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Various and George Newnes**

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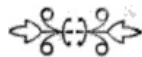
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STRAND MAGAZINE, VOL. 01, JANUARY
1891 ***

THE
STRAND MAGAZINE
An Illustrated Monthly
THE
STRAND MAGAZINE
An Illustrated Monthly

EDITED BY
GEO. NEWNES

Vol. I.
JANUARY TO JUNE



London:
BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND
1891

THE
STRAND MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1891.

THE

[Pg 1]

[Pg 2]

[Pg 3]

STRAND MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1891.

CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)
[The Story of the Strand](#)
[A Deadly Dilemma](#)
[The Metropolitan Fire Brigade](#)
[Scenes of the Siege of Paris](#)
[Portraits of Celebrities at different times of their Lives.](#)
[A Fair Smuggler](#)
[The Maid of Treppi](#)
[At the Animals' Hospital](#)
[The Mirror](#)
[Fac-simile of the Notes of a Sermon by Cardinal Manning](#)
[The Queen of Spades](#)
[The Two Genies](#)
[Transcriber's Notes](#)

INTRODUCTION.



The Editor of THE STRAND MAGAZINE respectfully places his first number in the hands of the public.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE will be issued regularly in the early part of each month.

It will contain stories and articles by the best British writers, and special translations from the first foreign authors. These will be illustrated by eminent artists.

Special new features which have not hitherto found place in Magazine Literature will be introduced from time to time.

It may be said that with the immense number of existing Monthlies there is no necessity for another. It is believed, however, that THE STRAND MAGAZINE will soon occupy a position which will justify its existence.

The past efforts of the Editor in supplying cheap, healthful literature have met with such generous favour from the public, that he ventures to hope that this new enterprise will prove a popular one. He is conscious of many defects in the first issue, but will strive after improvement in the future.

Will those who like this number be so good as to assist, by making its merits, if they are kind enough to think that it has any, known to their friends.



The Story of the Strand.

Strand is a great deal more than London's most ancient and historic street: it is in many regards the most interesting street in the world. It has not, like Whitehall or the Place de la Concorde, seen the execution of a king; it has never, like the Rue de Rivoli, been swept by grape-shot; nor

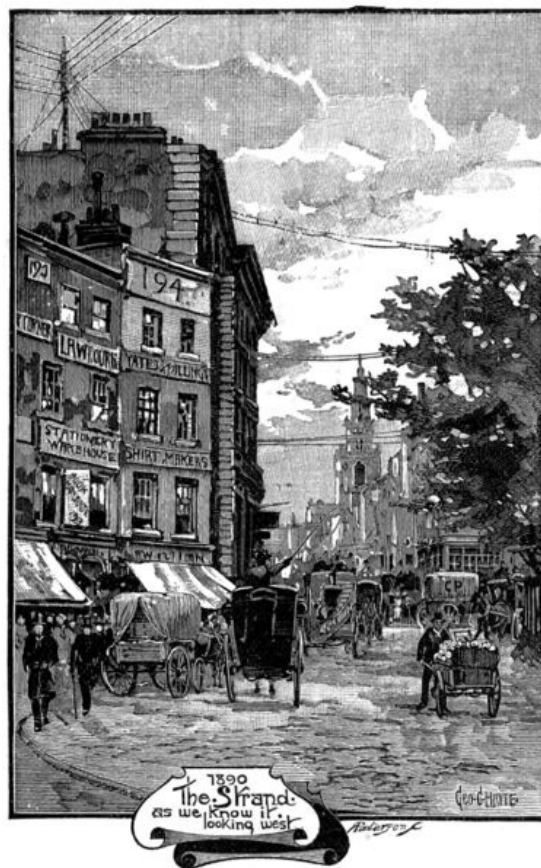


has it, like the Antwerp Place de Meir, run red with massacre. Of violent incident it has seen but little; its interest is the interest of association and development. Thus it has been from early Plantagenet days, ever changing its aspect, growing from a riverside bridle-path to a street of palaces, and from the abiding-place of the great nobles, by whose grace the king wore his crown, to a row of shops about which there is nothing that is splendid and little that is remarkable. It is not a fine street, and only here and there is it at all striking or picturesque. But now, as of yore, it is the high road between the two cities—puissant London and imperial Westminster. From the days of the

Edwards to this latest moment it has been the artery through which the tide of Empire has flowed. Whenever England has been victorious or has rejoiced, whenever she has been in sadness or tribulation, the Strand has witnessed it all. It has been filled with the gladness of triumph, the brilliant mailed cavalades that knew so well how to ride down Europe; filled, too, with that historic procession which remains the high water-mark of British pageantry, in the midst of which the king came to his own again. The tide of Empire has flowed westward along the Strand for generations which we may number but not realise, and it remains to-day the most important, as it was once the sole, highway between the two cities.

What the Strand looked like when it was edged with fields, and the road, even now not very wide, was a mere bridle-path, and a painful one at that, they who know the wilds of Connemara may best realise. From the western gate of the city of London—a small and feeble city as yet—to the Westminster Marshes, where already there was an abbey, and where sometimes the king held his court, was a long and toilsome journey, with the tiny village of Charing for halting-place midway. No palaces were there; a few cabins perhaps, and footpads certainly. Such were the unpromising beginnings of the famous street which naturally gained for itself the name of Strand, because it ran along the river bank—a bank which, be it remembered, came up much closer than it does now, as we may see by the forlorn and derelict water-gate of York House, at the Embankment end of Buckingham-street. Then by degrees, as the age of the Barons approached, when kings reigned by the grace of God, perhaps, but first of all by favour of the peers, the Strand began to be peopled by the salt of the earth.

Then arose fair mansions, chiefly upon the southern side, giving upon the river, for the sake of the airy gardens, as well as of easy access to the stream which remained London's great and easy highway until long after the Strand had been paved and rendered practicable for wheels. It was upon the water, then, that the real pageant of London life—a fine and well-coloured pageant it must often have been—was to be seen. By water it was that the people of the great houses went to their plots, their wooings, their gallant intrigues, to Court, or to Parliament. Also it was by water that not infrequently they went, by way of Traitor's Gate, to Tower Hill, or at least to dungeons which were only saved from being eternal by policy or expediency. This long Strand of palaces became the theatre of a vast volume of history which marked the rise and extension of some of the grandest houses that had been founded in feudalism, or have been built upon its ruins. Some of the families which lived there in power and pomp are mere memories now; but the names of many of them are still familiar in Belgravia as once they were in the Strand. There was, to start with, the original Somerset House, more picturesque, let us hope, than the depressing mausoleum which now daily reminds us that man is mortal. Then there was the famous York House, nearer to Charing Cross, of which nothing but the water-gate is left. On the opposite side of the way was Burleigh House, the home of the great statesman who, under God and Queen Elizabeth, did such great things for England. Burleigh is one of the earliest recorded cases of a man being killed by over-work. "Ease and pleasure," he sighed, while yet he was under fifty, "quake to hear of death; but my life, full of cares and miseries, desireth to be dissolved." The site of Burleigh House is kept in memory, as those of so many other of the vanished palaces of the Strand, by a street named after it; and the office of this magazine stands no doubt upon a part of Lord Burleigh's old garden. When Southampton House, Essex House, the Palace of the Savoy, and Northumberland House, which disappeared so lately, are added, we have still mentioned but a few of the more famous of the Strand houses.



But the Strand is distinguished for a vast deal more than that. Once upon a time, it was London's Belgravia. It was never perhaps the haunt of genius, as the Fleet-street tributaries were; it was never an Alsatia, as Whitefriars was, nor had it the many interests of the City itself. But it had a little of all these things, and the result is that the interest of the Strand is unique. It would be easy to spend a long day in the Strand and its tributaries, searching for landmarks of other days, and visiting sites which have long been historic. But the side streets are, if anything, more interesting than the main thoroughfare, and they deserve a special and separate visit, when the mile or so of road-way between what was Temple Bar and Charing Cross has been exhausted. Could Londoners of even only a hundred years ago see the Strand as we know it, they would be very nearly as much surprised as a Cockney under the Plantagenets, who should have re-visited his London in the time of the Georges. They who knew the picturesque but ill-kept London of the Angevin sovereigns found the Strand a place of torment.

In 1353 the road was so muddy and so full of ruts that a commissioner was appointed to repair it at the expense of the frontagers. Even towards the end of Henry VIII.'s reign it was "full of pits and sloughs, very perilous and noisome." Yet it was by this miserable road that Cardinal Wolsey, with his great and stately retinue, passed daily from his house in Chancery-lane to Westminster Hall. In that respect there is nothing in the changed condition of things to regret; but we may, indeed, be sorry for this: that there is left, save in its churches, scarcely a brick of the old Strand.

[Pg 6]

Still there are memories enough, and for these we may be thankful. Think only of the processions that have passed up from Westminster to St. Paul's, or the other way about! Remember that wonderful cavalcade amid which Charles II. rode back from his Flemish exile to the palace which had witnessed his father's death. Nothing like it has been seen in England since. Evelyn has left us a description of the scene, which is the more dramatic for being brief: "May 29, 1660. This day His Majesty Charles II. came to London, after a sad and long exile and calamitous suffering, both of the King and Church, being seventeen years. This was also his birthday, and, with a triumph above 20,000 horse and foot, brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy; the way strew'd with flowers, the bells ringing, the streets hung with tapestry, fountains running with wine; the mayor, aldermen, and all the companies in their liveries, chains of gold, and banners; lords and nobles clad in cloth of silver, gold, and velvet; the windows and balconies well set with ladies; trumpets, music, and myriads of people.... They were eight hours passing the city, even from two till ten at night. I stood in the Strand, and beheld it, and bless'd God." A century earlier Elizabeth had gone in state to St. Paul's, to return thanks for the destruction of the Armada. Next, Queen Anne went in triumph up to St. Paul's, after Blenheim; and, long after, the funeral processions of Nelson and Wellington were added to the list of great historic sights which the Strand has seen. The most recent of these great processions was the Prince of Wales's progress of thanksgiving to St. Paul's in 1872.

Immediately we leave what was Temple Bar, the Strand's memories begin. We have made only a few steps from Temple Bar, when we come to a house—No. 217, now a branch of the London and Westminster Bank—which, after a long and respectable history, saw its owners at length overtaken by shame and ruin. It was the banking-house of Strahan, Paul & Bates, which had been founded by one Snow and his partner Walton in Cromwell's days. In the beginning the house was "The Golden Anchor," and Messrs. Strahan & Co. have among their archives ledgers (kept in decimals!) which go back to the time of Charles II.

In 1855 it was discovered that some of the partners had been using their customers' money for their own pleasures or necessities. The guilty persons all went to prison; one of the few instances in which, as in the case of Fauntleroy, who was hanged for



SNOW'S BANK: FROM A SKETCH, 1808.

Nearly opposite Essex-street stands one of the most famous of London landmarks—the church of St. Clement Danes. Built as recently as 1682, it is the successor of a far older building. Its most interesting association is with Dr. Johnson, whose pew in the north gallery is still reverently kept, and an inscription marks the spot. In this church it was that Miss Davies, the heiress, who brought the potentiality of untold wealth into the family of the Grosvenors, was married to the progenitor of the present Duke of Westminster. St. Clement Danes is one of the few English churches with a *carillon*, which is of course set to psalm tunes. Milford-lane, opposite, was once really a lane with a bridge over a little stream which emptied into the Thames. Later on it marked the boundary of Arundel House, the home of the Dukes of Norfolk, who have built Arundel, Norfolk, Howard, and Surrey streets upon its site. In the time of Edward VI. the Earl of Arundel bought the property for forty pounds, which would seem to have been a good bargain even for those days. In Arundel House died "old Parr," who, according to the inscription upon his tomb in Westminster Abbey, lived to be 152 years old. Happily for himself he had lived all his life in Shropshire, and the brief space that he spent in London killed him.

The streets that have been built upon the site of old Arundel House are full of interesting associations. The house at the south-western corner of Norfolk and Howard-streets—it is now the "Dysart Hotel"—has a very curious history. A former owner—it was some sixty years since—was about to be married. The wedding breakfast was laid out in a large room on the first floor, and all was ready, except the lady, who changed her mind at the last minute. The jilted bridegroom locked up the banquet-chamber, put the key in his pocket, and, so the story runs, never again allowed it to be entered. There, it was said, still stood such mouldering remains of the wedding breakfast as the rats and mice had spared. Certainly the window curtains could for many years be seen crumbling to pieces, bit by bit, and the windows looked exactly as one would expect the windows of the typical haunted chamber to look. It is only of late that the room has been re-opened. The name of the supposed hero of this story has often been mentioned, but, since the story may quite possibly be baseless, it would be improper to repeat it. But there is no doubt whatever that for nearly half a century there was something very queer about that upper chamber.

forgery, English bankers have been convicted of breach of trust. Adjoining this house is that of Messrs. Twining, who opened, in 1710, the first tea-shop in London. They still deal in tea, though fine ladies no longer go to the Eastern Strand in their carriages to drink it, out of curiosity, at a shilling a cup.

[Pg 7]

One of the most interesting buildings in Essex-street, the "Essex Head" tavern, has only just been pulled down. There it was that Dr. Johnson founded "Sam's" Club, so named after the landlord, Samuel Graves. Dr. Johnson himself drew up the rules of the club, as we may see in Boswell's "Life." The chair in which he is reported to have sat was preserved in the house to the end. It is now cared for at the "Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet-street. A very redoubtable gentleman who formerly lived in Essex-street was Dr. George Fordyce, who for twenty years drank daily with his dinner a jug of strong ale, a quarter of a pint of brandy, and a bottle of port. And he was able to lecture to his students afterwards!



[Pg 8]



This same Howard-street was the scene, in 1692, shortly after it was built, of a tragedy which remained for generations in the popular memory. It took place within two or three doors of the "Dysart Hotel." The central figure of the pitiful story was Mrs. Bracegirdle, the famous and beautiful actress. One of her many admirers, Captain Richard Hill, had offered her marriage, and had been refused. But he was not to be put off in that way. If he could not obtain the lady by fair means he was determined to get her by force. He therefore resolved, with the assistance of Lord Mohun—a notorious person, who was afterwards killed in Hyde-park in a duel with the Duke of Hamilton—to carry her off. They stationed a coach in Drury-lane, and attempted to kidnap her as she was passing down the street after the play. The lady's screams drew such a crowd that the abductors were forced to bid their men let her go. They escorted her home (a sufficiently odd proceeding in the circumstances), and then remained outside Mrs. Bracegirdle's house in Howard-street "vowing revenge," the contemporary accounts say, but against whom is not clear. Hill and Lord Mohun drank a bottle of wine in the middle of the street, perhaps to keep their courage up, and presently Mr. Will Mountfort, an actor, who lived in Norfolk-street, came along. Mountfort had already heard what had happened, and he at once went up to Lord Mohun (who, it is said, "embraced him very tenderly"), and reproached him with "justifying the rudeness of Captain Hill," and with "keeping company with such a pitiful fellow." "And then," according to the Captain's servant, "the Captain came forward and said he would justify himself, and went towards the middle of the street and drew." Some of the eye-witnesses said that they fought, but others declared that Hill ran Mountfort through the body before he could draw his sword. At all events, Hill instantly ran away, and when the watch arrived they found only Lord Mohun, who surrendered himself. He seems to have had no part in the murder, and his sword was still sheathed when he was made prisoner. It is said that Hill already had a grudge against Mountfort, whom he suspected of being Mrs. Bracegirdle's favoured lover. But the best contemporary evidence agrees that the lady's virtue was "as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar."

[Pg 9]

Nearly opposite the scene of this brutal tragedy, the church of St. Mary-le-Strand was built some five-and-twenty years later. It is a picturesque building, and makes a striking appearance when approached from the west. It has of late been more than once proposed that it should be demolished, at once by reason of the obstruction which it causes in the roadway, and because of its ill-repair. But since it has now been put into good condition, the people who would so gaily pull down a church to widen a road will perhaps not be again heard from. According to Hume, Prince Charles Edward, during his famous stolen visit to London, formally renounced in this church the Roman Catholic religion, to strengthen his claim to the throne; but there has never been any manner of proof of that statement. The site of St. Mary-le-Strand was long famous as the spot upon which the Westminster maypole stood, and what is now Newcastle-street was called Maypole-lane down to the beginning of the present century. At the Restoration, a new maypole, 134 feet high, was set up, the Cromwellians having destroyed the old one, in the presence of the King and the Duke of York. The pole is said to have been spliced together with iron bands by a blacksmith named John Clarges, whose daughter Anne married General Monk, who, for his services in bringing about the Restoration, was created Duke of Albemarle. Three or four suits were brought to prove that her first husband was still living when she married the Duke, and that consequently the second (and last) Duke of Albemarle was illegitimate, but the blacksmith's daughter gained them all. Near the Olympic Theatre there still exists a Maypole-alley.



SOMERSET HOUSE: FROM A DRAWING BY S. WALE, 1776.

It is hardly necessary to say that the present Somerset House, which is exactly opposite the church of St. Mary-le-Strand, is not the original building of that name. People—praise to their taste!—did not build in that fashion in the time of the Tudors. The old house, built by not the cleanest means, by the Protector Somerset, was "such a palace as had not been seen in England." After Somerset's attainder it became the recognised Dower House of the English Queens. It was built with the materials of churches and other people's houses. John of Padua was the architect, and it was a sumptuous palace indeed; but if Somerset ever lived in it, it was for a very brief space. One of the accusations upon which he was attainted was that he had spent money in building Somerset House, but had allowed the King's soldiers to go unpaid. It was close to the Water Gate of Somerset House that the mysterious murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey took place in 1678. The story of the murder is so doubtful and complicated that it is impossible to enter upon it here. Sir Edmundbury was induced to go to the spot where he was strangled under the pretence that, as a justice of the peace, he could stop a quarrel that was going on. Titus Oates, the most finished scoundrel ever born on British soil, suggested that the Jesuits and even Queen Henrietta Maria were concerned in instigating the murder, and three men were hung at Tyburn for their supposed share in it. Around the Somerset House of that day there were extensive gardens of that square formal fashion which, although pleasing enough to the antiquary, are anathema to the artistic eye. Old Somerset House was demolished in the early days of George III., and the present building, of which Sir Wm. Chambers was the architect, was commenced in 1776.

[Pg 10]

Another interesting bit of the southern side of the Strand is the region still called The Savoy. The old Palace of the Savoy was built by Simon de Montfort, but it afterwards passed to Peter of Savoy, uncle of Queen Eleanor, who gave to the precinct the name which was to become historical. There it was that King John of France was housed after he was taken prisoner at Poitiers; and there too he died. The Palace of the Savoy was set on fire and plundered by Wat Tyler and his men in 1381. It was rebuilt and turned into a hospital by Henry VII. In the new building the liturgy of the Church of England was revised after the restoration of Charles II.; but the most interesting association of the place must always be that there Chaucer wrote a portion of the "Canterbury Tales," and that John of Ghent lived there. After many vicissitudes and long ruin and neglect, the last remains of the Palace and Hospital of the Savoy were demolished at the beginning of the present century, to permit of a better approach to Waterloo Bridge.

A little farther west, in Beaufort-buildings, Fielding once resided. A contemporary tells how he was once hard put to it to pay the parochial taxes for this house. The tax-collector at last lost patience, and Fielding was compelled to obtain an advance from Jacob Tonson, the famous publisher, whose shop stood upon a portion of the site of Somerset House. He returned home with ten or twelve guineas in his pocket, but meeting at his own door an old college chum who had fallen upon evil times, he emptied his pockets, and was unable to satisfy the tax-gatherer until he had paid a second visit to the kindly and accommodating Tonson. Another of the great Strand palaces stood on this site—Worcester House; which, after being the residence of the Bishops of Carlisle, became the town house of the Earls of Worcester. Almost adjoining stood Salisbury, or Cecil House, which was built by Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, a son of the sage Lord Burghley, whose town house stood on the opposite side of the Strand. It was pulled down more than two hundred years ago, after a very brief existence, and Cecil and Salisbury streets were built upon its site. Yet another Strand palace, Durham House, the "inn" of the Bishops Palatine of Durham, stood a little nearer to Charing Cross. It was of great antiquity, and was rebuilt as long ago as 1345. Henry VIII. obtained it by exchange, and Queen Elizabeth gave it to Sir Walter Raleigh. The most interesting event that ever took place in the house was the marriage of Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guildford Dudley. Eight weeks later she was proclaimed Queen, to her sorrow. Still nearer to Charing Cross, and upon a portion of the site of Durham House, is the famous bank of the Messrs. Coutts, one of the oldest of the London banks. The original Coutts was a shrewd Scotchman, who, by his wit and enterprise, speedily became rich and famous. He married one of his brother's domestic servants, and of that marriage, which turned out very happily, Lady Burdett-Coutts is a grandchild. Mr. Coutts' second wife was Miss Harriet Mellon, a distinguished actress of her day, to whom he left the whole of his fortune of £900,000. When the lady, who afterwards became Duchess of St. Albans, died in the year of the Queen's accession, that £900,000



COUTTS' BANKING HOUSE, 1853: FROM A DRAWING BY T. HOSMER SHEPHERD.

[Pg 11]

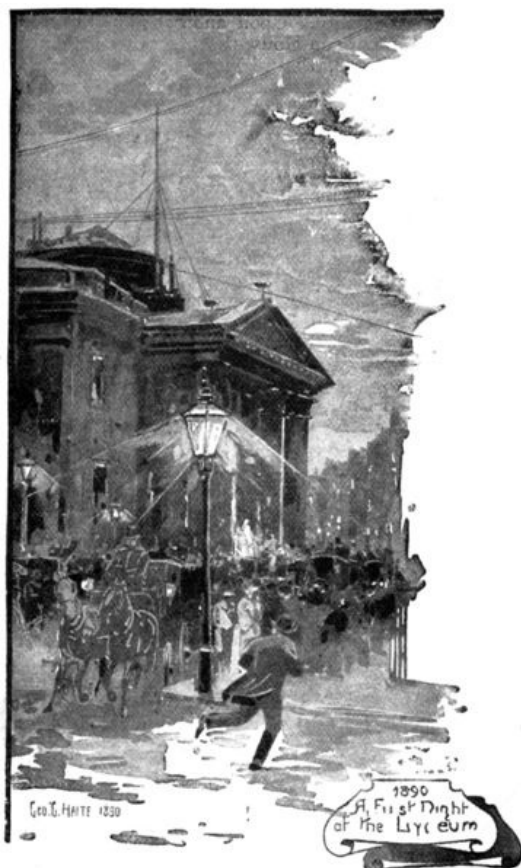
formed the foundation of the great fortune of Miss Angela Burdett, better known to this generation as Lady Burdett-Coutts. Messrs. Coutts' banking-house is an interesting building, with many portraits of the early friends and customers of the house, which included Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter Scott. The cellars of the firm are reputed to be full of boxes containing coronets and patents of nobility. Upon another part of the site of Durham House the brothers Adam built, in 1768, the region called the Adelphi. There, in the centre house of Adelphi-terrace, with its wondrous view up and down the river, died in 1779 David Garrick.



Buckingham-street and Villiers-street, which lie between the Adelphi and Charing Cross Station, carry their history, like so many other of the Strand tributaries, written in their names. They recall the long-vanished glories of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who lived at York House, so called as having been the town palace of the Archbishops of York. Wolsey lived there for a time; Bacon was living there when he was degraded. The Crown granted it to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, by whom it was splendidly rebuilt. The second Duke sold it to pay his debts, making it a condition that he should be commemorated in the names of the streets placed on the site—George, Villiers, Duke, and Buckingham streets. The only remaining relic of York House is the fine water-gate at the bottom of Buckingham-street. Close to this water-gate, in a house marked by a Society of Arts tablet, for a short time lived Peter the Great; opposite lived Samuel Pepys; and No. 14 was occupied by Etty. In Villiers-street both Evelyn and Steele lived; but it is now the haunt of anything rather than genius. Northumberland House, the last and best known of the riverside palaces, which was demolished only at the end of 1874, was not, properly speaking, in the Strand at all. It may therefore be sufficient to recall that it was built in 1605, and became the home of the Percies in 1642. It was sold to the Metropolitan Board of Works, with great and natural reluctance, for half a million of money; and the famous blue lion of the Percies, which for so long stood proudly over the building, was removed to Sion House.

[Pg 12]

The northern side of the Strand is not quite so rich in memories as the side which faced the river, but its associations with Lord Burleigh, that calm, sagacious, and untiring statesman, must always make it memorable. Burleigh House, the site of which is marked by Burleigh and Exeter-streets, was the house from which he governed England with conspicuous courage, devotion, and address. There, too, he was visited by Queen Elizabeth. According to tradition she wore, on that occasion, the notorious pyramidal head-dress which she made fashionable, and was besought by an esquire in attendance to stoop as she entered. "For your master's sake I will stoop, but not for the King of Spain," was the answer which might have been expected from a daughter of Henry VIII. Lord Burleigh lived there in considerable state, spending thirty pounds a week, which in Elizabethan days was enormous. There, broken with work and anxiety, he died in 1598. When his son was made Earl of Exeter he called it Exeter House. This historical house was not long in falling upon evil days. By the beginning of the eighteenth century a part of it had been demolished, while another part was altered and turned into shops, the new building being christened "Exeter Change." Nearer to our own time the "Change" became a kind of arcade, the upper floor being used as a wild-beast show. When it was "Pidcock's Exhibition of Wild Beasts" an imitation Beef-eater stood outside, in the Strand, inviting the cockney and his country cousin to "walk up." The roaring of the animals is said to have often frightened horses in the Strand. "Exeter Change" was the home of "Chunee," an elephant as famous in his generation—it was more than sixty years since—as "Jumbo" in our own. "Chunee," which weighed five tons, and was eleven feet high, at last became unmanageable, and was shot by a file of soldiers, who fired 152 bullets into his body before killing him. His skeleton is still in the Museum of the College of Surgeons, in Lincoln's-inn-fields. It should be remembered that in Exeter-street Dr.



Johnson lodged (at a cost of 4-1/2d. per day) when he began his struggle in London. A little farther east once stood Wimbledon House, built some three centuries ago by Sir Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon, a cadet of the great house founded by Lord Burleigh. Stow records that the house was burned down in 1628, the day after an accidental explosion of gunpowder demolished the owner's

[Pg 13]

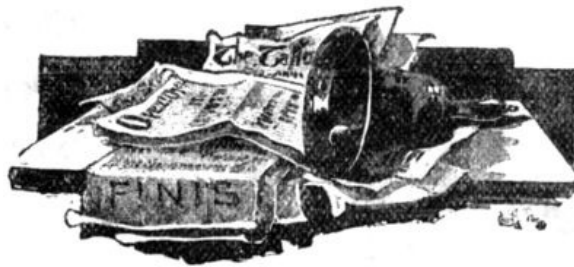
country seat at Wimbledon. Nearly all the land hereabouts still belongs to the Cecils. Upon a portion of the site of Wimbledon House arose the once famous "D'Oyley's Warehouse," where a French refugee sold a variety of silk and woollen fabrics, which were quite new to the English market. He achieved great success, and a "D'Oyley" is still as much a part of the language as an "antimacassar"—that abomination of all desolation. The shop lasted, at 346, Strand, until some thirty years ago. The Lyceum Theatre, which also stands upon a piece of the site of Exeter House, occupies the spot where Madame Tussaud's waxworks were first exhibited in 1802.

With Bedford House, once the home of the Russells, which stood in what is now Southampton-street, we exhaust the list of the Strand palaces. There is but little to say of it, and it was pulled down in 1704. Southampton-street—so called after Rachel, the heroic wife of Wm. Lord Russell, who was a daughter of Thomas, Earl of Southampton—Tavistock-street, and some others were built upon its site. It was in Southampton-street that formerly stood the "Bedford Head," a famous and fashionable eating-house. Pope asks:—

"When sharp with hunger, scorn you to be fed,
Except on pea-chicks at the 'Bedford Head'?"

He who loves his London, more especially he who loves his Strand, will not forget that No. 332, now the office of the *Weekly Times*, was the scene of Dickens' early work in journalism for the *Morning Chronicle*.

It would be impossible to find a street more entirely representative of the development of England than the long and not very lovely Strand. From the days of feudal fortresses to those of penny newspapers is a far cry; and of all that lies between it has been the witness. If its stones be not historic, at least its sites and its memories are; and still it remains, what it ever has been, the most characteristic and distinctive of English highways.



A Deadly Dilemma.

BY GRANT ALLEN.

[Pg 14]



When Netta Mayne came to think it over afterward in her own room by herself, she couldn't imagine what had made her silly enough to quarrel that evening with Ughtred Carnegie. She could only say, in a penitent mood, it was always the way like that with lovers. Till once they've quarrelled a good round quarrel, and afterwards solemnly kissed and made it all up again, things never stand on a really firm and settled basis between them. It's a move in the game. You must thrust in tierce before you thrust in quarte. The Roman playwright spoke the truth, after all: a lovers' quarrel begins a fresh chapter in

the history of their love-making.

It was a summer evening, calm, and clear, and balmy, and Netta and Ughtred had strolled out together, not without a suspicion at times of hand locked in hand, on the high chalk down that rises steep behind Holmbury. How or why they fell out she hardly knew. But they had been engaged already some months, without a single disagreement, which of course gave Netta a natural right to quarrel with Ughtred by this time, if she thought fit: and as they returned down the hanging path through the combe where the wild orchids grow, she used that right at last, out of pure unadulterated feminine perversity. The ways of women are wonderful; no mere man can fathom them. Something that Ughtred said gave her the chance to make a half petulant answer. Ughtred very naturally defended himself from the imputation of rudeness, and Netta retorted. At the end of ten minutes the trifle had grown apace into as pretty a lovers' quarrel as any lady novelist could wish to describe in five chapters.



**"NETTA AND UGHTRED HAD
STROLLED OUT TOGETHER."**

Netta had burst into perfectly orthodox tears, refused to be comforted, in the most approved fashion, declined to accept Ughtred's escort home, and bidden farewell to him excitedly for ever and ever.

It was all about nothing, to be sure, and if two older or wiser heads had only stood by unseen, to view the little comedy, they would sagely have remarked to one another, with a shake, that before twenty-four hours were out the pair would be rushing into one another's arms with mutual apologies and mutual forgiveness. But Netta Mayne and Ughtred Carnegie were still at the age when one takes love seriously—one does before thirty—and so they turned away along different paths at the bottom of the combe, in the firm belief that love's young dream was shattered, and that henceforth they two were nothing more than the merest acquaintances to one another.

[Pg 15]

"Good-bye, Mr. Carnegie," Netta faltered out, as in obedience to her wishes, though much against his own will, Ughtred turned slowly and remorsefully down the footpath to the right, in the direction of the railway.

"Good-bye, Netta," Ughtred answered, half choking. Even at that moment of parting (for ever—or a day), he couldn't find it in his heart to call her "Miss Mayne" who had so long been "Netta" to him.

He waved his hand and turned along the foot-path, looking back many times to see Netta still sitting inconsolable where he had left her, on the stile that led from the combe into the Four-acre meadow. Both paths, to right and left, led back to Holmbury over the open field, but they diverged rapidly, and crossed the railway track by separate gates, and five hundred yards from each other. A turn in the path, at which Ughtred lingered long, hid Netta at last from his sight. He paused and hesitated. It was growing late, though an hour of summer twilight still remained. He couldn't bear to leave Netta thus alone in the field. She wouldn't allow him to see her home, to be sure, and that being so, he was too much a gentleman to force himself upon her. But he was too much a man, too, to let her find her way back so late entirely by herself. Unseen himself, he must still watch over her. Against her will, he must still protect her. He would go on to the railway, and there sit by the side of the line, under cover of the hedge, till Netta crossed by the other path. Then he'd walk quietly along the six-foot way to the gate she had passed through, and follow her, unperceived, at a distance along the lane, till he saw her back to Holmbury. Whether she wished it or not he could never leave her.

He looked about for a seat. One lay most handy. By the side of the line the Government engineers had been at work that day, repairing the telegraph system. They had taken down half a dozen mouldering old posts, and set up new ones in their place—tall, clean, and shiny. One of the old posts still lay at full length on the ground by the gate, just as the men had left it at the end of their day's work. At the point where the footpath cut the line, was a level crossing, and there Ughtred sat down on the fallen post by the side, half-concealed from view by a tall clump of willow-herb, waiting patiently for Netta's coming. How he listened for that light footfall. His heart was full, indeed, of gall and bitterness. He loved her so dearly, and she had treated him so ill. Who would ever have believed that Netta, his Netta, would have thrown him over like that for such a ridiculous trifle? Who, indeed? and least of all Netta herself, sitting alone on the stile with her pretty face bowed deep in her hands, and her poor heart wondering how Ughtred, her Ughtred, could so easily desert her. In such strange ways is the feminine variety of the human heart constructed. To be sure, she had of course dismissed him in the most peremptory fashion, declaring with all the vows propriety permits to the British maiden, that she needed no escort of any sort home, and that she would ten thousand times rather go alone than have him accompany her. But, of course, also, she didn't mean it. What woman does? She counted upon a prompt and

[Pg 16]

unconditional surrender. Ughtred would go to the corner, as in duty bound, and then come back to her, with profuse expressions of penitence for the wrong he had never done, to make it all up again in the orthodox fashion. She never intended the real tragedy that was so soon to follow. She was only playing with her victim—only trying, woman-like, her power over Ughtred.

So she sat there still, and cried and cried on, minute after minute, in an ecstasy of misery, till the sunset began to glow deeper red in the western sky, and the bell to ring the curfew in Holmbury Tower. Then it dawned upon her slowly, with a shock of surprise, that after all—incredible! impossible!—Ughtred had positively taken her at her word, and wasn't coming back at all to-night to her.

At that, the usual womanly terror seized upon her soul. Her heart turned faint. This was too terrible. Great heavens, what had she done? Had she tried Ughtred too far, and had he really gone? Was he never going to return to her at all? Had he said good-bye in earnest to her for ever and ever?

Terrified at the thought, and weak with crying, she rose and straggled down the narrow footpath toward the further crossing. It was getting late now, and Netta by this time was really frightened. She wished with all her heart she hadn't sent away Ughtred—if it were only for the tramps: a man is such a comfort. And then there was that dreadful dog at Milton Court to pass. And Ughtred was gone, and all the world was desolate.

Thinking these things in a tumult of fear to herself, she staggered along the path, feeling tired at heart, and positively ill with remorse and terror. The colour had faded now out of her pretty red cheeks. Her eyes were dim and swollen with crying. She was almost half glad Ughtred couldn't see her just then, she was such a fright with her long spell of brooding. Even her bright print dress and her straw hat with the poppies in it, couldn't redeem, she felt sure, her pallor and her wretchedness. But Ughtred was gone, and the world was a wilderness. And he would never come back, and the dog at Milton Court was so vicious.

As she walked, or rather groped her way (for she couldn't see for crying) down the path by the hedge, at every step she grew fainter and fainter. Ughtred was gone; and the world was a blank; and there were tramps and dogs; and it was getting dark; and she loved him so much; and Mamma would be so angry.

Turning over which thoughts with a whirling brain, for she was but a girl after all, she reached the little swing-gate that led to the railway, and pushed it aside with vague numbed hands, and stood gazing vacantly at the long curved line in front of her.

Suddenly, a noise rose sharp in the field behind her. It was only a colt, to be sure, disturbed by her approach, dashing wildly across his paddock, as is the way with young horseflesh. But to Netta it came as an indefinite terror, magnified ten thousand-fold by her excited feelings. She made a frenzied dash for the other side of the railway. What it was she knew not, but it was, or might be, anything, everything—mad bulls, drunken men, footpads, vagabonds, murderers.

Oh, how could Ughtred ever have taken her at her word, and left her like this, alone, and in the evening? It was cruel, it was wicked of him; she hated to be disloyal, and yet she felt in her heart it was almost unmanly.

As she rushed along wildly, at the top of her speed, her little foot caught on the first rail. Before she knew what had happened, she had fallen with her body right across the line. Faint and terrified already, with a thousand vague alarms, the sudden shock stunned and disabled her. Mad bull or drunken man, they might do as they liked now. She was bruised and shaken. She had no thought left to rise or recover herself. Her eyes closed heavily. She lost consciousness at once. It was a terrible position. She had fainted on the line, with the force of the situation.

As for Ughtred, from his seat on the telegraph post on the side of the line five hundred yards farther up, he saw her pause by the gate, then dash across the road, then stumble and trip, then fall heavily forward. His heart came up into his mouth at once at the sight. Oh, thank heaven he had waited. Thank heaven he was



**"NETTA WAS STILL SITTING
INCONSOLABLE."**





"IT WAS A TERRIBLE POSITION."

near. She had fallen across the line, and a train might come along before she could rise up again. She seemed hurt, too. In a frenzy of suspense he darted forward to save her.

It took but a second for him to realise that she had fallen, and was seriously hurt, but in the course of that second, even as he realised it all, another and more pressing terror seized him.

Hark! what was that? He listened and thrilled. Oh no, too terrible. Yes, yes, it must be—the railway, the railway! He knew it. He felt it. Along the up line, on which Netta was lying, he heard behind him—oh, unmistakable, unthinkable, the fierce whirr of the express dashing madly down upon him. Great heavens, what could he do? The train was coming, the train was almost this moment upon them. Before he could have time to rush wildly forward and snatch Netta from where she lay, full in its path, a helpless weight, it would have swept past him resistlessly, and borne down upon her like lightning.

The express was coming—to crush Netta to pieces.

In these awful moments men don't think: they don't reason; they don't even realise what their action means; they simply act, and act instinctively. Ughtred felt in a second, without even consciously feeling it, so to speak, that any attempt to reach Netta now before that devouring engine had burst upon her at full speed would be absolutely hopeless.

His one chance lay in stopping the train somehow. How, or where, or with what, he cared not. His own body would do it if nothing else came. Only stop it, stop it. He didn't think of it at all that moment as a set of carriages containing a precious freight of human lives. He thought of it only as a horrible, cruel, devouring creature, rushing headway on at full speed to Netta's destruction. It was a senseless wild beast, to be combated at all hazards. It was a hideous, ruthless, relentless thing, to be checked in its mad career in no matter what fashion. All he knew, indeed, was that Netta, his Netta, lay helpless on the track, and that the engine, like some madman, puffing and snorting with wild glee and savage exultation, was hastening forward with fierce strides to crush and mangle her.

[Pg 18]

At any risk he must stop it—with anything—anyhow.

As he gazed around him, horror-struck, with blank inquiring stare, and with this one fixed idea possessing his whole soul, Ughtred's eye happened to fall upon the dismantled telegraph post, on which but one minute before he had been sitting. The sight inspired him. Ha, ha! a glorious chance. He could lift it on the line. He could lay it across the rails. He could turn it round into place. He could upset the train! He could place it in the way of that murderous engine.

No sooner thought than done. With the wild energy of despair, the young man lifted the small end of the ponderous post bodily up in his arms, and twisting it on the big base as on an earth-fast pivot, managed, by main force and with a violent effort, to lay it at last full in front of the advancing locomotive. How he did it he never rightly knew himself, for the weight of the great balk was simply enormous. But horror and love, and the awful idea that Netta's life was at stake, seemed to supply him at once with unwonted energy. He lifted it in his arms as he would have lifted a child, and straining in every limb stretched it at last full across both rails, a formidable obstacle before the approaching engine.

Hurrah! hurrah! he had succeeded now. It would throw the train off the line—and Netta would be saved for him.

To think and do all this under the spur of the circumstances took Ughtred something less than twenty seconds. In a great crisis men live rapidly. It was quick as thought. And at the end of it all, he saw the big log laid right across the line with infinite satisfaction. Such a splendid obstacle that—so round and heavy! It must throw the train clean off the metals! It must produce a fine first-class catastrophe.

As he thought it, half aloud, a sharp curve brought the train round the corner close to where he stood, great drops of sweat now oozing clammy from every pore with his exertion. He looked at it languidly, with some vague, dim sense of a duty accomplished, and a great work well done for Netta and humanity. There would be a real live accident in a moment now—a splendid accident—a first-rate catastrophe!

Great heavens! An accident!

And then, with a sudden burst of inspiration, the other side of the transaction flashed in one electric spark upon Ughtred's brain. Why—this—was murder! There were *people* in that train—innocent human beings, men and women like himself, who would next minute be wrecked and mangled corpses, or writhing forms, on the track before him! He was guilty of a crime—an awful crime. He was trying to produce a terrible, ghastly, bloody railway accident!

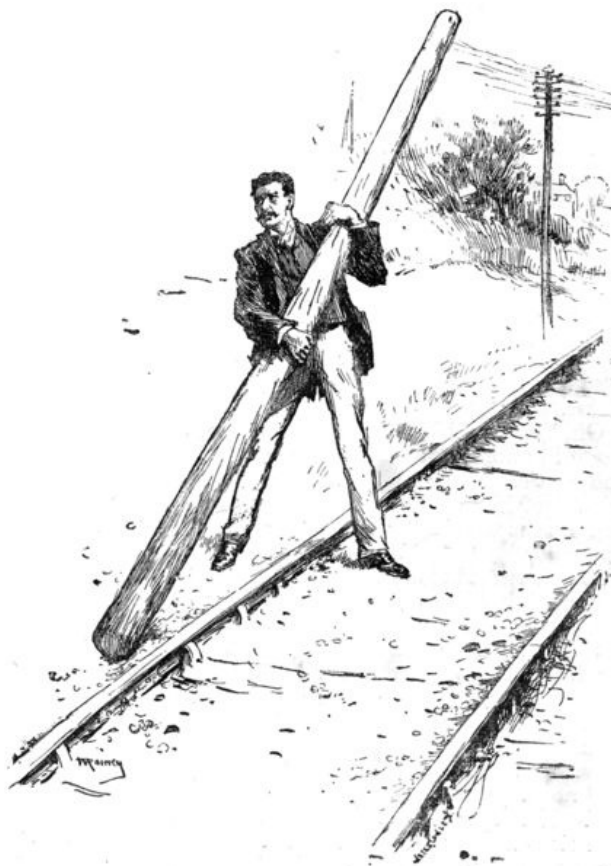
Till that second, the idea had never even so much as occurred to him. In the first wild flush of horror at Netta's situation, he had thought of nothing

[Pg 19]

except how best to save her. He had regarded the engine only as a hateful, cruel, destructive living being. He had forgotten the passengers, the stoker, the officials. He had been conscious only of Netta and of that awful thing, breathing flame and steam, that was rushing on to destroy her. For another indivisible second of time Ughtred Carnegie's soul was the theatre of a terrible and appalling struggle. What on earth was he to do? Which of the two was he to sacrifice? Should it be murder or treachery? Must he wreck the train or let it mangle Netta? The sweat stood upon his brow in great clammy drops, at that dread dilemma. It was an awful question for any man to solve. He shrank aghast before that deadly decision.

They were innocent, to be sure, the people in that train. They were unknown men, women, and children. They had the same right to their lives as Netta herself. It was crime, sheer crime, thus to seek to destroy them. But still—what would you have? Netta lay there all helpless on the line—his own dear Netta. And she had parted from him in anger but half an hour since. Could he leave her to be destroyed by that hideous, snorting, puffing thing? Has not any man the right to try and save the lives he loves best, no matter at what risk or peril to others? He asked himself this question, too, vaguely, instinctively, with the rapid haste of a life-and-death struggle, asked himself with horror, for he had no strength left now to do one thing or the other—to remove the obstacle from the place where he had laid it or to warn the driver. One second alone remained and then all would be over. On it came, roaring, flaring, glaring, with its great bulls' eyes now peering red round the corner—a terrible, fiery dragon, resistless, unconscious, bearing down in mad glee upon the pole—or Netta.

Which of the two should it be—the pole or Netta?



"IT WOULD THROW THE TRAIN OFF THE LINE."

Which of the two should it be—the pole or Netta?



"THE DRIVER'S HEART STOOD STILL WITH TERROR."

And still he waited; and still he temporised. What, what could he do? Oh heaven! be merciful. Even as the engine swept, snorting and puffing steam round the corner, he doubted yet—he doubted and temporised. He reasoned with his own conscience in the quick short-hand of thought. So far as intent was concerned he was guiltless. It wouldn't be a murder of malice prepense. When he laid that log there in the way of the train, he never believed—nay, never even knew—it was a train with a living freight of men and women he was trying to imperil. He felt to it merely as a mad engine unattached. He realised only Netta's pressing danger. Was he bound now to undo what he had innocently done—and leave Netta to perish? Must he take away the post and be Netta's murderer?

It was a cruel dilemma for any man to have to face. If he had half an hour to debate and decide, now, he might perhaps have seen his way a little clearer. But with that hideous thing actually rushing red and wrathful on his sight—why—he clapped his hands to his ears. It was too much for him—too much for him.

And yet he must face it, and act, or remain passive, one way or the other. With a desperate effort he made up his mind at last just as the train burst upon him, and all was over.

He made up his mind and acted accordingly.

As the engine turned the corner, the driver, looking ahead in the clear evening light, saw something in front that made him start with sudden horror and alarm. A telegraph pole lay stretched at full length, and a man, unknown, stood agonised by its side, stooping down as he thought to catch and move it. There was no time left to stop her now; no time to avert the threatened catastrophe. All the driver

could do in his haste was to put the brake on hard and endeavour to lessen the force of the inevitable concussion. But even as he looked and wondered at the sight, putting on the brake, meanwhile, with all his might and main, he saw the man in front perform, to his surprise, a heroic action. Rushing full upon the line, straight before the very lights of the advancing train, the man unknown lifted up the pole by main force, and brandishing its end, as it were, wildly in the driver's face, hurled the huge balk back with a terrible effort to the side of the railway. It fell with a crash, and the man fell with it. There was a second's pause, while the driver's heart stood still with terror. Then a jar—a thud—a deep scratch into the soil. A wheel was off the line; they had met with an accident.

For a moment or two the driver only knew that he was shaken and hurt, but not severely. The engine had left the track, and the carriages lay behind slightly shattered. He could see how it happened. Part of the pole in falling had rebounded on to the line. The base of the great timber had struck the near-side wheel, and sent it off the track in a vain effort to surmount it. But the brake had already slackened the pace and broken the force of the shock, so the visible damage was very inconsiderable. They must look along the carriages and find out who was hurt. And above all things, what had become of the man who had so nobly rescued them? For the very last thing the engine-driver had seen of Ughtred as the train stopped short was that the man who flung the pole from the track before the advancing engine was knocked down by its approach, while the train to all appearance passed bodily over him. For good or evil, Ughtred had made his decision at last at the risk of his own life. As the train dashed on, with its living freight aboard, his native instinct of preserving life got the better of him in spite of himself. He couldn't let those innocent souls die by his own act—though if he removed the pole, and Netta was killed, he didn't know himself how he could ever outlive it.

He prayed with all his heart that the train might kill him.

The guard and the driver ran hastily along the train. Nobody was hurt, though many were shaken or slightly bruised. Even the carriages had escaped with a few small cracks. The Holmbury smash was nothing very serious.

But the man with the pole? Their preserver, their friend. Where was *he* all this time? What on earth had become of him?

They looked along the line. They searched the track in vain. He had disappeared as if by magic. Not a trace could be found of him.

After looking long and uselessly, again and again, the guard and the driver both gave it up. They had seen the man distinctly—not a doubt about that—and so had several of the passengers as well. But no sign of blood was to be discovered along the track. The mysterious being who, as they all believed, risked his own life to save theirs, had vanished as he had come, one might almost say by a miracle.

And indeed, as a matter of fact, when Ughtred Carnegie fell on the track before the advancing engine, he thought for a moment it was all up with him. He was glad of that, too; for he had murdered Netta. He had saved the train; but he had murdered Netta. It would dash on, now, unresisted, and crush his darling to death. It was better he should die, having murdered Netta. So he closed his eyes tight and waited for it to kill him.

But the train passed on, jarring and scraping, partly with the action of the brake, though partly, too, with the wheel digging into the ground at the side; it passed on and went over him altogether, coming, as it did so, to a sudden standstill. As it stopped, a fierce joy rose uppermost in Ughtred's soul. Thank heaven, all was well. He breathed once more easily. He had fallen on his back across the sleepers in the middle of the track. It was not really the train that had knocked him down at all, but the recoil of the telegraph post. The engine and carriages had gone over him safely. He wasn't seriously hurt. He was only bruised, and sprained, and jarred, and shaken.

Rising up behind the train as it slackened, he ran hastily along on the off side, towards where Netta lay still unconscious on the line in front of it. Nobody saw him run past; and no wonder either, for every eye was turned toward the near side and the obstruction. A person running fast by the opposite windows was very little likely to attract attention at such a moment. Every step pained him, to be sure, for he was bruised and stiff; but he ran on none the less till he came up at last to where Netta lay. There, he bent over her eagerly. Netta raised her head, opened her eyes, and looked. In a moment the vague sense of a terrible catastrophe averted came somehow over her. She flung her arms round his neck. "Oh, Ughtred, you've come back!" she cried in a torrent of emotion.

"Yes, darling," Ughtred answered, his voice half choked with tears. "I've come back to you now, for ever and ever."

He lifted her in his arms, and carried her some little way off up the left-hand path. His heart was very full. 'Twas a terrible moment. For as yet he hardly knew what harm he might have done by his fatal act. He only knew he had tried his best to undo the wrong he had half unconsciously wrought; and if the worst came, he would give himself up now like a man to offended justice.

But the worst did not come. Blind fate had been merciful. Next day the papers were full of the accident to the Great Southern Express; equally divided between denunciation of the miscreant who had placed the obstruction in the way of the train, and admiration for the heroic, but unrecognisable stranger who had rescued from death so many helpless passengers at so imminent a risk to his own life or safety. Only Ughtred knew that the two were one and the same person. And when Ughtred found out how



"THE HOLMBURY SMASH."

little harm had been done by his infatuated act—an act he felt he could never possibly explain in its true light to any other person—he thought it wisest on the whole to lay no claim to either the praise or the censure. The world could never be made to understand the terrible dilemma in which he was placed—the one-sided way in which the problem at first presented itself to him—the deadly struggle through which he had passed before he could make up his mind, at the risk of Netta's life, to remove the obstacle. Only Netta understood; and even Netta herself knew no more than this, that Ughtred had risked his own life to save her.



The Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

[Pg 22]

ITS HOME AND ITS WORK.



ire! Fire!"

This startling cry aroused me one night as I was putting the finishing touches to some literary work. Rushing, pen in hand, to the window, I could just perceive a dull red glare in the northern sky, which, even as I gazed, became more vivid, and threw some chimneys near at hand into strong relief. A fire undoubtedly, and not far distant!

The street, usually so quiet at night, had suddenly awakened. The alarm which had reached me had aroused my neighbours on each side of the way, and every house was "well alight" in a short space of time. Doors were flung open, windows raised, white forms were visible at the casements, and curiosity was rife. Many men and some venturesome women quitted their houses, and proceeded in the direction of the glare, which was momentarily increasing, the glow on the clouds waxing and waning according as the flames shot up or temporarily died down.

"Where is it?" people ask in a quick, panting way, as they hurry along. No one can say for certain. But just as we think it must be in Westminster, we come in sight of a huge column of smoke, and turning a corner are within view of the emporium—a tall, six-storied block, stored with inflammable commodities, and blazing fiercely. Next door, or rather the next warehouse, is not yet affected.

The scene is weird and striking; the intense glare, the shooting flames which dart viciously out and upwards, the white and red faces of the crowd kept back by the busy police, the puff and clank of the engines, the rushing and hissing of the water, the roar of the fire, and the columns of smoke which in heavy sulky masses hung gloating over the blazing building. The bright helmets of the firemen are glinting everywhere, close to the already tottering wall, on the summit of the adjacent buildings, which are already smoking. Lost on ladders, amid smoke, they pour a torrent of water on the burning and seething premises. Above all the monotonous "puff, puff" of the steamer is heard, and a buzz of admiration ascends from the attentive, silent crowd.

Suddenly arises a yell—a wild, unearthly cry, which almost makes one's blood run cold even in that atmosphere. A tremor seizes us as a female form appears at an upper window, framed in flame, curtained with smoke and noxious fumes.

"Save her! Save her!"

The crowd sways and surges; women scream; strong men clench their hands and swear—Heaven only knows why. But before the police have headed back the people the escape is on the spot, two men are on it, one outstrips his mate, and darting up the



CAPTAIN SHAW.

fellows in their daily work, or leisure in their homes, amid all the surroundings of their noble calling. I went accompanied by an artistic friend, to whose efforts the illustrations which accompany this record are due.

Emerging from Queen-street, we find ourselves upon Southwark Bridge, and we at once plunge into a flood of memories of old friends who come, invisibly, to accompany us on our pilgrimage to old Winchester House, now the head-quarters of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, in the Southwark Bridge-road. On the bridge—once a "tolled" structure known as the Iron Bridge—we find "Little Dorrit" herself, and her suitor, young John Chivery, in all his brave attire; the young aspirant is downhearted at the decided refusal of Miss Amy to marry him, as they pace the then almost unfrequented bridge. Their ghosts cross it in our company, with Clennan and Maggie behind us, till we reach the Union-road, once known as Horsemonger-lane, where young John's ghost quits us to meditate in the back yard of Mr. Chivery's premises, and become that "broken-down ruin," catching cold beneath the family washing, which he feared.

The whole neighbourhood is redolent of Dickens. From a spot close by the head office we can see the buildings which have been erected on the site of the King's Bench Prison, where Mr. Micawber waited for something to turn up, and where Copperfield lost his box and money. The site of the former "haven of domestic tranquillity and peace of mind," as Micawber styled it, is indicated to us by Mr. Harman—quite a suitable name in such a connection with Dickens—by whom we are courteously and pleasantly received in the office of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

Our credentials being in order there is no difficulty experienced in our reception. Nothing can exceed the civility and politeness of the officials, and of the rank and file of the Brigade. Fine, active, cheerful fellows, all sailors, these firemen are a credit to their organisation and to London. The Superintendent hands us over to a bright young fellow, who is waiting his promotion—we hope he has reached it, if not a death vacancy—and he takes us in charge kindly.

Standing in the very entrance, we had already remarked two engines. The folding, automatic doors are closed in front of these machines. One, a steamer, is being nursed by means of a gas tube to keep the fire-box warm. When the fire-call rings there is no time to begin to get up steam. The well-heated interior soon acts in response to the quickly lighted fire as the engine starts, and by the time our steamer reaches its destination steam is generated. A spare steamer is close at hand.

Very bright and clean is the machine, which in a way puts its useful ally, the "manual," in the shade; though at present the latter kind are more numerous, in the proportion of seventy-eight to forty-eight. Turning from the engines, we notice a row of burnished helmets hanging over tunics, and below these, great knee-boots, which are so familiar to the citizen. When the alarm is rung, these are donned rapidly; but we opine the gates will occupy some time in the opening.

Our guide smiles, and points out two ropes hanging immediately over the driving seat of each engine.

"When the engine is ready the coachman pulls the

ladder, leaps into the open window.

He is swallowed up in a moment—lost to our sight. Will he ever return out of that fiery furnace? Yes, here he is, bearing a senseless female form, which he passes out to his mate, who is calmly watching his progress, though the ladder is in imminent danger. Quick! The flames approach!

The man on the ladder does not wait as his mate again disappears and emerges with a child about fourteen. Carrying this burthen easily, he descends the ladder. The first man is already flying down the escape, head-first, holding the woman's dress round her feet. The others, rescuer and rescued, follow. The ladder is withdrawn, burning. A mighty cheer arises 'mid the smoke. Two lives saved! The fire is being mastered. More engines gallop up. "The Captain" is on the spot, too. The Brigade is victorious.

In the early morning hour, as I strolled home deep in thought, I determined to see these men who nightly risk their lives and stalwart limbs for the benefit and preservation of helpless fire-scorched people. Who are these men who go literally through fire and water to assist and save their fellow creatures, strangers to them—unknown, save in that they require help and succour?

I determined there and then to see these brave

[Pg 23]



ENGINES GALLOP UP.

[Pg 24]

rope, and the gates open of their own accord, you may say. See here!"

He turns to the office entrance, where two ropes are hanging side by side. A pull on each, and the doors leading to the back-yard open and unfold themselves. The catch drops deftly into an aperture made to receive it, and the portals are thus kept open. About a second and a half is occupied in this manoeuvre.

We consider it unfortunate that we shall not see a "turn out," as alarms by day are not usual. The Superintendent looks quizzical, but says nothing then. He gives instructions to our guide to show us all we want to see, and in this spirit we examine the instrument room close at hand.

Here are fixed a number of telephonic apparatus, labelled with the names of the stations:—Manchester-square, Clerkenwell, Whitechapel, and so on, five in number, known by the Brigade as Superintendents' Stations, A, B, C, D, E Districts. By these means immediate communication can be obtained with any portion of the Metropolis, and the condition and requirements of the fires reported. There is also a frame in the outer office which bears a number of electric bells, which can summon the head of any department, or demand the presence of any officer instantly.

It is extraordinary to see the quiet way in which the work is performed, the ease and freedom of the men, and the strict observance of discipline withal. Very few men are visible as we pass on to the repairing shops. (Illustration, [p. 29.](#)) Here the engines are repaired and inspected. There are eleven steamers in the shed, some available for service, and so designated. If an outlying station require a steamer in substitution for its own, here is one ready. The boilers are examined every six months, and tested by water-pressure up to 180 lbs. on the square inch, in order to sustain safely the steam pressure up to 120 lbs., when it "blows off."

Passing down the shed we notice the men—all Brigade men—employed at their various tasks in the forge or carpenters' shop. Thus it will be perceived that the head-quarters enclose many different artizans, and is self-contained. The men were lifting a boiler when we were present, and our artist "caught them in the act."

Close to the entrance is a high "shoot" in which hang pendant numerous ropes and many lengths of drying hose. The impression experienced when standing underneath, and gazing upwards, is something like the feeling one would have while gazing up at the tops of the trees in a pine wood. There is a sense of vastness in this narrow lofty brick enclosure, which is some 70 ft. high. The hose is doubled in its length of 100 ft., and then it drains dry, for the moisture is apt to conceal itself in the rubber lining, and in the nozzles and head-screws of the hoses.

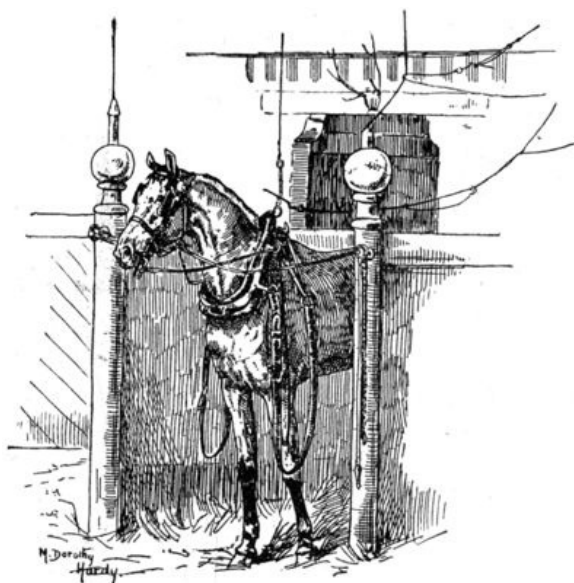
No precaution is neglected, no point is missed. Vigilant eyes are everywhere; bright responsive faces and ready hands are continually in evidence, but unobtrusively.

Turning from the repairing shops we proceed to the stables, where we find things in the normal condition of preparedness. "Be ready" is evidently the watchword of the Brigade. Ready, aye ready! Neatness and cleanliness are here scrupulously regarded. Tidiness is the feature of the stables. A pair of horses on either side are standing, faces outward, in their stalls. Four handsome, well-groomed, lithe animals they look; and as we enter they regard us with considerable curiosity, a view which we reciprocate.

Round each horse's neck is suspended his collar. A weight let into the woodwork of the stall holds the harness by means of a lanyard and swivel. When the alarm rings the collar is dropped, and in "half a second" the animals, traces and splinter-bar hanging on their sleek backs and sides, are trotted out and harnessed. Again we express our regret that no kind householder will set fire to his tenement, that no nice children will play with matches or candle this fine morning, and let us "see everything," like Charles Middlewick.

Once more our guide smiles, and passes on through the forage and harness-rooms, where we also find a coachman's room for reading, and waiting on duty.

[Pg 25]



IN THE STABLES.

It is now nearly mid-day, and we turn to see the fire-drill of the recruits, who, clad in slops, practise all the necessary and requisite work which alone can render them fit for the business. They are thus employed from nine o'clock to mid-day, and from two till four p.m. During these five hours the squads are exercised in the art of putting the ladders and escapes on the wagons which convey them to the scene of the fire. The recruit must learn how to raise the heavy machine by his own efforts, by means of a rope rove through a ring-bolt. We had an opportunity to see the recruits raising the machine together to get it off the wagon. The men are practised in leaping up when the vehicle is starting off at a great pace after the wheels are manned to give an impetus to the vehicle which carries such a burthen.

But the "rescue drill" is still more interesting, and this exhibited the strength and dexterity of the firemen in a surprising manner. It is striking to notice the different ways in which the rescue of the male and female sexes is accomplished. The sure-footed fireman rapidly ascends the ladder, and leaps upon the parapet. The escape is furnished

with a ladder which projects beyond the net. At the bottom a canvas sheet or "hammock" is suspended, so that the rescued shall not suffer from contusions, which formerly were frequent in consequence of the rapid descent.

One fireman passes into a garret window and emerges with a man. He makes no pause on the parapet, where already, heedless of glare and smoke and the risk of a fall, he has raised on his shoulders the heavy, apparently inanimate, form, and grasping the man round one leg, his arm inside the thigh, he carries him steadily, like a sack of coals, down the ladder as far as the opening of the bag-net of the escape.

Here he halts, and puts the man into the net, perhaps head downwards, he himself following in the same position. The man rescued is then let down easily, the fireman using his elbows and knees as "breaks" to arrest their progress. So the individual is assisted down, and not permitted to go unattended.

The rescue of a female is accomplished in a slightly different manner. She is also carried to the ladder, but the rescuer grasps both her legs below the knees, and when he reaches the net he places her head downwards and grasps her dress tightly round her ankles, holding her thus in a straight position. Thus her dress is undisturbed, and she is received in the folds of the friendly canvas underneath, in safety.

There is also a "jumping drill" from the windows into a sheet held by the other men. This course of instruction is not so popular, for it seems somewhat of a trial to leap in cold blood into a sheet some twenty feet below. The feat of lifting a grown man (weighing perhaps sixteen stone) from the parapet to the right knee, then, by grasping the waist, getting the limp arm around his neck, and then, holding the leg, to rise up and walk on a narrow ledge amid all the terrible surroundings of a fire, requires much nerve and strength. Frequently we hear of deaths and injuries to men of the Brigade, but no landsman can attain proficiency in even double the time that sailors do—the latter are so accustomed to giddy heights, and to precarious footing.



[Pg 26]

FIRE ESCAPES



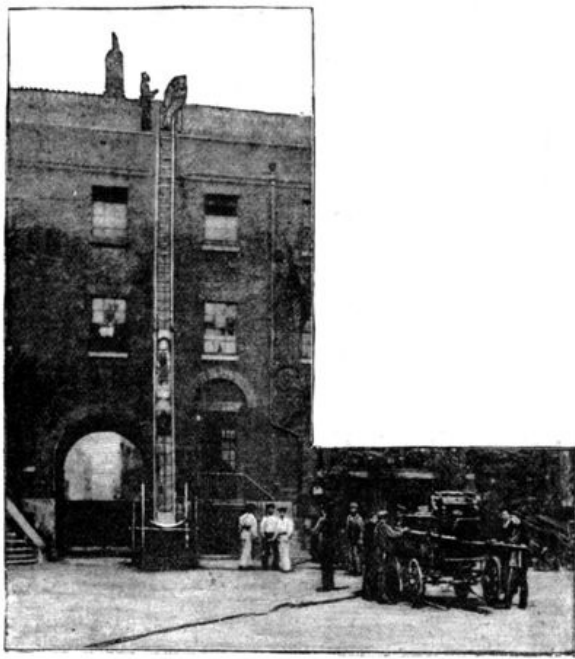
RECRUITS DRILLING.

Moreover, the belt, to which a swivel hook is attached, is a safeguard of which Jack takes every advantage. This equipment enables him to hang on to a ladder and swing about like a monkey, having both hands free to save or assist a victim of the fire or one of his mates. There is a death-roll of about five men annually, on the average, and many are injured, if not fatally yet very seriously, by falling walls and such accidents. Drenched and soaked, the men have a terrible time of it at a fire, and they richly deserve the leisure they obtain.

This leisure is, however, not so pleasant as might be imagined, for the fireman is always on duty; and, no matter how he is occupied, he may be wanted on the engine, and must go.

Having inspected the American ladder in its shed, we glanced at the stores and pattern rooms, and at the firemen's quarters. Here the men live with their wives and families, if they are married, and in single blessedness, if Love the Pilgrim has not come their way. Old Winchester House, festooned with creepers, was never put to more worthy use than in sheltering these retiring heroes, who daily risk their lives uncomplainingly. Somewhat different now the scenes from those when the stately palace of Cardinal Beaufort extended to the river, and the spacious park was stocked with game and venison. As our conductor seeks a certain key we muse on the old time, the feasts and pageants held here, the wedding banquet of James and Jane Somerset, when the old walls and precincts rang with merry cheer. Turning, we can almost fancy we perceive the restless Wyatt quitting the postern-gate, leaving fragments of the mutilated books of Winchester's proud bishop. These past scenes vanish as our guide returns and beckons us to other sights.

[Pg 27]



RESCUE DRILL.



A SAD RECORD.

Of these, by far the most melancholy interest is awakened by the relics of those brave firemen who have died, or have been seriously injured, on duty. In a cupboard, in a long, rather low apartment, in the square or inner quadrangle of the building, are a number of helmets; bruised, battered, broken, burnt; the fragments of crests twisted by fire, dulled by water and dust and smoke. Here is a saddening record indeed. The visitor experiences much the same sensations as those with which he gazes at the bodies at the Great Saint Bernard, only in this instance the cause of death is fire and heat, in the other snow and vapour, wind and storm; but all "fulfilling His word," Whose fiat has gone forth, "To dust shalt thou return."

Aye, it is a sad moment when on a canvas pad we see all that remains of the brave Fireman JACOBS, who perished at the conflagration in Wandsworth in September, 1889.

It was on the 12th of that month that the premises occupied by Messrs. Burroughs and Wellcome, manufacturing chemists, took fire. Engineer Howard and two third-class firemen, Jacobs and Ashby, ran the hose up the staircase at the end of the building. The two latter men remained, but their retreat was suddenly cut off, and exit was sought by the window. The united ladder-lengths would not reach the upper story, and a builder's ladder came only within a few feet of the casement at which the brave men were standing calling for a line.

Ashby, whose helmet is still preserved, was fortunately able to squeeze himself through the bars, drop on the high ladder, and descend. He was terribly burned. But Jacobs being a stout man—his portrait is hanging on the wall in the office waiting-room in Southwark—could not squeeze through, and he was burned to a cinder, almost. What remained of him was laid to rest with all Brigade honours, but in this museum are his blackened tunic-front, his hatchet and spanner, the nozzle of the hose he held in his death-grip. That is all! But his memory is green, and not a man who mentions but points with pride to his picture. "Did you tell him about Jacobs?" is a question which testifies to the estimation in which this brave man is held; and he is but a sample of the rest.

For he is not alone represented. Take the helmets one by one at random. Whose was this? JOSEPH FORD'S? Yes, read on, and you will learn that he saved six lives at a fire in Gray's Inn-road, and that he was in the act of saving a seventh when he lost his life. Poor fellow!

STANLEY GUERNSEY; T. ASHFORD; HOAD; BERG, too, the hero of the Alhambra fire in 1882. But the record is too long. *Requiescant in pace*. They have done their duty; some have survived to do it again, and we may be satisfied.... Come away, lock the cupboard, good Number 109. May it be long ere thy helmet is placed with sad memento within this press.

[Pg 28]

Descending the stairs we reach the office once again. Here we meet our Superintendent. All is quiet. Some men are reading, others writing reports, mayhap; a few are in their shirt-sleeves working, polishing the reserve engine: a calm reigns. We glance up at the automatic fire-alarm which, when just heated, rings the call, and "it will warm up also with your hand." See? Yes! but suppose it should ring, suppose—

Ting, ting, ting, ting-g-g!

What's this? The call? I am at the office door in a second. Well it is that I proceed no farther. As I pause

in doubt and surprise, the heavy rear doors swing open by themselves as boldly and almost as noiselessly as the iron gate which opened for St. Peter. A clattering of hoofs, a running to and fro for a couple of seconds; four horses trot in, led by the coachman; in the twinkling of an eye the animals are hitched to the ready engines; the firemen dressed, helmeted, and booted are seated on the machines; a momentary pause to learn their destination ere the coachman pulls the ropes suspended over head; the street doors fold back, automatically, the prancing, rearing steeds impatient, foaming, strain at the traces; the passers-by scatter helter-skelter as the horses plunge into the street and then dash round the corner to their stables once again.

"A false alarm?"

"Yes, sir. We thought you'd like to see a turn out, and that is how it's done!"

A false alarm! Was it true? Yes, the men are good-temperedly doffing boots and helmets, and quietly resuming their late avocations. They do not mind. Less than twenty seconds have elapsed, and from a quiet hall the engine-room has been transformed into a bustling fire station. Men, horses, engines all ready and away! No one knew whither he was going. The call was sufficient for all of them. No questions put save one, "Where is it?" Thither the brave fellows would have hurried, ready to do and die, if necessary.

It is almost impossible to describe the effect which this sudden transformation scene produces; the change is so rapid, the effect is so dramatic, so novel to a stranger. We hear of the engines turning out, but to the writer, who was not in the secret, the result was most exciting, and the remembrance will be lasting. The wily artist had placed himself outside, and secured a view, an instantaneous picture of the start; but the writer was in the dark, and taken by surprise. The wonderful rapidity, order, discipline, and exactness of the parts secure a most effective tableau.



A TURN OUT.

After such an experience one naturally desires to see the mainspring of all this machinery, the hub round which the wheel revolves—Captain Eyre M. Shaw, C.B. But the chief officer has slipped out, leaving us permission to interview his empty chair, and the apartments which he daily occupies when on duty in Southwark.

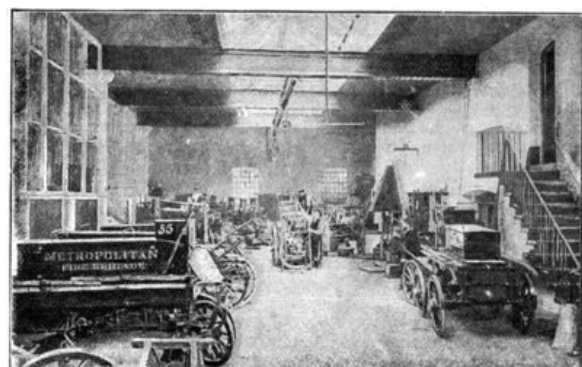
[Pg 29]

This unpretending room upstairs is plainly but comfortably furnished—though no carpet covers the floor, oilcloth being cooler. Business is writ large on every side. On one wall is a large map of the fire stations of the immense area presided over by Captain Shaw. Here are separately indicated the floating engines, the escapes, ladders, call points, police stations, and private communications.

The chair which "the Captain" has temporarily vacated bristles with speaking tubes. On the walls beside the fire-place are portraits of men who have died on duty; the chimney-piece is decorated with nozzles—hose-nozzles—of various sizes. Upon the table are reports, map of Paris, and many documents, amid which a novel shines, as indicating touch with the outside world. There is a book-case full of carefully arranged pamphlets, and on the opposite wall an illuminated address of thanks from the Fire Brigade Association to Captain Shaw, which concludes with the expression of a hope "That his useful life may long be spared to fill the high position in the service he now adorns."

With this we cordially concur, and we echo the "heartfelt wishes" of his obliged and faithful servants as we retire, secure in our possession of a picture of the apartment.

There are many interesting items in connection with the Brigade which we find time to chronicle. For instance, we learn that the busiest time is, as one would expect, between September and December. The calls during the year 1889 amounted to 3,131. Of these 594 were false alarms, 199 were only chimneys on fire, and of the remainder 153 only resulted in serious damage, 2,185 in slight damage. These calls are exclusive of ordinary chimney fires and small cases, but in all those above referred to engines and men were turned out. The grand total of fires amounted to 4,705, or on an average 13 fires, or supposed fires, a day. This is an increase of 350 on those of 1888, and we find that the increment has been growing for a decade. However, considering the increase in the number of houses, there is no cause for alarm. Lives were lost at thirty-eight fires in 1889.



THE REPAIRING SHOP.

The *personnel* of the Brigade consists of only seven hundred and seven of all ranks. The men keep watches of twelve hours, and do an immense amount of work besides. This force has the control of 158 engines, steam and manual of all sorts; 31-1/2 miles of hose, and 80 carts to carry it; besides fire-floats, steam tugs, barges, and escapes; long ladders, trolleys, vans, and 131 horses. These are to attend to 365 call points, 72 telephones to stations, 55 alarm circuits, besides telephones to police stations and

public and private buildings and houses, and the pay is 3s. 6d. per day, increasing!

From these, not altogether dry, bones of facts we may build up a monument to the great energy and intense *esprit de corps* of Captain Shaw and his Brigade. In their hands we place ourselves every night. While the Metropolis sleeps the untiring Brigade watches over its safety. Whether at the head-quarters or at the outer stations, at the street stations, boxes, or escape stations, the men are continually vigilant; and are most efficiently seconded by the police. But for the latter force the efforts of the firemen would often be crippled, and their heroic attempts perhaps rendered fruitless, by the pressure of the excited spectators.

[Pg 30]

We have now seen the manner in which the Metropolitan Fire Brigade is managed, and how it works; the splendid services it accomplishes, for which few rewards are forthcoming. It is true that a man may attain to the post of superintendent, and to a house, with a salary of £245 a year, but he has to serve a long probation. For consider that he has to learn his drill and the general working of the Brigade. Every man must be competent to perform all the duties. During this course of instruction he is not permitted to attend a fire; such experience being found unsuitable to beginners. In a couple of months, if he has been a sailor, the recruit is fit to go out, and he is sent to some station, where, as fireman of the fourth class, he performs the duties required.

By degrees, from death or accident, or other causes, those above him are removed, or promoted, and he ascends the ladder to the first class, where, having passed an examination, he gets a temporary appointment as assistant officer on probation. If then satisfactory, he is confirmed in his position as officer, proceeds to head-quarters, and superintends a section of the establishment as inspector of the shops, and finally as drill instructor.



CAPTAIN SHAW'S SANCTUM.

After this service, he is probably put under the superintendent at a station as "engineer-in-charge," as he is termed. He has, naturally, every detail of drill and "business" at his fingers' ends. The wisdom of such an arrangement is manifest. As the engineer-in-charge has been lately through the work of drill instructor, he knows exactly what is to be done, and every other officer in similar position also knows it. Thus uniformity of practice is insured.

There are many other points on which information is most courteously given at head-quarters. But time presses. We accordingly take leave of our pleasant guide, and the most polite of superintendents, and, crossing the Iron Bridge once more, plunge into the teeming thoroughfares of the City, satisfied.

Scenes of the Siege of Paris.

[Pg 31]

FROM THE FRENCH OF ALPHONSE DAUDET.

[ALPHONSE DAUDET, the most brilliant of French novelists alive, was born at Nîmes in 1840. His parents were not rich, and he started life by drudging as an usher. Then he resolved to break his chains, and to earn his bread at Paris with his pen. He began by painting in the *Figaro*, with great graphic power, the miseries of ushers in provincial schools. Then he turned to writing stories, with the success to which he owes his world-wide fame. Most of his novels are well known in England; but the characteristic little stories here translated will probably be new to English readers.]

I.—THE BOY SPY.



"HE WOULD TAKE HIS PLACE IN THE
LONG LINE."



is name was Stenne: they called him Little Stenne.

He was a thorough child of Paris; delicate-looking, pale, about ten years old—perhaps fifteen—one never can tell the ages of these scaramouches. His mother was dead; his father, an old marine, used to guard a square in the Temple quarter. Babies, nursemaids, the old women with folding-chairs, poor mothers—all the leisurely-moving world of Paris which puts itself out of the way of carriages in those gardens—knew Father Stenne, and worshipped him. People knew that under that bristling moustache, the terror of dogs and tramps, there lurked a tender, pleasant, almost a maternal smile; and that to see it one had only to say to the good man—

[Pg 32]

"How is your little boy?"

Father Stenne was very fond of his son. He was never so happy as in the evening after school when the little fellow came to fetch him, and when they went together round the walks, halting at every bench to speak to the regular loungers, and to reply to their civil greetings.

With the siege all this unfortunately changed. The square was closed; petroleum had been stored in it, and poor Stenne, obliged to keep watch incessantly, passed his life amid the deserted, and partly destroyed, clumps of trees without being able to smoke, and without the company of his son until he returned home late in the evening. You should have seen his moustache when he spoke of the Prussians!

Little Stenne, however, did not complain very much of this new life. A siege is such fun for the street boys! No more school; no lessons; holidays all the time, and the streets just like a fair! The lad stayed out all day till quite evening, running about. He would accompany the battalions of the quarter on their turn of duty to the ramparts, choosing those specially which had good bands; and on this question little Stenne was quite critical. He would have told you plainly that the band of the Ninety-sixth was not good for much; but that the Fifty-fifth had an excellent one. At other times he watched the mobiles drilling, and then there were the *queues* to occupy him.

With his basket on his arm he would take his place in the long lines which, in the half-light of the winter mornings—those gasless mornings—were formed outside the gates of the butchers and bakers. There the people, waiting for rations, their feet in the puddles, talked politics and made acquaintances; and, as the son of M. Stenne, every one asked the lad his opinion. But the greatest fun of all was the cork-throwing parties—the famous game of *galoche*—which the Breton mobiles had introduced during the siege. When little Stenne was not on the ramparts, or at the distribution of rations, you would surely find him in the Place Château d'Eau. He did not play *galoche* himself, you must understand: too much money was needed for that. He contented himself by watching the players "with all his eyes."

One lad—a big fellow in a blue jacket—who never ventured aught but five-franc pieces, especially excited the admiration of little Stenne. When this fellow moved about you could hear the coins jingling in his pocket.

One day, when picking up a piece that had rolled to the feet of our hero, the big boy said to him:

"Ah! that makes your mouth water, eh? Well, if you wish, I will tell you where to find some like this."

When the game was finished he led Stenne to a corner of the Place, and proposed that he should go with him and sell newspapers to the Germans—at thirty francs the trip! At first Stenne indignantly refused, and he did not go again to watch the game for three whole days—three terrible days. He no longer ate nor slept. At night he had visions of heaps of *galoches* at the foot of his bed, and five-franc pieces rolling and shining brightly. The temptation was too strong. On the fourth day he returned to the Château d'Eau, saw the big boy again, and permitted himself to be led astray!

[Pg 33]



"THE MEN GAVE THEM A DROP OF COFFEE."

One snowy morning they set out carrying a linen bag, and with a number of newspapers stuffed under their blouses. When they reached the Flanders Gate it was scarcely daylight. The big boy took Stenne by the hand and approaching the sentry—a brave "stay-at-home," who had a red nose, and a good-natured expression—said to him, in a whining tone:

"Let us pass, good sir; our mother is ill, papa is dead. We are going—my little brother and I—to pick up some potatoes in the fields."

He began to cry. Stenne, shame-faced, hung down his head. The sentry looked at the lads for a moment, and then glanced down the white, deserted road.

"Get on with you, quick!" he said, turning away; and then they were in the Aubervilliers-road. The big boy laughed heartily!

Confusedly, as in a dream, little Stenne saw the factories, now converted into barracks; abandoned barricades decked out with wet rags, and high chimneys, now smokeless, standing up, half in ruins, against the misty sky. At certain distances were sentries; officers, cloaked and hooded, sweeping the horizon with their field glasses; and small tents saturated by the melting snow beside the expiring watch-fires. The big boy knew the paths, and took his way across the fields so as to avoid the outposts.

Presently, however, they came upon a strong guard of Franc-tireurs, and were unable to pass by unnoticed. The men were in a number of small huts concealed in a ditch full of water all along the line of the Soissons railway. Here it was no avail for the big boy to tell his story; the Franc-tireurs would not let him pass. But while he was lamenting, an old sergeant, with white hair and wrinkled face, came out from the guard-house; he was something like Father Stenne.

"Come, come, you brats, don't cry any more!" he said. "You may go and fetch your potatoes; but first come in and warm yourselves a little. The youngster there looks nearly frozen!"

Alas! little Stenne was not trembling from cold, but for fear, for very shame!

In the guardhouse were some soldiers huddled round a very poor fire—a true "widow's fire," at which they were toasting biscuits on the points of their bayonets. The men sat up close to make room for the boys, and gave them a drop of coffee. While they were drinking it an officer came to the door and summoned the sergeant of the guard. He spoke to him very rapidly in a low tone and went off in a hurry.

"My lads," said the sergeant, as he turned round with a beaming countenance, "*There will be tobacco to-night!* The watch-word of the Prussians has been discovered, and this time we shall take that cursed Bourget from them!"

[Pg 34]

There was an explosion of "bravos" and laughter. The men danced, sang, and clashed their sword-bayonets, while the lads, taking advantage of the tumult, wended on their way.

The trench crossed, the plain lay extended in front of them; beyond it was a long white wall, loopholed for musketry. Towards this wall they made their way, halting at every step, pretending to pick up potatoes.

"Let us go back; do not go there," little Stenne kept saying. But the other only shrugged his shoulders, and continued to advance. Suddenly they heard the click of a fire-lock.

"Lie down," cried the big boy, throwing himself flat on the ground as he spoke.

As soon as he was down he whistled.



"LET US PASS, GOOD SIR."



"THE BOYS CRAWLED ON."

Another whistle came across the snow in reply. The boys crawled on. In front of the wall, on the level of the plain, appeared a pair of yellow moustaches under a dirty forage-cap. The big boy leaped into the trench beside the Prussian.

"This is my brother," he said, indicating his companion.

He was so small, this little Stenne, that the Prussian laughed when he looked at him, and he was obliged to lift him up to the embrasure.

On the further side of the wall were great mounds of earth, felled trees, dark holes in the snow, and in every hole was a dirty cap and a yellow moustache, whose wearer grinned as the lads passed.



"THEIR FACES BECAME MORE GRAVE."

In one corner stood a gardener's cottage, casemated with trunks of trees. The lower storey was filled with soldiers playing cards, or busy making soup over a clear fire. How good the cabbage and bacon smelt! What a difference from the bivouac of the Franc-tireurs! Upstairs the officers were quartered. Someone was playing a piano, while from time to time the popping of champagne corks was also audible.

When the Parisians entered a cheer of welcome assailed them. They distributed their newspapers, had something to drink, and the officers "drew them out." These officers wore a haughty and disdainful air, but the big boy amused them with his street slang and vulgar smartness. Little Stenne would rather have spoken, to have proved that he was not a fool, but something restrained him. Opposite to him was seated a Prussian older and more serious than the rest, who was reading, or rather pretending to read, for his gaze was fixed on little Stenne. In his steadfast look were tenderness and reproach, as if he had at home a child of the same age as Stenne—as if he was saying to himself—

[Pg 35]

"I would rather die than see my own son engaged in such a business!"

From that moment Stenne felt as if a heavy hand had been laid upon his heart, and that its beatings were checked—stifled.

To escape from this terrible feeling he began to drink. Soon the room and its occupants were turning round him. In a vague way he heard his companion, amidst loud laughter, making game of the National Guard—of their style of drill; imitating a rush to arms; a night alarm on the ramparts. Subsequently the "big fellow" lowered his tone, the officers drew nearer, their faces became more grave. The wretch was about to tell them of the intended attack of the Franc-tireurs.

Then little Stenne stood up in a rage, as his senses returned to him; he cried out, "None of that, big one, none of that!" but the other only laughed and continued. Ere he had finished, all the officers were on their feet. One of them opened the door.

"Get out," he said to the boys. "Be off!"

Then they began to converse among themselves in German. The big boy walked out as proud as the Doge, clinking his money in his pocket. Stenne followed him with drooping head, and as he passed the elderly Prussian, whose glance had so discomposed him, he heard him say in a sad tone in broken French, "This is bad! Very bad!"

Tears came into Stenne's eyes. Once in the plain again, the lads set out running, and returned quickly. The bag was full of potatoes which the Prussians had given them, and with it they passed the Franc-tireurs unmolested. The troops were preparing for the attack that night; bodies of men were coming up silently and massing themselves behind the walls. The old sergeant was present, engaged in posting his men, and seemed quite happy. As the lads passed he nodded at them, and smiled kindly in recognition.

Ah! how bad Stenne felt when he saw that smile: he felt inclined to cry out—

"Don't advance yonder; we have betrayed you!"

But the "big one" had told him that if he said anything they would both be shot; and fear restrained him.

At La Courneuve the pair went into an empty house to divide the money. Truth compels me to state

that the division was honourably made, and little Stenne did not feel his crime weigh so heavily on his mind when he heard the coins jingling in his pocket, and thought of the prospective games of *galoche*!

But—unhappy child!—when he was left alone! When, after they had passed the gate, and his companion had left him—oh, then his pocket weighed heavily, and the hand which pressed upon his heart was hard indeed! Paris was no longer the same. The people passing looked at him severely, as if they were aware of his mission. The word *spy* seemed to ring in his ears, and he heard it above the din of carriages, and in the rolling of the drums along the canal.

At length he reached home, and was very glad to find that his father had not yet come in. He hurried upstairs to his room to hide the crowns which had become so burdensome to him.

Never had Father Stenne been in such spirits, never in such good humour, as on that evening when he returned home. News had come in from the provinces: things were going better. As he ate his supper the old soldier gazed at his musket which was hanging on the wall, and exclaimed: "Hey, my lad, how you would go at the Prussians if you were big enough!"

About eight o'clock the sound of cannon was heard.

"That's Aubervilliers; they are fighting at Bourget," said the good old man, who knew all the forts. Little Stenne turned pale, and feigning fatigue went to bed, but not to sleep. The thunder of the cannon continued. He pictured to himself the Franc-tireurs marching in the darkness to surprise the Prussians, and falling into an ambuscade themselves. He recalled the sergeant who had smiled, and pictured him, with many others, extended lifeless on the snow. The price of all this blood was then under his pillow, and he—he, the son of M. Stenne, a soldier—what had he done? Tears choked him. He could hear his father walking about in the next room; he heard him open the window. In the Place below the *rappel* was being beaten; a battalion of mobiles was mustering. Yes it was a real battle—no mistake about it! The unhappy lad could not repress his sobs.

[Pg 36]

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Father Stenne, coming into the bedroom.

The lad could bear it no longer; he jumped out of bed, and was about to throw himself at his father's feet when the silver coins rolled out upon the floor.

"What's this? Have you robbed anyone?" asked the old soldier in a tremulous voice.

Then, all in a breath, little Stenne told him how he had gone to the Prussian lines and what he had done. As he continued to speak the weight on his heart grew less—it was a relief to accuse himself. Father Stenne listened; his face was terrible to see. When the lad had finished his narrative the old man buried his face in his hands and wept aloud.



"OH, FATHER! FATHER!"

"Oh, father! father!"—

The boy would have spoken, but the old man pushed him aside, and picked up the money without a word.

"Is this all?" he asked.

Little Stenne made a sign in the affirmative. The old soldier took down his musket and cartouche-box, and putting the silver money in his pocket, said calmly:

"Very well; I am going to pay it back to them!"

Then, without another word, without even turning his head, he descended the stairs, and joined the mobiles who were marching out into the darkness.

No one ever saw him again!

II.—BELISAIRE'S PRUSSIAN.

Here is a story which I heard this very week in a drinking-shop at Montmartre. To do the tale justice I ought to possess the faubourg accents of Master Belisaire, and his great carpenter's apron; and to drink two or three cups of that splendid white wine of Montmartre, which is capable of imparting a Parisian accent to even a native of Marseilles. Then I might be able to make your flesh creep, and your blood run cold, as Belisaire did when he related this lugubrious and veracious story to his boon companions.

"It was the day after the 'amnesty' (Belisaire meant armistice). My wife wished me to take our child across to Villeneuve-la-Garenne to look after a little cottage we had there, and of which we had heard and seen nothing since the siege had commenced. I felt nervous about taking the little chap with me, for I knew that we should fall in with the Prussians; and as I had not yet encountered them, I was afraid that something unpleasant would happen. But his mother was determined. 'Get out!' she cried. 'Let the lad have a breath of fresh air!'

"And the fact is he wanted it badly, poor little chap, after five months of the siege operations and privations.

"So we started off together across the fields. I suppose he was happy, poor mite, in seeing the trees and the birds again, and in dabbling himself with mud in the ploughed land; but I was not so comfortable myself; there were too many spiked helmets about for me. All the way from the canal to the island we met them every moment; and how insolent they were! It was as much as I could do to restrain myself from knocking some of them down. But I did feel my temper getting the better of me as we reached Villeneuve, and saw our poor gardens all in disorder, plants rooted up, the houses open and pillaged, and those bandits established in them! They were shouting to each other from the windows, and drying their clothes on our trellises. Fortunately the lad was trotting along close beside me, and I thought when I looked at him, if my hands itched more than usual, 'Keep cool, Belisaire; take care that no harm befall the brat!'

[Pg 37]



"WE STARTED OFF TOGETHER."

"Nothing but this feeling prevented me from committing some foolish act. Then I understood why his mother had been so determined about my bringing the boy out.

"The hut is at the end of the open space, the last on the right hand on the quay. I found it empty from top to bottom, like all the others. Not an article of furniture, not a pane of glass, was left in it! There was nothing except some bundles of straw and the last leg of the big arm-chair, which was smouldering in the chimney. These signs were Prussian all over; but I could see nothing of the Germans.



"I SEIZED THE BENCH-IRON."

"Nevertheless it seemed to me that somebody was stirring in the basement. I had a bench down there at which I used to amuse myself on Sundays. So I told the child to wait for me, and went down.

[Pg 38]

"No sooner had I opened the door than a great hulking soldier of William's army rose growling from the shavings and came at me, his eyes starting from his head, swearing strange oaths which I did not understand. I could perceive that the brute meant mischief, for at the first word that I attempted to speak he began to draw his sword.

"My blood boiled in a second. All the bile which had been aroused during the previous hour or so

rushed to my face. I seized the bench-iron and struck him with it. You know, my lads, whether my fist is usually a light one, but it seemed to me that that day I had a thunderbolt at the end of my arm. At the first blow the Prussian measured his length upon the floor. I thought he was only stunned. Ah! well, yes! But all I had to do was to clear out, to get myself out of the pickle.

"It seemed queer to me, who had never killed anything—not even a lark—in my life, to see the great body lying there. My faith! but he was a fine fair-haired fellow, with a curly beard like deal shavings. My legs trembled as I looked—and now the brat upstairs was beginning to feel lonely, and to yell out, 'Papa, papa!' at the top of his voice.

"There were some Prussians passing along the road. I could see their sabres and their long legs through the casement of the underground room. Suddenly the idea struck me—'If they enter the child is lost.' That was enough. I trembled no longer. In a second I dragged the corpse under the bench, covered it with planks and shavings, and hurried up the stairs to join the child.

"'Here I am!' I said.

"'What is the matter, papa? How pale you are!'

"'Come, let us get on!'

"I declare to you that the 'Cossacks' might hustle me, or regard me with suspicion, but I would not take any notice of them. It seemed that some one was running after me, and crying out behind us all the time. Once when a horseman came galloping up, I thought I would have fallen down in a faint! However, after I had passed the bridges I began to pull myself together. Saint Denis was full of people. There was no risk of our being fished out of the crowd. Then I only thought of our little cottage. The Prussians would surely burn it when they found their comrade, to say nothing of the risk of Jaquot, my neighbour, the water-bailiff, who, being the only Frenchman left in the hamlet, would be held responsible for the dead soldier! Truly it was scarcely plucky to save myself in such a way!

"I felt that I must arrange for the concealment of the body somehow! The nearer we came to Paris the closer I cherished this idea. I could not leave that Prussian in my basement. So at the ramparts I hesitated no longer.

"'You go on,' I said to the brat, 'I have another place to visit in Saint Denis.'

"I embraced him, and turned back. My heart was beating rather fast, but all the same I felt easier in my mind, not having the child with me then.

"When I again reached Villeneuve, night was approaching. I kept my eyes open, you may depend, and advanced foot by foot. The place seemed quiet enough, however. I could discern the hut still standing yonder in the mist. There was a long black line, or row, upon the quay. This 'palisade' was composed of Prussians calling the roll. A splendid opportunity to find the house deserted. As I made my way along I noticed Father Jaquot engaged in drying his nets. Decidedly nothing was known yet. I entered my house, I went down into the basement and felt about among the shavings. The Prussian was there! There were also a couple of rats already busy at work at his helmet, and, for a moment, I had a horrible fright, when I felt his chinstrap move! Was he reviving? No; his head was heavy and cold.

"I crouched in a corner and waited. I had the idea to throw the body into the Seine when the others were all asleep.

"I do not know whether it was the proximity of the dead, but I was uncommonly sorry when the Prussians sounded the 'retreat' that night. Loud trumpet blasts resounded—Ta-ta-ta! three by three, regular toad's music. It is not to such music that our fellows wish to go to bed!

"For some five minutes I heard the clanking of sabres, the tapping at doors; and then the soldiers entered the court-yard and began to shout—

"'Hofmann! Hofmann!'

"Poor Hofmann remained quite quiet under his shavings; but 'twas I who was on the alert. Every instant I expected to see the guard enter. I had picked up the dead man's sabre, and there I was ready, but saying to myself, 'If you get out of this scrape, my boy, you will owe a splendid wax taper to Saint John the Baptist of Belleville!'



[Pg 39]

"I RAISED HIM ON MY BACK."



"I PUSHED AND PUSHED."

"However, after they had called several times my tenants decided to return. I could hear their heavy boots upon the staircase, and in a few moments the whole house was snoring like a country clock. This was all I had been waiting for. I looked out.

"The place was deserted; all the houses were in darkness. Good for me! I redescended quickly, drew my Hofmann from beneath the bench, stood him upright, raised him on my back, like a burden, or a bale. But wasn't he heavy, the brigand! What with his weight, my terror, and the want of food, I was afraid that I should not have strength to reach my destination. Then no sooner had I reached the centre of the quay than I heard someone walking behind me. I turned round. There was no one! The moon was rising. I said to myself, 'I must look out; the sentries will fire!'

[Pg 40]

"To add to my trouble the Seine was low. If I had cast the corpse on the bank it would have remained there as in a cistern. I went on; no water! I could not go out any farther: my breath came thick and short. I panted. At length when I thought I had gone far enough, I threw down my load. There he goes into the mud! I pushed and pushed! *Hue!* There!

"Fortunately a puff of wind came up from the east, the river rose a little, and I felt the 'Maccabee' leave his moorings gently. Pleasant journey to him! I took a draught of water, and quickly mounted the bank.

"As I passed the bridge at Villeneuve the people were gazing at something black in the water. At that distance it had the appearance of a wherry. It was my Prussian, who was coming down on the current, in the middle of the stream!"





*From a Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence,
P.R.A.
AGE 22.*

ALFRED TENNYSON.

BORN 1809.



he novel portrait gallery which is here commenced, and in which it is our purpose to give portraits, month by month, of the most eminent men and women of the day at different times of life, cannot be more fitly opened than with those of the great poet whose name has been for more than fifty years the glory of our literature. Portraits of Lord Tennyson in youth are rare; but Lord Tennyson himself has had the kindness to assist us. "Mayall, of Regent-street," he writes, "has done the best photograph, and Cameron, of 70, Mortimer-street, has a photograph, as a young man, from a portrait by Lawrence." These are the two here reproduced. Both have a special interest, besides the interest of comparison which belongs to all the series: the first, as a portrait of the poet, by one of the best artists of that day, at an age when his first volume—tiny, but of dazzling promise—had just been given to the world; and the second, as that which Lord Tennyson regards as the best portrait of himself in later life.



*From a Photograph by Mayall, Regent
Street.
AGE 52.*



From a Painting.
AGE 5.



From a Lithograph.
AGE 45.

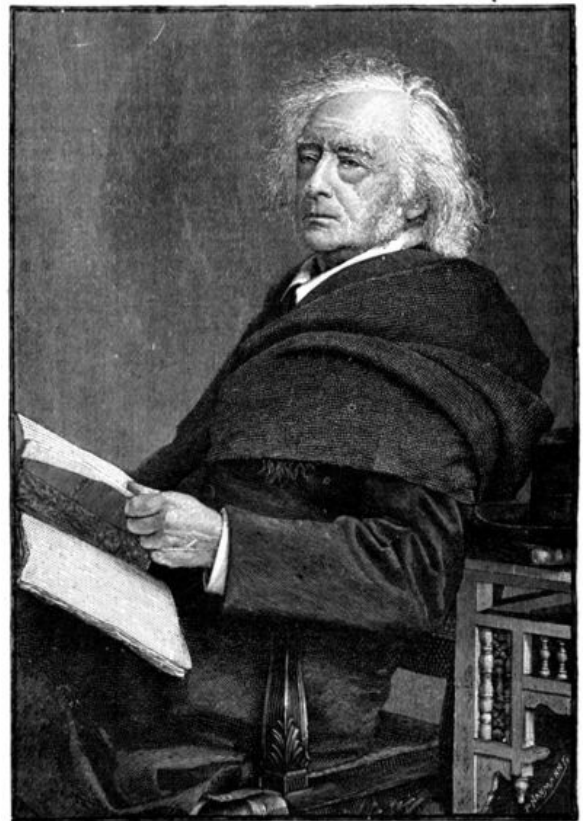
PROF. BLACKIE.

BORN 1809.



We are indebted to the kindness of Professor Blackie for three portraits of himself at widely different ages. Three-quarters of a century is so vast a span of human life, that the resemblance between the charming little boy of five in frills and the grey

Professor of eighty, who might be his great-grandfather, though distinctly traceable, may not at first be visible to all. At five years old John Stuart Blackie was, we may assume, most interested in tops and pop-guns; at forty-five he was a University Professor, and just returning from his tour to Athens, which was the origin of his well-known advocacy of the study of modern Greek; at eighty he was—as he still is, and as we trust he may long be—at once the most learned and the most popular of living Scotchmen.



From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.
AGE 80.



AGE 21.



AGE 30.



AGE 36.



AGE 54.

THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

BORN 1834.



Most men born to be great preachers have, at the age of twenty-one, not yet attempted their first sermon. Four years before that age Mr. Spurgeon, "the boy preacher," was speaking every Sunday to a crowd which overflowed the chapel doors and mobbed the very windows. Before 1855—the date of our first portrait—he had been called to London, and was drawing such a throng to the chapel in New Park-street, that the building had speedily to be enlarged. That year was also memorable for another reason; in January Mr. Spurgeon issued the first sermon of the unexampled series which was to run without an interruption, week by week, for five-and-thirty years. Long before the date of our second portrait, the New Park-street chapel, in spite of its enlargement, had become too small to hold the congregation. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was erected, and from that time down to this has been crowded every Sunday to the doors.



From a Photo. by Miss Bond, Southsea.
AGE 8.



From a Photo. by Window & Grove.
AGE 18.



From a Photo. by Window & Grove.
AGE 28.



From a Photo. by Window & Grove.
PRESENT DAY.

MISS ELLEN TERRY.

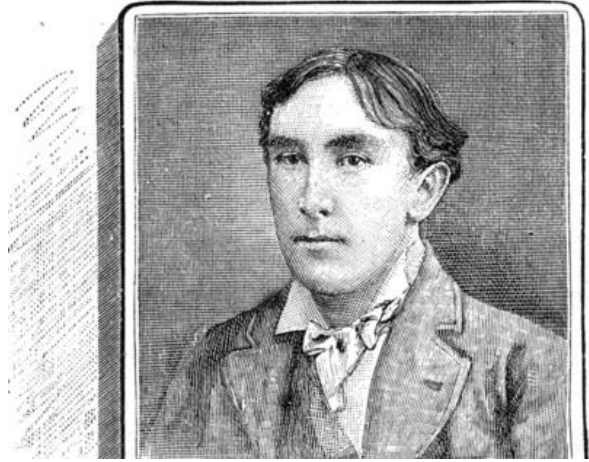


here is an old wives' saying, that pretty children often grow up plain, and *vice versâ*; but, as our readers may determine for themselves, Miss Ellen Terry has been always charming. And she has always been an actress. At the age of eight, as our first portrait shows her, she was playing as the child *Mamillius* in the "The Winter's Tale," with Charles Kean's company, at the Princess's, and was already giving promise of the mingled power and charm which perhaps have never been more fully manifest than in the part of *Lucy Ashton*, which all London is now crowding the Lyceum to see.

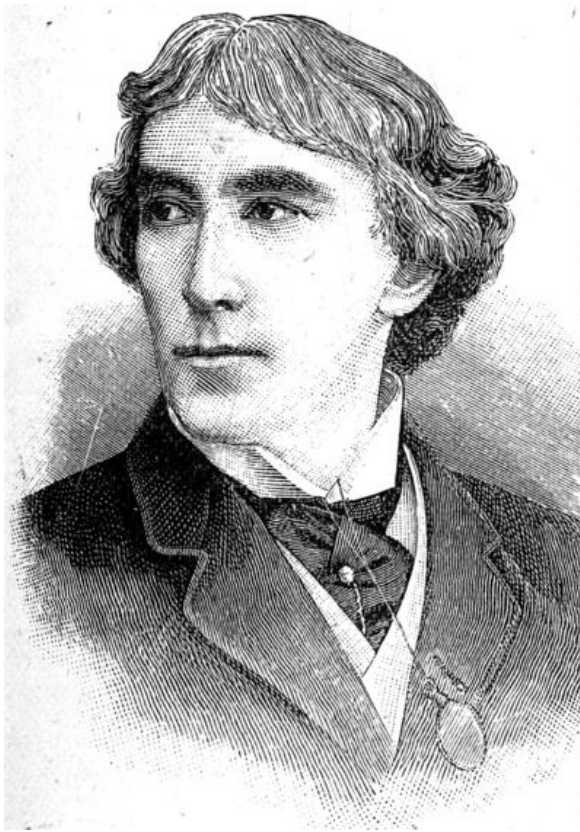
For all the photographs here reproduced we have to thank the kindness of Miss Terry.



From a Photograph by Messrs. Walker & Sons.
AGE 29.



From a Photograph by Messrs. Lock & Whitfield.
AGE 30.



From a Photograph.
AGE 39.



From a Photograph by Mr. S. A. Walker.
AGE 42.

HENRY IRVING.

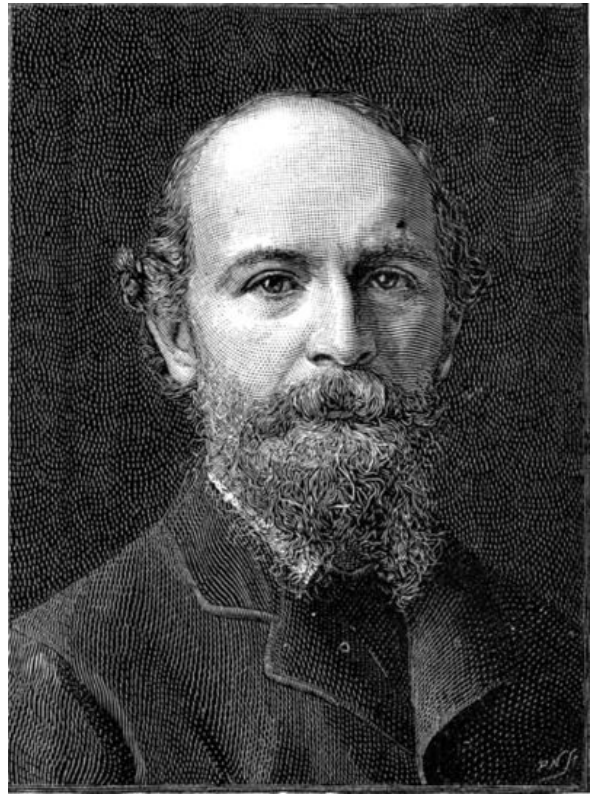
BORN 1838.



r. Irving wearing a moustache presents an unfamiliar aspect; but such was his appearance when, in 1867, he had just made his great success in "Hunted Down," at Manchester. The year after, Mr. Irving deprived himself of his moustache in order to play *Dorincourt* in "The Belle's Stratagem," and appeared as in our second portrait—which, however, he assures us, is a shade too plump to be his accurate presentment. Ten years later, when Mr. Irving was preparing to amaze the world as *Hamlet*, at the Lyceum, his features had assumed the well-known aspect which they wear in our third portrait, and which is still more visible in the last of the series, which has been selected as one of Mr. Irving's favourites among the stock of photographs which he has very kindly placed at our disposal.



AGE 29.
From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.



From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.
AGE 52.

ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

BORN 1837.



It has been said that every poet destined to become famous has written a great poem before five-and-twenty. Mr. Swinburne is, however, an exception to this rule. He was seven-and-twenty when, 1864, he published "Atalanta in Calydon," his first great work, and the finest imitation of a Greek play ever written. Two years later, the first series of "Poems and Ballads" proved conclusively that the new singer who had arisen must be classed with Shelley at the head of all the lyric bards of England. Mr. Swinburne's appearance at that time is given in the first of our two portraits, which is said by those

who knew him to be an admirable likeness.

Nearly a quarter of a century has since elapsed, and it is interesting to notice how the course of years, which has failed to tame the fiery vigour of his verse, has wrought the younger aspect of the poet into the older and still finer one.



From a Photograph by Messrs. Maull & Co.
AGE 19.



*From a Photo. by Messrs. Sayer & Bird,
Norwich.
AGE 28.*



*From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.
AGE 55.*

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, BART.

BORN 1834.



ir John Lubbock, at nineteen, was already showing, in his father's bank in Lombard-street, the remarkable capacity for business which he combines beyond example with pre-eminence in literature and science. At twenty-eight, the age at which our second portrait represents him, he was already meditating his great work on "Prehistoric Times"—a book which has been translated into all the leading languages, and to which the writer chiefly owes his fame. Sir John Lubbock's mind, as is well known, is of the enviable kind which can find its interests alike in the great and in the little, in the past and in the present—which can pass from the wigwam of a prehistoric savage to the London of to-day, and turn with equal gusto from canoes to County Councils, and from banks to bees.

Our portraits are reproduced from photographs kindly lent by Sir John Lubbock for the purpose.

[Pg 48]



From a Daguerreotype.



From a Photograph by M. G. Blaise, Tours.
AGE 19.



From a Photograph.
AGE 7.



From a Photograph by Mr. A. J. Melhuish.
AGE 34.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

BORN 1856.



It is not often possible to present a portrait of a well-known writer taken in his nursery days; but in the case of Mr. Rider Haggard, he has obligingly enabled us to do so, as well as to reproduce a portrait of himself when, as a boy of seven, he was probably about to quit the nursery for the schoolroom. The third portrait of the series represents him when, at nineteen, as secretary to Sir Henry Bulwer, he was about to pay a lengthy visit to Natal—there to acquire the thorough familiarity with the scenery and the people of South Africa, which he was afterwards to turn to excellent account, especially in "Jess."

Our final portrait, which is taken from a recent photograph, represents him as he is at present, when he has proved himself the best romantic writer of the day.

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF MICHAEL LERMONTOFF.

[MICHAEL LERMONTOFF was born at Moscow in the year 1814. His father was an officer on active service; and, his mother having died while he was still in petticoats, he was brought up by his grandmother, a rich old lady, who had a pretty house at the village of Tarkhanui. Michael, who was in temperament a kind of Russian Hotspur, and who was petted and spoiled at home, was sent in due course to the University, where he picked a quarrel with a bullying tutor, and was speedily expelled. Then he entered the Military College at St. Petersburg, and obtained a commission in the Horse Guards. His bitter wit and biting tongue involved him in perpetual duels. His genius was still sleeping; but the sound of the pistol which killed Pushkin awoke it suddenly to life. Pushkin's works had long been his delight; and, indeed, their characters had much in common—though in appearance, with his tall and powerful figure, his fair and waving hair, his large blue eyes and chiselled mouth, Lermontoff was exactly the reverse of the dusky little gipsy-looking Pushkin. His fate also was to be the same. In a piece of fiery verse he called upon the Czar to avenge the death of the great poet. The poem was regarded by the Czar as an impertinence, and Lermontoff was banished to the Caucasus. The wild and savage mountains suited well his fiery temper, and he became "the poet of the Caucasus," the singer of the lives, the legends, and the adventures of the stern and rocky mountaineers. He wrote also one prose work, "A Hero of our Times," from which we take the present story. Something in the book involved him in a duel—the last he was to fight, though he was only twenty-seven. As the challenged party, he possessed the choice of weapons and the mode of fighting; and he chose to fight with pistols on the margin of a precipice, so that, if either of the rivals staggered from a wound, he must infallibly fall over and be dashed to pieces. This strange encounter actually took place; and Lermontoff, struck by his opponent's bullet, reeled, and fell back into the terrible abyss.]



Taman is the most wretched of all our maritime towns. I almost died of hunger there, besides being nearly drowned.

I arrived very late at night in a wretched *telega*. The coachman stopped his tired horses close to a stone building, which stands by itself at the entrance to the town. A Black Sea Cossack, who was on guard, heard the bells of my carriage, and cried out, with the sharp accent of a person suddenly waked up, "Who goes there?"

Out came the sergeant and corporal. I told them I was an officer, travelling by order of the Crown, and that I wanted a billet somewhere.

The corporal took us into the town. All the houses we tried were already occupied. The weather was cold; I had been three nights without sleep. I was very tired, and our useless inquiries ended by irritating me.

"My friend," I said to the corporal, "take me to some place where I can at least lie down, no matter where it is."

"I know a hut in the neighbourhood," replied the corporal, "where you might sleep; but I am afraid it would scarcely suit your honour."

"Go on," I said, paying no attention to his observation.

After much walking through dirty little streets, we at last reached a sort of cabin on the edge of the sea.

The full moon cast its light on the thatched roof and the white walls of my proposed habitation. In the court, surrounded by a sort of palisade, I saw a hut, older and more broken down than the principal one. From this hut the ground sloped rapidly through the court down towards the sea, and I saw at my feet the foam of the troubled waters. The moon seemed to be contemplating the restless element, which was undergoing her influence. By the rays of the ruler of the night, I could make out, at a considerable distance from the shore, two ships, whose black sails stood out like spiders' webs against the dull tints of the sky. "This will do," I said to myself, "to-morrow morning I shall start for Ghelendchik."

A Cossack of the line was acting as my servant. I told him to take out my trunk and send away the postilion; after which I called the master of the house. I could get no answer. I knocked, but there was still no reply. What could it mean? I knocked again, and at last a boy of about fourteen showed himself.

"Where's the master of the house?"

"There is none," returned the child, in the dialect of Little Russia.



"OUT CAME THE SERGEANT AND CORPORAL."

"No master! then where is the mistress?"

"Gone into the village."

"Who will open the door then?" I cried, at the same time kicking at it.

The door opened of itself, and out came a wave of damp steam.

I struck a match, and saw by its light a blind boy, standing motionless before me.

I must here say that I am strongly prejudiced against the blind, the deaf, the lame, the hunchbacked; in short, against the deformed in general. I have remarked that there is always a singular correspondence between the physical formation of a man and his moral nature; as though by the loss of a member the individual lost certain faculties of the soul.

I examined the child's face; but what can one make of a physiognomy without eyes? I looked at him for some time, with a feeling of compassion, when suddenly I saw on his lips a cunning smile, which produced upon me a very disagreeable impression. "Could this blind boy be not so blind as he appeared?" I said to myself. Answering my own question I said that the boy was evidently suffering from cataract, and that the appearance of cataract cannot be simulated. Why, moreover, should he affect blindness? Yet in spite of my argument I still remained vaguely suspicious.

"Is the mistress of the cabin your mother?" I said to the boy.

"No."

"Who are you, then?"

"A poor orphan," he replied.

"Has the mistress any children?"

"She has one daughter, who has gone to sea with a Tartar."

"What Tartar?"

"How do I know? A Tartar of the Crimea, a boatman from Kertch."

I went into the hut. Two benches, a table, and a large wardrobe, placed near the stove, composed the whole of the furniture. No holy image against the wall—bad sign!

The sea-breeze came in through the broken panes of the window. I took a wax candle from my portmanteau, and after lighting it prepared to install myself. I placed on one side my sabre and my carbine, laid my pistols on the table, stretched myself out on a bench, and, wrapping myself up in my fur-lined coat, lay down.

My Cossack took possession of the other bench. Ten minutes afterwards he was fast asleep; I, however, was still awake, and could not drive from my mind the impression made upon me by the boy, with his two white eyes.

An hour passed. Through the window fell upon the floor the fantastic light of the moon.

Suddenly a shadow was cast, where before there had been bright light. I sprang up, and went to the window. A human figure passed once more, and then disappeared—heaven knows where. I could scarcely believe that it had escaped by the slope into the sea; yet there was no other issue.

Throwing on my overcoat, and taking my sabre, I went out of the cabin, and saw the blind boy before me. I concealed myself behind the wall, and he passed on confidently, but with a certain cautiousness. He was carrying something under his arm, and advanced slowly down the slope towards the sea. "This is the hour," I said to myself, "in which speech is restored to the dumb and sight to the blind."

I followed him at some distance, anxious not to lose sight of him.

During this time the moon became covered with clouds, and a black fog rose over the sea. It was just possible to distinguish in the darkness a lantern on the mast of a ship at anchor, close to the shore. The waves were rolling in, and threatened, if he continued to advance, to swallow up my blind adventurer. He was now so near the sea, that with another step he would be lost. But this was not the first of his nocturnal expeditions; so at least I concluded from the agility with which he now sprang from rock to rock, while the sea poured in beneath his feet. Suddenly he stopped as though he had heard some noise, sat down upon a rock, and placed his burden by his side. He was now joined by a white figure walking along the shore. I had concealed myself behind one of the rocks, and overheard the following conversation.

"The wind," said a woman's voice, "is very violent; Janko will not come."

"Janko," replied the blind boy, "Janko is not afraid of the wind."

"But the clouds get thicker and thicker."

"In the darkness it is easier to escape the coast-guard."

"And what if he gets drowned?"

"You will have no more bright ribbons to wear on Sunday."



"THE WOMAN TRIED TO PIERCE THE DARKNESS."

As I listened to this colloquy, I remarked that the blind boy, who had spoken to me in the Little Russian dialect, talked quite correctly the true Russian language.



"WHERE WERE YOU GOING LAST NIGHT?"

"You see," he continued, clapping his hands, "I was right. Janko fears neither the sea, nor the wind, nor the fog, nor the coast-guard. Listen! It is not the breaking of the waves I hear. No, it is the noise of his oars."

[Pg 52]

The woman got up, and, with an anxious look, tried to pierce the darkness. "You are wrong," she said, "I hear nothing."

I also tried to see whether there was not some sort of craft in the distance, but could distinguish nothing. A moment later, however, a black speck showed itself among the waves, now rising, now falling. At last I could make out the form of a boat dancing on the waters, and rapidly approaching the shore.

The man who was guiding it must have been a bold sailor to cross on such a night an arm of the sea some fourteen miles across, and must have had good reasons for braving so much danger. I watched the frail little craft which was now diving and plunging like a duck through the breakers. It seemed as though she must the next moment be dashed to pieces on the shore, when suddenly the skilful rower turned into a little bay, and there, in comparatively calm water, effected a landing.

The man was of middle height, and wore on his head a cap of black sheep-skin. He made a sign with his hand, when the two mysterious persons who had been talking together, joined him. Then the three united their forces to drag from the boat a burden which seemed to be so heavy, that I cannot even now understand how so slight a craft could have supported such a weight. They at last hoisted the cargo on their shoulders, then walked away and soon disappeared.

The best thing for me to do now was to return to my resting-place. But the strange scene I had witnessed had so struck me that I waited impatiently for daybreak.

My Cossack was much surprised when, on waking up, he found me fully dressed. I said nothing to him about my nocturnal excursion. I remained for some little time looking through the window with admiration at the blue sky, studded with little clouds, and the distant shore, the Crimea, stretched along the horizon like a streak of violet, ending in a rock, above which could be seen the tower of a lighthouse. Then I went out, and walked to the fort of Chanagora to ask the commandant when I could go to Ghelendchik.

Unfortunately the commandant could give me no positive answer; the only vessels in port were stationary ones, and trading ships which had not yet taken in their cargo. "Perhaps," he said, "in three or four days a mail packet will come in, and then something can be arranged."

I went back in a very bad humour to my lodging. At the door stood the Cossack, who, coming towards me with rather a scared look, said inquiringly:—

"Bad news?"

"Yes," I answered. "Heaven knows when we shall get away from here."

At these words the anxiety of the soldier seemed to increase. He came close to me, and murmured, in a low voice:—

"This is not a place to stop at. I met just now a Black Sea Cossack of my acquaintance—we were

-serving in the same detachment last year. When I told him where we had put up: 'Bad place,' he said; 'bad people.' And what do you think of that blind boy? Did anyone ever before see a blind person running about from one place to another; going to the bazaar, bringing in bread and water? Here they seem to think nothing of it."

"Has the mistress of the place come in?"

"This morning, while you were out, an old woman came with her daughter."

"What daughter? Her daughter is away."

"I don't know who it is, then. But look, there is the old woman sitting down in the cabin."

I went in. A good fire was shining in the stove, and a breakfast was being prepared, which, for such poor people, seemed to me rather a luxurious one. When I spoke to the old woman, she told me that she was stone deaf.

It was impossible, then, to talk with her. I turned to the blind boy, and, taking him by the ear, said:—

"I say, you little wizard, where were you going last night with that parcel under your arm?"

He at once began to moan and cry, and then sobbed out:

"Where was I going last night? I went nowhere. And with a parcel! What parcel?"

The old woman now proved that her ears, when she so desired it, were by no means closed.

"It is not true," she cried. "Why do you tease an unfortunate boy? What do you take him for? What harm has he done you?"

I could stand the noise no longer. So I went out, determined somehow or other to find the solution of this riddle. [Pg 53]

Wrapped up in my overcoat, I sat down on a bench before the door. Before me broke the waves of the sea, still agitated by the tempest of the night. Their monotonous noise seemed to resemble the confused murmurs of a town. As I listened I thought of bygone years—of the years I had passed in the north, of our bright, fresh capital; and little by little I became absorbed in my recollections.



"ON THE ROOF OF THE CABIN I SAW A YOUNG GIRL."

About an hour passed, perhaps more. Suddenly the cadences of a singing voice struck my ear. I listened, and heard a strange melody, now slow and sad, now rapid and lively. The sounds seemed to fall from the sky. I looked up, and on the roof of the cabin I saw a young girl, in a straight dress, with dishevelled hair, like a naiad. With one hand placed before her eyes to keep off the rays of the sun, she looked towards the distant horizon and still continued her song.

It seemed to me that this was the woman whose voice I had heard the night before on the sea-shore. I looked again towards the singer, but she had disappeared. A moment after she passed rapidly before me, singing another song and snapping her fingers. She went to the old woman and said something to her. The old woman seemed annoyed. The young girl burst into a laugh. Then, with a bound, she came close to me, suddenly stopped and looked at me fixedly, as though surprised to see me. Then turning away with an air of indifference, she walked quietly towards the shore.

But her manœuvres were not yet at an end. All the rest of the day I saw her at short intervals, always singing and dancing. Strange creature! There was nothing in her physiognomy to denote insanity. On the contrary, her eyes were intelligent and penetrating. They exercised on me a certain magnetic influence, and seemed to expect a question. But whenever I was on the point of speaking she took to flight with a sly smile on her lips.

I had never seen such a woman before. She could scarcely be called beautiful; but I have my own ideas on the subject of beauty. There was a thoroughbred look about her, and with women as with horses, there is nothing like breed. It can be recognised chiefly in the walk and in the shape of the hands and feet. The nose is also an important feature. In Russia regular noses are more rare than little feet. My siren must have been about eighteen years of age.

What charmed me in her was the extraordinary suppleness of her figure, the singular movements of her head, and her long, fair hair, hanging down in waves of gold on her neck, and her nose, which was perfectly formed.

In her sidelong glance there was something dark and wild; as there was something fascinating in the pure lines of her nose. The light-hearted singer recalled to me the Mignon of Goethe, that fantastic creation of the German mind. Between these two personages there was indeed a striking resemblance. The same sudden transitions from restless agitation to perfect calm; the same enigmatic words and the same songs. [Pg 54]

Towards the evening I stopped my Undine at the door of the hut, and said to her:

"Tell me, my pretty one, what you were doing to-day on the roof?"

"I was seeing in what direction the wind blew."

"How did that concern you?"

"Whence blows the wind, thence comes happiness."

"And your singing was to bring you good fortune?"

"Where singing is heard, there is joy."

"But what should you say if your singing caused unhappiness?"

"If unhappiness arrives it must be borne. And from grief to joy the distance is not great."

"Who taught you these songs?"

"No one; I dream and I sing; those who understand me listen to me, and those who do not listen to me cannot understand me."

"What is your name?"

"Ask those who baptized me."

"And who baptized you?"

"I do not know."

"Ah! you are very mysterious, but I know something about you."

There was no sign of emotion on her face; her lips did not move.

"Last night," I continued, "you were on the sea-shore." Then I told her the scene I had witnessed. I thought this would have caused her to evince some symptom of anxiety, but it had no such effect.

"You assisted at a curious interview," she said to me with a laugh, "but you do not know much, and what you do know you had better keep under lock and key, as you would keep some precious treasure."

"But if," I continued, with a grave and almost menacing air, "I were to relate what I saw to the commandant?"

At these words she darted away, singing, and disappeared like a frightened bird. I was wrong in addressing this threat to her. At the moment I did not understand all its gravity.



"THEN SHE DISAPPEARED."

The night came. I told my Cossack to prepare the tea urn, lighted a wax candle, and sat down at the table, smoking my long pipe. I was drinking my tea when the door opened, and I heard the rustling of a dress. I rose hastily and recognised my siren.

She sat down silently before me, and fixed me with a look which made me tremble; one of those magical looks which had troubled my life in earlier days. She seemed to expect me to speak to her, but some undefinable emotion deprived me of the faculty of speech. Her countenance was as pale as death. In this paleness I thought I could see the agitation of her heart. Her fingers struck mechanically on the table; her body seemed to shudder; her bosom rose violently and the moment afterwards seemed compressed.

This species of comedy tired me at last, and I was about to bring it to an end, in the most prosaic manner, by offering my fair visitor a cup of tea; when suddenly she rose, and taking my head in her hands, gazed at me with all the appearance of passionate tenderness.

A cloud covered my eyes, and I wished in my turn to kiss her, but she escaped like a snake, murmuring as she did so, "To-night, when everything is quiet, meet me on the shore." Then she disappeared, upsetting as she did so my tea-urn and my solitary light.

"She is the very mischief!" cried my Cossack, who had been looking out for his share of the tea.

He then lay down on his bench; and gradually my

agitation subsided.

"Listen," I said to him. "If you hear a pistol-shot, hurry down as fast as you can to the shore."

He rubbed his eyes, and replied mechanically, "Yes, sir."

I placed my pistol in my belt, and went out. The siren was waiting for me at the top of the path leading down to the sea, lightly clad in a stuff which clung to her waist like a scarf.

"Follow me," she said, taking me by the hand.

We walked down the rocky path in such a manner that I cannot understand how I failed to break my neck. Then we turned sharply to the right, as the blind boy had done the night before. The moon was not yet up. Two little stars, like the fires of lighthouses, relieved the darkness. The agitated waves lifted and let fall in regular cadence a solitary boat close to the shore.

"Get in," she said. I hesitated, for I confess that I have not the least taste for sentimental excursions on

the sea. But it was impossible to refuse. She leapt into the bark, I followed her, and off we went.

"What does all this mean?" I said getting angry.

"It means," she replied, making me sit down on a bench, and putting her arms round my waist, "it means that I love you." Her burning cheek was close to mine, and I felt her hot breath on my face. Suddenly I heard something fall into the water. Instinctively my hand went to my belt. The pistol was no longer there!

A horrible suspicion seized me. The blood rushed to my brain. I looked at her. We were far from the shore and I could not swim. I tried to escape from her embrace, but she clung to me like a cat, and almost succeeded by a sudden jerk in throwing me out of the boat, which was already on one side. I contrived, however, to restore the equilibrium; and then began, between my perfidious companion and myself, a desperate struggle, in which I employed all my strength, while feeling that the abominable creature was overcoming me by her agility.

"What do you mean?" I said to her, squeezing her little hands so tightly that I heard her fingers crack; but whatever pain I may have caused her she did not utter a word. Her reptile nature could not thus be overcome.

"You saw us," she cried at last. "You want to denounce us." Then by a rapid and violent effort she threw me down. Her body and mine were now bending over the side of the frail craft, and her hair was in the water. The moment was a critical one. I got up on my knees, took her with one hand by the hair, with the other by the throat, and when I had at last compelled her to unclutch my clothes, I threw her into the sea.

Twice her head reappeared above the foaming waves. Then I saw her no more.

In the bottom of the boat I found an old oar, with which, after much labour, I succeeded in getting to the shore. As I walked back to the hut by the path leading to the sea, I looked towards the place where the night before the blind boy had been awaiting the arrival of the sailor. The moon at this moment was shining in the sky, and I fancied I could discern on the seashore a white figure. Filled with curiosity, I concealed myself behind a sort of promontory, from which I could remark what was going on around me. What was my surprise, and I almost say my joy, when I saw that the white figure was my naiad? She was wringing the water out of her long, fair locks, and her wet dress clung to her body. A boat, which I could just see in the distance, was coming towards us. Out of it sprang the same boatman whom I had seen the night before, with the same Tartar cap. I now saw that his hair was cut in the Cossack fashion, and that from his girdle hung a large knife.

"Janko," cried the young girl, "all is lost."

Then they began to talk, but in so low a voice that I could not hear them.

"Where is the blind boy?" said Janko at last, raising his voice.

"He will be here soon," was the answer.

At that very moment the blind boy appeared, carrying on his back a packet, which he placed in the bark.

"Listen," said Janko, "keep a good watch here; the things you know are valuable. Tell"—(here a name was uttered which I could not catch) "that I am no longer in his service. Things have taken a bad turn. He will see me no more. The situation is so dangerous that I must get something to do elsewhere. He will not find such another very easily. You may add that, if he had rewarded more liberally the dangerous services rendered to him, Janko would not have left him in the lurch. If he wants to know where to find me—where the wind howls, where the sea foams, that is where I am at home."

After a moment's silence, Janko went on: "Say she accompanies me. She cannot remain here. Tell the old woman that she has done her time, and that she ought to be satisfied. We shall not see her again."

"And I?" murmured the blind boy.

"I cannot be troubled about you."

The young girl leapt into the boat, and with her hand made a sign to her companion.

"Here," he said to the blind boy, "that will do to buy a gingerbread."

"Nothing more?" replied the child.

"Yes, take this," and a piece of money fell upon the sands.

The blind boy did not pick it up.

Janko took his place in the boat. The blind boy remained sitting down on the seashore, and he seemed to be crying. Poor fellow! his grief afflicted me. Why had fate thrown me in the midst of this peaceful circle of smugglers? As a stone troubles the water, I had brought disorder into these lives, and like the stone, moreover, I had very nearly sunk.



"I THREW HER INTO THE SEA."

When I got back to the cabin, my Cossack was so fast asleep that it would have been cruel to disturb him. I lighted the candle, and saw that my little box containing my valuables, my sabre with silver mountings, my Circassian dagger (given to me by a friend), had all been carried off. I now understood what the packet placed in the boat by the blind boy must have contained.

I woke up my Cossack with a blow, reproached him for his negligence, and fairly lost my temper. But my anger could not make me find what I had lost.

And how could I complain to the authorities? Should not I have been laughed at if I had told them that I had been robbed by a blind boy, and almost drowned by a young girl?

The Maid of Treppi.

[Pg 57]

FROM THE GERMAN OF PAUL HEYSE.

[PAUL HEYSE, the greatest German novelist now living, was born in 1830, at Berlin. His father was a celebrated scholar and professor at the University; and he himself, while still a student, undertook a special tour in Italy in order to examine manuscripts in the libraries of Florence, Rome, and Venice. He was only twenty-four, when King Maximilian of Bavaria invited him to Munich, where he married the daughter of the eminent art critic, Franz Kugler, and where he has ever since resided. He had already turned from the dry bones of scholarship to the more congenial task of writing dramas, poems, and romances. His short stories—of which "The Maid of Treppi" is an excellent example—are his best achievements, and are full of passion, character, and romantic charm.]

CHAPTER I.



In the summit of the Apennines, just between Tuscany and the northern part of the States of the Church, there lies a solitary little village called Treppi. The paths that lead up to it are not fit for driving. Some miles further south the road for the post and "vetturine" goes winding through the mountains. None but the peasants who have to deal with the shepherds pass by Treppi; occasionally, too, a painter or pedestrian anxious to avoid the highroad, and at night the smugglers with their pack-mules, who, better than anyone, know of wild rocky paths by which to reach the solitary little village at which they make

but a short stay.

It was towards the middle of October, a season when up in those heights the nights are still very clear and bright. But after the burning hot sun of the day in question, a fine mist rose up from the ravine, and spread itself slowly over the bare but noble-looking rocks of the highland. It was about nine in the evening. A faint light from the fires was still visible in the scattered low stone huts, which, during the day, were taken care of by the oldest women and the youngest children only. The shepherds with their families lay sleeping round the hearths where the great kettles were swinging; the dogs had stretched themselves amongst the ashes; one sleepless old grandmother still sat upon a heap of skins, mechanically moving to and fro her spindle, and muttering a prayer or rocking a restless child in its cradle. The damp, autumnal night breeze came in through large crevices in the walls, and the smoke from the expiring flames on the hearth encountering the mist was forced back heavily and thickly, and floated beneath the ceiling of the hut without seeming to inconvenience the old woman. Presently she, too, slept as well as she could, but with wide open eyes.



**"THE DOG RUBBED HIS NOSE IN HER
HAND."**

In one house alone the dwellers were still stirring. Like the other houses it had only one storey, but the stones were better put together, the door was broader and higher, and adjoining the large square formed by the actual dwelling house were various sheds, extra rooms, stables, and a well-built brick oven. A group of well-laden horses stood before the door; one of the farm servants was just removing the empty mangers, while six or seven armed men emerged from the house into the fog and began hastily getting their steeds ready. A very ancient dog, lying near the door, merely wagged its tail at their departure. Then he raised himself wearily from the ground and went slowly into the hut, where the fire was still burning brightly.

[Pg 58]

His mistress stood by the hearth, turned towards the fire; her stately form was motionless, her arms hanging loosely at her sides. When the dog gently rubbed his nose in her hand, she turned round as though startled out of some dream. "Fuoco," she said, "poor fellow, go to bed, you are ill!" The dog whined and wagged its tail gratefully. Then he crept on to an old skin by the hearth, and lay down coughing and moaning.

Meanwhile a few menservants had come in and seated themselves round the large table on which stood the dishes left by the departing smugglers. An old maid-servant filled these again with polenta out of the big kettle, and taking her spoon sat down and joined the others. Not a word was spoken whilst they were eating; the flames crackled, the dog growled hoarsely in his sleep, the grave and solemn girl sitting on the stone slab by the hearth left untouched the little dish of polenta specially put there for her by the old maid, and gazed about the room buried in thought. In front of the door the fog was like a dense white wall. But at that moment the half-moon appeared, rising above the edge of the rock.

Then there was a sound of horses' hoofs and footsteps approaching up the path. "Pietro!" called out the young mistress of the house in quiet but admonishing tones. A tall young fellow immediately got up from the table and disappeared into the fog.

Steps and voices were heard drawing nearer, till the horse stopped at the door. After a pause, three men appeared in the doorway and entered with a brief greeting. Pietro went up to the girl who was gazing at the fire without showing the slightest interest. "These are two men from Porretta," he said to her, "without any wares; they are conducting a gentleman across the mountains; his passport is not quite in order."

"Nina!" called the girl. The old maid-servant got up and went across to the hearth.

"It is not only that they want something to eat, Padrona," continued the man, "can the gentleman have a bed for the night? He does not wish to go further before daybreak."

"Get ready a bed of straw for him in the chamber." Pietro nodded and went back to the table.

The three new arrivals had seated themselves without any particular attention being paid to them on the part of the servants. Two of them were contrabandists, well armed, their jackets thrown carelessly across their shoulders, and hats pushed well down over their brows. They nodded to the others as though they were old acquaintances, and leaving a good space between their companion and themselves they crossed themselves and began to eat.

The traveller who had come with them ate nothing. He removed his hat from a rather high forehead, passed his hand through his hair, and let his eyes survey the place and company. He read the pious proverbs traced with charcoal on the walls, looked at the picture of the Virgin with its little lamp in the corner, the hens sleeping beside it on their perches, then at the heads of maize hanging on a string from the ceiling, at a shelf with bottles, and jars, and skins, and baskets, all heaped up together. At last his eyes were attracted by the girl at the hearth. Her dark profile stood out clear and beautiful against the flickering red of the fire. A great nest of black plaits lay low on her neck, and her joined hands were clasped round one knee, while the other foot rested on the rocky floor of the room. He could not tell how old she was, but he could see from her manner that she was the mistress of the house.

"Have you any wine in the house, Padrona?" he asked at last.

Hardly were the words out of his mouth before the girl started as though struck by lightning, and stood upright on the hearth, leaning with both arms on the slab. At the same moment the dog woke up out of his sleep, a savage growl issuing from his wheezing chest. Suddenly the stranger saw four fiery eyes fixed on him.

"May one not ask whether you have any wine in the house, Padrona?" he repeated. The last word was still unspoken when the dog, in quite inexplicable fury, rushed at him, barking loudly, seized his cloak with his teeth, and tore it from his shoulder, and would have flown at him again if his mistress had not promptly called him off.

[Pg 59]

"Down, Fuoco, down! Quiet! Quiet!" The dog stood in the middle of the room, whisking his tail angrily, and keeping his eye on the stranger. "Shut him up in the stable, Pietro!" said the girl in an undertone. She still stood petrified by the hearth, and repeated her order, seeing Pietro hesitate. For many years the old dog's nightly resting place had been by the fireside. The men all whispered together as the dog followed most reluctantly, howling and barking terribly outside until at last he seemed to stop from sheer exhaustion.



**"HAVE YOU ANY WINE IN THE HOUSE,
PADRONA?"**

Meanwhile, at a sign from her mistress, the maid had brought in the wine. The stranger took a drink, passing on the goblet to his companions, and meditated in silence on the very extraordinary scene he had unconsciously been the cause of. One after another the men laid down their spoons, and went out with a "Good-night, Padrona!" At last the three were left alone with the hostess and the old maid.

"The sun rises at four o'clock," said one of the smugglers in an undertone to the stranger. "Your Excellency need not rise any earlier—we shall reach Pistoja in good time. Besides, we must think of the horse, which must have six hours' rest."

"Very well, my friends. Go to bed!"

"We will waken your Excellency."

"Do so in any case," answered the stranger, "although the Madonna knows I do not often sleep six hours at a stretch. Good-night, Carlone; good-night, Master Baccio!"

The men raised their hats respectfully, and got up. One of them went up to the hearth, and said:—

"I have a greeting for you, Padrona, from Costanzo of Bologna; he wants to know if he forgot his knife here last Saturday?"

"No," she answered shortly and impatiently.

"I told him you would certainly have sent it back to him if it had been left here. And then—"

"Nina," interrupted the girl, "show them the way to their room, in case they have forgotten it."

The maid got up from her seat. "I only wanted to tell you, Padrona," continued the man with great calmness and a slight blinking of the eyes, "that the gentleman there would not grudge the money if you give him a softer bed than what we get. That is what I wanted to say, Padrona, and now may the Madonna give you a good night, Signora Fenice!"

Thereupon he turned to his companion, and both bowing before the picture in the corner they crossed themselves and left the room with the maid. "Good night, Nina!" called out the girl. The old woman turned on the threshold and made a sign of inquiry; then quickly and obediently closed the door after her.

Hardly were they alone before Fenice took up a brass lamp which stood by the fireside and lit it hurriedly. The flames from the hearth were gradually dying out, and the three little red flames of the lamp only sufficed to light up quite a small portion of the large room. It seemed as though the darkness had made the stranger sleepy, for he sat at the table with his head bowed on his arms, his cloak well wrapped round him, as if he intended passing the night there. Then he heard his name called, and looked up. The lamp was burning before him on the table, and opposite stood the young hostess who had called him. Her glance met his with the utmost firmness.

"Filippo," she said, "do you not know me again?"

For a short time he gazed inquiringly into the beautiful face which glowed partly from the rays of the lamp and partly from fear as to what would be the answer to her question. The face was indeed one worthy to be remembered. The long silky eyelashes as they rose and fell softened the severity of the forehead and delicately-cut nose. The mouth was rosy—red in freshest youth; save only when silent there was a touch of mingled grief, resignation, and fierceness not gainsayed by the black eyes above. And as she stood there by the table the charm of her figure, and especially the beauty of her head and neck, were plainly visible. Still, however, after some consideration, Filippo merely said:

"I really do not know you, Padrona!"

"It is impossible," she answered in a strange low tone of certainty. "You have had time these seven years to keep me in your memory. It is a long time—long enough for a picture to be imprinted on the mind."

It was only then that the strange words seemed fully to rouse him out of his own thoughts.

"Indeed, fair maid," he answered, "he who for seven years has nothing else to do but think of one fair girl's face, must end at last in knowing it by heart."

"Yes," she said meditatively, "that is it; that is just what you used to say, that you would think of nothing else."

"Seven years ago? I was a gay and merry youth seven years ago. And you seriously believed that?"

She nodded gravely three times. "Why should I not believe it? My own experience shows me that you were right."

"Child," he said, with a good-natured look that suited his decided features, "I am very sorry for that. I suppose seven years ago I thought all women knew that the tender speeches of a man were worth about as much as counters in a game, which certainly can be exchanged for true gold, if expressly

sealed and arranged so. How much I thought of all you women seven years ago! Now, I must honestly confess, I seldom think of you at all. Dear child, there is so much to think of far more important."

She was silent, as though she did not understand it all, and was quietly waiting till he should say something that really concerned her.

After a pause, he said: "It seems to dawn upon me now that I have once before wandered through this part of the mountain. I might possibly have recognised the village and this house, if it had not been for the fog. Yes, indeed, it was certainly seven years ago that the doctor ordered me off to the mountains, and I, like a fool, used to rush up and down the steepest paths."

"I knew it," she said, and a touching gleam of joy spread over her face. "I knew well you could not have forgotten it. Why, Fuoco, the dog, has not forgotten it and his old hatred of you in those bygone days—nor I, my old love."

She said this with so much firmness and so cheerfully, that he looked up at her, more and more astonished.

"I can remember now," he said, "there was a girl whom I met once on the summit of the Apennines, and she took me home to her parents' house. Otherwise, I should have been obliged to spend the night on the cliffs. I remember, too, she took my fancy—"

"Yes," she interrupted, "very much."

"But I did not suit *her*. I had a long talk with her, when she hardly uttered ten words. And when I at last sought by a kiss to unseal her lovely sullen little mouth—I can see her before me now—how she darted to one side and picked up a stone in each hand, so that I hardly got away without being pelted. If *you* are that girl, then, how can you speak to me of your old love?"

"I was only fifteen then, Filippo, and I was very shy. I had always been very defiant, and left much alone, and I did not know how to express myself. And then I was afraid of my parents. They were still living then, as you can remember. My father owned all the flocks and herds, and this inn here. There are not many changes since then. Only that he is no longer here to look after it all—may his soul rest in Paradise! But I felt most ashamed before my mother. Do you remember how you sat just at that very place and praised the wine that we had got from Pistoja? I heard no more. Mother looked at me sharply, and I went outside and hid myself by the window, that I might still look at you. You were younger, of course, but not any handsomer. You have still the same eyes with which you then could win whomsoever you would, and the same deep voice that made the dog mad with jealousy, poor thing! Until then I had loved him alone. He felt that I loved you more; he felt it more than you did yourself."

[Pg 61]



SOMETIMES ABUSING YOU

out at San Miniato. I lived there for a month, and used to send her into the town every day to ask for you. In the evening I went down to the town myself and sought you. At last we heard that you had long since gone away, but no one quite knew where."

Filippo got up and paced the room with long strides. Fenice turned and followed him with her eyes, but she showed no signs of such emotion as he in his restlessness evinced. At last he approached, and looking at her for a little, said, "And wherefore do you confess all this to me, my poor child?"

"Because I have had seven long years in which to summon up courage to do it. Ah! if only I had confessed it to you then, this cowardly heart of mine would never have caused me such grief. I knew

"Yes," he said, "he was like a mad creature that night. It was a strange night! You had certainly captivated me, Fenice. I know I could not rest because you did not come back to the house, and I got up and went to look for you outside. I saw the white kerchief on your head and then nothing more, for you fled into the room next the stable. Even now I feel ashamed when I think of the rage I was in as I went angrily away and lay the whole night through in one long dream of you."

"I sat up all through the dark night," said she. "Towards morning sleep overcame me, and when at last I started up and saw the sun was high—what had become of you? No one told me, and I dared not ask. I felt such a horror and dislike of seeing anyone, just as though they had killed you on purpose that I might never see you again. I ran right away, just as I was, up and down the mountains, sometimes calling aloud for you and sometimes abusing you, for I knew I could never love anyone again, and all through you. At last I descended to the plain; then I took fright and went home again. I had been away two days. My father beat me when I got back, and mother would not speak to me. Well, they knew why I had run away. Fuoco the dog had been away with me, but whenever in my solitude I called aloud for you, he always howled."

There ensued a pause; the eyes of each of them were fastened on the other. Then Filippo said: "How long is it since your parents died?"

"Three years. They both died in the same week—may their souls rest in Paradise! Then I went to Florence."

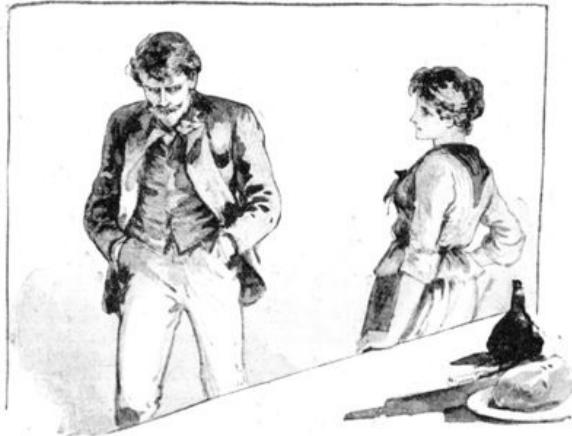
"To Florence?"

"Yes. You had told me you came from Florence. Some of the contrabandists sent me to the wife of the 'caffetiere'

you would come again, Filippo, but I did not think you would have waited so long; that grieved me. But it is childish of me to talk like this. What does it matter now all is past and over? Here you are, Filippo, and here am I; and I am yours for ever and ever!"

"Dear child!" said he softly; but then was silent and kept back the words trembling on his lips. She, however, did not notice how silent and absorbed he was as he stood thus before her, gazing above her head at the wall beyond. She went on talking quite calmly; it was as though her own words were all well known to her, as if she had thousands of times pictured to herself: He will come again, and then I will say this or that to him.

[Pg 62]



"FILIPPO PACED THE ROOM WITH LONG STRIDES."

"Many have wanted to marry me, both up here and when I was in Florence. But I would have none but you. When anyone asked me, and made sweet speeches to me, at once I seemed to hear your voice that memorable night—your words, sweeter far than any words ever spoken on this earth. For many years now they have let me be in peace, although I am not old or ugly. It is just as if they all knew that you were soon to come again." Then continuing: "And now, whither will you take me? Will you stay up here? But no, that would never do for you. Since I have been to Florence I know that it is dull up in the mountains. We will sell the house and the flocks, and then I shall be rich. I have had enough of this wild life with the people here. At Florence they were obliged to teach me everything that was proper for a town maiden to know, and they were astonished that I understood it all so quickly. To be sure, I had not much time, and all my dreams told me that it would be up here that you would come to seek me. I have consulted a fortune-teller too, and it has all come to pass as she said."

"And what if I already have a wife?"

She looked at him in amazement. "You want to try me, Filippo! You have no wife. The gipsy told me that, too. But she could not tell me where you lived."

"She was right, Fenice, I have no wife. But how could she or you tell that I ever intended to take one?"

"How could you not want to take me?" asked she in unwavering confidence.

"Sit down here beside me, Fenice! I have much to tell you. Give me your hand. Promise me that you will hear me quietly and sensibly to the end."

As she did not comply with his request, he continued with a beating heart, standing erect before her with his eyes fixed on her sadly, while hers, as though apprehending danger to her life, were sometimes closed, and sometimes roamed restlessly about the room.

"It is some years since I was obliged to flee from Florence," he resumed. "You know, it was just the time of those political tumults, and they lasted a long time. I am a lawyer, and know a great many people, and I write and receive a quantity of letters throughout the year. Besides, I was independent, proclaimed my opinion when necessary, and was hated accordingly, although I never took part in any of their secret plots and plans. At last I was obliged to leave the country with nothing in prospect, if I did not wish to be imprisoned, and go through endless trials. I went to Bologna, and lived there very quietly, attended to my own business, and saw very few people, least of all any women; for nothing now is left of the mad youth whose heart you so grievously wounded seven years ago, save only that my head, or if you will, my heart, is fit to burst when I cannot overcome any difficulty in my path. You may, perhaps, have heard that Bologna is in an unsettled state, too, latterly. Men of high position have been arrested, and amongst them one whose life and habits have long been known to me, and of whom I knew that all such things were foreign to his mind. My friend asked me to undertake his case, and I helped him to liberty. Hardly was this made public, when one day a wretched individual accosted me in the street, and loaded me with insults. He was drunk and unworthy of notice; but I could not get rid of him otherwise than by giving him a blow on the chest. No sooner had I made my way out of the crowd and entered a café, when I was followed by a relative of his, not drunk with wine, but mad with rage and indignation. He accused me of having retaliated with a blow instead of acting as every man of honour would have done. I answered him as moderately as I could, for I saw through the whole thing; it was all arranged by the Government in order to render me powerless. But one word followed another, and my enemies at last won the day. The other man pretended that he was obliged to go to Tuscany, and insisted on having the affair settled there. I agreed to this, for it was high time that one of our prudent party should prove to the unruly ones that it was not want of courage that restrained us, but solely and entirely the hopelessness of all secret revolutionary movements, when opposed to so superior a power. But when I applied for a passport the day before yesterday, it was refused, without their even deigning to give me a reason for it; I was told it was by order of the highest authorities. It was evident that they either wished to expose me to the disgrace of having shirked the duel, or else to force me to cross the frontier in some disguise, and thereby certainly cause my detention. Then they

[Pg 63]

would have had an excuse for bringing an action against me, and letting it drag on as long as they thought fit."

"The wretches! The ungodly sinners!" interrupted the girl, and clenched her fists.

"Nothing then was left me but to give myself up to the contrabandists at Porretta. They tell me we shall reach Pistoja to-morrow morning early. The duel is fixed for the afternoon in a garden outside the town."

Suddenly she seized his hand in hers. "Do not go down there, Filippo," she said. "They will murder you."

"Certainly they will, my child. But how do you know?"

"I feel it here and—here!" and she pointed with her finger to her brow and heart.

"You, too, are a fortune-teller, an enchantress," he continued, with a smile. "Yes, child, they will murder me. My adversary is the best shot in the whole of Tuscany. They have done me the honour of confronting me with a goodly enemy. Well, I shall not disgrace myself. But who knows whether it will be all fair play? Who can tell? Or can your magic arts foretell that too? Yet what would be the use, child! it would make no difference."

After a short silence he went on: "You must banish entirely from your thoughts any further encouragement of your former foolish love. Perhaps all this has come about so that I might not leave this world without first setting you free, free from yourself, poor child, and your unlucky constancy. Perhaps, too, you know, we should have suited each other badly. You have been true to quite a different Filippo, a young fellow full of vain desires and without a care save those of love. What would you do with such a brooding, solitary being as I?"

He drew near to her, muttering the last words as he walked up and down, and would have taken her hand, but was startled and shocked to see the expression of her face. All trace of softness had left her features, and her lips were ashy pale.

"You do not love me," she said, slowly and huskily, as though another voice were speaking in her, and she were listening to hear what was meant. Then she pushed away his hand with a scream; the little flames of the lamp were nearly blown out, and outside the dog began suddenly barking and howling furiously. "You do not love me, no, no!" she exclaimed, like one beside herself. "Would you rather go to the arms of death than come to me? Can you meet me like this after seven years, only to say farewell? Can you speak thus calmly of your death, knowing it will be mine too? Better had it been for me had my eyes been blinded before they saw you again, and my ears deaf before they heard the cruel voice by which I live and die. Why did the dog not tear you to pieces before I knew that you had come to rend my heart? Why did your foot not slip on the chasm's brink? Alas! woe is me! Madonna, save me!"

[Pg 64]

She flung herself down before the picture, her forehead bowed to the ground. Her hands were stretched out before her; she seemed to pray. Her companion listened to the barking of the dog, and with it the mutterings and groanings of the unhappy girl, while the moon increasing in power shone through the room. But before he could collect himself or utter a word he again felt her arms round his neck, and the hot tears falling on his face.

"Do not go to meet your death, Filippo," sobbed the poor thing. "If you stay with me, who could find you? Let them say what they will, the murderous pack, the malicious wretches, worse than Apennine wolves. Yes," she said, and looked up at him radiant through her tears, "you will stay with me; the Madonna has given you to me that I might save you. Filippo, I do not know what wicked words I may have spoken, but I feel they were wicked; I knew it by the cold chill they sent to my heart. Forgive me. It is a thought fit only for hell, that love can be forgotten, and faithful constancy crushed and destroyed. But now let us sit down and discuss everything. Would you like a new house? We will build one. Other servants? We will send these all away, Nina too, even the dog shall go. And if you still think that they might betray you—why, we will go away ourselves, to-day, now; I know all the roads, and before the sun has risen we should be down in the valley away northwards, and wander, wander on to Genoa, to Venice, or wherever you will."

"Stop!" said he harshly. "Enough of this folly. You cannot be my wife, Fenice. If they do not kill me to-morrow, it will only be put off a short time. I know how much I am in their way." And gently, but firmly, he loosed her arms from round his neck.

"See here, child," he continued, "it is sad enough as it is; we do not need to make it harder to bear through our own foolishness. Perhaps when in years to come you hear of my death, you will look round at your husband and your lovely children, and will feel thankful that he who is dead and gone was more sensible than you at this interview, although on that night of seven years ago, it may have been otherwise. Let me go to bed now, and go you too, and let us settle not to see each other to-morrow. Your reputation is a good one, as I heard from my companions on the way here. If we were to embrace to-morrow, and you made a scene—eh, dear child? And now—good-night, good-night, Fenice!"

Then again he offered her his hand. But she would not take it. She looked as pale as ashes in the moonlight, and her eyebrows and downcast lashes seemed all the darker. "Have I not already suffered enough," she said in an undertone, "for having acted too coyly that one night seven long years ago? And now he would again make me miserable with this wretched prudence, and this time my misery would last to all eternity! No, no, no! I will not let him go—I should be disgraced in the eyes of all if I let him go and he were to die."

"Do you not understand that I wish to sleep now, girl," he interrupted angrily, "and to be alone? Why do you go on talking in this wild fashion and making yourself ill? If you do not feel that my honour forces me to leave you, then you would never have suited me. I am no doll in your lap to fondle and play with. My path is cut out for me, and it is too narrow for two. Show me the skin on which I am to lie to-night; and then—let us forget one another!"

"And if you were to drive me from you with blows I will not leave you! If death were to come and stand between us, I would rescue you from him with these strong arms of mine. In life and death—you are

mine, Filippo!"

"Silence!" cried he, very loudly. The colour rushed to his very brow as he with both arms pushed the passionate pleader from him. "Silence! And let there be an end of this, to-day, and for ever. Am I a creature or thing to be seized upon by whoever will and whoever takes a fancy to me? I am a man, and whoever would have me I must give myself up to freely. You have sighed for me for seven years—have you any right therefore in the eighth year to make me act to my dishonour? If you would bribe me, you have chosen the means ill. Seven years ago I loved you because you were different from what you now are. If you had flown round my neck then and sought to wrest my heart from me with threats, I would have met your threats with defiance as I do to-day. All is over now between us, and I know that the pity I felt for you was not love. For the last time, where is my room?"

[Pg 65]

He had said all this in harsh and cutting tones, and as he stopped speaking the sound of his own voice seemed to give him a pang. But he said no more, though wondering silently that she took it much more quietly than he had expected. He would gladly now, with friendly words, have appeased any stormy outbreak of her grief. But she passed coldly by him, opened a heavy wooden door not far from the hearth, pointed silently to the iron bolt on it, and then stepped back again to the fireside.



"HE BOLTED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM."

So he went into the room and bolted the door behind him. But he stayed for some time close by the door, listening to what she was doing. No movement was heard in the room, and in the whole house there was no sound save from the restless dog, the horse stirring in the stable, and the moaning of the wind outside as it scattered the last remains of the fog. For the moon in all its splendour had risen, and when he pulled away a large bundle of heather out of the hole in the wall that served as a window, the room was lit up by its rays. He saw then that he was evidently in Fenice's room. Against the wall stood her clean, narrow bed, an open chest beside it, a small table, a wooden bench; the walls were hung with pictures, saints and Madonnas; a holy water bowl was seen beneath the crucifix by the door.

He sat himself down on the hard bed, and felt that a storm was raging within him. Once or twice he half rose up to hasten to her and tell her that he had only thus wounded her in order to comfort her afterwards. Then he stamped on the floor, vexed at his own soft-heartedness. "It is the only thing left for me to do," he said to himself, "unless I would add to my guilt. Seven years, poor child!" Mechanically he took in his hand a comb ornamented with little pieces of metal that was

lying on the table. This recalled to him her splendid hair, the proud neck on which it lay, the noble brow round which the curls clustered, and the dusky cheek. At last he tossed the tempting object into the chest, in which he saw dresses, kerchiefs, and all sorts of little ornaments neatly and tidily put away. Slowly he let fall the lid and turned to look out at the hole in the wall.

The room was at the back of the house, and none of the other huts in Treppi interfered with the view across the mountains. Opposite was the bare ridge of rock rising up from behind the ravine, and all lit up by the moon, then just over the house. On one side were some sheds, past which ran the road leading down to the plain. One forlorn little fir-tree, with bare branches, was growing among the stones; otherwise the ground was covered with heather only, and here and there a miserable bush. "Certainly," thought he, "this is not the place to forget what one has loved. I would it were otherwise. In truth, she would have been the right wife for me; she would have loved me more than dress and gaiety, and the whisperings of gallants. What eyes my old Marco would make if I suddenly came back from my travels with a lovely wife! We should not need to change the house; the empty corners were always so uncanny. And it would do me good, old grumbler that I am, if a laughing child—but this is folly, Filippo, folly! What would the poor thing do left a widow in Bologna? No, no! no more of this! Let me not add a fresh sin to the old ones. I will wake the men an hour earlier, and steal away before anyone is up in Treppi."

He was just going to move away from the window and stretch his limbs, wearied from the long ride, on the bed, when he saw a woman's figure step out from the shadow of the house into the moonlight. She never turned her head, but he did not for a moment doubt that it was Fenice. She walked away from the house with slow, steady steps down the road leading to the ravine. A shudder ran through his frame as at that moment the thought flashed across his mind that she would do herself some injury. Without stopping to think, he flew to the door and pulled violently at the bolt. But the rusty old iron had stuck so obstinately fast in its place that he spent all his strength in vain. The cold sweat stood on his brow; he shouted and shook and beat the door with fists and feet, but it did not yield. At last he gave up, and rushed back again to the window. Already one of the stones had given way to his fury, when suddenly he saw the figure of the girl reappear on the road and come towards the hut. She had something in her hand, but in the uncertain light he could not make out what it was, but he could see her face distinctly. It was grave and thoughtful—no trace of passion in it. Not a single glance did she send to his window, and disappeared again into the shade.

[Pg 66]



**"NO ONE SHALL EVER DRINK OUT OF IT
AGAIN."**

As he still stood there and drew a deep breath after his fright and exertion, he heard a great noise which seemed to come from the old dog, but it was no barking or whining. This puzzled him more than ever, it was so uncanny. He stretched his head far out of the opening, but could see nothing save the still night in the mountains. Suddenly there was a short, sharp howl, then a low convulsive groan from the dog, but after that, though he listened long and anxiously, not another sound the whole night through, save that the door of the adjoining room was opened and Fenice's step was heard on the stone floor. In vain he stood for long at the bolted door, listening at first, then asking and begging and imploring the girl for one little word only—all remained still and quiet.

At length he threw himself on the bed in a fever, and lay awake thinking and thinking, till at last the moon went down an hour after midnight, and fatigue conquered his thousand fleeting thoughts. But still in his uneasy slumber he seemed to see the lovely face continually before his eyes, and to hear the pleading and impassioned voice still ringing in his ears.

When he awoke next morning, the light around him was dim; but as he raised himself from the bed and collected his thoughts, he was aware that it was not the dim light of dawn. On one side a faint ray of sunlight reached him, and he soon saw that the hole in the wall which he had left open before he fell asleep, had, nevertheless, been filled up again with branches. He pushed them out, and was dazzled by the bright rays of the morning sun. In a towering rage with the contrabandists, with himself for having slept, but above all with the girl to whom he attributed this treachery, he hurried to the door, the bolt of which yielded easily to his pressure, and stepped out into the other room.

[Pg 67]

He found Fenice there alone, sitting quietly by the fire, as though she had long been expecting him. Every trace of the stormy scenes of the day before had left her face; no sign of any grief, and no mark of any painfully acquired composure, met his stern glance.

"This is your fault," he said, angrily, "my sleeping beyond the time."

"Yes, it is," she answered, indifferently. "You were tired. You will reach Pistoja early enough, if you do not need to meet your murderers before the afternoon."

"I did not ask you to take heed of my fatigue. Do you still mean to force yourself on me? It will avail you nothing, girl. Where are my men?"

"Gone."

"Gone? Would you make a fool of me? Where are they? As if they would go away before I paid them!" And he strode rapidly to the door, thinking to leave.

Fenice remained sitting where she was, and said, in the same placid voice: "I have paid them. I told them that you needed sleep, and also that I would accompany you down the mountain myself; for my supply of wine is at an end, and I must buy fresh at about an hour's distance from Pistoja."

For a moment he was speechless with rage. "No," he burst out at last, "not with you; never again with you! It is absurd for you to think that you can still entangle me in your smooth meshes. We are now more completely parted than ever. I despise you, that you should think me soft and weak enough to be won by these poor devices. I will not go with you! Let one of your men go with me; and here—pay yourself what you gave to the contrabandists."

He flung a purse to her, and opened the door to look for some one who could show him the way down. "Do not trouble yourself," she said, "you will not find any of the men; they are all in the mountains. And there is nobody in Treppi who can be of use to you. Poor feeble old women and men, and children who have to be taken care of themselves. If you do not believe me—go and look!"

"And altogether," she went on, as he, in vexation and anger, stood undecided in the doorway, turning his back to her, "why does it seem to you so impossible and so dangerous for me to be your guide? I had dreams last night, from which I can tell that you are not destined for me. It is true enough that I still have a liking for you, and it would be a pleasure to me to have a few more hours' talk with you. But I do not, on that account, wish to intrude. You are free to go from me for ever, and wherever you will, to death or to life. Only I have so arranged it that I may walk beside you part of the way. I swear to you, if it will ease your mind, that it will only be part of the way—on my honour, not as far as Pistoja. Only just until I have put you in the right direction. For if you were to go away alone, you would lose your way, and would neither get forward nor backward. Surely you must remember that, from your first journey in the mountains."

"Plague upon it!" muttered he, biting his lips. He saw, however, that the sun was getting higher, and all things well considered, what grave cause for fear had he? He turned to her, and thought, from the indifferent look in her large eyes, that he could take it for granted there was no treachery hidden in her words. She really seemed to him to be a different person from the day before; and there was almost a feeling of discontent mingled with his surprise as he was forced to allow that her fit of grief and passion on the preceding day had passed away so soon, and left no trace. He looked at her for some time, but she did not in any way arouse his suspicions.

"Well," he said dryly, "since you have become so very prudent, let us start. Come!"

Without any particular sign of delight she got up, and said: "We must eat first; we shall get nothing for many hours." She put a dish before him and a pitcher, and ate something herself, standing at the hearth, but did not touch a drop of wine. But he, to get it over, ate some spoonfuls, dashed down the wine, and lit his cigar from the ashes on the hearth. All this time he had not deigned to look at her, but when he chanced to look up, standing near her, he saw a strange red in her cheeks, and something like triumph in her eyes. She now rose hurriedly, seized the pitcher, and, flinging it on the stone floor, shattered it at a blow. "No one shall ever drink out of it again," she said, "after your lips have touched it."

He started up in alarm, and, for a second, the suspicion crossed his mind: "Has she poisoned me?" but then he chose to think that it was the last remains of her lovesick idolatry which she had forsworn, and without further comment he followed her out of the house.

[Pg 68]

"They took the horse back with them to Porretta," she said to him outside, as he seemed to be searching for it. "You would not have been able to ride down without danger. They are steeper roads than those of yesterday."

Then she went on before him, and they soon left behind them the huts, which, deserted and without the faintest cloud of smoke from the chimneys, stood out clear in the bright sun. It was then only that Filippo became fully aware of the majestic scenery of this desolate place, with the clear transparent sky above it. The path, now hardly visible, like a faint track in the hard rock, ran northward along the broad ridge; and here and there, where there was a bend in the opposite parallel range of mountains, a narrow strip of sea shone in the far horizon to the left. There was still no sign of vegetation, far or near, except the hard and stunted mountain plants and interwoven bush and bramble. But then they left the summit, and descended into the ravine, which had to be crossed in order to climb the rocky ridge on the other side. Here they soon came upon fir-trees, and streams, which flowed into the glen; and far below them they heard the roaring of the water. Fenice now went on in front, stepping with sure feet upon the safest stones, without looking round, or uttering a single word. He could not help letting his eyes rest on her, and admiring the graceful strength of her limbs. Her face was entirely hidden from him by the great white kerchief on her head, but when it so chanced that they walked side by side, he had to force himself to look before him, and away from her, so greatly was he attracted by the wondrous regularity of her features. It was only when in the full light of the sun that he noticed her strangely child-like expression, without being able to say wherein it lay. It was as though for the last seven years something had remained unaltered in her face, while all else had grown and developed.

At last he began to talk to her of his own accord, and she answered him in a sensible and even easy way. Only that her voice, which as a rule was not so dull and harsh as is the case with the generality of the women in the mountains, sounded to him monotonous and sad, though only speaking of the most indifferent things.



"THEN SHE WENT ON BEFORE HIM."

While thus talking, Filippo never noticed how the sun had climbed higher and higher and still no

glimpse of the Tuscan plains came in view. Neither did he give a thought to what awaited him at the close of the day. It was so refreshing to be walking along the thickly wooded paths, fifty paces above the waterfall, to feel the spray sometimes reach him, to watch the lizards darting over the stones, and the fluttering butterflies chasing the sun's rays, that he never even noticed that they walked on towards the stream, and had not as yet turned off to the left. There was a magic in the voice of his companion which made him forget everything which, the day before, had so occupied him in the society of the contrabandists. But when they left the ravine and saw an endless, unknown mountainous tract, with fresh peaks and cliffs lying barren and deserted before them, he awoke suddenly from his enchanted dreams, stood still, and looked at the heavens. He saw clearly that she had brought him in an utterly opposite direction, and that he was some miles further from his destination than when they started.



"IS THIS THE WAY, YOU TREACHEROUS CREATURE?"

"Stop!" said Filippo. "I see betimes that you are still deceiving me. Is this the way to Pistoja, you treacherous creature?"

"No," she said fearlessly, but with downcast eyes.

"Then, by all the infernal powers, the fiends might learn deceit from you. A curse upon my infatuation!"

"One who loves can do all things—love is more powerful than devil or angel," said she in deep, mournful tones.

"No," shouted he, in maddened anger, "do not triumph yet, you insolent girl, not yet! A man's will cannot be broken by what a mad wench calls love. Turn back with me at once, and show me the shortest paths—or I will strangle you, with these very hands—you fool, not to see that I must hate you, who would make me seem a scoundrel in the eyes of the world."

He went up to her with clenched fists, beside himself with passion.

"Strangle me, then!" she said in a clear but trembling voice; "do it, Filippo. But, when the deed is done, you will cast yourself on my body and weep tears of blood that you cannot bring me to life again. Your place will be here beside me; you will fight with the vultures that will come to eat my flesh; the sun by day will burn you; the dew at night will drench you; till you fall and die beside me—for you can never more tear yourself away from me. Do you think that the poor, silly thing, brought up in her mountain home, would throw away seven years like one day? I know what they have cost me, how dear they were, and that I pay an honest price in buying you with them. Let you go to meet your death? It would be absurd. Turn from me as you will, you will soon feel that I can force you back to me for all eternity. For in the wine which you drank to-day I mixed a love-potion, which no man under the sun has been able to withstand!"

Most queenly did she look as she uttered these words, her arm stretched out towards him, as though her hand wielded a sceptre over one who had deserted her. But he laughed defiantly, and exclaimed, "Your love-potion will do you a bad turn, for I never hated you more than at this moment. But I am a fool to take the trouble to hate a fool like you. May you be cured of all your folly as of your love when you no longer see me near you. I do not need you to guide me. On yonder slope I see a shepherd's hut, and the flocks are near. A fire, too, is burning. They will show me the right way up there. Farewell, you poor hypocrite; farewell!"

She answered not a word as he left her, but sat down quietly in the shadow of a rock by the ravine, burying her great eyes in the dark green of the fir trees growing below by the stream.

(To be continued.)

At the Animals' Hospital.



A HAPPY FAMILY IN BONE.



ne hundred years ago! A century since the first two stones were joined together from which was to spring a veritable boon to the sick and suffering amongst all sorts and conditions of domesticated animals—an abiding-place where horse and dog, calf and sheep, even down to the maligned and sorely-trying drawer of the costermonger's cart might receive assistance and advice to meet the thousand and one ills to which their flesh and bones are heir. The Royal Veterinary College is within a month of claiming a hundred years' good labour to its credit.

Hence the reason of our mounting the "knife-board" of a yellow-bodied 'bus, conspicuously painted "Camden Town," with a view of obtaining a preliminary interview with the driver regarding the ills of most animals in general, and of horseflesh in particular. He knew little, and kept that meagre knowledge to himself, regarding us with suspicion, probably as a spy in the employ of an opposition company, and screwed his mouth artfully when a question was volleyed, and met it with a knowing crack of the whip in irritating response.

"Orf side down, 'Arry. Just show the way where the donkeys is doctored, and the 'osses vaccinated. Whoa! Whoa! 'Er', 'pon my word, 'Arry, if I didn't forget to give Betsy"—a frisky-looking mare on the near side—"her cough mixture. Wot time does the Wet'inary College shut?"

The way pointed out by the conductor was King-street, at the top of which runs Great College-street, where the great gates of the Hospital for Animals are facing you. Here, congregated together about the entrance, are a dozen or twenty students, the majority of them arrayed in garments of a decidedly "horsey" cut, their appearance suggesting that they are somewhere about one remove from the medical student proper, though in full possession of all their traditional love of fun and irrepressible spirits. For a charge of sixty guineas these young men may revel in the anatomy of a horse for a period of three years, walk the straw-carpeted floor of the sick stable, pay periodical visits, and learn how to prescribe the necessary remedies for the inmates of the dogs' ward. The secretary, Mr. R. A. N. Powys, assures us that three hundred students are at present located here, and, together with the educational staff, numbering, amongst others, such veterinary authorities as Professors Axe, Penberthy, McQueen, Coghill, and Edwards, they visit the beds of some fifty horses every day, together with those of some ten or a dozen dogs, to say nothing of pigs and sheep weakly inclined, and cows of nervous temperament. During the past twelve months 1,174 horses have been examined for unsoundness. More than four thousand animals were treated either as in-patients or out-patients during that period.

[Pg 71]



THE RESULTS OF SWALLOWING TIN-TACKS.

Passing through the gateway, a fine open space is immediately in front, with a roadway laid down for the purpose of testing the soundness of horses. Just at this moment a fine prancing steed, a typical shire horse, with his coat as brown as a new chestnut, and his limbs and quarters as they should be, is led out by a stalwart groom. For all the animal's 16-1/2 hands, there is a question as to his soundness. A professor hurries up, followed by a score of students, with notebooks and pencils ready. The horse is trotted round the gravel-path, then galloped with a rider bare-back. A thoughtful consultation follows, and the verdict pronounced upon its respiratory organs is: "As sound as a bell."

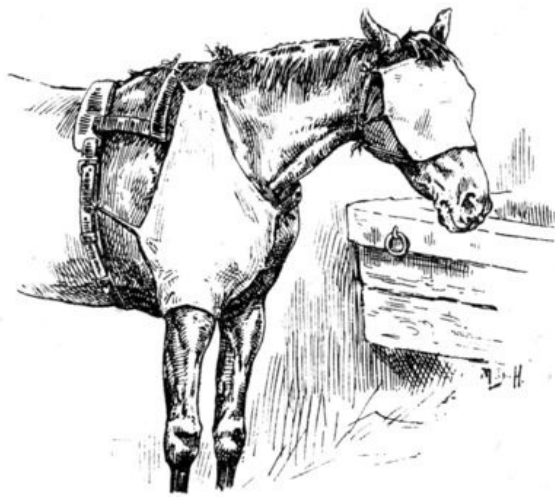
There is an estimable and enterprising gentleman touring the London streets who is the proprietor of a group of animals which he facetiously calls "The Happy Family." These are in the flesh, alive and frolicsome; but here in Camden Town, where all things veterinary are studied, is a happy family—in the bone. They are gathered together in unison around the bust of the late Professor Robertson. The "ship of the desert" has on its left an elephant of formidable size, near which stands an ostrich. On the camel's right is a cow, and a lion, originally part of a menagerie in the Edgware-road. A pig is readily recognised, and a fine dog seems to be looking up to the late Professor as an old friend. This interesting collection will shortly be added to by all that is left of the celebrated race-horse "Hermit."

It is to the Museum that the students repair two or three times a week, and gain a practical knowledge of the ailments which are associated with animals.

The glass cases contain horses' mouths, showing the various stages of the teeth. Innumerable are the bottles holding preserved portions of each and every animal. In one of the cases is a very interesting specimen of the students' work. It illustrates the anatomy of a dog's leg. The bone is taken in hand by the student, and by an ingenious arrangement of red sealing wax the blood-vessels are faithfully and realistically introduced.

Every case contains a curiosity—one is full of the feet of horses, and its next-door neighbour protects a wonderful array of horseshoes. The ideal horse-shoe is one which requires no nails. The nearest approach to this is a shoe which clamps the hoof, is screwed up tightly, and the whole thing kept in place by an iron band. The great amount of pressure which is required to keep the shoe from shifting, and the possible injury it may cause the wearer, has prevented its universal use.

Here is an old-fashioned drenching bit—the old idea of administering medicine to horses. The bit is hollow and a funnel is attached to it, to be inserted in the animal's mouth and the mixture poured in. To-day, however, a tin drenching can of a somewhat pyramidal shape is simply used.

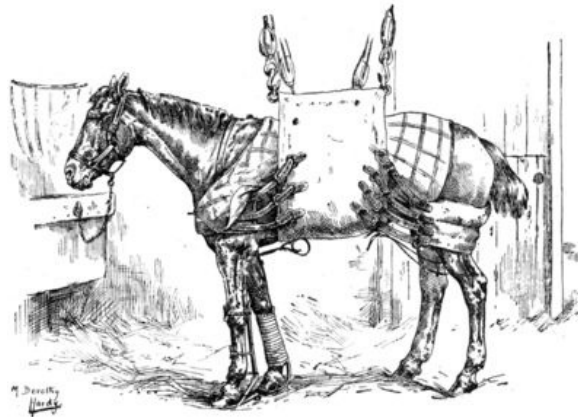


"POLLY."

At the door one may brush against what appears to be a mop of extra size. It is—to use a homely expression—a calf's leg with "a housemaid's knee." This curious growth is five feet in circumference and a foot and a half in depth. But perhaps the most remarkable corner is that devoted to the storing of massive stones and cement, hardened together, which have been taken from the bodies of various animals.

[Pg 72]

These are of all shapes and sizes. Two of them taken from a mare, weigh fifty-four pounds, and many of them would turn the scale at thirty-five to forty pounds. The formation of such stones is curious. Above is a drawing—in miniature—of a huge stone formed inside a cow. The cow—by no means a careful one—enjoyed the green grass of the meadow in blissful ignorance that even tin-tacks and nails get lodged on the sward occasionally. The cow, in her innocence, swallowed the nail—there it is, imbedded in the centre. Lime and earth deposited and hardened round it, with the result that an immense stone was formed of nearly forty pounds in weight.



"JOE."

Next comes the instrument-room. This is an apartment not calculated to act as a sedative upon the visitor who is forced to be a frequent caller on the dentist. The forceps for drawing horses' teeth are more than a yard long, and it requires a man of might and muscle to use them with effect. The tracheotomy tubes—inserted when a horse has difficulty in breathing—stand out brightly from amongst the dull and heavy appearance of the firing irons, which are employed in lameness, as a blister on the limb. It is interesting to be told that there are a number of horses in the hunting field, in the streets, and the park, wearing silver tracheotomy tubes, as an assistance to their breathing, and, to put it in the words of a doctor, "doing well."

The pharmacy is by no means to be hurriedly passed by. It is the chemist's shop of the establishment, the place where students enter to be initiated into all the mysteries of compounding a prescription. They may crush the crystals into powder in a mortar of diminutive size, or pound them in one as big as a copper with a pestle as long as a barber's pole. A great slate is covered with veterinary hieroglyphics; the shelves are decorated with hundreds of blue bottles, the drawers brimming over with tiny phials and enormous gallipots. Step behind a substantial wooden screen, which practically says "Private," and you have the most approved of patterns in the way of a chemist's counter. Here is every item, down to the little brass scales and weights, the corks and sealing wax, the paper and string.

From the pharmacy to the Turkish bath is but a step. Veterinary authorities have arrived at the conclusion that a Turkish bath is the finest remedy that can be found for skin disease in horses. This takes the form of a square stable, heated by a furnace at the back. Not an outlet is permitted for the escape of the hot air, and it can be heated to any temperature required. The horse, too, can enjoy all the luxuriousness of a shower bath, and if necessary can dabble his four feet in a foot-bath handy. Indeed, everything goes to prove the whole system of treating sick animals is founded on the same principle as that meted out to human beings.

[Pg 73]

One must needs look in at the open door of the shoeing-forge. The clang of the blacksmith's hammer makes a merry accompaniment to the prancing of a dozen fine creatures just entering to be shod. The whistling of the bellows, and the hissing of the roused-up flames vie with the snorting of a grand bay mare who cannot be numbered amongst the most patient of her sex.

"Stand over, miss—stand over," cries a strapping, brawny lad. "She'll take a number five;" and from a stock of three hundred and fifty dozen new shoes which adorn the walls—and, if numbers count for anything, good luck should pervade every nook and corner of the forge—a five-inch shoe is quickly adjusted, and the bay, not yet realising the new footing upon which she stands, enlists the services of a pair of men to hold her in.

The paddock in the immediate neighbourhood of the forge is the sick-ward of the hospital for horses. Every horse has its own apartment—a loose box, the door of which is fitted with iron bars through which the doctor can inspect his patient. The inmate's card, which tells its sex and colour, date of entrance, number, disease, and treatment prescribed, is affixed to the door, and every day a professor goes his rounds. The hospital surgeon also pays continual visits, and medicine is administered at intervals varying from two or three hours to three or four days.

Here is one of the most patient of the inmates, "Polly," a pretty creature who would add to the picturesqueness of any hunting-field in the country, and who has dislocated her shoulder. Polly might be held up as a credit to any hospital. She bore her bandaging—not always a painless operation, for the linen must needs be fastened firmly—without moving a muscle, only heaving a sigh of relief as soon as the tying-up was over.

A slip of linen or calico is carefully cut to size and strapped on with strong tapes. It is likewise considered beneficial that the patient should be kept in ignorance as to its whereabouts: for the horror of "hospital" which pervades most people's minds exists in the imaginations of animals as well. Therefore the sick Polly must needs submit to having her eyes bandaged that she may realise the position of being in the dark as to her lodging for a week or two. A strip of the same material from which the shoulder-strap was cut is tied on to the head-collar.

"Polly's" next-door neighbour, however, presents a much more serious case.

"Joe" has recently been gaining experience in the fact that life is but a chapter of accidents. Joe could not be characterised as a careless creature; indeed, it is chronicled of him that he would positively feel for every step he took, and pick out the safest spots in the line of route. Poor Joe! His careful line of action and method of travelling did not meet with that reward to which it was entitled. Alas! he now rests here as a warning to his fellow-horses not to put trust in the treacherous smoothness of the agreeable asphalt, or too much faith in the comfort afforded by the pleasures of travelling on a newly-repaired road. He is laid up with an injured thigh, and a severe fracture has befallen one half of what he depended upon to carry him through life.

"Rest, complete rest, is what he needs," remarks a passing doctor. And a very ingenious arrangement is provided in order to attain the desired end.

This consists of a big canvas sling, held up by half a dozen pulleys. On this the whole weight of the body is supported, and the comfort afforded is equivalent to that provided by a good bed to a weary man. The animal is so weak that, if he tumbled down, it is doubtful whether he would get up again. Here he will remain until completely recovered, which means enjoying the repose afforded by this horsey hammock for a period between six weeks and six months.

The two fractured limbs are, for the time being, imbedded in iron splints with leather bands, and fitted with little pads in front in order not to cut the leg. All these surgical appliances are in every way as perfect as if they were intended for the human frame, instead of for a horse's.

Sickness does not seem to diminish the appetites of the inmates, and doses of iron and quinine are not of frequent occurrence. It may take three or four months to cure a case of lameness, and long terms of confinement may possibly be needed for diseases of the respiratory or digestive organs, or of the skin. But the bill for food, hay and straw, amounted to the comfortable sum of £1,510 0s. 8d. last year, against the modest outlay of £166 11s. 5d. which was spent in drugs. The number of horse-patients confined to well-kept beds of straw and healthy peat-moss, in admirably ventilated apartments, averages fifty at one time. Their paddock—or sick-ward—is a pattern of cleanliness, neatness, and good order.

There is only a moment to spend in the operating theatre, acknowledged to be the finest in Europe. It is a huge space covered with a glass canopy, where four or five horses can be operated on at once. There is ample accommodation for every student in the hospital to obtain a good view of the proceedings. Only a moment also to peep in at a little apartment in the far corner—a small operating room fitted up with a trevis, a wooden structure where the animal to be operated upon is placed, and strapped in with ropes, so that movement is impossible; only a moment, such a barking and a whining breaks upon the peaceful air—troubled cries that find an outlet from the open door of an upper room, to which ascends a stable staircase. It is the dogs' ward!

The barking of the inmates is to be interpreted into an unmistakable welcome. Here, in corners of the cosiest, and beds of the whitest wood-fibre, reclines many a magnificent specimen. These fine St. Bernard pups are worth £250 a piece, and only a week or two ago a patient was discharged as convalescent, upon whose head rested the figure of £1,200. Most of them are suffering from skin disease; but here is a pup, with a coat of impenetrable blackness, afflicted with St. Vitus's dance. He wears a pitiful expression; but, save for an occasional twitter of a muscle, rests very quietly. Every cage is occupied, save one, and that is an apartment



"DAVID."

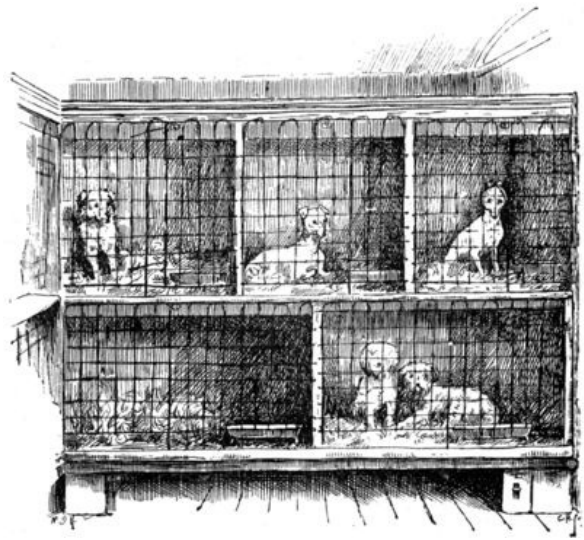
with double iron gates. It is set apart for mad dogs. Every creature bears its affliction with remarkable resignation, and, as one passes from bed to bed, runs out to the length of its chain and stands looking up the sawdust-strewn floor which leads to "the nursery."

One fine fellow, however, rests in a corner, near the bath, the very personification of all that is dignified.

"David" is a grand St. Bernard, upon whom a coat of shaggy beauty has been bestowed and the blessing of a majestic presence. He sits there with his front paw dangling over the bed-side; helpless, but not uncared for. His leg is broken, and he holds it out, tightly tied up and bandaged, as token thereof. Cheer up, David, old boy—look a bit pleasant, David, my brave fellow. But David only shakes his head in grateful thanks for a word of sympathy. He is a credit to his breed, and his noble disposition would lead him to forget what brought him there. It is a touching story. His owner's little daughter was his mistress; David followed her wherever she went, and—save at night time—never allowed her out of his sight, and even then he would nestle outside her door on the mat, until the child woke in the morning. Just a week ago the little girl had wandered down the river bank, climbing over the iron railings separating the pathway from the tiny valley which led down to the water. David did not notice this action, and when he turned his head saw that his mistress had disappeared. With his mind bent on the water, he took a leap, intending to spring over the rails; but his front paw caught the iron bars, and his leg was broken. The child was quite safe; she was only gathering flowers.

"The Nursery" is a room set apart at the far end for the reception of the smaller species of the canine tribe.

The two little Skye terriers fondling one another are suffering from ingrown toe-nails and must needs have them cut. The cot next to them is empty; but a "King Charles" will convert the apartment into a royal one on the morrow. His Majesty, too, requires the application of the scissors to his royal toes. Above is a terrier—beautifully marked—but, withal, wearing a remarkably long expression of countenance. Something is wrong with one of his ears, and his face is tied up like that of an individual writhing beneath the tortures of toothache. "Dot" envies his brother terrier next door. There is nothing wrong with *him*; he is not an inmate, but a boarder, and the property of one of the officials. A pretty little couple of colleys are sympathising with each other in their affliction as they lie cuddled up in the corner. They are both queer—something wrong with their lungs.



[Pg 75]

THE NURSERY.



DISSECTING ROOM.

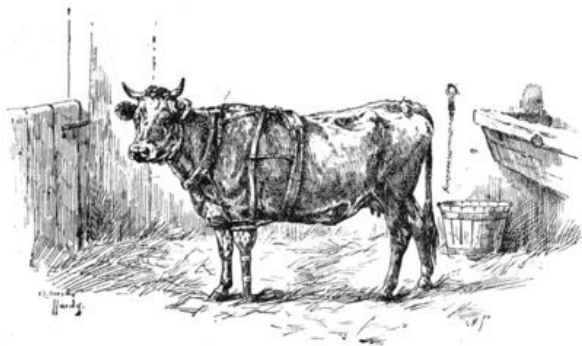
Out in the open again, we look in upon a fine bullock with a very ugly swollen face. But here, in a corner all to itself, we meet with a veritable curiosity—a cow with a wooden leg!

[Pg 76]

This is a strapping young Alderney, of such value that it was deemed advisable to provide her with a wooden support instead of killing her at once. "Susan" was a pet, and had her own way in most things. Probably this aroused the green-eyed monster within the breast of a mare who sometimes shared her meadow. Whether the cause was jealousy or not, one thing is certain—after a particularly hearty meal, which seems to have endowed the mare with exceptional strength and vigour, to say nothing of a wicked and revengeful mind, she deliberately, and without warning, kicked the fair Susan. Susan had to lie up for three or four months, and now a wooden leg supports her injured frame.

A strap is fastened round the body of the cow; then a wooden support is placed near the neck and attached to the main strap with leather bands. Finally, the iron-bound timber leg is set in place; and it is said that the animal sustains but little inconvenience.

Following a number of students, we are soon within the precincts of the dissecting room. This is a square room containing a dozen or twenty dead donkeys, each laid out on a table for dissection. The enterprising students repair to Islington Cattle Market, and for a pound or thirty shillings purchase a likely subject from an obliging costermonger. Half a dozen of them will each take a share in the expense incurred, and work together at a table, passing from head to tail until a complete examination has been made.



"SUSAN."

But what most interests the casual visitor is "The Poor Man's Corner," a portion of the yard set apart for out-patients, and termed by the hospital authorities their "cheap practice."

Every day—excepting Sundays—between the hours of two and four, a motley crowd assembles here, bringing with them an animal which has betrayed signs to its owner that it is not altogether "fit." The cabby who is the proud possessor of a four-wheeler and an ancient-looking steed comes with a face which tells another tale than that which betokens a small fare. The coster thrusts his hands deep into his trousers pockets and waits in gloomy meditation. Visions of his donkey being condemned to death on the spot flash through his mind, and he

almost regrets he came.

"Guvnor—I say, guvnor, it ain't a 'opeless case, is it? Don't say it's all up wi' it. Yer see, guvnor, I couldn't help but bring it along. I'm a rough 'un, but I've got a 'art, and, there, I couldn't stand it no longer, seein' the poor creeter a limp in' along like that. On'y say it ain't a 'opeless case."

He will soon be out of his suspense, for his donkey will be examined in its turn.

Not only is advice given gratis and the animal thoroughly examined, but, should it need medicine, or call for an operation, this is readily done, the students generally performing it under the superintendence of one of the professors.

The "poor man's" gate has just been opened, and Mr. E. R. Edwards, the hospital surgeon, holds the bridle of the first horse for examination as the students gather round. One of the professors appears upon the scene, and asks the owner what is the matter with his horse.

"He can 'ardly walk, sir."

"Lame, eh?"

"I expec's so, sir."

"What are you?"

"Hawks wegetables about, sir."

The horse is trotted up the yard and back again. Then the professor turns to a student and asks what he considers is wrong with the animal.

"Lame in both hind legs;"—and, the student having diagnosed the case correctly, the animal is walked off to be further treated and prescribed for. [Pg 77]

Case after case is taken. One horse that draws firewood from seven in the morning until ten or eleven at night, cannot eat. Away it goes for examination, and the temperature of its pulse is taken. A lad, evidently not used to the stubborn disposition and immovable spirit of donkeys in general, has brought his own, which he informs the professor he only purchased "the week afore last." Now, nothing under the sun in the shape of argument with whip or words will make it go at anything like the pace which the man from whom he bought it guaranteed.

"Why, sir, I had to drag it here. 'Pon my word, I believe as 'ow he knew where I was a takin' 'im, for he crawled more'n ever. I thought as 'ow there might be something wrong wi' his wind."

"Trot him along," said the professor; but the donkey turned a deaf ear to the inviting cries of forty or fifty students to "go on," and bravely stood his ground. The victor was placed on one side to be dealt with later on.

The next case was one connected with a pathetic story. The horse—a poor creature which had evidently seen better days—was owned by a laundryman, a widower, who had eleven children to support, the oldest of whom was only fifteen years of age, and the youngest six months. He depended entirely on his horse to carry the laundry round from house to house.

The poor fellow stood quietly by and seemed to read in the professor's face and gather from his hurried consultation with a brother "vet." that something out of the common was the matter with his horse. In response to the doctor's beckoning, he approached the spot where the animal stood, and, with tears in his eyes, asked in a choking voice, "Not an operation, I hope, sir?"

The professor shook his head.

Then the truth flashed upon the laundryman's mind. He stood dumbfounded for a moment. The students ceased their chatter, and, save for the movement of a horse's foot upon the uneven stones, the yard was as still as the ward of a hospital where human beings lie. The horse was condemned to death!



"POOR MAN'S CORNER."

The poor fellow threw his arms about the animal's neck, and the horse turned its head in response to his master's caresses, and the cry which came from the man's heart could not have been more pitiful had he been parting from his only friend.

The Mirror.

[Pg 78]

From the French of LÉO LESPÈS.

[LÉO LESPÈS was born at Bonchain, June the 18th, 1815—the day of Waterloo. At seventeen he was compelled to take up arms as a conscript of Fusiliers, and for eight years passed his life amidst the scenes of camps and guard-rooms. But Lespès was not born to be a soldier; nature had meant him for a man of letters. As soon as he obtained his liberty, he began to write for newspapers and magazines; and from that time until his death in 1875 he lived a busy but uneventful life, as one of the most popular of authors. He was one of the chief founders of the *Petit Journal*, which, owing largely to the tales and articles which he wrote under the signature of "Timothy Trimm," attained at once to a gigantic circulation. During his lifetime, his brilliant little stories were the delight of thousands; but beyond the limits of his native country his fame has never been so great as it deserves.]

LETTER I.



Y ou wish me to write to you, my dear Anaïs—me, a poor blind creature whose hand moves faltering in the darkness? Are you not afraid of the sadness of my letters, written as they are in gloom? Have you no fear of the sombre thoughts which must beset the blind?

Dear Anaïs, *you* are happy; you can see. To see! Oh, to see! to be able to distinguish the blue sky, the sun, and all the different colours—what a joy! True, I once enjoyed this privilege, but when I was struck with blindness, I was scarcely ten years old. Now I am twenty-five. It is fifteen long years since everything around me became as black as night! In vain, dear friend, do I endeavour to recall the wonders of nature. I have forgotten all her hues. I smell the scent of the rose, I guess its shape by the touch; but its boasted colour, to which all beautiful women are compared, I have forgotten—or, rather, I cannot describe. Sometimes under this thick veil of darkness strange gleams flit. The doctors say that this is the movement of the blood, and that this may give some promise of a cure. Vain delusion! When one has lost for fifteen years the lights which beautify the earth, they are never to be found again except in heaven.

The other day I had a rare sensation. In groping in my room I put my hand upon—oh! you would never guess—upon a mirror! I sat down in front of it, and arranged my hair like a coquette. Oh! what would I have given to be able to regard myself!—to know if I was nice!—if my skin is as white as it is soft, and if I have pretty eyes under my long lashes!—Ah! they often told us at school that the devil comes in the glasses of little girls who look at themselves too long! All I can say is, if he came in mine he must have been nicely caught—my lord Satan. I couldn't have seen him!

[Pg 79]

You ask me in your kind letter, which they have just read to me, whether it is true that the failure of a banker has ruined my parents. I have heard nothing about it. No, they are rich. I am supplied with

every luxury. Everywhere that my hand rests it touches silk and velvet, flowers and precious stuffs. Our table is abundant, and every day my taste is coaxed with dainties. Therefore, you see, Anaïs, that my beloved folks are happily well off.

Write to me, my darling, since you are now back from that aristocratic England, and you have some pity for the poor blind girl.

LETTER II.

You have no idea, Anaïs, what I am going to tell you! Oh! you will laugh as if you had gone crazy. You will believe that with my sight I must have lost my reason. I have a lover!

Yes, dear; I, the girl without eyes, have a wooer as melting and as importunate as the lover of a duchess. After this, what is to be said? Love, who is as blind as blind can be, undoubtedly owed me this as one of his own kind.

How *he* got in amongst us I don't know; still less, what he is going to do here. All I can tell you is that he sat on my left at dinner the other day, and that he looked after me with extreme care and attention.

"This is the first time," I said, "that I have had the honour of meeting you."

"True," he answered, "but I know your parents."

"You are welcome," I replied, "since you know how to esteem them—my good angels!"

"They are not the only people," he continued, softly, "for whom I feel affection."

"Oh," I answered, thoughtlessly, "then whom else here do you like?"

"You," said he.

"Me? What do you mean?"

"That I love you."

"Me? You love *me*?"

"Truly! Madly!"

At these words I blushed, and pulled my scarf over my shoulders. He sat quite silent.

"You are certainly abrupt in your announcement."

"Oh! it might be seen in my regards, my gestures, all my actions."

"That may be, but I am blind. A blind girl is not wooed as others are."

"What do I care about the want of sight?" said he, with a delightful accent of sincerity; "what matters it to me if your eyes are closed to the light? Is not your figure charming, your foot as tiny as a fairy's, your step superb, your tresses long and silky, your skin of alabaster, your complexion carmine, and your hand the colour of the lily?"

He had finished his description before his words ceased sounding in my ears. So then, I had, according to him, a beautiful figure, a fairy foot, a snowy skin, a complexion like a rose, and fair and silky hair. Oh, Anaïs, dear Anaïs, to other girls such a lover, who describes all your perfections, is nothing but a suitor; but to a blind girl he is more than a lover, he is a mirror.

I began again: "Am I really as pretty as all that?"

"I am still far from the reality."

"And what would you have me do?"

"I want you to be my wife."

I laughed aloud at this idea.

"Do you mean it?" I cried. "A marriage between the blind and the seeing, between the day and the night? Why, I should have to put my orange blossoms on by groping! No! no! my parents are rich: a single life has no terrors for me; single I will remain, and take the service of Diana, as they say—and so much the worse for her if she is waited on amiss!"

He went away without saying a word more. It is all the same: he has taught me that I am nice! I don't know how it is that I catch myself loving him a little, Mr. Mirror mine!

LETTER III.

Oh, dear Anaïs, what news I have to tell you! What sad and unexpected things befall us in this life! As I tell you what has happened to me, the tears are falling from my darkened eyes.

Several days after my conversation with the stranger whom I call *my mirror*, I was walking in the garden, leaning on my mother's arm, when she was suddenly and loudly called for. It seemed to me that the maid, in haste to find my mother, betrayed some agitation in her voice.

"What is the matter, mother?" I asked her, troubled without knowing why.

"Nothing, love; some visitor, no doubt. In our position we owe something to society."

"In that case," I said, embracing her, "I will not keep you any longer. Go and do the honours of the drawing-room."

She pressed two icy lips upon my forehead. Then I heard her footsteps on the gravel path receding in the distance.



"HEARD VOICES."

She had hardly left me when I thought I heard the voices of two neighbours—two workmen—who were chatting together, thinking they were alone. You know, Anaïs, when God deprives us of one of our faculties, he seems, in order to console us, to make the others keener: the blind man has his hearing sharper than his whose gaze can traverse space. I did not lose a word of their remarks, although they spoke in a low tone. And this is what they said:

"Poor things! how sad! The brokers in again!"

"And the girl has not the least suspicion. She never guesses that they take advantage of her loss of sight to make her happy."

"What do you mean?"

"There isn't any doubt about it. All that her hand touches is of mahogany or velvet; only the velvet has grown shabby and the mahogany has lost its lustre. At table she enjoys the most delicious dishes without dreaming, in her innocence, that the domestic misery is kept concealed from her, and that alongside of that very table her father and mother seldom have anything except dry bread."

Oh, Anaïs, you can understand my agony! They have practised on me for my happiness; they have made me live in luxury amidst my darkness—and me alone. Oh! marvellous devotion. All the wealth which a most grateful heart can offer cannot pay this everlasting debt.

LETTER IV.

I have not told anyone that I have guessed this sad yet charming secret. My mother would be overwhelmed to learn that all her trouble to conceal her poverty from me has been useless. I still affect a firm belief in the flourishing condition of our house. But I am determined to save it.

M. de Sauves, as my lover is called, came to see me—and may Heaven forgive me!—I set myself to play the coquette with him.

So I said: "Have you still the same esteem for me?"

"Yes," said he. "I love you because you are beautiful with the noblest beauty, which is pure and modest."

"And my figure?"

"As exquisite and graceful as a vine."

"Ah! and my forehead?"

"Large, and smooth as the ivory which it outshines."

"Really?" And I began to laugh.

"What makes you so merry?"

"An idea—that you are my mirror. I see myself reflected in your words."

"Dearest, I would that it might be so always."

"Would you agree, then——?"

"To be your faithful mirror, to reflect your qualities, your virtues. Consent to be my wife. I have some fortune; you shall want for nothing, and I will strive with all my power to make you happy."

At these words I thought of my poor parents, whom my marriage would relieve of an enormous burden.

"If I consent to marry you," I answered, "your self-love, as a man, would suffer. I could not see you."

"Alas!" he cried, "I owe you a confession."

"Go on," I said.

"I am a graceless child of nature. I have neither charm of countenance, nor dignity of carriage. To crown my misfortune, a scourge, nowadays made powerless by the art of vaccination, has mercilessly scarred my features. In marrying a blind girl, therefore, I show that I am selfish and without humility."

I held out my hand to him.

"I don't know whether you are too hard on yourself, but I believe you to be good and true. Take me, then, such as I am. Nothing, at any rate, will turn my thoughts from yours. Your love will be an oasis in the desert of my night."

Am I doing right, or wrong? I know not, dear Anaïs, but I am going to my parents' rescue. Perhaps, in my groping, I have found the right way.

LETTER V.

I thank you for your kind friendliness, for the compliments and congratulations with which your letter is filled.

Yes, I have been married for two months, and I am the happiest of women. I have nothing to desire; idolised by my husband, and adored by my parents, who have not left me, I do not regret my infirmity, since Edmond sees for both of us.

The day I was married, my mirror—as I call him—reflected complacently my bridal pomp. Thanks to it, I knew that my veil was nicely made, and that my wreath of orange-blossoms was not all on one side. What could a Venetian mirror have done more?

In the evening we walk out together in the gardens, and he makes me admire the flowers by their perfume, the birds by their song, the fruit by its taste and its soft touch. Sometimes we go to the theatre, and there, too, he reproduces, by his wit, all that my closed eyes cannot see. Oh! what does his ugliness matter to me? I no longer know what is beautiful, or what is ugly, but I *do* know what is kind and loving.

Farewell, then, dear Anaïs, rejoice in my happiness.

LETTER VI.

I am a mother, Anaïs, the mother of a little girl, and I can't see her! They say she looks sweet enough to eat. They make out that she is a living miniature of me, and I can't admire her! Oh, how mighty is a mother's love! I have borne without a murmur not to look upon the blue of heaven, the glamour of the flowers, the features of my husband, of my parents, of those who love me; but it seems that I cannot bear with resignation not to see my child! Oh, if the black band which covers my sight would fall for a minute, a second only; if I could look at her as one looks at the vanishing lightning, I should be happy—I should be proud for the remainder of my life!

Edmond this time cannot be my mirror. It is in vain that he tells me that my cherub has fair curly hair, great wayward eyes, and a vermilion smile. What good is that to me? I cannot see my little darling when she stretches out her arms to me!

LETTER VII.

My husband is an angel. Do you know what he is doing? He has had me cared for during the past year without my knowing it. He wishes to restore the light to me, and the doctor is—himself!—he who for my sake has adopted a profession from which his sensibility recoils.

"Angel of my life," he said to me yesterday, "do you know what I hope?"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; those lotions which I made you use under the pretext that they would beautify the skin, were really preparations for an operation of a very different importance."

"What operation?"

"For the cure of cataract."

"Will not your hand tremble?"

"No; my hand will be sure, for my heart will be devoted."

"Oh!" said I, embracing him, "you are not a man, you are a ministering angel."

"Ah!" he said, "kiss me once more, dearest. Let me enjoy these last few moments of illusion."

"What do you mean, dear?"

"That soon, with the help of God, you will regain your sight."

"And then——?"

"Then you will see me as I am—small, insignificant, and ugly."

At these words it seemed to me as if a flash shot through my darkness: it was my imagination which was kindling like a torch.

"Edmond, dearest," I said rising, "if you do not trust my love, if you think that, whatever your face may be, I am not your willing slave, leave me in my nothingness, in my eternal night."

He answered nothing, but pressed my hand.

The operation, my mother told me, might be attempted in a month.

I called to mind the details which I had asked about my husband. Mamma had told me that he was marked by small-pox; papa maintains that his hair is very thin: Nicette, our servant, will have it that he is old.

To be marked by the small-pox is to be the victim of an accident. To be bald is a sign of intellectual power: so said Lavater. But to be old—that is a pity. And then, if, unfortunately, in the course of nature, he were to die before me, I should have less time to love him.

In fact, Anaïs, if you remember the stories in the fairy book which we read together, you with eyes and voice, I in heart and spirit, you will admit that I am rather in the interesting situation of "The Beauty and the Beast," without having the resource of the transformation miracle. Meanwhile, pray for me; for, with God's help, who knows whether I shall not soon be able to read your precious letters!

LAST LETTER.

Oh, my friend, don't look at the end of this letter before you have read the beginning. Take your share of my griefs, my vicissitudes, and my joys, by following their natural course.

The operation took place a fortnight ago. A trembling hand was placed upon my eyes. I uttered two piercing cries; then I seemed to see day, light, colour, sun. Then instantaneously a bandage was replaced upon my burning forehead. I was cured! only a little patience and a little courage were required. Edmond had restored me to the sweetness of life.

But, must I confess it? I did a foolish thing. I disobeyed my doctor—he will not know it: besides, there is no danger in my rashness now. They had brought me my little one to kiss. Nicette was holding her in her lap. The child said in her soft voice, "Mamma!" I could resist no longer. I tore off the bandage.

"My child! oh, how lovely she is!" I cried out. "I see her! oh, I see her!"



"MY CHILD! OH, HOW LOVELY SHE IS!"

Nicette quickly put the bandage on again. But I was no longer lonely in the darkness. This cherub face, restored by memory, from that moment lighted up my night.

Yesterday my mother came to dress me. We were long over my toilette. I had on a beautiful silk dress, a lace collar, my hair dressed *à la Marie Stuart*. When my arrangements were complete, my mother said to me:—

"Take off the bandage."

I obeyed, and though only a twilight prevailed in the room, I thought that I had never seen anything so beautiful. I pressed to my heart my mother, my father, and my child.

"You have seen," said my father, "everybody but yourself."

"And my husband," I cried out, "where is my husband?"

"He is hiding," said my mother.

Then I remembered his ugliness, his attire, his thin hair, and his scarred face.

"Poor dear Edmond," I said, "let him come to me. He is more beautiful than Adonis."

[Pg 83]

"While we are waiting for your lord and master," mamma answered, "admire yourself; look in the glass. You may admire yourself for a long time without blame, if you are to make up for lost time."

I obeyed; a little from vanity, a little from curiosity. What if I was ugly? What if my plainness, like my poverty, had been concealed from me? They led me to my pier-glass. I uttered a cry of joy. With my slender figure, my complexion like a rose, my eyes a little dazed, and like two shimmering sapphires, I was charming. Nevertheless, I could not look at myself quite at my ease, for the glass was trembling without cessation, and my image reflected on its brilliant surface seemed as if it danced for joy.

I looked behind the glass to see what made it tremble.

A young man came out—a fine young man, with large black eyes and striking figure, whose coat was adorned by the rosette of the Legion of Honour. I blushed to think that I had been so foolish in the presence of a stranger.

"Just look," said my mother to me, without taking any notice of him, "how fair you are; like a white rose."

"Mamma!" I cried.

"Only look at these white arms," and she pulled my sleeves above the elbow without the smallest scruple.

"But, mamma," I said, "what are you thinking of, before a stranger!"

"A stranger? it is a mirror."

"I don't mean the glass, but this young gentleman who was behind it, like a lover in a comedy."

"Eh! goose," cried my father, "you need not be so bashful. It is your husband."

"Edmond!" I cried out, and made a step forward to embrace him.

Then I fell back. He was so beautiful! I was so happy! Blind, I had loved in confidence. What made my heart beat now was a new love, swollen by the

generosity of this truly noble man, who had ordered everyone to say that he was ugly, in order to console me for my blindness.

Edmond fell at my knees. Mamma put me in his arms, as she wiped away her tears.

"How lovely you are," said my husband to me, in an ecstasy.

"Flatterer!" I answered, looking down at him.

"No, when I alone was your mirror I always told you so—and see! my colleague, here, whom you have just consulted, is of the same opinion, and declares that I am right!"



"A YOUNG MAN CAME OUT."

Fac-simile of the Notes of a Sermon by Cardinal Manning.

[Pg 84]

By the kindness of Cardinal Manning, we are able to present our readers with a fac-simile of the Cardinal's synopsis of a sermon on Charity, preached on the 9th of July, 1890, in the chapel of the Sisters of Charity, Carlisle Place, Westminster. The fac-simile shows the Cardinal's handwriting at the age of 83, and also his peculiar method of jotting down his notes on long, narrow slips, two of which are here given to a page. These notes are for a sermon of an hour's duration.

[Pg 86]

1. S. Jo. vi. 19 "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us"

- God's love to us binds us with comm^{ts}

1. In duty
2. In gratitude

- God's love to us enables us

No glory, Reflex. Sun on Sea

No glory, Kindled Spirit & fire

Kindled Spirit & fire

Kindled Spirit & fire

Kindled Spirit & fire

- God's love to us is the law of

1. Three Precepts. 1. New commandment
2. To all persons
3. To all actions

"Greater charity &"

1. The God: & Deny Him.

1. His love is our motive

2. He loved us first.

3. The Greater

2. The All help

3. The sovereignty

2. He created us

a) I am myself proud to myself.

b) His love is revealed in me all day long

1. Pulse & Breath & Beat.

3. He redeemed me

a) He regenerated me

b) He sacrificed me

c) He will glorify me, if I am true to Him

1. Gift of Son now
2. Gift of Resurrection then & Divine Circle

2. His love is our measure

i.e. "Whole heart & "

- 1. His love channel with all His love
- a) I have loved thee with
- B) Having loved His own
- γ All true love is eternal

2. He has no limit in Himself.

Deus mensura sui is

- In mensura
- a) God is Creativity
- B. Δ.

γ. An incident a consequent
incident 1. He who has all within
Consequent 2. Every man must have

- 3. No limit but in us.
- 4. Our sin 1. Obey 2. Remove
- β. Our love of creatures

- γ. Our unloving hearts
- 1. unpathy
- 2. unpathy

4. The Degrees of D. Love

- 1. 1. P. M. M.
- 2. 2. P. M. M.
- 3. 3. M. M. M.

1. W. have love the greatest

They are with Paul
The South West of England

- 1. Can you
- 1. Knowledge

2. Charities

3. Piousness

4. Mary's words

- 1. M. of a piece
- 2. Superior

- 1. The motive in the hope
- 2. The desire is will forward

3. His love is our Example

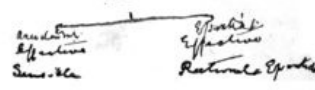
- 1. Disinterested,
- a) Not for fear
- B) Not for gain
- γ. Not for anything out of
- δ. a below God
- ε. But for Himself love

- 2. Pure
- a) God for Himself
- B) All things as means to
- γ. All things in Him

- 3. Efficient cause,
- a) God's love our active
- B) Not working but seeking.

"Charities & to us"

Two kinds



- 2. With it the least things
- Every consumption up a face of operations are precious
- 1. Half a Crown

2. & little cakes

3. Two m. c.

4. Cup of cold water

- 1. Served 1. In the 2. In the 3. In the
- 2. Friends 1. Give gladly 2. Give purely

- 1. The money
- 2. In kind - Work
- 3. In respect
- 4. In love
- Will for deed

- a) Remembrance 1. Service
- 2. Providence

- a) In the family
- a) Full measure is taken

The Queen of Spades.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN.

[Alexander Sergeivitch Pushkin, the first of the great Russian writers, was born at Moscow on Ascension Day, 1799. His father was a Russian nobleman, an officer, a courtier, and a wit, but so fiery-tempered that he threw up his commission in a rage at being reprimanded on parade for having used his cane to poke the fire. Pushkin's mother was the granddaughter of a negro slave named Abraham Hannibal, whom Peter the Great had made a favourite and at last had raised to be an admiral—a piece of history stranger than romance. Pushkin's African descent was visible in his appearance—in his crisp black hair, his irregular though mobile

features, and his swarthy skin. At school he hated work—his sums always made him cry—and he was the ringleader in every prank. When scarcely yet of age he wrote an "Ode to Liberty," for which he was condemned to exile in Bessarabia. There for some years he continued to pour forth the lofty, fiery, and romantic poems which have caused him to be termed the Byron of the North. Besides his poems Pushkin also wrote a striking volume of prose stories, from which "The Queen of Spades" is taken. When Nicholas was crowned he was recalled to Court, and in 1831 he married. For five years he lived in happiness; but the husband of his wife's sister, who was named George Danthès, preferred the wife of Pushkin to his own. Pushkin, who was as jealous as Othello, challenged Danthès to a duel. On the 29th of January, 1837, the brothers-in-law met with pistols at six paces, and Pushkin was shot through the body. Two days afterwards he breathed his last. He was buried, at his own desire, at a monastery near his early home, where his grave is still denoted by a cross of marble, bearing simply the initials A. S. P.]



The Queen of Spades denotes ill-luck.

COMPLETE FORTUNE-TELLER.

here was a card party at the rooms of Naroumoff, a lieutenant in the Horse Guards. A long winter night had passed unnoticed, and it was five o'clock in the morning when supper was served. The winners sat down to table with an excellent appetite; the losers let their plates remain empty before them. Little by little, however, with the assistance of the champagne, the conversation became animated, and was shared by all.

"How did you get on this evening, Surin?" said the host to one of his friends.

"Oh, I lost, as usual. I really have no luck. I play *mirandole*. You know that I keep cool. Nothing moves me; I never change my play, and yet I always lose."

"Do you mean to say that all the evening you did not once back the red? Your firmness of character surprises me."

"What do you think of Hermann?" said one of the party, pointing to a young Engineer officer. "That fellow never made a bet or touched a card in his life, and yet he watches us playing until five in the morning."

[Pg 88]

"It interests me," said Hermann; "but I am not disposed to risk the necessary in view of the superfluous."

"Hermann is a German, and economical; that is the whole of the secret," cried Tomski. "But what is really astonishing is the Countess Anna Fedotovna!"

"How so?" asked several voices.

"Have you not remarked," said Tomski, "that she never plays?"

"Yes," said Naroumoff, "a woman of eighty, who never touches a card; that is indeed something extraordinary!"

"You do not know why?"

"No; is there a reason for it?"

"Just listen. My grandmother, you know, some sixty years ago, went to Paris, and became the rage there. People ran after her in the streets, and called her the 'Muscovite Venus.' Richelieu made love to her, and my grandmother makes out that, by her rigorous demeanour, she almost drove him to suicide. In those days women used to play at faro. One evening at the Court she lost, on *parole*, to the Duke of Orleans, a very considerable sum. When she got home, my grandmother removed her beauty-spots, took off her hoops, and in this tragic costume went to my grandfather, told him of her misfortune, and asked him for the money she had to pay. My grandfather, now no more, was, so to say, his wife's steward. He feared her like fire; but the sum she named made him leap into the air. He flew into a rage, made a brief calculation, and proved to my grandmother that in six months she had got through half a million roubles. He told her plainly that he had no villages to sell in Paris, his domains being situated in the neighbourhood of Moscow and of Saratoff; and finally refused point blank. You may imagine the fury of my grandmother. She boxed his ears, and passed the night in another room.

"The next day she returned to the charge. For the first time in her life, she condescended to arguments and explanations. In vain did she try to prove to her husband that there were debts and debts, and that she could not treat a Prince of the blood like her coachmaker.

"All this eloquence was lost. My grandfather was inflexible. My grandmother did not know where to turn. Happily she was acquainted with a man who was very celebrated at this time. You have heard of the Count of St. Germain, about whom so many marvellous stories were told. You know that he passed for a sort of Wandering Jew, and that he was said to possess an elixir of life and the philosopher's stone.

"Some people laughed at him as a charlatan. Casanova, in his memoirs, says that he was a spy. However that may be, in spite of the mystery of his life, St. Germain was much sought after in good society, and was really an agreeable man. Even to this day my grandmother has preserved a genuine affection for him, and she becomes quite angry when anyone speaks of him with disrespect.

"It occurred to her that he might be able to advance the sum of which she was in need, and she wrote a note begging him to call. The old magician came at once, and found her plunged in the deepest despair. In two or three words she told him everything; related to him her misfortune and the cruelty of her husband, adding that she had no hope except in his friendship and his obliging disposition.



"THE OLD MAGICIAN CAME AT ONCE."

"Mere luck!" said one of the young officers.

"What a tale!" cried Hermann.

"Were the cards marked?" said a third.

"I don't think so," replied Tomski, gravely.

"And you mean to say," exclaimed Naroumoff, "that you have a grandmother who knows the names of three winning cards, and you have never made her tell them to you?"

"That is the very deuce of it," answered Tomski. "She had three sons, of whom my father was one; all three were determined gamblers, and not one of them was able to extract her secret from her, though it would have been of immense advantage to them, and to me also. Listen to what my uncle told me about it, Count Ivan Ilitch, and he told me on his word of honour.

"Tchaplitzki—the one you remember who died in poverty after devouring millions—lost one day, when he was a young man, to Zoritch about three hundred thousand roubles. He was in despair. My grandmother, who had no mercy for the extravagance of young men, made an exception—I do not know why—in favour of Tchaplitzki. She gave him three cards, telling him to play them one after the other, and exacting from him at the same time his word of honour that he would never afterwards touch a card as long as he lived. Accordingly Tchaplitzki went to Zoritch and asked for his revenge. On the first card he staked fifty thousand roubles. He won, doubled the stake, and won again.

Continuing his system he ended by gaining more than he had lost.

"But it is six o'clock! It is really time to go to bed."

Everyone emptied his glass and the party broke up.

"Madam," said St. Germain, after a few moments' reflection, 'I could easily advance you the money you want, but I am sure that you would have no rest until you had repaid me, and I do not want to get you out of one trouble in order to place you in another. There is another way of settling the matter. You must regain the money you have lost.'

"But, my dear friend," answered my grandmother, 'I have already told you that I have nothing left.'

"That does not matter," answered St. Germain. 'Listen to me, and I will explain.'

"He then communicated to her a secret which any of you would, I am sure, give a good deal to possess."

All the young officers gave their full attention. Tomski stopped to light his Turkish pipe, swallowed a mouthful of smoke, and then went on.

"That very evening my grandmother went to Versailles to play at the Queen's table. The Duke Of Orleans held the bank. My grandmother invented a little story by way of excuse for not having paid her debt, and then sat down at the table, and began to stake. She took three cards. She won with the first; doubled her stake on the second, and won again; doubled on the third, and still won."



"SEATED BEFORE HER LOOKING-GLASS."

[Pg 89]

[Pg 90]

CHAPTER II.

The old Countess Anna Fedotovna was in her dressing-room, seated before her looking-glass. Three maids were in attendance. One held her pot of rouge, another a box of black pins, a third an enormous lace cap, with flaming ribbons. The Countess had no longer the slightest pretence to beauty, but she preserved all the habits of her youth. She dressed in the style of fifty years before, and gave as much

time and attention to her toilet as a fashionable beauty of the last century. Her companion was working at a frame in a corner of the window.

"Good morning, grandmother," said the young officer, as he entered the dressing-room. "Good morning, Mademoiselle Lise. Grandmother, I have come to ask you a favour."

"What is it, Paul?"

"I want to introduce to you one of my friends, and to ask you to give him an invitation to your ball."

"Bring him to the ball and introduce him to me there. Did you go yesterday to the Princess's?"

"Certainly. It was delightful! We danced until five o'clock in the morning. Mademoiselle Eletzki was charming."

"My dear nephew, you are really not difficult to please. As to beauty, you should have seen her grandmother, the Princess Daria Petrovna. But she must be very old, the Princess Daria Petrovna!"

"How do you mean old?" cried Tomski thoughtlessly; "she died seven years ago."

The young lady who acted as companion raised her head and made a sign to the officer, who then remembered that it was an understood thing to conceal from the Princess the death of any of her contemporaries. He bit his lips. The Countess, however, was not in any way disturbed on hearing that her old friend was no longer in this world.

"Dead!" she said, "and I never knew it! We were maids of honour in the same year, and when we were presented, the Empress"—and the old Countess related for the hundredth time an anecdote of her young days. "Paul," she said, as she finished her story, "help me to get up. Lisabeta, where is my snuff-box?"

And, followed by the three maids, she went behind a great screen to finish her toilet. Tomski was now alone with the companion.

"Who is the gentleman you wish to introduce to madame?" asked Lisabeta.

"Naroumoff. Do you know him?"

"No. Is he in the army?"

"Yes."

"In the Engineers?"

"No, in the Horse Guards. Why did you think he was in the Engineers?"

The young lady smiled, but made no answer.

"Paul," cried the Countess from behind the screen, "send me a new novel; no matter what. Only see that it is not in the style of the present day."

"What style would you like, grandmother?"

"A novel in which the hero strangles neither his father nor his mother, and in which no one gets drowned. Nothing frightens me so much as the idea of getting drowned."

"But how is it possible to find you such a book? Do you want it in Russian?"

"Are there any novels in Russian? However, send me something or other. You won't forget?"

"I will not forget, grandmother. I am in a great hurry. Good-bye, Lisabeta. What made you fancy Naroumoff was in the Engineers?" and Tomski took his departure.

Lisabeta, left alone, took out her embroidery, and sat down close to the window. Immediately afterwards, in the street, at the corner of a neighbouring house, appeared a young officer. The sight of him made the companion blush to her ears. She lowered her head, and almost concealed it in the canvas. At this moment the Countess returned, fully dressed.

"Lisabeta," she said, "have the horses put in; we will go out for a drive."

Lisabeta rose from her chair, and began to arrange her embroidery.

"Well, my dear child, are you deaf? Go and tell them to put the horses in at once."

"I am going," replied the young lady, as she went out into the ante-chamber.

A servant now came in, bringing some books from Prince Paul Alexandrovitch.

"Say, I am much obliged to him. Lisabeta! Lisabeta! Where has she run off to?"

"I was going to dress."

"We have plenty of time, my dear. Sit down, take the first volume, and read to me."

The companion took the book and read a few lines.

"Louder," said the Countess. "What is the matter with you? Have you a cold? Wait a moment, bring me that stool. A little closer; that will do."

Lisabeta read two pages of the book.

"Throw that stupid book away," said the Countess. "What nonsense! Send it back to Prince Paul, and tell him I am much obliged to him; and the carriage, is it never coming?"

"Here it is," replied Lisabeta, going to the window.

"And now you are not dressed. Why do you always keep me waiting? It is intolerable!"

Lisabeta ran to her room. She had scarcely been there two minutes when the Countess rang with all her might. Her maids rushed in at one door and her valet at the other.

"You do not seem to hear me when I ring," she cried. "Go and tell Lisabeta that I am waiting for her."

At this moment Lisabeta entered, wearing a new walking dress and a fashionable bonnet.

"At last, miss," cried the Countess. "But what is that you have got on? and why? For whom are you dressing? What sort of weather is it? Quite stormy, I believe."

"No, your Excellency," said the valet; "it is exceedingly fine."

"What do you know about it? Open the ventilator. Just what I told you! A frightful wind, and as icy as can be. Unharness the horses. Lisabeta, my child, we will not go out to-day. It was scarcely worth while to dress so much."

"What an existence!" said the companion to herself.

Lisabeta Ivanovna was, in fact, a most unhappy creature. "The bread of the stranger is bitter," says Dante, "and his staircase hard to climb." But who can tell the torments of a poor little companion attached to an old lady of quality? The Countess had all the caprices of a woman spoilt by the world. She was avaricious and egotistical, and thought all the more of herself now that she had ceased to play an active part in society. She never missed a ball, and she dressed and painted in the style of a bygone age. She remained in a corner of the room, where she seemed to have been placed expressly to serve as a scarecrow. Every one on coming in went to her and made her a low bow, but this ceremony once at an end no one spoke a word to her. She received the whole city at her house, observing the strictest etiquette, and never failing to give to everyone his or her proper name. Her innumerable servants, growing pale and fat in the ante-chamber, did absolutely as they liked, so that the house was pillaged as if its owner were really dead. Lisabeta passed her life in continual torture. If she made tea she was reproached with wasting the sugar. If she read a novel to the Countess she was held responsible for all the absurdities of the author. If she went out with the noble lady for a walk or drive, it was she who was to blame if the weather was bad or the pavement muddy. Her salary, more than modest, was never punctually paid, and she was expected to dress "like everyone else"; that is to say, like very few people indeed. When she went into society her position was sad. Everyone knew her; no one paid her any attention. At a ball she sometimes danced, but only when a *vis-à-vis* was wanted. Women would come up to her, take her by the arm, and lead her out of the room if their dress required attending to. She had her portion of self-respect, and felt deeply the misery of her position. She looked with impatience for a liberator to break her chain. But the young men, prudent in the midst of their affected giddiness, took care not to honour her with their attentions; though Lisabeta Ivanovna was a hundred times prettier than the shameless or stupid girls whom they surrounded with their homage. More than once she slunk away from the splendour of the drawing-room, to shut herself up alone in her little bed-room, furnished with an old screen and a pieced carpet, a chest of drawers, a small looking-glass, and a wooden bedstead. There she shed tears at her ease, by the light of a tallow candle in a tin candlestick.



[Pg 92]

PAUL AND LISABETA.



"THERE SHE SHED TEARS."

One morning—it was two days after the party at Naroumoff's, and a week before the scene we have just sketched—Lisabeta was sitting at her embroidery before the window, when, looking carelessly into the street, she saw an officer, in the uniform of the Engineers, standing motionless with his eyes fixed upon her. She lowered her head, and applied herself to her work more attentively than ever. Five minutes afterwards she looked mechanically into the street, and the officer was still in the same place. Not being in the habit of exchanging glances with young men who passed by her window, she remained with her eyes fixed on her work for nearly two hours, until she was told that lunch was ready. She got up to put her embroidery away, and, while doing so, looked into the street, and saw the officer still in the same place. This seemed to her very strange. After lunch she went to the window with a certain emotion, but the officer of Engineers was no longer in the street.

She thought no more of him. But two days afterwards, just as she was getting into the carriage with the Countess, she saw him once more, standing straight before the door. His face was half concealed by a fur collar, but his black eyes sparkled beneath his helmet. Lisabeta was afraid, without knowing why, and she trembled as she took her seat in the carriage.

[Pg 93]

On returning home, she rushed with a beating heart towards the window. The officer was in his habitual place, with his eyes fixed ardently upon her. She at once withdrew, burning at the same time with curiosity, and moved by a strange feeling, which she now experienced for the first time.

No day now passed but the young officer showed himself beneath the window. Before long a dumb acquaintance was established between them. Sitting at her work she felt his presence, and when she raised her head she looked at him for a long time every day. The young man seemed full of gratitude for these innocent favours.

She observed, with the deep and rapid perceptions of youth, that a sudden redness covered the officer's pale cheeks as soon as their eyes met. After about a week she would smile at seeing him for the first time.

When Tomski asked his grandmother's permission to present one of his friends, the heart of the poor young girl beat strongly, and when she heard that it was Naroumoff, she bitterly repented having compromised her secret by letting it out to a giddy young man like Paul.

Hermann was the son of a German settled in Russia, from whom he had inherited a small sum of money. Firmly resolved to preserve his independence, he had made it a principle not to touch his private income. He lived on his pay, and did not allow himself the slightest luxury. He was not very communicative; and his reserve rendered it difficult for his comrades to amuse themselves at his expense.

Under an assumed calm he concealed strong passions and a highly-imaginative disposition. But he was always master of himself, and kept himself free from the ordinary faults of young men. Thus, a gambler by temperament, he never touched a card, feeling, as he himself said, that his position did not allow him to "risk the necessary in view of the superfluous." Yet he would pass entire nights before a card-table, watching with feverish anxiety the rapid changes of the game. The anecdote of Count St. Germain's three cards had struck his imagination, and he did nothing but think of it all that night.

"If," he said to himself next day as he was walking along the streets of St. Petersburg, "if she would only tell me her secret—if she would only name the three winning cards! I must get presented to her, that I may pay my court and gain her confidence. Yes! And she is eighty-seven! She may die this week—to-morrow perhaps. But after all, is there a word of truth in the story? No! Economy, Temperance, Work; these are my three winning cards. With them I can double my capital; increase it tenfold. They alone can ensure my independence and prosperity."

Dreaming in this way as he walked along, his attention was attracted by a house built in an antiquated style of architecture. The street was full of carriages, which passed one by one before the old house, now brilliantly illuminated. As the people stepped out of the carriages Hermann saw now the little feet of a young woman, now the military boot of a general. Then came a clocked stocking; then, again, a diplomatic pump. Fur-lined cloaks and coats passed in procession before a gigantic porter.

Hermann stopped. "Who lives here?" he said to a watchman in his box.

"The Countess Anna Fedotovna." It was Tomski's grandmother.

Hermann started. The story of the three cards came once more upon his imagination. He walked to and fro before the house, thinking of the woman to whom it belonged, of her wealth and her mysterious power. At last he returned to his den. But for some time he could not get to sleep; and when at last sleep came upon him, he saw, dancing before his eyes, cards, a green table, and heaps of roubles and bank-notes. He saw himself doubling stake after stake, always winning, and then filling his pockets with piles of coin, and stuffing his pocket-book with countless bank-notes. When he awoke, he sighed to find that his treasures were but creations of a disordered fancy; and, to drive such thoughts from him, he went out for a walk. But he had not gone far when he found himself once more before the house of the Countess. He seemed to have been attracted there by some irresistible force. He stopped, and looked up at the windows. There he saw a girl's head with beautiful black hair, leaning gracefully over a book or an embroidery-frame. The head was lifted, and he saw a fresh complexion and black eyes.

[Pg 94]



"HERMAN SAW THE LITTLE FEET."

This moment decided his fate.

CHAPTER III.

Lisabeta was just taking off her shawl and her bonnet, when the Countess sent for her. She had had the horses put in again.

While two footmen were helping the old lady into the carriage, Lisabeta saw the young officer at her side. She felt him take her by the hand, lost her head, and found, when the young officer had walked away, that he had left a paper between her fingers. She hastily concealed it in her glove.

During the whole of the drive she neither saw nor heard. When they were in the carriage together the Countess was in the habit of questioning Lisabeta perpetually.

"Who is that man that bowed to us? What is the name of this bridge? What is there written on that signboard?"

Lisabeta now gave the most absurd answers, and was accordingly scolded by the Countess.

"What is the matter with you, my child?" she asked. "What are you thinking about? Or do you really not hear me? I speak distinctly enough, however, and I have not yet lost my head, have I?"

Lisabeta was not listening. When she got back to the house she ran to her room, locked the door, and took the scrap of paper from her glove. It was not sealed, and it was impossible, therefore, not to read it. The letter contained protestations of love. It was tender, respectful, and translated word for word from a German novel. But Lisabeta did not read German, and she was quite delighted. She was, however, much embarrassed. For the first time in her life she had a secret. Correspond with a young man! The idea of such a thing frightened her. How imprudent she had been! She had reproached herself, but knew not now what to do.

Cease to do her work at the window, and by persistent coldness try and disgust the young officer? Send him back his letter? Answer him in a firm, decided manner? What line of conduct was she to pursue? She had no friend, no one to advise her. She at last decided to send an answer. She sat down at her little table, took pen and paper, and began to think. More than once she wrote a sentence and then tore up the paper. What she had written seemed too stiff, or else it was wanting in reserve. At last, after much trouble, she succeeded in composing a few lines which seemed to meet the case. "I believe," she wrote, "that your intentions are those of an honourable man, and that you would not wish to offend me by any thoughtless conduct. But you must understand that our acquaintance cannot begin in this way. I return your letter, and trust that you will not give me cause to regret my imprudence."

[Pg 95]

Next day as soon as Hermann made his appearance, Lisabeta left her embroidery, and went into the drawing-room, opened the ventilator, and threw her letter into the street, making sure that the young officer would pick it up.



**"SHE TORE IT INTO A HUNDRED
PIECES."**

German. Hermann wrote under the influence of a commanding passion, and spoke a language which was his own. Lisabeta could not hold out against such torrents of eloquence. She received the letters, kept them, and at last answered them. Every day her answers were longer and more affectionate, until at last she threw out of the window a letter couched as follows:—

"This evening there is a ball at the Embassy. The Countess will be there. We shall remain until two in the morning. You may manage to see me alone. As soon as the Countess leaves home, that is to say towards eleven o'clock, the servants are sure to go out, and there will be no one left but the porter, who will be sure to be asleep in his box. Enter as soon as it strikes eleven, and go upstairs as fast as possible. If you find anyone in the ante-chamber, ask whether the Countess is at home, and you will be told that she is out, and, in that case, you must resign yourself, and go away. In all probability, however, you will meet no one. The Countess's women are together in a distant room. When you are once in the ante-chamber, turn to the left, and walk straight on, until you reach the Countess's bedroom. There, behind a large screen, you will see two doors. The one on the right leads to a dark room. The one on the left leads to a corridor, at the end of which is a little winding staircase, which leads to my parlour."

At ten o'clock Hermann was already on duty before the Countess's door. It was a frightful night. The winds had been unloosed, and the snow was falling in large flakes; the lamps gave an uncertain light; the streets were deserted; from time to time passed a sleigh, drawn by a wretched hack, on the lookout for a fare. Covered by a thick overcoat, Hermann felt neither the wind nor the snow. At last the Countess's carriage drew up. He saw two huge footmen come forward and take beneath the arms a dilapidated spectre, and place it on the cushions, well wrapped up in an enormous fur cloak. Immediately afterwards, in a cloak of lighter make, her head crowned with natural flowers, came Lisabeta, who sprang into the carriage like a dart. The door was closed, and the carriage rolled on softly over the snow.

The porter closed the street door, and soon the windows of the first floor became dark. Silence reigned throughout the house. Hermann walked backwards and forwards; then coming to a lamp he looked at his watch. It was twenty minutes to eleven. Leaning against the lamp-post, his eyes fixed on the long hand of his watch, he counted impatiently the minutes which had yet to pass. At eleven o'clock precisely Hermann walked up the steps, pushed open the street door, and went into the vestibule, which was well lighted. As it happened the porter was not there. With a firm and rapid step he rushed up the staircase and reached the ante-chamber. There, before a lamp, a footman was sleeping, stretched out in a dirty greasy dressing-gown. Hermann passed quickly before him and crossed the dining-room and the drawing-room, where there was no light. But the lamp of the ante-chamber helped him to see. At last he reached the Countess's bedroom. Before a screen covered with old icons [sacred pictures] a golden lamp was burning. Gilt arm-chairs, sofas of faded colours, furnished with soft cushions, were arranged symmetrically along the walls, which were hung with China silk. He saw two large portraits, painted by Madame le Brun. One represented a man of forty, stout and full coloured, dressed in a light green coat, with a decoration on his breast. The second portrait was that of an elegant young woman, with an aquiline nose, powdered hair rolled back on the temples, and with a rose over her ear. Everywhere might be seen shepherds and shepherdesses in Dresden china, with vases of all shapes, clocks by Leroy, work-baskets, fans, and all the thousand playthings for the use of ladies of fashion, discovered in the last century, at

Hermann, in fact, at once saw it, and, picking it up, entered a confectioner's shop in order to read it. Finding nothing discouraging in it, he went home sufficiently pleased with the first step in his love adventure.

Some days afterwards, a young person with lively eyes called to see Miss Lisabeta, on the part of a milliner. Lisabeta wondered what she could want, and suspected, as she received her, some secret intention. She was much surprised, however, when she recognised, on the letter that was now handed to her, the writing of Hermann.

"You make a mistake," she said, "this letter is not for me."

"I beg your pardon," said the milliner, with a slight smile; "be kind enough to read it."

Lisabeta glanced at it. Hermann was asking for an appointment.

"Impossible!" she cried, alarmed both at the boldness of the request, and at the manner in which it was made. "This letter is not for me," she repeated; and she tore it into a hundred pieces.

"If the letter was not for you, why did you tear it up? You should have given it me back, that I might take it to the person it was meant for."

"True," said Lisabeta, quite disconcerted. "But bring me no more letters, and tell the person who gave you this one that he ought to blush for his conduct."

Hermann, however, was not a man to give up what he had once undertaken. Every day Lisabeta received a fresh letter from him,—sent now in one way, now in another. They were no longer translated from the

the time of Montgolfier's balloons and Mesmer's animal magnetism.

Hermann passed behind the screen, which concealed a little iron bedstead. He saw the two doors; the one on the right leading to the dark room, the one on the left to the corridor. He opened the latter, saw the staircase which led to the poor little companion's parlour, and then, closing this door, went into the dark room.

The time passed slowly. Everything was quiet in the house. The drawing-room clock struck midnight, and again there was silence. Hermann was standing up, leaning against the stove, in which there was no fire. He was calm; but his heart beat with quick pulsations, like that of a man determined to brave all dangers he might have to meet, because he knows them to be inevitable. He heard one o'clock strike; then two; and soon afterwards the distant roll of a carriage. He now, in spite of himself, experienced some emotion. The carriage approached rapidly and stopped. There was at once a great noise of servants running about the staircases, and a confusion of voices. Suddenly the rooms were all lit up, and the Countess's three antiquated maids came at once into the bedroom. At last appeared the Countess herself.

The walking mummy sank into a large Voltaire arm-chair. Hermann looked through the crack in the door; he saw Lisabeta pass close to him, and heard her hurried step as she went up the little winding staircase. For a moment he felt something like remorse; but it soon passed off, and his heart was once more of stone.

The Countess began to undress before a looking-glass. Her head-dress of roses was taken off, and her powdered wig separated from her own hair, which was very short and quite white. Pins fell in showers around her. At last she was in her dressing-gown and her night-cap, and in this costume, more suitable to her age, was less hideous than before.

Like most old people, the Countess was tormented by sleeplessness. She had her armchair rolled towards one of the windows, and told her maids to leave her. The lights were put out, and the room was lighted only by the lamp which burned before the holy images. The Countess, sallow and wrinkled, balanced herself gently from right to left. In her dull eyes could be read an utter absence of thought; and as she moved from side to side, one might have said that she did so not by any action of the will, but through some secret mechanism.

Suddenly this death's-head assumed a new expression; the lips ceased to tremble, and the eyes became alive. A strange man had appeared before the Countess!

It was Hermann.

"Do not be alarmed, madam," said Hermann, in a low voice, but very distinctly. "For the love of Heaven, do not be alarmed. I do not wish to do you the slightest harm; on the contrary, I come to implore a favour of you."

The old woman looked at him in silence, as if she did not understand. Thinking she was deaf, he leaned towards her ear and repeated what he had said; but the Countess still remained silent.

"You can ensure the happiness of my whole life, and without its costing you a farthing. I know that you can name to me three cards——"

The Countess now understood what he required.

"It was a joke," she interrupted. "I swear to you it was only a joke."

"No, madam," replied Hermann in an angry tone. "Remember Tchaplitzki, and how you enabled him to win."

The Countess was agitated. For a moment her features expressed strong emotion; but they soon resumed their former dulness.

"Cannot you name to me," said Hermann, "three winning cards?"

The Countess remained silent. "Why keep this secret for your great-grandchildren," he continued. "They are rich enough without; they do not know the value of money. Of what profit would your three cards be to them? They are debauchees. The man who cannot keep his inheritance will die in want, though he had the science of demons at his command. I am



"A FOOTMAN IN A GREASY DRESSING GOWN."



"A STRANGE MAN HAD APPEARED."

a steady man. I know the value of money. Your three cards will not be lost upon me. Come!"

He stopped tremblingly, awaiting a reply. The Countess did not utter a word. Hermann went upon his knees.

"If your heart has ever known the passion of love; if you can remember its sweet ecstasies; if you have ever been touched by the cry of a new-born babe; if any human feeling has ever caused your heart to beat, I entreat you by the love of a husband, a lover, a mother, by all that is sacred in life, not to reject my prayer. Tell me your secret! Reflect! You are old; you have not long to live! Remember that the happiness of a man is in your hands; that not only myself, but my children and my grandchildren will bless your memory as a saint."

The old Countess answered not a word.

Hermann rose, and drew a pistol from his pocket.

"Hag!" he exclaimed, "I will make you speak."

At the sight of the pistol the Countess for the second time showed agitation. Her head shook violently; she stretched out her hands as if to put the weapon aside. Then suddenly she fell back motionless.

"Come, don't be childish!" said Hermann. "I adjure you for the last time; will you name the three cards?"

The Countess did not answer. Hermann saw that she was dead!



"ONE GLANCE SHOWED HER THAT HE WAS NOT THERE."

CHAPTER IV.

Lisabeta was sitting in her room, still in her ball dress, lost in the deepest meditation. On her return to the house, she had sent away her maid, and had gone upstairs to her room, trembling at the idea of finding Hermann there; desiring, indeed, *not* to find him. One glance showed her that he was not there, and she gave thanks to Providence that he had missed the appointment. She sat down pensively, without thinking of taking off her cloak, and allowed to pass through her memory all the circumstances of the intrigue which had begun such a short time back, and had already advanced so far. Scarcely three weeks had passed since she had first seen the young officer from her window, and already she had written to him, and he had succeeded in inducing her to make an appointment. She knew his name, and that was all. She had received a quantity of letters from him, but he had never spoken to her; she did not know the sound of his voice, and until that evening, strangely enough, she had never heard him spoken of.

[Pg 99]



"THE DOOR OPENED AND HERMANN ENTERED."

But that very evening Tomski, fancying he had noticed that the young Princess Pauline, to whom he had been paying assiduous court, was flirting, contrary to her custom, with another man, had wished to revenge himself by making a show of indifference. With this noble object he had invited Lisabeta to take part in an interminable mazurka; but he teased her immensely about her partiality for Engineer officers, and pretending all the time to know much more than he really did, hazarded purely in fun a few guesses which were so happy that Lisabeta thought her secret must have been discovered.

"But who tells you all this?" she said with a smile.

"A friend of the very officer you know, a most original man."

"And who is this man that is so original?"

"His name is Hermann."

She answered nothing, but her hands and feet seemed to be of ice.

"Hermann is a hero of romance," continued Tomski.

"He has the profile of Napoleon, and the soul of Mephistopheles. I believe he has at least three crimes on his conscience.... But how pale you are!"

"I have a bad headache. But what did this Mr. Hermann tell you? Is not that his name?"

"Hermann is very much displeased with his friend, with the Engineer officer who has made your acquaintance. He says that in his place he would behave very differently. But I am quite sure that Hermann himself has designs upon you. At least, he seems to listen with remarkable interest to all that

his friend tells him about you."

"And where has he seen me?"

"Perhaps in church, perhaps in the street; heaven knows where."

At this moment three ladies came forward according to the custom of the mazurka, and asked Tomski to choose between "forgetfulness and regret."^[A]

And the conversation which had so painfully excited the curiosity of Lisabeta came to an end.

The lady who, in virtue of the infidelities permitted by the mazurka, had just been chosen by Tomski, was the Princess Pauline. During the rapid evolutions which the figure obliged them to make, there was a grand explanation between them, until at last he conducted her to a chair, and returned to his partner.

But Tomski could now think no more, either of Hermann or Lisabeta, and he tried in vain to resume the conversation. But the mazurka was coming to an end, and immediately afterwards the old Countess rose to go.

[Pg 100]

Tomski's mysterious phrases were nothing more than the usual platitudes of the mazurka, but they had made a deep impression upon the heart of the poor little companion. The portrait sketched by Tomski had struck her as very exact; and with her romantic ideas, she saw in the rather ordinary countenance of her adorer something to fear and admire. She was now sitting down with her cloak off, with bare shoulders; her head, crowned with flowers, falling forward from fatigue, when suddenly the door opened and Hermann entered. She shuddered.

"Where were you?" she said, trembling all over.

"In the Countess's bedroom. I have just left her," replied Hermann. "She is dead."

"Great heavens! What are you saying?"

"I am afraid," he said, "that I am the cause of her death."

Lisabeta looked at him in consternation, and remembered Tomski's words: "He has at least three crimes on his conscience."

Hermann sat down by the window, and told everything. The young girl listened with terror.

So those letters so full of passion, those burning expressions, this daring obstinate pursuit—all this had been inspired by anything but love! Money alone had inflamed the man's soul. She, who had nothing but a heart to offer, how could she make him happy? Poor child! she had been the blind instrument of a robber, of the murderer of her old benefactress. She wept bitterly in the agony of her repentance. Hermann watched her in silence; but neither the tears of the unhappy girl, nor her beauty, rendered more touching by her grief, could move his heart of iron. He had no remorse in thinking of the Countess's death. One sole thought distressed him—the irreparable loss of the secret which was to have made his fortune.

"You are a monster!" said Lisabeta, after a long silence.

"I did not mean to kill her," replied Hermann coldly. "My pistol was not loaded."

They remained for some time without speaking, without looking at one another. The day was breaking, and Lisabeta put out her candle. She wiped her eyes, drowned in tears, and raised them towards Hermann. He was standing close to the window, his arms crossed, with a frown on his forehead. In this attitude he reminded her involuntarily of the portrait of Napoleon. The resemblance overwhelmed her.

"How am I to get you away?" she said at last. "I thought you might go out by the back stairs. But it would be necessary to go through the Countess's bedroom, and I am too frightened."

"Tell me how to get to the staircase, and I will go alone."

She went to a drawer, took out a key, which she handed to Hermann, and gave him the necessary instructions. Hermann took her icy hand, kissed her on the forehead, and departed.

He went down the staircase, and entered the Countess's bedroom. She was seated quite stiff in her armchair; but her features were in no way contracted. He stopped for a moment, and gazed into her face as if to make sure of the terrible reality. Then he entered the dark room, and, feeling behind the tapestry, found the little door which opened on to a staircase. As he went down it, strange ideas came into his head. "Going down this staircase," he said to himself, "some sixty years ago, at about this time, may have been seen some man in an embroidered coat with powdered wig, pressing to his breast a cocked hat: some gallant who has long been buried; and now the heart of his aged mistress has ceased to beat."

At the end of the staircase he found another door, which his key opened, and he found himself in the corridor which led to the street.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] The figures and fashions of the mazurka are reproduced in the cotillon of Western Europe.
—TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER V.

Three days after this fatal night, at nine o'clock in the morning, Hermann entered the convent where the last respects were to be paid to the mortal remains of the old Countess. He felt no remorse, though he could not deny to himself that he was the poor woman's assassin. Having no religion, he was, as usual in such cases, very superstitious; believing that the dead Countess might exercise a malignant influence on his life, he thought to appease her spirit by attending her funeral.

The church was full of people, and it was difficult to get in. The body had been placed on a rich catafalque, beneath a canopy of velvet. The Countess was reposing in an open coffin, her hands joined on her breast, with a dress of white satin, and head-dress of lace. Around the catafalque the family was assembled, the servants in black caftans with a knot of ribbons on the shoulder, exhibiting the colours of the Countess's coat of arms. Each of them held a wax candle in his hand. The relations, in deep mourning—children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren—were all present; but none of them wept.

To have shed tears would have looked like affectation. The Countess was so old that her death could have taken no one by surprise, and she had long been looked upon as already out of the world. The funeral sermon was delivered by a celebrated preacher. In a few simple, touching phrases he painted the final departure of the just, who had passed long years of contrite preparation for a Christian end. The service concluded in the midst of respectful silence. Then the relations went towards the defunct to take a last farewell. After them, in a long procession, all who had been invited to the ceremony bowed, for the last time, to her who for so many years had been a scarecrow at their entertainments. Finally came the Countess's household; among them was remarked an old governess, of the same age as the deceased, supported by two women. She had not strength enough to kneel down, but tears flowed from her eyes, as she kissed the hand of her old mistress.

In his turn Hermann advanced towards the coffin. He knelt down for a moment on the flagstones, which were strewn with branches of yew. Then he rose, as pale as death, and walked up the steps of the catafalque. He bowed his head. But suddenly the dead woman seemed to be staring at him; and with a mocking look she opened and shut one eye. Hermann by a sudden movement started and fell backwards. Several persons hurried towards him. At the same moment, close to the church door, Lisabeta fainted.

Throughout the day, Hermann suffered from a strange indisposition. In a quiet restaurant, where he took his meals, he, contrary to his habit, drank a great deal of wine, with the object of stupefying himself. But the wine had no effect but to excite his imagination, and give fresh activity to the ideas with which he was preoccupied.



**"HERMANN STARTED AND FELL
BACKWARDS."**

He went home earlier than usual; lay down with his clothes on upon the bed, and fell into a leaden sleep. When he woke up it was night, and the room was lighted up by the rays of the moon. He looked at his watch; it was a quarter to three. He could sleep no more. He sat up on the bed and thought of the old Countess. At this moment someone in the street passed the window, looked into the room, and then went on. Hermann scarcely noticed it; but in another minute he heard the door of the ante-chamber open. He thought that his orderly, drunk as usual, was returning from some nocturnal excursion; but the step was one to which he was not accustomed. Somebody seemed to be softly walking over the floor in slippers.

The door opened, and a woman, dressed entirely in white, entered the bedroom. Hermann thought it must be his old nurse, and he asked himself what she could want at that time of night.

But the woman in white, crossing the room with a rapid step, was now at the foot of his bed, and Hermann recognised the Countess.

"I come to you against my wish," she said in a firm voice. "I am forced to grant your prayer. Three, seven, ace, will win, if played one after the other; but you



"THREE, SEVEN, ACE."

must not play more than one card in twenty-four hours, and afterwards as long as you live you must never touch a card again. I forgive you my death, on condition of your marrying my companion, Lisabeta Ivanovna."

With these words she walked towards the door, and gliding with her slippers over the floor, disappeared. Hermann heard the door of the ante-chamber open, and soon afterwards saw a white figure pass along the street. It stopped for a moment before his window, as if to look at him.

Hermann remained for some time astounded. Then he got up and went into the next room. His orderly, drunk as usual, was asleep on the floor. He had much difficulty in waking him, and then could not obtain from him the least explanation. The door of the ante-chamber was locked.

Hermann went back to his bedroom, and wrote down all the details of his vision.

CHAPTER VI.

Two fixed ideas can no more exist together in the moral world than in the physical two bodies can occupy the same place at the same time; and "Three, seven, ace" soon drove away Hermann's recollection of the old Countess's last moments. "Three, seven, ace" were now in his head to the exclusion of everything else.

They followed him in his dreams, and appeared to him under strange forms. Threes seemed to be spread before him like magnolias, sevens took the form of Gothic doors, and aces became gigantic spiders.

His thoughts concentrated themselves on one single point. How was he to profit by the secret so dearly purchased? What if he applied for leave to travel? At Paris, he said to himself, he would find some gambling-house where, with his three cards, he could at once make his fortune.

Chance soon came to his assistance. There was at Moscow a society of rich gamblers, presided over by the celebrated Tchekalinski, who had passed all his life playing at cards, and had amassed millions. For while he lost silver only, he gained bank-notes. His magnificent house, his excellent kitchen, his cordial manners, had brought him numerous friends and secured for him general esteem.

When he came to St. Petersburg, the young men of the capital filled his rooms, forsaking balls for his card-parties, and preferring the emotions of gambling to the fascinations of flirting. Hermann was taken to Tchekalinski by Naroumoff. They passed through a long suite of rooms, full of the most attentive, obsequious servants. The place was crowded. Generals and high officials were playing at whist; young men were stretched out on the sofas, eating ices and smoking long pipes. In the principal room at the head of a long table, around which were assembled a score of players, the master of the house held a faro bank.

He was a man of about sixty, with a sweet and noble expression of face, and hair white as snow. On his full, florid countenance might be read good humour and benevolence. His eyes shone with a perpetual smile. Naroumoff introduced Hermann. Tchekalinski took him by the hand, told him that he was glad to see him, that no one stood on ceremony in his house; and then went on dealing. The deal occupied some time, and stakes were made on more than thirty cards. Tchekalinski waited patiently to allow the winners time to double their stakes, paid what he had lost, listened politely to all observations, and, more politely still, put straight the corners of cards, when in a fit of absence some one had taken the liberty of turning them down. At last when the game was at an end, Tchekalinski collected the cards, shuffled them again, had them cut, and then dealt anew.

"Will you allow me to take a card?" said Hermann, stretching out his arm above a fat man who occupied nearly the whole of one side of the table. Tchekalinski, with a gracious smile, bowed in consent. Naroumoff complimented Hermann, with a laugh, on the cessation of the austerity by which his conduct had hitherto been marked, and wished him all kinds of happiness on the occasion of his first appearance in the character of a gambler.

"There!" said Hermann, after writing some figures on the back of his card.

"How much?" asked the banker, half closing his eyes. "Excuse me, I cannot see."

"Forty-seven thousand roubles," said Hermann.

Every one's eyes were directed toward the new player.

"He has lost his head," thought Naroumoff.

"Allow me to point out to you," said Tchekalinski, with his eternal smile, "that you are playing rather high. We never put down here, as a first stake, more than a hundred and seventy-five roubles."

"Very well," said Hermann; "but do you accept my stake or not?"

Tchekalinski bowed in token of acceptance. "I only wish to point out to you," he said, "that although I am perfectly sure of my friends, I can only play against ready money. I am quite convinced that your word is as good as gold; but to keep up the rules of the game, and to facilitate calculations, I should be obliged to you if you would put the money on your card."

Hermann took a bank-note from his pocket and handed it to Tchekalinski, who, after examining it with a glance, placed it on Hermann's card.

Then he began to deal. He turned up on the right a ten, and on the left a three.

"I win," said Hermann, exhibiting his three.

A murmur of astonishment ran through the assembly. The banker knitted his eyebrows, but speedily his face resumed its everlasting smile.

"Shall I settle at once?" he asked.

"If you will be kind enough to do so," said Hermann.

Tchekalinski took a bundle of bank-notes from his pocket-book, and paid. Hermann pocketed his winnings and left the table.

Naroumoff was lost in astonishment. Hermann drank a glass of lemonade and went home.

The next evening he returned to the house. Tchekalinski again held the bank. Hermann went to the table, and this time the players hastened to make room for him. Tchekalinski received him with a most gracious bow. Hermann waited, took a card, and staked on it his forty-seven thousand roubles, together with the like sum which he had gained the evening before.

Tchekalinski began to deal. He turned up on the right a knave, and on the left a seven.

Hermann exhibited a seven.

There was a general exclamation. Tchekalinski was evidently ill at ease, but he counted out the ninety-four thousand roubles to Hermann, who took them in the calmest manner, rose from the table, and went away.

The next evening, at the accustomed hour, he again appeared. Everyone was expecting him. Generals and high officials had left their whist to watch this extraordinary play. The young officers had quitted their sofas, and even the servants of the house pressed round the table.

When Hermann took his seat, the other players ceased to stake, so impatient were they to see him have it out with the banker, who, still smiling, watched the approach of his antagonist and prepared to meet him. Each of them untied at the same time a pack of cards. Tchekalinski shuffled, and Hermann cut. Then the latter took up a card and covered it with a heap of bank-notes. It was like the preliminaries of a duel. A deep silence reigned through the room.

Tchekalinski took up the cards with trembling hands and dealt. On one side he put down a queen and on the other side an ace.

"Ace wins," said Hermann.



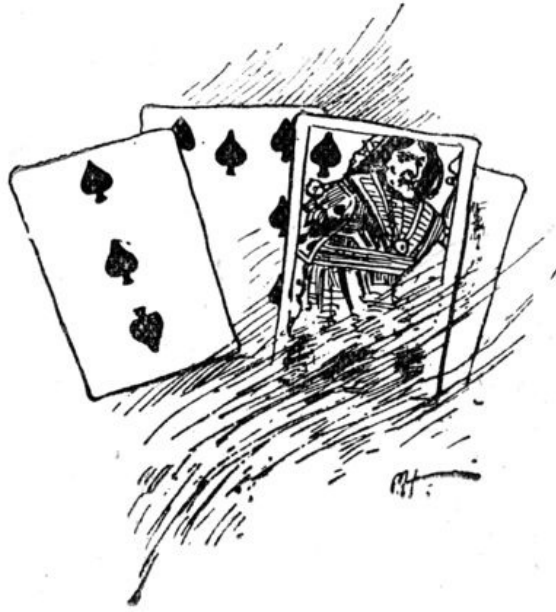
"HE SAW BEFORE HIM A QUEEN OF SPADES."

"No. Queen loses," said Tchekalinski.

Hermann looked. Instead of ace, he saw a queen of spades before him. He could not trust his eyes! And now as he gazed, in fascination, on the fatal card, he fancied that he saw the queen of spades open and

then close her eye, while at the same time she gave a mocking smile. He felt a thrill of nameless horror. The queen of spades resembled the dead Countess!

Hermann is now at the Oboukhoff Asylum, room No. 17—a hopeless madman! He answers no questions which we put to him. Only he mumbles to himself without cessation, "Three, seven, ace; three, seven, *queen!*"



The Two Genies.

[Pg 105]

A STORY FOR CHILDREN; FROM THE FRENCH OF VOLTAIRE.



EBONY AND TOPAZ.



very one in the province of Candahar knows the adventures of young Rustem. He was the only son of a Mirza of that country—or, as we might say, a lord. His father, the Mirza, had a good estate. Rustem was to be married to the daughter of a Mirza of his own rank, as both families ardently desired. He was intended to be the comfort of his parents, to make his wife happy, and to be happy with her.

But, unfortunately, he had seen the Princess of Cashmere at the great fair at Cabul, which is the most important fair in the whole world. And this was the reason why the old Prince of Cashmere had brought his daughter to the fair. He had lost the two most precious objects in his treasury: one was a diamond as big as my thumb, on which, by an art then known to the Indians, but

now forgotten, a portrait of his daughter was engraved; the other was a javelin, which of its own accord would strike whatever mark the owner wished.

A fakir in his Highness's train had stolen these treasures, and carried them to the Princess. "Take the greatest care of these two things," said he; "your fate depends upon them." Then he went away, and was seen no more.

The Prince of Cashmere, in great despair, determined to travel to the fair at Cabul, to see whether among all the merchants who collected there from the four quarters of the earth, there might not be one who had his diamond or his weapon. He took his daughter with him wherever he went, and she carried the diamond safe in her girdle; but as for the javelin, which she could not conveniently hide, she left it in Cashmere, safely locked up in a large Chinese chest.

[Pg 106]

At Cabul she and Rustem saw each other, and they fell in love with all the ardour of their nation. As a love-token the Princess gave him the diamond; and, at parting, Rustem promised to go to see her secretly in Cashmere.

The young Mirza had two favourite attendants who served him as secretaries, stewards, and body-servants. One was named Topaz; he was handsome and well-made, as fair as a Circassian beauty, as gentle and obliging as an Armenian, and as wise as a Parsee. The other was called Ebony, a good-looking negro; more active and more industrious than Topaz, and who never made objections. To them he spoke about his journey. Topaz tried to dissuade him, with the cautious zeal of a servant who is anxious not to offend, and reminded him of all the risks. How could he leave two families in despair, and cut his parents to the heart? He shook Rustem's purpose; but Ebony once more confirmed it, and removed his scruples.

The young man had not money enough for so long a journey. Wise Topaz would have refused to get it for him. Ebony provided it. He quietly stole his master's diamond, and had a false one made exactly like it, which he put in its place, pledging the real one to an Armenian for many thousands of rupees.



**"AN ELEPHANT WAS LOADED WITH HIS
BAGGAGE."**

As soon as Rustem had the rupees he was ready to start. An elephant was loaded with his baggage, and they set out on horseback.

"I took the liberty," said Topaz to his master, "of remonstrating against your enterprise; but after speaking it was my duty to obey. I am your slave. I love you, and will follow you to the end of the world. But let us consult the oracle which is on our way."

Rustem agreed. The answer of the oracle was this: "If you turn to the east you will turn to the west." Rustem could not understand this. Topaz maintained that it boded no good; Ebony, always accommodating, persuaded him that it was very favourable.

[Pg 107]

There was yet another oracle in Cabul, which they consulted also. The Cabul oracle replied as follows: "If you possess you will not possess; if you get the best of it, you will get the worst; if you are Rustem you will not be Rustem." This saying seemed still more incomprehensible than the other.

"Beware," said Topaz.

"Fear nothing," said Ebony. And he, as may be supposed, seemed to his master to be always in the right, since he encouraged his passion and his hopes.

On leaving Cabul they marched through a great forest. Here they sat down on the grass to eat, while the horses were turned loose to feed. They were about to unload the elephant, which carried the dinner and the service, when it was discovered that Topaz and Ebony were no longer with the party. They called them loudly; the forest echoed with the names of Topaz and Ebony; the men sought them in every direction and filled the woods with their shouts, but they came back having seen no one and heard no answer. "We saw nothing," they said to Rustem, "but a vulture fighting with an eagle and plucking out all its feathers."

The history of this struggle excited Rustem's curiosity; he went to the spot on foot. He saw no vulture or eagle, but he found that his elephant, still loaded with baggage, had been attacked by a huge

rhinoceros. One was fighting with his horn, the other with his trunk. On seeing Rustem the rhinoceros retreated, and the elephant was led back. But now the horses were gone. "Strange things happen to travellers in the forest!" exclaimed Rustem. The servants were dismayed, and their master was in despair at having lost his horses, his favourite negro, and the sage Topaz, for whom he had always had a regard, though he did not always agree with his opinion.

He was comforting himself with the hope of soon finding himself at the feet of the beautiful Princess of Cashmere, when he met a fine striped ass, which a vigorous peasant was beating violently with a stick. There is nothing rarer, swifter, or more beautiful than an ass of this kind. This one retorted on the rustic for his thrashing by kicks which might have uprooted an oak. The young Mirza very naturally took the ass's part, for it was a beautiful beast. The peasant ran off, crying out to the ass: "I will pay you out yet!" The ass thanked its liberator after its fashion, went up to him, fawned on him, and received his caresses.

Having dined, Rustem mounted him, and took the road to Cashmere with his servants, some on foot and some riding the elephant.

Hardly had he mounted his ass, when the animal turned towards Cabul, instead of proceeding on the way to Cashmere. In vain his rider tugged at the bridle, jerked at the bit, squeezed his ribs with his knees, drove the spurs into his flanks, gave him his head, pulled him up, whipped him right and left. The obstinate beast still made direct for Cabul.

Rustem was growing desperate, when he met a camel-driver, who said to him—

"You have a very stubborn ass there, master, which insists on carrying you where you do not want to go. If you will let me have him, I will give you four of my camels, which you may choose for yourself."

Rustem thanked Providence for having sent so good a bargain in his way. "Topaz was all wrong," thought he, "to say that my journey would be unlucky." He mounted the finest of the camels, and the others followed. He soon rejoined his little caravan, and went on his way towards happiness.

He had not marched more than four miles, when he was stopped by a torrent, wide, deep, and impetuous, tumbling over rocks all white with foam. On each shore rose precipitous cliffs which bewildered the eye and chilled the heart of man. There was no way of getting across, of turning to the right hand or to the left.

"I am beginning to fear," said Rustem, "that Topaz may have been right to reprehend me for this journey, and I very wrong to undertake it. If he were but here he might give me some good advice, and if I had Ebony, he at any rate would comfort me, and suggest some expedient. As it is I have no one left to help me."

His dismay was increased by that of his followers. The night was very dark, and they spent it in lamentations. At last fatigue and dejection brought sleep to the love-sick traveller. He awoke, however, at daybreak, and saw a fine marble bridge built across the torrent from shore to shore.

Then what exclamations, what cries of astonishment and delight. "Is it possible? Is it a dream? What a marvel! It is magic! Dare we cross it?" All the Mirza's train fell on their knees, got up again, went to the bridge, kissed the ground, looked up to heaven, lifted their hands; then tremulously set foot on it, went over, and came back in perfect ecstasy. And Rustem said, "Heaven is on my side this time. Topaz did not know what he was saying. The oracles were in my favour. Ebony was right; but why is he not here?"

Hardly had the caravan crossed in safety, when the bridge fell into the torrent with an appalling crash.

"So much the better!" cried Rustem. "God be praised! He does not intend me to return to my own country, where I should be only a private gentleman. He means me to marry the Princess. I shall be Prince of Cashmere. In that way, when I possess my Princess, I shall not possess my humble rank in Candahar; I shall be Rustem, and I shall not, since I shall be a great prince. There is a great deal of the oracle interpreted in my favour. The rest will be explained in the same way. I am too happy! But why is not Ebony at my side? I regret him a thousand times more than Topaz."

He rode a few miles further in great glee; but as evening fell, a chain of mountains, steeper than a rampart, and higher than the Tower of Babel would have been when finished, entirely closed the road against the travellers, who were filled with fears.

Everyone exclaimed: "It is the will of God that we should perish here! He has broken down the bridge that we may have no hope of returning; He has raised up this mountain to hinder our going forward. Oh, Rustem! Oh, hapless Mirza! We shall never see Cashmere, we shall never return to the land of Candahar!"

In Rustem's soul the keenest anguish and most complete dejection succeeded the immoderate joy and hopes which had intoxicated him. He was now very far from interpreting the oracles to his advantage: "Oh merciful Heaven!" he cried. "Have I really lost my friend Topaz?"

As he spoke the words, heaving deep sighs and shedding bitter tears in the sight of his despairing followers, behold, the base of the mountain opened, and a long vaulted gallery lighted by a hundred thousand torches was revealed to his dazzled eyes!

Rustem broke into exclamations of joy; his people fell on their knees or dropped down with



THE ASS RETORTED BY KICKS.

amazement, crying out that it was a miracle, and that Rustem was destined to govern the world. Rustem himself believed it, and was uplifted beyond measure. "Ah! Ebony, my dear Ebony, where are you?" he cried. "Why are you not here to see all these wonders? How did I come to lose you? Fair Princess of Cashmere, when shall I again behold your charms?"

He marched forward with his servants, his elephant, and his camels into the tunnel under the mountain, and at the end of it came out upon a meadow enamelled with flowers and watered by brooks. Beyond this meadow, avenues of trees stretched into the far distance; at the end of them was a river bordered by delightful houses in the loveliest gardens. On every side he heard concerts of voices and instruments, and saw dancing. He hurried across one of the bridges over the river, and asked the first man he met what was this beautiful country.

The man to whom he spoke replied: "You are in the province of Cashmere; the inhabitants, as you see, are holding great rejoicings. We are doing honour to the wedding of our beautiful Princess, who is about to marry a certain lord named Barbabou to whom her father has plighted her. May Heaven prolong their happiness!"



"THE CLEVEREST PHYSICIANS WERE CALLED IN."

On hearing these words Rustem fell down in a swoon. The gentleman of Cashmere, supposing that he was liable to fits, had him carried to his own house, where he lay some time unconscious. The two cleverest physicians of the district were called in; they felt their patient's pulse; and he having somewhat recovered, sobbed and sighed, and rolled his eyes, exclaiming, "Topaz, Topaz, you were right after all!"

One of the physicians said to the gentleman of Cashmere, "I perceive by his accent that this young man comes from Candahar; the air of this country does not agree with him, and he must be sent home again. I can see by his eyes that he is mad; leave him in my hands; I will take him back to his own country and cure him." The other physician declared that his only complaint was melancholy, and that he ought to be taken to the Princess's wedding and compelled to dance.

While they were discussing his case the sick man recovered his powers; the two physicians were sent away, and Rustem remained alone with his host.

"Sir," said he, "I ask your pardon for fainting in your presence; I know that it is not good manners, and I entreat you to accept my elephant in acknowledgment of all the kindness with which you have received me."

He then related his adventures, taking good care not to mention the object of his journey. "But, in the name of Brahma," said he, "tell me who is this happy Barbabou who is to be married to the Princess of Cashmere, and why her father has chosen him for his son-in-law, and why the Princess has accepted him for her husband."

"My lord," replied the gentleman of Cashmere, "the Princess is far from having accepted him. On the contrary, she is drowned in tears, while the province rejoices over her marriage. She is shut up in the Palace Tower, and refuses to see any of the festivities prepared in her honour."

Rustem, on hearing this, felt new life in his soul, and the colour which sorrow had faded came again into his cheeks.

"Then pray tell me," he continued, "why the Prince of Cashmere persists in marrying her to Barbabou against her will."

"The facts are these," replied his friend. "Do you know that our august Prince lost some time ago a diamond and a javelin, on which his heart was greatly set?"

"I know it well," said Rustem.

"Then, I must tell you," said his host, "that the Prince, in despair at hearing nothing of his two treasures, after searching for them all the world over, promised his daughter in marriage to anyone who would bring him either of them. Then Barbabou arrived and brought the diamond with him; and he is to marry the Princess to-morrow."

Rustem turned pale. He muttered his thanks, took leave of his host, and went off on his dromedary to the capital where the ceremony was to take place. He reached the palace of the sovereign, announced that he had matters of importance to communicate to him, and craved an audience. He was told that the Prince was engaged in preparing for the wedding. "That is the very reason," said he, "why I wish to speak to him." In short, he was so urgent that he was admitted.

"My lord," said he, "may Heaven crown your days with glory and magnificence! Your son-in-law is a rascal."

"A rascal! How dare you say so? Is that the way to speak to a Prince of Cashmere of the son-in-law he has chosen?"

"Yes, a rascal," said Rustem. "And to prove it to your Highness, here is your diamond, which I have brought back to you."

The Prince, in much amazement, compared the two diamonds, and, as he knew nothing about gems, he could not tell which was the true one.

"Here are two diamonds," said he, "but I have only one daughter. I am in a strange dilemma!"

Then he sent for Barbabou, and asked him whether he had not deceived him. Barbabou swore that he had bought the diamond of an Armenian. Rustem did not say from whom he had got his, but he proposed, as a solution, that his Highness should allow him and his rival to fight in single combat on the spot.

"It is not enough that your son-in-law should possess a diamond," said he, "he ought also to show proof of valour. Do you not think it fair that the one who kills the other should marry the Princess?"



"THE COMBAT BEGAN."

"Very good," said the Prince; "it will be a fine show for all the Court. You two shall fight it out at once. The conqueror shall have the armour of the conquered man, after the custom of Cashmere; and he shall marry the Princess."

The rivals immediately descended to the palace court. On the stairs they saw a magpie and a raven. The raven cried, "Fight it out, fight it out!" the magpie, "Do not fight!" This made the Prince laugh. The rivals scarcely noticed the two birds.

[Pg 111]

The combat began. All the courtiers stood round them in a circle. The Princess still shut herself up in her tower and would see nothing of it. She had no suspicion that her lover could be in Cashmere, and she had such a horror of Barbabou that she would not look on. The fight went off as well as possible. Barbabou was left stone dead, and the populace were delighted, for he was ugly and Rustem very handsome—a fact which almost always turns the scale of public favour.

The conqueror put on the dead man's coat of mail, his scarf and his helmet, and approached the window of his mistress to the sound of trumpets, followed by all the Court. Everyone was shouting: "Fair Princess, come and see your handsome bridegroom who has killed his hideous rival!" and the ladies repeated the words. The Princess unfortunately looked out of window, and seeing the armour of the man she abhorred she flew in despair to the Chinese trunk, and took out the fatal javelin, which darted, at her wish, to pierce her dear Rustem through a joint in his cuirass. He gave a bitter cry, and in that cry the Princess thought that she recognised the voice of her hapless lover.

She flew into the courtyard, her hair all dishevelled, death in her eyes and in her heart. Rustem was lying in her father's arms. She saw him! What a moment, what a sight! Who can express the anguish, the tenderness, the horror of that meeting? She threw herself upon him and embraced him.

"These," she cried, "are the first and last kisses of your lover and destroyer." Then snatching the dart from his wound, she plunged it into her own heart, and died on the breast of the lover she adored.

Her father, horror-stricken and heart-broken, strove in vain to bring her back to life; she was no more. He broke the fatal weapon into fragments, and flung away the ill-starred diamonds; and while preparations were proceeding for his daughter's funeral instead of her wedding, he had the bleeding but still living Rustem carried into his palace.

Rustem was laid upon a couch. The first thing he saw, one on each side of his death-bed, were Topaz and Ebony. Surprise gave him strength. "Cruel that you were," said he; "why did you desert me? The Princess might still perhaps be living if you had been at hand!"

"I have never left you for a moment," said Topaz.

"I have been always at your side," said Ebony.

"What do you mean? Why do you insult me in my last moments?" replied Rustem, in a weak voice.

"Believe me, it is true," said Topaz. "You know I never approved of this ill-advised journey, for I foresaw its disastrous end. I was the eagle which struggled with the vulture, and which the vulture plucked; I was the elephant which made off with your baggage to compel you to return home; I was the striped ass which would fain have carried you back to your father; it was I who led your horses astray, who produced the torrent which you could not cross, who raised the mountain which checked your unlucky advance; I was the physician who advised your return to your native air, and the magpie which urged you not to fight."

"I," said Ebony, "was the vulture who plucked the eagle, the rhinoceros which thrust its horn into the elephant, the peasant who beat the ass, the merchant who gave you the camels to hasten you to your ruin; I raised the bridge you crossed; I bored the mountains for you to pass; I was the physician who advised you to proceed, and the raven which encouraged you to fight."

"Alas! And remember the oracles," added Topaz; "'If you turn to the east you will turn to the west.'"

"Yes, here they bury the dead with their faces turned westward," said Ebony. "The oracle was plain; why did not you understand it? You possessed and you possessed not; for you had the diamond, but it was a false one, and you did not know it; you got the best of it in battle, but you also got the worst, for you must die; you are Rustem, but you will soon cease to be so. The oracle is fulfilled."

Even as he spoke two white wings appeared on the shoulders of Topaz, and two black wings on those of Ebony.

"What is this that I see?" cried Rustem. And Topaz and Ebony replied: "We are your two genies." "I," added Topaz, "am your good genie."

"And you, Ebony, with your black wings, are apparently my evil genie."

"As you say," replied Ebony.

Then suddenly everything vanished. Rustem found himself in his father's house which he had not quitted, and in his bed where he had been sleeping just an hour. [Pg 112]

He awoke with a start, bathed in sweat and greatly scared. He shouted, he called, he rang. His servant Topaz hurried up in his night-cap, yawning.



THE TWO GENIES.

"Am I dead or alive?" cried Rustem. "Will the beautiful Princess of Cashmere recover?"

"Is your Highness dreaming?" said Topaz, calmly.

"And what," cried Rustem, "has become of that cruel Ebony, with his two black wings? Is it his fault that I am dying so dreadful a death?"

"Sir, I left him upstairs snoring. Shall I call him down?"

"The villain! He has been tormenting me these six months. It was he who took me to that fatal fair at Cabul; it was he who stole the diamond the Princess gave me; he is the sole cause of my journey, of the death of my Princess and of the javelin-wound of which I am dying in the prime of youth."

"Make yourself easy," said Topaz. "You have never been to Cabul. There is no Princess of Cashmere; the Prince has but two sons, and they are now at school. You never had any diamond. The Princess cannot be dead since she never was born; and you are perfectly sound and well."

"What! Is it not true that you became in turn an eagle, an elephant, an ass, a doctor, and a magpie, to protect me from ill?"

"It is all a dream, sir. Our ideas are no more under our control when sleeping than when awake. The Almighty sent that string of ideas through your head, as it would seem, to give you some lesson which you may lay to heart."

"You are making game of me," said Rustem. "How long have I been sleeping?"

"Sir, you have only slept one hour."

"Well, I cannot understand it," said Rustem.

But perhaps he took the lesson to heart, and learnt to doubt whether all he wished for was right and good for him.

Transcriber's Notes:

Images can be clicked to access higher-resolution versions.

The original text contains some inconsistencies of hyphenation (e.g. "tea urn" vs. "tea-urn"); these have been retained.

Page 14, added missing close quote to "NETTA AND UGHTRED HAD STROLLED OUT TOGETHER."

Page 26, changed typo "or" to "of" in "victim of the fire."

Page 28, added missing period to "The wonderful rapidity, order, discipline, and exactness of the parts secure a most effective tableau."

Page 29, added missing "s" to "buildings" in "public and private buildings and houses."

Pages 41-48, rejoined broken image captions for readability (e.g. changed "*From a* AGE 5. [*Painting.*" to "*From a Painting.* AGE 5.")

Page 47, added missing period to image caption: "AGE 19."

Page 80, added missing open quote to image caption: "HEARD VOICES."

Page 81, removed a stray quote after "What could a Venetian mirror have done more?"

Page 83, added missing period after "in order to console me for my blindness" and removed duplicate

"in" from "so foolish in the presence of a stranger."

Page 91, corrected typo "Lisbeta" to "Lisabeta" in "Lisabeta Ivanovna was, in fact, a most unhappy creature."

Page 99, corrected single quote to double quote after "Is not that his name?"

Page 108, added missing close quote after "I will give you four of my camels, which you may choose for yourself."

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