold one another's hands under the bed-clothes, and to press our shoulders close together.

Only once again did the door open, and that was to admit our escort, who had brought back our handbags.

And then the door closed for good and all, but we never said a word all the long night through, though each knew and felt that the other was awake. The grey dawn stealing in saw us with eyes strained and wide, and we turned and looked at each other, and mother kissed me. It was Christmas Day.

Our hearts were braver with the daylight, and what was joy unspeakable was to see the snow melting fast away under the heavy thaw that had set in during the early hours of the dawn. Our journey could be pursued without much difficulty, for if need be we could walk every step of the way.

When it was quite light we got up and dressed. I undid my stitching of the night before, gave mother back the gold safe and intact, and then sewed up the incision as neatly as I could.

We went down hatted and cloaked to the room we had supped in the night before. It presented no change. Over the fire the old woman bent, stirring something in a saucepan; our escort was seated at the table, and by the stove sat the hunchback nursing his knees—with only one difference,—there was no grin upon his face. He looked like a man thwarted.

We had just bade them good morning and the old woman was asking us how we had slept, when the noise of wheels and horses' feet sounded outside. It was the second *diligence*. The landlord of the inn had told the conductor to call and see if we had been forced to take refuge in our escort's house. The jovial conductor was beaming all over as he stamped his wet feet on the stone floor of the kitchen, laughing at the miraculous disappearance of all the snow. His very presence seemed to put new life into us.

"And what am I indebted to you," asked mother, "for the kindly shelter you have afforded us?"

Our escort shrugged his shoulders. "Whatever madame wishes," was his reply.

So mother placed a napoleon upon the table. It was too much, I always maintained, after all the francs they had robbed from the purse, and the gold piece the hunchback had picked up, but it was the smallest coin mother had, and she told me afterwards she didn't grudge it, for our lives had been spared us as well as the bulk of our money.

The *diligence* rattled briskly along, and we reached the *Pomme d'Or* to find that father's illness had taken a favourable turn during that terrible night, and the only thing he needed now was care and good nursing. When he was well again he reported our experiences to the police, and we had good reason to believe that no credulous wayfarer ever had to undergo the terrible ordeal that we did that night. The house was ever after kept under strict police surveillance.

A NIGHT OF HORROR.

BY ALFRED H. MILES.

The jaguar, otherwise known as the American leopard, belongs to the forests of South America, and has many points of difference from, as well as some of similarity with, the leopard of Asia.

Though ferocious in his wild state, he is amenable to civilising influences and becomes mild and tame in captivity. He is an excellent swimmer and an expert climber, ascending to the tops of high branchless trees by fixing his claws in the trunks. It is said that he can hunt in the trees almost as well as he can upon the ground, and that hence he becomes a formidable enemy to the monkeys. He is also a clever fisherman, his method being that of dropping saliva on to the surface of the water, and upon the approach of a fish, by a dexterous stroke of his paw knocking it out of the water on to the bank.

But the jaguar by no means confines his attention to hunting monkeys and defenceless fish. He will hunt big game, and when hungry will not hesitate to attack man.

The strength of the jaguar is very great, and as he can climb, swim, and leap a great distance, he seems to be almost equally formidable in three elements. He is said to attack the alligator and to banquet with evident relish off his victim. D'Azara says that on one occasion he found a jaguar feasting upon a horse which it had killed. The jaguar fled at his approach, whereupon he had the body of the horse dragged to within a musket shot of a tree in which he purposed watching for the jaguar's return. While temporarily absent he left a man to keep watch, and while he was away the jaguar reappeared on the opposite side of a river which was both deep and broad. Having crossed the river the animal approached, and seized the horse with his teeth, dragged it some sixty paces to the water side, plunged in with it, swam across the river, pulled it out upon the other side, and carried it into a neighbouring wood.

Such an animal could not but be a formidable foe to any one who had the misfortune to be unarmed when attacked, as many an early settler in the Western States of America found to his cost. Among such experiences, the following story of a night of horror told by Mrs. Bowdich stands out as a tale of terror scarcely likely to be surpassed.

Two of the early settlers in the Western States of America, a man and his wife, once closed their wooden hut, and went to pay a visit at a distance, leaving a freshly-killed piece of venison hanging inside. The gable end of this house was not boarded up as high as the roof, but a large aperture was left for light and air. By taking an enormous leap, a hungry jaguar, attracted by the smell of the venison, had entered the hut and devoured part of it. He was disturbed by the return of the owners, and took his departure. The venison was removed. The husband went away the night after to a distance, and left his wife alone in the hut. She had not been long in bed before she heard the jaguar leap in at the open gable. There was no door between her room and that in which he had entered, and she knew not how to protect herself. She, however, screamed as loudly as she could, and made all the violent noises she could think of, which served to frighten him away at that time; but she knew he would come again, and she must be prepared for him. She tried to make a large fire, but the wood was expended. She thought of rolling herself up in the bed-clothes, but these would be torn off. The idea of getting under the low bedstead suggested itself, but she felt sure a paw would be stretched forth which would drag her out. Her husband had taken all their firearms. At last, as she heard the jaguar this time scrambling up the end of the house, she in despair got into a large store chest, the lid of which closed with a spring. Scarcely was she within it, and had dragged the lid down, inserting her fingers between it and the side of the chest, when the jaguar discovered where she was. He smelt round the chest, tried to get his head in through the crack, but fortunately he could not raise the lid. He found her fingers and began to lick them; she felt them bleed, but did not dare to move them for fear she should be suffocated. At length the jaguar leaped on to the lid, and his weight pressing down the lid, fractured these fingers. Still she could not move. He smelt round again, he pulled, he leaped on and off, till at last getting tired of his vain efforts, he went away. The poor woman lay there till daybreak, and then only feeling safe from her enemy, she went as fast as her strength would let her to her nearest neighbour's, a distance of two miles, where she procured help for her wounded fingers, which were long in getting well. On his return, her husband found a male and female jaguar in the forest close by, with their cubs, and all were destroyed.

Human hair has been known to turn white in a single night, and is often said to do so in the pages of fiction. Whether it did so or not in the present case is not recorded, but certainly if it did not, it lost an exceptional opportunity.

AUNT GRIEVES' SILVER.

BY LUCIE E. JACKSON.

When Kate Hamilton's father had been dead six months, and Kate had had time to realise that the extensive sheep station belonged to her and to her alone—that she, in fact, was what the shearers called "the boss"—then did she sit down and pen a few lines to her aunt in England—her father's only sister. She did not exactly know what possessed her to do it. She had never at any time during her nineteen years corresponded with her aunt; it was her father who had kept up the tie between his sister and himself. But notwithstanding that she was now "boss," perhaps a craving for a little of the sympathy and the great affection with which her father had always surrounded her, had something to do with her wishing to get up a correspondence with his sister. Whatever the reason the impulse was there, and the letter was despatched to the England that

Kate had never seen except through her father's eyes.

A few weeks later she received an answer that filled her with surprise.

After a few preliminary remarks relating to the grief she felt at the news of her brother's death, Mrs. Grieves wrote as follows:

"Your cousin Cicely and I cannot bear to think of your being alone—young girl that you are—without a single relative near for comfort or advice. I have made up my mind to start for Australia as soon as I can arrange my affairs satisfactorily. There is nothing to keep us in England since Cicely's father died last year, and I long to see my brother's only child. Moreover, the voyage will do Cicely good, for she is very fragile, and the doctor warmly approves of the idea. So adieu, my dear child, till we meet. I shall send a cablegram the day before our vessel starts.

"Your affectionate aunt,

"CAROLINE GRIEVES."

Kate's face was a study when she had finished reading the letter. Surprise she certainly felt, and a little amusement, too, to think that she—an Australian bush-born girl—could not look after herself and her affairs without an English aunt and an English cousin travelling many thousands of miles across the water to aid her with their advice.

Hadn't she been for the last three years her father's right hand in the store, and in the shearing-shed, too, for that matter? Didn't she understand thoroughly how the books were kept? For this very reason her father, knowing full well that the complaint from which he suffered would sooner or later cause his death, had kept her cognisant of how the station should be managed. And now these English relatives were leaving their beautiful English home to give her advice upon matters that they were totally ignorant of!

Kate sat down with the letter in her hand and laughed. Then she looked sober. It would after all be pleasant to see some of her own relatives, not one of which—either on her dead mother's or her father's side—did she possess in Australia.

Yes, after all, the idea, on closer investigation, did not seem at all disagreeable, and Kate took up the letter again and read it with pleasure this time.

Even if she had wished to put a stop to the intended visit, she could not have had time, for three weeks later she received the cablegram:

"We are leaving by the steamer Europa."

She really felt a thrill of joy as she read this. She could now calculate upon the day they were likely to arrive. The days flew fast enough, for Kate had not time to sit down and dream over the appearance of the travellers. The "boss" was wanted everywhere, and she must needs know the why and wherefore of matters pertaining to account-books, shearing sheds, cattle-yards, stores, and everything relating to the homestead.

"It is good you were born with your father's business head," said Phil Wentworth, with a scarcely concealed look of admiration.

He was the manager of the station at Watakona. Mr. Hamilton had chosen him five years before to be his representative over the shearing-shed and stores, finding him after that length of time fully capable of performing all and more than was expected of him. He was a good-looking young man of thirty, with a bright, cheery manner, that had a good effect upon those employed at the station.

"Not a grumble from one of the men has ever been heard since Wentworth came here as manager," Kate's father had often said to her. "So different from that rascal Woods, who treated some of the men as if they were dogs, and allowed many a poor sheep to go shorn to its pen cut and bleeding from overhaste, with never a word of remonstrance."

And Kate bore that in mind, as also some of her father's last words:

"Don't ever be persuaded to part with Wentworth. He is far and away the best man I have ever had for the business."

At last the day came when Mrs. Grieves and her daughter Cicely arrived at Watakona.

There was a comical smile on the manager's good-looking face as trunk after trunk was lifted down off the waggon, and Kate's aunt announced that "there was more to come."

"More to come!" answered Kate, surprised. And then, bursting into a laugh, "Dear aunt, what can you have brought that will be of any use to you in this out-of-the-way place?"

Mrs. Grieves smilingly nodded her head. "There is not one trunk there that I could possibly do without."

And Kate, with another smile, dismissed the subject.

But not so her aunt. When they were all seated together after a comfortable tea, she began in a whisper, looking round cautiously first to see that no one was within hearing:

"You are curious, Kate dear, to know what those trunks contain?"

"My curiosity can stay, aunt. I am only afraid that what you have brought will be of no use to you. You see, I live such a quiet life here, with few friends and fewer grand dresses, that I fear you will be disappointed at not being able to wear any of the things you have brought."

Cicely, a pretty, delicate-looking girl, laughed merrily.

"They do not hold dresses, Kate. No, I have not thought to lead a gay life on a sheep station in Australia. What I have brought is something that I could not bear to leave behind. Those trunks contain all the silver I used to use in my English home."

"Silver! What kind of silver?"

"Teapots, cream ewers, épergnes, candlesticks, to say nothing of the spoons, forks, fish-knives, etc.," said Cicely gaily.

"You've brought all those things with you here?" cried Kate, horrified. "Oh, aunt, where can I put them all for safety?"

Mrs. Grieves looked nonplussed. "I suppose you have some iron safes——" she began.

"But not big enough to store that quantity of silver!"

Kate spent a restless night. Visions of bushrangers stood between her and sleep. What would she do with that silver?

"Bank it," suggested Phil Wentworth the next morning, as she explained her difficulty to him in the little counting-house after breakfast.

Kate shook her head. "Aunt wouldn't do it. If she did she might as well have banked it in England."

The manager pulled his moustache. "How much is there?"

"I haven't seen it, but from what Cicely says I should say there are heaps and heaps."

"Foolish woman," was the manager's thought, but he wisely kept it to himself.

When, however, the silver was laid before her very eyes, and piece after piece was taken from the trunks, ranged alongside one another in Mrs. Grieves's bedroom, Kate's heart failed her.

"Mr. Wentworth must see it and advise me," was all she could say. And her aunt could not deter her.

Kate's white brow was puckered into a frown, and her pretty mouth drooped slightly at the corners as she watched Mr. Wentworth making his inspection of the silver. She knew his face so well, she could tell at one glance that he was thinking her aunt an exceedingly foolish woman, and Kate was not quite sure that she did not agree with him.

However, the silver was there, and they had to make the best of it, for Mrs. Grieves utterly rejected the idea of having it conveyed to a bank in Sydney.

"The only thing to do," said the manager gloomily, turning to Kate, "is to place it under the trap-door in the counting-house."

Kate looked questioningly at him. He half smiled.

"I think that the only thing you are not aware of in the business is the fact that the flooring of the counting-house can be converted at will into a strong lock-up. Come, and I will show you."

The three women followed him. To Cicely's English eyes the entire homestead was a strangely delightful place.

Rolling to one side the matting that covered the floor of the counting-house, Mr. Wentworth paused, and introducing a lever between the joining of two boards upheaved a square trap-door, revealing to the eyes of the astonished English ladies, and the no less astonished Australian "boss," a wide, gaping receptacle, suitable for the very articles under discussion.

It looked dark and gloomy below, but on the manager's striking a wax match and holding it aloft, they were enabled each one to descend the short ladder which the opening of the flooring revealed. Beneath the counting-house Kate found to her amazement a room quite as large as the one above it, furnished with chairs, a table, and a couple of stout iron safes. Upon the table stood an old iron candlestick into which Mr. Wentworth inserted a candle lighted from his wax match.

"You never told me," were Kate's reproachful words, and still more reproachful glance.

"I tell you now," he said lightly. "There was no need to before. Your father showed it me when I had been here a year. Indeed, he and I often forgot that the counting-house had been built for a double purpose,—but that was because there was nothing to stow away of much value. Now I think we have just the hiding-place for all that silver."

It was indeed the place, the very place, and under great secrecy the silver was conveyed through the trap-door, and firmly locked into the iron safes.

So far so good, and Kate breathed again with almost as much of her old light-heartedness as before.

In spite of her doubt of the wisdom of bringing such valuables so far and to such a place, she and Cicely took a secret delight in a weekly cleaning up of the silver, secure of all observation from outsiders. It was a pleasure to Kate to lift and polish the handsome *épergne*, and to finger the delicate teaspoons and fanciful fish-knives and forks.

"What a haul this would be for a bushranger!" she said one day, as she carefully laid the admired *épergne* back into its place in the iron safe.

Cicely gave a gasp and a shudder. "You—you don't have them in these parts, surely!" she ejaculated.

"If they find there is anything worth lifting they'll visit any homestead in the colony," returned Kate.

"But oh! dear Kate, what should we do if they came here? I should die of fright."

"Yes, I'm afraid you would," said Kate, glancing compassionately at the delicate figure beside her, and at the cheeks which had visibly lost their pink colour. "No, Cicely, I don't think there is any chance of such characters visiting us just now. The first and last time I saw a bushranger was when I was fifteen years old. He and his men tried to break into our house for, somehow, it had got wind that father had in the house a large sum of money—money which of course he usually banked. I can see dear old father now, standing with his rifle in his hand at the dining-room window, and Mr. Wentworth standing beside him. They were firing away at three men who were as much in earnest as my father and his manager were."

"And what happened?" asked Cicely breathlessly, as Kate stopped to look round for her polishing cloth.

"Father killed one man, the two others got away, not, however, before Mr. Wentworth had shot away the forefinger of the leader. We found it after they had gone, lying on the path beside the cattle-yard. He was a terrible fellow, the leader of that bushranging crew. He went by the name of Wolfgang. He may be alive now, I don't know. I have not heard of any depredations committed by him for two or three years now."

"And I hope you never will," said Cicely with a shudder. "Kate, have you done all you want to do here? I should so like to finish that letter to send off by to-day's mail."

"Then go. I'll just stay to lock up. You haven't much time if you want Sam Griffiths to take it this afternoon."

Cicely jumped up without another word, and climbed the ladder.

Kate lifted the case of fish-knives into the safe, and stretched out her hand for the other articles without turning her head. She felt her hand clutched as in a vice by fingers cold as ice. She turned sharply round. Cicely was at her side with lips and cheeks devoid of colour.

"Good gracious, Cicely! what is the matter? How you startled me!" said Kate in a vexed tone.

Cicely laid one cold, trembling, finger upon her cousin's lips.

"He has seen us—he has been looking down on us," was all she could articulate.

"Who? What do you mean?" But Kate's voice was considerably lowered.

"The bushranger Wolfgang. He—he has seen all the silver!"

Kate broke into a nervous laugh. "I think you are dreaming, Cicely. How do you know you saw Wolfgang? And how could he see us down here?"

"It is no dream," answered Cicely in the same husky whisper. "Kate, as I climbed the ladder quickly I saw the face of a man disappear from the trap-door, but not before I caught sight of the forefinger missing off the hand that held one side of the trap-door. Kate, Kate, it was Wolfgang. He has been staring down at us."

Kate looked up wildly at the opening above. It was free from all intruders now. She locked every article into the safe without uttering a word; then said, "Come."

Together they mounted the ladder; together they latched down the trap-door; together they left the counting-house.

"Tell Sam to ride to the shed and ask Mr. Wentworth to come to me at once—at once." Kate gave the order in a calm voice to the one woman servant that did the work in the house.

"Sam isn't in the yards," was the answer. "He told me three hours ago that he was wanted by Mr. Wentworth to ride to the township for something or other. He was in a fine way about it, for he said it was taking him from his work here."

Some of Kate's calm left her. She looked round at the helpless women—three now, for her aunt

had joined them.

"Aunt," she said, forcing herself to speak quietly, "I have fears that this afternoon we shall be attacked by bushrangers. Unfortunately Sam has been called away, and he is the only man we have on the premises. There is not another within reach, except at the shearing-shed, and you know where that is. Which of you will venture to ride there for help? I dare not go, for I must protect the house."

She glanced at each of the three faces in turn, and saw no help there. Becky, the servant, had utterly collapsed at the word bushranger; the other two faces looked as if carved in stone.

"Kate, Kate, is there no other help near?"

"Not nearer than the shearing-shed, aunt."

"I daren't go. I couldn't ride that distance."

"Cicely?" Kate's tone was imploring.

"Don't ask me," and Cicely burst into a flood of tears.

"We must defend ourselves, then."

The Australian girl's voice was quiet, albeit it trembled slightly.

"Come to the counting-house. Becky, you come too. We must barricade the place. I'll run round and fasten up every door. They will have a tough job to get in," she murmured grimly.

How she thanked her father for the strong oak door! The oaken shutters with their massive iron clamps! It would seem as if he had expected a raid from bushrangers at some time or other in his life. The counting-house door was stronger than the others. She now understood the reason why. The room below had been taken into consideration when that door was put up.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon. A broiling, sun-baking afternoon. They were prepared, sitting, as it were, in readiness for the attack they were momentarily expecting.

It came at last. The voice that sounded outside the counting-house door took her back to the time when she was fifteen years of age. It was a strange, harsh voice, grating in its harshness, strange in being like no other. She remembered it to be the voice of the man that had challenged her father that memorable day—remembered it to be the voice of Wolfgang.

Like an evil bird of prey had he scented from afar the silver stored under the trap-door, just as he had scented the sum of money her father had hidden away in the house.

"It's no use your sheltering yourselves in there," said the voice. "We want to harm no one—it's against our principles. What we want is just the silver hidden under the counting-house, and we want nothing more."

With one finger upraised, cautioning silence, Kate saw for the twentieth time to the priming of her rifle—the very rifle that had shot Wolfgang's chief man four years before. There was no need for her to caution her companions to silence. They knelt on the floor—a huddled, trembling trio.

If only Kate could see how many men there were! But she could not.

"It will take them some time to batter in that door," thought she, "and by that time, who knows, help may come from some unexpected quarter."

"Do you dare to defy us?" said the voice again. "We know you are utterly helpless. Sam has been got out of the way by a cooked-up story, ditto your manager. They are both swearing in the broiling township by now." And the voice broke off with a loud "Ha! ha!"

At which two other voices echoed "Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

Kate strained her ears to catch the sounds. Were there only three, then, just as there had been three four years before?

Then ensued a battering at the door, but it stood like a rock. They were tiring at that game. It hurt them, and did no good. There was silence for the space of some minutes, and then the sound of scraping reached Kate's ears.

What were they doing now?

It sounded on the roof of the counting-house. O God! they were never going to make an entrance that way!

Scrape, scrape, scrape. The sound went on persistently.

Kate's face was hidden in her hands. Was she praying? thought Cicely. Then she, too, lifted up a silent prayer for help in their time of need.

Kate's voice whispering in her ear aroused her. "Come," she breathed.

And with one accord, without a question, the three followed her silently.

The room beyond the counting-house was up a narrow flight of stairs. It used to be called by

Kate, in derision, "Father's observatory." Through a small pane of glass in this room she could see the roof of the counting-house.

Sawing away at the wooden structure upon which he was perched sat Wolfgang himself, whilst the man beside him was busily engaged in removing the thatch piece by piece.

Kate waited to see no more. Raising her rifle to her shoulder she fired—fired straight at the leading bushranger.

She saw him stagger and roll—roll down the sloping roof, and fall with a dull thud to the ground below.

She could only lean against the wall, and hide her face in her trembling hands. Was he dead? Had she killed him? Or had the fall off the house completed the deed?

She felt a hand on her arm. Becky was standing beside her. "Give me the rifle," she breathed. "I can load it."

With a faint feeling of surprise at her heart, Kate handed her the weapon with fingers slightly unsteady. She received it back in silence, and mounted to her place of observation again.

Wolfgang's companion was crouching. His attitude struck Kate disagreeably. His back was turned to her. What was he looking at?

She strained her eyes, and descried, galloping at the top of his speed, Black Bounce, and on his back was Phil Wentworth. Behind him at breakneck pace came six of the shearers—tall, brawny men, the very sight of whom inspired courage.

Wentworth's rifle was raised. A shot rang through the air. Then another. And yet another. Bang! bang! bang! What had happened?

Kate, straining her eyes, only knew that just as the manager's rifle went off, the bushranger on the roof had fired at him, not, however, before Kate's shot disabled him in the arm, thus preventing his aim from covering the manager.

"Thank God, thank God, we are saved!" she cried.

And now that the danger was over, Kate sank down upon the floor of the "observatory," and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Becky—her bravery returning as the sound of horses' hoofs struck upon her ear—slipped from the room, leaving Mrs. Grieves and Cicely to play the part of consolers to her young mistress.

It appeared that a trumped-up story, purporting to come from one of his friends in the township, had caused Phil Wentworth to go there that morning, and that on his way he overtook Sam Griffiths, who grumpily asked him why he should have been ordered to the township when his hands were so full of work at home. This led the young manager to scent something wrong, and telling Griffiths to follow him home quickly he rode straight back to the shed, and getting some of the shearers to accompany him, made straight tracks for the house.

Mrs. Grieves and Cicely had by this time had as much as they cared for of bush life, and very shortly after announced that the Australian climate did not suit either Cicely or herself as she had hoped it might, and that they had made up their minds to return to England.

"I hope they intend to take their silver away with them," said the manager when Kate told him.

She replied with a laugh, "Oh yes, I don't believe aunt would think life worth living if she had not her silver with her."

Poor Aunt Grieves! the vessel she travelled by had to be abandoned before it reached England, and the silver she had suffered so much for lies buried in the sands of the deep.

As for Kate, she subsequently took Philip Wentworth into partnership, and he gave her his name.

BILLJIM.

BY S. LE SOTGILLE.

Nestling in the scrub at the head of a gully running into the Newanga was a typical Australian humpy. It was built entirely of bark. Roof, back, front, and sides were huge sheets of stringy bark, and the window shutters were of the same, the windows themselves being sheets of calico; also the two doors were whole sheets of bark swung upon leathern hinges.

The humpy was divided into three rooms, two bedrooms and a general room. The "galley" was just outside, a three-sided, roofed arrangement, and the ubiquitous bark figured in that adjunct of civilisation.

In springtime the roof and sides of this humpy were one huge blaze of Bougainvillæa, and not a

vestige of bark was visible. It was surrounded by a paling fence, rough split bush palings only, but in every way fitted for what they were intended to do—that is, keep out animals of all descriptions.

In the front garden were flowers of every conceivable hue and variety, from the flaring giant sunflower to the quiet retiring geranium, and stuck to old logs and standing dead timber were several beautiful orchids of different varieties. Violets, pansies, fuchsias and nasturtiums bordered the walks in true European fashion, and one wondered who had taken all this trouble in so outlandish a spot.

At the back of the humpy rose the Range sheer fifteen hundred feet with huge granite boulders, twice the size of the humpy itself, standing straight out from the side of the Range, giving one the idea that they were merely stuck there in some mysterious manner, and were ready at a moment's notice to come tumbling down, overwhelming every one and everything in their descent.

On the other three sides was scrub. Dense tropical scrub for miles, giving out a muggy disagreeable heat, and that peculiar overpowering smell common, I think, to all tropical growth. No one could have chosen a better spot than this if his desire were to escape entirely from the busy world and live a quiet sequestered life amongst the countless beautiful gifts that Dame Nature seems so lavish of in the hundred nooks and corners of the mountainous portion of Australia. In this humpy, then, hidden from the world in general, and known only to a few miners and prospectors, lived Dick Benson, his wife, and their daughter Billjim. That is what she was called, anyway, by all the diggers on the Newanga. It wasn't her name, of course. She was registered at Clagton Court House as Katherine Veronica Benson, but no one in all the district thought of calling her Kitty now, and as for Veronica—well, it was too much to ask of any one, let alone a rough bushman.

The name Billjim she practically chose herself.

One evening a digger named Jack L'Estrange, a great friend of the Bensons, was reading an article from the *Bulletin* to her father, and Kitty, as she was then called, was whiling away the time by pulling his moustache, an occupation which interfered somewhat with the reading, but which was allowed to pass without serious rebuke.

In this article the paper spoke of backblocks bushmen under the generic soubriquet of Billjim. And a very good name too, for in any up-country town one has but to sing out "Bill" or "Jim" to have an answer from three-fourths of the male population.

The name tickled Kitty immensely, and she chuckled, "Billjim! Billjim! Oh, I'd like to be called that."

"Would you though?" asked her father, smiling.

"Yes," answered Kitty; "it's a fine name, Billjim."

"Well, we will call you Billjim in future," said Dick; and from that day the name stuck to her. And it suited her.

She was the wildest of wild bush girls. At twelve years old she could ride and shoot as well as most of us, and would pan out a prospect with any man on the Newanga.

She had never been to school, there being none nearer than Clagton, which was some fifteen miles away, but she had been taught the simple arts of reading and writing by her mother, and Jack L'Estrange had ministered to her wants in the matter of arithmetic.

With all her wildness she was a good, kindly girl, materially helping her mother in the household matters, and all that flower garden was her special charge and delight.

Wednesday and Thursday of every week were holidays, and those two days were spent by Billjim in roaming the country far and wide. Sometimes on horseback, when a horse could be borrowed, but mostly on her own well-formed feet.

She would wander off with a shovel and a dish into the scrub, and, following up some gully all day, would return at night tired out and happy, and generally with two or three grains of gold to show for her day's work. Sometimes she would come back laden with some new orchid, and this she would carefully fix in the garden in a position as similar as possible to that in which she had found it, and usually it would blossom there as if it were thankful at being so well cared for.

When Billjim wasn't engaged making her pocket-money, as she termed it, her days would be spent with Jack L'Estrange.

Jack was a fine, strapping young fellow of twenty-three, and was doing as well on the Newanga as any. Since the day he had snatched Billjim (then a wee mite) from the jaws of an alligator, as Queensland folk will insist upon calling their crocodile, he had been *l'ami de la maison* at the Bensons', and Billjim thought there was no one in the world like him. He in return would do any mortal thing which that rather capricious young lady desired.

One evening, when they were all sitting chatting round the fire in the galley, Benson said:

"Don't you think, Jack, that Billjim ought to go to some decent school? The missus and me of course ain't no scholars, but now that we can afford it we'd like Billjim to learn proper, you

know."

Jack looked at Billjim, who had nestled up closer to him during this speech, and was on the point of answering in the negative, when less selfish thoughts entered his head, and he replied:

"Well, Dick, much against my inclination, I must say that I think she ought to go. You see," he continued, turning to Billjim and taking her hand, "it's this way. We should all miss you, lass, very much, but it's for your own good. You must know more than we here can teach you if you wish to be any good to your father and mother."

Billjim nodded and looked at him, and Jack had to turn his eyes away and speak to Mrs. Benson for fear of going back on his words.

"You see, Mrs. Benson," said Jack, "it wouldn't be for long, for Billjim would learn very quickly with good teachers, and be of great use to you when Dick makes that pile."

Mrs. Benson smiled in spite of herself when Jack mentioned "that pile." Dick had been going to strike it rich up there on the Newanga for over seven years, and the fortune hadn't come yet.

"I suppose you're right," she said, "and I'm sure Billjim will be a good girl and study quick to get back. Won't you, lass?"

"Yes'm," answered Billjim, with a reservoir of tears in her voice, but none in her eyes. She wouldn't have cried with Jack there for the world!

So after a lot of talking it was settled, and Billjim departed for school, and the humpy knew her no more for four long years.

Ah! what a dreary, dreary time that was to Mrs. Benson and Dick. Jack kept her flower garden going for all those years, and Snowy, her dog, lived down at his camp. These had been Billjim's last commands.

Dick worked away manfully looking for that pile, and succeeded passing well, as the account at Clagton Bank could show, but there was no alteration made at the "Nest," as the humpy was designated.

Jack passed most of his evenings up there, and on mail days was in great request to read Billjim's epistles out loud.

No matter who was there, those letters were read out, and some of us who knew Billjim well passed encouraging remarks about her improvement, etc.

We all missed her, for she had been used to paying periodical flying visits, and her face had always seemed to us like a bright gleam of sunshine breaking through that steaming, muggy, damp scrub.

One mail day, four years very near to the day after Billjim's departure, the usual letter was read out, and part of it ran so:

"Oh, mum dear, do let me come back now. I am sure I have learned enough, and oh! how I long for a sight of you and dad, and dear old Jack and Frenchy, and Jim Travers, and all of you in fact. Let me come, oh! do let me come back."

Upon my word, I believe there was a break in Jack's voice as he read. Mrs. Benson was crying peacefully, and Dick and French were blowing their noses in an offensive and boisterous manner.

A motion was put and carried forthwith that Billjim should return at once. Newanga couldn't go on another month like this. Quite absurd to think of it.

The letter was dispatched telling Billjim of the joyful news, and settling accounts with the good sisters who had sheltered and cared for her so long.

Great were the preparations for Dick's journey to the coast to meet her when the time came. So great was the excitement that a newcomer thought some great reef had been struck, and followed several of us about for days trying to discover its location and get his pegs in!

Every one wanted to lend something for Billjim's comfort on the journey out. No lady's saddle was there in all the camp, and great was Dick's trouble thereat, until Frenchy rigged his saddle up with a bit of wood wrapped round with a piece of blanket, which, firmly fixed to the front dees, did duty for a horn.

"It's a great idea, Frenchy," said Dick; "but, lord, I'd ha' sent her the money for one if I'd only ha' thought of it, but, bless you, I was thinking of her as a little girl yet."

'Twas a great day entirely, as Micky the Rat put it, when Billjim came home.

Every digger for miles round left work and made a bee-line from his claim to the road, and patiently waited there to get a hand-shake and a smile from their friend Billjim, and they all got both, and went back very grateful and very refreshed.

Billjim had turned into a pretty woman in those four years, and I think every one was somewhat staggered by it.

Jack L'Estrange's first meeting with his one-time playmate was at the Nest, and it so threw Jack

off his balance that he was practically maudlin for a week after the event.

When he entered the door he stood at first spell-bound at the change in his favourite, then he said:

"Why, Bill—er Kate, I... 'Pon my word, I don't know what to say. Oh, Christopher! you know this is comical; I came up here intending to kiss my little friend Billjim, and I find you grown into a beautiful woman."

"Kiss me, Jack?" broke in Billjim; "kiss me? Why, I'm going to hug you!" And she did, and Jack blushed to the roots of his curly golden hair, and was confused all the evening over it.

The four years' schooling had not changed Billjim one iota as far as character went. She was the identical Billjim grown big and grown pretty, that was all.

But something was to happen which was to turn the wild tom-boy into a serious woman, and it happened shortly after her return home.

It was mail night up at the Nest, and Jack L'Estrange was absent from the crowd that invariably spent an hour or two getting their mail and discussing items of grave interest. Being mail night, Jack's absence was naturally noticed, and every one made some remark about it.

However, old Dick said: "Oh, Jack's struck some good thing, I suppose, and got back to camp too late to come up. He'll come in the morning likely."

This seemed to satisfy every one save Billjim. She turned to Frenchy, and said:

"Do you know whereabouts Jack was working lately?"

"Yes," answered Frenchy. "He was working at the two mile, day before yesterday, so I suppose he's there yet."

"Yes," said Billjim, "I suppose he will be." But Billjim wasn't satisfied. When every one was asleep she was out, and knowing the scrub thoroughly, was over to Jack's camp in a quarter of an hour. Not finding Jack there, she made for the two mile with all speed, for something told her she knew not what. An undefinable feeling that something was wrong came across her. She saw Jack lying crushed and bleeding and no one there to help him! Do what she would, dry, choking sobs burst from her tight-closed lips as she scrambled along over boulders and through the thick scrub. Brambles, wait-a-bit vines, and berry bushes scratched and stung her, and switched across her face, leaving bleeding and livid marks on her tender skin. But she pushed on and on in the fitful moonlight through the dense undergrowth, making a straight line for the two mile.

Arrived there, she stopped for breath for a while, and then sent forth a long "Coo-ie." No answer. "I was right," thought Billjim, "he is hurt. My God! he may be dead out here, while we were there chatting and laughing as usual. Oh, Jack, Jack!"

Up the gully she sped, from one abandoned working to another, over rocks and stones, into water-holes, with no thought for herself. At last, there, huddled up against the bank, with a huge boulder pinning one leg to the ground, lay poor Jack L'Estrange.

Billjim's first impression was that he was dead, he looked so limp and white out in the open there with the moon shining on his face, but when her accustomed courage returned she stooped over him and found him alive, but unconscious.

She bathed his temples with water, murmuring:

"Jack dear, wake up. Oh, my own lad, wake up and tell me what to do."

Jack opened his eyes at last, as if her soft crooning had reached his numbed senses.

"Halloa, Billjim," he said faintly. "Is that you or a dream?"

"It's me, Jack," replied Billjim, flinging school talk to the four winds. "It's me. What can I do? How can I help? Are you suffering much?"

"Well," said Jack, "you can't shift that boulder, that's certain, for I've tried until I went off. It's not paining now much, seems numbed. Do you think you could fetch the boys? Get Frenchy especially; he knows something about bandaging and that. It's a case with the leg, I think."

"All right, dear," said Billjim; and the "dear" slipped out unawares, but she went on hurriedly to cover the slip: "Yes, I'll get Frenchy and Travers, Tate and Micky the Rat; they all live close together. You won't faint again, Jack, will you? See, I'll leave this pannikin here with water. Keep up your pecker, we shan't be long," and she was gone to hide the tears in her eyes, and the choke in her voice. "It's a case with the leg" was too much for her.

She was at Frenchy's camp in a very short time. Frenchy was at his fire, dreaming. When he saw who his visitor was he was startled, to say the least of it.

"What, Billjim the Beautiful? At this hour of night? Why, what in the name of...?" were his incoherent ejaculations.

And Billjim for the first time in that eventful night really gave way. She sat down and sobbed out:

"Oh, Frenchy.... Come.... Poor Jack.... Two mile ... crushed and bleeding to death, Frenchy.... I

saw the blood oozing out.... Oh, dear me!... Get the boys ... come...."

Frenchy's only answer was a long, melodious howl, which was promptly re-echoed from right and left and far away back in the scrub, and from all sides forms hurried up clad in all sorts of strange night costumes.

Some shrank back into the shadows again on seeing a woman sitting at the fire sobbing, but one and all as they hurried up asked:

"What's up? Niggers?"

They were told, and each hurried back for clothes. Frenchy got his bandages together, and fetched his bunk out of his tent.

"We'll take this," he said; "it's as far from Jack's camp to the two mile as it is from here. Now then, Billjim, off we go."

Her followers had to keep moving to keep near her, loaded as they were, but at last they arrived at the scene of Jack's disaster.

Jack was conscious when they arrived, and Frenchy whipped out a brandy flask and put it in Billjim's hand, saying:

"Give him a dose every now and again while we mend matters. Sit down there facing him. That's right. Now, chaps!"

With a will the great piece of granite was moved from off the crushed and bleeding limb. With deft fingers Frenchy had the trouser leg ripped up above the knee, and then appeared a horribly crushed, shattered thigh. Frenchy shook his head dolefully. "Any one got a small penknife? Ivory or smooth-handled one for preference," he demanded.

"You're not going to cut him?" queried Billjim, without turning her head.

"No, no," said Frenchy; "I want it to put against the vein and stop this bleeding. That'll do nicely," as Travers handed him a knife. "Sit tight, Jack, I must hurt you now."

"Go ahead," said Jack uneasily; "but don't be longer than you can help," and he caught hold of Billjim's hand and remained like that, quiet and sensible, while Frenchy put a ligature round the injured limb and bandaged it up as well as was possible.

"Now, mates," he said, as he finished, "this is a case for Clagton and the doctor at once. No good one going in and fetching the doctor out, it's waste of time, and then he mightn't be able to do anything. So we must pack him on that stretcher and carry him in. Everybody willing?"

Aye, of course they were, though they knew they had fifteen miles to carry a heavy man over gullies and rocks and through scrub and forest.

So Jack was carefully placed on the stretcher.

"Now you had better get home, Billjim, and tell them what has happened," said Frenchy.

"No, no, I won't," said Billjim; "I'm going with you;" and so she did, of course, holding Jack's hand all the way, and administering small doses of brandy whenever she was ordered. "La Vivandière," as Frenchy remarked, sotto voce, "but with a heart! Grand Dieu, with what a heart!"

It was a great sight to see that gallant little band carrying twelve stone of helpless humanity in the moonlight.

Through scrub, over rocks and gullies, and through weird white gum forest, and no sound but the laboured breathing of the bearers. There were twelve of them, and they carried four and four about, those fifteen miles.

Never a groan out of the poor fellow up aloft there, though he must have suffered agonies when any one stumbled, which was bound to occur pretty often in that dim light.

Slowly but surely they covered the distance, and just as day began to dawn they reached the doctor's house at Clagton.

In a very little time Jack was lying on a couch in the surgery.

After some questions the doctor said:

"Too weak. Can't do anything just now."

"It's a case, I suppose?" asked Frenchy.

"Yes," said the doctor; "amputation, of course, and I have no one here to help me. Stay, though! Who bandaged him?"

"I did," answered Frenchy; "I learnt that in hospitals, you know."

"Oh, well," said the doctor, quite relieved, "you'll do to help me. Go and get a little sleep, and come this afternoon."

"Right you are," said Frenchy. "Come on, Billjim. Can't do any good here just now. I'll take you to

Mother Slater's."

Billjim gave one look at Jack, who nodded and smiled, and then went away with Frenchy.

For three weeks after the operation Jack L'Estrange lay hovering on the brink of the great chasm. Then he began to mend and get well rapidly.

Billjim was in constant attendance from the day she was allowed to see him, and the doctor said, in fact, that but for her care and attention there would probably have been no more Jack.

Great was the rejoicing at the Nest when Jack reappeared, and the rejoicing turned to enthusiasm when it was discovered that there was a mutual understanding come to between Billjim and the crippled miner.

Micky the Rat prophesied great things, but said:

"Faix, 'tis a distressful thing entirely to see a fine gurrl like that wid a husband an' he wed on wan leg. 'Twas mesilf Billjim should ha' tuk, no less."

But we all knew Micky the Rat, you see.

The wedding-day will never be forgotten by those who were on the Newanga at the time.

The event came off at Clagton, and everybody was there. No invitations were issued. None were needed. The town came, and the miners from far and near, *en masse*.

Those who couldn't get a seat squatted in true bush fashion with their wide-brimmed hats in their hands, and listened attentively to the service; a lot of them never having entered a church door in their lives before.

At the feast, before the newly married couple took their departure, everybody was made welcome. It was a great time.

Old Dick got up to make a speech, and failed ignominiously. He looked at Billjim for inspiration. She was just the identical person he shouldn't have looked at, for thoughts of the Nest without Billjim again rose before him, and those thoughts settled him, so he sat down again without uttering a word.

Jack said something, almost inaudible, about seeking a fortune and finding one, which was prettily put, and Frenchy as best man was heard to mutter something about "Beautiful ... loss to camp ... happiness ... wooden leg," and the speech making was over.

At the send off much rice flew about, and as the buggy drove off, an old dilapidated iron-shod miner's boot was found dangling on the rear axle of that conveyance.

That was Micky the Rat's parting shot at Jack for carrying Billjim away.

Clagton was a veritable London for that night only. You couldn't throw a stone without hitting some one, and as a rule an artillery battery could have practised for hours in the main street without hitting any one or anything, barring perhaps a stray dog.

Things calmed down at last, however, and when the newly married returned and, adding to the Nest, lived there with the old couple, every one was satisfied. "Billjim" remained "Billjim" to all of us, and when a stranger expresses surprise at that, Billjim simply says, "Ah! but you see we are all mates here, aren't we, Jack?"

IN THE WORLD OF FAERY.

THE LEGENDS OF LANGAFFER.

BY MADAME ARMAND CAUMONT.

I.

THE TINY FOLK OF LANGAFFER.

Langaffer was but a village in those days, with a brook running through it, a bridge, a market-place, a score of houses, and a church.

It may have become a city since, and may have changed its name. We cannot tell. All we know is, that the curious things we are about to relate took place a long time ago, before there was any mention of railroads or gaslamps, or any of the modern inventions people have nowadays.

There was one cottage quite in the middle of the village, much smaller, cleaner, and neater than its neighbours. The little couple who lived in it were known over the country, far and wide, as "Wattie and Mattie, the tiny folk of Langaffer."

These two had gone and got married, if you please, when they were quite young, without asking anybody's advice or permission. Whereupon their four parents and their eight grandparents sternly disowned them; and the Fairy of the land, highly displeased, declared the two should remain tiny, as a punishment for their folly.

Yet they loved one another very tenderly, Wattie and Mattie; and, as the years rolled by, and never a harsh word was heard between them, and peace and unity reigned in their diminutive household—which could not always have been said of their parents' and grandparents' firesides—why, then the neighbours began to remark that they were a good little couple; and the Fairy of the land declared that if they could but distinguish themselves in some way, or perform some great action, they might be allowed to grow up after all.

"But how could we ever do a great deed?" said Wattie to Mattie, laughing. "Look at the size of us! I defy any man in the village, with an arm only the length of mine, to do more than I! Of course I can't measure myself with the neighbours. To handle Farmer Fairweather's pitchfork would break my back, and to hook a great perch, like Miller Mealy, in the mill-race, might be the capsizing of me. Still, what does that matter? I can catch little sprats for my little wife's dinner; I can dig in our patch of garden, and mend our tiny roof, so that we live as cosily and as merrily as the best of them."

"To be sure, Wattie dear!" said Mattie. "And what would become of poor me supposing thou wert any bigger? As it is, I can bake the little loaves thou lovest to eat, and I can spin and knit enough for us both. But, oh, dear! wert thou the size of Farmer Fairweather or Miller Mealy, my heart would break."

In truth the little couple had made many attempts at pushing their fortune in the village; and had failed, because it was no easy problem to find a trade to suit poor Wattie. A friendly cobbler had taught him how to make boots and shoes, new soling and mending; and he once had the courage to suspend over his door the sign of a shoemaker's shop. Then the good wives of Langaffer did really give him orders for tiny slippers for their little ones to toddle about in. But, alas! ere the work was completed and sent home, the little feet had got time to trot about a good deal, and had far outgrown the brand-new shoes; and poor Wattie acquired the character of a tardy tradesman. "So shoemaking won't do," he had said to Mattie. "If only the other folk would remain as little as we are!"

In spite of this, Wattie and Mattie not only continued to be liked by their neighbours, but in time grew to be highly respected by all who knew them. Wattie could talk a great deal, and could give a reason for everything; and his dwarf figure might be seen of an evening sitting on the edge of the bridge wall, surrounded by a group of village worthies, whilst his shrill little voice rose high above theirs, discussing the affairs of Langaffer. And little Mattie was the very echo of little Wattie. What *he* said *she* repeated on his authority in many a half-hour's gossip with the good wives by the village well.

Now it happened that one day the homely community of Langaffer was startled by sudden and alarming tidings. A traveller, hastening on foot through the village, asked the first person he met, "What news of the war?"

"What war?" returned the simple peasant in some surprise.

"Why, have you really heard nothing of the great armies marching about all over the country, attacking, besieging and fighting in pitched battles—the king and all his knights and soldiers against the enemies of the country—ah, and it is not over yet! But I wonder to find all so tranquil here in the midst of such troublous times!" And then the stranger passed on; and his words fell on the peaceful hamlet like a stone thrown into the bosom of a tranquil lake.

At once there was a general commotion and excitement among the village folk. "Could the news be true? How dreadful if the enemy were indeed to come and burn down their homesteads, and ravage their crops, and kill them every one with their swords!"

That night the gossip lasted a long time on Langaffer Bridge. Wattie's friends, the miller and the grocer, the tailor and the shoemaker, and big Farmer Fairweather spoke highly of the king and his faithful knights, and clenched their fists, and raised their voices to an angry pitch at the mention of the enemy's name. And little Wattie behaved like the rest of them, strutted about, and doubled up his tiny hands, and proclaimed what he should do if Langaffer were attacked—and "if he were only a little bigger!" Whereupon the neighbours laughed and held their sides, and cried aloud, "Well done, Wattie!"

But the following evening brought more serious tidings. Shortly before nightfall a rider, mounted on a sweltering steed, arrived at the village inn, all out of breath, to announce that the army was advancing, and that the General of the Forces called upon every householder in Langaffer to furnish food and lodging for the soldiers.

"What! *Soldiers* quartered on us!" cried the good people of Langaffer. "Who ever heard the like?"

"They shall not come to *my* house!" exclaimed Farmer Fairweather resolutely.

"Oh, neighbour Fairweather!" shouted half a dozen voices, "and thou hast such barns and lofts, and such very fine stables, and cowsheds, thou art the very one who canst easily harbour the soldiers."

"As for *me*," cried the miller, "I have barely room for my meal-sacks!"

"Oh, plenty of room!" screamed the others, "and flour to make bread for the troopers, and bran for the horses!"

"But it falls very hard on poor people like us!" cried the weaver, the tinker, the cobbler and tailor; upon which little Wattie raised his voice and began, "Shame on ye, good neighbours! Do ye grudge hospitality to the warriors who go forth to shed their blood in our defence? Every man, who has strength of body and limb, ought to feel it an honour to afford food and shelter to the army of the land!"

"*Thy* advice is cheap, Wattie!" cried several voices sarcastically, "thou and thy tiny wife escape all this trouble finely. For the general would as soon dream of quartering a soldier on dwarfs as on the sparrows that live on the housetops!"

"And what if we are small," retorted Wattie, waxing scarlet, "we have never shirked from our duty yet, and never intend to do so."

This boast of the little man's had the effect of silencing some of the most dissatisfied; and then the people of Langaffer dispersed for the night, every head being full of the morrow's preparations.

"Eh, Wattie dear," said Mattie to her husband, when the two were retiring to sleep in their cosy little house, "we may bless ourselves this night that we are not reckoned amongst the big people, and that our cottage is so small no full-grown stranger would try to enter it."

"But we must do something, Mattie dear," said Wattie. "You can watch the women washing and cooking all day to-morrow, whilst I encourage the men in the market-place and on the bridge. These are great times, Mattie!"

"Indeed they are, Wattie dear." And so saying, the little couple fell fast asleep.

The following morning Langaffer village presented a lively picture of bustle and excitement. Soldiers in gaudy uniforms, and with gay-coloured banners waving in the breeze, marched in to the sound of trumpet and drum. How their spears and helmets glittered in the sunshine, and what a neighing and prancing their steeds made in the little market-square! The men and women turned out to receive them, the children clapped their hands with delight, and the village geese cackled loudly to add to the stir.

Wattie was there looking on, with his hands in his pockets. But nobody heeded him now. They were all too busy, running here, running there, hastening to and fro, carrying long-swords and shields, holding horses' heads, stamping, tramping, scolding and jesting. Little Wattie was more than once told to stand aside, and more than once got pushed about and mixed up with the throng of idle children, whose juvenile curiosity kept them spell-bound, stationed near the village inn.

Wattie began to feel lonely in the midst of the commotion. A humiliating sense of his own weakness and uselessness crept over him; and the poor little dwarf turned away from it all, and wandered out of the village, far away through the meadows, and into a lonely wood.

On and on he went, unconscious of the distance, till night closed in, when, heartsick and weary, he flung his little body down at the foot of a majestic oak, and covered his face with his hands.

He had not lain long when he was startled by a sound close at hand; a sigh, much deeper than his own, and a half-suppressed moan—what could it be?

In an instant Wattie was on his feet, peering to right and left, trying to discover whence those signs of distress proceeded.

The moon had just risen, and by her pale light he fancied he saw something glitter among the dried leaves of the forest. Cautiously little Wattie crept closer; and there, to his astonishment, lay extended the form of a knight in armour. He rested on his elbow, and his head was supported by his arm, and his face, which was uncovered, wore an expression of sadness and anxiety. He gazed with an air of calm dignity rather than surprise on the dwarf, when the latter, after walking once or twice round him, cried out, "Noble knight, noble knight, pray what is your grief, and can I do aught to relieve it? Say, wherefore these groans and sighs?"

"Foes and traitors, sorrow and shame!" returned the warrior. "But tell me, young man, canst thou show me the road to Langaffer?"

"That I can, noble sir," answered Wattie, impressed by the stranger's tone. "Do I not dwell in Langaffer myself!"

"Then perhaps, young man, thou knowest the Castle of Ravenspur?"

"The ruined tower of Count Colin of Ravenspur!" cried Wattie, "why, that is close to Langaffer. Our village folk call it 'the fortress' still, although wild and dismantled since the time it was forsaken by——"

"Name not Count Colin to me!" cried the knight, impatiently. "The base traitor that left his own land to join hands with the enemy! His sable plume shall ne'er again wave in his own castle-yard!... But come, hasten, young man, and guide me straight to Ravenspur. Our men, you say, are encamped at Langaffer?"

"That they are," returned Wattie; "well-nigh every house is filled with them. They arrived in high spirits this morning; and doubtless, by this time, are sleeping as heavily as they were carousing an hour ago."

"All the better," cried the knight, "for it will be a different sort of sleep some of them may have ere the morrow's setting sun glints through the stems of these forest trees! And now, let us hasten to Ravenspur."

So saying, he drew himself up to his full height, lifted his sword from the ground and hung it on his side, and strode away with Wattie, looking all the while like a great giant in company of a puny dwarf.

As they emerged from the forest Wattie pointed with his finger across the plain to the village of Langaffer, and then to a hill overhanging it, crowned by a fortress which showed in the distance its chiselled outlines against the evening sky. An hour's marching across the country brought them close to the dismantled castle. The moonbeams depicted every grey stone overgrown with moss and ivy, and the rank weeds choking the apertures which once had been windows.

"An abode for the bat and the owl," remarked Wattie, "but, brave sir, you cannot pass the night here. Pray—pray come to my tiny house in the village, and rest there till the morning dawns."

"I accept thy hospitality, young man," said the warrior, "but first thou canst render me a service. Thou art little and light. Canst clamber up to yonder stone where the raven sits, and tell me what thou beholdest far away to the west?" Whereupon Wattie, who was agile enough, and anxious to help the stranger, began to climb up, stone by stone, the outer wall of the ruined fortress. A larger man might have felt giddy and insecure; but he, with his tiny figure, sprang from ledge to ledge so swiftly, holding firmly by the tufts of grass and the trailing ivy, that ere he had time to think of danger, he had reached the spot where, a moment before, a grim-looking raven had been keeping solemn custody. Here the stone moved, and Wattie fancied he heard something rattle as he set his foot upon it. The raven had now perched herself on a yet higher eminence, on a piece of the old coping-stone of the castle parapet; and she flapped her great ugly wings, and cawed and croaked, as if displeased at this intrusion on her solitude. Wattie followed the ill-omened bird, and drove her away from her vantage-ground, where he himself now found a better footing from which to make his observations.

"To the west," he cried, "lights like camp-fires, all in a row far against the horizon!"

This was all he had to describe; and it seemed enough to satisfy the armed stranger.

"And now, young man," he said, when Wattie had, after a perilous descent, gained the castle-yard once more, "I shall be thy guest for the night."

A thrill of pride and pleasure stole through Wattie's breast as he thought of the honour of receiving the tall warrior. But the next instant his heart was filled with anxiety as he remembered the tiny dimensions of his home, Mattie and himself.

All these hours his little wife had passed in sore perplexity because of his absence. At the accustomed time for supper she had spread the snow-white napkin on the stool that served them for a table. She had piled up a saucerful of beef and lentils for Wattie, and filled him an egg-cupful of home-brewed ale to the brim. And yet he never came!

What could ever have happened? A tiny little person like Wattie might have been trampled to death in the crowd of great soldiers that now filled Langaffer! A horse's kick at the village inn might have killed him! He might have been pushed into the stream and been drowned. Oh, the horrible fancies that vaguely hovered round poor Mattie's fireside! No wonder the little woman sat there with her face pale as ashes, her teeth chattering, and her tiny hands clasped tightly together.

And thus Wattie found her when he returned at last, bringing the stranger knight along with him. But Mattie was so overjoyed to see her Wattie safe home, and held her arms so tightly round his neck, that he could scarcely get his story told.

Little indeed did the good people of Langaffer, that night, asleep in their beds, dream of the great doings under the modest roof of Wattie and Mattie; all the furniture they possessed drawn out and joined together, and covered with the whole household stock of mattresses, quilts and blankets, to form a couch for their guest's repose.

The knight had eaten all Mattie's store of newly-baked bread, and now only begged for a few hours' rest, and a little more water to quench his thirst when he should waken. As he took off his helmet with its great white plume, and handed it to Wattie, the latter staggered under its weight, and Mattie cried out, "Oh, Wattie, how beautiful, how noble it must be to ride o'er hill and dale in

such a gallant armour!"

Then thrice to the Fairy Well in the meadow beyond the bridge of Langaffer must Wattie and Mattie run to fetch water, the best in the land, clear as crystal, and cold as ice; for it required fully three times what they could carry to fill the great stone pitcher for the sleeping warrior.

And the third time the two came to the spring, behold, the water bubbled and flashed with the colours of the rainbow, and by the light of the moon they caught a glimpse of something bright reflected on its surface. They glanced round, and there a lovely, radiant being sat by, with a tiny phial in her hand.

"Hold here, little people!" she cried, "let me drop some cordial into the pitcher."

"Nay, nay!" screamed Mattie.

"Nay!" cried Wattie sternly, "the drink must be as pure as crystal."

"For your noble warrior," added the fairy rising; "but the beverage will taste the sweeter with the drops that I put into it." And so saying, she stretched forth her hand, and shook the contents of her tiny flask into the pitcher; and her gay laugh rang merrily and scornfully through the midnight air.

Wattie and Mattie, half-frightened, hastened homewards; and lo, when crossing the bridge, an old hag overtook them, and, as she hurried past, she uttered a spiteful laugh.

"There is something strange in the air to-night," said Mattie. "See that weird old woman, and hark, Wattie, how Oscar, the miller's dog, barks at the moon."

"Mattie," cried Wattie resolutely, "let us empty our pitcher into the mill-race, and go back once again, and draw afresh! 'Tis safer."

So the tiny couple, weary and worn out as they were, trudged all the way to the Fairy Well once more to "make sure" that the stranger knight should come to no harm through their fault.

And this time the water flowed clear and cold, but with no varied tints flashing through it. Only Wattie seemed to hear the stream rushing over the pebbles like a soft, lispng voice. "Hush! listen! what does it say?"

"To me," cried Mattie, "it whispers, 'Silver sword of Ravenspur.' But that has no sense, Wattie dear. Come, let us go!"

"And to me the same!" cried Wattie, "'Silver sword of Ravenspur.' That means something."

It was now early dawn as the two passed over the bridge and by the miller's house, and they could see the fish floating *dead* on the surface of the mill-race, and poor Oscar the dog lying stretched on the bank, with his tongue hanging out stiff and cold. And silently wondering at all these strange things the little couple finished their task.

When the hour of noon arrived, the din of battle raged wild and fierce round the village of Langaffer. The enemies of the land had arrived from the west with false Colin at their head, and were met by the soldiers in the plain, below the Castle of Ravenspur. With a loud war-cry on either side foe rushed upon foe, and the fight began. Horsemen reeled over and tumbled from their chargers, blood flowed freely on every side, shrieks rent the air; but the strength of the combatants appeared equal. At last Count Colin and his men pressed closer on the royal army, and forced them back by degrees towards Langaffer.

It seemed now that the enemy's troops were gaining; and groans of despair broke forth from the villagers and countryfolk who watched with throbbing hearts the issue of the day.

At this moment the knight who had been little Wattie's guest dashed forward, mounted on a snow-white charger, his armour of polished steel glistening, and his fair plume waving in the sunshine.

"Back with the faint-hearted, on with the brave, and down with the traitor!" he cried, and rode to the front rank himself.

His word and action wrought like an enchantment on the soldiers. They rallied round the white-plumed stranger, who soon was face to face with false Colin. And then the hostile bands, with their rebel commander, were in turn driven back, and back, and back across the plain, and right under the beetling towers of the fortress of Ravenspur.

Now Wattie was standing near the ruin, and saw the combat, and heard the sounds of the warriors' voices reverberating from the bend of the hill. How his heart bounded at the brave knight's battle-cry: "*Back with the faint-hearted, on with the brave, and down with the traitor!*" And then indeed the blood seemed to stand still in his veins when he heard false Colin exclaim, "Oh, had I the silver sword of Ravenspur!"

Ah! Wattie remembered the raven, and the one loose stone in the castle wall.

In another instant his tiny figure was grappling with the trailing ivy on the outer fencework of the fortress.

And now he is seen by false Colin, and now the archers bend their bows, and the arrows fly past

him on every side. But Wattie has hurled down a stone into the old courtyard, and, from behind it, has drawn forth a silver-hilted brand.

"He is so small that our arrows all miss him!" cry the archers. "Nay," cries false Colin, "but he bears the enchanted weapon of Ravenspur! Take it from him, my men, and fetch it to me."

"Count Colin shall have the *point* of the sword," cries Wattie, "but the silver handle is for the white-plumed knight!" and, running round the ledge of the castle wall to the highest turret, he flings the shining weapon down amongst the men of Langaffer.

And now there was a fresh charge made on the enemy, and the "unknown warrior," armed with the newly-found talisman, stood face to face, hand to hand, with the traitor.

... *Count Colin fell*, pierced through his armour of mail by the sword that once had been his! The enemy fled, and the victory was won.

Then the stranger knight undid his visor, and took off his armour; and, as his golden locks floated down his shoulders, the soldiers cried out, "'Tis the King! 'tis the King!"

Wattie was called forth by the King of all the Land, and was bidden to take the knightly helmet with its waving plume, and the shield, and the silver sword, and to wear them. The men of Langaffer laughed aloud; but Wattie did as he was commanded, and put on the knightly armour and weapons.

And, behold at that moment he grew up into a great, strong warrior, worthy to wield them! He was knighted then and there, "Sir Walter of Ravenspur," and presented with the castle on the hill, which the king's own army repaired ere they quitted Langaffer.

And then the King of all the Land sent a fair white robe, the size of the Queen's ladies'; and when little Mattie put this on, she grew up tall and stately to fit it. And, for many and many a year to come, she was known as the "Good Dame Martha, the faithful lady of Sir Walter of Ravenspur."

II. THE KINGFISHER.

Martin was a gardener, and lived in a cottage in the midst of a hamlet near Langaffer. All the country for miles round belonged to the old king and queen; and their beautiful palace was hard by the village, in a stately grove of elms and beech trees. Before the windows extended a lovely garden, which was kept in order by Martin. Here he toiled every day from morning-dawn till evening-dusk; and, in his own churlish manner, he had come to love the flowers that cost him so much labour.

Like many another honest gardener, however, Martin found it very hard that he could not have his own way in this world, even as concerned his plants. For instance, the old monarch would come out every morning after breakfast in his dressing-gown and slippers, and would admire the bloom; but the very flowers he appeared to prize most were those that cost Martin least trouble, and which the gardener in his heart despised as cheap and vulgar.

Then the queen and the young ladies were wont to appear on the terrace before dinner, with their little lapdogs, and call out for posies. They must have the finest tea-roses and moss-roses that were only in bud. Martin might grumble about to-morrow's "poor show," and point to some rare full-blown beauties—but no, they just desired those which were not yet opened.

Moreover, there grew here and there in the garden a plant or shrub, which, Martin considered, would have been better removed; especially one large lauristinus, which, he declared, "destroyed all symmetry," and "hindered the flowers about it from enjoying the sunshine."

But the old king obstinately opposed changes of this sort, and strictly forbade his gardener, on any pretext whatever, to remove the lauristinus; as it was well known at the court that for generations a spell was connected with this special shrub, and that therefore the less it was meddled with the better.

All this interference tended to sour poor Martin's temper; but he himself declared it was nothing compared to the aggravating behaviour of Prince Primus, commonly called "Lord Lackaday," the king's eldest son.

This young nobleman, who was renowned far and wide for his indolent habits, sauntered forth every day with a little boy carrying his fishing-tackle, away through the lovely gardens, without once turning his head to behold the brilliant parterres of "calceolarias, pelargoniums, petunias and begonias," or to inhale the sweet-scented heliotropes,—away through the park, and on to the river; for my Lord Lackaday's sole pastime was angling.

"Humph! there he goes with his tackle," Martin would murmur, turning from tying up his carnations to stare after him. "If old Martin, now, were to spend *his* days lying stretched *his* full length on the grass, with a rod dangling in the water before him, what would the world come to? And where would *you* be, my beauties?" he added, continuing his occupation. "Hanging your lovely heads, my darlings!" And so he grumbled and mumbled in an undertone to himself the whole livelong day, until he went home to his supper at night; when his good wife, Ursula, would

endeavour to cheer him with her hearty welcome.

One evening Martin went with his clay pipe and his pewter ale-pot in his hand to the village inn, to divert himself listening to the general gossip which was carried on there between the host and the little group of customers—weavers, tinkers, tailors, blacksmiths and labourers. To-night they talked of the rich old king and queen, and Lord Lackaday, and all the gay princesses, knights and ladies, who lived at the court, and rode by in such splendid carriages, in such gorgeous attire.

"They eat out of golden dishes," said the tailor, "and the very nails in their boots are silver!"

Martin knew as much about the court as any present; but he was in one of his silent humours this evening.

"The princess gave a hundred crowns," cried the blacksmith, "for a one-eyed lapdog, and My Lord Lackaday—Prince Primus, I mean—two hundred for a certain white fly for his angling-rod—"

"And he never gave *me* a hundred *groats*," blurted out Martin, who could not stand any reference to the prince in question.

Thereupon the conversation took another turn; wages were discussed, the weaver and the ploughman "compared notes"; and, as for Martin, it was the unanimous opinion of the whole company that he, at least, ought to strike—to insist on an increase of pay, or refuse to labour any more as the king's own gardener.

Accordingly, the next morning Martin watched and waited till his royal master came sidling along the smooth gravel walk in his embroidered slippers, with his dressing-gown floating about him, sniffing with good-humoured satisfaction the sweet fragrance of the standard roses, that formed a phalanx on either side.

"I've got to tell your Majesty," began Martin abruptly, "that, unless your Majesty raises my salary, I can't work any more in your Majesty's garden."

Whereupon the old king started back all astonished; then laughed so heartily that he brought on a fit of coughing.

"Your Majesty may be highly amused," grumbled Martin, "but I've said my say, and I mean to stick to it!"

"But suppose your salary *ain't* raised," began the king, trying his best to look serious, "what then?"

"Then I'll go!" cried Martin; and, so saying, he flung his spade with such force into the soil, that it stood upright.

"Well, my man, we'll give you a week to come to your senses," replied the monarch, as, gathering up his skirts, he shuffled away down the garden walk.

When Martin arrived home he found a great fuss going on in his little cottage. All the good wives of the hamlet were gathered about the door-porch; and, when he entered, lo, and behold, Dame Ursula held in her arms the dearest little beauty of a baby-boy!

She wept for joy, as she saw how pleased her goodman was with his new little son; but when he related to her all that had passed between himself and his master, the old king, she clasped her hands together, and began to weep and wail for sorrow, "because," as she said, "it was a very bad time to be 'out of work,' and an evil omen for the child. However, we'll have a real nice christening, Martin dear, and invite all the *good fairies*. And next week you will go on with your gardening again, you know, just as if nothing had happened."

So they had as grand a christening as people in their circumstances could afford. The baby was called Lionel, "which," remarked some of the neighbours, "was quite too fine a name for a common gardener's son." Only one bright little, gay little fairy could be found who had time to come to the christening. But she was a good-natured little thing, that somehow always found exactly time to render a great many kindly services. She willingly became Lionel's godmother, and promised to help him through life as far as she could. "However," added the little lady, with a sigh, "there's many a wicked fairy in the land may try to throw a shadow across his path."

Now the day after the christening, and after the fairy's departure, the troubles in little Lionel's home appeared to set in. Martin's leather money-bag hung empty, and there was very little bread in the house for his wife to eat; and this Saturday night no wages were coming due. Oh, how he yearned for Monday morning, that he might go at his digging again; and how anxiously he hoped that all might continue as before!

Slowly the week dragged out, the lagging hours weighing like chains on the heart of the honest yeoman, who was not accustomed to idleness.

At last the Monday morning dawned, with rustling of leaves, and twittering of birds; and Martin flung his clothes on, and hastened forth to the royal garden.

Ah, me! the place looked neglected since only last week. The roses and carnations hung their heads for want of a drop of water, and the leaves of the fuchsias had mostly turned white. Weeds were staring out boldly right and left; and the box-borders, that had ever been so trim and neat, just appeared as if all the cats and dogs in the country-side had gathered in on purpose to tear

them to pieces.

Martin sped to the toolhouse for his watering-can, rake and hoe; but he was somewhat dismayed indeed to find his implements broken in pieces, and lying scattered about.

What could it mean?

He took a few strides towards the "lime walk," and gazed up at the castle windows. The lattices were closed, and all was silent. But then, of course, the old king and queen and My Lord Lackaday, and all the princesses would be sleeping in their beds at this early hour of the morning. Martin must wait until some human creature appeared to tell him how the garden tools came to be broken and scattered.

In the meantime he trudged back to his own domain among the flowers, and passed the dreary moments picking off the withered leaves. By-and-by a light footstep was audible, and "Impudent Jack the jockey" arrived whistling, with a heavy-jowled bull-dog at his heels, and stamped right across the garden parterres, switching off the carnation-tops with his cutty-whip.

"Holloa there, man! Mind what you're about!" cried Martin foaming with wrath. "I wish His Majesty the old king saw you."

"The old king!" cried Jack, standing still, and gazing at Martin with some amazement. "Why, Martin, the old king is *dead* a week to-morrow, and My Lord Lackaday is master now. And, as for the garden, my man, you may set your mind at rest about that, for his new Royal Majesty has given orders that the whole concern is to be turned into a lake for His Majesty to fish in. Now!" And, so saying, *impudent* Jack that he was, continued his way, whistling louder, and switching off more carnation tops than before.

Poor Martin was utterly dazed. Could it be true, or was it only a cunning invention of Impudent Jack the jockey's?

Alas, the prolonged stillness that reigned in the park, and the forlorn aspect of the castle windows, made his heart sink like lead within him.

Suddenly a postern door banged, and then a slow, dawdling step was heard in the distance, and Martin perceived, approaching the "lime walk," My Lord Lackaday, with his fishing-rod and tackle. There were two or three young pages with him bearing baskets and nets; and he overheard one of them say, "By-and-by your Majesty shall not have so far to go, once the new pond here is finished."

This was more than Martin could endure. He dashed after the royal fisherman, and screamed forth, "Can it be true that the flower gardens are to be made a pond of? And how is your father's gardener then to get his living?"

"Don't bother us," drawled out the new king; "we don't like flowers, nor do we care whether you get a living or not!"

The blood rushed to Martin's head, and a singing sound filled his ears. "A pond!" he cried. "A common fishpond! And how am I to earn my living now? And what is to become of my wife and little Lionel?"

In his anger and despair, Martin sprang blindly forward, and kicked the standard roses, and wrung the necks of the beautiful purple iris that bloomed in the shade of some laurel bushes. His eye caught the spellbound lauristinus, and, forgetting his late good master's commands, he fell on it furiously with both hands, and tore, and wrenched it from the earth.

Then suddenly, as the roots and fibres of the ill-omened plant with a crackling noise were released from the soil, a wonderful being, which had been buried underneath it—a wicked fairy with an evil eye—uncoiled herself, and rose up straight and tall before him. She gave a malicious smile, and simpered out flattering words to the half-bewildered labourer.

"A thousand thanks, O noble knight, for relieving a spell-bound lady! Pray let me know, is there aught that I can do to indicate my gratitude?"

"Tell me how I can earn my daily bread?" stammered forth poor Martin.

"Daily bread!" cried the fairy, tossing her head contemptuously. "I can tell thee, gallant sir, where to find gold, ay, more real yellow gold than the king and all his court ever dreamed of! I have not been pent up under that lauristinus all these years for nothing! I know a secret or two."

Martin's eyes grew dilated, and his breath came and went, and he seized the fairy by the wrist. "Answer me," he gasped out hoarsely, "where's all that gold to be got? No palavering, or I'll bury you up again, and plant that same lauristinus-bush on your head!"

The fairy rolled her evil eye, and gave a forced laugh. "At the back of yonder mountain!" she cried, pointing with her thin, long hand to a hill whose summit overlooked the park. "The way thou must take is through the forest, till thou comest to the charcoal-burners' huts. Then follow a crooked path leading to the left, round to the back of the hill. Thou wilt find an opening in the earth. *The gold is there!*"

Martin scarcely waited for the last words. He loosened his grasp of the fairy's wrist, and hastened full speed home to his wife and child.

"To a hole at the back of the mountain to look for gold!" Poor Dame Ursula was sorely puzzled when her good-man arrived all excited, and bade her make a bundle of what clothes she possessed, bring the baby Lionel, and follow him to push their fortune at the back of the mountain.

Now at the back of the mountain there was a deep mine where many people, men, women and children, were searching after, and finding, gold. Only they were obliged to descend deep, deep into the bowels of the earth, where all was dark, save for the pale flickering of little lanterns, which they were allowed to carry down.

Poor Dame Ursula wept bitterly at the notion of taking her darling little Lionel into such a dismal pit. But there was no help for it; down they must go, and live like the rest at the bottom of the gloomy mine, whilst Martin, with a pickaxe, wrought for gold.

... The days passed, and the weeks passed, and the months, and the *years!* And little Lionel was growing up amidst the dross. His long hair was filthy, and matted together, and his skin was always stained with the clay. His parents could scarcely know whether he was a lovely boy or not. It was so dark down there, that his mother could not show his blue eyes to the neighbours; yet she ever kept him by her side, for fear of losing him, and also because she dreaded he might learn bad ways from the gold-diggers—to curse and swear like them, and tell lies, and steal other people's treasures.

And poor Martin dug from year-end to year-end, in the weary hope of some day lighting on a great heap of wealth.

The time dragged slowly on, and Lionel's father was getting old and weak, and his pickaxe fell with feeble, quavering strokes into the earth; and Lionel's poor mother was growing blind with constantly peering after her son through the half-obscurity of their underground abode.

Then one morning she missed him altogether, having mistaken for him another youth, whom she followed and then found with bitter anguish to be not her boy. Thus Lionel was alone; and he, too, searched for his mother, and, in so doing, became completely lost in the mine.

On and on he wandered, through endless subterranean corridors, until at last he spied a feeble glimmer before him. He never remembered to have been here before, or to have seen this light. It was the entrance to the mine.

There was a large basket, with two old men standing in it; and they told Lionel that they were about to be taken up into the daylight.

"Oh, let me go with you!" cried Lionel. "Take me also to the daylight, if only for a little while!"

They hoisted him into the basket; and immediately several unseen hands from above drew all three right up, out of the dark gold mine. The pale, thin ray grew stronger, broader, brighter as they ascended; and, at the mouth of the mine, a perfect flood of golden sunshine overwhelmed Lionel, who now held his hands across his brow, and felt painfully dazzled.

"Young man," said a voice beside him, in mournful accents, "this upper air is not for thee. Go down again to the shady retreat to which thou art accustomed."

It was an aged female that spoke; she sat on the ground all clad in a sooty garment.

"Not for me!" cried Lionel, bursting into tears; "and why should it not be for me as well as for others?"

But just at this instant a fairy-like thing in white glided past the youth, and whispered, "Heed her not, she is an evil genius! Hie thee, young man, for shelter to yonder wood; from its leafy shade thou canst behold the lovely earth with its verdant meadows, rich foliage and brilliant flowers, and the soft, fleecy clouds embracing one another in the azure sky overhead. Never fear, it is all for thee; thine eyes were meant to gaze on it."

Lionel ran, and his young heart bounded within him for joy. He felt like some blind person who sees again for the first time.

All through those dismal years down in the mine his mother had told him how lovely the sunshine was, and the soft green grass; and how pure and sweet the country air; but he had little dreamed it could be so delightful, so beautiful as this!

The forest stood before him with its thousands of singing-birds, and its carpet of many-coloured leaves and wild flowers. He would enter in there.

Suddenly a croaking sound from a branch overhead arrested his attention, and Lionel saw a great magpie staring down at him with dark, piercing eyes.

"Halt!" cried the magpie, "nor enter this wood upon the peril of thy life! Here are lions and tigers, bears and wolves, that will rend thee to pieces."

He was startled and troubled for a moment; but at once his eye caught sight of a pretty little mocking-bird, that laughed like a human being, and shook its tiny head at him.

"*She* doesn't believe you, anyhow," said Lionel to the magpie. "Nor will I." And he walked away right into the forest.

As he went he stopped to examine the feathery-looking ferns, and the wondrous velvety moss that grew on the roots of the trees. By-and-by a rushing noise was heard, which became louder as Lionel proceeded. Could that be the wild beasts of which the magpie had warned him? He stood still with fast-beating heart and listened.

But the thought of the fairy-like voice and the gay little mocking-bird encouraged him, and he pressed forward to see what that rushing noise could mean.

The next instant found young Lionel by the side of a majestic waterfall, standing with parted lips and rounded eyes, gazing before him in a bewilderment of admiration. The cascades leaped laughingly from rock to rock, and were lost in a limpid pool; then flowed away as a gentle, rippling brook.

"How lovely!" gasped Lionel; and he bent forward, and looked into the placid surface of the water in the rocky basin. But what did he behold there? A vision that appalled him, and caused him to start back abashed—*himself*; all grimy, with his matted hair and besmeared face! For he had still the dress of the gold mine clinging to him; and he wept for shame to feel himself so ugly in a spot where all was beauty.

Lionel stood and gazed on the silver stream with his wondering eyes; he observed the little birdies come down quite fearlessly to quench their thirst, and lave their tiny bodies in the cooling drops. Then he, too, trembling at his own temerity, bathed himself in the crystal pool, and came forth fair and shining, with his sunny locks waving on his shoulders.

And now he continued his path through the forest with a happy heart; for, what if his garments *were* old and mud-stained, he felt that he himself was fresh and comely!

Young Lionel gathered a nosegay as he went, harebells and violets, oxlips and anemones; thinking all the while of the tales his mother oft had told him about his father's skill in flowers. And heartily he laughed at the frolics of the cunning little squirrels he spied for the first time among the branches over his head.

At last he heard the echo of many voices and the sounds of merry-making, and paused, hesitating and timid. Whence came all this laughter and these cries of mirth? Surely not from the voice of one being, a sallow-looking female attired in gaudy garments, like a gipsy, who now came along his path.

"Turn, noble sir, and come with me," she cried, "and I will tell thee thy fortune!"

But Lionel liked not her artful eyes, so he only said, "What sounds are those?"

"They are the inhabitants of the country," answered the female vaguely; "but beware of them, young stranger, they will surely take thy life."

"But I must see them," cried Lionel, "their voices please my ears! They seem to be very happy."

"Such happiness is not for thee, young man!" shrieked the fortune-teller angrily. "Be warned, and return from whence thou camest; else these country clowns, when they behold thy miserable attire, will stone thee to death, as a thief or a highwayman."

Lionel was shocked; yet the leer of the gipsy's eye made him think of the lying magpie. So he left her, and hastened on, and, behold! there stood before him the village maypole, bedecked with roses and ribbons, and a living garland of youths and fair maidens dancing round it.

They had a lovely little fairy-body in their midst, and were entreating her to be their "May-Queen," but laughingly she broke away from them all, and declared she had her duties elsewhere—other young folks in another hamlet to render happy. She nodded in a friendly, familiar way to Lionel, who waited, shyly looking on, and motioned to him with her little wand to join the party round the May-pole.

Far from repulsing him with sneers and jests, or "stoning him to death," the young people were very kind to Lionel; and, taking his hand, welcomed him into their chain of dancers.

And when the frolics were at an end, and each one satiated with happiness and excitement, they brought him to their festal board, and gave him to eat and drink.

Then the good old wives of the hamlet gathered round, and began to question the stranger youth, inquiring his name and whence he came. When they heard that he was called "Lionel," and his father "Martin," they held up their hands with astonishment, and nodded their heads to one another, and cried out, "Dame Ursula's son! Dame Ursula's babe, that was christened Lionel, the day Lord Lackaday became king! Well to be sure! And where is Dame Ursula now? And Martin the gardener? And where have they hidden themselves all these long years?" cried the old wives of the hamlet in a breath.

But Lionel wept bitterly, as he thought of his mother and father far down in the bottom of the gold-mine; and at the same time he was ashamed to tell the village people where they were.

"I must go," he cried, "and bring them here! I must be off to search for them, away ... away ... at the back of the mountain."

Then the old wives insisted on his waiting and resting the night there; for he had need of sleep, he was so tired after walking and bathing, dancing and weeping. And they gave him a nice,

spruce, dimity-curtained bed to sleep in; and presented him with a beautiful suit of new garments for the morrow; "for," they said, "they had been at his christening, and it was easy to see that the good Dame Ursula, wherever she had been all these years, had brought her boy up well."

Lionel was fatigued, and shut his eyes at once for the night; but, ere slumber overtook him, he heard distinctly the old wives' gossip by his bedside.

"What a shame it was," said they, "of My Lord Lackaday to turn away poor Martin as he did, and then transform the magnificent palace garden into a fishpond!"

"But he was punished for it," whispered another. "They say an 'evil spell' hangs over his only child, the lovely princess—the 'Lady Liliass' as she is called. They say some creature from below the cursed fishpond is to marry her—some dreadful beast no doubt. And the king is in terror, and spends his time fishing there day and night."

The words awakened a strange curiosity in Lionel's heart; they rang in his ears, and mingled with his dreams the whole night through; and it seemed to him as if he and his parents were, in some way, bound up with the fate of this poor young princess and her unhappy father, the king.

The following morning he donned the brave new garments they had given him, and went forth to look at the park and the palace he had so often heard of, before starting back to the gold-mine.

He discovered the royal entrance without assistance. But what was his surprise to see, crouched on the roadside near it, a being which looked this time just what she was, a wicked fairy with an evil eye! She uncoiled herself, and stood up, straight and tall, before him. She gave a malicious smile, and simpered forth these words: "Beware, young man, of entering in there! That is the royal demesne, and no stranger intrudes unpunished. None so poor and so mean as thou art dares be seen within those precincts."

"My parents have taught me that *to tell lies is mean!* And thou hast told me enough!" cried Lionel, indignantly.

At his words the creature vanished from before him; and on the spot where she had stood he saw an ugly bush of deadly nightshade.

Then he boldly entered the royal park, and walked in thoughtful silence till the stone work of the ancient castle walls met his view. At one side was a venerable shady lime walk, and Lionel perceived a maiden slowly gliding down it, attired in white, with golden hair, much longer than his own, and eyes of an azure blue.

"Are you the spellbound Lady Liliass?" asked Lionel. "And where is the lake that was once a lovely garden?"

"Oh, I dare not go there," sighed the maiden; "not even to cull the sweet white water-lilies I wish so much, because my father fears I may meet some creature from below the water. Didst thou ever hear the like? But I think I might go with thee," she added wistfully, taking Lionel's hand. "No vile creature can harm me when thou art by my side!"

Her innocent, confiding words captivated Lionel's heart, and he exclaimed, "I will protect you, Lady Liliass, from every danger."

Then she led him to the great artificial lake at the back of the royal mansion; and there, sure enough, lay the king stretched out his full length upon the bank, with his fishing-rod dangling in the water.

Near the margin of the lake grew lovely white water-lilies, and the Lady Liliass stooped to gather them. But her father was all alarmed on beholding her approach the spot which fate had connected with so much danger for his child.

"My daughter, my Liliass!" he cried out, "when I have fished up the creature from below the lake that waits to marry thee, I will kill it, and then thou may'st wander as thou wilt. But oh, keep far from the water's edge, my child!"

"Ah, here is a *Lion* will guard thy *Lily*, father dear," returned the girl laughing, and she presented young Lionel to the king.

But, at this instant, a violent tugging was perceptible at the end of the monarch's angling-rod; and he rose in great excitement to draw in his line, which this time seemed to have hooked some extraordinary booty.

Lionel ran forward, and assisted the king to land it.

And what was the wondrous fish? A little tiny fairy-body all laughing and shining like a mermaid.

"I have come," she began gaily, "from the bottom of the lake, but your Majesty need not fear that fair Lady Liliass will fall in love with an old fairy like me. Yet there stands one at her side, my godson, young Lionel, old Martin the gardener's son, who has indeed come also from beneath the lake; and deeper down than I. For you must know that below your Majesty's feet, and below the royal palace and this park and pond, there are workmen grovelling sordidly for gold, and the danger is, that some fine morning both the palace and the hamlet may be undermined, and fall into the pit that they are digging."

"Oh," cried the king greatly relieved, "then my Liliash shall marry young Lionel! He is a goodly youth; and my heart shall be at rest about my daughter. And now, good Fairy, that I fear no longer an ugly monster for my child, I shall fish no more to-day, but inquire into these things, that threaten the safety of my kingdom!"

Lady Liliash and "My Lord Lionel," as he was now called, were married at once; for the good fairy declared, *a good thing could never be done too soon.*

The marriage was a grand one, as became a royal princess of the great house of Primus Lackaday; and immediately after the ceremony, by Lionel's desire, the young pair drove in a glass-coach, drawn by eight swift chargers, through the forest, Liliash bearing in her hands a large posy of water-lilies—away, past the cascade, and on, to the opening of the gold-mine, at the back of the mountain.

An order was sent down in the basket, by a special messenger, bidding old Martin and Dame Ursula ascend to meet their Lionel and his noble bride.

As it was, the poor old couple had been searching in anguish for their son; and now, weary and heavy-hearted, they had arrived just at the foot of the opening when the news came to them.

Then the sudden reaction, and the sight of the brand-new silk and velvet garments Lionel sent down for them, almost killed them with joy. "'Tis my *Lionel's voice* I hear!" cried Dame Ursula as they were being drawn up in the basket.

"Ah me, the odour of my flowers after twenty years!" sobbed out Martin, the tears trickling down his furrowed cheeks at the recognition of his favourites.

And so they were all happy again; and Lionel's fortune was made, although his father found no heaps of gold.

As for the king, *in three days* he was back to his fishing again, lying on the bank of the great pond, as happy as ever he was in the old times when he was only "My Lord Lackaday." He said the land was too much trouble for him; Liliash and Lionel might rule it as they thought fit. And so these two *really* carried out all *he* had promised to do.

The good little fairy-body rarely appeared in the country after Lionel's wedding-day; for the people were all happy now, "and," as she declared, "had no need of her."

And then it happened that one day at noontide, when the sun was shining overhead with a dazzling heat, and all the air was warm and drowsy, the king, who had been angling since early morning, without catching the smallest minnow, and had fallen fast asleep, lost his balance, and rolled down the sloping bank into the water, and disappeared. They dredged the lake for his body in vain. No trace of him was to be discovered, although they sent the most expert divers down to search.

But, strange to say, every evening from that time forward, just about sunset, a little bird with plumage gay, called "*The Kingfisher*," might be seen to haunt the margin of the lake, ready, with its pointed beak, to hook up the tiny fishes, that glided in shoals at nightfall near the surface of the water.

III.

CASPAR THE COBBLER, OF COBWEB CORNER.

In the centre of a certain old city in the Land of Langaffer stood a king's castle, surrounded by a high turreted wall, with many little gables and long windows, and balconies adorned with flowers. A courtyard full of soldiers was inside. Like the city, the castle was picturesque, with its quaint architecture, its nooks and turns, its solid masonry and stone-carving. The interior must have been beautiful indeed; for the king, who had a very excellent taste, could scarcely be induced to leave his royal home even for an hour, so much did he love it. He was wont to inhale the fresh air every morning on the southern parapet where the clematis trailed over the antique coping, and, in the long summer twilight he would enjoy gazing at the east, where the sinking sun had spread its golden hue over his dominions, from the tiny top turret pointing to the woods and mountains that lay away beyond the city.

Now, in close proximity to the castle were some of the darkest and narrowest streets of the city. One of these was Cobweb Corner; and here, in a small attic, dwelt a humpbacked, plain-visaged little man, who the whole day long loved to think about the king. He was called "Caspar the Cobbler, of Cobweb Corner."

The people all knew Caspar, but they did not know that Caspar's secret ambition was to become some day cobbler to the king.

Caspar's father and mother had been poor folk, like himself; and when he came into the world, a sickly, plain-featured babe, his mother sent for the very last of the fairies in the land to be her child's godmother, and to bequeath him some wonderful gift which might make up for his lack of strength and beauty.

"What an ugly child," said the fairy; "yet somebody will love him, and he may become beautiful—"

and, when all else forsake him, why, then the most graceful of the birds shall be his friends."

Poor Caspar's mother considered that she had accomplished a great thing in persuading the fairy to act as godmother; but his father thought he could do better for his son in teaching him his own handicraft to the best of his ability.

And therefore, with an extraordinary amount of care and patience, the old man instructed his little lad how to manage his awl; and, ere he died, had the satisfaction of knowing that his Caspar bade fair to become as clever a cobbler as any in the city.

Several years had passed, and Caspar lived on alone in the little attic near the castle wall. The way up to his room was dark and narrow, up rickety stairs, and along crooked passages; but, once at the top, there was plenty of cheerful light streaming in through the dormer-window, and the twittering of the birds, as they built their nests in the eaves, had something pleasant and gay.

The feathered songsters were Caspar's most constant companions, and he understood every word they said. He confided to them all his secrets, amongst others, what a proud man he should be, the day he made a pair of shoes for the king! Other secrets he imparted also to the birds, which the city folk down in the streets guessed little about.

Many and many a time, as Caspar sat so much alone, he would sigh, and wish that his fairy-godmother would come and see him sometimes. But, alas, that could not be, for the king had given strict orders that the sentinels posted at the city gates should allow "no fairy bodies" in. Even the very last of the kind was, by a new law, banished to far-distant fairyland. "No more magic wands, no more wonders nowadays," sighed poor Caspar; "nothing can be won but by hard and constant work, work, work!"

Moreover, poor Caspar had to learn that even honest work sometimes fails to ward off hunger and poverty. For many a long month the crooked little cobbler was doomed to toil, and to suffer privation as well. He might make his boots and shoes night and day, and lay them out, pair by pair, in neat rows along a shelf in the corner of his attic, but what availed all this if no customer ever ventured up to look at them, nor even to order mendings?

The fact was, that about this time the folk in that old city began to wear *wooden* shoes, which, they said, were good enough for them, and lasted longer than any other.

Only fair-haired, blue-eyed Mabel, Dame Dimity's daughter, who had the daintiest little feet in the world, and knew how to dance like any fairy—she wore lovely little shoes manufactured by Caspar.

When Midsummer-day came round Mabel was elected May-queen. Then she came tripping up the rickety staircase, and along the dingy passage to the attic workshop, in Cobweb Corner. "Caspar, Caspar, here, quick! My measure for a darling little pair of shoes to dance in!" and she held out the most elegant little foot which any shoemaker could possibly choose for a pattern.

Three days after that the shoes were finished, a bonnie wee pair of crimson ones, in the softest of kid-leather; and when Mabel came to fetch them, and tried them on, they fitted like a glove. She drew them both on, and danced round the room to show how delighted she was. And dear! how lovely they looked, all three—Mabel and the little red shoes!!

Poor deformed Caspar smiled as he watched her, and felt happy to have rendered her so happy.

"I love to see you, little Mabel," he said, "and that is why I shall shut up my workshop on Midsummer-day, and go out to the common when you are crowned 'Queen o' the May.' I only wish the sky may be as blue—as blue—as your eyes are, Mabel!" And then the crooked little cobbler stammered and blushed at his own forwardness in paying such a compliment to the prettiest maiden in the land.

But little Mabel said, "I will watch out for you, Caspar. I shall care for nobody on all the green so much as you."

Caspar could scarcely quite believe little Mabel when she said this; yet he was greatly touched by her kindness, and he promised to go and look at her from afar.

When Midsummer-day dawned over that old city the weather was beautiful—the sky, as blue as Mabel's eyes; and young and old flocked out to bask in the sunshine, and enjoy the games and the merry-making. Even the king sallied forth from his castle, accompanied by his courtiers, to favour with his presence the time-honoured custom of crowning the May-queen.

When he beheld little Mabel he exclaimed, "What a lovely maiden, fit to be a princess!"

Caspar was standing quite near, and heard it with his own ears. He expected after that to see Mabel drop a curtsey to the king. But no, the little maiden looked straight at him—poor Caspar—instead, and with her queen's flowery wand, pointed down to her bonnie crimson shoes.

The cobbler of Cobweb Corner was becoming dazed with happiness. Curious thoughts about his fairy-godmother crept into his head; strange thrills of pleasure and of pain shot through his dwarfish frame, and turned him well-nigh sick with emotion. It seemed to Caspar that he had grown older and younger in that one summer day. He felt giddy, and suddenly longed for his quiet attic in Cobweb Corner.

He stole silently away, and had left the crowd behind him on the Common, when he suddenly

became aware of a tiny hand slipped into his own; and, looking down to the ground, observed a dainty pair of red shoes tripping lightly by his side. "What! little Mabel?"

"I just wanted to leave when you would leave, Caspar. For there was nobody on all the green I cared for so much as you."

Ah, this time he did believe her,—poor Caspar! And so he must tell her all *his* secret. "I love you, little Mabel, oh so much! And oh, if some day you could marry me, I should keep you in darling little crimson shoes all your life! And who knows—perhaps through your love Mabel—I might grow better-looking. They said my godmother promised it."

"I love you as you are, plain or handsome, you dear, good Caspar," cried little Mabel, "and I will marry you just as soon as my mother, Dame Dimity, gives her consent!"

Alas! True love is ever doomed to be crossed, else this little tale of ours had been a good deal shorter; had, perhaps, even ended here!

Dame Dimity would on *no* account yield her consent to the union of her daughter, the beauty of the town, with the cobbler of Cobweb Corner. Why, if it came to that, there was Christopher Clogs, the wooden shoemaker, who was a good figure and a wealthy man to boot! He lived in the Market Place, and drove a thriving business, whilst Caspar was known to have only one coat to his back. Really the effrontery of Cobweb Corner was astounding!

Poor Mabel's eyes were now often dimmed with tears; yet once every day she passed through the narrow street near the castle wall, and gazed up at Caspar's gable-window, until she saw the little shoemaker smile down at her. After she had vanished, Caspar would feel very lonely; yet he said to himself, "When I want to see her blue eyes, then I must look at the sky. She'll always have blue eyes, and she'll always be *my Mabel*."

These days Caspar rarely left his workshop in the old garret. He was very poor, and had nothing to buy with; so he went to no shops, and he avoided the neighbours, as they were beginning to make merry about him, and Mabel, and Dame Dimity. He could not bear to hear them say that Mabel was betrothed to Christie Clogs, the wooden shoemaker. Anything but that!

When he had nobody to talk to, why, he opened his window to converse with the swallows, and asked them every evening what was the news—for Caspar could not afford to take in a newspaper.

"Oh, what do you think!" they cried one night, swirling round his head in circles, as their custom was, "here is something to interest you, Caspar! The king has got *sore feet*—from wearing tight boots, they say,—and sits in an arm-chair with his feet wrapped up in a flannel. We saw it all just a while ago."

"I took stock of His Majesty's feet that day," said Caspar promptly, "the day he was out on the 'Green.' I can't help measuring people's feet with my eye," he added apologetically to the swallows; "you see, it's my trade, and it is the only thing I am good at."

But ere he had finished speaking, the friendly swallows had described their last swift circle in the air, and, with a sharp scream of "Goodnight," had darted into their nests under the old pointed roof.

That evening, ere he lay down in *his* nest, poor Caspar had cut out of soft, well-tanned leather a pair of shoes, which he knew to be the king's own measure. "Ah," said Caspar, "the poor king must have his new shoes as soon as possible, for it is awful to suffer toe-ache, and to be obliged to sit all day long with one's feet swathed in flannel." And Caspar sat with his leather apron on, and wrought as if for life and death at the new shoes. He was too busy even to rise and look at the window for little Mabel passing by.

At last they were completed. Then the humpbacked cobbler, having washed his hands, and brushed his one coat, went off, quivering with excitement, bearing the new shoes in his hands, away downstairs, and through the narrow street under the castle wall, till he came and stood before the castle gate. Here the sentinel on duty demanded what he wanted.

"Pair of shoes for His Majesty," responded Caspar in a businesslike manner, and was admitted.

When he had crossed the courtyard, and had arrived at the entrance of the inner apartments, he was accosted by a couple of lackeys covered with gold lace, and with powdered hair.

"Heigho! What's all this!" they exclaimed. "Where dost thou hail from, old Hop-o'-my-thumb?"

"I am Caspar the cobbler, of Cobweb Corner," replied the little man gravely; "as you may perceive by these new shoes which I bring for the king, and which are His Majesty's exact fit."

"Begone, knave!" cried the lackeys indignantly. "Dost thou imagine the king would wear anything contrived by the likes of thee. Be off, old mountebank, ere thou and thy shoes are flung into the castle dungeon!"

In vain poor Caspar intreated; they would not even listen to him. At last, in utter terror for his life, he hurried away, disappointed, mortified, sick at heart, carrying the despised piece of workmanship, at which he had toiled so carefully and conscientiously all these weeks, back home to his obscure lodging in Cobweb Corner. Here, overcome with vexation, the little man flung himself upon his bed, and cried himself asleep.

When he awoke it was evening. A fresh breeze was gently stirring the casement, the window was open, and the swallows passing and repassing it in circles, producing a screaming, chattering noise all the time.

Caspar's eye fell first on his work-table, on which lay, side by side, his latest, best work, the brand new shoes for the king. Ah! the swallows saw them too, and this was the cause of all the extra twittering and screaming this evening.

"Dear feathered friends," cried Caspar, springing to the open window, "how can ye help me? They are finished! They fit! But how are they to be conveyed to His Majesty? The menials in the castle would not let me in."

"Wee—wee—we could carry *one!*" piped the swallows, slyly, dipping their long lanced wings, and swirling swiftly by.

"No, not *one*, ye silly creatures!" cried Caspar all out of breath; "*both* or none!"

The swallows made a second long sweep, and as they neared the gablet again, hissed forth, "Singly were surer." But, as Caspar made a sign of impatience, four of his friends, the swifts, darted straight across the window-sill to the work-table, and, seizing the new shoes by heel and toe, sped off with them across the old wall to the royal castle.

It seemed but an instant and they were back, screaming and hissing and circling towards their nest in the eaves. Caspar put his head out at the open casement, and listened anxiously to their sounds.

"Dropped them at his bed-room window—the little balcony—some one opened—took them in—so, so, sleep well, sleep well,—goodnight!"

The following morning Caspar the cobbler was up and dressed before daybreak, and down in the streets, in and out amongst the crowds, trying to overhear some gossip about the king.

The city folk were surprised to see him once more in their midst; and good-naturedly permitted him to sit at their firesides for old times' sake, although he called for no ale, nor lighted a long pipe like the others. All poor Caspar desired was to ascertain the latest court news; but, to his annoyance, he was doomed to learn first a great many things that did not please him about Dame Dimity and Christie Clogs.

At last, late on in the afternoon, somebody inquired if the company were informed of the good tidings, "that His Majesty the king was recovered of his foot-ache, and could walk about again, thanks to a shoemaker who had succeeded in fitting His Majesty's foot to a 'T.'"

"*That* shoemaker, whoever he be, has founded his own fortune this day!" exclaimed the innkeeper.

Caspar sprang to his feet, and at the same time the pewter tankards and all the pipes, the host and all the customers, danced round before his eyes. With a great gasp of excitement he bounded out to the street, and sped on to the market place, past Dame Dimity's, and past Christie Clogs', and on to the narrow street with the overshadowing wall, and on, and on, until he arrived at the royal entrance. He obtained admittance as before, and pressed forward till he was arrested by the supercilious lackeys in gold-lace livery.

"What! here again, old Hop-o'-my-thumb!" cried they.

"But I am the royal shoemaker, gentlemen!" exclaimed Caspar, proudly, "and that was my own work which I carried in my hand yesterday morning."

"What knavery is this?" returned the head menial of the castle, "the royal shoemaker, villain, is no clumsy clown from these parts; but he and his wares come from abroad, from Paris. He is, moreover, with the king at present, receiving his reward for the beautiful new pair of shoes in softly-tanned leather, which arrived last night at dusk. He is an elegant gentleman, this Parisian, and knows fine manners as well as his trade, for he ne'er goes nor comes without dealing out *largesse* to us, the gentlemen attendants, and therein exhibits his good breeding."

"But the shoes!" stammered out Caspar all aghast. "The shoes! I made them, and His Majesty the king has them on at this very moment. Confound your Parisian!" he screamed, waxing wroth; "it was *I* who made the shoes—they were found on the western balcony last night—His Majesty must know that they are the work of Caspar the cobbler, of Cobweb Corner!"

At this moment a musical murmur of voices was audible from within, and a creaking of boots; and at once the angry lackeys turned smiling faces towards the departing French merchant, who politely pressed a little coin into each of their outstretched palms.

When at length he took his departure, Caspar followed him some way with a very ugly expression disfiguring his features. "I could kill this dandy interloper, who steals the reward and credit of my hard-earned toil! I could stick my awl through him!"

Poor Caspar, it was well that at this instant he was accosted by his loving little angel, his sweet, blue-eyed Mabel!

"Eh, my Caspar, whatever has come over you, and whither are you going, that you do not even see your own Mabel? And, oh! I am thankful to have met you now, for look, Caspar, with trudging

past Cobweb Corner every day my pretty shoes are well-nigh worn through! So I must have a new pair, and you may set about making them at once."

Then poor Caspar told her about his grievous disappointment at the castle, and the insults and humiliation he had experienced at the hands of the royal underlings. "It is too bad," he said, "to think that nobody knows that I made them!"

"The swallows know it," added Mabel pensively, "and you should have followed their advice; for, after all, they are your best friends."

"What!" returned Caspar sharply, "and sent only one at a time? Is that what you mean, Mabel?"

"I dare say that was what *they* meant," she returned.

Caspar groaned.

"But look," continued the little maiden gaily, her blue eyes dancing with a bright idea, "remember this, O Caspar, the king's shoes must by-and-by become worn through, like mine! And then—and then, he must have new ones too—and then—and then we'll take the swallows' advice, and act with greater caution."

That evening when Caspar went home to Cobweb Corner, and flung open his gable-window, there were *no* graceful circles described overhead, and *no* twittering amongst the eaves. All was silent. The swallows had taken leave of Cobweb Corner, and of the royal castle, and of the quaint old city, with its many spires and turrets. They were off, all together, a joyous merry troupe of tourists, swiftly, swiftly winging their way to warmer climes for the winter.

Poor Caspar missed them sadly, and reproached them a little at first for being heartless, selfish creatures. Soon, however, he gained courage again; and began to work at Mabel's shoes ... and then at the king's—to have them ready by spring time, when, as the little maiden said, "the others should be worn out."

Several times that winter Caspar saw the king walk out in the identical shoes his hands had manufactured; and his heart gave a leap every time he observed them becoming thinner.

At last the soft western breezes, the budding flowers, and the bright-blue, sunny sky of springtime came again; and the swallows returned swiftly, swiftly, swirling and screaming, just as they had done last year. They nested in their old corner under the eaves of Caspar's gable-roof. And by-and-by, when it was gossipped throughout the city that the king's feet were paining him again, because the very last new shoes—which *really* came from Paris, didn't fit at all, then the swallows at nightfall hissed at Caspar's window, "*Soon, soon, see they be ready! Singly is surely!*"

The dandified tradesman from Paris arrived at the castle with all his samples; but he was received with suspicion, and dismissed in disgrace, and this time distributed no *largesse* amongst the gold-laced lackeys.

The same night the swallows might have been observed darting off from Cobweb Corner, bearing *one* neatly-made shoe in soft, well-tanned leather. They dropped it outside the royal window, on the western balcony.

The following morning there was a great proclamation out all over the town. The mayor read it aloud on the market place in front of Christie Clogs' house, offering an immense reward to the person who could produce the missing shoe, "fellow to that one discovered on the king's balcony last night"; and a second reward, "ten times as great to the manufacturer of the said pair of shoes, which fitted His Majesty to a 'T.'"

In front of the crowd thronging the market place stood Caspar, his figure erect, his face transformed into a beautiful face by the delight which had taken possession of his whole soul. The success of an honest workman beamed in his countenance, and rendered the poor cobbler noble.

Mabel ran to his side, and he placed the missing shoe in her hands. "It is safe with my true, blue-eyed darling!" cried Caspar proudly; and the people raised a hearty cheer.

Then they formed a procession, and, with Caspar and Mabel at their head, marched to the royal presence.

This time the king received Caspar himself, and from Mabel's lips learned the whole story of the shoes from the very beginning.

After that, there was great rejoicing in the quaint old city; for both Caspar and Mabel were now the favourites with all the better folk. The king issued a command for their immediate marriage, and appointed Caspar to a post in the castle.

But the only title Caspar was willing to accept was that of "Cobbler to the King"; and, as such, he subsequently removed his belongings from Cobweb Corner to a fine large house which was prepared for him in the market place.

The fairy godmother was allowed to come and grace the wedding with her presence; and she promised so many blessings that Caspar and Mabel ought to have been still happier if that had been possible.

As for Dame Dimity, she married Christie Clogs herself; and report says she led a sore life of it when he came home tipsy at night, and began to fling his wooden shoes about.

IV. DAME DOROTHY'S DOG.

On the outskirts of Langaffer village, and not far from the great pine forest, stood the cottage of old Dame Dorothy, with its latticed windows and picturesque porch, and its pretty little garden, fenced in with green palings and privet hedge.

Dame Dorothy was a nice, particular old lady, who spent her time in and about her house, trying to make things neat and cosy. In winter she might be seen polishing her mahogany furniture, rubbing bright her brazen candlesticks and copper kettle, or sweeping about the fireplace; whilst in summertime she was mostly busy weeding her garden, raking the little walks, and watering her flowers.

Yet she never smiled, only sighed very often; and toiled every day more diligently than the day before.

Strange to say, Dame Dorothy was not comfortable in spite of all her conscientiously-performed labours; nor happy, although she lived in such a beautiful little cottage. She never imagined for a moment that the cause of this could be the fact—that she kept a black dog.

Black Nero was a magnificent mastiff, with not a white hair on his back. He had run into Dame Dorothy's one Fifth of November from the forest, when quite a little puppy; and she had housed him and fed him ever since; and now she was so much attached to him that she declared she could not part with him for the world.

In return for her care he trampled over her flower-beds, tore down her hollyhocks, and scraped up the roots of her "London Pride" with his fore-paws; made a passage for himself through her privet hedge, and lay stretched on fine days his full length on her rustic sofa in the door-porch.

When the rosy-cheeked village children passed by to school in the morning Nero snarled and snapped at them through the railings, so that not one durst venture to say "Good-morrow, Dame Dorothy."

Even the next-door neighbours were afraid of him; and some acquaintances of the widow, who themselves kept cats and dogs, and nice little soft kittens as pets, now rarely invited her over to a friendly dance or a wedding or christening; for if they did the black dog was certain to accompany his mistress; and then, in the midst of the party, he would raise such a barking, and create such a confusion, that none of the dames could get speaking.

In winter, when the cold blasts swirled dreamily through the leafless branches of the Langaffer beeches, causing them to creak and moan; when the snow lay thick upon the ground, and the nights closed in apace, and the villagers relished the comforts of the "ingle-nook," then—alas!—there was no fireside enjoyment for poor Dame Dorothy. She might fasten her shutters, and draw her armchair close to the hearth; she might pile up the logs in the chimney to make a blazing fire—but all in vain! Home cheer there was none; for the black dog was there, with his great body extended between her and the warmth. She might boil the kettle, and gaze at herself in its shining lid; but Nero's face was reflected in the kettle-lid too; and in all the lids, and pots and pans, and pewters and coppers right round the room, with his ugly muzzle half-open for growling and snarling.

Moreover, the dog was so greedy and thankless, he never wagged his tail, but would snap at the victuals his mistress herself was eating; and when she did give him the choicest dainties that came off her gridiron, and the very top of the cream, he would only whine for more.

For all this, Dame Dorothy had no idea of parting with the graceless brute, but continued to pet and pamper him. She was even secretly proud of Nero, because he was the biggest dog in the village, and by far the most terrible. Once she told the neighbours over the palings that he was a great protection to her, especially at night, and she "such a poor lone widow!"

Whereupon these good people honestly replied, "Oh, Mistress Dorothy, never dread a worse enemy than your own black dog!"

Then in her heart she remembered how that very morning Nero had indeed caught her thumb between his teeth when impatiently snatching his food; and how the evening before he had upset the milkpail, and left the black mark of his paw on her new knitted quilt; and how, one day last week, he had sat down on her best Sunday cap. And Dame Dorothy knew in her heart that the village folk spoke truly; but she would not acknowledge it, no—but with a melancholy shake of her head, repeated, "Poor dear Nero! People have something against thee, my dear black doggie!"

Now it happened that one fine morning in May, when the lark was warbling high overhead, and the hawthorn bushes were putting on their first pink blossoms, and all the forest was gay with budding flowers and singing birds, and the village school-children were passing hand-in-hand, carrying their little slates and satchels, that they met a tiny fairy all in white, with a wondrous

beaming face, and golden hair floating down over her shoulders. Naturally they stopped to stare at her, for they had never seen such a lovely little lady before; and she smiled pleasantly, for she had never beheld such a collection of wondering round eyes, and so many wide-open mouths gaping at her.

Presently she asked, "Can you tell me, young people, whose is that pretty cottage, so nicely situated at the corner of the wood, with the beautiful porch and palings?"

"Dame Dorothy's!" exclaimed they all in a breath.

"It must be very delightful there," she continued. "I shall go in, and see Dame Dorothy."

"Don't! She keeps a dog," cried one, "and he will eat you up."

"Such a nasty, big black dog," added another, "that barks——"

"Like a lion," interposed a third.

"And bites like a tiger!" added a fourth.

"Oh, don't go, pretty lady!" repeated a fifth and sixth, and many more childish voices together; "and pray don't open the gate, for we are all so afraid he might spring out at us."

"Thank you, my dears, but I am not afraid," said the fairy. "And I intend to visit Dame Dorothy all the same."

Then the children were more astonished still when they saw her glide in between the palings without ever unlatching the gate. She was such a slender little fairy-body! But they held their breaths, and clutched at one another's skirts with fear, as they heard the harsh yelp of Nero, and perceived him bounding forward from his seat in the doorway.

"Ah! eh! oh! he will devour her!" they all gasped out together. But just then the little lady was waving her tiny hand toward their school-house; and they all ran on so fast, so fast, that the door was not quite closed when they arrived.

And now the good little fairy with her white dress, and her golden tresses floating behind her, fixed her blue eyes very steadily on the dog's black eyes, and held up her tiny forefinger.

Thus she walked straight into Dame Dorothy's cottage, and, as she flung open the door, a whole flood of sunshine streamed in along with her.

And the black dog hung his head, and followed her slowly, growling and grinding his teeth as if he would best like to snatch her, and munch her up, and swallow her down all in a minute.

But Dame Dorothy was enchanted with her bright little visitor; for, to tell the truth, the callers-in were very rare that year at the woodside cottage, and the widow's heart often yearned for some one to speak to.

The white fairy inquired how it was that so few flowers were seen in the garden, and so few birds' nests under the eaves of the cottage; and why Dame Dorothy did not take her knitting that fine morning, and enjoy the bright sun in the doorway?

The widow looked melancholy, and heaved a deep sigh; but the black dog, who had overheard every syllable, sneaked away with a low growling noise, and knocked down a chair on purpose to indicate his malice.

"I shall return another day," said the good little fairy as she rose to take leave, "and bring you such a sweet nosegay fresh from the forest, to decorate the table and cheer your heart, because," she added, quite in a whisper, lest Nero might hear her—"because I am sorry to see you have none left in your flower-beds."

From this day forth Dame Dorothy's dog was "poorly." He skulked about the garden, keeping to the gravel walk, with drooping ears and tail between his legs. And by-and-by he began to leave his food untasted.

The poor widow noticed the change, and became anxious. Then presently she grew more uneasy; and at last, greatly concerned about her favourite's health, she set about cutting him out a warm coat for the autumn out of her own best velvet mantle, for she was sure he had taken the influenza.

By-and-by she observed that Nero grew worse on the days of the bright little fairy's visits; that no sooner did the white robe and the golden hair cross the threshold than he would move away from the fireside, slink whining under the tables and chairs, and pass outside the house altogether.

Yet Dame Dorothy could not help loving the sunny fairy who every time fetched a lovely posy of sweet-scented flowers from the forest; to say nothing of her winning voice, her musical laughter, her gentle, loving eyes.

And the village children trooped often now past the woodside cottage, for they wanted to catch a glimpse of the fairy as she went in and out; and they were quite overjoyed when she spoke to them.

At last one day Dame Dorothy, who had got into the habit of telling the fairy everything, thought

she would consult her about her dog.

"Ah me, my poor Nero!" she said; "look at him, he is not thriving at all. And what will become of me, a lone widow woman, if aught befall my black dog? And only think, I cannot persuade him to wear the jacket I sewed for him out of my own best mantle!"

"Poor black dog!" said the little fairy as gravely as she could, and nothing more.

After that she went away; and the same night the dog disappeared.

Dame Dorothy sought for him high and low, called him by name, coaxingly, entreatingly; but all in vain. Then she sat down in her great armchair by her own fireside, and began to weep for her favourite.

Now it was a very comfortable chair, and the beech-logs in the wide grate sent out a nice warm glow, and it was the first time for months that the rightful possessor of the place could enjoy these in undisturbed tranquillity.

Dame Dorothy soon fell fast asleep. And then she had such funny dreams about *white* dogs, and *black* fairies, and school children, all clothed in little jackets cut out of her own best mantle, that she laughed aloud several times in her sleep, and indeed did not waken until the morning sun sent his beams in through the diamond panes of her window.

Many days Dame Dorothy searched for her black dog in every corner of the cottage, and under every bush in the garden, and all among her privet hedge, for she was sure he had lain down in some spot to die. But not the least trace of him did she discover.

And then she gathered up all her grief to pour it forth in one loud, intense lamentation the first time the bright little fairy should arrive.

"But oh, do not weep so, good Dame Dorothy," said the little lady. "When I return again, I shall fetch you another pet to keep you company all day long, and bring joy to your heart, and peace to your fireside!"

She kept faithful to her promise, the good little fairy; for the next time she came from the forest she brought with her a lovely white-breasted *turtle-dove* for Dame Dorothy.

The village children saw her on the road, and they all flocked in before her, crying, "Good-morrow, Dame Dorothy. Oh, you are going to get such a beautiful, *beautiful* bird!" Then the old lady smiled at the children, as she never had smiled for years and years.

And, as the days went by, the little garden near the great pine forest grew fair and fragrant. The roses and the sweet woodbine clambered over the pretty porch. The hollyhocks and the London-pride flourished once more, and the little birds built their nests, and twittered fearlessly under the eaves of the rustic cottage.

The new white pet became so tame and so gentle that it would eat from its mistress's hand, and would perch lovingly upon her shoulder.

And when she was invited by her old acquaintances in the village to an afternoon party, she was always requested to bring her pet along with her; for all the villagers, young and old, who had formerly dreaded the great black dog, now loved and welcomed *Dame Dorothy's dove*.

V. THE LITTLE LOCKSMITH.

Long ago there lived in Langaffer a light-hearted, light-haired, lazy little lad called Randal. He enjoyed a happy home, health and high spirits, and a gay, merry life with his brothers and sisters.

They went to no school, but in the early Spring days sallied forth to gather primroses and anemones; they knew the spot where the tallest rushes grew, for plaiting into butterflies' cages, the best seggan-leaves for tiny canoes, and could tell where the finest blackbirds' eggs were to be found.

In autumn, when the leaves were turning yellow, and the squirrels were fat and tame, they roamed together through the dingle in search of hazel-nuts; and waded up and down the shallow stream, their chatter mingling with its bubbling noise, whilst they tried to catch the darting minnows.

Every corner of the village had echoed with their laughter, and with the shrill, clear voice of Randal, the bonniest and blithest of the band.

Now, in a shady grove, at some distance from the village, there stood a quaint-looking edifice, with antique windows and sculptured pillars partly overgrown with ivy. The tiny lads and lasses of Langaffer knew it well enough by sight; but little cared they who lived there, or what might be inside. In the long summer twilight they chased one another round the basement walls, and startled the swallows from the eaves with their joyous screams; and that was enough for them.

Yet there came a day when Randal was alone, lying listlessly his full length upon the grass,

flapping away the midges with a blade of spear-grass, just in front of the mansion, when he beheld the portal open, and a youth step forth.

The young man had a beaming countenance, and walked with a quick, elastic step.

Then Randal wondered for the first time in his life what that lofty edifice could be, and why the youth came "all so smiling out" from its stately portico. He sprang to his feet, and, running forward, cried out, "Pray, sir, can you tell me what building is this?"

"Oh, a beautiful fairy palace," cried the stranger, "with such wonderful things in every apartment! The oftener one enters, the more one sees, and all so curious, so lovely!"

"What! Then you will take me with you the next time you go?" cried Randal, eagerly.

"Oh, no, my lad," said the stranger. "If you wish to enter in you must have a key of your own."

"But *where* shall I get one?" said Randal.

"Make it!" was the reply. "If you go to the forge at the four roads' end, and apprentice yourself to the locksmith there, he will show you how to set about it. It's a labour that's well repaid."

The youth went away, and his words filled Randal with a strange yearning to behold the interior of the mysterious mansion.

But he lost no time; he ran full speed till he came to the forge at the four roads' end, and begged the locksmith to receive him as an apprentice, and teach him how to construct a magic key, that would open the fairy palace.

And there, at the smithy, Randal beheld a number of little locksmiths about his own age, each with a leathern apron on, and arms bared to the elbows, working away at the anvil. They were all making keys, and some had well-nigh finished, whilst others were only beginning.

Then little Randal bared his arms too, and got a leathern apron on, and began to work with all his might, thinking only of the beautiful fairy palace, that stood so silent and majestic in the midst of the shady pine-grove.

What could be within its walls? When should he obtain a peep at all the wondrous things he had heard of? Not till his key was ready!

And alas! it was heavy work at the smithy. Day after day must the little mechanic toil, till the great beads of perspiration gathered upon his brow.

As for the other apprentices, only *some* wrought steadily on, with unflinching courage. Most of them, who were beginners, like Randal, idled when the master locksmith chanced to leave the forge, and skimmed their work, and grumbled, and declared there was nothing in the palace worth the labour.

One boy, whose key was almost shaped, gave up in despair, cried out that all the treasures of Fairyland should not induce him to work another minute; then flung down his tools upon the ground, tore off his apron, and ran out into the green fields.

This discouraged many of the little workmen, who, one by one, dropped their implements, and slipped away, murmuring that the task was too difficult and tedious.

Poor Randal felt sorely tempted to follow their example; and indeed he might have yielded, too, had not one pale-faced, earnest-looking boy, who held a file and piece of polished metal in his hand, exclaimed,—

"Six times have I tried my key in the lock of the palace door, and all in vain. The *seventh* time I must succeed—and then—the treasures are mine!"

"What that pale-faced boy can do, I can do," said Randal to himself; and, like a thorough workman, he set himself bravely to his task, determined, come what might, to finish it.

And every morning, when Randal left his home, and started for the forge, he took his way through the pine grove, just to gaze a moment with awe and admiration at the fairy palace, and for the twentieth time to fancy himself deftly turning the key in the lock, and gliding softly in.

But once, as he hastened by at break of day, whom should he meet but Sylvan, the squire's son, setting out with a couple of terriers to hunt for weasels.

"Where are you going so early?" said Sylvan; and Randal told him.

Then the young squire laughed aloud, and cried out, "Oh, I have been a locksmith too at the four roads' end! My father made me go and work like a common slave. But I have had enough of that sort of life, and I don't wish to hear anything more about 'locks and keys, and fairy palaces.' Come with me, and I'll teach you how to set a trap."

But Randal silently shook his head, and went his way to the forge at the four roads' end. Sylvan's words, however, continued to ring in his ears, and spoiled his heart for his labour. And all that day the smithy seemed in his eyes like an ugly den, and himself and the little locksmiths like so many toil-worn slaves. And now he chafed and fretted; and now he loitered at his work; and now he hastened to make up for squandered time. And then, alas, in his haste, he broke the key he

was making.

"Here's a pretty mess!" cried Randal in despair. "Must I start at the beginning again? Or shall I give it up altogether? Ah! why did I hear about the fairy palace at all?"

The temptation was strong to fling down his tools, as many another before him had done, and leave the anvil for ever. Randal's ten fingers were just raised to unfasten the ties of his leather apron, when a joyous cry rang through the forge.

It came from the pale-faced, earnest-looking lad, who held up his shining new key now completed. "My seventh trial," he shouted, with tears in his eyes, "and I know that it is perfect!" and he bounded forth in the direction of the wonderful mansion in the forest.

At the sight of the pale boy's success Randal blushed deep red, and bit his lip; then, picking up his instruments one by one, he begged the master to give him another bit of iron.

After that, the little locksmith wrought the livelong day with more energy and greater courage than any one at the forge. Before daybreak now he hastened to his work, ever choosing the nearest way, and avoiding the wood, lest he might encounter idle Sylvan, the squire's son. But once, at eventide, whom should he chance to meet but the gentle, pale-faced boy, coming from the fairy house, and looking so radiant and happy, that Randal rushed towards him, and questioned him about the treasures.

"Oh, Randal!" cried his friend, "you will simply be enchanted when you come. For, once within the fairy palace, you must look and listen, and laugh, and admire."

"Oh, tell me no more," cried the little locksmith, "my key is almost finished!"

After this many more days passed in silent, steady toil; until at last, one bright morning in early Spring, as the sunbeams were breaking through the mist, Randal quietly laid down his file, and, nervously clasping a brightly-polished key in his vigorous young hand, glided softly from the smithy, and out into the cool air.

The master locksmith stepped to the threshold to look after him; and, as he shaded his hand with his horny palm, and watched the lad's retreating figure, a smile of satisfaction and approval flitted across his wrinkled face.

The new key turned smoothly in the lock, the door was opened, and he entered in.

Randal wandered through the fairy palace. He found himself in beautiful apartments, lofty, grand and airy, containing countless lovely and curious objects. Some of these he could only look at; others he might feel and handle at his pleasure.

There were portraits of kings and great warriors, pictures of battlefields and processions, which filled his mind with wonder; of quaint streets, and homely firesides, and little children attired in funny costumes, that made him laugh, and clap his hands, and hold his sides for merriment.

In another apartment were various kinds of coloured glasses and prisms, through which the little Langaffer lad looked at strange countries he had never dreamed of before. Nay, from a certain oriel window he discovered stars, so many and so beautiful that he trembled with delight.

And, all the time, there were other children from other villages rambling, like Randal, through the chambers of the fairy mansion. They moved gently about from room to room, taking one another's hands, and holding their breaths in astonishment. And only one subdued murmur filled the air of "Oh, how lovely, how fine! Ah, how strange!" For, besides all these things, there were exquisite flowers to be seen, and animals of every shape and size, and pearls and corals, precious stones and sparkling gems, and pretty contrivances for the children to play with.

And the very best of it all was, that Randal possessed the key which he himself had made. He was as much the lord of the "wonderful palace" now as any one!

The villagers were indeed astonished when Randal went home, and related to them what he had seen. And they all *respected* the little locksmith, who, by his own honest toil, had gotten what they called, "The Key to the Treasures of Fairyland."

ROMANCE IN HISTORY.

HOW CICELY DANCED BEFORE THE KING.

BY THOMAS ARCHER.

The old manor-house of Sir Christopher Burroughs of Stolham, Norfolk, lay shining in the last rays of the setting sun, on the eve of May Day 1646. The long range of windows along the front of the building between the two buttresses flashed with crimson and gold; for the house faced the south-west, and the brilliant light that shone from the rim of the blood-red cloud behind which the sun was sinking, glowed deep on the diamond panes. But the house was lighted within as well as without. In the large low-ceilinged dining-hall wax candles burned in great silver sconces, and the cloth was laid for supper. In the upper room the gleams that came through the spaces between the heavy curtains showed that there was company there. If any one had gone close to the porch and listened, he could have heard the sound of voices talking loudly, and now and then a laugh, or could have seen the shadows of servants passing to and fro in the buttery just within the great hall; nay, any one going round the corner of the house where there was an angle of the wall of the garden, could have heard from an upper window the sound of a lute playing a slow and stately measure, and if his ears had been very sharp indeed, he would have detected the light footfalls of dancers on the polished oaken floor.

It was an exciting time; for King Charles I and his cavaliers and the army that they commanded had been beaten by Oliver Cromwell and the soldiers of the Parliament at Naseby, in Northamptonshire, and the King had lost all his baggage and his letters and papers. After this Charles had been from place to place with his army, till he reached Oxford, where his council was staying, and from this town he thought he should be able either to get to London or to go northward and join the Scotch army.

But news had just come to Sir Christopher Burroughs that Cromwell and his general, Fairfax, had marched to Newbury, only a mile from Oxford; and though the worthy knight of Stolham was not fighting for the King any more than most of his neighbours in Norfolk were, he was more on the side of the Royal cause than on that of the Parliament; so that the report of the King's danger gave him a good deal of anxiety, and he and his friends and their ladies were talking about it as they waited for the butler to come and tell them that supper was ready. The troubles of the times did not always prevent people from eating and drinking and having merry-makings. The people around Stolham did not care enough for the Royal cause to give up all pleasures; and some of them—friends of Sir Christopher too—were more inclined to side with the Parliament and the Puritan generals, though at present they said very little about it; and Sir Christopher presently called out,—

"Well, we met not to talk of politics or of the King's affairs; so let us to supper, though I cannot but say that I would fain see the ceasing of this strife, and the King with his own again."

"Yes, with his own; but not with that which belongs to his subjects," said a farmer, who had been fined for not paying the taxes which the King had ordered to be forced upon the people without the consent of Parliament.

"Come, come," said Dame Burroughs, laughing and taking the farmer's arm, "we women hear enough of such talk every day in the week; but to-morrow will be May Day, and there will be open house to our friends, and for the lads and lasses, dancing at the May-pole, and a supper in the barn. Let us keep English hearts within us even in these dark times, and make merry as we can."

"But methinks the May-pole is no more than a pagan thing, an idol to encourage to vanity and profane dancing," said a sour-faced man, who had been standing by the window.

"It may have been a pagan custom once," said Sir Christopher; "and the same may be said of preaching from a pulpit; but all depends on the way of it, and not on the thing itself. As to dancing, it is an old custom enough; there is Scripture warrant for it perhaps, and it comes naturally to all young creatures. I'll be bound, now, that our Dick and his little cousin Cicely are at this moment getting the steps of the gavotte or the other gambadoes that have come to us from France and Spain, that they may figure before the company to-morrow."

"That are they!" said the dame laughing, as a servant opened the door, and each of Sir Christopher's friends gave a hand to a lady to lead them down to supper. "Hark! don't you hear my kinswoman's lute? Poor, kind Dorothy, she will play to them for the hour long, and likes nothing better. I can hear their little feet pit-a-patting; and Dick would insist on putting on his new fine suit, all brave with Spanish point and ribbon velvet, and the boy has buckled on a sword, too, while the little puss, Cicely, not to be backward, is all a prop with a stiff petticoat and a brocaded fardingale, and has on her little silk cap with the pearls, just as I have heard the fashion is among the Queen's French ladies of honour. Hark! there they go, tum-tum-ty, tum-twenty-tum, tum-twenty-tum! Bless their little hearts!"

The sour-faced man made a grimace; for his wife was just before him, and he could see her feet moving in time to the music as they all went down into the great hall laughing and talking; nor did the sound of the music cease till it was shut out by the closing of the door after they had sat down to supper; and even then it came upon them in gushes of melody every time a servant opened the door, to bring in another dish or a flagon of ale or of wine.

They heard it when, supper being nearly over, the butler came in softly and whispered to Sir Christopher, who, asking them to excuse him for a moment, went out into the hall.

A horseman was standing there, booted and spurred, and with his riding whip in his hand, and his steed was snorting, and scraping the ground outside.

"Do you know me again, Sir Christopher?" said the man, in a low voice.

"Let me bring you to the light," muttered the knight, leading him to the porch where there was a lantern hanging. "To be sure. I have seen you up at Whitehall and at Oxford, too, and are not likely to forget His Majesty's Groom of the Chambers. How fares it with our Royal Master?"

"Why, it stands this way, sir, as I take it," whispered the visitor. "His Majesty must either fly the country or reach the army of the Scots, which he has no liking for, or raise the eastern counties and risk another battle. As it is, we have come safe out of Oxford, where Fairfax and the arch-rebel Cromwell are closing upon the city, and the king has ridden behind me after I had trimmed off his pointed beard, and made him look as much like a servant as is possible to his sainted person. I left him an hour ago after we had left Deeping, for I came on here to see if you could receive him, not according to his rank, but as a plain guest, with the name of Thomas Williams; for there are those about who might be meddlesome, and His Majesty can only tarry for two or three days, waiting for a message from the Scots generals, to be brought by a trusty hand. I had feared that His Majesty would have overtaken me, for my horse cast a shoe, and came limping along for a mile or more, till at the smithy yonder by the roadside I found a farrier."

"Bring my dear friend Mr. Thomas Williams on with you," said Sir Christopher loudly, as the door opened and a serving man came out; "he shall be welcome for old times' sake when we were at college together, and tell him I will not have him put up at the inn while there is a bed and a bottle at Stolham Manor."

Now neither Sir Christopher nor this visitor, who was the King's Groom of the Chamber, knew that the King, hearing the sound of horsemen behind him, had ridden past and turned down a bye-road, which all the same led him to Stolham; still less did they imagine that he was actually in the old manor house while they were talking there in the hall; because they had no notion of what had happened in the room where Mistress Dorothy was twanging the lyre, and the two young cousins were footing to the tune of Valparaiso Bay.

While the children were in the very midst of a figure and Dick was snapping his fingers, and Cicely was making the grand *chasse*, Mistress Dorothy, glancing up from her music towards the window, had seen a pale face looking through the pane. She was not a woman to scream or to faint, for she was a quiet, staid, middle-aged person of much experience, and had lived in London, where she went to Court more than once with Sir Christopher and her kinswoman Dame Burroughs; so she kept on playing, and walked a little nearer to the window. The man who was outside—for it was a man, and he had climbed the angle of the wall, and now sat amidst the ivy close to the window-sill—beckoned to her, and as she advanced opened the breast of his coat, and showed a great jewel fastened with a gold chain under his vest.

Another moment, and she had unfastened the window, and he had raised himself to the sill and come in. He was dressed like a servant,—a groom,—for he wore high riding-boots and spurs, and had a cloak strapped round his waist; he seemed to forget to take off his hat, but stood still in the middle of the room, as Mistress Dorothy suddenly knelt before him, and said in a whisper, "Children, children, kneel; it is the King!"

Then the visitor removed his hat and showed his high, handsome face. Dick and Cicely also fell on their knees, but the King said, "Rise, madam; rise, little ones; and pardon my intrusion. I am travelling secretly, and was on my way hither when I found that I was followed, and so left my horse at the inn in the next village, and walked on. I would not that Sir Christopher Burroughs should be summoned, for my pursuers will ere long be at the gate, and, not finding me here, may pass."

Now Dick Burroughs was as sharp a little blade as could be found between Stolham and Land's End, and quick as lightning he said, "But, Majesty, if it be no offence, let Cousin Cicely and I go on with our dancing, for there be some friends of Sir Christopher at supper, and should they or the servants no longer hear the lute, and think that we be tired, they may be sent to call us to bed, seeing that to-morrow will be May Day, and we shall rise early."

"And then, Your Majesty," lisped Cicely, "if anybody break in and come up here and see us dancing, they will go away, and you can hide behind the hangings yonder."

"You are a bright lad, and you a loyal little lady," said Charles, with a grave smile.

"There is a horseman coming up the road," said Dick, in a whisper. "Your Majesty had best find a hiding-place, and I will show it you. Above this room is the turret, and behind the hangings here is a door, where a ladder goes straight up the wall to take you to the turret-room, from which you can see far up and down the road. Let me go first and light Your Majesty, and carry your cloak." Then, taking a candle from the music stand, he began to mount the steps.

"Thou'rt a brave lad," said the King, "and I'll follow thee."

"And it shall go hard but I'll get thee some supper, your Majesty," said Dick; "but Cis and I must keep on dancing till all the guests be gone,—and you will see who comes and leaves,—even if it be till daybreak, for there is a May moon shining all night."

"Now, Mistress Dorothy, now, Cis," cried Dick, when he had come down and closed door and curtain, "music, music, for we must keep on dancing." The dancing never ceased, but Dick stole to the buttery and found a pie and a flagon of wine, which he carried with cup, knife, and napkin, to the King in the turret-room, and then down to dance again, till his legs ached and poor Cicely began to droop.

There was a knock at the door, and the stumbling of feet upon the stair, and then the voice of Sir Christopher outside saying, "What warrant ye have to enter this house I know not; but as you take not my word, look for yourselves." With that he opened the door, and two men looked into the room.

"Dance up, Cis," whispered Dick, who gave a skip, and pretended to see nobody. "Play a little faster, Mistress Dorothy."

"Now," said Sir Christopher, to the two fellows who stood outside, "mayhap you will leave these children to their sport till it is time for them to go to bed;" and with that he shut the door, and the fellows went lumbering down the stair. It seemed to be hours afterward when Sir Christopher again appeared. He opened the door suddenly, and he was not alone. Dame Burroughs was with him and a strange gentleman.

"What! not in bed, you naughty rogues!" he said, as his eye fell on Cissy, who was sitting on the floor, her head upon her hands, fast asleep.

"Dick, lad, what ails thee?" For Dick was standing by the hangings with the sword that he carried half-drawn from the scabbard, and great black rings round his eyes, and his legs trembling.

"Come, Dick," said the knight, "this is His Majesty's Groom of the Chambers, and I would that we knew where our royal master could be found."

"Here he is," said a deep voice from behind the curtain, as the King drew it aside and stepped into the room. The music ceased, Madame Dorothy gave a great cry. Charles stooped and caught up Cicely from the ground in his arms and kissed her.

"Come, sweetheart," he said, "thou hast danced for the King till thou art half-dead, but the King will not forget thee. Richard, thou'rt a brave lad, and thou must come and kiss me, too. If we both live, thou shalt not repent having served Charles Stuart both with head and feet."

A MOTHER OF QUEENS.

A ROMANCE OF HISTORY.

One day, I will not say how many years ago, a young woman stepped from a country waggon that had just arrived at the famous Chelsea inn, "the Goat and Compasses," a name formed by corrupting time out of the pious original, "God encompasseth us."

The young woman seemed about eighteen years of age and was neatly dressed, though in the plain rustic fashion of the times. She was well formed and good-looking, both form and looks giving indications of the ruddy health due to the bright sun and the fresh air of the country.

After stepping from the waggon, which the driver immediately led into the court-yard, the girl stood for a moment uncertain which way to go, when the mistress of the inn, who had come to the door, observed her hesitation, and asked her to enter and take a rest.

The young woman readily accepted the invitation, and soon after, by the kindness of the landlady, found herself by the fireside of a nicely sanded parlour, with a good meal before her—welcome indeed after her long and tedious journey.

"And so, my girl," said the landlady, after having heard the whole particulars of the young woman's situation and history, "so thou hast come all this way to seek service, and hast no friend but John Hodge, the waggoner? Truly, he is like to give thee but small help, wench, towards getting a place."

"Is service, then, difficult to be had?" asked the young woman, sadly.

"Ay, marry, good situations, at least, are somewhat hard to find. But have a good heart, child," said the landlady, and as she continued she looked round her with an air of pride and dignity; "thou see'st what I have come to, myself; and I left the country a young thing, just like thyself, with as little to look to. But 't isn't every one, for certain, that must look for such a fortune, and, in any case, it must first be worked for. I showed myself a good servant before my poor old Jacob, heaven rest his soul, made me mistress of 'the Goat and Compasses.' So mind thee, girl——"

The landlady's speech might have continued indefinitely—for the good dame loved well to hear the sound of her own voice—but for the interruption occasioned by the entrance of a gentleman, whom the landlady rose and welcomed heartily.

"Ha! dame," said the new-comer, who was a stout respectably attired man of middle age, "how sells the good ale? Scarcely a drop left in thy cellars, I hope?"

"Enough left to give your worship a draught after your long walk," said the landlady, as she rose to fulfil the promise implied in her words. "I did not walk," was the gentleman's reply, "but took a pair of oars down the river. Thou know'st, dame, I always come to Chelsea myself to see if thou lackest anything."

"Ay, sir," replied the landlady, "and it is by that way of doing business that you have made yourself, as all the city says, the richest man in the Brewers' Corporation, if not in all London itself."

"Well, dame, the better for me if it is so," said the brewer, with a smile; "but let us have thy mug, and this pretty friend of thine shall pleasure us, mayhap, by tasting with us."

The landlady was not long in producing a stoup of ale, knowing that her visitor never set an example hurtful to his own interests by countenancing the consumption of foreign spirits.

"Right, hostess," said the brewer, when he had tasted it, "well made and well kept, and that is giving both thee and me our dues. Now, pretty one," said he, filling one of the measures or glasses which had been placed beside the stoup, "wilt thou drink this to thy sweetheart's health?"

The poor country girl to whom this was addressed declined the proffer civilly, and with a blush; but the landlady exclaimed:

"Come, silly wench, drink his worship's health; he is more likely to do thee a service, if it so please him, than John the waggoner. The girl has come many a mile," continued the hostess, "to seek a place in town, that she may burden her family no more at home."

"To seek service!" exclaimed the brewer; "why, then, it is perhaps well met with us. Has she brought a character with her, or can you speak for her, dame?"

"She has never yet been from home, sir, but her face is her character," said the kind-hearted landlady; "I warrant me she will be a diligent and trusty one."

"Upon thy prophecy, hostess, will I take her into my own service; for but yesterday was my housekeeper complaining of the want of help, since my office in the corporation has brought me more into the way of entertaining the people of the ward."

Ere the wealthy brewer and deputy left "the Goat and Compasses," arrangements were made for sending the country girl to his house in the city on the following day.

Proud of having done a kind action, the garrulous hostess took advantage of the circumstance to deliver a long harangue to the young woman on her new duties, and on the dangers to which youth is exposed in large cities. The girl listened to her with modest thankfulness, but a more minute observer than the good landlady might have seen in the eye and countenance of the girl a quiet firmness of expression, such as might have shown the lecture to be unnecessary. However, the landlady's lecture ended, and towards the evening of the day following her arrival at "the Goat and Compasses," the girl found herself installed as housemaid in the home of the rich brewer.

The fortunes of this girl it is our purpose to follow. It was not long before the post of housekeeper became vacant, and the girl, recommended by her own industry and skill, became housekeeper in the brewer's family. In this situation she was brought more than formerly into contact with her master, who found ample grounds for admiring her propriety of conduct, as well as her skilful economy of management. By degrees he began to find her presence necessary to his happiness; and at length offered her his hand. It was accepted; and she, who but four or five years before had left her country home a poor peasant girl, became the wife of one of the richest citizens of London.

For many years, Mr. Aylesbury, for such was the name of the brewer, and his wife, lived in happiness and comfort together. He was a man of good family and connections, and consequently of higher breeding than his wife could boast of, but on no occasion had he ever to blush for the partner whom he had chosen.

Her calm, inborn strength, if not dignity, of character, united with an extreme quickness of perception, made her fill her place at her husband's table with as much grace and credit as if she had been born to the station. As time ran on, Mr. Aylesbury became an alderman, and, subsequently, a sheriff of the city, and in consequence of the latter elevation, was knighted.

Afterwards the important place which the wealthy brewer filled in the city called down upon him the attention and favour of the king, Charles I., then anxious to conciliate the goodwill of the citizens, and the city knight received the farther honour of a baronetcy.

Lady Aylesbury, in the first years of her married life, gave birth to a daughter, who proved an only child, and around whom, as was natural, all the hopes and wishes of the parents entwined themselves. This daughter had only reached the age of seventeen when her father died, leaving an immense fortune behind him.

It was at first thought that the widow and her daughter would become inheritors of this without the shadow of a dispute. But it proved otherwise. Certain relatives of the deceased brewer set up a plea upon the foundation of a will made in their favour before he married.

With her wonted firmness, Lady Aylesbury immediately took steps for the vindication of her rights.

A young lawyer, who had been a frequent guest at her husband's table, and of whose abilities she had formed a high opinion, was the person whom she fixed upon as her legal representative. Edward Hyde was, indeed, a youth of great ability. Though only twenty-four years of age at the

period referred to, and though he had spent much of his youthful time in the society of the gay and fashionable of the day, he had not neglected the pursuits to which his family's wish, as well as his own tastes, had devoted him. But it was with considerable hesitation, and with a feeling of anxious diffidence, that he consented to undertake the charge of Lady Aylesbury's case; for certain feelings were at work in his heart which made him fearful of the responsibility, and anxious about the result.

The young lawyer, however, became counsel for the brewer's widow and daughter, and, by a striking display of eloquence and legal knowledge, gained their suit.

Two days afterwards, the successful pleader was seated beside his two clients. Lady Aylesbury's usual manner was quiet and composed, but she now spoke warmly of her gratitude to the preserver of her daughter from want, and also tendered a fee—a payment munificent, indeed, for the occasion.

The young barrister did not seem at ease during Lady Aylesbury's expression of her feelings. He shifted upon his chair, changed colour, looked to Miss Aylesbury, played with the purse before him, tried to speak, but stopped short, and changed colour again. Thinking only of best expressing her own gratitude, Lady Aylesbury appeared not to observe her visitor's confusion, but rose, saying:

"In token that I hold your services above compensation in the way of money, I wish also to give you a memorial of my gratitude in another shape."

As she spoke thus, she drew from her pocket a bunch of keys such as every lady carried in those days, and left the room.

What passed during her absence between the young people whom she had left together will be shown by the sequel. When Lady Aylesbury returned, she found her daughter standing with averted eyes, with her hand in that of the young barrister, who knelt on the mother's entrance, and besought her consent to their union. Confessions of mutual affection ensued, and Lady Aylesbury was not long in giving her consent to their wishes.

"Give me leave, however," said she to the lover, "to place around your neck the memorial which I intended for you. The chain"—it was a superb gold one—"was a token of gratitude, from the ward in which he lived, to my dear husband." Lady Aylesbury's calm, serious eyes were filled with tears as she threw the chain round Edward's neck, saying, "These links were borne on the neck of a worthy and an honoured man. May thou, my beloved son, attain to still higher honours."

The wish was fulfilled, though not until danger and suffering had tried severely the parties concerned. The son-in-law of Lady Aylesbury became an eminent member of the English bar, and also an important speaker in Parliament.

When Oliver Cromwell brought the king to the scaffold, and established the Commonwealth, Sir Edward Hyde—for he had held a government post, and had been knighted—was too prominent a member of the royalist party to escape the attention of the new rulers, and was obliged to reside upon the continent till the Restoration.

While abroad, he was so much esteemed by the exiled prince (afterwards Charles II.) as to be appointed Lord High Chancellor of England, which appointment was confirmed when the king was restored to his throne. Some years afterwards, Hyde was elevated to the peerage, first in the rank of a baron, and subsequently as Earl of Clarendon, a title which he made famous in English history.

These events, so briefly narrated, occupied considerable time, during which Lady Aylesbury passed her days in quiet and retirement. She had now the gratification of beholding her daughter Countess of Clarendon, and of seeing the grandchildren who had been born to her mingling as equals with the noblest in the land.

But a still more exalted fate awaited the descendants of the poor friendless girl who had come to London, in search of service, in a waggoner's van. Her granddaughter, Anne Hyde, a young lady of spirit, wit, and beauty, had been appointed, while her family were living abroad, one of the maids of honour to the Princess of Orange, and in that situation had attracted so strongly the regard of James, Duke of York, and brother of Charles II., that he contracted a private marriage with her.

The birth of a child forced on a public announcement of this contract, and ere long the granddaughter of Lady Aylesbury was openly received by the Royal Family, and the people of England, as Duchess of York, and sister-in-law of the sovereign.

Lady Aylesbury did not long survive this event. But ere she sunk into the grave, at a ripe old age, she saw her descendants heirs-presumptive of the British Crown. King Charles had married, but had no children, and, accordingly, his brother's family had the prospect and the right of succession. And, in reality, two immediate descendants of the poor peasant girl did ultimately fill the throne—Mary (wife of William III.), and Queen Anne.

Such were the fortunes of the young woman whom the worthy landlady of "the Goat and Compasses" was fearful of encouraging to rash hopes by a reference to the lofty position it had been her good fortune to attain in life. In one assertion, at least, the hostess was undoubtedly right—success in life must be laboured for in some way or other. Without the prudence and

propriety of conduct which won the esteem and love of her wealthy employer, the sequel of the country girl's history could not have been such as it was.

THE STORY OF GRIZEL COCHRANE.

A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

BY W. R. C.

Sir John Cochrane of Ochiltree, the father of our heroine, was the second son of the first Earl of Dundonald. He was a distinguished friend of Sidney, Russell, and other illustrious men, who signalised themselves in England by their opposition to the court; and he had so long endeavoured in vain to procure some improvement in the national affairs, that he at length began to despair of his country altogether, and formed the design of emigrating to America. Having gone to London in 1683, with a view to a colonising expedition to South Carolina, he became involved in the deliberations of the Whig party, which at that time tended towards a general insurrection in England and Scotland, for the purpose of forcing an alteration of the royal councils and the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne. In furtherance of this plan, Sir John pledged himself to assist the Earl of Argyle in raising the malcontents in Scotland.

By the treachery of some of the subordinate agents this design was detected prematurely; and while some were unfortunately taken and executed, among whom were Sidney and Lord Russell, the rest fled from the kingdom. Of the latter number were the Earl of Argyle, Sir John Cochrane, and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth. The fugitives found safety in Holland, where they remained in peace till the death of Charles II. in February 1685, when the Duke of York, the object politically of their greatest detestation, became king. It was then determined to invade Scotland with a small force, to embody the Highland adherents of Argyle with the west country Presbyterians, and, marching into England, to raise the people as they moved along, and not rest till they had produced the desired melioration of the state. The expedition sailed in May; but the Government was enabled to take such precautions as, from the very first, proved a complete frustration to their designs. Argyle lingered timidly in his own country, and, finally, against the advice of Cochrane and Hume, who were his chief officers, made some unfortunate movements, which ended in the entire dissolution of his army, and his own capture and death. While this well-meaning but weak nobleman committed himself to a low disguise, in the vain hope of effecting his escape, Sir John Cochrane, after a gallant fight against overwhelming numbers, finding his enemies were gathering large reinforcements, retired with his troops to a neighbouring wilderness or morass, where he dismissed them, with the request that each man would provide the best way he could for his own safety. For himself, having received two severe wounds in the body during the engagement, and being worn out with fatigue, he sought refuge in the house of his uncle, Mr. Gavin Cochrane of Craigmuir, who lived at no great distance from the place of encounter. Here he was seized and removed to Edinburgh, where, after being paraded through the streets bound and bare-headed, and conducted by the common hangman, he was lodged in the tollbooth on July 3rd, 1685, there to await his trial as a traitor. The day of trial came, and he was condemned to death, in spite of the most strenuous exertions of his aged father, Earl of Dundonald.

No friend or relative had been permitted to see him from the time of his apprehension; but it was now signified to him that any of his family he desired to communicate with might be allowed to visit him. Anxious, however, to deprive his enemies of an opportunity of an accusation against his sons, he immediately conveyed to them his earnest entreaties, and indeed commands, that they should refrain from availing themselves of this leave till the night before his execution. This was a sacrifice which it required his utmost fortitude to make; and it had left him to a sense of the most desolate loneliness, insomuch that, when, late in the evening, he heard his prison door unlocked, he lifted not his eyes toward it, imagining that the person who entered could only be the gaoler, who was particularly repulsive in his countenance and manner. What, then, was his surprise and momentary delight when he beheld before him his only daughter, and felt her arms entwining his neck! After the first transport of greeting she became sensible that, in order to palliate his misery, she must put a strong curb upon her own, and in a short time was calm enough to enter into conversation with her father upon the subject of his present situation, and to deliver a message from the old earl, her grandfather, by which he was informed that an appeal had been made from him to the king, and means taken to propitiate Father Peters, his Majesty's confessor, who, it was well known, often dictated to him in matters of state. It appeared evident, however, by the turn which their discourse presently took, that neither father nor daughter were at all sanguine in their hopes from this negotiation. The Earl of Argyle had been executed but a few days before, as had also several of his principal adherents, though men of less consequence than Sir John Cochrane; and it was therefore improbable that he, who had been so conspicuously active in the insurrection, should be allowed to escape the punishment which his enemies had it now in their power to inflict. Besides all this, the treaty to be entered into with Father Peters would require some time to adjust, and meanwhile the arrival of the warrant for execution must every day be looked for.

Under these circumstances, several days passed, each of which found Miss Grizel Cochrane an

inmate of her father's prison for as many hours as she was permitted. Grizel Cochrane was only at that period eighteen years old; she had, however, a natural strength of character, that rendered her capable of a deed which has caused her history to vie with that of the most distinguished of heroines.

Ever since her father's condemnation, her daily and nightly thoughts had dwelt on the fear of her grandfather's communication with the king's confessor being rendered unavailable for want of the time necessary for enabling the friends in London to whom it was trusted, to make their application, and she boldly determined to execute a plan, whereby the arrival of the death-warrant would be retarded.

At that time horses were used as a mode of conveyance so much more than carriages that almost every gentlewoman had her own steed, and Miss Cochrane, being a skilful rider, was possessed of a well-managed palfrey, on whose speed and other good qualities she had been accustomed to depend. One morning after she had bidden her father farewell, long ere the inhabitants of Edinburgh were astir, she found herself many miles on the road to the borders. She had taken care to attire herself in a manner which corresponded with the design of passing herself off for a young serving-woman journeying on a borrowed horse to the house of her mother in a distant part of the country; and by only resting at solitary cottages, where she generally found the family out at work, save perhaps an old woman or some children, she had the good fortune, on the second day after leaving Edinburgh, to reach in safety the abode of her old nurse, who lived on the English side of the Tweed, four miles beyond the town of Berwick. In this woman she knew she could place implicit confidence, and to her, therefore, revealed her secret. She had resolved, she said, to make an attempt to save her father's life, by stopping the postman, an equestrian like herself, and forcing him to deliver up his bags, in which she expected to find the fatal warrant. In pursuance of this design she had brought with her a brace of small pistols, together with a horseman's cloak, tied up in a bundle, and hung on the crutch of her saddle, and now borrowed from her nurse the attire of her foster-brother, which, as he was a slight-made lad, fitted her reasonably well.

She had, by means which it is unnecessary here to detail, possessed herself of the most minute information with regard to the places at which the postmen rested on their journey, one of which was a small public-house, kept by a widow woman, on the outskirts of the little town of Belford. There the man who received the bag at Durham was accustomed to arrive about six o'clock in the morning, and take a few hours' repose before proceeding farther on his journey. In pursuance of the plan laid down by Miss Cochrane, she arrived at this inn about an hour after the man had composed himself to sleep, in the hope of being able, by the exercise of her wit and dexterity, to ease him of his charge.

Having put her horse into the stable, which was a duty that devolved on the guests at this little change-house, from its mistress having no ostler, she entered the only apartment which the house afforded, and demanded some refreshment. "Sit down at the end of that table," said the old woman, "for the best I have to give you is there already; and be pleased, my bonny man, to make as little noise as ye can, for there's ane asleep in that bed that I like ill to disturb." Miss Cochrane promised fairly; and after attempting to eat some of the viands, which were the remains of the sleeping man's meal, she asked for some cold water. "What," said the old dame, as she handed it to her, "ye are a water-drinker, are ye? It's but an ill custom for a change-house." "I am aware of that," replied her guest, "and, therefore, when in a public house, always pay for it the price of the stronger potation, which I cannot take." "Indeed—well, that is but just," responded the dame, "and I think the more of you for such reasonable conduct." "Is the well where you get this water near at hand?" said the young lady; "for if you will take the trouble to bring me some from it, as this is rather warm, it shall be considered in the lawing." "It is a good bit off," said the woman; "but I cannot refuse to fetch some for such a civil, discreet lad, and will be as quick as I can. But, for any sake, take care and don't meddle with these pistols," she continued, pointing to a pair of pistols on the table, "for they are loaded, and I am always terrified for them." Saying this, she disappeared; and Miss Cochrane, who would have contrived some other errand for her had the well been near, no sooner saw the door shut than she passed, with trembling eagerness, and a cautious but rapid step, across the floor to the place where the man lay soundly sleeping in one of those close wooden bedsteads common in the houses of the poor, the door of which was left half open to admit the air, and which she opened still wider, in the hope of seeing the mail-bag and being able to seize upon it. But what was her dismay when she beheld only a part of the integument which contained what she would have sacrificed her life a thousand times to obtain just peeping out from below the shaggy head and brawny shoulders of its keeper, who lay in such a position upon it as to give not the smallest hope of its extraction without his being aroused from his nap. A few moments of observation served to convince her that, if she obtained possession of this treasure, it must be in some other way, and again closing the door of the bed, she approached the pistols, and having taken them one by one from the holsters she as quickly as possible drew out their loading, which, having secreted, she returned them to their cases, and resumed her seat at the foot of the table. Here she had barely time to recover from the agitation into which the fear of the man's awaking during her recent occupation had thrown her, when the old woman returned with the water, and having taken a draught, of which she stood much in need, she settled her account, much to her landlady's content, by paying for the water the price of a pot of beer. Having then carelessly asked and ascertained how much longer the other guest was likely to continue his sleep, she left the house, and mounting her horse, set off at a trot, in a different direction from that in which she had arrived. Fetching a compass of two or three miles, she once more fell into the high road between Belford and Berwick, where she walked her horse

gently on, awaiting the coming up of the postman. On his coming close up, she civilly saluted him, put her horse into the same pace with his, and rode on for some way in his company. He was a strong, thick-set fellow, with a good-humoured countenance, which did not seem to Miss Cochrane, as she looked anxiously upon it, to savour much of hardy daring. He rode with the mail-bags strapped firmly to his saddle in front, close to the holsters (for there were two), one containing the letters direct from London, and the other those taken up at the different post-offices on the road. After riding a short distance together, Miss Cochrane deemed it time, as they were nearly half-way between Belford and Berwick, to commence her operations. She therefore rode nearly close to her companion, and said, in a tone of determination, "Friend, I have taken a fancy for those mail-bags of yours, and I must have them; therefore take my advice, and deliver them up quietly, for I am provided for all hazards. I am mounted, as you see, on a fleet steed; I carry firearms; and, moreover, am allied with those who are stronger, though not bolder than myself. You see yonder wood," she continued, pointing to one at the distance of about a mile, with an accent and air which was meant to carry intimidation with it. "Again, I say, take my advice; give me the bags, and speed back the road you came for the present, nor dare to approach that wood for at least two or three hours to come."

There was in such language from a stripling something so surprising that the man looked on Miss Cochrane for an instant in silent and unfeigned amazement. "If," said he, as soon as he found his tongue, "you mean, my young master, to make yourself merry at my expense, you are welcome. I am no sour churl to take offence at the idle words of a foolish boy. But if," he said, taking one of his pistols from the holster, and turning its muzzle toward her, "ye are mad enough to harbour one serious thought of such a matter, I am ready for you. But, methinks, my lad, you seem at an age when robbing a garden or an old woman's fruit-stall would befit you better, if you must turn thief, than taking his Majesty's mails from a stout man such as I am upon his highway. Be thankful, however, that you have met with one who will not shed blood if he can help it, and sheer off before you provoke me to fire."

"Nay," said his young antagonist, "I am not fonder of bloodshed than you are; but if you will not be persuaded, what can I do? for I have told you a truth, *that mail I must and will have*. So now choose," she continued, as she drew one of the small pistols from under her cloak, and deliberately cocking it, presented it in his face.

"Nay, then, your blood be on your own head," said the fellow, as he raised his hand, and fired his pistol, which, however, only flashed in the pan. Dashing this weapon to the ground, he lost not a moment in pulling out the other, which he also aimed at his assailant, and fired with the same result. In a transport of rage and disappointment the man sprang from his horse and made an attempt to seize her; but, by an adroit use of her spurs, she eluded his grasp and placed herself out of his reach. Meanwhile, his horse had moved forward some yards, and to see and seize the advantage presented by this circumstance was one and the same to the heroic girl, who, darting toward it, caught the bridle, and having led her prize off about a hundred yards, stopped while she called to the thunderstruck postman to remind him of her advice about the wood. She then put both horses to their speed, and on turning to look at the man she had robbed, had the pleasure of perceiving that her mysterious threat had taken effect, and he was now pursuing his way back to Belford.

Miss Cochrane speedily entered the wood to which she had alluded, and tying the strange horse to a tree, out of all observation from the road, proceeded to unfasten the straps of the mail. By means of a sharp penknife, which set at defiance the appended locks, she was soon mistress of the contents, and with an eager hand broke open the Government despatches, which were unerringly pointed out to her by their address to the council in Edinburgh and their imposing weight and broad seals of office. Here she found not only the fatal warrant for her father's death, but also many other sentences inflicting different degrees of punishment on various delinquents. These, however, it may readily be supposed, she did not then stop to examine; she contented herself with tearing them into small fragments and placing them carefully in her bosom.

The intrepid girl now mounted her steed and rode off, leaving all the private papers where she had found them, imagining (what eventually proved the case) that they would be discovered ere long from the hints she had thrown out about the wood, and thus reach their proper places of destination. She now made all haste to reach the cottage of her nurse, where, having not only committed to the flames the fragments of the dreaded warrant, but also the other obnoxious papers, she quickly resumed her female garments, and was again, after this manly and daring action, the simple and unassuming Miss Grizel Cochrane. Leaving the cloak and pistols behind her, to be concealed by her nurse, she again mounted her horse and directed her flight towards Edinburgh, and, by avoiding as much as possible the high road, and resting at sequestered cottages, as she had done before, and that only twice for a couple of hours each time, she reached town early in the morning of the next day.

It must now suffice to say that the time gained by the heroic act related above was productive of the end for which it was undertaken, and that Sir John Cochrane was pardoned, at the instigation of the king's favourite counsellor, who interceded for him in consequence of receiving a bribe of five thousand pounds from the Earl of Dundonald.

A WIFE'S STRATAGEM.

A TALE OF 1715.

BY LUCY HARDY.

It was with mingled feelings of annoyance and satisfaction that old Lady Glenlivet and her daughters received the intelligence that the only son of the house was about to bring an English bride to the grey old Scotch mansion where so many generations of his "forbears" had lived and died.

Sir Alick was six-and-twenty, and it was therefore fully time that he should marry and carry on the traditions of the house, and, as the Glenlivet's fortune did not match their "long pedigree," it was distinctly an advantage that the newly-wedded bride was so well dowered. But then, on the other hand, Mistress Mary Wilkinson was an Englishwoman, and Lady Glenlivet more than suspected the fact (adroitly veiled in her son's letter) that the young lady's fortune had been made in trade.

Sir Alick Glenlivet, visiting London for the first time in his life, had been hospitably entertained by a distant kinsman, a Scotch lawyer, who had settled in the English metropolis; and at his house had met with the orphan heiress of a substantial city trader, to whom Simon Glenlivet was guardian. To Alick, bred up in the comparative seclusion and obscurity of his Scottish home, the plunge into London life was as bewildering as delightful; and he soon thought sweet Mary Wilkinson, with her soft blue eyes and gentle voice, the fairest creature his eyes had ever rested upon; while to Mary, the handsome young Scotchman was like the hero in a Border tale.

"Happy the wooing that's not long a-doing." Mistress Mary was twenty-two, so of legal age to please herself in her choice of a husband; while Simon Glenlivet was still sufficiently a Scotchman at heart to consider an alliance with the "ancient and noble family" with which he himself claimed kinship an advantage which might fairly outbalance his lack of fortune.

To do the young man justice, Mary's wealth counted for nothing in his choice; he would as readily have married her had the fortune been all on his side. Indeed, it was with some qualms of conscience that Sir Alick now wrote to inform his mother of the sudden step which he had taken; half fearing that, in the eyes of the proud old Scotch dame, even Mary's beauty and fortune could scarcely compensate for her lack of "long descent."

And indeed, Lady Glenlivet's Highland pride was not at all well pleased to learn that her son had wedded a trader's daughter; though Mary (or Maisie, as her husband now called her) had received the education of a refined gentlewoman, and was far more well bred and accomplished than were the two tall, awkward daughters of the Glenlivet household; or, for the matter of that, than was the "auld leddy hersel'."

Lady Glenlivet, however, loved her son, and stifled down her feelings of disapproval for his sake. It was undeniable that Mary's money came in most usefully in paying off the mortgages which had so long crippled the Glenlivet estate; and when the bride and bridegroom arrived at their Scotch home, the ladies were speechless in their admiration at the bride's "providing." Such marvels of lace and brocades, such treasures of jewellery, such a display of new fashions had never been known in the neighbourhood before; and Isobel and Barbara, if not inclined to fall rapturously in love with their new sister, at least utterly lost their hearts over her wardrobe—nor such a very extensive or extravagant one after all, the bride had thought; but, in the eighteenth century, a wealthy London trader's only child would be reared in a far more luxurious manner than the daughters of many a "long descended" Scotch household.

Mary, or Maisie, certainly found her new home lacking in many comforts which were almost necessities in her eyes; but the girl was young, and sweet-tempered, and devotedly attached to her brave young husband, who equally adored his young wife. The prejudice excited against the new-comer on the score of her nationality and social rank softened down as the months went by; although old Lady Glenlivet often remarked that Maisie was "just English" whenever the younger lady's opinions or wishes did not entirely coincide with her own.

In the kindly patriarchal fashion of Scottish households of the day, Sir Alick's mother and sisters still resided under his roof; and Maisie, gentle and retiring by nature, never dreamt of attempting to depose the old lady from her position of house-mistress; so the "auld leddy" still kept the keys, and ruled the servants, and was as busy and notable as of yore; her new daughter being, in truth, often far more submissive to the good dame's sway than were either Isobel or Barbara, who occasionally "took the dorts" and would have their own wills.

Yet Maisie was happy enough in her new life—for had she not Alick and his devotion?—until dark clouds began to gather in the political horizon.

It was the year 1715, a year to be remembered in many an English and Scottish household for many a year to come. Whispers of plots and conspiracies were flying about the land; for the coming of the "wee German lairdie" was by no means universally acceptable, and many Jacobites who had acquiesced in the accession of "good Queen Anne" herself (a member of the ancient royal house), now shrank from acknowledging "the Elector" as their monarch. Simon Glenlivet, a shrewd and prudent man, who had lived in London and watched the course of political events,

had long ago laid aside any romantic enthusiasm for the cause of the exiled Stuarts, if he had ever possessed such a feeling; realising perhaps the truth of Sir John Maynard's reply to William III. when the king asked the old man if he had not survived "all his brother lawyers," "Ay, and if your Majesty had not come, I might shortly *have survived the law itself.*"

Maisie's father, like most of his brother-citizens, had welcomed the "Deliverer" with acclamations, and would doubtless have greeted the accession of George I. with equal enthusiasm had he lived to witness it. It was only after she crossed the Border that Maisie had heard the son of James II. alluded to save as the "Pretender," to whom his enemies denied any kinship with the Stuarts at all. Maisie, wise and discreet beyond her years, speedily learnt to stifle her own political opinions amid her husband's family circle; though indeed she was no eager supporter of any party. She had been duly taught that it was a duty to submit to the "powers that be," and to pray daily for the king; and like a dutiful little maiden of her time, piously obeyed her teacher's and guardian's injunctions, without troubling her head as to whether the actual lawful monarch of England was keeping his court at St. Germain's or St. James'. And Maisie's husband, to tell the truth, was scarcely a more vehement or interested politician than herself; though Sir Alick called himself a Jacobite because his father and mother had been Jacobites before him. Lady Glenlivet, a woman of narrow education and deeply rooted prejudices, was a strong partisan of the Stuart cause; strong with all the unreasoning vehemence of a worthy but ignorant woman. So, when the Earl of Mar's disastrous expedition was being secretly organised, the emissaries of the plotters found ready acceptance with the "auld leddy," who scrupled not to press and urge her son to join the "glorious undertaking" which should restore her lawful king to Scotland and bring added honours and lands to the Glenlivet family. Sir Alick, supremely happy in his domestic life, had at first small desire for embarking in the hazardous scheme of the wisdom and justice of which he felt less positively assured than did his mother. Sir Alick had seen something of the world during his visit to London, and had not been entirely uninfluenced by the views of his wise kinsman. But Lady Glenlivet was not the only foolish woman at that epoch who forced a wiser judging husband, son, or brother into joining a conspiracy which his better sense condemned; and Sir Alick, always greatly under his mother's influence, at length consented to attend that historic meeting at Braemar in the autumn of 1715, where, under pretence of a hunting party, the Earl of Mar assembled the disaffected Scottish nobility and gentry, and raised the Stuart standard, proclaiming King James III. of England and VII. of Scotland.

The "fiery cross" was circulated through the Highlands, and Sir Alick returned to his home to raise a troop of his own tenants and clansmen, at whose head he proposed to join the Earl of Mar.

Maisie, ordinarily so gentle and retiring, was now roused to unwonted and passionate protest. The scheme for the threatened "rising" was not unknown in England; and Simon Glenlivet wrote to his quondam ward, urging her most strongly to dissuade her husband from joining a rash conspiracy which could only bring ruin upon all who were engaged in it.

"'Tis hopeless—and I thank Heaven that it is so—to think of overturning the present condition of things," wrote the cautious London Scot; "and they who take part in this mad conspiracy—of which the English Government have fuller details than the conspirators wot of—will but lose their lands, and it may be their heads to boot. I pray thee, my pretty Molly, keep thy husband out of this snare."

But this command was not so easily followed. Since his visit to Braemar, Alick himself had caught the war fever, and, for once, his wife's entreaties, nay, even her tears and prayers, were disregarded by her husband! Sir Alick was all love and tenderness, but join the glorious expedition he must and would, encouraged in this resolve by mother, sister, and kinsfolk; Maisie's being the only dissenting voice; and, as Lady Glenlivet tauntingly remarked to her daughter-in-law, "it was not for the child of a mere English pock-pudding to decide what was fitting conduct for a Highland noble—Maisie should remember she had wedded into an honourable house, and not strive to draw her husband aside from the path of duty."

Unheeded by her husband, derided and taunted by his mother, Maisie could but weep in silent despair.

And so the day of parting came, and Alick, looking splendidly handsome in his military attire, stood to take his last farewell of wife and kindred, and to drink a parting cup to the success of the expedition.

"Fill me the quaick, Maisie," he said, with a kindly smile turning to his pale and heavy-eyed young wife. "Ye'll soon see me come back again to bid ye all put on your brows to grace the king's coronation at Edinburgh." To which hope Lady Glenlivet piously cried "Amen"; and Maisie turned to mix the stirrup cup, for the morning was raw and cold.

"Let Isobel lift the kettle, lass; it's far too heavy for thee," cried Lady Glenlivet; but alas! too late, for Maisie stumbled as she turned from the fire, and the chief part of the scalding water was emptied into one of the young man's long riding boots.

Alick's sudden yell of pain almost drowned Maisie's sobbing cry, and old Lady Glenlivet furiously exclaimed, forgetful of all courtesies,—

"Ye wretched gawk! ye little fule! ye ha' killed my puir lad!"

"Nay, nay, na sae bad as that, I judge. Dinna greet, Maisie, my bonnie bird—ye couldna help it,

my dow," cried Alick, recovering himself, and making a heroic effort to conceal the pain he felt. "Look to her, some of ye," he added sharply, as Maisie sank fainting on the floor.

It was a very severe scald, said the doctor whom the alarmed household quickly summoned, and it would be many a long day before Sir Alick would be fit to wear his boot or put foot in saddle again.

But thanks greatly to the devoted nursing he received from wife and mother, and to his own youth and health, Sir Alick completely recovered from the injury. But in the meantime, the bubble had burst, Sherrifmuir had been fought, Mar's army had been totally routed, the prisons in England and Scotland had been filled with his misguided followers, and the headsman and the hangman were beginning their ghastly work.

Sir Alick, thanks to the accident which had prevented his taking any overt part in the rebellion, had escaped both imprisonment and confiscation; and it was probably Simon Glenlivet's influence which had availed to cover over Sir Alick's dalliance with the Jacobite plotters.

Maisie had proved herself a most tender and efficient nurse, but it was now her turn to be ill, and one quiet day, after she had presented her lord with an heir to the Glenlivet name, she told him the whole truth about that lucky accident with the boiling water; but auld Leddy Glenlivet never knew that her son had been saved from a rebel's fate by a wife's stratagem.

THE KING'S TRAGEDY.

AN HISTORICAL TALE.

BY ALFRED H. MILES.

In the year 1436, a party of horsemen, weary and belated, were seen hurrying amid the deepening darkness of a December day towards the ferry of the Firth of Forth. Their high carriage, no less than the quality of their accoutrements, albeit dimmed and travel-stained by the splash of flood and field, showed them to be more than a mere party of traders seeking safety in numbers, and travelling in pursuit of gain. In the centre of the group rode a horseman, whose aspect and demeanour marked him as the chief, if not the leader, of the band; and by his side a lady, whose grace and beauty could not be altogether concealed by the closeness of her attire or the darkness of the night. These were the King and Queen of Scotland, James the First and his fair wife Joan, surrounded by a small band of faithful followers, bound for the monastery of the Black Friars of Perth to hold Christmas Carnival.

The weather and the day were wild enough, and these but only too truly reflected the surging passions of human hearts. The brave young king's desire to put down the marauding practices of his Highland subjects, and bring about a condition of things under which a "key" should be sufficient keep for a "castle," and a "bracken bush" enough protection for a "cow," together with, perhaps, a not always wise way of working so good a cause, had provoked the hostility of some of the Highland chiefs who lived by stealing their neighbours' property. This disaffection became formidable under the leadership of Sir Richard Graeme, brother of the Earl of Stratherne, whose earldom had been confiscated by the king, who feared its power with perhaps less justice than became his high purpose, and James and his retainers had need to watch and ward against open enemies and secret foes.

Silently, if not mournfully, the little band moved on, picking its way along the uneven shore, and peering anxiously through the deepening shadows for signs of the distant ferry. Like a cavalcade of ghosts, but dimly seen as dimly seeing, they pressed on, all eyes for what light might give them guidance, all ears for what sound might give them warning.

As they were descending to the beach, at the point where the ferry crossed the water, sight and sound combined to startle if not to terrify them; for out from behind a pile of rocks there sprang a wild, weird woman, who with waving arms and frantic shouts motioned them to go back. In an instant the whole cavalcade was in confusion. The horses reared and plunged, the men shouted and demanded who was there, and all the while the weird figure, whose tattered garments fluttered fantastically in the wind, waved her skinny arms wildly, and shouted, "Go back!"

Thinking that the woman might have some news of importance to the king, some of the retainers spurred forward and interrogated her; but she would say them nothing but "Go back"; adding at last "For the king alone—for the king alone!" Judging that she might desire to warn him of some treachery, even among his followers, the king rode forward and spoke to her, when, waving her hands towards the water, she screamed, "If once you cross that water, you will never return alive!" The king asked for news, but the old witch was not a chronicler but a prophetess, and catching at the king's rein she sought to turn him back.

By this time the retinue had closed in upon the singular pair, and the queen's anxiety doubtless stimulated the king's action. Shaking from his rein the woman's hand, he cried, "Forward!" and in a few moments the party had left the stormy land for the scarce more stormy sea.

After crossing the Firth of Forth the party made rapid progress, and in due course were safely and comfortably housed in the old monastery of the Dominicans of Perth. The gaieties of Court and Carnival soon obliterated, for a time at least, the memory of the discomforts of the journey; and the warning of the old witch, if remembered at all, was thought of with pity or dismissed with mirth. The festivities, which were maintained with vigour and brilliance for a considerable time, surrounded the king with both friends and foes. Sir Robert Stuart, who had been promised the kingdom by Sir Richard Graeme, was actually acting as chamberlain to the king he was plotting to dethrone; and the Earl of Athole and other conspirators were among the guests who, with loyal protestations, pledged the king's health and prosperity. Towards the close of the Carnival, when the month of February 1437 had almost waned to a close, while the rain beat upon the windows and the wind whistled wildly around the roof of the old monastery, in grim contrast with the scene of merriment that graced the halls within, the guests were startled by a loud knocking at the outer door. The king, gayest among the gay, was singing "The King's Quhair," a ballad of his own writing, when the usher interrupted him to announce the old witch of the Firth of Forth. She says "she must have speech with you," said the usher, and that her words "admit of no delay." But James was annoyed by the interruption, and, as it was midnight, ordered her to be sent away, promising to see her on the morrow. Driven forth at the king's command, the old beldame wrung her hands, and cried, "Woe! woe! To-morrow I shall not see his face!" and the usher, upon the king's interrogation, repeated her words to him and to the queen. Upon hearing them, both were filled with anxiety and fear, and thinking it best to close the festivities of the evening the king gave the signal for the finish of the feast, and the guests slowly separated and left the hall. The king's chamberlain was the last to leave, and his errand was one of treachery.

During the day the conspirators had been busily preparing for their opportunity. The locks of the hall had been tampered with so that their keys were of no avail. The bars by which the gates were barricaded were removed from their accustomed place. Planks had been surreptitiously placed across the moat that the enemy might obtain easy access to the stronghold; and Sir Richard Graeme, with three hundred followers in his train, was waiting for the signal to advance.

James and his wife stood hand in hand before the log fire of the great hall, while the bower-maidens of the queen prepared the royal bed in an alcove leading from the chamber. The old crone's warning had struck terror to the queen's heart, and unnerved the courage of the king. While looking anxiously at the burning logs in the fireplace, again they heard the voice of the witch, inarticulate in its frenzy, uttering a wild, wailing scream. In an instant the waiting-women had drawn back the curtains, and the red glow of a hundred torches flashed upon the walls of the Hall. The king looked round for a weapon, but there was none to be found; he shouted to the women to shut the bolts, but the bolts had been removed; he tried the windows, they were fast and barred; and then, hearing the approach of his enemies along the passage, he stood with folded arms in the centre of the Hall to wait for death.

Beneath the Hall lay the unused and forgotten vaults of the monastery; and in the king's extremity it occurred to Catherine Douglas, one of the waiting-women, that these might give the king a chance of escape. There was not a moment to lose, so, seizing the heavy tongs from the fireplace, she forced them into the king's hand, and motioned him to remove the flooring and hide in the crypt below. Spurred to desperation the king seized the tongs, and proceeded to force up the flooring of the hall; but the sound of his approaching enemies came nearer and nearer, and the flooring was strong and tough. To give time the women made a desperate attempt to pull a heavy table in front of the door, but it was heavier than they could move. In another moment the floor had given way, and, with a hurried embrace, the king squeezed through the flooring and dropped into the vault. Then came the replacing of the boards—could they possibly do it in the time? A clash of arms in the passage showed that at least one sentinel was true; but the arm of one was but a poor barrier against so large a force. Another moment and the flooring would give no evidence of the secret that it held, for the queen and her bower-maidens were replacing it with all speed. Again the tread of the approaching conspirators; the sentinel has paid for his fidelity with death. Is there no arm can save?

At this moment, as with a flash of inspiration, the thought came into her mind. Catherine Douglas, one of the bower-maidens, rushed forward and thrust her arm through the staple of the removed bolt, and for a little while a woman's arm held a hundred men at bay.

It was a terrible moment, and as the poor bruised arm gave way at last Catherine Douglas fell fainting to the floor.

Sir Richard Graeme and his followers, having forced an entrance, made hot and eager search, but without avail. One of them placed his dagger at the queen's breast and demanded to know where the king was, and would have killed her had not the young Graeme caught back his arm and said, "She is a woman; we seek the king." At last, tired by their fruitless search, they left the Hall, and then, unfortunately, the king requested the women to draw him up from the vault again. This they attempted to do, with ropes made from the sheets from the bed, but they were not strong enough, and one of them, a sister of Catherine Douglas, was pulled down into the vault below. Attracted by the noise of this attempt, the conspirators returned, and the traitor chamberlain revealed the secret of the hidden vaults. In a few moments all was over,—the flooring was torn up, and, more like wild beasts than men, one after another the king's enemies dropped into the vault, attacking him, unarmed as he was, and killing him with many wounds. How the queen ultimately revenged herself upon the king's assassins is matter of history; but the story is chiefly interesting for its record of the heroic devotion of Catherine Douglas, who was renamed Kate Barlas, from the circumstances of her chivalry, by which name her descendants are known to this

day.

THE STRANGER.
A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.
BY H. G. BELL.

Hodnet is a village in Shropshire. Like all other villages in Shropshire, or anywhere else, it consists principally of one long street, with a good number of detached houses scattered here and there in its vicinity. The street is on a slight declivity, on the sunny side of what in England they call a hill. It contains the shops of three butchers, five grocers, two bakers, and one apothecary. On the right hand, as you go south, is that very excellent inn, the Blue Boar; and on the left, nearly opposite, is the public hall, in which all sorts of meetings are held, and which is alternately converted into a dancing-school, a theatre, a ball-room, an auction-room, an exhibition-room, or any other kind of room that may be wanted. The church is a little farther off, and the parsonage is, as usual, a white house surrounded with trees, at one end of the village. Hodnet is, moreover, the market-town of the shire, and stands in rather a populous district; so that, though of small dimensions itself, it is the rallying-place, on any extraordinary occasion, of a pretty numerous population.

One evening in February, the mail from London stopped at the Blue Boar, and a gentleman wrapped in a travelling cloak came out. The guard handed him a small portmanteau, and the mail drove on. The stranger entered the inn, was shown into a parlour, and desired that the landlord and a bottle of wine should be sent to him. The order was speedily obeyed; the wine was set upon the table, and Gilbert Cherryripe himself was the person who set it there. Gilbert next proceeded to rouse the slumbering fire, remarking, with a sort of comfortable look and tone, that it was a cold, raw night. His guest assented with a nod. "You call this village Hodnet, do you not?" said he inquiringly. "Yes, sir, this is the town of Hodnet" (Mr. Cherryripe did not like the term village), "and a prettier little place is not to be found in England." "So I have heard; and as you are not upon any of the great roads, I believe you have the reputation of being a primitive and unsophisticated race." "Privative and sofiscated, did you say, sir? Why, as to that I cannot exactly speak; but, if there is no harm in it, I daresay we are. But you see, sir, I am a vintner, and don't trouble my head much about these matters." "So much the better," said the stranger, smiling. "You and I shall become better friends; I may stay with you for some weeks, perhaps months. In the meantime, get me something comfortable for supper, and desire your wife to look after my bedroom."

Next day was Sunday. The bells of the village church had just finished ringing when the stranger walked up the aisle and entered, as if at random, a pew which happened to be vacant. Instantly every eye was turned towards him, for a new face was too important an object in Hodnet to be left unnoticed. "Who is he?" "When did he come?" "With whom does he stay?" "How long will he be here?" "How old may he be?" "Do you think he is handsome?" These and a thousand other questions flew about in whispers from tongue to tongue, whilst the unconscious object of all this interest cast his eyes calmly, and yet penetratingly, over the congregation. Nor was it altogether to be wondered at that his appearance had caused a sensation among the good people of Hodnet, for he was not the kind of person whom one meets with every day. There was something both in his face and figure that distinguished him from the crowd. You could not look upon him once and then turn away with indifference. When the service was over our hero walked out alone, and shut himself up for the rest of the day in his parlour at the Blue Boar. But speculation was busily at work, and at more than one tea-table that evening in Hodnet conjectures were poured out with the tea and swallowed with the toast.

A few days elapsed and the stranger was almost forgotten; for there was to be a subscription assembly in Hodnet, which engrossed entirely the minds of all. It was one of the most important events that had happened for at least a century. At length the great, the important night arrived. The three professional fiddlers of the village were elevated on a table at one end of the hall, and everybody pronounced it the very model of an orchestra. The candles were tastefully arranged and regularly snuffed. The floor was admirably chalked by a travelling sign-painter, engaged for the purpose; and the refreshments in an adjoining room, consisting of negus, apples, oranges, cold roast-beef, and biscuits, were under the immediate superintendence of our very excellent friend, Mr. Gilbert Cherryripe. At nine o'clock, which was considered a fashionable hour, the hall was nearly full, and the first country dance was commenced by the eldest son and presumptive heir of old Squire Thoroughbred, who conducted gracefully through its mazes the chosen divinity of his heart, Miss Wilhelmina Bouncer, only daughter of Tobias Bouncer, Esq., Justice of Peace in the county of Shropshire.

Enjoyment was at its height, and the three professional fiddlers had put a spirit of life into all things, when suddenly one might perceive that the merriment was for a moment checked, whilst a more than usual bustle pervaded the room. The stranger had entered it; and there was something so different in his looks and manner from those of any of the other male creatures, that everybody surveyed him with renewed curiosity, which was at first slightly tinged with

awe. "Who can he be?" was the question that instantaneously started up like a crocus in many a throbbing bosom. "He knows nobody, and nobody knows him; surely he will never think of asking anybody to dance."

For a long time the stranger stood aloof from the dancers in a corner by himself.

At length, something like a change seemed to come over the spirit of his dreams. His eye fell on Emily Sommers, and appeared to rest where it fell with no small degree of pleasure. No wonder. Emily was not what is generally styled beautiful; but there was a sweetness, a modesty, a gentleness about her, that charmed the more the longer it was observed. She was the only child of a widowed mother. Her father had died many a year ago in battle; and the pension of an officer's widow was all the fortune he had left them. But nature had bestowed riches of a more valuable kind than those which fortune had denied. I wish I could describe Emily Sommers; but I shall not attempt it. She was one of those whose virtues are hid from the blaze of the world, only to be the more appreciated by those who can understand them.

It was to Emily Sommers that the stranger first spoke. He walked right across the room and asked her to dance with him. Emily had never seen him before; but concluding that he had come there with some of her friends, and little acquainted with the rules of etiquette, she immediately, with a frank artlessness, smiled an acceptance of his request.

It was the custom in Hodnet for the gentlemen to employ the morning of the succeeding day in paying their respects to the ladies with whom they had danced on the previous evening. Requesting permission to wait upon his partner and her mother next day, it was without much difficulty obtained. This was surely very imprudent in Mrs. Sommers, and everybody said it was very imprudent. "What! admit as a visitor in her family a person whom she had never seen in her life before, and who, for anything she knew, might be a swindler or a Jew! There was never anything so preposterous—a woman, too, of Mrs. Sommers's judgment and propriety! It was very—very strange." But whether it was very strange or not, the fact is that the stranger soon spent most of his time at Violet Cottage; and what is perhaps no less wonderful, notwithstanding his apparent intimacy, he remained nearly as much a stranger to its inmates as ever. His name, they had ascertained, was Burleigh—Frederick Burleigh; that he was probably upwards of eight-and-twenty, and that, if he had ever belonged to any profession, it must have been that of arms. But farther they knew not. Mrs. Sommers, however, who to a well-cultivated mind added a considerable experience of the world, did not take long to discover that their new friend was, in every sense of the word, a man whose habits and manners entitled him to the name and rank of a gentleman; and she thought, too, that she saw in him, after a short intercourse, many of those nobler qualities which raise the individual to a high and well-merited rank among his species. As for Emily, she loved his society she scarcely knew why; yet, when she endeavoured to discover the cause, she found it no difficult matter to convince herself that there was something about him so infinitely superior to all the men she had ever seen that she was only obeying the dictates of reason in admiring and esteeming him.

Her admiration and esteem continued to increase in proportion as she became better acquainted with him, and the sentiments seemed to be mutual. He now spent his time almost continually in her society, and it never hung heavy on their hands. The stranger was fond of music, and Emily, besides being mistress of her instrument, possessed naturally a fine voice. Neither did she sing and play unrewarded; Burleigh taught her the most enchanting of all modern languages—the language of Petrarch and Tasso; and being well versed in the use of the pencil, showed her how to give to her landscapes a richer finish and a bolder effect. Then they read together; and as they looked with a smile into each other's countenances, the fascinating pages of fiction seemed to acquire a tenfold interest. These were evenings of calm but deep happiness—long, long to be remembered.

Spring flew rapidly on. March, with her winds and her clouds, passed away; April, with her showers and her sunshine, lingered no longer; and May came smiling up the blue sky, scattering her roses over the green surface of creation. The stranger entered one evening, before sunset, the little garden that surrounded Violet Cottage. Emily saw him from the window and came out to meet him. She held in her hand an open letter. "It is from my cousin Henry," said she. "His regiment has returned from France, and he is to be with us to-morrow or next day. We shall be so glad to see him! You have often heard us talk of Henry?—he and I were playmates when we were children; and though it is a long time since we parted, I am sure I should know him again among a hundred." "Indeed!" said the stranger, almost starting; "you must have loved him very much, and very constantly too." "Oh, yes! I loved him as a brother. I am sure you will love him too," Emily added. "Everybody whom you love, and who loves you, I also must love, Miss Sommers. But your cousin I shall not at present see. I must leave Hodnet to-morrow." "To-morrow! Leave Hodnet to-morrow!" Emily grew very pale, and leaned for support upon a sun-dial, near which they were standing. "Can it be possible, Miss Sommers—Emily—that it is for me you are thus grieved?" "It is so sudden," said Emily, "so unexpected; are you never to return again—are we never to see you more?" "Do you wish me to return, do you wish to see me again, Emily?" he asked. "Oh! how can you ask it?" "Emily, I have been known to you under a cloud of mystery, a solitary being, without a friend or acquaintance in the world, an outcast apparently from society—either sinned against or sinning—without fortune, without pretensions; and with all these disadvantages to contend with, how can I suppose that I am indebted to anything but your pity for the kindness which you have shown to me?" "Pity! pity you! Oh, do not wrong yourself thus. No! though you were a thousand times less worthy than I know you are, I should not pity, I should—" She stopped confused, a deep blush spread over her face, she burst into tears, and

would have sunk to the ground had not her lover caught her in his arms. "Think of me thus," he whispered, "till we meet again, and we may both be happy." "Oh! I will think of you thus for ever!" They had reached the door of the cottage. "God bless you, Emily," said the stranger; "I dare not see Mrs. Sommers; tell her of my departure, but tell her that ere autumn has faded into winter I shall again be here. Farewell, dearest, farewell." She felt upon her cheek a hot and hurried kiss; and when she ventured to look round he was gone.

Henry arrived next day, but there was a gloom upon the spirits of both mother and daughter, which it took some time to dispel. Mrs. Sommers felt for Emily more than for herself. She now perceived that her child's future happiness depended more upon the honour of the stranger than she had hitherto been aware, and she trembled to think of the probability that in the busy world he might soon forget the very existence of such a place as Hodnet, or any of its inhabitants. Emily entertained better hopes, but they were the result of the sanguine and unsuspecting temperament of youth. Her cousin, meanwhile, exerted himself to the utmost to render himself agreeable. He was a young, frank, handsome soldier, who had leapt into the very middle of many a lady's heart—red coat, sword, epaulette-belt, cocked hat, feathers, and all. But he was not destined to leap into Emily's. She had enclosed it within too strong a line of circumvallation. After a three months' siege, it was impregnable. So Henry, who really loved his cousin, thinking it folly to endanger his peace and waste his time any longer, called for his horse one morning, shook Emily warmly by the hand, mounted, "and rode away."

Autumn came; the leaves grew red, brown, yellow, and purple; then dropped from the high branches, and lay rustling in heaps upon the path below. The last roses withered. The last lingering wain conveyed from the fields their golden treasure. The days were bright, clear, calm, and chill; the nights were full of stars and dew, and the dew, ere morning, was changed into silver hoar-frost. The robin hopped across the garden walks, and candles were set upon the table before the tea-urn. But the stranger came not. Darker days and longer nights succeeded. Winter burst upon the earth. But still the stranger came not. Then the lustre of Emily's eye grew dim; but yet she smiled, and looked as if she would have made herself believe that there was hope.

And so there was; for the mail once more stopped at the Blue Boar; a gentleman wrapped in a travelling cloak once more came out of it; and Mr. Gilbert Cherryripe once more poked the fire for him in his best parlour. Burleigh had returned.

I shall not describe their meeting nor inquire whether Emily's eye was long without its lustre. But there was still another trial to be made. Would she marry him? "My family," said he, "is respectable, and as it is not wealth we seek, I have an independence, at least equal, I should hope, to our wishes; but anything else which you may think mysterious about me I cannot unravel until you are indissolubly mine." It was a point of no slight difficulty; Emily entrusted its decision entirely to her mother. Her mother saw that the stranger was inflexible in his purpose, and she saw also that her child's happiness was inextricably linked with him. What could she do? It had been better perhaps they had never known him; but knowing him, and thinking of him as they did, there was but one alternative—the risk must be run.

It was run. They were married in Hodnet; and immediately after the ceremony they stepped into a carriage and drove away, nobody knew whither. It is enough for us to mention that towards twilight they came in sight of a magnificent Gothic mansion, situated in the midst of extensive and noble parks. Emily expressed her admiration of its appearance; and her young husband, gazing on her with impassioned delight, exclaimed, "Emily, it is yours! My mind was imbued with erroneous impressions of women; I had been courted and deceived by them. I believed that their affections were to be won only by flattering their vanity or dazzling their ambition. I was resolved that unless I were loved for myself I would never be loved at all. I travelled through the country *incognito*; I came to Hodnet and saw you. I have tried you in every way, and found you true. It was I, and not my fortune, that you married; but both are yours. This is Burleigh House; your husband is Frederick Augustus Burleigh, Earl of Exeter, and you, my Emily, are his countess!"

LOVE WILL FIND A WAY.

THE STORY OF WINNIFRED COUNTESS OF NITHSDALE.

Among the noblemen who, with many misgivings as to the wisdom of the attempt, yet felt it their duty to take part in the rising on behalf of the young Pretender, which took place in the year 1745, Lord Nithsdale was unhappily numbered.

It is unnecessary to detail here the progress of this ill-advised enterprise, which ended in general defeat and the capture of those principally concerned. Lord Derwentwater, Lord Nithsdale, and other noblemen, were immediately brought to trial, and condemned, without hope of mercy, to suffer the death of traitors.

Lady Nithsdale, when the first terrible news of her husband's apprehension reached her, was at Terreagles, their seat, near Traquhair in Peebleshire, and hearing that he much desired the consolation of seeing her, she resolved at once to set out for London. It was winter, and at that period the roads during this season were often almost impassable. She succeeded, however, through great difficulties, in reaching Newcastle, and from thence went to York by the stage; but

there the increased severity of the weather and the depth of the snow would not admit of the stage proceeding farther—even the mail could not be forwarded. But Lady Nithsdale was on an errand from which no risks might deter her. She therefore pursued her way, though the snow was generally above the horse's girths, and, in the end, reached London in safety, and, supported both in health and spirits by firm resolution, she sustained no ill consequences from her perilous journey.

Arrived there, however, she learnt, to her dismay, that she was not to be allowed to see her husband, unless she would consent to be imprisoned with him in the Tower—a plan she could not consent to, as it would prevent her acting on his behalf by soliciting the assistance and intercession of friends, and, above all, incapacitate her from carrying out the plan of escape she had already formed, should the worst she apprehended come true. In spite of the refusal of the Government, however, by bribing the guard she obtained frequent interviews with her husband up to the day on which the prisoners were condemned; after which, for the last week, their families were allowed free admittance to take a last leave of them.

From the first moment of her arrival in London she laboured in her husband's cause, making application to all persons in authority, wherever there was the most distant chance of assistance; but from those in power she only received assurances that her cause was hopeless, and that for certain reasons her husband was especially reserved for vengeance.

Lord Nithsdale, for her sake more than his own, was anxious that a petition should be presented to the king in his behalf; trusting, by this means, to excite for her his sympathy and indulgence. It was well known that the king was especially incensed against Lord Nithsdale, so that he is said to have forbidden that any petition should be presented for him, or personal address made to him; but the countess, in obedience to her lord's wish, resolved to make the attempt, and accordingly repaired to court. In the narrative she wrote to her sister of her husband's escape, she has given the following account of the interview—very little creditable to the feelings of George I., either as a king or a gentleman:—

"So the first day that I heard the king was to go to the drawing-room, I dressed myself in black, as if I had been in mourning, and sent for Mrs. Morgan (the same who accompanied me to the Tower); because, as I did not know his Majesty personally, I might have mistaken some other person for him. She stayed by me, and told me when he was coming. I had another lady with me (Lady Nairn), and we remained in a room between the king's apartments and the drawing-room, so that he was obliged to go through it; and as there were three windows in it, we sat in the middle one, that I might have time enough to meet him before he could pass. I threw myself at his feet, and told him, in French, that I was the unfortunate Countess of Nithsdale, that he might not pretend to be ignorant of my person. But, perceiving that he wanted to go off without receiving my petition, I caught hold of the skirt of his coat, that he might stop and hear me. He endeavoured to escape out of my hands; but I kept such strong hold, that he dragged me on my knees from the middle of the room to the very door of the drawing-room. At last one of the blue ribbons who attended his Majesty took me round the waist, while another wrested the coat out of my hands. The petition, which I had endeavoured to thrust into his pocket, fell down in the scuffle, and I almost fainted away through grief and disappointment. One of the gentlemen in waiting picked up the petition; and as I knew that it ought to have been given to the lord of the bedchamber, who was then in waiting, I wrote to him, and entreated him to do me the favour to read the petition which I had had the honour to present to his Majesty. Fortunately for me it happened to be my Lord Dorset, with whom Mrs. Morgan was very intimate. Accordingly she went into the drawing-room and delivered him the letter, which he received very graciously. He could not read it then, as he was at cards with the Prince; but as soon as ever the game was over he read it, and behaved (as I afterwards learned) with the warmest zeal for my interest, and was seconded by the Duke of Montrose, who had seen me in the ante-chamber and wanted to speak to me. But I made him a sign not to come near me, lest his acquaintance might thwart my designs. They read over the petition several times, but without any success; but it became the topic of their conversation the rest of the evening, and the harshness with which I had been treated soon spread abroad—not much to the honour of the king."

This painful scene happened on Monday, February 13th, and seems to have produced no result, unless it may be supposed to have hastened the fate of the prisoners; for, on the following Friday, it was decided in council that the sentence against them should be carried into effect.

In the meanwhile Lady Derwentwater and other ladies of high rank were strenuous in their efforts to avert the execution of the sentence. They succeeded in obtaining an interview with the king, though without any favourable issue. They also attended at both Houses of Parliament to present petitions to the members as they went in. These exertions had a decided influence on the feelings of both Houses. In the Commons a motion to petition the king in favour of the delinquents was lost by only seven votes, and among the Lords a still stronger personal feeling and interest was excited; but all proved unavailing, and Lady Nithsdale, after joining with the other ladies in this ineffectual attendance, at length found that all her hope and dependence must rest on her long-formed scheme of bringing about her husband's escape. She had less than twenty-four hours for arranging it in all its details, and for persuading the accomplices who would be necessary to her to enter into so hazardous a project. In these she seems to have been peculiarly fortunate; but the history of this remarkable escape can only be given in her own words, taken from the interesting and spirited narrative she wrote of it:—

"As the motion had passed generally (that the petitions should be read in the Lords, which had

only been carried after a warm debate) I thought I would draw some advantage in favour of my design. Accordingly I immediately left the House of Lords and hastened to the Tower; where, affecting an air of joy and satisfaction, I told all the guards I passed that I came to bring joyful tidings to the prisoner. I desired them to lay aside their fears, for the petition had passed the House in their favour. I then gave them some money to drink to the lords and his Majesty, though it was but trifling; for I thought that if I were too liberal on the occasion they might suspect my designs, and that giving them something would gain their good humour and services for the next day, which was the eve of the execution. The next morning I could not go to the Tower, having so many things on my hands to put in readiness; but in the evening, when all was ready, I sent for Mrs. Mills, with whom I lodged, and acquainted her with my design of attempting my lord's escape, as there was no prospect of his being pardoned, and this was the last night before the execution. I told her that I had everything in readiness, and that I trusted she would not refuse to accompany me, that my lord might pass for her. I pressed her to come immediately, as we had no time to lose. At the same time I sent for Mrs. Morgan, then usually known by the name of Hilton, to whose acquaintance my dear Evans (her maid) had introduced me—which I looked upon as a very singular happiness. I immediately communicated my resolution to her. She was of a very tall and slender make; so I begged her to put under her own riding-hood one that I had prepared for Mrs. Mills, as she was to lend hers to my lord, that in coming out he might be taken for her. Mrs. Mills was not only of the same height, but nearly the same size as my lord. When we were in the coach I never ceased talking, that they might have no leisure to reflect. Their surprise and astonishment when I first opened my design to them had made them consent, without ever thinking of the consequences.

"On our arrival at the Tower, the first I introduced was Mrs. Morgan; for I was only allowed to take in one at a time. She brought in the clothes that were to serve Mrs. Mills when she left her own behind her. When Mrs. Morgan had taken off what she had brought for my purpose, I conducted her back to the staircase; and, in going, I begged her to send me in my maid to dress me; that I was afraid of being too late to present my last petition that night if she did not come immediately. I despatched her safe, and went partly downstairs to meet Mrs. Mills, who had the precaution to hold her handkerchief to her face—as was very natural for a woman to do when she was going to bid her last farewell to a friend on the eve of his execution. I had, indeed, desired her to do it, that my lord might go out in the same manner. Her eyebrows were rather inclined to be sandy, and my lord's were dark and very thick; however, I had prepared some paint of the colour of hers to disguise his with. I also bought an artificial head-dress of the same coloured hair as hers; and I painted his face with white and his cheeks with rouge, to hide his long beard, which he had not had time to shave. All this provision I had before left in the Tower.

"The poor guards, whom my liberality the day before had endeared me to, let me go quietly with my company, and were not so strictly on the watch as they usually had been; and the more so as they were persuaded from what I had told them the day before that the prisoners would obtain their pardon. I made Mrs. Mills take off her own hood and put on that which I had brought her. I then took her by the hand and led her out of my lord's chamber; and in passing through the next room, in which there were several people, with all the concern imaginable I said, 'My dear Mrs. Catherine, go in all haste and send me my waiting-maid; she certainly cannot reflect how late it is; she forgets that I am to present a petition to-night, and if I let slip this opportunity I am undone; for to-morrow will be too late. Hasten her as much as possible; for I shall be on thorns till she comes.' Everybody in the room, who were chiefly the guards' wives and daughters, seemed to compassionate me exceedingly; and the sentinel officiously opened the door.

"When I had seen her out I returned back to my lord and finished dressing him. I had taken care that Mrs. Mills did not go out crying, as she came in, that my lord might the better pass for the lady who came in crying and afflicted; and the more so because he had the same dress she wore. When I had almost finished dressing my lord in all my petticoats excepting one, I perceived that it was growing dark, and was afraid that the light of the candles might betray us, so I resolved to set off. I went out, leading him by the hand; and he held his handkerchief to his eyes. I spoke to him in the most piteous and afflicted tone of voice, bewailing bitterly the negligence of Evans, who had ruined me by her delay. Then said I, 'My dear Mrs. Betty, for the love of God run quickly and bring her with you. You know my lodging, and, if ever you made despatch in your life, do it at present. I am distracted with this disappointment.' The guards opened the doors, and I went downstairs with him, still conjuring to make all possible despatch. As soon as he had cleared the door, I made him walk before me, for fear the sentinel should take notice of his walk; but I still continued to press him to make all the despatch he possibly could. At the bottom of the stairs I met my dear Evans, into whose hands I confided him.^[3]

[3] Thus one more person left Lord Nithsdale's prison than had entered it. Three had gone in, and four came out. But so long as women only passed, and these two at a time, the guards probably were not particularly watchful. This inevitable difficulty in the plan of the escape makes Lady Nithsdale's admirable self-possession of manner in conducting it the more conspicuous. Any failure on her part would have awakened the suspicions of the bystanders.

"I had before engaged Mr. Mills to be in readiness before the Tower to conduct him to some place of safety, in case he succeeded. He looked upon the affair as so very improbable to succeed, that his astonishment, when he saw us, threw him into such consternation that he was almost out of himself; which Evans perceiving, with the greatest presence of mind, without telling him (Lord Nithsdale) anything, lest he should mistrust them, conducted him to some of her own friends on whom she could rely, and so secured him; without which we should have been undone.

When she had conducted him, and left him with them, she returned to find Mr. Mills, who by this time had recovered himself from his astonishment. They went home together, and having found a place of security, they conducted him to it.

"In the meanwhile, as I had pretended to have sent the young lady on a message, I was obliged to return upstairs and go back to my lord's room in the same feigned anxiety of being too late; so that everybody seemed sincerely to sympathise with my distress. When I was in the room, I talked to him as if he had been really present; and answered my own questions in my lord's voice as nearly as I could imitate it. I walked up and down as if we were conversing together, till I thought they had time enough thoroughly to clear themselves of the guards. I then thought proper to make off also. I opened the door, and stood half in it, that those in the outward chamber might hear what I said; but held it so close that they could not look in. I bid my lord a formal farewell for that night; and added, that something more than usual must have happened to make Evans negligent on this important occasion, who had always been so punctual in the smallest trifle; that I saw no other remedy than to go in person; that if the Tower were still open when I finished my business I would return that night; but that he might be assured that I would be with him as early in the morning as I could gain admittance to the Tower; and I flattered myself I should bring favourable news. Then, before I shut the door, I pulled the string through the latch, so that it could only be opened on the inside. I then shut it with some degree of force, that I might be sure of its being well shut. I said to the servant as I passed by, who was ignorant of the whole transaction, that he need not carry candles in to his master till my lord sent for him, as he desired to finish some prayers first. I went downstairs and called a coach, as there were several on the stand. I drove home to my lodgings, where poor Mr. Mackenzie had been waiting to carry the petition, in case my attempt failed. I told him there was no need of any petition, as my lord was safe out of the Tower and out of the hands of his enemies, but that I did not know where he was.

"I then desired one of the servants to call a chair, and I went to the Duchess of Montrose, who had always borne a part in my distresses. She came to me; and as my heart was in an ecstasy of joy, I expressed it in my countenance as she entered the room. I ran up to her in the transport of my joy. She appeared to be exceedingly shocked and frightened, and has since confessed to me that she apprehended my trouble had thrown me out of myself till I communicated my happiness to her. She then advised me to retire to some place of security, for that the king was highly displeased, and even enraged, at the petition I had presented to him, and had complained of it severely, and then said she would go to court and see how the news of my lord's escape was received. When the news was brought to the king, he flew into an excess of passion, and said he was betrayed; for it could not have been done without some confederacy. He instantly despatched two persons to the Tower to see that the other prisoners were secure, lest they should follow the example. Some threw the blame upon one, some upon another. The duchess was the only one at court who knew it.

"When I left the duchess, I went to a house which Evans had found out for me, and where she promised to acquaint me where my lord was. She got thither some few minutes after me, and took me to the house of a poor woman, directly opposite to the guard-house, where my lord was. She had but one small room, up one pair of stairs, and a very small bed in it. We threw ourselves upon the bed, that we might not be heard walking up and down. She left us a bottle of wine and some bread, and Mrs. Mills brought us some more in her pocket next day. We subsisted on this provision from Thursday till Saturday night, when Mrs. Mills came and conducted my lord to the Venetian ambassador's. We did not communicate the affair to his excellency; but one of his servants concealed him in his own room till Wednesday, on which day the ambassador's coach-and-six was to go down to Dover to meet his brother. My lord put on a livery, and went down in the retinue, without the least suspicion, to Dover, where M. Michel (the ambassador's servant) hired a small vessel and immediately set sail for Calais. The passage was so remarkably short that the captain threw out this reflection, that the wind could not have served better if his passengers had been flying for their lives, little thinking it to be really the case.

"For my part," continues Lady Nithsdale, "I absconded to the house of a very honest man in Drury Lane, where I remained till I was assured of my lord's safe arrival on the Continent. I then wrote to the Duchess of Buccleugh and entreated her to procure leave for me to go with safety about my business. So far from granting my request, they were resolved to secure me, if possible. After several debates it was decided that if I remained concealed no further search should be made, but that if I appeared either in England or Scotland I should be secured."

On first hearing of her husband's apprehension, she had thought it prudent to conceal many important family papers and other valuables, and having no person at hand with whom they could be safely entrusted, had hid them underground, in a place known only to the gardener, in whom she could entirely confide. This had proved a happy precaution, for, after her departure, the house had been searched, and, as she expressed it, "God only knows what might have transpired from those papers." In addition to the danger of their being discovered, there was the imminent risk of their being destroyed by damp, so that no time must be lost in regaining them before too late. She therefore determined on another journey to the north, and, for greater secrecy, on horseback, though this mode of travelling, which was new to her, was extremely fatiguing. She, however, with her maid, Mrs. Evans, and a servant that could be depended on, set out from London, and reached Traquhair in safety and without any one being aware of her intentions. Here she ventured to rest two days, in the society of her sister-in-law and Lord Traquhair, feeling security in the conviction that, as the lord-lieutenant of the county was an old friend of her

husband's, he would not allow any search to be made after her without first giving her warning to abscond. From thence she proceeded to Terreagles, whither it was supposed she came with the permission of Government; and to keep up that opinion, she invited her neighbours to visit her. That same night she dug up the papers from their hiding-place, where happily they had sustained no injury, and sent them at once, by safe hands, to Traquhair. This was accomplished just in time, for the magistrates of Dumfries began to entertain suspicions of her right to be there, and desired to see her leave from Government. On hearing this, "I expressed," she says, "my surprise that they had been so backward in paying their respects; 'but,' said I, 'better late than never: be sure to tell them that they shall be welcome whenever they choose to come.' This was after dinner; but I lost no time to put everything in readiness, but with all possible secrecy; and the next morning, before daybreak, I set off again for London, with the same attendants, and, as before, I put up at the smallest inns, and arrived safe once more."

George I. could not forgive Lady Nithsdale for the heroic part she had acted: he refused, in her case, the allowance or dower which was granted to the wives of the other lords. "A lady informed me," she says, "that the king was extremely incensed at the news; that he had issued orders to have me arrested, adding that I did whatever I pleased, despite of all his designs, and that I had given him more trouble than any woman in all Europe. For which reason I kept myself as closely concealed as possible, till the heat of these rumours had abated. In the meanwhile, I took the opinion of a very famous lawyer, who was a man of the strictest probity: he advised me to go off as soon as they had ceased searching for me. I followed his advice, and, in about a fortnight after, I escaped without any accident whatever."

She met her husband and children at Paris, whither they had come from Bruges to meet her. They soon afterwards joined the Pretender's court at Avignon; but, finding the mode of life there little to their taste, shortly after returned to Italy, where they lived in great privacy.

Lord Nithsdale lived, after his escape, nearly thirty years, and died at Rome in 1744. His wife survived him five years: she had the comfort of having provided a competency for her son by her hazardous journey to Terreagles, though his title and principal estates had been confiscated by his father's attainder. He married Lady Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Traquhair. Her daughter, the Lady Anne Maxwell, became the wife of Lord Bellevue.

[Transcriber's Note: The following typographical errors present in the original print edition have been corrected. No other alterations have been made to the original text.

In "Margot: The Martyr", "the burning larva" has been changed to "the burning lava".

In "Nadine: The Princess", a colon was added following "The silence was broken by Maura, saying"; a quotation mark was added following "the subject is never mentioned to her"; and a quotation mark has been deleted preceding "O—— was a fearful place".

In "My Year at School", a quotation mark was added before "The history prize has been awarded".

In "The Silver Star", "her exhibiton work" has been changed to "her exhibition work".

In "Uncle Tone", a comma has been added after "he shut himself off from all society"; and "discourtsey" has been changed to "discourtesy".

In "The Missing Letter", a quotation mark was added after "he shall have it now."

In "The Magic Carpet", a quotation mark has been added before "The book?" and before "The Magic Cabinet!"; and "half-cirle" has been changed to "half-circle".

In "Only Tim", "A little latter" has been changed to "A little later"; and "pepples" has been changed to "pebbles"./p>

In "The Colonel's Boy", "mischevously" has been changed to "mischievously".

In "The Trevern Treasure", "no oppportunity for Sybil Trevern ro return" has been changed to "no opportunity for Sybil Trevern to return"; "frequently rasults in misadventure" has been changed to "frequently results in misadventure"; and "the disaster of Sherifmuir" has been changed to "the disaster of Sherrifmuir".

In "Dora", "Miss Dora 'll be marryin'" has been changed to "Miss Dora 'll be marryin'"; and "'e ses. solemn" has been changed to "'e ses solemn".

In "Little Peace", "Beneath this ortrait" has been changed to "Beneath this portrait"; "Blessed are the pacemakers" has been changed to "Blessed are the peacemakers"; and a quotation mark has been added before "Because old Gaffer Cressidge".

In "The Story of Wassili and Daria", "dressed in their most brillant manner" has

been changed to "dressed in their most brilliant manner".

In "The Pedlar's Pack", a quotation mark has been removed in front of "If I didn't think".

In "The Unbidden Guest", quotation marks have been added in front of "Dad believes what he's agoing to tell you" and in front of "I was a-looking at mother"; "'Nothin', says I" has been changed to "'Nothin',' says I"; and "'Nothin,' says she" has been changed to "'Nothin',' says she".

In "A Strange Visitor", a quotation mark has been added in front of "I must apologise for intruding upon you".

In "Billjim", "as similiar as possible" has been changed to "as similar as possible"; and "See bathed his temples" has been changed to "She bathed his temples".

In "The Tiny Folk of Langaffer", a quotation mark has been added in front of "Silver sword of Ravenspur.' That means something."

In "The Kingfisher", "their voices lease my ears" has been changed to "their voices please my ears".

In "Caspar the Cobbler", "masonary and stone-carving" has been changed to "masonry and stone-carving"; "his workship in the old garret" has been changed to "his workshop in the old garret"; and a quotation mark has been added after "exhibits his good breeding."

In "The Story of Grizel Cochrane", "In futherance of this plan" has been changed to "In furtherance of this plan".

In "The Stranger", a quotation mark has been added before "Can it be possible".]

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