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THE STRAND MAGAZINE
An Illustrated Monthly

EDITED BY GEORGE NEWNES

Vol VII., Issue 40.
April, 1894

An Anarchist.
Illustrated Interviews.
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Zig-zags at the Zoo
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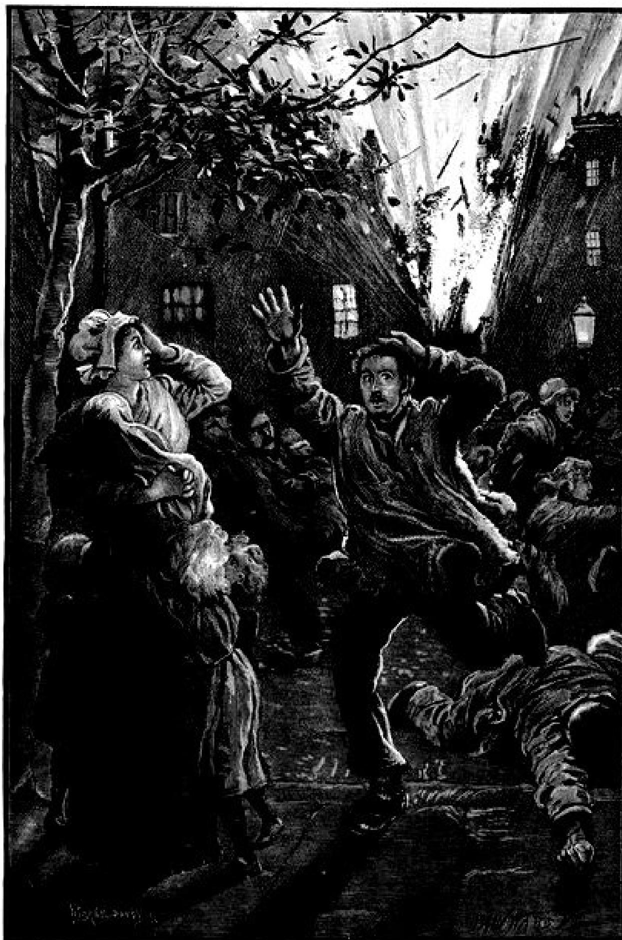
Transcriber's Notes



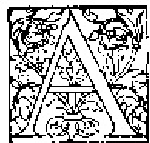
"THERE WAS A FRIGHTFUL PANIC AND FLIGHT."

(*See page 347.*)]

AN ANARCHIST.

From the French of Eugène Moret.

I.—The End of the Day.



All Saints' Day was near. It was very cold. At five o'clock, night came. Marianne has risen slowly from her seat and gone to close the window, which she had opened for a few minutes to let some fresh air into the room. Ah! how dark and cheerless is the weather! On the pavements it must be difficult to walk, so thickly coated are they with slippery mud—mud that is everywhere, mud and standing puddles. A hard winter is commencing. The charcoal seller will want a great deal of money.

Ah, well—that is an expense that has been foreseen. The charcoal man and the baker have to be paid; and with courage and health it can be done.

In spite of the hissing wind and the biting cold, Marianne rested on her elbows at the open window for a moment; it refreshed her head. She was so tired. Since the morning she had hardly quitted her work, and sewing is so wearisome. Four children, the two eldest at school, the third at the asylum; the fourth, still quite young, in its white-curtained cradle.

The needle must be kept stitching, stitching, there must be no going to sleep over the work; but both ends could be made to meet, and that is the chief thing. Jacques Houdaille is a good workman, thirty-seven years of age, with a solid backbone, as he says. He works his full time; skulking is not in his way, he leaves that to fellows with hay in their sabots; he has youngsters, and they must be fed—that's all he knows. Besides, the missis has her notions: she is proud of herself, she'd not have any debts in the neighbourhood.

Poor Jacques! he had not always been so reasonable, and there was a time when his life had not been so well led.

Marianne, feeling the cold, which raised the handkerchief covering her shoulders and pierced beneath her dress, shut the window and moved about the room, putting things in order, then, after lighting her lamp, resumed her place near the stove.

The work she was doing was wanted speedily, and she wished to finish it. It was Saturday, and there is so much to be done on Sunday, where there is a workman's clothes to be mended and a family of young children to be tended.

But while plying the needle she reflected.

"MARIANNE SHUT THE WINDOW."

No, it was a fact, her Jacques had not always reasoned so justly. It was not that he was naturally fickle; he was an honest, hard-working man, a good workman at his trade, open-hearted, devoted to his wife, whom he had married for love, and adoring his children. But he was feeble-minded, ignorant, fond of listening to glib talkers, phrasemongers, and unable to refuse the offer of a glass; and, one glass drunk, a second followed, and at the third he lost his head, and gave himself up to a drinking bout.

Ah! Marianne had not laughed every day at that time, and that had not been all. In those days Jacques sometimes only brought home from five-and-twenty to thirty francs a week: that was not a sum on which they could live; lodgings cost dear, and Marianne, who was still young, liked to dress as well as other people.

Then poverty came, the man was out of heart, and, during several months, did no work. That was anything but a gay time.

But all that was over. Marianne, as well as seeing to the home and attending to the children, made her fifty sous a-day. It was no great thing, but with Jacques's wages, they were not badly off; for the blacksmith now earned from sixty to seventy francs a week—nine and ten francs a day and overtime, for which he was paid double. It was not much to talk of, but the workmen had had nothing to complain about for some length of time. Certainly, as Jacques said, there was still a

good deal to be done; there was still wanting insurance against want of employment, accidents, and the infirmities of age. But everything could not be done at once, and Jacques did not grumble; he hoped it would all come right in time. He was a philosopher.

They were living then in a very small town, where the population was not large. But the proprietors of the factory where he worked were good men, who understood that men must be enabled to live by their labour, and that the price of everything was high. They even talked of one day giving the factory hands a share in the profits of the enterprise.

"That's only a dream," said Jacques Houdaille. "There's amongst us a pack of idlers and incompetents, who don't earn even the wages they get now; and then the workman knows nothing about account-keeping, and likes to see his way clearly; I only know what I am paid."

Marianne laughed as she thought of her husband's rough way of speaking.

What more could be expected of him? He hammered iron all day, swinging heavy sledge-hammers, bare-armed, in the red light of the forge. That kind of work did not give him polite manners, but he was so kind-hearted, and could express himself so tenderly when he chose: so long as he kept from drink; and he had refrained already for several months.

And Marianne, as she cast her eyes about her, felt a thrill of happiness. She was in her own home, and everything in it had been gained without owing a sou to anybody: the neat furniture, a handsome, brightly polished commode with its marble top, and on the mantelpiece a large gilt clock, "warranted for two years." It was comfort, almost ease! Oh, if it would only last for ever! And why should it not?

Seven o'clock struck.

"Heavens! I must see to my dinner!"

II.—The Evening Meal.

She sprang up from her seat, hurried to the kitchen, stirred up the fire, then returned to the little sitting-room, cleared the table, and set out the dinner things.

In the street below heavy clattering steps were heard upon the pavement: it was the work-people going home. Some slouched along, with their hands in their pockets, scenting the wide-open cabaret; others quickened their pace, eager to get back to their firesides, to the kind faces of their housewives and their shock-headed children.

"HE HAMMERED IRON ALL DAY."

The door opened abruptly; it was he, tall, strong, all black—a handsome man under his rough skin and bushy beard. The children, who had waited for his coming out of the factory, were with him. They seated themselves at table and Marianne brought in the soup.

The blacksmith was fond of soup, fond of the good odour which escaped from the brown tureen; and he proved it by having his plate filled three times to the brim.

Yet he did not look in a good temper. His clear blue eyes flashed under his knit brows, and it was with rough gesture he emptied the glass of wine Marianne had taken pleasure in pouring out for him.

"This state of things can't go on much longer," he said, as if speaking to himself.

"What has happened?" asked Marianne, anxiously. "Haven't you been paid your wages?"

"Thunder! It only wants to come to that. If ever they don't pay me, I'll burn down the whole

shop!"

"How strange you are to-night! What is the matter with you?"

"What's the matter? Well, never you mind; women have nothing to do with such things."

"Give me your money, Jacques," said Marianne, speaking softly, thinking that he had forgotten himself a little on leaving the factory, and that it was well to take precautions.

"My money—what for?"

"For one reason, because you have no need to keep it in your pocket—you may lose it."

"Or drink it away, you mean?"

"Well! then you know what I have to pay, that I owe for my last confinement to the doctor, and the tailor has called——"

"The tailor! You are tricking me out nicely! Monsieur must have his tailor, now, like a fund-holder. And a doctor is to be paid by a workman—there's another good-for-nothing to be put down!"

The blacksmith seized the bottle of wine that was within his reach and refilled his glass.

"Jacques," said Marianne, now become slightly pale, "what is the matter with you to-day? I have never seen you like this before."

"I have had enough of this sort of life; it is time to end it, and that we should know a little whether it is not the man who makes the harvest that is to eat the corn."

"Oh!" cried Marianne, "I was sure you had been drinking."

"Yes, I have, but that's neither here nor there. I tell you that at the factory we've had enough of sweating, and have revolted at last."

"Jacques," cried Marianne, trembling, "has any injustice been done to you?"

"There's nothing else but injustice in this world. For whom do we slave? For whom do we toil the life out of us? For the rich and idle! I tell you, you are not going to pay for anything more with my money; I shall want it for myself, for I am not going back to work again."

He rose, snatched up his cap and planted it on his head.

"Where are you going, Jacques?"

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING, JACQUES?"

"To join the comrades who are waiting for me. If I don't come back to-night, you'll know."

Marianne brushed away a tear which was running down her cheek, and tried to put a cheerful face on the matter. The children were there, and she did not want them to comprehend that anything serious was occurring. Perhaps, too—who could tell?—there might really be nothing in it; men are so foolish when they have been drinking.

"He has been put out in some way," she said to herself; "it has mounted to his head, and he is going to give way a little this evening, to drown his irritation, which will be gone to-morrow."

She put her children to bed, cleared away the dinner things, and resumed her sewing. But, in spite of herself, she could not help recalling what her husband had said. Why this hatred against the classes above him? What had they done to him? M. Hennetier, the principal proprietor of the factory, was a moderately rich man; but, down to the present time, the workmen in his employ had always regarded him as both good and just in his dealings with them. To make everybody as well off as himself was impossible. The position he held had been won by hard work; for he had once been a foreman only in the establishment of which he was now at the head.

III.—The Strike.

Jacques returned late in the night. He was not drunk, as Marianne feared he would be; but he

was highly excited and talked of nothing less than setting fire to the factory they had quitted the evening before.

Next day he was no calmer. He was hardly at home all day. In the evening, Marianne, looking out of window, saw that something was in the air. The workmen were gathered in knots in the street, or walking about and talking together excitedly. On the following day Jacques did what he had never before done, made "Saint Monday." On Tuesday he returned to the factory, but it was with all the pains in the world and with prayers and tears that Marianne was able to induce him to do so.

"We are going to keep on till the end of the week," he said, when he returned home at night. And, sure enough, on Friday night he came back with a triumphant air, and threw his bag of tools into a corner of the room.

"It's done!" he said.

"What is done?" cried Marianne, in alarm.

"The factory, from to-night, is picketed."

"Picketed!"

"Yes, every hand forbidden to enter it: the first of ours who enters the gates will be a dead man!"

"By what right?"

"Because we've come out on strike!"

"On strike!" repeated Marianne, shuddering at that terrific word. "Then you are not going to work—will have no more wages to receive; but what is to become of us, then? How are we to live?"

"Oh! don't worry yourself about that," replied the blacksmith, feeling a little uneasy in spite of his words; "we have funds, we shall all get two francs a day."

"Two francs—and four children!"

"You have some savings?"

"And when they are gone?"

"Oh, don't bother me!—so long as the workman gets his rights. We've had enough of this miserable existence."

"Miserable on what you have been earning?" said Marianne. "Look about you. In this very house, on the first floor, there is a family: the husband alone works, and has a salary of only eighteen hundred francs a year."

"*Only* eighteen hundred!"

"That's five francs a day, and you earn double that."

"I suppose that is so—when you count it up."

"Well, these people have three children, and when they go out they are dressed like princes."

"Yes, but they don't eat."

"You mean they don't *drink*. Well, they find the means for going out on Sundays, for going once or twice a year to the theatre, to receive friends—in short, they appear to be at ease, and make no complaint as to their condition."

"What!" cried the blacksmith, bringing down his clenched fist heavily on the table, "do you compare me with a paper-scratcher? Are such things as him men at all? He has not even a trade! A paper-scratcher!—a pack of useless idlers the whole lot of them—as bad as tradesmen and the rest of the bloodsuckers!"

Marianne saw that he had no other answer to give. For some time he was no longer himself. He did not get exactly drunk, but he was constantly in a state that was half-way towards intoxication, and a mere nothing roused his anger. It was still worse some days later, and if the wife was resigned, the mother asked herself in terror, whether it was possible for her to

"AT THE CABARET."

continue to live with him. He did no work, and his days were spent at the cabaret, sometimes part of his nights. He, formerly so kind and tender to his wife, regarded her with nothing but savage looks; and as to his children, of whom he had been so fond, he ceased to notice them even.

Marianne cried when she was alone, for it was the future which, more than all, terrified her. There was no more money coming in, and her little savings, so painfully amassed, were, day by day, dwindling. She had been obliged to sell a railway share, a tiny piece of paper of which she had been so proud. Linen, clothes, all took the same road; the handsome gilt clock had to be sold, the commode—even the children's playthings and books, one day, when they were hungry.

It must be told, too, that she herself earned nothing. Not only had work been brought to a standstill since the outset of that detestable strike: people who had, before that, employed her, now shut their doors in her face.

"We don't give work to the wife of a striker," they said.

She had swallowed her tears and had felt a movement of anger. Was it her fault that it had happened? More than all, was it the fault of her poor little ones, who, if the present state of things continued, would become destitute? No; but it was a contest—war between classes. What a frightful misfortune that men could not come to an understanding and help, rather than hate and fight, each other!

IV.—Seditious Placards.

One evening Jacques slunk like a thief up the stairs of his house and entered his room furtively. He was pale, his face contorted, his eyes haggard; and it was with a panting voice he called Marianne.

"I am pursued," he said; "I have come to let you know and to share what money you have—for I must escape."

She threw herself upon his neck.

"What is it you have done?"

"Oh! a mere nothing: posted up some bills on the walls; they say these placards are seditious."

"And you are being pursued?"

"Yes, they are trying to arrest me. I'm not afraid of a prison, but I don't fancy being made to pay for others."

"Yet that is all you will do, Jacques; for you are weak-minded, and allow yourself to be led away."

"They say it is revolutionary."

"Yes, and they will make an insurgent of you. They will push you on to fight behind a barricade; they will get themselves made Deputies or Ministers, and leave you to be put in irons and sent to die five thousand leagues away, if you are not shot against a wall. It is wrong of you, Jacques, to have allowed yourself to be led into this position; women see further than you—because they are mothers."

All the while she was weeping and talking she was hurriedly making up a bundle of clothes. Then kissing Jacques—holding him in a long embrace—she placed two five-franc pieces in his hand, perhaps the only two left in the house.

"Don't go yet," she said; "I want you to see the children."

But sounds were heard on the stairs—the whisperings of men stealthily ascending.

"The police!" cried Houdaille. "Oh, the brutes!—Adieu! I have no time to lose. Don't be afraid—they won't take me!"

He opened the door suddenly and darted down the stairs, striking out with his fists, and with such whirling rapidity, that the poor fellows in pursuit of him had nothing but their pains for their labour in the long and fruitless chase which followed.

Marianne breathed again—he was saved. Saved, yes—but what was to become of him?

During the greater part of the night she stood with her face pressing the windowpane, shuddering at the slightest sound made without, expecting every moment to see him re-appear. For an instant a cold perspiration burst out upon her forehead; it was a troop of soldiers, a whole battalion of infantry, the commander at its head, passing under her windows, and when the sound of their feet had died away into the icy silence of the night, it was the turn of cavalry, the iron hoofs of the horses clattering upon the frosted pavement in the moonlight. It was part of a regiment of dragoons, with down-bent heads, enveloped in their grey cloaks and sabre in hand.

"STRIKING OUT WITH HIS FISTS,"

V.—A Gleam of Gaiety.

Three weeks passed after that, and the strike still continued—the strike—that is to say, the ruin of the country, discomfort to the rich, misery to the poor, excitement amongst the masses, alarm everywhere.

Jacques Houdaille had not reappeared. He knew that a warrant for his arrest was out against him, and he was not so stupid as to come and throw himself into the wolf's jaws.

Several of his comrades had been arrested and were awaiting their trial. What would become of them? Poor fellows! They still held up their heads behind the bars of their prison.

Their counsel, a tall, thin man, who wished to fatten himself and become a somebody at the Bar, excited them in their bravado. He quite well knew what he was about, that glib speaker; in any case, it was they, poor creatures, who would pay for the broken pottery.

Jacques Houdaille, more fortunate, was still at liberty. But where was he? How would he escape? Marianne had heard no news of him, and while awaiting the end of all those misfortunes, she had to live, and that was hard to do—nothing left, and four mouths to feed.

At last—for a fortnight past, at least—she had obtained work. Some persons had had pity on her, and had promised to do something for her children. It had come to be recognised that neither she nor her little ones were responsible for the faults of the wretched husband.

On the morning of the 24th December some of these charitably-disposed persons had gone to see her. The next day was a day of rest, and, on the occasion of the Christmas holidays, had brought for her children new and warm winter clothing.

For a moment she hesitated to accept these presents, for all her life she had been able to buy for herself all she needed, and had never held out her hand. But she was made to see that it was not on her own account this assistance was being offered to her—that, in any case, she was in an exceptional position—that her husband had left her and was not likely soon to return to her; and that it would be, on her part, an act of unjustifiable pride to condemn her children to suffer, when it was impossible for her to provide for their needs. She gave in to those good reasons, and her children were loud in the expression of their delight.

"That is not all," said one of her visitors. "At Madame Hennetier's, this evening, there is to be an assemblage of thirty children belonging to our town; they are to keep Christmas, and you must promise us to bring your little ones."

Marianne became very pale.

"Madame Hennetier!" she said; "but she is the wife of the principal manager of the factory where my husband worked!"

"Madame Hennetier knows that, and wishes to give you a proof of her esteem. Efforts are, at this moment, being made to bring the workmen back from the misguided step they have taken; there

is no concession which the masters are not prepared to grant, in the hope of putting an end to this horrible strike, for everybody plainly sees that if the situation is continued it will result in a great disaster. But, in this matter of the children's Christmas treat, there is no question of politics. Christmas begins to-night; there is, we know only too well, much poverty in the country; in more than one garret to-night there will be no supper, and to-morrow will find many empty stomachs and many little shoes unvisited in the night by Santa Claus.

"Madame Hennetier and her sister have both been poor; they know what it is to want bread, and do not blush to have it known. They have remained good in their relative prosperity, and they have resolved to give, this evening, some hours of happy forgetfulness to the poor innocent little ones about them."

Marianne still shrank from making the surrender asked of her, for many thoughts had crowded upon her mind while her visitor was speaking. She said to herself: "My husband would refuse; to him these people are enemies. Yet—why enemies?" she reflected; "they appear, on the contrary, to be animated by the best feelings towards him, and to have but one purpose—to bring him back to calmness and reason."

Then the children were present, listening anxiously; there would be a beautiful supper, sweetmeats, cakes, a profusion of playthings. For days past, nothing else had been talked of in the place but this entertainment. They had been thinking of it, not dreaming that they would be invited to it.

At last Marianne made up her mind.

"What can I give them instead?—nothing. I have no right to deprive them of this happiness." And aloud she replied: "I will come, madame."

The children clapped their hands.

VI.—Pity!

The little fête was brilliant and tumultuous. More than forty children were gathered about an immense table laden with flowers and food of all kinds: smoking puddings; geese, stuffed with chestnuts, and roasted to the hue of gold; pastry and ornamented sweets; and hillocks of comfits and lozenges. But what were more beautiful still, were ten Christmas trees, in all their wealth of green, hung with a thousand playthings of all forms and colours.

Marianne and her four children arrived rather late; but as soon as she appeared a place was made for her. A quarter of an hour later she would have found it difficult to single out the elder ones, they were so completely mixed with the joyous crowd. A little before midnight, Marianne rose and her eyes searched for her truants. She was instantly surrounded.

"You are not going to take them away from us?"

"It is getting late, and to-morrow——"

"To-morrow is a holiday, and to-night you belong to us; besides, the playthings will not be distributed before one o'clock, and you would not like your children not to have their share."

"Well, then," replied Marianne, "I will let the two elder ones stay and leave the third in your charge while I go home and put the youngest to bed. You see he is already asleep, and my neighbour has promised to wait for me."

On this engagement she was allowed to go, and the supper, which was drawing to a close, was continued with redoubled gaiety, with bravos and peals of laughter.

In the street Marianne was surprised at the silence and deep darkness all about her. She felt at first cold, then afraid, and hurried on with rapid steps. But she had not gone many yards before she came to a sudden standstill: a cloud seemed to pass before her eyes and a suppressed scream rent her bosom. She fell back a pace.

"You!"

"Yes, it is I!"

"What are you doing here? You have, no doubt, been to the house? My God, if you have been seen!"

"They may see me now, when they like—I care not! The blow is struck."

"The blow—what do you mean? I don't understand you—you terrify me. What brings you here? You are not a bad-hearted man, you do not seek anybody's life?"

"Don't I? What I want to do is to blow up everybody here!—this kind of thing has lasted too long. The reign of masters and people of fortune is over!"

"Unhappy man, what are you saying? Have you lost your senses?"

"What am I saying?—this! Look at that house blazing with light, where they are feasting—the house of our exploiter, isn't it—where he is regaling his well-to-do friends? Well, in ten minutes, they will all be blown up."

"Blown up!—blown up!" repeated Marianne, almost mad with terror.

"Yes, it is there I have just come from; the dynamite is placed, the fuse lit; at midnight—the explosion!"

Marianne comprehended. Out of herself, she sprang upon Jacques Houdaille.

"Wretch!" she shrieked. "Wretch!—all the children in the country are there—ours—yours—monster!"

"What!—my children?" cried the man, passing the back of his hand across his brow and nearly sinking to the ground, but instantly recovering himself and disappearing into the darkness in the direction of the house.

Marianne was already there. She sprang across the threshold and, flinging the door wide open, cried:—

"The house is mined! Save yourselves! Save yourselves, all of you!"

"YOU!"

At any other time, those who heard her might have thought her mad, and hesitated before taking flight; but, in the threatening circumstances of the hour, she had scarcely opened her lips before her appearance had told of danger.

The stronger carried out the weaker and the youngest of the party, while their elders threw open all the doors and drove the little ones out before them. By good fortune, the feast had been given on the ground floor, a few steps only from the street. In a few moments the house was emptied, the outer gates passed.

The twelfth stroke of midnight was sounding on the factory clock when a terrible explosion was heard, and the house, full of light and the odours of the entertainment so rudely interrupted, was blown into the air and fell in a heap of ruins.

There was a frightful panic and flight. The street, but a few moments before so full of cheerful sounds, became suddenly silent, as if death had taken the place of life there.

At a short distance, one woman alone remained—a woman with an infant in her arms and three other children clinging to her skirt.

This woman, followed by her children, advanced.

One gaslight only was burning in the street, lighting the immense hecatomb and casting its trembling rays upon the body of a man.

She wished to reach this body, to see whether she recognised it—praying to God that it might be *him*, preferring rather to know that he was dead than a living assassin.

A glance sufficed, and, hiding her face, forcing back the tears that were swelling her bosom to bursting, she drew her children to her and fell upon her knees.

Through its windows the little workmen's church of the quarter seemed to be on fire, and the bells pealed out with their utmost power of sound, calling the faithful to the midnight service. But in the higher part of the town the news of the explosion had spread with immense rapidity, and presently an ever-growing crowd gathered from all points, manifesting terror and indignation.

The body of the man was examined and identified.

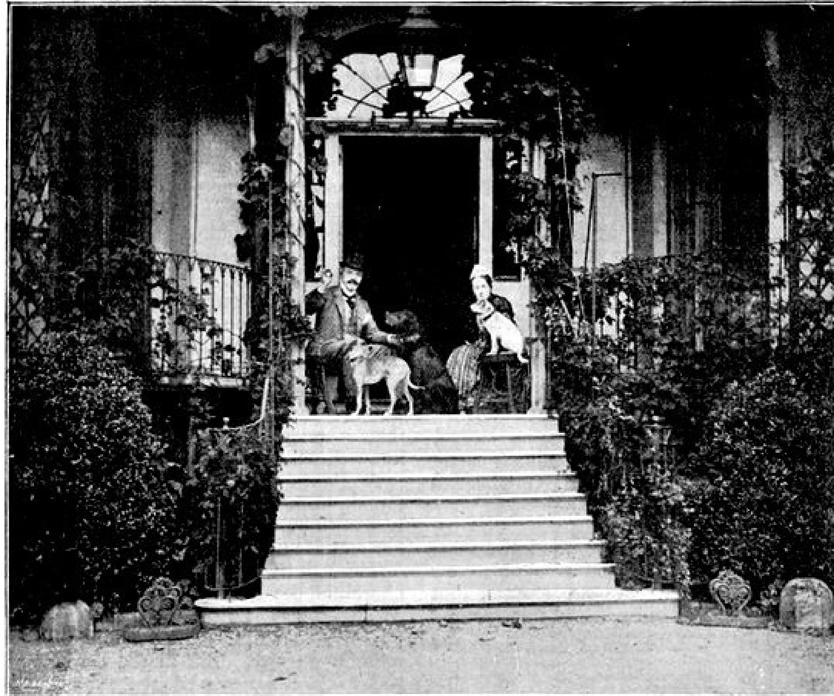
"Jacques Houdaille, the Anarchist!" was cried on all sides.

"Yes," said Marianne, facing the exasperated crowd and protecting her children with her trembling hands; "the Anarchist—but who did not hesitate to rush on to death to save us, and accepted that fate as an expiation."

Illustrated Interviews.

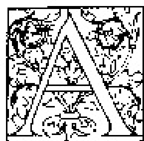
XXXII.—THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

By Mary Spencer-Warren.



MR. BURDETT-COUTTS AND THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

From a Photo by Elliott & Fry.



A name that is a household word; a personage that occupies a position unique; one who is deservedly respected and honoured by all classes; to whom individuals and bodies of people have turned for sympathy and help, and in whose hearts is built a monument of gratitude, such as surely has seldom been accorded to any human being—such is the truly noble woman who has been for upwards of half a century the pioneer of the majority of benevolent movements and the ready helper of the helpless.

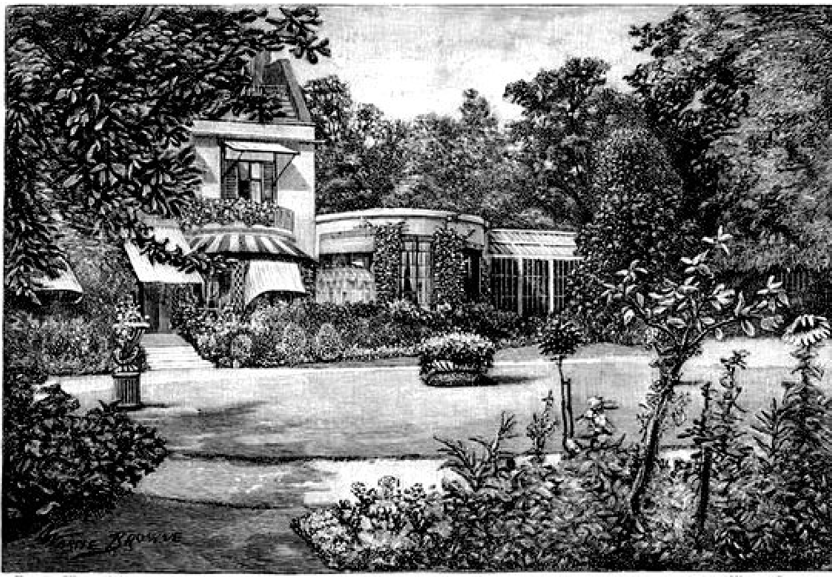
Here is a long life of good deeds, of which yet no record exists: nothing beyond paragraphic accounts—which, spread out over so great a lapse of time, are lost to sight and memory. Interviews, too, have never been granted; and when I am told an exception is to be made in my favour, I am not only sincerely gratified, but am also impressed with the magnitude of my task, and the honour conferred upon me by being enabled to give to the world some account of the life and work of one of the most remarkable women of the age.

Miss Burdett was the youngest daughter of Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., one of the chief political characters of the early part of the century; who married one of the daughters of Mr. Coutts, the banker, and of whom I shall have more to say later on. On the death of the banker's widow, who had, after the death of Mr. Coutts, married the Duke of St. Albans, the subject of this article found the enormous fortune was bequeathed to her. She, at the age of twenty-three, was the head of a banking-house second only to the Bank of England, and veritably the richest woman in the land.

What would she do with it?—was the question that would occur to many, and all sorts of surmises would be promulgated, and various schemes of disbursement planned by many well-intentioned, but too busy, people. We may readily conjecture that, in many hands, this vast wealth would have fulfilled a very different mission; would have contributed rather to the selfish pleasure of its possessor than to the wants of the many. As it is—but as you read you will gather some idea, though necessarily a limited one, of what *has* been done.

To look back upon the life of the Baroness is an historical education. One recalls the good and the great with whom she has been associated, reads the history of the labouring classes, watches the education of the young, and reviews events which have stirred nations: and in each and every case, where money could help, the Baroness has led the way with munificent benevolence, and what is more, has brought the effect of her example, and so used her enormous influence, that others have thereby been induced likewise to afford valuable assistance.

Every grade of life, from the man of culture, high in his profession, to the mechanic or even the "coster" of the streets, has representatives who owe much to her practical help; financial assistance for those who needed it; with encouragement and kindly patronage, combined with the opportunity of meeting the first in the ranks of the world's genius—to those who, standing alone, would have been lost in the crowd.



HOLLY LODGE.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

Her doors have ever been open. Kings, statesmen, churchmen, writers, artists, travellers, and scholars—all have been proud to call her friend; and to each and all has she proved herself worthy of their confidence and esteem.

My interview was accorded at Holly Lodge, a charming retreat on the Northern Heights of London, approached by a steep hill, and standing back in its own grounds in perfect seclusion.

We sat chatting together under the trees: the "we" being the Baroness, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P., Colonel Saunderson, M.P., Mr. Edmund Caldwell, artist, and myself. A very pleasant spot it was; a natural group of immense trees, under whose branches it was possible to feel cool in almost tropical heat, and to enjoy to the full comfortable basket chairs, with bamboo tables, on which are scattered flowers, fruit, and books. Particularly kind had been my reception, and I had been at once struck with the charming grace of manner and courtesy of the old school evidenced by the Baroness. Tall, slender, with a carriage that would credit a woman of half her age, and a remarkable personality that at once makes itself apparent, you have before you one gifted with talents of no mean order, with strong power of penetration, and, above all, with a kindly and generous nature, a sympathetic heart, and a sincere Christian feeling that finds happiness in the happiness of others.

Mr. Burdett-Coutts, a man of distinguished appearance, pleasing manners, an active and willing coadjutor in the charitable works of his wife, an excellent speaker, an earnest politician, and regular attendant at the House—where he has piloted one or two Bills successfully—a cultured, scholarly man, the writer of more than one clever work, and possessor of one of the finest studs—Brookfield—in the country.

Everyone knows Colonel Saunderson by reputation. He is often heard in the House, where his keen wit and satire create the strongest interest when he is about to speak, and make him at the same time a veritable "thorn in the flesh" to his opponents. Every inch a soldier, and also the most entertaining of hosts and desirable of guests, you can fancy him leading his men into action with flashing eye and stentorian tones, or keeping the whole table alive with witty speech and keen repartee.

Of Edmund Caldwell's work you will note evidences in the illustrations of this article. Perhaps you have seen some at the Academy, where he has several times made notable exhibits; chiefly of hounds, puppies, and kittens. The one hung in 1887 will be, perhaps, best remembered. "For the Safety of the Public" is its title. It gained immense popularity, and the etching by Hester still commands a large sale. Mr. Caldwell—who is spoken of in art circles as the coming Landseer—is one of the most modest, unassuming men I have ever met; yet if once drawn into conversation, he speaks with earnestness and ability.

So much for the personages with whom I am conversing; now, as minor characters, I dismiss them, and resume with the Baroness.

Holly Lodge has much the appearance of a bungalow—it is quite small, surrounded by a veranda, with its trellis-work covered with hops, Virginia and other creepers; about fifty-two acres of garden and park surround it, so well wooded that, from the house, all one gets of the exterior world is a glimpse of a church spire. The place is old, and was purchased by Mr. Coutts as a residence for himself and second wife. Small as it is, it is most extremely interesting, for it is full of associations of the many friends of the Baroness—of all sorts and conditions of people, and from all parts of the globe.

Stepping over the threshold (where, by-the-bye, I notice a horse-shoe nailed—a reminiscence of Mrs. Coutts), you are at once in a cool entrance-hall, hung with some rare old prints and portraits, amongst them being the Queen, the Prince Consort, and a print of Sir Francis Burdett riding triumphantly on a car of curious construction to the "Crown and Anchor." Everybody knows—who knows anything of political history at all—how fiercely Sir Francis fought for the rights of the people and the Reform Bill. Poor old gentleman! His career was by no means smooth. Do you remember how he was committed to the Tower for breach of privilege? I thought of it when I looked at this queer print, and called to mind a room in the Stratton Street residence of the Baroness, which was pointed out to me as the one where the military had broken in the windows in order to capture him, he having barricaded his house. How, when at last he surrendered, the Guards were pelted with stones, the people shouting: "Burdett for ever!"

A little farther on in the hall is Bassano's "Spoiling the Egyptians"; then a print of a vessel that made one of the first Arctic voyages, the back of it being fitted with a glass case containing small trophies given by the commander to the Baroness; then I note a picture denoting a reception of Volunteers on the lawn of Holly Lodge more than a quarter of a century ago. And here I must remark on the great patriotism always displayed by the Baroness. When the Volunteer movement was quite in its infancy, she was one of its most ardent supporters, as indeed she ever has been of anything for the benefit of a country she holds dear. Now we pause before a print of Mr. Coutts, and I listen to a funny story about him which I must tell you.

It seems he was a very eccentric man, and, despite his great wealth, was often very shabbily dressed. Tall, of singularly refined and stately bearing, he was one day walking out in his favourite attitude—hands behind his back. As he thus walked, he attracted the attention of another gentleman, who was also taking a constitutional; and who was immediately moved with sympathy for the evident poverty of the shabby-genteel individual in front of him. Being himself in fairly affluent circumstances, he determined to afford some slight relief to the decayed gentleman who seemed to need it so much, and who, doubtless, would not disclose his position in order to obtain assistance. Accordingly, he slipped quietly and quickly up behind him, and putting a couple of guineas into the outstretched hands, he as suddenly withdrew; before the astonished recipient was sufficiently aroused from his reverie to remonstrate. You can well imagine the surprise of the benevolent old gentleman on the next evening, when, on attending a select dinner-party given in honour of Mr. Coutts, the banker, he recognised in him the "decayed gentleman" on whom he had bestowed his well-meant charity the day before!

Were I to particularize the reminiscences of good and great who are departed that I saw at Holly Lodge, it would be an almost endless task. In different parts of the house I came across memories of Dickens, Wellington, Garrick, Gordon, and many others. Wellington was the firmest of friends, taking a fatherly interest in the career of the young girl with her millions of money and her large heart; Dickens and she together visited some of the vilest dens of London, when "slumming" was not fashionable, and even philanthropists were not safe in venturing over the border from West to crime-polluted and poverty-stricken East. If the inimitable writer had never opened the eyes of the many wilful blind to behold the sorrows and sufferings of their plague-stricken fellow creatures, he would not have been unrewarded, for he it was who interested the one of all others who was both able and willing to afford timely help, and to turn sorrow into joy, darkness into light.

HOLLY LODGE—UNDER THE TREES.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

Nova Scotia Gardens, a resort of murderers, thieves, disreputable and abandoned, where rubbish and refuse were shot in heaps, a place which had long been a trap for fevers and loathsome diseases: this was the spot where Miss Coutts introduced wholesale and sweeping reform. Struck with the horror and misery, she bought it all up, pulled down the wretched buildings, and put up four blocks of model dwellings, each block containing between forty and fifty tenements, with every accommodation in the shape of laundry, baths, etc., and the luxury of a good library and reading-room. This, for a people who had been surrounded by abominations of every description, whose every breath had sucked in foul stench, and whose every footstep had been in slimy pools and decaying matter shot from dust-carts. These buildings, I may add, not only hold their own with those of much later date, but are actually in advance of some for such general requirements as drainage, ventilation, and light. Columbia Square it was named, and from then till now it has continued to be a much-to-be-desired place of habitation for the class for whom it was intended.

Now, glance at "Brown's Lane," another place brightened and blessed by the practical benevolence of Miss Coutts. Go back between thirty and forty years, to a time when the community known as "Hand Weavers" were almost starving in consequence of loss of trade following on importation of foreign silks; when, despite of an association which had been formed for the amelioration of the sufferers, distress was so prevalent that nothing short of a miracle could stem it. Then Miss Coutts came forward and became the mainstay and almost the entire support of the association. Some of the people were sent out of the country as emigrants, others were given the means of starting in little businesses; girls were suitably trained for respectable situations, and work was found for the women in a sort of sewing-room, where, after 1.30 in the

day, they could earn from 8s. to 15s. per week, thus helping very materially to keep things going. The work consisted of shirt-making for the police and soldiers, and one very good feature of the plan was, that each woman as she came in was given a good, hearty meal to commence with. Some, who on account of their families could not leave home, were allowed to have their work out; thus large numbers were benefited. It must also be added that many had actually to be taught the proper use of their needle, and I am very much inclined to think that the same training is just as necessary now amongst our East-end factory hands.

THE ENTRANCE-HALL.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

Nor did the work of this true charity stop there: the people were especially visited in their homes on an organized plan, and help afforded them on the report furnished by the visitors. Such visitors, being clergymen and qualified lay people, were fully competent to judge of the cases with which they came in contact. Clothing, blankets, provisions, and wine were freely distributed; half-day jobs were given to unemployed men, outfits were provided for boys and girls starting for new situations, and nothing that money or care could do was left undone.

Then distress broke out amidst the tanners, and again Miss Coutts found a way of helping. In a practical manner, she appointed a trusty agent to attend the police-courts of the distressed districts, where applications for relief were received. By this means funds for present wants were disbursed, and also the means of saving their homes to them until better times.

Some of you may remember the cholera epidemic in the East-end of London in 1867. Then was Miss Coutts again the active benefactor, and her's was the hand that gave freely, and her's the judicious relief that can never be adequately known or appreciated. Under the superintendence of a qualified medical man, she employed eight trained nurses, two sanitary inspectors, and, under their orders, four men to distribute disinfectants. Let me give you a summary of *one* week's absolute *gifts* during the course of this fearful disease: 1,850 tickets for meat, value 1s., 250lb. of arrowroot, 500lb. of rice, 50lb. each of sago and tapioca, 30lb. black currant jelly, 50 gallons of port wine, 25 gallons of brandy, 20 gallons of beef tea, 560 quarts of milk, 100 blankets, 400yds. of flannel, and 400 garments: all this in addition to doctor, nurse, and money!

A Shoe Black Brigade, a Boys' Club, and a Relief Committee for discriminate charity may be briefly referred to, as well as the more recent Flower Girls' Brigade; the members of the latter being not only helped and befriended in their present occupation, but also taught the duties of domestic service, or initiated into the art of artificial flower making in the factory specially opened for them. It is satisfactory to hear that this one society has put upwards of 800 girls into a more desirable way of earning their own living.

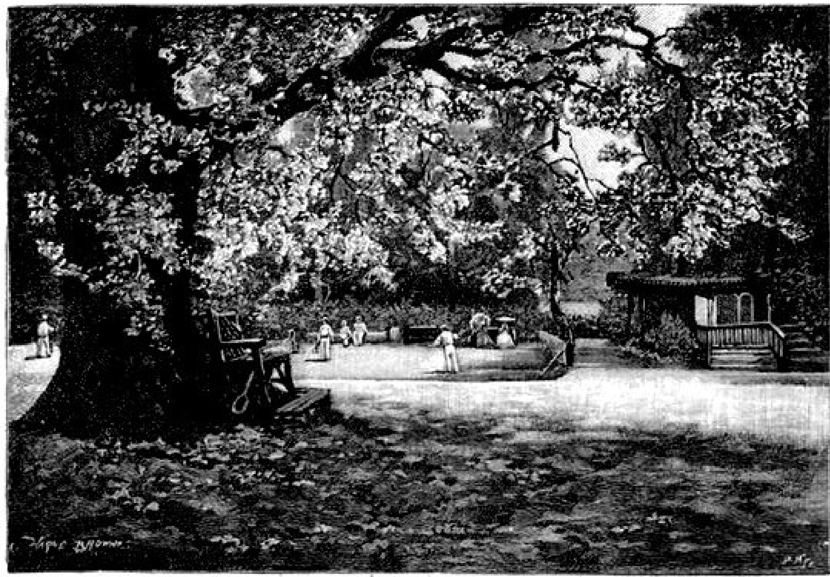
The portrait of Charles Dickens gave rise to these reminders of work accomplished in this direction; and now I take up another, that of an aged coloured man, who, the Baroness tells me, was the first convert of one of the Colonial churches, in which she has ever been much interested. She does not, however, tell me what I subsequently learn of these churches, for she is not given to talking of her good deeds.

Now, what are the facts? Briefly these: In her warm admiration of our own Church, and her anxiety for its extension, she actually founded the Bishoprics of Adelaide, British Columbia, and Cape Town. I will give you the cost of one; you will then see somewhat of the magnitude of this branch of her benevolence. For the endowment of the church, £25,000; for the bishopric, £15,000; and for the partial cost for clergy, £10,000.

So much for the Church in foreign lands. Now glance at what has been done for the Church at home. Here we find that almost the first use Miss Coutts made of her wealth was to distribute it largely in assisting to build churches in London and elsewhere.

At Carlisle she erected a handsome edifice, seating about 700 people, to accommodate a congregation formerly worshipping in a disused warehouse; and at Westminster the Church of St. Stephen's, with all its adjuncts of schools and institute, was put up entirely at her own cost, and stands as a lasting monument, not only of her generosity, but also of her practical forethought for all the needs of the

congregation, young and old. It was in the year 1847 when the buildings were commenced, the consecration taking place in 1850. The actual cost was close upon £100,000. From then till now, the Baroness has entirely supplied the working expenses, no small item when one considers the manifold branches emanating from this centre of active Christianity. No wants are overlooked: from the tiniest toddler in the infant class to the grey-haired worshipper at the beautiful services, some organization embraces their needs. Clubs, guilds, classes, friendly societies, district visiting, etc., are all in active operation, and, in addition, a self-help club, which deserves more than passing mention. Established at a comparatively recent date on cooperative principles, it can now show a working capital of upwards of £2,000. Of the success of the schools I can give you no adequate idea, for facts and figures fail to convey a thorough grasp of the real benefit conferred upon, literally, thousands of a rising generation. When I tell you that upwards of fifteen thousand boys and girls have in these schools been properly trained for their future position in the world, I tell you but little.



HOLLY LODGE—THE TENNIS LAWN.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

It was not only with these schools, however, that Miss Coutts spent both time and money: Stepney, Highgate, and many outlying places have to thank her for substantial aid in this direction. And what one must admire is the very clear perception of all requirements, as well as the prompt manner of carrying out.

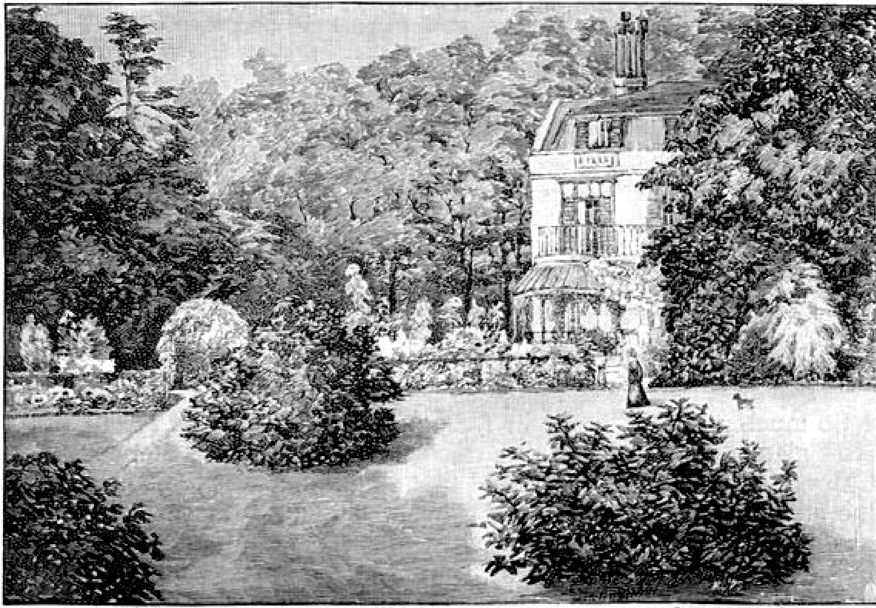
Of the Townshend Schools, at Westminster, I must give you some slight particulars. The schools were, in the first place, the outcome of a fund of which Miss Coutts was left a trustee, and which was also immediately under her superintendence. They were literally crowded with the children of people residing in various districts of that part of London, who, unable to pay the requisite School Board fees, yet compelled to educate their children, were thankful to avail themselves of either the free admission or the nominal charge of one penny, where it could be afforded.

The Free Education Bill becoming law in 1890, made a re-organization of these schools requisite, it being no longer necessary to do what any School Board is compelled to do by the Act. So now the whole of the schools, St. Stephen's and Townshend, run side by side, stepping-stones from each other. Thus, the Townshend are now the "St. Stephen's Elementary"—and entirely free; while the "St. Stephen's Higher Grade," for a charge of from twopence to sixpence per week, are imparting sciences and 'ologies, languages, and many other useful acquirements to the deserving and persevering from the "Elementary Schools"; the transition being made the more easy by a large number of scholarships open to students in the last-named.

The next step is to the "Technical Institute," at which place scholars attending the "Higher Grade" are received for evening study, as are those who have formerly attended them. The Institute is also open to others who may be disposed to join, with this proviso—that every student must be either actually earning his or her living, or purposing to do so, by the arts and crafts here taught.

At the Westminster Institute some hundreds of students are receiving instruction likely to benefit their entire future. That they are deriving immense profit to themselves was strongly evidenced at the last annual meeting, which meeting I had the pleasure of attending. Here were youths and adults, many of them with horny hands of toil, coming forward to receive well-earned prizes and certificates as a result of technical work of no mean order; the Baroness herself bestowing them with kind, encouraging words, and in addition made a capital speech. And, by the way, I thought we never *should* get that speech, for when her ladyship stood up to commence, the ovation was simply tremendous; cheer upon cheer broke forth again and again. When at length it did subside, the immense audience (and hundreds had been turned away), although the hour was late, sat and stood in perfect silence, eager to catch every word that fell from her lips. The entire affair, in fact, had resolved itself into an unmistakable tribute of affectionate regard; for when the Baroness had entered the hall at the commencement of the evening, everyone present had sprung to his feet and continued standing until she herself was seated. No greater respect could have been paid to Majesty itself; and who better deserves it than one who has made herself acquainted with the wants and sorrows of her poorer brethren?

A new building for the students has just been erected by the Baroness, as complete in every way as skill and money can make it: a series of workshops containing all requisite tools, a first-rate library of technical



HOLLY LODGE—THE GARDEN.

From a Painting by Sir Edmund Henderson.

works, and everything one can think of. Here boys and youths can become masters of carpentry and joinery, bricklayers' and plumbers' work, building construction and builders' quantities, metal plate work, technical and mechanical drawing, and applied art. Girls can become practical cooks and dressmakers; while either sex can go into the Civil Service classes, and acquire book-keeping, shorthand, languages, algebra, mathematics, and a variety of the like useful subjects. I may just add that more than the usual percentage of medals and certificates offered by the City and Guilds of London, the Society of Arts, and the Science and Art and Educational Department were this last year carried off by these students. *Free admission* is given to fifty scholars from the lower school, by means of that number of scholarships founded by the Baroness, other scholarships being awarded annually to deserving children of poor parents.

I may not linger on these educational details, but will just mention the Whitelands Training College and an Art Students' Home, both of them owing their origin to the Baroness, though the latter has since become self-supporting. Then it must also be remembered that some of the really useful things now taught in our schools were first taught there, owing to her persistent efforts; as must also the fact that before education was compulsory, she was a persistent advocate for evening schools, herself entirely supporting a large one in the East of London.

For children the Baroness has always had a large corner in her heart, likewise a large corner in her pocket, for no effort has been too great, if such effort could help the little ones. Cruelty to children to her is one of the greatest of iniquities, and it is mainly due to her unceasing devotion that the Bill of 1889—which has so materially improved the condition of these poor little ones—passed into law. That Bill made it lawful to remove them from the custody of cruel parents, and also to make such parents contribute towards their support. Many of you may not know that the formation of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was chiefly due to her ladyship, the first committee meeting taking place in her own drawing-room. Great things have sprung from it: for now there is an average of ten thousand cases to deal with annually.

The "Destitute Children's Dinner Society" is also dear to her heart; she has, in fact, been its hard-working president since the death of the good Earl of Shaftesbury. This Society gives each season about three hundred thousand substantial dinners, at a charge of one penny or one halfpenny each.

THE BOUDOIR.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

After the children and the poor may be mentioned the love of animals, ever shown by Lady Coutts; she is, indeed, well known everywhere for her good work in connection with the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, often attending meetings in its furtherance, and identifying herself with the annual cart-horse parades at London, Newcastle, etc.; and what a number of animals, of all sorts and sizes, one

sees at Holly Lodge! Here is a white donkey, the gift of a number of costermongers; and this reminds me that the Baroness has been in the habit of giving prizes to those men who at the periodical shows could produce animals well fed and well kept. And one of her cherished possessions is a silver model of a donkey presented to her by a costermongers' club. These clubs, I may tell you, she has promoted, with the object of assisting street vendors to purchase their own barrows. The requisite amount was advanced to the men, which was repaid by a small weekly instalment. There is no need to recall her valuable help to the costers in the somewhat recent crisis in their trade. Many of you watched the struggle from one court to another; but the donkey and barrow came off triumphant, and the men still ply their calling in our poorer neighbourhoods.

At one time the Baroness kept llamas, but found the climate hardly suitable for such delicate animals, so gave it up. Two of the pretty creatures are now stuffed, and kept indoors in a handsome glass home of their own. She has also some very fine goats, to which special attention is paid. She calls them the "poor man's cow," and believes they might be made highly productive. I go through the goat stables, first looking at the champion, "Sir Garnet," the finest I have ever seen; in fact, his keeper tells me "he has never been beat"; then on to see some "Nubians"—pretty, timid creatures—from a few weeks old upwards. Then I inspect some fine cows, beautiful horses, pigs, fowls, and creatures of all sorts.

"SIR GARNET."

From a Painting by Edmond Caldwell.

We did no stereotyped inspection, but just wandered here and there before and after luncheon, chatting pleasantly, and stopping now and again for anything with which the Baroness was specially interested, or anything that struck me in particular. Ever and anon we sat and rested under the trees, enjoying the welcome shade (for this was in the hot days of last summer), and here we had afternoon tea, surrounded by the sweet smelling flowers, the singing of the birds, and the hum of the bees: for the Baroness is an enthusiastic bee-keeper, and is, indeed, the president of the Bee Society. Privately, I begin to wonder what society she is *not* connected with.

In one of our wanderings we find ourselves on a site known as "Traitors' Hill," actually in the grounds, though right on the other side. This was the spot where the conspirators stood to watch what never came off—the blowing up of the Houses of Parliament. A clear view right over London, as it lays like a huge panoramic picture that has paused for the explanatory guide. Then we return *viâ* long archways of flowers, gaily arranged beds, and acres of kitchen garden. I notice that the men employed in the grounds are by no means young, and am told that unless they have been there quite a number of years the others look upon them altogether as interlopers. Many are really past actual work, but there they stay until such time as the Baroness pensions them off.

I have told you Mr. Burdett-Coutts has a fine stud near: near enough, in fact, to send to for some of the horses. I have no time to visit the place, and when I hear a clattering and whinnying, and find myself confronted with a splendidly-matched pair called "The Ladies," I am glad to have seen some specimens of the fine English breed for which their master has made himself famous. This is indeed a pretty pair; full of fire, yet easily controlled into the most gentle action. They put me in mind of twin sisters, for I have to walk round them two or three times in my endeavours to tell "t'other from which." This is the pair with which Mr. Coutts is wont to drive the Baroness round the park; generally accompanied by one or two pet dogs. The dogs, they are of great importance at Holly Lodge: "Peter" and "Prince" being the favourites, the former generally accompanying his mistress wherever she goes; he has a decided taste for geological survey; and indoors there is quite a collection made by him, borrowed from all parts, the Continent and at home. Another valuable canine had for its father a favourite of the Emperor Charles Frederick; and still others possess histories of their own, for which I have not space. One thing I *can* give, though, and that is a good photographic reproduction of a group, specially taken for this Magazine, and given at the head of this article; there you will observe the Baroness, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, and the dogs, grouped on the summit of the "Lodge" steps. Also, you have a portrait of "Cocky," a self-asserting cockatoo, one of a tribe of feathered creatures, happy and well fed, who live in and around the house. At one time, the Baroness tells me, she made efforts to induce nightingales to build in the surrounding trees, but ultimately had to give it up, as they were just a prize for the bird-fanciers.

At Haydn Hall, a former residence, large numbers of robins were daily fed, and it was quite a usual thing on a winter's morning to hear their little beaks tapping the windows of the sleeping apartments of the Baroness, as a reminder that they were ready for their breakfast. She is a firm friend of the sweet singing bird, and whether it has been in indefatigably promoting an Act for their protection during the breeding season, or whether it has consisted in earnest remonstrances against the reprehensible practice, followed by so many ladies, of wearing wings and even small birds, they have found in her a zealous and powerful advocate.

"COCKY."

From a Painting by Edmond Caldwell.

We are strolling across the lawn, and are suddenly confronted with an Oriental structure in the grounds, named "Candilia," erected in memory of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. Do you remember the horrors which thrilled all Europe when recounted? Filled with sorrowing pity for the sufferings of the thirty thousand families—passive victims—who had fled for refuge to the villages of the Danube, the Baroness took the matter up warmly, and wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, which quickly found sympathetic response throughout the country. I cannot do better than give you an extract from this letter:

"I would pray one and all to bear in mind the unhappy sufferers in a far-away country, of another creed, whose lives are ebbing fast away, uncheered, desolate, and abandoned. We cannot, perhaps, stanch their lifeblood; we can wash our hands, though, free of its stain, by binding up their wounds, if not by our money, by our sympathy. If silver and gold there is none, we have prayers still; and He to whom all flesh comes, hears the cry of the poor for His creatures suffering from the sword, as He also accepts the gifts of the rich.... When your vast public reads these few lines, I trust much bodily or mental anguish will begin to be soothed, through that real Christianity which is still, in God's providence, the appointed means by which hunger and thirst are assuaged, sickness alleviated, and consolation given."

This letter was eminently characteristic of her whole manner and conversation: kindly, gentle, mindful of her "duty to her neighbour," and anxious to do that duty. How much better and happier the world would be for more of such!

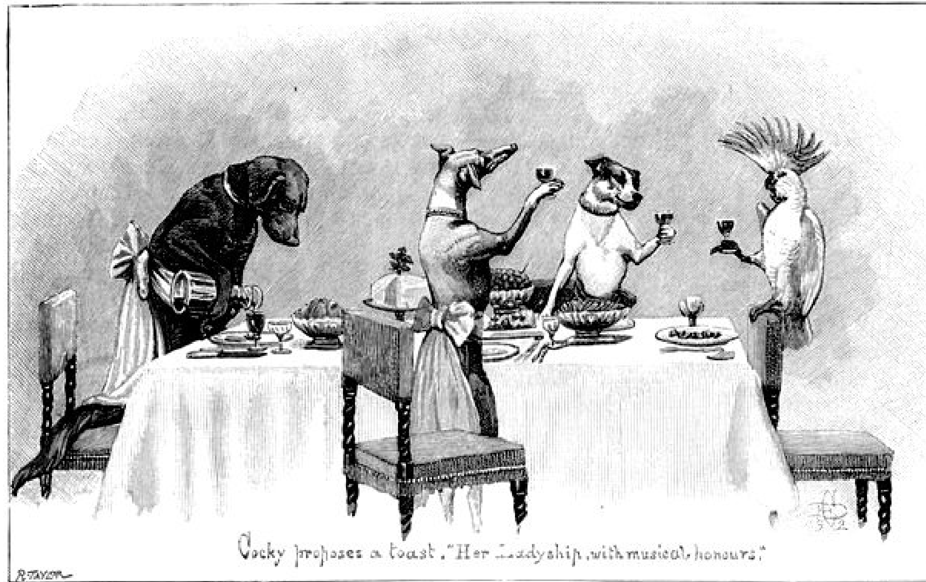
Well, the "Compassionate Fund" was at once formed, the Baroness starting it with a subscription of £1,000—which sum she afterwards doubled. Collections were made in all parts, and in a few days £30,000 and a prodigious amount of clothing and food were ready for dispatch. Mr. Burdett-Coutts went out as "Special Commissioner," Sir Francis de Winton and other officers affording valuable assistance. What they had to contend with was simply appalling: famine, pestilence, bitter weather, roads crowded with destitute masses of people—many being literally frozen to death; women actually throwing their children into the rivers to save them further sufferings. Driven from place to place, they at length reached Constantinople, where some found refuge in mosques, some in the houses of the rich, and a large number in the Royal Palace itself, which the Sultan at once threw open for them.

Nearer the house the Baroness shows me the tent dressing-rooms for gentlemen visitors, which she has had put up on account of the extreme smallness of the house, rendering further accommodation necessary when guests are invited to dinner. From there we go to view the kitchens—models of neatness, and bright with tiled walls and polished steel.

Then up into the house again, through a long, roomy apartment, that seems wholly intended for a conservatory, and, indeed, communicates with it actually: an apartment that contains all sorts of curios and precious things; that is cool, comfortable, and home-like, and has, moreover, a beautiful view of the grounds. Here we stop to inspect what is the finest—because most perfect—collection of minerals extant. This mineral museum was formerly the property of Professor Tennant: it is a study in itself. Then there is quite a collection of china, all fashioned in imitation of vegetables, a Chinese dragon, a clock tower carved by Russian prisoners, and many other objects of interest.

In the other rooms I note some fine paintings by Wilkie, Brenghel, Harrison Weir, Frith, Teniers, and Hogarth; in addition to several by the before-mentioned Edmund Caldwell. One of his, a comic Christmas card, is here reproduced; it shows the pets of the Baroness. The Baroness is

essentially English in her tastes; and at her residence shows her preference for English workmanship—even the piano in her boudoir is from the old English firm of Broadwood and Son; and other articles in unison.



THE PETS OF THE BARONESS.

A Christmas Card by Edmund Caldwell.

I am not done with portraits yet: here is one of Sir James Brook, an old friend of the Baroness, and another living instance of one who has been materially assisted by her. An ordinary English gentleman in the first place, he became King of Borneo, and founded a sovereignty! Then there is Dr. Moffat, Dr. Livingstone, and other illustrious men; and last, but not least, the brave Christian General and martyr, Gordon. In quiet tones and with saddened mien, the Baroness tells me how much she valued his friendship, and how he often came to see her; how his almost, if not quite, last visit was paid to her; and how, during that visit, he took up a small letter-case lying handy, asking, "Might he have it for a keepsake?" and how she had since had proof of this keepsake being carried with him in his breast-pocket until his death.

How much his captivity must have grieved his friend can only be faintly surmised by her scheme, in conjunction with a few friends, for opening up communication with Khartoum by means of a Morocco merchant, who, disguising himself, managed to convey to poor Gordon the last letters and papers he ever received from England.

No efforts were made by us to rescue him; and well and nobly did the Baroness publicly plead on behalf of her friend. The shame and the disgrace made men and women blush for their country; and when Lady Coutts's letter found its way into the *Times*, it awoke a universal thrill from all classes. We mourn still the loss of his noble life; and some of us wonder at the necessity of the public appeal for funds by the late Lord Tennyson in order that the Boys' Home, a work dear to the brave General, could be carried on. Is it that we forget?

HOLLY LODGE—THE CONSERVATORY.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

I might keep on indefinitely telling you of the different things taken up by the Baroness, for everywhere I turn I have something to remind me of such. Now it is the portrait of a most handsome bouquet which had been presented to her by a deputation of Irish women. Everybody knows how again and again the Baroness has spent immense sums in relieving this unfortunate people: in famine and sickness she has come forward for years past and tendered timely help, always seeking, as she herself said, "to improve their moral as well as their material condition." Of the amount of money, food, fuel, clothing, etc., disbursed I cannot give you any correct total, spreading as the work has over so long a period; but I *can* tell you how, thirteen years ago, she offered the munificent sum of £250,000 to the Government for them to use beneficially in aid of the Irish destitute.

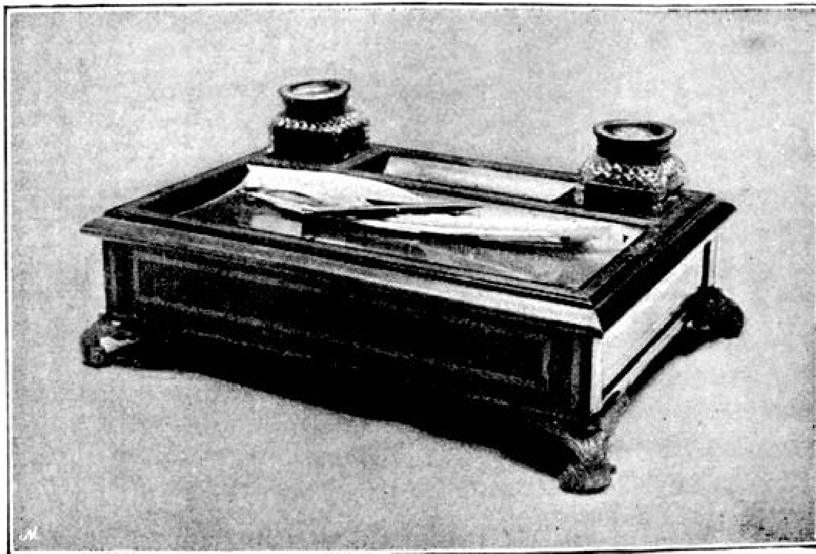
Some of this great work was carried on in the fishing villages, where dire famine had made such havoc, that craft had either gone or was in such a battered condition for want of repair that fishing was practically impossible. Scots were actually fishing in the Irish waters, and selling the

same fish to those of the Irish who had money to buy with. Then the Baroness made loans to the deserving men of sums of £300, in order that they might purchase new boats, the loans to be repaid by small yearly instalments. Later on, her ladyship established a Fishing School, in which four hundred boys from all parts of Ireland could be thoroughly initiated into boat-building, net-making and mending, etc., carpentering, coopering, and fish-curing. This school the Baroness opened herself in the year 1887, and can it be wondered at that when their well-tried friend came among them, arriving at night by yacht, flags, table-cloths, and pocket-handkerchiefs bedecked the place, the people came together in huge crowds, and large bonfires gave ruddy lights on all the surrounding hills? When the actual opening took place on the next day, the scene of enthusiasm was almost unexampled—not in any degree lessened by the presence of a large number of deputations to present addresses.

When I come to the question of her private and individual charities, I must honestly confess that this is a subject upon which I can give you no information. As you may imagine, begging letters arrive in batches, and few that are really deserving apply altogether in vain. Of this the public learns nothing, neither did I, beyond the actual fact above stated.

Everyone was glad when the honour of a peerage was conferred upon Miss Coutts in 1871. This is an instance unique when connected with a woman for her own worthy deeds. The bestowal, to my mind, conferred as much honour upon the Queen who gave it as upon the subject who received it. The Baroness also wears the Orders of the Medjidieh and the Shafakat, given by the Sultan in token of his gratitude for her services to the unfortunate refugees. In addition to this she has had the freedom of several cities conferred upon her.

The last undertaking I shall mention is a literary one; this, by the way, not the first. The Chicago Exhibition is now a thing of the past; but Lady Coutts has given us a work in connection with it that deserves a place on the shelves of every library in the land. I refer to the book, "Woman's Mission," undertaken by the Baroness at the express wish of H.R.H. the Princess Christian. Certainly the Princess could not have placed the commission in more able hands; and the result confirms her judgment. The Baroness set about it in the very best possible manner, and instead of collecting reports, statistics, etc., which would only have proved dull and uninteresting, she put herself in communication with a large number of such well-known ladies as Florence Nightingale, Miss Agnes Weston, etc., and from them obtained accounts of the different works in which they were engaged as women *for* women—each and every paper being stamped with an individual personality which gives life and interest as well as facts and truisms. No fewer than thirty-five of such papers are here presented to the readers of the book, two of them written by the Baroness herself, who has, in addition, also written a lengthy appendix touching upon each; and a preface of remarkable power and earnestness, treating, as it does, of the progressive education of women during the last sixty years.



TOM MOORE'S INKSTAND.

In the possession of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

From a Photo by Elliott & Fry.

This, to even a casual observer, is a marvellous production for anyone who has spent the best years of so long a life; and was, as the Baroness herself told me, only undertaken at earnest solicitation, and with the hope that good might be done by its publication, not only by bringing our American sisters more closely in touch with us, but also as a useful review of work accomplished by the women of our country, from the richest to the poorest.

I feel I have far exceeded the limits of a magazine article, but could have continued interminably, so vast has been the goodness and the magnitude of true charity and loving sympathy of the subject of this interview. Not only England, but the world has been better for such a life in our midst: and from many a thousand homes scattered in every part of the globe the name of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts is blessed and honoured.

As I drive to the station in her comfortable carriage, laden with some of her fairest flowers, I feel that this day's interview will be memorable to me for all time to come.

We are indebted to the courtesy of the Baroness for the loan of some valuable water-colours by Sir Edmund Henderson and Mr. Warne Browne, from which some of the accompanying illustrations are taken.

Martin Hewitt, Investigator.

II.—THE LOSS OF SAMMY CROCKETT.

It was, of course, always a part of Martin Hewitt's business to be thoroughly at home among any and every class of people, and to be able to interest himself intelligently, or to appear to do so, in their various pursuits. In one of the most important cases ever placed in his hands, he could have gone but a short way toward success had he not displayed some knowledge of the more sordid aspects of professional sport, and a great interest in the undertakings of a certain dealer therein. The great case itself had nothing to do with sport, and, indeed, from a narrative point of view, was somewhat uninteresting, but the man who alone held the one piece of information wanted was a keeper, backer, or "gaffer" of professional pedestrians, and it was through the medium of his pecuniary interest in such matters that Hewitt was enabled to strike a bargain with him.

"I'VE GOT THE WINNER IN THIS HOUSE."

The man was a publican on the outskirts of Padfield, a northern town pretty famous for its sporting tastes, and to Padfield, therefore, Hewitt betook himself, and, arrayed in a way to indicate some inclination of his own toward sport, he began to frequent the bar of the "Hare and Hounds." Kentish, the landlord, was a stout, bull-necked man, of no great communicativeness at first: but after a little acquaintance he opened out wonderfully, became quite a jolly (and rather intelligent) companion, and came out with innumerable anecdotes of his sporting adventures. He could put a very decent dinner on the table, too, at the "Hare and Hounds," and Hewitt's frequent invitation to him to join therein and divide a bottle of the best in the cellar soon put the two on the very best of terms. Good terms with Mr. Kentish was Hewitt's great desire, for the information he wanted was of a sort that could never be extracted by casual questioning, but must be a matter of open communication by the publican, extracted in what way it might be.

"Look here," said Kentish one day, "I'll put you on to a good thing, my boy—a real good thing. Of course, you know all about the Padfield 135 Yards Handicap being run off now?"

"Well, I haven't looked into it much," Hewitt replied. "Ran the first round of heats last Saturday and Monday, didn't they?"

"They did. Well"—Kentish spoke in a stage whisper as he leaned over and rapped the table—"I've got the final winner in this house." He nodded his head, took a puff at his cigar, and added, in his ordinary voice, "Don't say nothing."

"No, of course not. Got something on, of course?"

"Rather—what do *you* think? Got any price I liked. Been saving him up for this. Why, he's got twenty-one yards, and he can do even time all the way! Fact! Why, he could win runnin' back'ards. He won his heat on Monday like—like—like that!" The gaffer snapped his fingers, in default of a better illustration, and went on. "He might ha' took it a little easier, *I* think—it's shortened his price, of course, him jumpin' in by two yards. But you can get decent odds now, if you go about it right. You take my tip—back him for his heat next Saturday, in the second round, and for the final. You'll get a good price for the final, if you pop it down at once. But don't go makin' a song of it, will you, now? I'm givin' you a tip I wouldn't give anybody else."

"Thanks very much—it's awfully good of you. I'll do what you advise. But isn't there a dark horse anywhere else?"

"Not dark to me, my boy, not dark to me. I know every man runnin' like a book. Old Taylor—him over at the Cop—he's got a very good lad—eighteen yards, and a very good lad indeed; and he's a tryer this time, I know. But, bless you, my lad could give him ten, instead o' taking three, and

beat him then! When I'm runnin' a real tryer, I'm generally runnin' something very near a winner, you bet; and this time, mind, *this* time, I'm runnin' the certainest winner I *ever* run—and I don't often make a mistake. You back him."

"I shall, if you're as sure as that. But who is he?"

"Oh, Crockett's his name—Sammy Crockett. He's quite a new lad. I've got young Steggles looking after him—sticks to him like wax. Takes his little breathers in my bit o' ground at the back here. I've got a cinder sprint path there, over behind the trees. I don't let him out o' sight much, I can tell you. He's a straight lad, and he knows it'll be worth his while to stick to me: but there's some 'ud poison him, if they thought he'd spoil their books."

Soon afterward the two strolled toward the tap-room. "I expect Sammy'll be there," the landlord said, "with Steggles. I don't hide him too much—they'd think I'd got something extra on, if I did."

In the tap-room sat a lean, wire-drawn-looking youth, with sloping shoulders and a thin face, and by his side was a rather short, thick-set man, who had an odd air, no matter what he did, of proprietorship and surveillance of the lean youth. Several other men sat about, and there was loud laughter, under which the lean youth looked sheepishly angry.

"IN THE TAP-ROOM."

"'Tarn't no good, Sammy lad," someone was saying. "You a makin' after Nancy Webb—she'll ha' nowt to do with 'ee."

"Don' like 'em so thread-papery," added another. "No, Sammy, you aren't the lad for she. I see her——"

"What about Nancy Webb?" asked Kentish, pushing open the door. "Sammy's all right, anyway. You keep fit, my lad, an' go on improving, and some day you'll have as good a house as me. Never mind the lasses. Had his glass o' beer, has he?" This to Raggy Steggles, who, answering in the affirmative, viewed his charge as though he were a post, and the beer a recent coat of paint.

"Has two glasses of mild a-day," the landlord said to Hewitt. "Never puts on flesh, so he can stand it. Come out now." He nodded to Steggles, who rose, and marched Sammy Crockett away for exercise.

On the following afternoon (it was Thursday), as Hewitt and Kentish chatted in the landlord's own snuggery, Steggles burst into the room in a great state of agitation and spluttered out: "He—he's bolted; gone away!"

"What?"

"Sammy—gone. Hooked it. *I* can't find him."

The landlord stared blankly at the trainer, who stood with a sweater dangling from his hand, and stared blankly back. "What d'ye mean?" Kentish said, at last. "Don't be a fool. He's in the place somewhere; find him."

But this Steggles defied anybody to do. He had looked already. He had left Crockett at the cinder-path behind the trees, in his running-gear, with the addition of the long overcoat and cap he used in going between the path and the house, to guard against chill. "I was goin' to give him a bust or two with the pistol," the trainer explained, "but when we got over t'other side, 'Raggy,' ses he, 'it's blawin' a bit chilly. I think I'll ha' a sweater—there's one on my box, ain't there?' So in I coomes for the sweater, and it weren't on his box, and when I found it and got back—he weren't there. They'd seen nowt o' him in t' house, and he weren't nowhere."

Hewitt and the landlord, now thoroughly startled, searched everywhere, but to no purpose. "What should he go off the place for?" asked Kentish, in a sweat of apprehension. "'Tain't chilly a bit—it's warm—he didn't want no sweater; never wore one before. It was a piece of kid to be able

to clear out. Nice thing, this is. I stand to win two years' takings over him. Here—you'll have to find him."

"Ah—but how?" exclaimed the disconcerted trainer, dancing about distractedly. "I've got all I could scrape on him myself; where can I look?"

Here was Hewitt's opportunity. He took Kentish aside and whispered. What he said startled the landlord considerably. "Yes, I'll tell you all about that," he said, "if that's all you want. It's no good or harm to me, whether I tell or no. But can you find him?"

"That I can't promise, of course. But you know who I am now, and what I'm here for. If you like to give me the information I want, I'll go into the case for you, and, of course, I sha'n't charge any fee. I may have luck, you know, but I can't promise, of course."

The landlord looked in Hewitt's face for a moment. Then he said, "Done! It's a deal."

"Very good," Hewitt replied; "get together the one or two papers you have, and we'll go into my business in the evening. As to Crockett, don't say a word to anybody. I'm afraid it must get out, since they all know about it in the house, but there's no use in making any unnecessary noise. Don't make hedging bets or do anything that will attract notice. Now we'll go over to the hack and look at this cinder-path of yours."

Here Steggles, who was still standing near, was struck with an idea. "How about old Taylor, at the Cop, guv'nor, eh?" he said, meaningly. "His lad's good enough to win, with Sammy out, and Taylor is backing him plenty. Think he knows anything o' this?"

"That's likely," Hewitt observed, before Kentish could reply. "Yes. Look here—suppose Steggles goes and keeps his eye on the Cop for an hour or two, in case there's anything to be heard of? Don't show yourself, of course."

Kentish agreed, and the trainer went. When Hewitt and Kentish arrived at the path behind the trees, Hewitt at once began examining the ground. One or two rather large holes in the cinders were made, as the publican explained, by Crockett, in practising getting off his mark. Behind these were several fresh tracks of spiked shoes. The tracks led up to within a couple of yards of the high fence bounding the ground, and there stopped abruptly and entirely. In the fence, a little to the right of where the tracks stopped, there was a stout door. This Hewitt tried, and found ajar.

"That's always kept bolted," Kentish said; "he's gone out that way—he couldn't have gone any other without comin' through the house."

"But he isn't in the habit of making a step three yards long, is he?" Hewitt asked, pointing at the last footmark and then at the door, which was quite that distance away from it. "Besides," he added, opening the door, "there's no footprint here nor outside."

The door opened on a lane, with another fence and a thick plantation of trees at the other side. Kentish looked at the footmarks, then at the door, then down the lane, and finally back towards the house. "That's a licker," he said.

"This is a quiet sort of lane," was Hewitt's next remark. "No houses in sight. Where does it lead?"

"That way it goes to the Old Kilns—disused. This way down to a turning off the Padfield and Catton Road."

Hewitt returned to the cinder-path again, and once more examined the footmarks. He traced them back over the grass toward the house. "Certainly," he said, "he hasn't gone back to the house. Here is the double line of tracks, side by side, from the house—Steggles's ordinary boots with iron tips and Crockett's running pumps—thus they came out. Here is Steggles's track in the opposite direction alone, made when he went back for the sweater. Crockett remained—you see various prints in those loose cinders at the end of the path where he moved this way and that, and then two or three paces toward the fence—not directly toward the door, you notice—and there they stop dead, and there are no more, either back or forward. Now, if he had wings, I should be tempted to the opinion that he flew straight away in the air from that spot—unless the earth swallowed him and closed again without leaving a wrinkle on its face."

"THAT'S A LICKER!"

Kentish stared gloomily at the tracks,

and said nothing.

"However," Hewitt resumed, "I think I'll take a little walk now, and think over it. You go into the house and show yourself at the bar. If anybody wants to know how Crockett is, he's pretty well, thank you. By-the-bye, can I get to the Cop—this place of Taylor's—by this back lane?"

"Yes, down to the end leading to the Catton Road, turn to the left, and then first on the right. Anyone'll show you the Cop," and Kentish shut the door behind the detective, who straightway walked—toward the Old Kilns.

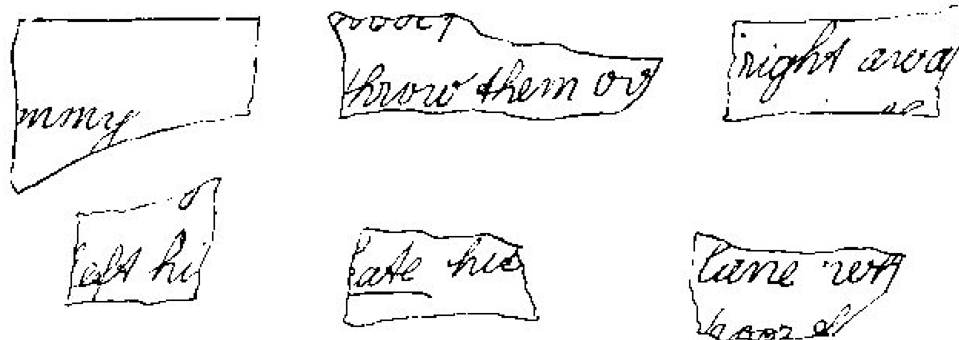
In little more than an hour he was back. It was now becoming dusk, and the landlord looked out papers from a box near the side window of his snuggery, for the sake of the extra light. "I've got these papers together for you," he said, as Hewitt entered. "Any news?"

"Nothing very great. Here's a bit of handwriting I want you to recognise, if you can. Get a light."

Kentish lit a lamp, and Hewitt laid upon the table half-a-dozen small pieces of torn paper, evidently fragments of a letter which had been torn up, here reproduced in facsimile.

The landlord turned the scraps over, regarding them dubiously. "These aren't much to recognise, anyhow. *I* don't know the writing. Where did you find 'em?"

"They were lying in the lane at the back, a little way down. Plainly they are pieces of a note addressed to someone called Sammy or something very like it. See the first piece with its 'mmy'? That is clearly from the beginning of the note, because there is no line between it and the smooth, straight edge of the paper above; also, nothing follows on the same line. Someone writes to Crockett—presuming it to be a letter addressed to him, as I do for other reasons—as Sammy. It is a pity that there is no more of the letter to be found than these pieces. I expect the person who tore it up put the rest in his pocket and dropped these by accident."


mmy
throw them ov
right awa
left hi
late his
lane we

Kentish, who had been picking up and examining each piece in turn, now dolorously broke out:

"Oh, it's plain he's sold us—bolted and done us; me as took him out o' the gutter, too. Look here—'throw them over'; that's plain enough—can't mean anything else. Means throw *me* over, and my friends—me, after what I've done for him. Then 'right away'—go right away, I s'pose, as he has done. Then," he was fiddling with the scraps and finally fitted two together, "why, look here, this one with 'lane' on it fits over the one about throwing over, and it says 'poor f' where it's torn; that means 'poor fool,' I s'pose—*me*, or 'fathead,' or something like that. That's nice. Why, I'd twist his neck if I could get hold of him; and I will!"

Hewitt smiled. "Perhaps it's not quite so uncomplimentary after all," he said. "If you can't recognise the writing, never mind. But if he's gone away to sell you, it isn't much use finding him, is it? He won't win if he doesn't want to."

"Why, he wouldn't dare to rope under my very eyes. I'd—I'd——"

"Well, well; perhaps we'll get him to run after all, and as well as he can. One thing is certain—he left this place of his own will. Further, I think he is in Padfield now—he went toward the town I believe. And I don't think he means to sell you."

"Well, he shouldn't. I've made it worth his while to stick to me. I've put a fifty on for him out of my own pocket, and told him so; and if he won, that would bring him a lump more than he'd probably get by going crooked, besides the prize money, and anything I might give him over. But it seems to me he's putting me in the cart altogether."

"That we shall see. Meantime, don't mention anything I've told you to anyone—not even to Steggles. He can't help us, and he might blurt things out inadvertently. Don't say anything about these pieces of paper, which I shall keep myself. By-the-bye, Steggles is indoors, isn't he? Very well, keep him in. Don't let him be seen hunting about this evening. I'll stay here to-night and we'll proceed with Crockett's business in the morning. And now we'll settle *my* business, please."

In the morning Hewitt took his breakfast in the snuggery, carefully listening to any conversation that might take place at the bar. Soon after nine o'clock a fast dog-cart stopped outside, and a red-faced, loud-voiced man swaggered in, greeting Kentish with boisterous cordiality. He had a drink with the landlord, and said: "How's things? Fancy any of 'em for the sprint handicap? Got a lad o' your own in, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes," Kentish replied. "Crockett. Only a young 'un—not got to his proper mark yet, I reckon. I think old Taylor's got No. 1 this time."

"Capital lad," the other replied, with a confidential nod. "Shouldn't wonder at all. Want to do anything yourself over it?"

"No—I don't think so. I'm not on at present. Might have a little flutter on the grounds just for fun: nothing else."

There were a few more casual remarks, and then the red-faced man drove away.

"Who was that?" asked Hewitt, who had watched the visitor through the snuggery window.

"That's Danby—bookmaker. Cute chap; he's been told Crockett's missing, I'll bet anything, and come here to pump me. No good though. As a matter of fact, I've worked Sammy Crockett into his books for about half I'm in for altogether—through third parties, of course."

"'CAPITAL LAD,' THE OTHER REPLIED."

Hewitt reached for his hat. "I'm going out for half an hour now," he said. "If Steggles wants to go out before I come back, don't let him. Let him go and smooth over all those tracks on the cinder-path, very carefully. And, by-the-bye, could you manage to have your son about the place to-day, in case I happen to want a little help out of doors?"

"Certainly; I'll get him to stay in. But what do you want the cinders smoothed for?"

Hewitt smiled and patted his host's shoulder. "I'll explain all my little tricks when the job's done," he said, and went out.

On the lane from Padfield to Sedby village stood the "Plough" beerhouse, wherein J. Webb was licensed to sell by retail beer to be consumed on the premises or off, as the thirsty list. Nancy Webb, with a very fine colour, a very curly fringe, and a wide-smiling mouth revealing a fine set of teeth, came to the bar at the summons of a stoutish old gentleman with spectacles, who walked with a stick.

The stoutish old gentleman had a glass of bitter beer and then said, in the peculiarly quiet voice of a very deaf man: "Can you tell me, if you please, the way into the main Catton Road?"

"Down the lane, turn to the right at the cross roads, then first to the left."

The old gentleman waited with his hand to his ear for some few seconds after she had finished speaking, and then resumed, in his whispering voice, "I'm afraid I'm very deaf this morning." He fumbled in his pocket and produced a note-book and pencil. "May I trouble you to write it down? I'm so very deaf at times, that I—thank you."

The girl wrote the direction, and the old gentleman bade her good morning and left. All down the lane he walked slowly with his stick. At the cross roads he turned, put the stick under his arm, thrust the spectacles into his pocket, and strode away in the ordinary guise of Martin Hewitt. He pulled out his note-book, examined Miss Webb's direction very carefully, and then went off another way altogether, toward the "Hare and Hounds."

Kentish lounged moodily in his bar. "Well, my boy," said Hewitt, "has Steggles wiped out the tracks?"

"Not yet—I haven't told him. But he's somewhere about—I'll tell him now."

"No, don't. I don't think we'll have that done, after all. I expect he'll want to go out soon—at any rate, some time during the day. Let him go whenever he likes. I'll sit upstairs a bit in the club room."

"Very well. But how do you know Steggles will be going out?"

"Well, he's pretty restless after his lost *protégé*, isn't he? I don't suppose he'll be able to remain idle long."

"And about Crockett. Do you give him up?"

"Oh, no. Don't you be impatient. I can't say I'm quite confident yet of laying hold of him—the time is so short, you see—but I think I shall at least have news for you by the evening."

"NANCY WEBB."

Hewitt sat in the club-room until the afternoon, taking his lunch there. At length he saw, through the front window, Raggy Steggles walking down the road. In an instant Hewitt was downstairs and at the door. The road bent eighty yards away, and as soon as Steggles passed the bend the detective hurried after him.

All the way to Padfield town and more than half through it Hewitt dogged the trainer. In the end Steggles stopped at a corner and gave a note to a small boy who was playing near. The boy ran with the note to a bright, well-kept house at the opposite corner. Martin Hewitt was interested to observe the legend "H. Danby, Contractor," on a board over a gate in the side wall of the garden behind this house. In five minutes a door in the side gate opened, and the head and shoulders of the red-faced man emerged. Steggles immediately hurried across and disappeared through the gate.

This was both interesting and instructive. Hewitt took up a position in the side street and waited. In ten minutes the trainer reappeared and hurried off the way he had come, along the street Hewitt had considerately left clear for him. Then Hewitt strolled toward the smart house and took a good look at it. At one corner of the small piece of forecourt garden, near the railings, a small, baize-covered, glass-fronted notice-board stood on two posts. On its top edge appeared the words "H. Danby. Houses to be Sold or Let." But the only notice pinned to the green baize within was an old and dusty one, inviting tenants for three shops, which were suitable for any business, and which would be fitted to suit tenants. Apply within.

Hewitt pushed open the front gate and rang the door-bell. "There are some shops to let, I see," he said, when a maid appeared. "I should like to see them, if you will let me have the key."

"Master's out, sir. You can't see the shops till Monday."

"Dear me, that's unfortunate. I'm afraid I can't wait till Monday. Didn't Mr. Danby leave any instructions, in case anybody should inquire?"

"Yes, sir—as I've told you. He said anybody who called about 'em must come again on Monday."

"Oh, very well, then; I suppose I must try. One of the shops is in High Street, isn't it?"

"No, sir; they're all in the new part—Granville Road."

"Ah, I'm afraid that will scarcely do. But I'll see. Good day."

Martin Hewitt walked away a couple of streets' lengths before he inquired the way to Granville Road. When at last he found that thoroughfare, in a new and muddy suburb, crowded with brick-heaps and half-finished streets, he took a slow walk along its entire length. It was a melancholy example of baffled enterprise. A row of a dozen or more shops had been built before any population had arrived to demand goods. Would-be tradesmen had taken many of these shops, and failure and disappointment stared from the windows. Some were half covered by shutters, because the scanty stock scarce sufficed to fill the remaining half. Others were shut almost altogether, the inmates only keeping open the door for their own convenience, and, perhaps, keeping down a shutter for the sake of a little light. Others again had not yet fallen so low, but struggled bravely still to maintain a show of business and prosperity, with very little success. Opposite the shops there still remained a dusty, ill-treated hedge and a forlorn-looking field, which an old board offered on building leases. Altogether a most depressing spot.

There was little difficulty in identifying the three shops offered for letting by Mr. H. Danby. They were all together near the middle of the row, and were the only ones that appeared not yet to have been occupied. A dusty "To Let" bill hung in each window, with written directions to inquire of Mr. H. Danby or at No. 7. Now, No. 7 was a melancholy baker's shop, with a stock of three loaves and a plate of stale buns. The disappointed baker assured Hewitt that he usually kept the

keys of the shops, but that the landlord, Mr. Danby, had taken them away the day before, to see how the ceilings were standing, and had not returned them. "But if you was thinking of taking a shop here," the poor baker added, with some hesitation, "I—I—if you'll excuse my advising you—I shouldn't recommend it. I've had a sickener of it myself."

Hewitt thanked the baker for his advice, wished him better luck in future, and left. To the "Hare and Hounds" his pace was brisk. "Come," he said, as he met Kentish's inquiring glance, "this has been a very good day, on the whole. I know where our man is now, and I think we can get him, by a little management."

"I'VE HAD A SICKENER OF IT MYSELF."

"Where is he?"

"Oh, down in Padfield. As a matter of fact, he's being kept there against his will, we shall find. I see that your friend, Mr. Danby, is a builder as well as a bookmaker."

"Not a regular builder. He speculates in a street of new houses now and again, that's all. But is he in it?"

"He's as deep in it as anybody, I think. Now, don't fly into a passion. There are a few others in it as well, but you'll do harm if you don't keep quiet."

"But go and get the police—come and fetch him, if you know where they're keeping him; why——"

"So we will, if we can't do it without them. But it's quite possible we can, and without all the disturbance and, perhaps, delay that calling in the police would involve. Consider, now, in reference to your own arrangements. Wouldn't it pay you better to get him back quietly, without a soul knowing—perhaps not even Danby knowing—till the heat is run to-morrow?"

"Well, yes, it would, of course."

"Very good, then, so be it. Remember what I have told you about keeping your mouth shut—say nothing to Steggles or anybody. Is there a cab or brougham your son and I can have for the evening?"

"There's an old hiring landau in the stables you can shut up into a cab, if that'll do."

"Excellent. We'll run down to the town in it as soon as it's ready. But, first, a word about Crockett. What sort of a lad is he? Likely to give them trouble, show fight, and make a disturbance?"

"No, I should say not. He's no plucked 'un, certainly—all his manhood's in his legs, I believe. You see, he ain't a big sort o' chap at best, and he'd be pretty easy put upon—at least, I guess so."

"Very good, so much the better, for then he won't have been damaged, and they will probably only have one man to guard him. Now the carriage, please."

Young Kentish was a six-foot sergeant of Grenadiers, home on furlough, and luxuriating in plain clothes. He and Hewitt walked a little way towards the town, allowing the landau to catch them up. They travelled in it to within a hundred yards of the empty shops and then alighted, bidding the driver wait.

"I shall show you three empty shops," Hewitt said, as he and young Kentish walked down Granville Road. "I am pretty sure that Sammy Crockett is in one of them, and I am pretty sure that that is the middle one. Take a look as we go past."

When the shops had been slowly passed, Hewitt resumed: "Now, did you see anything about those shops that told a tale of any sort?"

"No," Sergeant Kentish replied. "I can't say I noticed anything beyond the fact that they were empty—and likely to stay so, I should think."

"We'll stroll back, and look in at the windows, if nobody's watching us," Hewitt said. "You see, it's reasonable to suppose they've put him in the middle one, because that would suit their purpose best. The shops at each side of the three are occupied, and if the prisoner struggled, or shouted,

or made an uproar, he might be heard if he were in one of the shops next those inhabited. So that the middle shop is the most likely. Now, see there," he went on, as they stopped before the window of the shop in question, "over at the back there's a staircase not yet partitioned off. It goes down below and up above: on the stairs and on the floor near them there are muddy footmarks. These must have been made to-day, else they would not be muddy, but dry and dusty, since there hasn't been a shower for a week till to-day. Move on again. Then you noticed that there were no other such marks in the shop. Consequently the man with the muddy feet did not come in by the front door, but by the back; otherwise he would have made a trail from the door. So we will go round to the back ourselves."

It was now growing dusk. The small pieces of ground behind the shops were bounded by a low fence, containing a door for each house.

"This door is bolted inside, of course," Hewitt said, "but there is no difficulty in climbing. I think we had better wait in the garden till dark. In the meantime, the gaoler, whoever he is, may come out; in which case we shall pounce on him as soon as he opens the door. You have that few yards of cord in your pocket, I think? And my handkerchief, properly rolled, will make a very good gag. Now over."

They climbed the fence and quietly approached the house, placing themselves in the angle of an outhouse out of sight from the windows. There was no sound, and no light appeared. Just above the ground about a foot of window was visible, with a grating over it, apparently lighting a basement. Suddenly Hewitt touched his companion's arm, and pointed toward the window. A faint rustling sound was perceptible, and as nearly as could be discerned in the darkness, some white blind or covering was placed over the glass from the inside. Then came the sound of a striking match, and at the side edge of the window there was a faint streak of light.

"That's the place," Hewitt whispered. "Come, we'll make a push for it. You stand against the wall at one side of the door and I'll stand at the other, and we'll have him as he comes out. Quietly, now, and I'll startle them."

He took a stone from among the rubbish littering the garden and flung it crashing through the window. There was a loud exclamation from within, the blind fell, and somebody rushed to the back door and flung it open. Instantly Kentish let fly a heavy right-hander, and the man went over like a skittle. In a moment Hewitt was upon him and the gag in his mouth.

"Hold him," Hewitt whispered, hurriedly. "I'll see if there are others."

He peered down through the low window. Within, Sammy Crockett, his bare legs dangling from beneath his long overcoat, sat on a packing-box, leaning with his head on his hand and his back towards the window. A guttering candle stood on the mantelpiece, and the newspaper which had been stretched across the window lay in scattered sheets on the floor. No other person besides Sammy was visible.

They led their prisoner indoors. Young Kentish recognised him as a public-house loafer and race-course ruffian well known in the neighbourhood.

"So it's you, is it, Browdie?" he said. "I've caught you one hard clump, and I've half a mind to make it a score more. But you'll get it pretty warm one way or another, before this job's forgotten."

Sammy Crockett was overjoyed at his rescue. He had not been ill-treated, he explained, but had been thoroughly cowed by Browdie, who had from time to time threatened him savagely with an iron bar, by way of persuading him to quietness and submission. He had been fed, and had taken no worse harm than a slight stiffness from his adventure, due to his light under-attire of jersey and knee-shorts.

Sergeant Kentish tied Browdie's elbows firmly together behind, and carried the line round the ankles, bracing all up tight. Then he ran a knot from one wrist to the other over the back of the neck, and left the prisoner, trussed and helpless, on the heap of straw that had been Sammy's bed.

"You won't be very jolly, I expect," Kentish said, "for some time. You can't shout and you can't walk, and I know you can't untie yourself. You'll get a bit hungry, too, perhaps, but that'll give you an appetite. I don't suppose you'll be disturbed till some time to-morrow, unless our friend Danby turns up in the meantime. But you can come along to gaol instead, if you prefer it."

They left him where he lay, and took Sammy to the old landau. Sammy walked in slippers, carrying his spiked shoes, hanging by the lace, in his hand.

"Ah," said Hewitt, "I think I know the name of the young lady who gave you those slippers."

Crockett looked ashamed and indignant. "Yes," he said; "they've done me nicely between 'em. But I'll pay her—I'll——"

"Hush, hush!" Hewitt said: "you mustn't talk unkindly of a lady, you know. Get into this carriage, and we'll take you home. We'll see if I can tell you your adventures without making a mistake. First, you had a note from Miss Webb, telling you that you were mistaken in supposing she had slighted you, and that as a matter of fact she had quite done with somebody else—left him—of whom you were jealous. Isn't that so?"

"Well, yes," young Crockett answered, blushing deeply under the carriage-lamp: "but I don't see how you come to know that."

"Then she went on

"THE PRISONER—TRUSSED AND HELPLESS."

to ask you to get rid of Steggles on Thursday afternoon for a few minutes, and speak to her in the back lane. Now, your running pumps, with their thin soles, almost like paper, no heels and long spikes, hurt your feet horribly if you walk on hard ground, don't they?"

"Ay, that they do—enough to cripple you. I'd never go on much hard ground with 'em."

"They're not like cricket shoes, I see."

"Not a bit. Cricket shoes you can walk anywhere in."

"Well, she knew this—I think I know who told her—and she promised to bring you a new pair of slippers, and to throw them over the fence for you to come out in."

"I s'pose she's been tellin' you all this?" Crockett said, mournfully. "You couldn't ha' seen the letter—I saw her tear it up and put the bits in her pocket. She asked me for it in the lane, in case Steggles saw it."

"Well, at any rate, you sent Steggles away, and the slippers did come over, and you went into the lane. You walked with her as far as the road at the end, and then you were seized and gagged, and put into a carriage."

"That was Browdie did that," said Crockett, "and another chap I don't know. But—why, this is Padfield High Street!" He looked through the window and regarded the familiar shops with astonishment.

"Of course it is. Where did you think it was?"

"Why, where was that place you found me in?"

"Granville Road, Padfield. I suppose they told you you were in another town?"

"Told me it was Newstead Hatch. They drove for about three or four hours, and kept me down on the floor between the seats so as I couldn't see where we was going."

"Done for two reasons," said Hewitt. "First, to mystify you, and prevent any discovery of the people directing the conspiracy; and, second, to be able to put you indoors at night and unobserved. Well, I think I have told you all you know yourself now as far as the carriage.

"But there is the 'Hare and Hounds' just in front. We'll pull up here and I'll get out and see if the coast is clear. I fancy Mr. Kentish would rather you came in unnoticed."

In a few seconds Hewitt was back, and Crockett was conveyed indoors by a side entrance. Hewitt's instructions to the landlord were few but emphatic. "Don't tell Steggles about it," he said; "make an excuse to get rid of him, and send him out of the house. Take Crockett into some other bedroom, not his own, and let your son look after him. Then come here, and I'll tell you all about it."

Sammy Crockett was undergoing a heavy grooming with white embrocation at the hands of Sergeant Kentish, when the landlord returned to Hewitt. "Does Danby know you've got him?" he asked. "How did you do it?"

"Danby doesn't know yet, and with luck he won't know till he sees Crockett running to-morrow. The man who has sold you is Steggles."

"Steggles?"

"Steggles it is. At the very first, when Steggles rushed in to report Sammy Crockett missing, I suspected him. You didn't, I suppose?"

"No. He's always been considered a straight man, and he looked as startled as anybody."

"Yes, I must say he acted it very well. But there was something suspicious in his story. What did he say? Crockett had remarked a chilliness, and asked for a sweater, which Steggles went to fetch. Now, just think. You understand these things. Would any trainer who knew his business (as

Steggles does) have gone to bring out a sweater for his man to change for his jersey in the open air, at the very time the man was complaining of chilliness? Of course not. He would have taken his man indoors again and let him change there under shelter. Then supposing Steggles had really been surprised at missing Crockett, wouldn't he have looked about, found the gate open, and *told* you it was open, when he first came in? He said nothing of that—we found the gate open for ourselves. So that from the beginning, I had a certain opinion of Steggles."

"What you say seems pretty plain now, although it didn't strike me at the time. But if Steggles was selling us, why couldn't he have drugged the lad? That would have been a deal simpler."

"Because Steggles is a good trainer and has a certain reputation to keep up. It would have done him no good to have had a runner drugged while under his care—certainly it would have cooked his goose with *you*. It was much the safer thing to connive at kidnapping. That put all the active work into other hands, and left him safe, even if the trick failed. Now you remember that we traced the prints of Crockett's spiked shoes to within a couple of yards of the fence, and that there they ceased suddenly?"

"Yes. You said it looked as though he had flown up into the air; and so it did."

"But I was sure that it was by that gate that Crockett had left, and by no other. He couldn't have got through the house without being seen, and there was no other way—let alone the evidence of the unbolted gate. Therefore, as the footprints ceased where they did, and were not repeated anywhere in the lane, I knew that he had taken his spiked shoes off—probably changed them for something else, because a runner anxious as to his chances would never risk walking on bare feet, with a chance of cutting them. Ordinary, broad, smooth-soled slippers would leave no impression on the coarse cinders bordering the track, and nothing short of spiked shoes would leave a mark on the hard path in the lane behind. The spike tracks were leading, not directly toward the door, but in the direction of the fence, when they stopped—somebody had handed, or thrown, the slippers over the fence and he had changed them on the spot. The enemy had calculated upon the spikes leaving a track in the lane that might lead us in our search, and had arranged accordingly.

"So far, so good. I could see no footprints near the gate in the lane. You will remember that I sent Steggles off to watch at the Cop before I went out to the back—merely, of course, to get him out of the way. I went out into the lane, leaving you behind, and walked its whole length, first toward the Old Kilns and then back toward the road. I found nothing to help me except these small pieces of paper—which are here in my pocket-book, by-the-bye. Of course, this 'mmy' might have meant '"Jimmy' or 'Tommy,' as possibly as 'Sammy,' but they were not to be rejected on that account. Certainly Crockett had been decoyed out of your ground, not taken by force, or there would have been marks of a scuffle in the cinders. And as his request for a sweater was probably an excuse—because it was not at all a cold afternoon he must have previously designed going out—inference, a letter received: and here were pieces of a letter. Now, in the light of what I have said, look at these pieces. First there is the 'mmy'—that I have dealt with. Then, see this 'throw them ov'—clearly a part of 'throw them over'; exactly what had probably been done with the slippers. Then the 'poor f,' coming just on the line before, and seen, by joining up with this other piece, might easily be a reference to 'poor feet.' These coincidences, one on the other, went far to establish the identity of the letter, and to confirm my previous impressions. But then there is something else. Two other pieces evidently mean 'left him,' and 'right away'—send Steggles 'right away,' perhaps; but there is another, containing almost all of the words 'hate his,' with the word 'hate' underlined. Now, who writes 'hate' with the emphasis of underscoring—- who but a woman? The writing is large and not very regular; it might easily be that of a half-educated woman. Here was something more—Sammy had been enticed away by a woman.

"Now, I remembered that when we went into the tap-room on Wednesday, some of his companions were chaffing Crockett about a certain Nancy Webb, and the chaff went home, as was plain to see. The woman, then, who could most easily entice Sammy Crockett away was Nancy Webb. I resolved to find who Nancy Webb was and learn more of her.

"Meantime I took a look at the road at the end of the lane. It was damper than the lane, being lower, and overhung by trees. There were many wheel tracks, but only one set that turned in the road and went back the way it came—- towards the town—and they were narrow wheels, carriage wheels. Crockett tells me now that they drove him about for a long time before shutting him up—probably the inconvenience of taking him straight to the hiding-place didn't strike them when they first drove off.

"A few inquiries soon set me in the direction of the 'Plough' and Miss Nancy Webb. I had the curiosity to look round the place as I approached, and there, in the garden behind the house, were Steggles and the young lady in earnest confabulation!

"Every conjecture became a certainty. Steggles was the lover of whom Crockett was jealous, and he had employed the girl to bring Sammy out. I watched Steggles home, and gave you a hint to keep him there.

"But the thing that remained was to find Steggles's employer in this business. I was glad to be in when Danby called—he came, of course, to hear if you would blurt out anything, and to learn, if possible, what steps you were taking. He failed. By way of making assurance doubly sure, I took a short walk this morning in the character of a deaf gentleman, and got Miss Webb to write me a direction that comprised three of the words on these scraps of paper—'left,' 'right,' and 'lane'—see, they correspond, the peculiar 'f's,' 't's,' and all.

"Now, I felt perfectly

sure that Steggles would go for his pay to-day. In the first place, I knew that people mixed up with shady transactions in professional pedestrianism are not apt to trust one another far—they know better. Therefore, Steggles wouldn't have had his bribe first. But he would take care to get it before the Saturday heats were run, because once they were over the thing was done, and the principal conspirator might have refused to pay up, and Steggles couldn't have helped himself. Again I hinted he should not go out till I could follow him, and this afternoon when he went, follow him I did. I saw him go into Danby's house by the side way and come away again. Danby it was, then, who had arranged the business; and nobody was more likely, considering his large pecuniary stake against Crockett's winning this race.

"STEGGLES AND THE YOUNG LADY IN EARNEST CONFABULATION."

"But now, how to find Crockett? I made up my mind he wouldn't be in Danby's own house—that would be a deal too risky, with servants about, and so on. I saw that Danby was a builder, and had three shops to let—it was on a paper before his house. What more likely prison than an empty house? I knocked at Danby's door and asked for the keys of those shops. I couldn't have them. The servant told me Danby was out (a manifest lie, for I had just seen him), and that nobody could see the shops till Monday. But I got out of her the address of the shops, and that was all I wanted at the time.

"Now, why was nobody to see those shops till Monday? The interval was suspicious—just enough to enable Crockett to be sent away again and cast loose after the Saturday racing, supposing him to be kept in one of the empty buildings. I went off at once and looked at the shops, forming my conclusions as to which would be the most likely for Danby's purpose. Here I had another confirmation of my ideas. A poor, half-bankrupt baker in one of the shops had, by the bills, the custody of a set of keys; but *he*, too, told me I couldn't have them; Danby had taken them away—and on Thursday, the very day—with some trivial excuse, and hadn't brought them back. That was all I wanted, or could expect in the way of guidance; the whole thing was plain. The rest you know all about."

"Well, you're certainly as smart as they give you credit for, I must say. But suppose Danby had taken down his 'to let' notice, what would you have done then?"

"We had our course even then. We should have gone to Danby, astounded him by telling him all about his little games, terrorized him with threats of the law, and made him throw up his hand and send Crockett back. But as it is, you see, he doesn't know at this moment—probably won't know till to-morrow afternoon—that the lad is safe and sound here. You will probably use the interval to make him pay for losing the game—by some of the ingenious financial devices you are no doubt familiar with."

"Aye, that I will. He'll give any price against Crockett now, so long as the bet don't come direct from me."

"But about Crockett, now," Hewitt went on. "Won't this confinement be likely to have damaged his speed for a day or two?"

"Ah, perhaps," the landlord replied: "but, bless ye, that won't matter. There's four more in his heat to-morrow. Two I know aren't tryers, and the other two I can hold in at a couple of quid apiece any day. The third round and final won't be till to-morrow week, and he'll be as fit as ever by then. It's as safe as ever it was. How much are you going to have on? I'll lump it on for you safe enough. This is a chance not to be missed—it's picking money up."

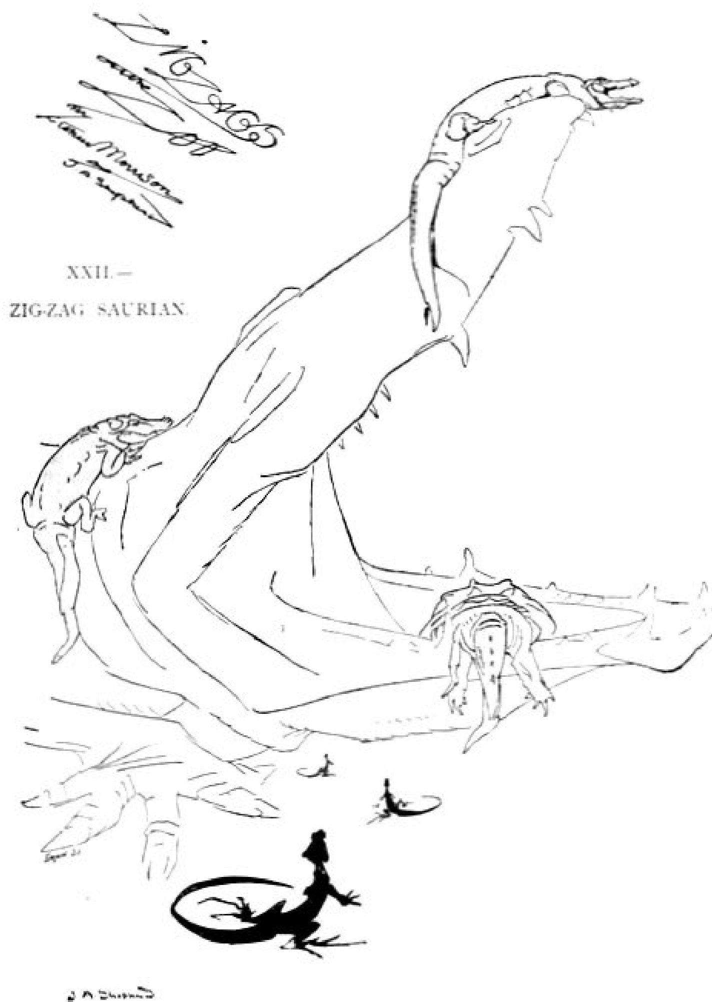
"Thank you: I don't think I'll have anything to do with it. This professional pedestrian business doesn't seem a pretty one at all. I don't call myself a moralist, but, if you'll excuse my saying so, the thing is scarcely the game I care to pick up money at in any way."

"Oh! very well, if you think so, I won't persuade ye, though I don't think so much of your smartness as I did, after that. Still, we won't quarrel—you've done me a mighty good turn, that I must say, and I only feel I aren't level without doing something to pay the debt. Come, now, you've got your trade as I've got mine. Let me have the bill, and I'll pay it like a lord, and feel a deal more pleased than if you made a favour of it—not that I'm above a favour, of course. But I'd prefer paying, and that's a fact."

"My dear sir, you have paid," Hewitt said, with a smile. "You paid in advance. It was a bargain, wasn't it, that I should do your business if you would help me in mine? Very well, a bargain's a bargain, and we've both performed our parts. And you mustn't be offended at what I said just now."

"That I won't. But as to that Raggy Steggles, once those heats are over to-morrow, I'll —— well ——!"

It was on the following Sunday week that Martin Hewitt, in his rooms in London, turned over his paper and read, under the head "Padfield Annual 135 Yards Handicap," this announcement: "Final Heat: Crockett, first; Willis, second; Trewby, third: Owen, 0; Howell, 0. A runaway win by nearly three yards."



ZIG-ZAGS AT THE ZOO

By Arthur Morrison and J A Shepherd

XXII.—ZIG-ZAG SAURIAN.

People, as a rule, are not fond of lizards, and the larger the lizards the less people like them; until the crocodile and the alligator, largest of all, are received with positive antipathy, and rarely treated as pets. People make many excuses for such an attitude toward lizards; calling them ugly, crawly, slimy, scaly, and so forth. I have an hypothesis that envy is a large element in this human antipathy. For after all, if we will but confess it, the alligator's is rather an enviable lot. To lie all day in a bed of warm, soft mud—really, it is a pleasant thing. To be able, without inconvenience, to postpone dinner for a fortnight—that is attractively economical. To enjoy the advantages of six eyelids and the resulting capability in winks—there is something even in this. But chiefly, envy for the crocodile has got into the grain of humanity by heredity from those ancients who believed everything that Plutarch told them in his book, *De Iside et Osiride*. The crocodile, he informs us therein, can render itself invisible at will, everything else being perfectly visible to it the while. This is a noble privilege, and worthy of the most respectful envy. Jack the Giant Killer performed the trick by means of a cloak; but Plutarch's crocodile does it "merely by the power of the heye," as the street-corner mesmerist has it—does it "like winking," in fact. The mechanism is very simple, and quite easy to understand. It consists only of a membrane to draw over the eye; and as the eye it is drawn over is the crocodile's, it is obvious that he becomes invisible at once. His ability to see others is provided for by the ingenious expedient of having the membrane transparent—and there you are. What could be simpler? Anybody who can run to a transparent membrane fitting for his eyes may dodge his creditors at will, thanks to the tip of the benevolent and ingenious Plutarch.

THE CROCODILE-CREASE.

A PASSING PLEASANTRY.

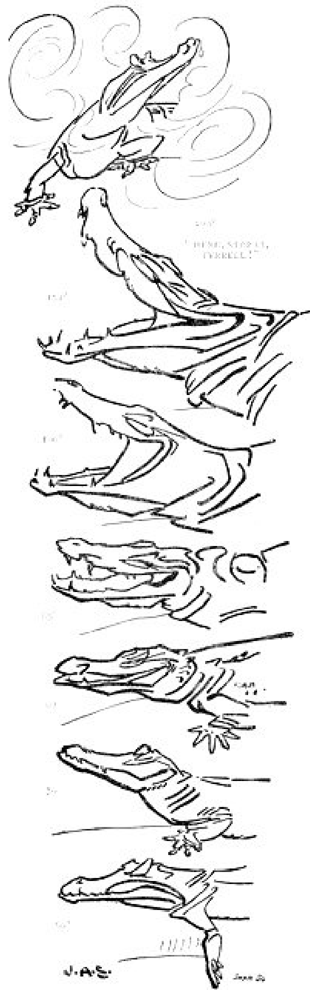
In the reptile-house at these Gardens, the largest saurian bears the apt name of Little-'un. He is a youthful alligator, although, being rather more than 10 ft. 6 in. long, he has quite grown out of short frocks. Nothing infantile remains about his appearance, and he has in full development that curious cravat of fleshy folds and creases noticeable in no animals but alligators and 'bus-drivers, and among the latter species only in the stout and red-faced variety. Little-'un's name was not given him by way of a joke, but because, nine years ago, he was only a foot long—which *is* little for an alligator. Little-'un has always been a good business alligator, however, and by strict industry and invincible perseverance in the pursuit of whatever might be eatable, has risen to an honoured and considerable eminence in the higher Zoo circles. To observe the open countenance of Little-'un bearing down on a piece of meat that ought properly to belong to some other alligator, is to get a sight of a truly original edition of "Smiles's Self-Help." Little-'un's one moral principle is—the greatest good of the greatest alligator. His business maxim is get something to eat; honestly, if there is no other way, but, anyhow, get it as large as possible, and as often as you can. He would, without the least bashfulness, proceed to eat his friends in the same tank if Tyrrell (the keeper, whom you know already) neglected the commissariat. Indeed, he once began on one fellow-lodger, with no other excuse than opportunity. Feeding was in progress, and, in the scramble and confusion, a smallish crocodile, lunging his nose in the direction of the desired morsel, without particularly noticing where that direction led, found himself up to the eyes in Little-'un's dental establishment. Little-'un's prudent habits rendered it unlikely that he would deliberately fling away anything that Providence had actually thrust into his mouth, even if it were his own grandfather: and only a vigorous application of Tyrrell's pole saved the crocodile from making a meal in a sense he didn't originally intend.

"'EAR THAT, BILL?"

SHORT FROCKS.

Eighty-five degrees is the temperature prescribed for the water here, and every crocodile is a thermometer unto himself, soon showing signs, notwithstanding his thick hide, of any variation in the rate of his gentle stewing—Little-'un being as sensitive as any, in spite of his assiduous attention to business.

With Tyrrell, by the way, Little-'un is comparatively affable, for an alligator. Tyrrell climbs calmly into the basin, among its inmates, to swill and mop it out at the weekly cleaning, herding crocodiles and alligators into a corner by the flourish of a mop, in a manner more than disrespectful—almost insulting. There is some mysterious influence about that mop. Why should



200°

"HERE, STOP IT, TYRELL!"

150°

100°

80°

70°

60°

J.A.S.

Swain So

THE CROCODILE THERMOMETER

alligators shut their heads and stand meekly aside at its potent waggle? I would never venture up the Nile without Tyrrell's mop. With one wave of that mystic sceptre I would assume immediate sovereignty over all the crocodiles in Africa, and drive them into corners. There is no withstanding that mop. If it will intimidate crocodiles, plainly it would be successful with leopards, cobras, lions, and tigers. If I could borrow it I would even try it on the beadle at the Bank of England, and if I could wave *him* aside with it, I should know that thenceforth the world was at my feet; and I'm afraid Tyrrell wouldn't get his mop back.

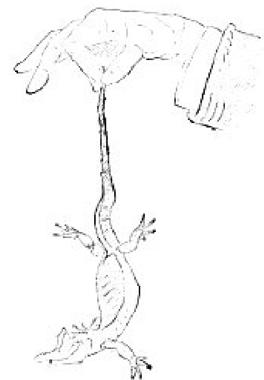
But I was speaking of Little-'un: his affability; and of Tyrrell: his irreverent familiarity. When Tyrrell mops out the basin, he finds it convenient to leave somewhat under a foot of water in the bottom for cleaning purposes, and as this would be damp (as is water's nature) to tread in, he calmly stands on Little-'un's back and proceeds placidly with his mopping. To wave an alligator aside with a mop is an insult altogether, but to stand on his back for the sake of dry shoes is an outrage unutterable. Little-'un seems a very appropriate name as it stands, but if ever a time should arrive when it must be changed, I think, with every respect and honour to the departed statesman, I should suggest John Bright. "Mr. Speaker," said an honourable member, who spoke before he thought, but whose name I have forgotten, "Mr. Speaker, the right honourable gentleman" (Mr. Bright) "accuses me of making allegations. Why, sir, the right honourable gentleman is the greatest alligator in this House!" Which is precisely what Little-'un is now.

Round at the back, in his private domains, Tyrrell keeps a crocodile and alligator nursery. It is a metal box fixed against a wall and holding about a gallon. Here are all the infants, eight inches to a foot long, squirming, wriggling, and struggling, with a lively activity foreign to the nature of the full-grown alligator. Tyrrell will plunge his hand into the struggling mass and produce a handful for your inspection. They are charming little pets and as ready to bite as if they were twenty feet long. An alligator may be pardoned some impatience in growing; if he is to be ten feet and a half long at nine years of age, there is a deal of lee-way to make up. Most creatures would be discouraged at being born only to a measurement in inches, and refuse to grow at all.

AT NURSE.

There would appear to be a sort of general reluctance to make a domestic pet of the crocodile; it is not fashionable now, and nobody seems anxious to set the *mode*. To encourage anybody who is disposed to distinguish himself, I may observe that a crocodile is cheapest when young. This is doubly fortunate, because for a less sum you have a longer run for your money—the last expression not being intended in any uncomfortable sense. I believe the usual price of young crocodiles and alligators, up to a certain size, is a guinea a linear foot; at any rate, I know you could buy them at that rate of my old friend Mr. Jamrach, and I have no doubt that the Zoological Society may be able, from time to time, to spare a foot or two of alligator at the price. If you buy a foot—or a yard, as the case may be (the *case*, of course, will be a little longer, but that is unworthy trifling)—you must be careful to keep it in a warm place, in water at the right temperature, at night as well as day. Then when it grows to the size of Little-'un, it will make an imposing embellishment for your entrance-hall, and useful to receive subscription-collectors. And to take them inside.

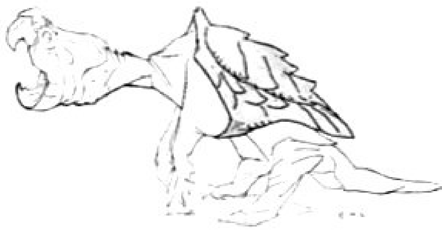
"BITE? NO."



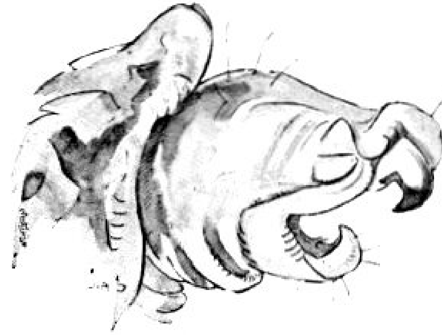
A FINE BABY.

It is a bad thing to generalize in a world containing China. China upsets everything. If you venture to put a date to the invention of gunpowder, somebody is sure to remind you to except China; the same with printing and everything else. There is nothing

China hasn't got or hasn't had. So that naturally, after America has many years flaunted and gloried in the exclusive possession of the broad-nosed alligator as distinguished from the sharp-snouted crocodile, China, in the old familiar aggravating way, bobs up serenely with *her* alligators—perfectly authentic and genuine, and here some of them are, in the small basin. There's no getting ahead of China.



WAITING FOR A BITE.



FOSSILIZED.

But Temminck's Snapper is the wonder and gaping-stock of this house. Bring the most impassive country cousin, let him sneer at the snakes, lounge past the lizards, turn up his nose at the tigers, elevate it more at the elephants, ridicule the rhinoceros, and disparage the donkeys. Let him do all this, and then confront him with the Snapper. He will be beaten. "Well, of all the ——" He will probably refuse to believe the thing alive, and it certainly looks more like a fine old Paleozoic Fossil than anything else imaginable. This is due to the operation of Misdirected Patience—a virtue so noticeable as to demand capital letters. For the Snapper has been in this not very large tank for ten years, and has not yet become convinced that there are no fish in it. Wherefore he laboriously and patiently fishes without a moment's cessation. Fishing, with him, means waiting immovably with open mouth for a fish to come and be gobbled. He has waited ten years for a bite, but that is nothing unusual, as you may try for yourself, if you buy a rod and line. It is calculated, I believe, that a hundred years more in his present attitude will be sufficient to fossilize him, when, no doubt, he will be passed on to the Geological Society. He has never yet found the need for an individual name; but I am thinking of suggesting a suitable combination—I think it should be Job Walton.

"WELL, OF ALL THE——"

"EH?"

"MONEY?"

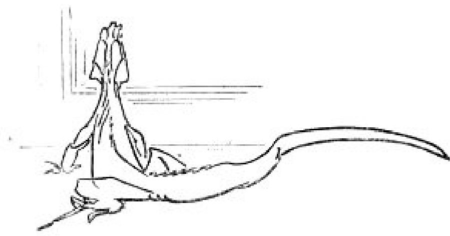
Job is not an emotional person. He never exhibits enthusiasm, even for fishing. I shouldn't myself, after ten years' waiting for a bite. There he floats, with all the mental activity of an ordinary brick, while visitors come and go, nations are convulsed, elections, boat-races are decided, and green weed grows all over his back, but he doesn't care. "A rolling stone gathers no moss" is a capital proverb for the guidance of people who care for moss as a personal adornment. Job avoids all rolling, in common with other forms of movement, and is lavishly rewarded with moss of the greenest, on back, legs, toes, and tail. Beyond his patience (a negative sort of virtue, after all), Job Walton has no particular personal characteristic that I can discover, except extreme niggardliness plain and patent in his face. He has nothing in the world to be niggardly with, except his moss, but if he had, he would make a very un-indulgent uncle. I have a theory that Job is not an animal at all, but a fossilized concretion of the twin virtues (or what you like to call them), patience and stinginess; a sort of petrified fungus, produced by the chemical action consequent on the mingling of the two qualities. Probably some very shocking old miser (perhaps it was Scrooge himself) lost all his stinginess at once, just at the identical moment when some long-suffering person lost his patience (this was, probably, an angler). The subtle essences comprising these qualities met and mingled—result, a fungus growth, Job Walton. The same sort of thing occurs a thousand times a day in the case of toadstools.

UNCLE SNAPPER.

"WHAT?"

"NOT ANOTHER HALFPENNY."

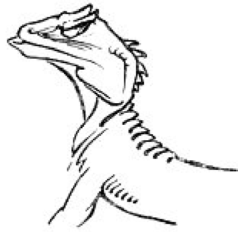
I am really friendly with only one of the



ON DUTY.

J. A. Sigmund

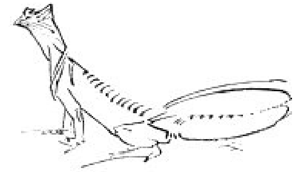
smaller lizards here—and he is a large one; the big monitor at the corner. But I have never been able to learn from him, even in his most confidential moments, how many feet of tongue he really has. It is a round, whip-lash sort of tongue, like the ant-eater's, and I have a private superstition in both cases that there actually is no other end to that tongue. The monitor is fond of rats, but the rats are not at all partial to his society.



"TICKET?"

"PAID YOUR SHILLING?"

Lesueur's Water Lizard is a curious specimen. He has not been here long, but has already assumed, on his own nomination, a position of great responsibility and importance. He is Inspector of Visitors. He won't have questionable characters in the reptile-house. When not actively inspecting, he is watching for his victims. He observes a visitor approaching. He is on guard at once, by the front glass of the case. His aspect is official and stern, his manner abrupt and peremptory; he is not a lizard to be trifled with. "Paid your shilling?" he demands, as plainly as a silent lizard may. "Got your railway ticket? Show it." Any respectable visitor with the fear of the law before his eyes will comply at once. "Where do you live? Produce your last water-rate receipt." He looks you up and down suspiciously. "Been vaccinated lately? Date? All right. Pass along." And he swings abruptly round to watch for somebody else.



"VACCINATED?"

"?—?—?"

ALL'S WELL.

The Australian Bearded Lizard (most quaint lizards are Australian) is supposed to derive his colloquial name—the Jew Lizard—from his beard. But he has an Israelitish acquisitiveness of his own, too. He goes about his shop—everything he does makes it seem a shop—and brings his paw down on one pebble and one twig after another with an unmistakable air of assertive proprietorship. "Mine," he intimates, "mine, every one of them; and you keep your hands off them, unless you're ready to do business." He would pronounce it "pishnesh" if mere gesture-talk admitted of it. A little irritation goes a long way with the Jew lizard. His beard stands out tremendously, he swells to a rib-threatening degree, and stands at bay with open mouth, ready to smite the Philistines hip and thigh and spoil the Egyptians of their finger-tips—let them but come near enough. But he is a very respectable lizard, not so lazy as most, and pleasant to the touch.

"MINE!"

"MINE, I TELL YOU!"

"YESH, MINE, MY TEAR."

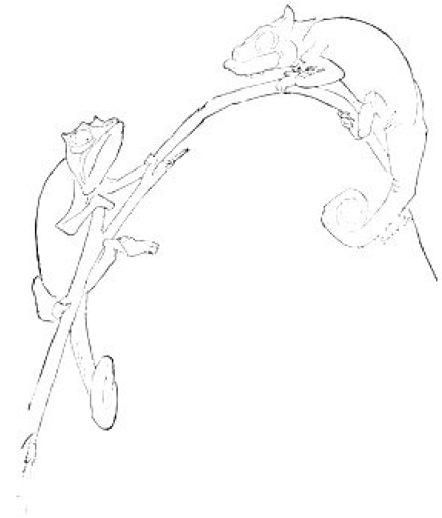
GALLOT'S LIZARD —"RATIONS AHOY!"

He is not so lazy, for instance, as the chameleon. The chameleon is the slowest creature alive. If there were a race between a chameleon and a pump, it would be safest to back the pump. An active little Gallot's lizard was placed here lately, with a pair of chameleons, but the contrast was so disgraceful to the chameleons that he was removed, and made to chum with a Gecko, a few cases off. He absorbed all the rations, too, which was an addition of injury to insult, although chameleons can always put off dinner for a month or two without inconvenience. A chameleon is a sort of twin. Like other things, he has two halves; but these halves are only acquainted with one another—not really intimate. His left-hand side is often asleep while the right is as wide awake as a chameleon's side can be. His eyes, also, are quite independent of one another, and roll in opposite directions as often as not, so that he would be inconvenient as a Speaker. Everybody would catch his eye at once and there would be quarrels—possibly even fights—a thing impossible in the House of

CATCH WHICH?

Commons as it is. A chameleon never walks, he proceeds in this way: After a long and careful deliberation, extending over half an hour or so, he proceeds to lift one foot. You may not be able to see it moving, but it is moving all the same, like the hand of a watch. Take a look round the Gardens and come back, when, if you have not been too hurried in your inspection, you may see the lifted foot in mid-air, and the chameleon probably asleep. He usually takes a nap after any unusual exertion. In an hour or two he will wake up, and proceed to plant that foot, with proper deliberation, before him. Then there will be another nap and a good think, after which the tail will begin to unwind from the branch it clings to. This process, persistently persevered in for many days, will carry the intrepid gymnast quite a number of inches. But a journey of this sort is an enterprise rarely ventured on. Chameleons prefer the less exciting sport of sitting face to face and daring each other to mortal combat, secure in the assurance that neither will think of moving toward the other. They *have* been known to fight. A chameleon fight is an amusement whereunto neither the Peace Society nor the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals need have any objection. No evangelistic clergyman need incur scandal by being present, an interested spectator, at a chameleon fight. The savage combatants never attempt to bite. They gaze gravely and seriously at the surroundings, and at proper pre-arranged intervals solemnly dab their tails together—not hard, nor with any particular feeling beyond a desire to conduct the rite with proper formality and decorum. It is the most harmless and dignified scuffle in the animal creation.

"THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME."



"GARN, PULL YER EAR!"

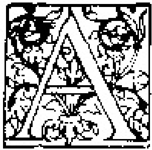
"WHAT, YOU?"

"YUS, ME."

"GARN!"

My Diving-Dress.

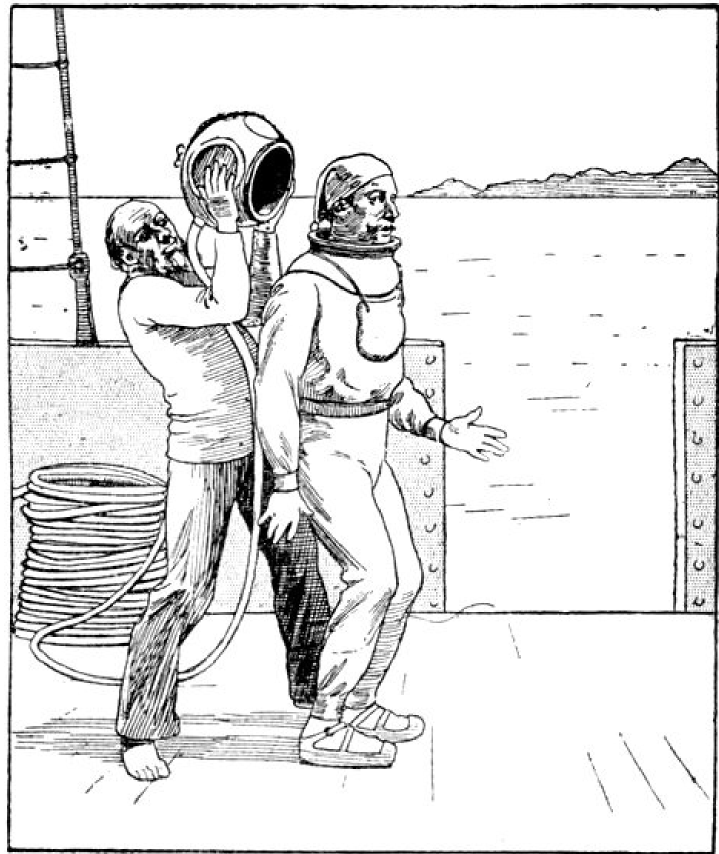
By One Who Has Done With It.



large part of my life has been spent in seeking and experiencing novel sensations. Precisely what quality of mind it is that urges me to try experiments with myself and other things I do not know positively; but I firmly believe it to be dauntless intrepidity. My fond mother, in early days, used to call it a noble thirst for information, and predicted for me a life of scientific eminence; other people have been so ill-natured as to call it abject imbecility, and to predict an early grave from a broken neck or a dynamite explosion, or something equally sensational and decided. Never mind what it is. In boyhood's days it led me once up the chimney, once on a river in a wash-tub, once down a gravel-pit with a broken head, and frequently across my father's knee, with a pain in another place. Since I have arrived at years of discretion (or greater indiscretion—just as you please), it has taken me up in a balloon, out to sea in a torpedo-boat, up the Matterhorn (with no guide but a very general map of Europe, having the height of the mountain marked on it in very plain figures), along Cheapside on a bicycle at mid-day, to a football match in the capacity of referee, and lastly, and most recently, down under water in a diving-dress. Many of these experiences were sharp enough while they lasted, and the diving was as disturbing as most; but, still, I believe nothing was quite so uncomfortable as the football referee-ship.

But, just now, I am concerned only with the diving. I have been now and again to Whitstable, where, I believe by some remarkable process of Nature, every third male person is born a diver. Anyway, Whitstable is the place where divers mostly grow, and where I caught the temptation to go a-diving myself. I should feel grateful to any obliging Anarchist who would blow up Whitstable to-morrow.

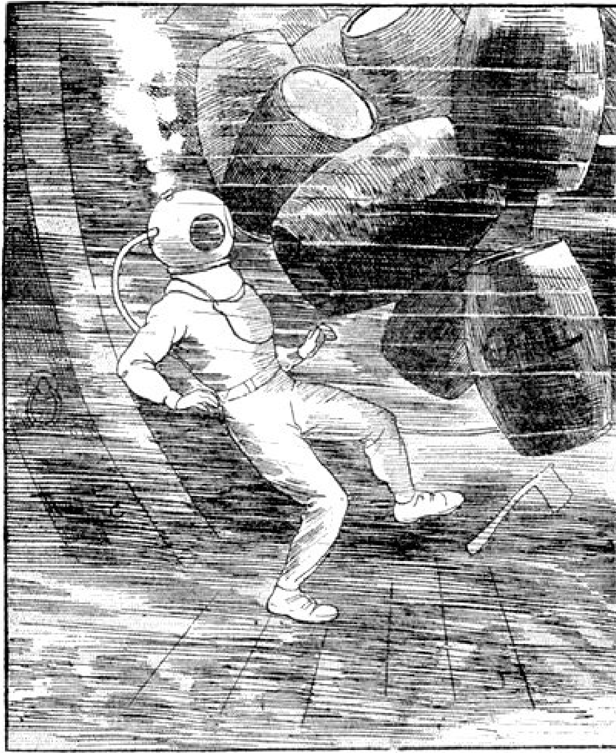
I mentioned my desire to one or two old divers who had permitted me to make their acquaintance in consideration of a suitable succession of drinks, but met with jeers and suspicion. I believe they were afraid of opposition in the business. But Whitstable never produced a diver that could put me off. I took the royal road. I bought a diving-dress for myself—how much I paid I shall not say here, for why should an unsympathetic world measure my lunacy by pounds, shillings, and pence?—especially as that would make rather a long measurement of it. Never mind what I paid. I got the dress, and I also got permission to go down and amuse myself on a sunken coasting vessel lying off Shoeburyness.



"MY DIVING-DRESS."

It was a very noble diving-suit, and the new india-rubber squeaked musically as I moved, and smelt very refreshing. There was a shield-shaped plate, rather like a label on a decanter, hanging on my chest, that would have looked more complete with "Whisky," or some similar inscription, on it. There was a noble metal collar—about thirty-two, the size would have been, on the usual scale. I had also a very fetching red night-cap, while my helmet was a terror to all beholders. I don't mind confessing to a certain amount of discomfort while they were building me up in this dress—partly due to a vivid imagination. The helmet made me think of the people in the story who put hot-pots on the heads of strangers, and I seemed stifling at once. What if I were unpacked at last from this smelly integument—a corpse? But this was unmanly and un-diver-like. There wasn't much comfort to be got out of the leaden shoes—try a pair for yourself and see—but when all was ready I made a shift to get overboard and down the ladder provided. It was not a great deal of the outer world that I could see through my windows, and I hung on to that ladder with something of a desperate clutch. When at last the water stretched away level around my windows, then, I confess, I hesitated for a moment. But I made the next step with a certain involuntary blink, and I was under water. All the heaviness—or most of it—had gone out of my feet, and all my movements partook of a curiously easy yet slowish character. It looked rather dark below me, and I tried to remember the specific gravity of the human body in figures by way of keeping jolly. At the top of my helmet the air-escape-valve bubbled genially, and I tried to think of myself as rather a fine figure of a monster among the fish, with a plume of bubbles waving over my head. You do think of trivial things on certain cheerful occasions. Remember Fagin in the

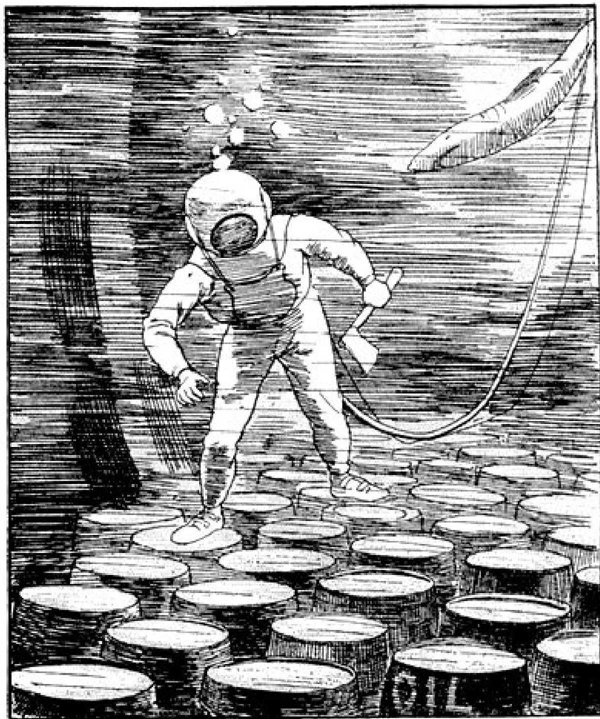
dock, for instance.



"I WAS ENGULFED IN AN AWFUL CONVULSION."

It was not as long as it seemed before I was on the wreck, and down below in the nearest hold. Regular professionals had already been at work, and access to different parts of the ship had been made easy. Now, in this big hold was an immense number of barrels, stood on end and packed tightly together—barrels of oil, to judge from externals. I tried to move one, but plainly they were all jammed tightly together, and not one would shift. I took the light axe with which I had furnished myself, using it alternately as wedge and lever, and at last felt the barrel move. I had certainly loosened it, and pulled up the axe with the intention of trying to lift the barrel, when I was suddenly engulfed in an awful convulsion as of many earthquakes in a free fight. The world was a mob of bouncing oil-barrels, which hit me everywhere as I floundered in intricate somersaults, and finally found myself staggering at the bottom of the hold, and staring at the roof, whereunto all the barrels were sticking like balloons, absolutely blocking up the hatchway above me.

What was this? Some demoniac practical joke of fiends inhabiting this awful green sea about me? Were they grinning at me from corners of the hold? or had some vast revolution in the ways of Nature taken place in a second, and the law of gravity been reversed? It was not at all warm down there, but I perspired violently. Then a notion flashed upon me. Those barrels must have been *empty*. Jammed together, they stayed below, of course, but once the jam was loosened they would fly at once towards the surface. Then I thought more. I had been an ass. Of course, those barrels would do as they had done, even were they full of oil. Oil floats on water, as anybody should know. They might be either full or empty, it didn't matter a bit. I had forgotten that I was moving in a different element from the air I was used to, where barrels of oil did *not* incontinently fly up into space without warning. Obviously, I had made a fool of myself, but I had some comfort in the reflection that there was nobody about to see it. Then it came upon me suddenly that I would rather have someone there after all, for I was helpless! Those horrible barrels were having another jam in the hatchway now, and my retreat was cut off entirely. Here I was like a rat in a cage, boxed in on every side. My communication-cord and my air-pipe led up between the barrels, to outer safety; but what of that? I perspired again. What would happen to me now? Why did I ever make a submarine Guy Fawkes of myself, and thus go fooling about, where I had no business, at the end of a flexible gas-pipe? If I could have dated myself back an hour at that moment, I believe I should have changed my mind about going in for this amusement. At this, I began thinking about trivial things again—how, paraphrasing a certain definition of angling, diving might be described as matter of a pipe with a pump at one end and something rather worse than a fool at the other. I determined, if ever I got out alive, to fire off that epigram at the earliest possible moment—so here it is.



"IN THE HOLD WERE AN IMMENSE NUMBER OF BARRELS."

I made an effort, pulled myself together, and determined on heroic measures. My axe lay near, and, with a little groping, I found it. I would hew my way out of this difficulty through the side of the vessel. I turned on the inoffensive timbers at my side and hacked away viciously—with, I really fancy, a certain touch of that wild, stern, unholy joy that anyone feels who is smashing somebody else's property with no prospect of having to pay for it. Every boy with a catapult, who lives near an empty house, will understand

"I HACKED AWAY VICIOUSLY."

the feeling I mean—especially if the empty house has a large conservatory.

The timbers were certainly stout. The work was a bit curious to the senses—the axe feeling to work with a deal more dash and go than the arm that directed it. At any rate, the exercise was pretty hard. Any millionaire in want of an excellent, healthy, and expensive exercise should try chopping his way through the sides of ships—it will do him a world of good, and will be as expensive as anybody could possibly desire. After a while I found I had well started a plank, and, once through, chopping away round the hole was not so difficult. Still, when I had a hole big enough to get through, I did not feel by any means as fresh as I had done when first that horrible copper pot was screwed down over my head.

I squeezed through the hole, and at the first step I had ever made on the real sea-bottom, I fell a savage and complicated cropper over my communication-cord. I got up, but, as I stepped clear of the cord, a frightful conviction seized my mind that I was a bigger fool than I had ever given myself credit for being. What in the world was the good of getting out through the side of the vessel when that communication cord—my only means of signalling—and that air-pipe—my only means of submarine life—led up through the boat itself and among those execrated oil-barrels? Awful! Awful! I sat down helplessly on a broken rock and stared blankly through my windows. To weep would have been mere bravado, with so much salt water already about me. I tried to signal with the communication-cord, but it was caught somewhere in that congregation of oil-barrels. It seemed to be all up, except myself, who was all down, with no prospect of ever rising in the world again. Shadowy forms came and went in the water about me, and I speculated desperately in how long or how short a time these sea-creatures would be having a dinner-party, with *me* as the chief attraction. I wondered, casually, whether the india-rubber would agree with them, and hoped that it would not. Then I wondered what they would take for the indigestion, and I thought they would probably take each other—it's their way, I believe. I was wandering on in this way, and had just feebly recollected that there was four pounds eight and something in my pockets above, which was a pity, because I might have spent it first, and that I owed my landlady fifteen-and-six, which was a good job, because it would compensate for that claret she said the cat drank, when an inspiration seized me—a great inspiration. I should probably have called out "Eureka!" as did the venerable discoverer of that principle of specific gravity that had lately (literally) taken a rise out of me, if I had thought of it, but I didn't, which was fortunate, because it is rather a chestnut after all.

This was my notion—a desperate one, but still one with hope in it. I would shut off the air-escape valve on my helmet, so that the air being pumped in would inflate my india-rubber dress like a bladder. Then I would cut my air-pipe and communication cord, stuffing the pipe and tying it as best I might, take off my leaden shoes and rise to the surface triumphantly, like an air-cushion, or, say, an oil barrel. Specific gravity having taken a rise—all the rise—out of me, I would proceed to take a rise out of specific gravity; a great, glorious, and effective rise to the upper world. No office-boy on promotion ever looked forward to his rise with more hope than I to mine. It was a desperate expedient certainly, but what else to do?

I took off one leaden shoe and loosened the other, ready to kick away. I shut the escape-valve. I cut the cord with my axe on the rock I had been sitting on, and then, when the air had blown out my dress to most corpulent proportions, I took the decisive stroke. I chopped through the air-pipe. I stuffed it as well as possible and tied it in some sort of a knot—it was *very* stiff—in a great hurry, and

then—I kicked off the leaden shoe.

"I TOOK OFF ONE LEADEN SHOE."

"AWFUL!"

Never, never, never—even if I live on Jupiter after this planet is blown to shivers—shall I forget the result of my forlorn-hope dodge. I kicked off the shoe, as I have said, and, in an instant, the whole universe of waters turned upside down and swirled away beyond my head. In sober fact, *I* had turned upside down—as I might have known I should do, if only I hadn't been a bigger fool than ever.

Of course, the moment my leaden shoes went, *down* came my copper head-pot, being my heaviest part, and up went my feet. I had a pretty quick rise, certainly, but I prefer not to recall my feelings during the rush. I can quite understand now why a rise in the world makes some people giddy. All that I had before felt of amazement and horror, I now felt multiplied by fifty and squeezed into about two seconds, so that they felt like ten hours. Up through that awful water and those moving shadows I went, feeling that I was in reality held still, like a man in a nightmare. When at last I stopped, I felt that it was but a matter of moments, and the air would leak away through that cut tube, and I should go down again, still head under, for the last time, to die in that grisly combination of mackintosh and copper kettle; also I felt choking, stifling, when—something had me roughly by the ankle, and I was dragged, a wretched rag of misplaced ambition, into a boat. The appearance of my legs sticking out above water had, it seemed, caused intense amusement among the boat's crew—a circumstance which probably ought to have gratified me, although it didn't.

"I HAD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN."

I have little more to add, except that I shudder, to this day, whenever I see an acrobat standing on his head, because it is so graphically remindful. But, if anybody is thinking of going in for diving by way of placid enjoyment, I shall be delighted to treat with him for the sale and purchase of a most desirable diving-dress in unsoiled condition, cut in the most fashionable style, with a fascinating copper helmet and commodious collar, and a neat label for the chest. The shoes will not be included in the bargain, having been inadvertently left in a damp place.

Harold Piffard

FROM BEHIND THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR.

XIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE EMPTY SEAT.

The new Session is already fairly advanced, and in some sense it is sad to reflect that business goes forward very much as if Mr. Gladstone were still in his place by the brass-bound box. It seemed when the first announcement of his retirement was made that the House of Commons could scarcely survive the withdrawal. There is not a man in the House to-day who remembers the place when Mr. Gladstone was not a prominent figure in it. It is true Mr. Villiers, having continuously sat since he was first elected for Wolverhampton in 1835, is known as "The Father of the House." But in a Parliamentary sense Mr. Gladstone was born before his father, seeing that he took his seat for Newark in the year 1832. Moreover, whilst Mr. Villiers, literally bent under the weight of his more than ninety years, has long withdrawn from regular attendance on Parliamentary duties, Mr. Gladstone was, up to the end of last Session, daily in his place, actively directing affairs and ready at a moment's notice to deliver a speech which, standing alone, would make a Parliamentary reputation.

"LISTENING."

LISTENING.

Up to the last his passion for Parliamentary life was overmastering. He was, probably, never so happy as when seated in the House following a debate. Some speeches, to others unbearably blank of interest, were to him irresistibly attractive. During the last Parliament he, in deference to an undertaking extorted by Sir Andrew Clark, promised to limit his regular attendance on debate up to a point marked by the dinner-hour, not returning save upon exceptional occasions. He made up for restraint of opportunity by exacting use of the measure provided. Often between seven and eight o'clock, when the House was almost empty and some unimportant, unattractive member found his chance, he had among his scanty audience the Prime Minister, sitting with hand to ear, apparently entranced. During the interminable Home Rule debates, Mr. Gladstone formed a habit, at which less excitable members used to smile, of moving to the gangway-end of the Treasury Bench, sitting there by the hour eagerly listening to a member whose measure of attraction for ordinary men was indicated by the emptiness of the benches. When in Opposition he carried this habit a step further, occasionally seating himself below the gangway the better to hear an Irish member.

THE UNDERTAKER.

Although immersed in affairs of State, Mr. Gladstone had that intimate personal knowledge of the House of Commons which seems more natural among the gossips in the smoke-room. He knew every man above the level of the absolutely silent members, and had formed a keen and well-defined judgment of their qualities. He was always on the look-out for promising young men among his own party, and sometimes found them, as in the cases of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Acland, Mr. Robertson, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Sydney Buxton. One evening during the Midlothian campaign, the conversation

turned upon new members on the Conservative side who had made some mark in the last Parliament. I ventured to name one Irish member, seated above the gangway, who had taken frequent part in debate on Irish affairs, and had shown intimate knowledge of the Irish question.

"Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, "but his manner is so funereal. In my humble way," he added, his face wrinkling into the smile that illumined it when he was much amused, "I call him the Undertaker."

There was something charming in this way of putting it, as if he were only a beginner in the way of affixing nicknames to Parliamentary personages, and must not be understood in his "humble way" to be competing with practitioners.

BAITED.

One feeling that weighed with everyone when Mr. Gladstone withdrew from the forefront of Parliamentary life was that he, the greatest, is also the last of a type not cast for modern Parliaments. There was about him in the heat of battle a certain chivalry of manner, and in the minutest relationships a courtesy, which is too truly known as "old-fashioned." With his departure the House of Commons loses a standard of daily conduct which, though unattainable for the average man, was ever a wholesome incentive. To gentlemen below the gangway this courtly bearing under, sometimes, almost brutal provocation, was an incomprehensible and undesirable thing. They wanted to see him hit back, give stroke for stroke, and could not understand his patient, dignified bearing. No man, under my observation in the House of Commons—and I have lived in it for more than twenty years—was ever assailed with such bitterness as Mr. Gladstone; and none have shown so little resentment. During his Ministry of 1880-5, he was nightly the object of vituperation on the part of the Irish members, who came nearer to the language of Billingsgate than of Westminster. It seems now, as it seemed then, that no man could ever forget, or forgive, the savagery of that prolonged onslaught. I do not know whether Mr. Gladstone has forgotten it. Certainly, through the last seven years he sat on one or other of the Front Benches he comported himself as if it had never been: as if the men whom he alluded to as "my hon. friends" had ever, as then, cooed him as gently as a sucking dove.

"DIGNITY AND COURTESY."

In private I have heard him speak of only two members of the House of Commons with abhorrence, and then the tone of voice and visage were terrible to hear and see. When he has appeared at the table following some bitter personal attack, and the House has hushed every sound in expectation of an avalanche of scathing wrath, he has but lightly touched on the personal matter, and returned to the course of argument it had spitefully broken in upon. Once or twice last Session he turned upon Mr. Chamberlain, and delighted the House by the courtly grace and delightful skill of his reprisal. But it was never savage, or with any under-current of nastiness—which possibly, after all, made it the more effective.

The late Mr. Cavendish Bentinck was much treasured by the House of Commons by reason of the temptation, invariably irresistible, he laid in the way of Mr. Gladstone to indulge in lofty banter. Oddly enough, in these later years, the man who stirred the blackest water of his ire was Mr. Jesse Collings, whose almost venerable inoffensiveness of appearance, as Mr. Gladstone turned upon him, completed the enjoyment of the episode. Mr. Finlay was another member who seemed quite inadequately to stir his wrath. At one time a promising recruit to the Liberal party, Mr. Finlay in 1886 seceded with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain. Like the other Dissentient Liberals he retained his old seat, which happened to be immediately behind the Front Opposition Bench. His contiguity seemed to affect Mr. Gladstone with physical repulsion. In the heat of

debate he would turn round to face Mr. Finlay, at the moment innocent of wrong-doing, fix him with flaming eye, and pour over him a torrent of scorching denunciation.

MONUMENTAL PATIENCE.

Mr. Gladstone's marvellous patience has been shown most conspicuously in his bearing towards temporary recalcitrant followers. For at least a quarter of a century his worst enemies have been those of his own household. As soon as he has completed the structure of a Ministry, so soon have "caves" been dug around it by hands that assumed to be friendly. His progress has ever been clogged by Tea Room cabals, the incessant unrest culminating in the great disruption of 1886.

I do not remember seeing Mr. Gladstone more angry than he was one Wednesday afternoon in the Session of 1870. Here again his wrath was excited by an ordinarily inoffensive person. The Irish Education Bill was before the House, and there was, naturally, a Tea Room Party formed by good Liberals for the destruction of their Leader and the bringing in of the other side. Mr. Fawcett was foremost in the cabal, laying the foundation, after a manner not unfamiliar in politics, of the Ministerial position he later attained under the statesman whom he had attacked from the flank. Mr. Miall, in genial Nonconformist fashion, accused Mr. Gladstone of profiting by the support of the Opposition, thus earning the suspicion, distrust, and antagonism of his most earnest supporters.

By an odd coincidence, Mr. Miall sat that afternoon in the very seat where last year Mr. Gladstone was accustomed to find Mr. Chamberlain. When he sat down the Premier leaped to his feet and, turning upon him with angry gesture, as if he would sweep him bodily out of the House, said: "I hope my hon. friend will not continue his support of the Government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so."

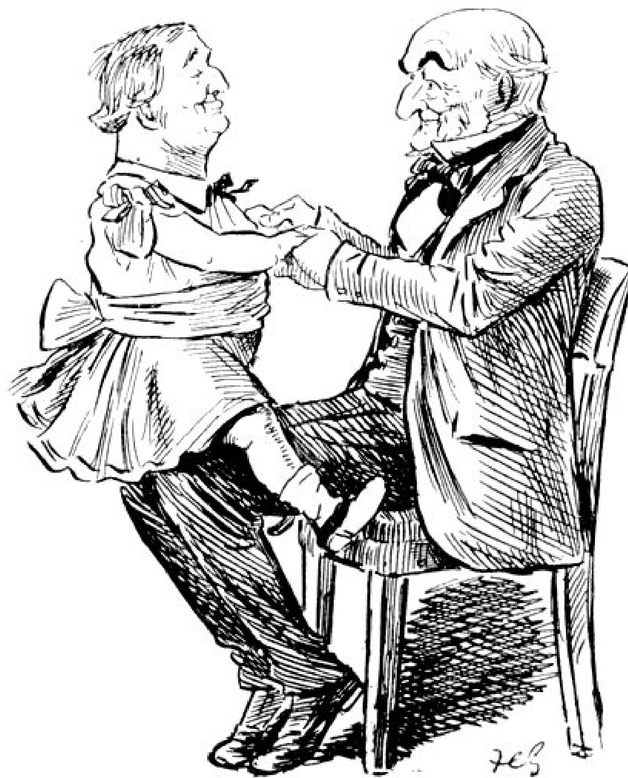
Twenty-four years have sped since that Wednesday afternoon. But I can see, as if it were yesterday, the figure with outstretched hand, and hear the thunderous voice in which this never since repeated invocation to the Deity rang through the House. The outbreak was memorable because rare. Since then the provocation has been as persistent as that which on this same Irish Education Bill prepared for the foundering of the Liberal party in the earliest months of 1874, and led to all that came to pass in the next six years of the Disraeli Parliament. Occasionally Mr. Gladstone has been moved to outburst of resentment. But it has been slight compared with the incentive.

We have heard and read in recent months much about the courage, eloquence, and statesmanship of this great career. To me it seems that the most strongly marked feature in it has been its quiet long suffering, its sublime patience. The fight is finished now, well done up to the very last, and to-day—

> For thee, good knight and grey, whose gleaming crest
> Leads us no longer, every generous breast
> Breathes benediction on thy well-won rest.

YOUTH AND AGE.

Mr. Gladstone is so accustomed to make passing references to his extreme age, and those in close intercourse with him have grown so habituated to the phenomenon, that the marvel of it comes to be considerably lessened. There are two personal recollections which serve to place the fact in full light. One was revived by Sir William Harcourt at one of the Saturday-to-Monday parties with which the Prince of Wales occasionally brightens Sandringham. A reference to the Premier's then approaching eighty-fourth birthday being made, Sir William Harcourt said he had a perfect recollection of an occasion when he was nursed on the knee of Mr. Gladstone. Sir William is no chicken, either in years or girth, and recollection of this affecting scene carried him back nearly sixty years. It was too much for Mr. Frank Lockwood, who happened to be amongst the guests forming this particular house party. Through eyes softened with the gleam of tears, the Recorder of Sheffield sketched on the back of the menu a picture of the infantile Harcourt fondled on the knee of his right hon. friend, both unconscious of all the coming years held in store for them. The sketch is, I believe, now among the prized possessions of the Princess of Wales.



OLD WILLIAM AND YOUNG WILLIAM.

The other reminiscence also belongs to the records of a country house, and it is Mr. Gladstone who recalls it. Mr. Henry Chaplin was a fellow guest. Mr. Gladstone one evening asked him whether his grandmother had not lived in a certain street in Mayfair. Mr. Chaplin assented. "Ah," said Mr. Gladstone, "I remember it very well. I lived next door to her for awhile when I was a child. She used to give evening parties. When the carriages were assembled to take up, my brother and I used to creep out of bed—it was in the summer time—softly open the window, get out our squirts, and discreetly fire away at the coachmen on the boxes. I remember the intense delight with which we used to see them look up to the sky and call out to ask each other whether it wasn't beginning to rain."

SIR ISAAC HOLDEN.

SIR ISAAC HOLDEN.

Mr. Gladstone is not, after all, the oldest man in the present House of Commons. Sir Isaac Holden is his senior by two years. Of the twain, I fancy Sir Isaac is the younger-looking. During the winter Session, lacking the impulse of the constant fight round the Home Rule standard, disappointed by the success of Obstructionist tactics, Mr. Gladstone, from time to time, showed a distinct falling-off from the splendid form he had presented through the long summer Session. Sometimes he sat on the

Treasury Bench, with chin sunk on his chest, a grey paleness stealing over his face, and the light of battle faded from his eyes. He never failed to pull himself together on returning to the House after a division. But the effort was made, not, as heretofore, in advance of his entrance, but after he had walked a few paces, with bent shoulders and weary gait.

Sir Isaac Holden, who has now entered on his eighty-seventh year, is as straight as a dart, and walks with springy step that shows no effort. He shares with Mr. Gladstone the characteristic, rare in a man of fourscore, that his eyes are still bright and clear. On occasions when the Standing Orders are suspended and the House sits late in anticipation of an important division, Sir Isaac waits till whatever hour is necessary in order to record his vote. When the House is up, he walks home.

Unlike Mr. Gladstone, Sir Isaac has leisure, means, and disposition to order his daily life upon carefully-considered rules. His day is automatically parcelled out: work, exercise, food, and recreation each having its appointed place and period. He is neither a vegetarian nor a teetotaler, though the main stock of his daily meals is fruit and vegetables. For wine he drinks a little claret. He has lived a busy, useful life, and owes a large fortune to his own industry and enterprise. Of singularly modest disposition, the only thing he thinks worthy of being mentioned to his credit is the fact that he invented the lucifer match.

THE EFFACEMENT OF THE IRISH MEMBER.

The still new Parliament possesses no more marked characteristic than the self-effacement of the Irish member. If any member of the 1874 or the 1880 Parliament were to revisit Westminster without knowledge of what had taken place since 1886, he would not recognise the scene. In those not distant days the Irish member pervaded the Chamber. Whatever the subject-matter of debate might be, he was sure to march in and make the question his own. If in any direct or indirect manner Ireland was concerned, this was natural enough. But any subject, found in China or Peru, would serve to occupy a night's sitting, and retard the progress of Government business. In the Parliament of 1880 two of the most prolonged and fiercest debates, inaugurated and carried on by the Irish members, related to flogging in the army and the state of affairs in South Africa.

This procedure was, up to 1886, part of a deliberate policy, of which Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell were the earliest exponents. They wanted their own Parliament on College Green. If the Saxon, regardless of entreaties and demands, insisted on keeping them at Westminster, they would make themselves as obnoxious as possible. The habit of constantly taking part in debate being thus formed, and fitting easily gentlemen to whom public speaking comes by nature, it was observed, though with less persistence, during the last Parliament, when the Irish party was no longer a political Ishmael, but was the acknowledged ally of one of the great English armies.

MR. SEXTON.

With the opening of the present Session a marvellous, almost miraculous, change has been wrought. Its most remarkable development, the fullest measure of rare personal sacrifice, is found in the case of Mr. Sexton. A man of rare gifts as a debater, no one takes so keen a pleasure in the delivery of Mr. Sexton's speeches as does the hon. member himself. This very excess of appreciation was at one time wont to mar his Parliamentary position. For the ordinary speaker, provision of one peroration per speech suffices. So illimitable are Mr. Sexton's natural resources, that he can toss off half-a-dozen perorations in the course of a single speech. In practice this habit grows a trifle tantalizing. Even the most indolent listener draws himself together and concentrates attention when a member, who has been talking for twenty minutes or half an hour, shows signs of coming to a conclusion. When, after declaiming a ringing peroration, the orator, recurring to leveller tones and less ornate style, quietly begins again, the feeling of disappointment is aggravated by a sense of having been betrayed.

MR. SEXTON.

In some of his set speeches, extending from one and a half to two hours, Mr. Sexton, doubtless unconsciously, has been known thus to impose on the confidence of the House three distinct times. This long-irresistible tendency to verbosity was regrettable as spoiling a position won by natural ability, hampered rather than assisted by adventitious circumstances.

Since the first Session of the new Parliament opened the Irish members, including Mr. Sexton, have conducted themselves in a manner that testifies to the potency of patriotism. The one object they have in view is to get a Home Rule Bill added to the Statute Book. It is avowedly, as Lord Randolph Churchill long ago, with brusque frankness, admitted, a race against time. Every week's delay in the accomplishment of the end imperils the success of the movement. In these circumstances any Irish member who lengthens the proceeding by speech-making is a traitor to the cause. The Irish members have, therefore, with one accord taken and kept a vow of silence.

RADICAL MARTYRS.

This is no new thing in Parliamentary tactics. A dozen years ago a similar effacement of another active party was brought about in the House of Commons. This was the active and useful private member, of whom the late Mr. Peter Rylands was a type, accustomed to sit through Committee of Supply worrying the Minister in charge of the Votes with innumerable questions and pin-pricking criticisms. The Irish were then the Obstructionists, and, taking full advantage of opportunity presented in Committee of Supply, they talked at large through the night in order to prevent Votes being taken. It came to pass that any honest, well-meaning member who desired to obtain information touching a particular Vote came to be regarded as a criminal. He was undoubtedly by his interposition playing the game of the Obstructionists. It was not only the time appropriated by his remarks that had to be taken into account. The quick-witted Irishmen, making the most of every opportunity, went off on the new trail opened, and followed it for the greater part of a sitting. The well-meaning economist was shunned by his friends, frowned on by his leaders, and took care not to repeat the indiscretion. Between 1880 and 1885 the old-fashioned custom of narrowly examining the Civil Service Estimates, not the least interesting function of a member of the House of Commons, received a blow from which it has not yet recovered.

The consequent self-repression was bad enough for sober Saxons like Mr. Peter Rylands and his mates in Committee. For the Celtic nature the strain must be much more severe. What Mr. Sexton suffers, as night after night he sits below the Gangway, hearing other members talk and recognising how much better he could put the points, who shall say? As for Mr. Tim Healy, he providentially finds partial relief in a running commentary that occasionally draws upon him reproof from the Speaker or Chairman. Mr. Balfour, with the instincts of a leader partially responsible for good order in the House, once welcomed these little ebullitions. They were, he said, equivalent to the blowing-off of steam. Shut off the means of partial relief, and fatal explosion might follow.

THE EXTINCT IRISH MEMBER.

It is curious but not inexplicable how the type of Irish member familiar eighteen or even thirteen years ago has disappeared. Of the band Isaac Butt reappeared on the political stage to lead, but few are left. Even of their successors, the body Mr. Biggar inspired and Mr. Parnell organized, those still in the House may be counted on the fingers of one hand. And what a rare group of individuals they formed! There were many characters that might have stepped out of the pages of

Lever or Lover. Butt himself was an interesting figure, a relic of Parliamentary time and manner that to-day seem prehistoric. It is a pity that such a man, with his great gifts and his wide experience, should have been allowed to drop behind the horizon without the tribute of that biography rendered to many far less interesting and important people. There was something pathetic about the renunciation of his leadership by the party he had created. When Parnell was a youth at college, Butt was fighting for Home Rule for Ireland. He was the Moses of this Irish pilgrimage. Some failings and shortcomings may have justified the edict which forbade him to enter the Promised Land. But it was a little hard that he should have been ousted from the command whilst still on the march he had planned.

MR. TIM HEALY.

From an Irish MS. of the 19th Century.

I remember the night when, entering the House whilst the usual flood of questions was pouring from the Irish camp, he walked on, crossed the Gangway, and took his seat behind the Front Opposition Bench. He did not long survive this severance from the majority of his party. He was not old as years are counted. But he had lived his days, had heard the chimes at midnight, was bowed in body, harassed in mind, and this last blow shattered him.

There were few to migrate with him above the Gangway. Almost alone, McCarthy Downing followed the old leader, a lachrymose comforter, sitting near him, as Butt, with his back turned to the Irish quarter, sat with his head leaning on his hands listening to the shrill gibes of Joseph Gillis, or the more polished but not therefore less acrid taunts of Parnell.

Mr. Mitchell Henry was one of the few who stood by the old chief, the rift thus developed widening as the influence of Parnell and Biggar prevailed, and open war was declared against law and order and the House of Commons. When the Liberals came in in 1880, and the Irish members, breaking through a new tradition, decided to remain stationary on the left of the Speaker, Mitchell Henry crossed the floor, sat with the Ministerialists, and became a favourite target of the Parnellites.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN.

With him went Sir Patrick O'Brien, the most delightful embodiment of genuine Irish humour of the unconscious, inconsequential order known to the present generation. Sir Pat, with his left hand in his trousers pocket, his right hand shaking defiance at his countrymen opposite, was a precious possession, for ever lost to an increasingly prosaic Parliament. He could not away with the new kind of Irish member represented by Mr. Kenny, "the young sea-sarpent from County Clare," as in a flight of lofty but vague eloquence he called him. "Order! order!" cried the Speaker, sternly. "Then, Mr. Speaker," said Sir Pat, with a courtly bow, "I will withdraw the sea-sarpent and substitute the hon. member for County Clare."

Stories From the Diary of a Doctor.

By the Authors of "The Medicine Lady."

X.—WITHOUT WITNESSES.

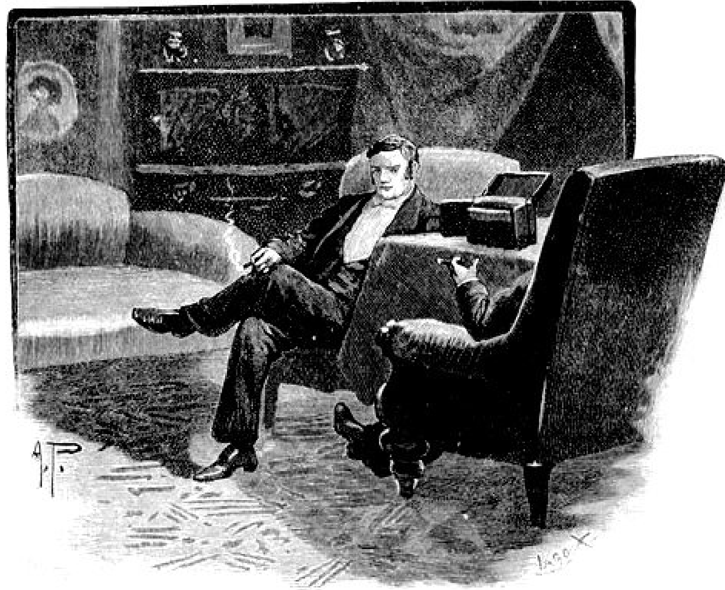
In the October of 1890 I went to pay a short visit to my friends, the Brabazons, of Penporran, in Cornwall. I could only spare a week out of town, and looked forward to my visit with the pleasure which a busy man must feel when he can relax his labours for a short time.

Brabazon was an old college friend, and on the first evening of my stay we had many memories to revive and many friends to talk over. We sat until the small hours in his smoking-room, and it was early morning before we retired to bed. Just as I was leaving the room, he said to me:—

"By the way, you will find some disturbing elements at work here. I know you are fond of attributing everything to some psychological cause. I wonder what you will say to the love affairs of Randall, Carleton, and Miss Farnham."

I naturally asked what my host meant.

"Randall and Carleton are both desperately in love with the same girl," he replied. "Did you not notice the state of affairs this evening at dinner?"



"WE HAD MANY MEMORIES TO REVIVE."

"I naturally noticed Miss Farnham," I answered at once. "It would be difficult not to be attracted by so striking a personality."

"Barbara Farnham is, without exception, the most dangerous girl of my acquaintance," replied Brabazon, with a slight laugh. "Before her advent on the scene, Randall and Carleton were the best possible friends. Now they are at daggers drawn."

"I confess I did not particularly observe them," I answered.

"Oh, they are just ordinary good young fellows," replied Brabazon. "I am sorry for Carleton, of course, for I don't think he has the ghost of a chance with Miss Farnham. He is not particularly good looking, and he has the misfortune to be poor. Randall is a handsome lad, and has considerable expectations. His father is Lord Hartmore—but the fact is, I don't think the girl means to marry either of them—she is simply playing one against the other for her own ends. She is a handsome witch, and a dangerous one. She plays as carelessly with edged tools—as carelessly and unconcernedly as a baby would with its rattle."

I said nothing further. Brabazon conducted me to my room, and wished me good-night. I sat down by the fire, and thought in an idle manner over the events of the evening. There was a large house party at Penporran. Shooting was going on vigorously, and cub-hunting had begun. Some of the guests were acquaintances of mine. In short, I looked forward to a pleasant week in this genial house. As I laid my head on my pillow I thought again, but without any specially keen interest, of Brabazon's story about the disturbing elements which were now agitating the air of this otherwise peaceful mansion.

Two young men were in love with the same girl. Surely the situation was a very ordinary one. Such a complication happened daily.

I wondered why Brabazon should have troubled himself to mention such an ordinary event, but as I was dropping off to sleep, I saw rising up before me, in my mind's eye, the proud, beautiful face of Barbara Farnham, and a kind of intuition told me that these commonplace incidents might assume the form of tragedy in her cruel and careless hands.

I dreamt of Miss Farnham that night, and came down to breakfast the next morning with my curiosity considerably aroused about her.

She was in the room when I entered, and was idly helping herself to a cup of coffee, which she carried to a distant window where a small table was also laid for breakfast. She sat down, and, sipping it leisurely, looked around her with a careless glance. Her eyes fell on me—she smiled and motioned to me to approach.

"Pray bring your breakfast to this table," she said, in a light tone. "I was immensely interested in you when I heard you were coming. I adore doctors, particularly if they are clever. Are you going to ride this morning?"

I answered in the affirmative, and asked her if she was fond of horses.

"Fond?" she replied, a flash of added warmth lighting up her peculiar red-brown eyes. "I am going to whisper a secret to you—I never could compare horses and human beings. I consider the horse the infinitely nobler creature of the two."

I laughed, and we entered into an animated conversation.

While we were talking, Carleton came into the room. He was a squarely built young man, with deeply set dark eyes, and a determined chin and mouth. His figure was slightly above the middle height; he was extremely spare, but had good shoulders and was well set up. As soon as ever he appeared in sight, Miss Farnham, by an almost imperceptible movement, slightly turned her back to him and her talk with me became even more animated and full of wit than before. Her gay, light laugh must have reached Carleton, who came straight across the room to her side.

"You are in your favourite seat," he said.

"Yes," she replied, "and Dr. Halifax is having breakfast with me."

Then she turned to continue her conversation with me, while Carleton stood perfectly erect and silent by her side.

"Why don't you eat something?" she said to him, presently.

"There is time enough," he answered.

Finding he would not go away she tried to draw him into conversation, but he was evidently not in the humour to make himself agreeable. His answers were confined to monosyllables, and to some of Miss Farnham's remarks he did not reply at all.

I confess that I began to think him an unmitigated bore.

A change was, however, quickly to take place in the situation—Randall, the other lover, appeared on the scene, and his coming acted like a flash of sunshine. He was a gay, handsome, debonair-looking young fellow. He had good teeth, good eyes, a genial smile, a hearty manner. His voice was musical, and he knew well how to use it. He nodded carelessly to one or two acquaintances when he entered the room, and then came straight to Miss Farnham's table.

She shook hands with him, and he nodded a cheerful good morning to Carleton and me.

"That is right," he said, smiling brightly at the handsome girl; "you promised to reserve a seat for me at this table, and I see you have kept your word. Have you done breakfast, Carleton?"

"I had something an hour ago," replied Carleton.

Randall went to a sideboard to help himself to a generous portion of a dish which was being kept hot with a spirit lamp. On his return our conversation became gayer and more lively than ever.

I must confess that I saw nothing to object to in Miss Farnham's manners. I could not imagine why Brabazon spoke of her as a dangerous witch. She tried to be polite to both men—or rather, she was polite without effort, but there was not a trace of the flippant in her manner or bearing. Her beauty was undoubtedly of a remarkable order. Her eyes were her most striking characteristic. There was a great deal of red in their brown, which was further accentuated by the red brown of her long eyelashes. The eyes were capable of every shade of expression, and could be at times as eloquent and as full of meaning as those of that bewitching creature, the collie. Her eyebrows were dark and delicately pencilled. Her hair was tawny in shade—she had quantities of it, and she wore it picturesquely round her stately, statuesque head. In some lights that brilliantly coloured hair looked as if a sunbeam had been imprisoned in it. Her complexion was of a warm, creamy whiteness. Her figure was slight and graceful. But for her eyes she might have been simply remarked as a handsome girl; but those eyes made her beautiful, and lifted her completely out of the commonplace.

We had nearly finished breakfast, when I was startled by seeing Randall suddenly press his hand to his eyes, and turn so white that I thought he was going to lose consciousness. He recovered himself almost immediately, however, and so completely, that no one else remarked the circumstance. Miss Farnham rose from the breakfast-table.

"I am going to ride with you, Dr. Halifax," she said, nodding brightly to me. "I shall come downstairs in my habit in half an hour."

She was crossing the room to speak to some of the other guests when Carleton came up to her.

"I want to say something to you," he said—"can we go to some room where we shall be quite undisturbed?"

His words were distinctly audible, not only to me, but to several other people in the room.

Randall in particular heard them, and I could see that he was waiting anxiously for the reply.

"I want to ride this morning. I have no time for private confidences," replied Miss Farnham, in a distinctly vexed tone.

"I won't keep you long," replied Carleton—"what I have to say is of great importance, at least to me."

"I will give you ten minutes after lunch; will that suffice?"

"Five minutes now will do better. I am very much in earnest when I make this request."

"Very well," said Miss Farnham, in a light tone; "importunate people generally have their way.

Come into the conservatory—there is a rose there on which I have set my heart; it is too high for me to reach."

She left the room as she spoke, and Carleton quickly followed her. As they disappeared, I noticed more than one guest looking significantly after them. Carleton's pluck was distinctly approved of —I could see that by the expression on some of the ladies' faces and one, as she passed close to Randall's side, was heard to murmur, audibly:—

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

Randall came up to me and asked me to join him in a smoke on the balcony. As we walked up and down, he talked cheerfully, and, whatever anxiety he may inwardly have felt, was careful not to betray a trace of it.

In less than half an hour Miss Farnham joined us. She was in a dark brown riding-habit, which toned perfectly with her rich and peculiar colouring. Her spirits were gay, not to say wild, and the warm, creamy whiteness of her face seemed to glow now as if with hidden fire.

"Are you not ready for your ride?" she said, looking at me with a certain reproach. "The horses will be round in less than ten minutes. It is a splendid morning for a gallop. You are coming, too?" she added, turning suddenly to Randall.

"I only waited for you to invite me," he said. "Of course I shall come, with pleasure. But I thought," he added, in a low tone, coming close to her side as he spoke, "that you arranged to ride with Ronald Carleton this morning?"

"That is off," she replied, in a light tone. "Mr. Carleton has, I believe, another engagement."

The balcony on which we were walking led round to one of the entrances to the house; at this moment a groom was seen leading a smart mare up to the door, and at the same instant Carleton ran down the steps, and sprang lightly into the saddle.

"Where are you off to?" exclaimed Randall, bending out of the balcony to speak to him. "Miss Farnham, Dr. Halifax, and I are all going out immediately. Won't you join us?"

"Not this morning, I think," said Carleton, constraint in his tone. He gathered up the reins, and the mare began to prance about.

"You are holding her too much on the curb," exclaimed Randall.

"Thanks, I think I know what I'm about," replied Carleton, with evident temper. "Quiet, you brute, quiet," he continued, vainly endeavouring to restrain the movements of the impatient animal.

"I tell you, that mare won't stand the curb," shouted Randall. "Give her her head, and she'll do anything you ask her. I know, for I've often ridden her."

"When I require a riding lesson from you, I'll inform you of the fact," answered Carleton, in a sulky voice, which was rendered almost ridiculous by the frantic movements of the mare, now thoroughly upset.

Miss Farnham, who had been standing in the background, came up at this juncture, and took her place conspicuously by Randall's side.

"Mr. Randall is right and you are wrong," she exclaimed. "It is absolutely cruel to ride that mare on the curb."

Carleton looked up with a scowl, which anything but improved him. He would not even glance at Miss Farnham, but his eyes flashed an angry fire at his more fortunate rival.

"Of course, Randall is right," he exclaimed. "All the odds are in his favour."

"Nonsense," retorted Randall, with heat.

"Come, come, gentlemen, pray don't quarrel on this lovely morning," said Miss Farnham. "Mr. Carleton, I wish you a pleasant ride."

She left the balcony as she spoke, and Randall and I immediately followed her example.

We had a splendid ride over an extensive moorland country, and returned to lunch in excellent spirits and in high good humour with each other. Carleton had not yet come back, but his absence did not seem to depress anyone, certainly not Miss Farnham, whose bright eyes and gay, animated manner made her the life of the party. Randall was radiant in the sunshine of her presence. She was confidential and almost affectionate in her manner to him: and he undoubtedly looked, and was, at his best.

I could not help cordially liking him and thinking that the pair were well matched. Notwithstanding Brabazon's words of the night before, I had no doubt that Miss Farnham was sincerely attached to Randall, and would tell him so presently.

I spent the greater part of the afternoon alone with my host, and did not see the rest of the guests until we met at dinner. Carleton had then returned. He sat between a red-haired girl and a very fat old lady, and looked as *distrait* and bored as man well could. Randall, on the other hand, was in his best form. His clothes sat well on him. He was, undoubtedly, a handsome, striking-looking man.

I cannot describe Miss Farnham's dress. It was ethereal in texture and suited her well. She was not seated in the neighbourhood of either Randall or Carleton, but once or twice I noticed that her eyes wandered down to their part of the table. For some reason, she was not in such high spirits as she had been in the early

"CARLETON LOOKED UP WITH A SCOWL."

part of the day. My neighbour, a quiet, middle-aged spinster, began suddenly to talk to me about her.

"I see you are interested in Barbara Farnham," she began. "I am not the least surprised—you but follow the example of all the other men who know her."

"Miss Farnham is a very beautiful girl." I replied.

Miss Derrick gave a short sigh.

"Yes," she replied, "Barbara has a beautiful face. She is a fine creature too, although of course terribly spoilt."

"Have you known her long?" I asked.

"Yes; since she was a child. Of course you must notice, Dr. Halifax, the state of matters. Barbara's conduct is more or less the talk of the whole house. I presume from his manner that poor Mr. Carleton's chances of success are quite over, and for my part I am sorry. He is not rich, but he is a good fellow—he is devotedly attached to Barbara, and his abilities are quite above the average. Yes, I am sorry for Mr. Carleton. Barbara might have done worse than return his affection."

I did not feel inclined to pursue the subject any further with this somewhat garrulous lady. After a pause, I remarked:—

"Miss Farnham looks tired, and does not seem in her usual spirits."

Miss Derrick shrugged her thin shoulders.

"What else can you expect?" she answered. "Barbara is a creature of moods. She was quite *exaltée* all the morning; now she will be correspondingly dull, until a fresh wave of excitement raises her spirits."

At this moment the signal for the ladies to withdraw was given. After their departure, Carleton and Randall found themselves sitting close together. I noticed that neither man spoke to the other, and also observed that after a time Carleton deliberately changed his seat for one at a distant part of the table.

We did not sit long over wine, and when we came into the drawing-room a lady was playing some classical music with precision and sufficient brilliancy to attract several musical men to the vicinity of the piano. Her place was quickly taken by the droll man of the party, who entertained the company with comic songs. The evening dragged on in the usual manner. For some unaccountable reason no one seemed quite in good spirits. As for me, I found myself constantly looking in the direction of the door. I heartily wished that either Carleton or Randall would come in—I acknowledged to myself that the presence of one at least of these gentlemen in the room would give me relief.

An hour and more passed away, however, and neither of them appeared. I glanced towards Miss Farnham. She was standing near the piano, idly playing with a large feather fan. I thought I read both solicitude and expectation in her eyes.

The funny man was trolling out a sea-song to which a lively chorus was attached. Brabazon came up and touched my arm.

"When that is over," he said, in a low voice, "I will ask Barbara Farnham to sing."

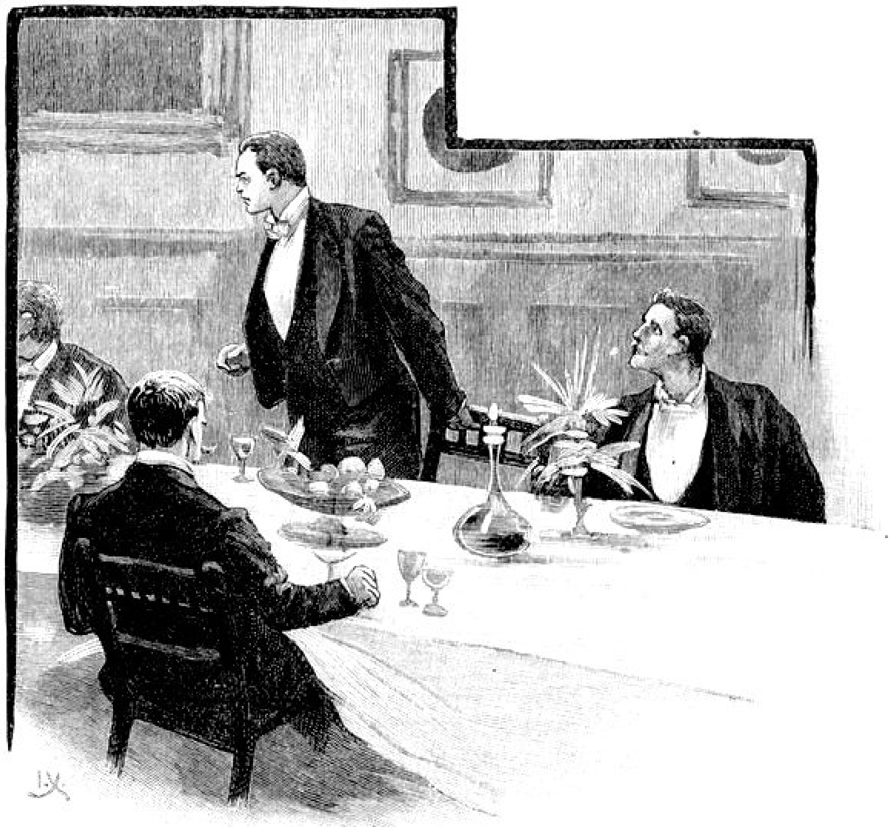
"Can she sing?" I asked.

"Can she!" he reiterated. "Yes, she sings," he replied, emphatically. "Wait—you will hear her in a moment. Her voice is the most absolutely sympathetic I have ever listened to."

Soon afterwards Miss Farnham went to the piano. She played her own accompaniment. One grand sweep her hands seemed to take of the instrument, as if they meant to embrace it, and then a voice, high, full, sweet, magnificent in its volume of melody, rose on the air and seemed to fill the room.

Brabazon was right, Barbara Farnham could sing. As the words fell from her lips, there was no other sound in the listening room.

I jotted those words down afterwards from memory—they seemed to me to be a fit prelude to the scene which was immediately to follow:—



"CARLETON DELIBERATELY CHANGED HIS SEAT."

Thou hast filled me a golden cup
With a drink divine that glows,
With the bloom that is flowing up
From the heart of the folded rose.
The grapes in their amber glow,
And the strength of the blood-red wine,
All mingle and change and flow
In this golden cup of thine
With the scent of the curling wine,
With the balm of the rose's breath—
For the voice of love is thine,
And thine is the Song of Death!

The voice of the singer sank low as she approached the end of her song. The final words were in a minor key. I looked full at Miss Farnham, and her dark eyes met mine. They were full of apprehension. A kind of premonition of coming sorrow might well have filled her breast from the look in their depths.

There was a noise and sense of confusion in the outer drawing-room. People stood back to make way for someone, and hurrying steps came quickly towards the piano.

Miss Farnham sprang to her feet, the last notes of the song arrested on her lips.

Carleton, an overcoat covering his evening dress, his hair dishevelled, his eyes wild, had come hastily to her side.

"You will think that I have killed him, Barbara; but, before God, it is not true!" he said in a hoarse whisper—then he grasped my arm.

"Come, I want you," he said, and he dragged me, as if he were a young fury, out of the room.

"What, in the name of Heaven, is the matter?" I asked of him when we found ourselves in the hall.

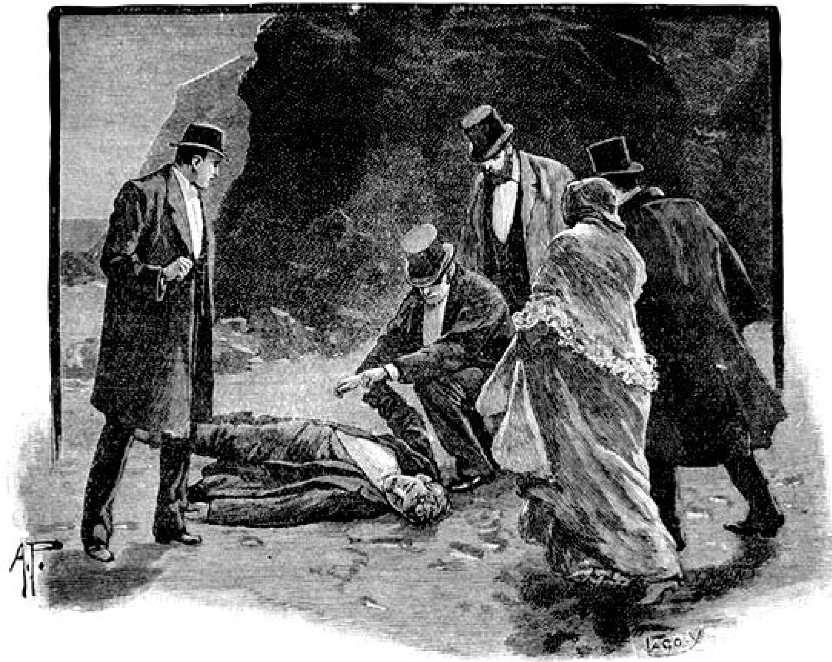
"Randall has fallen over the cliff down by Porran's field," he gasped. "I have found the—the body. Oh! no, no, what am I saying? Not the body yet—not a body when I left it—it breathed—it just breathed when I left. I tried to drag it up here, but it was too heavy. Come at once, for the love of Heaven."

Other people had followed us out of the drawing-room. I encountered a glance of fire from Miss Farnham's dark eyes—her face was like death itself. Brabazon, in a tone full of authority, as befitted the host, began to speak.

"Come!" he said. "Accident or no, there is not a moment to be lost in trying to help the poor fellow. You will lead us to the spot at once, Carleton. Come, Halifax; what a blessing that you happen to be on the spot!"

"Get some brandy and something which we can improvise into a litter or shutter," I exclaimed. "I am going to my room to fetch my surgical case."

I ran upstairs. A moment or two later we were on our way to the scene of the accident. Every man of the party accompanied us, and several of the ladies. The foremost of the group was Miss Farnham herself. She had hastily flung a shawl over her head, and the train of her rich dinner dress was slung across her arm. She looked at Carleton, and with a peremptory gesture seemed to invite him to come to her



"I FELT FOR THE PULSE IN THE LIMP AND POWERLESS WRIST."

side. He did so, and they rushed on—too quickly for many of the rest of the party to keep up with them.

It was a bright, moonlight night, and we had scarcely any need of the lantern which Brabazon was thoughtful enough to bring with him. We had to go some distance to reach the spot where poor Randall was lying, but by-and-by we found him stretched partly on his back, partly rolled over on his left side, on a little strip of sand which gleamed cold in the moonlight.

"Yes, it was here I left him," exclaimed Carleton. He fell on his knees as he spoke and looked intently into the poor lad's face.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, looking up at me, "he can't be dead. I dragged him as far as this, and then left him lying on his back. See, he has moved—he is partly on his side now!"

I motioned to Carleton to make way for me to approach. I felt for the pulse in the limp and powerless wrist. I laid my hand on the heart—then I gently raised the head, and felt along the region of the skull.

"You will give him a little brandy," exclaimed Brabazon; "here is the flask."

Miss Farnham took it out of Brabazon's hands, unscrewed it, and began to pour some into the cup. As she did so, she knelt also on the sand. I looked at her and felt that she would probably need the stimulant which could avail nothing now to the dead.

"It is all over," I said; "he is dead, poor fellow!"

As I spoke, I stretched out my hand and took the brandy flask from Miss Farnham. She looked wildly round, glanced at Carleton, gave a piercing cry, and fell forward over Randall's body. She had completely lost consciousness. I laid her flat on the sand, and, applying some restoratives, she quickly came to her senses.

The body of the dead man was lifted up and laid on some boards which we had brought with us, and we returned slowly to the house. Brabazon gave his arm to Miss Farnham, who truly needed it, for she staggered as she walked. I looked round for Carleton. There was a wild expression in his eyes, which made me anxious about him. I saw, too, that he wished to linger behind the others.

"Come," I said, going up to him, "this has given you a terrible shock; why, you are just as much overcome as Miss Farnham."

I dragged his hand through my arm, and we followed in the rear of the sad procession. All the way up to the house he did not speak, nor did I trouble him with questions. I saw that his misery had made him dumb for the time being—in short, he was in a stunned condition. I dreaded, however, the return tide of strong emotion which must inevitably follow this apparent calm. I guessed that Carleton was a man of strong sensibilities. I could read character well—most men in my profession have much practice in this art. The human eye tells a doctor a good deal. The lips may falter out certain utterances, which the eyes will belie. I read truth and sincerity in the honest eyes of this young man. He was intensely reserved—he was jealous to a morbid degree—he in all probability possessed anything but a good temper; nevertheless, his eyes were honest, and I felt certain that he had nothing whatever to do with poor Randall's death. Nevertheless, I knew well that appearances were strongly against him.

When we got to the house I turned to him and said, abruptly:—

"I should like to see you in Brabazon's smoking-room in about half an hour."

He raised sullen eyes to my face.

"Come," I said, laying my hand on his shoulder, "I tell you at once I do not believe that you killed that poor fellow, but we must talk the matter over. I am anxious to be your friend. It is absolutely necessary that you should confide in someone. I am as unbiased in my views of the whole situation as man can be. Come and talk to me in half an hour in the smoking-room."

He did not say a word, but I knew by the way in which he suddenly grasped my hand that he would come.

The dead man was carried into the library, where he was laid reverently on a table. Brabazon then had a consultation with me as to the best means of breaking the news to Lord and Lady Hartmore. Poor Randall was their only son; it was a terrible business altogether, and Brabazon was naturally greatly distressed.

I asked after Miss Farnham. He told me that she had gone straight to her room. His tone was scarcely sympathetic, and I looked at him in wonder.

"I have no patience with her," he exclaimed. "She has behaved very badly—this awful thing would not have occurred but for her. She has driven poor Carleton——"

I put up my hand to arrest the words.

"Hush!" I exclaimed. "You surely don't——?"

He laughed aloud in his agitation.

"I surely do," he began. "There, Halifax, we won't give the thing a name to-night. Of course, there must be a coroner's inquest."

"Yes," I replied.

"It is a terrible thing altogether," continued Brabazon; "and to think of its happening here. And to Randall, of all people—a man with his expectations. Well, it is a lesson which Miss Farnham may well lay to heart."

We were standing together in the library—the hour was now nearly midnight. The body of the dead man lay on the centre table covered with a white sheet. There came a knock at the door, and to my dismay and astonishment I saw Carleton enter the room.

"I heard voices, and guessed you would be here," he exclaimed. "I have recovered my nerves to a certain extent, and wish to tell you, sir," looking at his host, "and you also, Dr. Halifax, exactly what has occurred."

"Come into the smoking-room," said Brabazon, not unkindly.

"No," answered the poor lad. "If you will allow me, I will tell my story here. There is not much to tell, but what there is had best be told in the presence of——" his lip trembled—he could not get further words out. He sank suddenly into a chair, and covered his white face with his shaking hands. "We must humour him," I said, turning and speaking in a whisper to Brabazon—"and before God," I continued, impulsively, "I believe he is as innocent as I am."

I drew forward a chair for myself as I spoke, but Brabazon stood by the hearth.

Carleton began to speak almost directly—his emotion was quickly mastered.

"HE COVERED HIS WHITE FACE WITH HIS SHAKING HANDS."

"I have loved Barbara Farnham for two years. At intervals she has given me great encouragement, and I had fair hopes of winning her until she met Randall in this house a fortnight ago. This morning I felt desperate, and resolved to put my fortunes to the test. I asked her to give me an interview after breakfast, as you doubtless noticed." He paused and looked at me—I nodded my head, and he continued: "We went into the conservatory, and I—I spoke to her. I told her the naked truth, perhaps a little too bluntly. I asked her if she really meant to—no, I must not say what I did ask her. It is unfair—unfair to her. From her manner and her words I plainly gathered that she preferred Randall to me, and that I had no chance whatever of winning her. Perhaps I lost my temper—anyhow, it was unmanly of me to say what I did. I accused her of valuing Randall's position. I told her plainly that if Randall and I could change places, I should be the favoured one. We had a disagreement; our interview was full of pain, at least to me. When I left Miss Farnham the Evil One seemed to enter into me, and I hated Randall as I never knew before that I could hate anyone. I would not ride with the others, but went away by myself, and the whole day has been a long agony to me.

"My hatred to Randall grew worse and worse, until its vehemence half frightened me. We used to be good friends, too. After dinner I felt that I could not bear a couple of conventional hours in the drawing-room, and went out to nurse my misery in the open air. I had no idea that Randall was also out. I went along by the shore, but mounted to the higher cliffs on my way back. I intended to leave Penporran early to-morrow, and felt impatient for the hour when I could get away from the loathsome sight of my successful rival.

"As I was walking along by the edge of the cliffs, and had just entered Porran's field, I felt my heart jump into my mouth, for Randall was coming to meet me. He was about a hundred yards away when I first saw him. He is a taller man than I, and he seemed to stand out sharply between me and the sky. I knew by his attitude that he was smoking a cigar. I stood still for a moment. I did not want to pass him. My heart was full of torment, and I hated to meet him out there, with not a soul to stand between us. You know that part of the cliff, Mr. Brabazon? Randall had just come to that portion of it which is railed in to keep the cattle from tumbling over. I don't know what possessed him to take the outside path, which is very narrow and slippery. He did so, however; and now, for the first time, he must have noticed me. I was within fifty yards of him, coming also along the edge of the cliff. He stood stock still, as if something or somebody had shot him. I thought he was about to shout to me, but instead of doing so, he threw up one hand and clutched his brow. The next instant he began to sway from side to side, and before I could approach him, he had fallen over the cliff, down that awful height!

"My absolute surprise stunned me for a moment—then I ran up to the spot where he had fallen, and throwing myself on my face and hands, looked over the cliff, in the hopes that he might have clung on to something. The moon was bright, but I could not see him. Looking down from that height made me dizzy, and I saw there was nothing for it but to retrace my steps as fast as possible to the shore. I ran quickly, and was breathless when I got up to him. He was lying on his back, with his arms stretched out—some blood was oozing from his mouth. I wiped it away and called to him, and putting my arms under his head, tried to lift him. He moaned and moved faintly. I felt his limbs—they seemed all right. I had a wild hope that he was only stunned, and tried to drag him along the shore. He was too heavy for me, however, and I feared that I was only injuring him in my attempt to get him back to the house. I laid him as easily as I could on a piece of sand above high-water mark, and then ran back to Penporran. It was on my way back that the awful idea first occurred to me that Barbara would think I had killed him. I seemed to see all the circumstances of his terrible death with preternatural clearness, and I felt sure that the gravest suspicion would attach to me. I have come to this room now to tell you both, before Heaven, and in the presence of the dead man, the solemn truth. Of course, I cannot compel you to believe me."

Carleton stood up as he uttered these last words. His attitude was very manly, and the look on his face was at once straightforward and quiet. I liked him better than I thought I ever could have liked him. I felt deep sympathy for him, and looked at Brabazon, expecting him to share my sentiments. To my surprise, however, I saw by the expression round his lips that he was not favourably impressed by Carleton, and that his feelings towards him were the reverse of sympathetic.

Carleton looked full at him, expecting him to speak. When he did not, the poor fellow repeated his last remark, a faint quaver perceptible in his voice:

"Of course, I cannot compel you to believe me."

"Thank you for coming to see us," said Brabazon then; "you have been the first to give name to a suspicion which will, doubtless, be harboured by more than one person who has known all the circumstances of this unhappy case. I sincerely pity you, Carleton, but I prefer to keep my judgment in abeyance for the time being. Halifax will tell you that a coroner's inquest will be necessary. At the inquest the whole matter will be gone carefully into. You may be certain that all possible justice will be done you."

"Justice!" exclaimed Carleton, a faint smile playing for an instant round his lips. "Justice, when there were no witnesses! Oh, that the dead could speak!" He turned abruptly and prepared to leave the room.

Brabazon called after him.

"You must give me your word of honour that you will not attempt to leave Penporran before the inquest."

"You may rest assured on that point." said Carleton.

He left the room. The restraint he was putting upon himself gave a dignity to his whole bearing which impressed me much.

"I fully believe in that poor fellow's innocence," I said, as soon as the door had closed behind him. Brabazon gave me a keen glance.

"You are a good judge of character," he said, after a pause; "still, I prefer to keep my judgment in abeyance."

Shortly afterwards he bade me good-night, and I retired to my own room. I closed the door and stood by the hearth, where the ashes of the fire, which had been lit some hours previous and had long ago burnt itself out, were to be seen.

I felt too restless to go to bed, and wished the morning would come. I was standing so, thinking over all the circumstances which had turned our gay party into one of mourning, when I heard a footfall outside my door. I thought it might possibly be Carleton, and going across the room, I

opened the door and went out into the corridor. To my astonishment, Miss Farnham, still wearing her gay evening dress, stood before me.

"I was thinking of knocking at your door," she said, "but had scarcely courage to do so. I want to speak to you."

"I will see you in the morning," I said.

"It is morning already," she replied. "This is no time for conventionality, Dr. Halifax; I wish to speak to you now. You cannot sleep, and no more can I. Please follow me to Mrs. Brabazon's sitting-room, where a fire and a lamp are still burning."

She led the way, and I obeyed her without a word.

"Now tell me the truth." she said, the moment we found ourselves in the room. "Will Mr. Carleton be accused of having murdered poor Arthur Randall?"

"PLEASE FOLLOW ME."

"There is no doubt that grave suspicion will attach to him," I answered, without hesitation.

"But you think him innocent?" she queried.

"I think him innocent. As innocent as you or I."

"Oh, don't speak of me," she said, sinking suddenly on the sofa. "Pray don't mention my innocence. But for me this tragedy would never have happened."

I looked long at her before I replied.

"In one sense you may be right," I answered; "it is quite possible that but for you Carleton would not have witnessed Randall's death. Still, you must not be unfair to yourself—you are not accountable for the sudden brain seizure which must have caused Randall to reel and fall over the cliff."

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Carleton has just described the accident to Brabazon and me," I answered. "He saw Randall sway and fall over the cliff. I believe his story, although I fear few people will agree with me."

"I don't know the story," she said, faintly. "Pray tell it to me."

I did so in a few words.

"You believe all this?" she said, with intense eagerness, when I had done speaking.

"Yes."

"How do you account for Mr. Randall's death?"

I could not help sighing deeply.

"You allude now to the difficulty of the position," I said. "At the present moment I cannot account for Randall's death. A man in perfect health is not often attacked with such violent vertigo as to cause him to lose the power of keeping himself upright." Then I paused—I was thinking deeply. "Undoubtedly there have been such cases," I said, "but they are rare."

I remembered, as I spoke, Randall's change of colour and the sudden pressure of his hand to his head that morning at breakfast.

"You have seen a good deal of the poor fellow," I said. "Did he ever at any time complain of peculiar symptoms to you? Did you ever notice anything about him which would lead you not to suppose him in perfect health?"

"Never," she said at once, emphatically. "He always seemed to me to be the perfect embodiment of the rudest health and strength."

"The death is very mysterious," I said; "and while I personally believe poor Carleton's story, I fear matters will go hard with him."

I was about to leave the room, as I did not imagine Miss Farnham could have anything further to say to me, when she exclaimed, impulsively, her eyes filled with the most terrible anguish, her face turning white as death: "If, indeed, this thing is true, and if Ronald Carleton has to suffer in

consequence of Mr. Randall's death, I shall put an end to my own life."

"Nonsense!" I said, sharply. "You must not speak in that wild way. You know you don't mean a word that you say."

"You mistake me," she replied. "I exaggerate nothing. I state a simple fact when I tell you that if Ronald Carleton suffers for this, my remorse will be greater than I can bear. I have behaved badly to him."

"Yes, God knows you have!" I interrupted. I felt angry with her, and did not want to spare her at that moment. "You have behaved badly to as honest and true-hearted a man as ever breathed. When will beautiful women like you learn that men's hearts are not mere balls to be kicked here and there?"

"Oh, yes, you are right to abuse me," she said. "Go on, go on. I am so unhappy that nothing you can say will add to my pain. My cup of misery is full. I have ruined the man I love."

"The man you love?" I queried, looking at her in astonishment. "Nay, you must not be too hard on yourself. You surely are not accountable for Randall's tragic end. If Carleton's story is true, he died from sudden vertigo. You were kind to him while he lived—you have nothing to reproach yourself with on that score."

"Yes, I have," she answered, with sudden passion. "I deceived him. I made him think that I loved him; in reality, he was nothing to me. It is Ronald Carleton whom I love."

"Then, in the name of the Evil One——" I began.

"Yes, you may well quote the Evil One," she retorted. "I think he has been about the house all day. I think he entered into me this morning when poor Ronald spoke to me. The Evil One held me back then from telling him what I really thought. I gave him to understand that I—I hated him, and all the time I loved him—I loved him then—I love him now—I shall love him for ever! The dead man is nothing to me: less than nothing!"

She began to walk up and down the room: fever spots burnt on her cheeks; her eyes looked wild; she clenched her right hand.

"SHE FLUNG HERSELF ON HER KNEES AT MY FEET."

"What can I do for you?" I asked, after a pause. "You have been good enough to confide in me: you must have done so for a reason."

She stopped her restless walk and came close to me.

"I have heard of you before, Dr. Halifax," she said. "This is not the first time you have been asked to help people in trouble. I want you to help me—will you help me?"

"With all my power, if I can."

"You can. Find out what killed Mr. Randall. Save Ronald Carleton."

"I wish I could," I said, reflectively.

"Oh, it won't be difficult," she replied.

I looked at her in surprise.

"What can you mean?" I asked.

To my amazement, she flung herself on her knees at my feet.

"You can invent something," she said, clasping my hand and pressing it frantically between both her own. "Oh, it would not be a crime—and it would save a life—two lives. Say you saw symptoms of apoplexy. Say—oh, you will know what to say—and you are a great doctor, and you will be believed."

"Get up," I said, sternly; "I will forgive your wild words, for circumstances have excited you so much that you do not quite know what you are saying. Believe me that nothing would give me more sincere satisfaction than to be able to discover the real cause of poor Randall's death. But you mistake your man utterly when you make the suggestion you do. Now I must leave you. It is

almost morning, and I have promised to meet Brabazon downstairs at an early hour."

I went back to my own room, where I sat in anxious thought until the time which Brabazon had appointed for us to meet arrived. I then went down to the smoking-room, where I found him.

He looked harassed and ill—no wonder. The subject we had met to discuss was how best the news of their only son's death was to be broken to Lord and Lady Hartmore. The Hartmores' place was situated about a hundred miles away. Brabazon said that there was nothing whatever for it but to telegraph the unhappy circumstance to them.

"And I fear doing so very much," he added, "for Hartmore is not strong: he has a rather dangerous heart affection."

"Don't telegraph," I said, impulsively; "I will go and see them."

"You!" exclaimed Brabazon. "That would be an immense relief. You will know how to break the news in the least startling way. I should recommend you to see Lady Hartmore if possible first—she is a strong-minded woman, and has a fine character. But, at best, the shock will be terrible—it is good of you, Halifax, to undertake so fearful a mission."

"Not at all," I replied. "Will you come with me?"

"I fear I cannot. My wife is very much shaken, and I ought not to leave her with a house full of people."

"I suppose most of your guests will leave to-day?"

"Probably; still, for the time being, they are here. Then there is the inquest, which will most likely take place to-day."

"I was going to propose," I said, "that a post-mortem examination should precede the inquest."

Brabazon raised his brows—he looked annoyed.

"Is that necessary?" he asked—"a post-mortem examination will only add needlessly to the sufferings of the unfortunate parents. In this case, surely, the cause of death is clearly defined—fracture of the skull?"

"The cause of death *is* clearly defined," I answered, "but not the cause of the sudden vertigo."

"The sudden vertigo, according to Carleton's account," corrected Brabazon. He did not say anything further for a moment—nor did I. After a pause, he continued: "As you are good enough to say you will go to Tregunnel, I will ask you to take poor Randall's last letter with you. I went into his room yesterday evening, and found one directed to his mother on the writing-table. She will prize it, of course. Now I had better look up your train."

He did so, and half an hour afterwards I was driving as fast as a pair of horses could take me to the nearest railway station. I caught an early train to Tregunnel, and arrived there between nine and ten that morning. A cab conveyed me to the castle, which stood on a little eminence above the sleepy-looking town.

My errand was, in truth, a gloomy one. During the journey I had made up my mind for every reason to see Lady Hartmore first. When the servant opened the door, I asked for her, and giving the man my card, told him that I wished to see his mistress alone on a matter of urgent importance. I was shown into a morning-room, and in a very short time Lady Hartmore came in. She was a tall, fine-looking woman, with a likeness to her dead son about her kindly, well-opened eyes and pleasant mouth.

My name and the message I had sent to her by the servant naturally startled her. She gave me a keen glance when she entered the room, which I returned with interest. I saw at once that her heart was strong enough, her nature brave enough, to stand the full weight of the terrible calamity without breaking down.

"I have come to see you on a most painful matter," I began at once. "I am just now visiting the Brabazons at Penporran."

"Then it is something about my son," she exclaimed, instantly. Her face grew very pale; she pressed her hand to her left side, and looked hurriedly towards the door.

"Lord Hartmore may come in, if you are not quick," she said. "He was in the breakfast-room when the servant brought me your card and message. Please tell what you have got to say at once—I can bear a shock, but he cannot."

Poor wife! poor mother! Her eyes looked at me with dumb entreaty, while her lips uttered the words of courage.

"Women like you, Lady Hartmore," I could not help uttering, impulsively, "are always brave. It is my terrible mission to inflict a great blow upon you—your son has met with an accident."

"Is he dead?" she asked. She came close to me as she spoke, her voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper.

"He is dead," I replied, instantly; "sit down."

I motioned her to a chair—she obeyed me.

"Lock the door," she said; "Lord Hartmore must not—must not know of this—quite yet."

I did what she asked me, and then went and stood with my back to her in one of the windows.

As I did so I felt in my pocket

"'IS HE DEAD?' SHE ASKED."

for the letter which Brabazon was to have given me. It was not there. I then remembered that in the excitement of my getting off in time to catch the train we must both have forgotten it.

After a time Lady Hartmore's voice, sounding hollow and low, reached my ears.

"Tell me the particulars," she said.

I did so. I sat down near her and told them as briefly as possible. She listened attentively. When I had finished she said, in a puzzled tone:—

"I cannot account for the sudden giddiness. Arthur always had excellent health." Then she looked me full in the face. "Do you believe the story, Dr. Halifax?"

I thought for a moment, then I said, emphatically:—

"Yes, I believe it."

She did not speak at all for the best part of a moment. Then she gave a heavy sigh.

"After all," she said, "the thing that affects us is the death. He is dead. The inevitable has overtaken him. It scarcely matters how it happened—at least not now—not to me."

"Pardon me," I interrupted, "it matters a great deal how it happened. The cause of your son's death will be a question of anxious investigation—of the gravest and most searching inquiries. I fully believe the story which Carleton told us last night, but there are others who will—who must—suspect him of foul play. Is it possible, Lady Hartmore—is it in any way within the province of woman, so completely to forget herself in this moment of terrible anguish, as to live for another? You can do nothing now for the dead, but you can do much, very much, for the living."

"You mean for my husband?" she inquired.

"Not alone for your husband—not even principally for him. You can do much for the man who will be accused of the crime of having murdered your son. I can only repeat my firm conviction of his innocence, but the grounds for my belief, at present, go for nothing; circumstances prove a grave case against him. Your son, to all appearance, was much attached to the girl whom Carleton loved and loves. Yesterday morning Carleton received what he considered a final rejection from Miss Farnham. She spent the day with your son; she gave him every encouragement. Carleton was morose, gloomy, jealous. His jealousy and gloom were noticed by every member of our party. Carleton and your son both absented themselves from the drawing-room after dinner. It was during that time that the accident, which deprived your son of his life, took place. There will, of course, be a coroner's inquest. At the inquest the circumstances which I have just alluded to will come out, and there is no question but that Carleton will be arrested on suspicion and sent to trial—unless, indeed, you will help me."

"How can I help you?" she asked. "What am I to do? You ask me to share your belief, which seems to me to be based on nothing. Suppose I cannot share it?"

I was silent for a moment.

"I will tell you what I want you to do," I said then. "I want you to join me in insisting on having a post-mortem examination."

She gave me a glance of horror.

"Why?" she asked. "Why must the sleep of the dead be disturbed?"

Before I could answer her, Lord Hartmore's voice was heard at the door.

She was a brave woman, but at the sound of her husband's voice her courage for a moment deserted her.

"How—how can I break it to him?" she gasped. "Oh, please, don't leave me."

"No," I said, "I will stay with you."

I unlocked the door myself, and a white-headed, feeble-looking man came querulously into the room.

His wife rose to meet him. She put her arms around him and some way, somehow, conveyed the terrible tidings to his mind. I need scarcely linger over the hour that followed. At the end of that time I was accompanying the Hartmores back to Penporran. During the journey my companions were almost completely silent. Lady Hartmore kept her veil down, and, I felt sure, wished to avoid speaking to me. The old lord was completely prostrated with grief. Not by word or hint had either parent given me the slightest clue by which I could insist on a post-mortem examination. Their son had evidently enjoyed perfect health during his brief life. I saw that circumstances were very black against Carleton.

It was evening when we reached Penporran. Lord and Lady Hartmore went at once to a private suite of rooms which had been got ready for their reception. As soon as I could I sought an interview with Brabazon.

"Most of our visitors have left us," he said. "But Miss Farnham and, of course, Carleton, remain. The inquest is to take place in the library at an early hour to-morrow."

I was silent for a moment, then I said, abruptly:

"Even at the risk of annoying you, Brabazon, I must repeat my strong desire that a post-mortem should precede the coroner's inquest."

"Have you spoken to the Hartmores on the subject?" inquired Brabazon.

I told him that I had mentioned my wish to Lady Hartmore.

"And what did she say?" he asked.

"She shrank from the idea with horror," I was obliged to confess.

"You can scarcely blame her," said Brabazon. "Why should the poor fellow's body be unnecessarily disturbed? The fact is, I have the greatest faith in your judgment, Halifax, but I think in the present instance you carry your sympathy for Ronald Carleton too far. The cause of death in the case of poor Randall was so absolutely apparent, that I do not think you will get the coroner to consent to a post-mortem."

"There is one thing that occurred to me," I said: "if Randall met his death by violence, there would be some traces of a struggle at the spot where he fell over. Randall would not tamely submit to murder—he was a big man and muscular. Has the path along the cliff been carefully searched?"

"Yes," replied Brabazon, "and there is no trace anywhere of a struggle. A little blood has been discovered on a sharp point of rock just where Carleton described the fall to have taken place. The marks of a heavy body being dragged along the sands above high-water mark have also been seen. All these evidences are, of course, I am bound to say, quite consistent with Carleton's story. The blood on the rock indicates also the exact spot of the accident."

"That was where the vault of the skull was broken," I said. "By the way, you forgot to give me poor Randall's letter to his mother. Doubtless Lady Hartmore would like to have it without a moment's delay."

Brabazon started, and put his hand in his pocket.

"I put the letter here," he said, "intending to give it to you as you were starting; of course, I forgot it. Here it is; no, though, there is nothing in my pocket. Surely I can't have dropped it anywhere. I know I put it here this morning. I rushed up to the poor fellow's room to fetch it just when the brougham was coming round."

"You did not give it to me," I said; "that letter ought to be found: it may be of the utmost importance. Was that the coat you wore this morning?"

"Yes, I have not been out of it all day; you don't know what a rush and confusion the whole place has been in."

"You will look for the letter, won't you, Brabazon? I cannot quite tell you why, but it will give me a sense of relief to know that it has been found before the inquest takes place to-morrow morning."

Soon afterwards we parted. I went into one of the morning-rooms, where I found Mrs. Brabazon. I made inquiries with regard to Carleton and Miss Farnham.

"I have not seen either of them," replied my hostess. "I believe Mr. Carleton has spent the day in his room, and a servant told me that Barbara Farnham was not well. I hear she has not risen at all to-day."

"Poor girl!" I ejaculated.

Mrs. Brabazon looked at me with languid interest—she was a very lethargic person.

"Yes," she ejaculated, after a pause—"this tragedy will be a sad blow to Barbara. She is as ambitious as she is handsome. She would have made a regal-looking Lady Hartmore."

I said nothing further—I could not betray the poor girl's secret, nor let Mrs. Brabazon know what a small place high position and greatness occupied just now in Miss Farnham's thoughts.

Just before the inquest the next morning, I asked Brabazon if the missing letter had been found.

"No," he said—"I cannot tell you how vexed I am about it. Every conceivable hole and corner both in the house and out has been searched, but no trace of the letter has been discovered. What I fear is that when I was down on the shore yesterday making investigations, it may have dropped out of my pocket and been washed away with the incoming tide. I cannot think of any other cause

for its absolute disappearance. I beg of you, Halifax, not to say anything to Lady Hartmore about it for the present."

"Of course not," I answered, in some surprise at the request.

I then ran upstairs. I must, of course, be present at the inquest, but I had still a moment at my disposal. I went boldly to Miss Farnham's door and knocked. After a very brief pause she opened it herself and stood before me. She was fully dressed. Her face was of a dead white—all the beautiful warmth of colour had fled.

"I am told I must be present at the inquest," she said. "Is it time for me to go downstairs? Have you come to fetch me?" She shuddered visibly as she spoke.

"I have come to ask you to help me," I said, eagerly. "I will manage to account for your absence in the library. Put on your hat; I want you to go out at once."

"What do you mean?" she asked, in astonishment.

"I will tell you," I said. "On the day of his death Randall wrote a letter to his mother. That letter has been lost. Brabazon had it in his pocket and has dropped it—no one knows where. There is no saying, Miss Farnham, what important evidence that letter may contain. I am sure it is not in the house. Brabazon believes that he dropped it when exploring the coast yesterday. Will you go at once and look for it? The moment you discover it, bring it to the library. Now, be as quick as ever you can."

"Yes," she replied, the soul in her eyes leaping up with a sudden renewed joy. She turned, pinned a hat on her head, wrapped a shawl round her, and ran downstairs. Her woman's wit grasped the whole situation at a glance. I went to the library, feeling assured that if poor Randall's letter were still in existence, Miss Farnham would find it.

There were present at the inquest Lady Hartmore, Brabazon and his wife, Carleton, and two gentlemen who had not yet left the house. Also, of course, the coroner and the jury. The moment I entered the room I glanced at the coroner; I had not seen him before. He was a little old gentleman, with a somewhat irascible expression of face, and a testy manner. I looked from him to poor Carleton, whom I had not seen since the time when he told his story in this room. The body of the dead man had been placed in a shell, and still occupied the central table of the library. Lady Hartmore sat near it. A sheet covered the face of the dead. Once I saw her raise her hand and touch the sheet reverently. She had the attitude of one who was protecting the body from intended violence. Her position and the look on her face reminded me of Rispah.

I looked again from her to Carleton. It was necessary for me to glance at the poor fellow, and to notice the despair on his face, to enable me to go up to the coroner, and urge upon him the necessity of a post-mortem preceding the inquest. He did not take my suggestion kindly.

"The cause of death is abundantly evident," he said, with irritation. "I cannot counsel a post-mortem examination."

"And I will not hear of it," said Lady Hartmore, looking at me with eyes full of reproach.

"Pray say nothing more about it," exclaimed Carleton.

I bowed, and sat down.

The inquest was conducted with extreme care, but soon Miss Farnham's presence was found necessary, and her absence commented upon. I saw Carleton start when her name was mentioned, and a look of extreme distress filled his eyes.

"I will go and find her," said Mrs. Brabazon, leaving the room.

She returned in a moment to say that Miss Farnham was not in her room, and that no one seemed to know anything about her.

"I have sent several servants into the grounds to look for her," she said.

As Miss Farnham was an important witness, having spent almost the entire day previous to his death with poor Randall, proceedings were delayed during her absence.

The case, however, seemed as black as could be against Carleton, and I had not the least doubt that the coroner would order a warrant to be issued for his arrest on suspicion.

My one last hope now hung on Miss Farnham's being able to find the missing letter, and then on the letter containing evidence which would give a medical cause for poor Randall's extraordinary death.

I seldom found myself in a more torturing position than during the time of this inquest. Relief, however, was at hand. I heard the sound of light and quickly moving feet in the hall. The door of the library was opened, not softly and with reverent hush, but with the eager, impetuous movement of someone in hot haste. Miss Farnham came into the room with a wild colour in her cheeks and a wild, bright light in her eyes. Her skirts were draggled and wet, her hair was loosened and fell over her shoulders—she had cast away both hat and shawl.

"There," she said, going straight up to Lady Hartmore; "there's your letter—the last letter your son ever wrote to you. It was lost, or supposed to be lost, but I found it. I walked along the cliff, close to the edge—very close. There is a part where the cliff is undermined. I lay on my face and hands and looked over. I saw, far below me, a tiny ledge of rock: there was a bush growing there, and, sticking in the bush, something white—it might be a useless rag or a piece of torn paper, or it might be a letter of importance. The tide

was coming in fast; still, I thought that I had time. I put wings to my feet and rushed down a narrow path which led to the beach below. The tide had already come up and was wetting the base of the rock above which the bush which contained the white paper stood.

"I waded through the water and climbed the cliff and got the paper. I scrambled down again. When I came back the water was up to my knees. I crossed it safely, and mounted to the higher cliff again. Then, for the first time, I examined my prize. Yes, it was a letter—it was open. I don't know what had become of its covering. I sat on the grass and I read it—yes, I read every word. Here it is now, and you can read it. Read it aloud, please, for it is important—it explains, it saves! Ronald, it saves you!" Here the excited girl paused in her eager narrative, and turned her full gaze upon Carleton, who was bending forward to listen to her. "It saves you," she repeated; "it exonerates you completely!"

"I CLIMBED THE CLIFF AND GOT THE PAPER."

The commotion and interest which Miss Farnham's words and manner excited can be better felt than described. Lady Hartmore stood up and confronted the breathless girl. She held out her hand and clutched the letter, which was torn and dirty from its long exposure to wind and weather. She held it close and looked at it. It was in the beloved writing of the dead. The dead man was her only son—the letter was addressed to her, his mother. It contained a last message from the brain now silent—from the heart now still.

Tears filled her eyes.

"I must read this letter in private," she faltered. "This last letter of my boy's is too sacred for anyone but his mother to hear—I must read it alone."

"No," interrupted Miss Farnham, "it contains important information. I will call upon the coroner to insist on its being read aloud. I risked my life to get it. Another life hangs upon the information it contains. Dr. Halifax, you are a medical man—will you insist on this letter being read aloud?"

I went up to Lady Hartmore and said something to her in a low voice. She listened attentively—she considered my words. After a pause she put the letter into my hands.

"If it must be, it must," she said. "This is the last drop in the bitterness of my cup."

She sat down, and flinging out her two arms, stretched them over the body of the dead man. Once more her attitude and manner reminded me of Rispah.

Miss Farnham stood close to Lady Hartmore. She forgot her dishevelled hair, her disordered appearance. All her soul filled the eyes which she raised expectantly to my face.

I glanced hurriedly through the letter, then I spoke.

"There is a good deal in this sheet of paper which is strictly private," I said, "and need not be read for the benefit of the coroner and the jury; but there are some sentences referring to the state of Mr. Randall's health which are, as Miss Farnham remarked, of the utmost importance. I will now proceed to read that portion of the letter."

I did so in a loud, clear voice.

These were poor Randall's words:—

"As far as I can tell, I am in perfect health, but for the last week or so, I have been suffering at intervals from a strange form of giddiness. I feel as though I were made to turn round and round, or against my will impelled to go forwards, or backwards, or to one side. Sometimes the giddiness takes another form—I fancy that objects are revolving round *me*. I am perfectly conscious all the time, but the giddiness is generally accompanied by a distinct sensation of nausea. Very often the act of closing my eyes removes the vertigo completely for the time being. When the attack goes off I feel perfectly well, only I fancy I am suffering from continued deafness in my right ear. I don't know why I am impelled to tell you this—it is not worth making a fuss over. If I were to consult a medical man, he would probably set it down to a form of indigestion. I had a slight attack this morning at breakfast. If it continues or gets worse, I will take the opportunity of consulting a London doctor who happens to be in the house."

I did not read any more, but folding up the letter returned it to Lady Hartmore. Both Carleton

and Miss Farnham had approached each other in their excitement.

I looked beyond them to the coroner.

"I am sure," I said, "that I now express Lady Hartmore's sentiments as well as my own, when I demand that this inquest be adjourned until a post-mortem examination has been made on the body of the dead man. The symptoms which he describes in the letter which I have just read aloud distinctly point to a disease of the inner ear, well known to the medical faculty, although not of common occurrence. I will ask the coroner to take immediate steps to get the services of two independent doctors to conduct the post-mortem, at which I should wish to be present."

My words were followed by a slight pause—the coroner then agreed to my wishes, and the inquest was adjourned.

The post-mortem took place on the afternoon of that same day, and the results amply accounted for the strange symptoms which poor Randall had so faithfully described in his last letter to his mother. On the right side of that portion of the base of the skull which contains the delicate organs of hearing, we found a small, bony excrescence growing down into the labyrinth or inner ear. This, though small, was undoubtedly the cause of the terrible attacks of vertigo which the poor fellow complained of, and in one of which he met with his tragic death.

The coroner's inquest was resumed on the following day, and, of course, Carleton was abundantly exonerated.

It was two years afterwards, however, before I accidentally saw in the *Times* the announcement of his marriage with Miss Farnham.

Portraits of Celebrities at Different Times of their Lives.

MR. JUSTICE LOPES.

BORN 1828.

AGE 34.

From a Photo. by J. F. Long, Exeter.

AGE 48.

From a Photo. by Alexander Bassano.

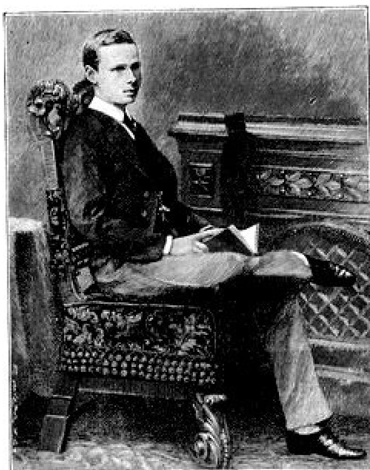
HE RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY CHARLES LOPES, P.C., Lord Justice of the Court of Appeal, third son of the late Sir Ralph Lopes, the second baronet of Maristow, was born at Devonport, and received his education at Winchester School and at Balliol College, Oxford (B.A. 1850). He was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1852. Mr. Lopes was made Recorder of Exeter in 1867, obtained his silk gown in 1869, and was elected a Bencher of his Inn shortly afterwards. In April, 1868, he was returned to the House of Commons as member for Launceston. On November 3rd, 1876, he accepted the vacant Judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas, and shortly afterwards received the honour of Knighthood. In 1885 he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal, and subsequently sworn of the Privy Council. Sir Henry was Treasurer of the Inner Temple for the year 1890, and is a member of the Council of Legal Education.

PRESENT DAY.

From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

THE GRAND DUKE OF HESSE.

BORN 1868.

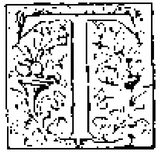


AGE 15.

From a Photo. by Carl Backofen, Darmstadt.

AGE 21.

From a Photo. by Carl Backofen, Darmstadt.



THE marriage of the Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg and Edinburgh to the Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse, which is fixed to take place on April the 22nd, and at which Her Majesty the Queen, the Emperor of Germany, and other notabilities will be present, will almost coincide with the appearance of these portraits. H.R.H. the Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse Darmstadt was born in Darmstadt, Germany, on the 25th of November, 1868, and succeeded his father, Louis IV., to the throne in March, 1892. On his accession to the throne he concluded his speech with the following words: "I shall try to follow in the footsteps of my dear father. And I beg of you to help me as you have helped him, not for duty only, but also out of love." The Duke is the eldest son of the late Princess Alice, and is, therefore, a grandson of the Queen. In offering our sincere congratulations and best wishes to the youthful pair, we are sure that every reader of THE STRAND MAGAZINE will cordially join us.

PRESENT DAY.

From a Photo. by Carl Backofen, Darmstadt.

PRINCESS VICTORIA MELITA OF SAXE-COBURG AND EDINBURGH.

BORN 1876.

AGE 2.

From a Photo. by Schevegerle, Coburg.

AGE 4.

From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

AGE 14.

From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

PRESENT DAY.

From a Photo. by Heath, Plymouth.

AGE 10.

From a Photo. by Hughes & Mullins, Ryde.

PRINCESS VICTORIA MELITA, of whom we have the pleasure of here presenting a most charming set of portraits, is the second daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Edinburgh. She was born on the 25th of November, 1876, and it will be seen that the happy pair therefore celebrate their respective birthdays on the same date.

THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

BORN 1824.

AGE 4.

From a Drawing.

AGE 24.

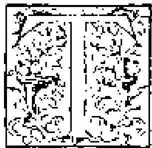
From a Daguerreotype.

PRESENT DAY.

From a Photo. by Elliott d'Fry.

AGE 38.

From a Photo. by Kilburn, Regent St.



The Right Rev. John Jas. Stewart Perowne, D.D., was born at Burdwan, Bengal, of a family of French extraction, that came over to this country at the revocation of the French Edict of Nantes. He was educated at Norwich Grammar School, and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Dr. Perowne took his B.A. degree in 1845, and that of M.A. in 1848, and was elected a Fellow of his College in 1849. He was appointed Honorary Chaplain to the Queen in 1875. In 1890 he was consecrated Bishop of Worcester, in succession to Dr. Philpott, who resigned.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, M.P.

Born 1836.

AGE 15.

From a Bust.

AGE 32.

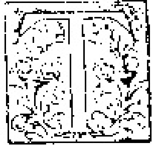
From a Photo. by Maull & Co., London.

PRESENT DAY.

From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

AGE 41.

From a Photo. by Van Bosh, Paris.



HE RIGHT HON. HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, M.P., is the second son of the late Sir James Campbell, of Stracathro, Forfarshire. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge (B.A., 1858—M.A., 1861). He is a magistrate for the counties of Lanark and Kent, and has represented the Stirling Boroughs in the Liberal interest since December, 1868. He was Financial Secretary at the War Office from 1871 to 1874; was again appointed to that office in 1880; and in May, 1882, succeeded Mr. Trevelyan as Secretary to the Admiralty. On the resignation of Mr. Trevelyan he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1884-5, and has held the office of Secretary of State for War since 1892.

Crimes and Criminals.

No. III.—COINERS AND COINING.

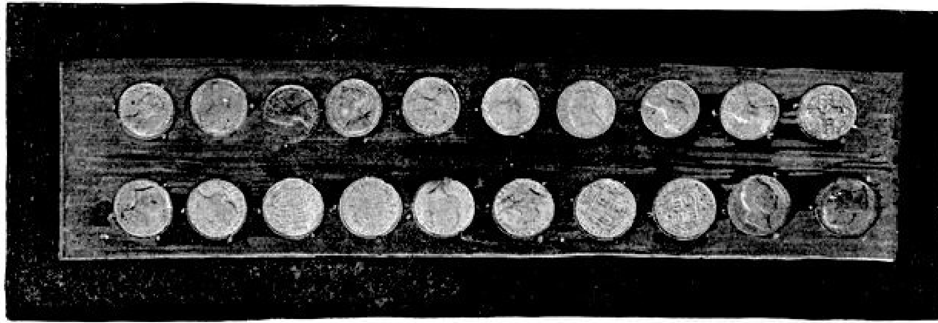
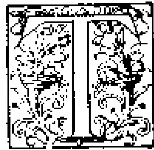


FIG. 1.—BURNISHING BOARD.



HE up-to-date counterfeit-money coiner is one of the most difficult individuals with whom the police have to deal. He is a positive artist. He no longer cuts shillings with a pair of scissors out of brass and silvers them over, as was done in the early part of the present century. He employs more scientific means, and his methods are such that only men of considerable ingenuity and inventive powers could possibly hope to bring them to a successful issue. But, alas! as in most things—woman's in it!—and to the fair sex belongs the first case on record in which any person appears to have been executed for counterfeiting the coin of the realm.

In May, 1721, Barbara Spencer had the crime brought home to her of indulging in the—in those days—highly treasonable pastime of manufacturing shilling pieces. She employed two other women, Alice Hall and Elizabeth Bray, to act as her agents, or "passers," and it is a significant fact that in almost every case of counterfeiting up to the present day women are employed in this particular branch of the profession. Barbara, it should be mentioned, was strangled and burned at Tyburn, on the 5th July, 1721, her accomplices being acquitted.

The question may be asked: Is the manufacture of counterfeit coin in a flourishing condition? The answer is a very decided affirmative. True, the convictions against counterfeiters are few and far between; but that is owing to the very elaborate measures adopted by the counterfeiters themselves of preventing a knowledge of their whereabouts becoming the property of the police. Your next-door neighbour may be a magnificent hand at turning out "five-bob" pieces; your butcher, greengrocer, and milk purveyor may all be adepts at the game. In proof of this, examine this bell and its companion. One is an ordinary electric bell—the other an invalid's bell-push.

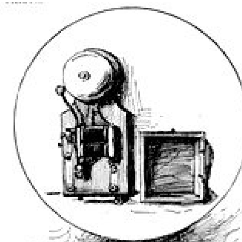
Thomas Raven, *alias* Cooper, Beauchamp, and "Tom the Tailor," was a tailor in the salubrious neighbourhood of Bethnal Green. The police made a raid upon the premises and discovered something like 200 pieces of base coin in the cellar below, and between the joists some lampblack, plaster of Paris, and a spoon which had contained molten metal. The coiners were fairly caught. It was the duty of the gentleman in charge of the shop upstairs to give a certain signal with the bell, to warn the enterprising personages downstairs. A mistake was made, and the irrepressible Tom remarked, when told the charge: "Well, I have had a long run; but if they had given the signals right this morning, you would not have had me now."

It was, indeed, a long run. It took three years to run "Tom the Tailor" and a lady who helped to get rid of the coin to earth; and it was believed that the *pseudo* coat-cutter had been making counterfeit coin for the last seventeen years, and before that he had acted as coiners' agent. If time is money, Tom is still at his old occupation—fourteen years' penal servitude.

New Scotland Yard has every reason to be proud of its counterfeit collection—it certainly has real and original samples of everything associated with this glittering profession, which we shall now proceed to specify. We do so without the slightest qualms of conscience, and without any fear that anything we may say may lead to anybody admiring these remarks too greatly, and seeking to imitate. We are informed that years of practice are necessary to come up to the standard counterfeit coin of to-day. Take this sovereign, which is accorded the place of honour in one of the glass cases. It was made in Barcelona, and actually contains sixteen shillings' worth of gold in its composition. It would deceive a banker—there is the true, honest, unadulterated ring about it. Its date is 1862. To those whom it may concern—that is, those who happen to be in possession of sovereigns of this date—this fact may be interesting. Beware of Barcelonas!

But this gold piece is an exception. There are two or three thousand gold and silver coins here—all arranged in the prettiest and most delightful of heaps—that would not deceive the easiest-going of individuals. Pennies, sixpences, shillings, two-shilling pieces, half-crowns, crown pieces, half-sovereigns, and sovereigns are all here, the most popular, however, amongst the fraternity being the shilling, two-shilling piece, and half-crown, as people, when they accept change, are less likely to "try" these than coins of a higher value. There are some coins here, however, which positively call for respect. These George IV. half-crowns are perfect. The King's head is partially worn away by time—grit and dirt, from constant use of seventy years, are lodged in the creases of the coin. But time did not wear the King's features away, or constant use provide the dirt. After the coin was in a finished state it was placed on a burnishing board (Fig. 1) made of a piece of ordinary deal, with a few

A SURPRISE FOR THE TAILOR.



COINERS SURPRISED.

tacks stuck in to hold the coins in position—and rubbed over with an old scrubbing brush, in order to dull the coin and give it an ancient appearance. And the dirt? It is here quite handy. It is in a match-box bearing a portrait of General Gordon, whilst another deposit is in a small tin whose label tells that it was originally intended for mustard. Both the match-box and the mustard-tin contain lampblack. The bellows is used for "blowing-up" purposes (Fig. 2).

But George IV. is, or was, a great favourite with counterfeiters. There are such things in this world as lucky sixpences, and they are signalled out as such charms, should they happen to have a hole bored through them. Who would not give a mere paltry ordinary sixpence for one of these bringers of luck, and a George IV. at that? Echo answers—everybody. We hope Echo will be more careful after learning the use of this little drill which we are now examining (Fig. 3). It is used by counterfeiters to bore holes into sixpences, which they can warrant, seeing that they are their own make. The counterfeit brooch is not missing from the collection. It had its birth with the issue of the Jubilee coins, when those who could afford it had one of the gold Jubilee five-pound pieces—which were coined to the value of over £250,000—mounted as a brooch, and worn or treasured as a souvenir of the fiftieth anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne. Once again the counterfeiter had a chance. True, the Jubilee sixpences offered him admirable opportunities in the way of giving further point to the old adage that "All is not gold that glitters." But he went farther. He made counterfeit half-crowns and five-shilling pieces, fastened pins to them, and put them on the market, charging but a small sum for the supplementary fastener.

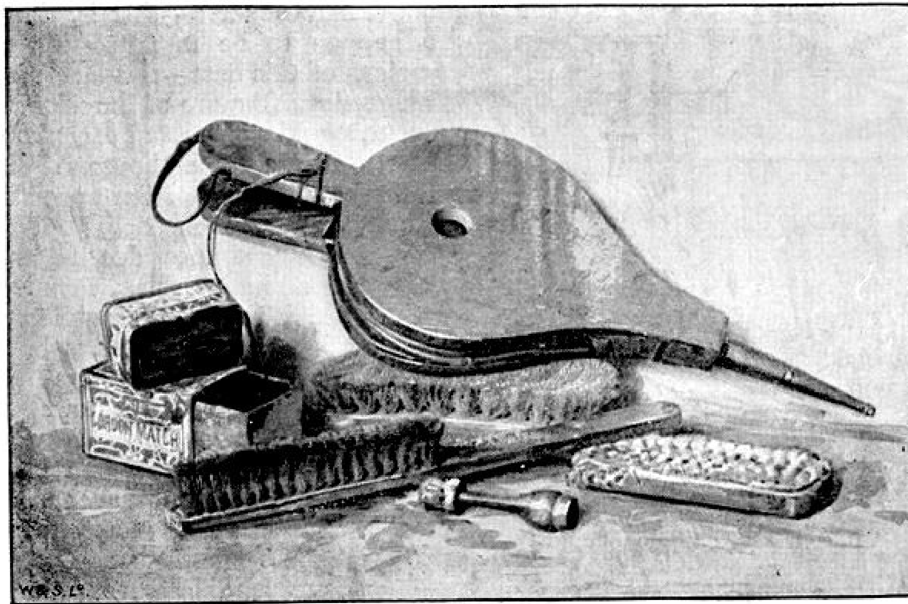


FIG. 2—LAMPBLACK, BRUSHES, AND BELLOWS.

"Well," argued the purchaser, "the coin will always be worth the money!" Permit us to observe that the price realized for sham coins rarely exceeds twopence to twopence-halfpenny in the shilling, whilst a true, sterling shilling would buy four base half-crowns.

In order to arrive in some measure at the exact method of manufacture, it is proposed to examine the curiosities of the New Scotland Yard counterfeiting cases more minutely.

Every coiner has his "pattern" piece, that is, a genuine piece of money, which is to give the cast of the coin intended to be copied. The cast from the true coin is taken in plaster of Paris of the finest possible quality. There are enough moulds here to thoroughly colonize a country with counterfeiters! They may be accepted as excellent examples, for the greater proportion formed part of the stock-in-trade of the notorious John H——, *alias* Sydney A——, who was rewarded with twenty years; some were also found on the premises occupied by a famous Fulham coiner—whose name we are asked not to publish, but of whom more anon; others belonged to a worthy who made the fine and large crown-pieces a speciality (Fig. 4). Some are quite clean, others are burnt through constant use, not a few show the coin in its rough state, with the edge uncut and unfiled (Fig. 5), a process performed by an ordinary pocket-knife and file; whilst a "half-crown" mould reveals the "get" (Fig. 6), or surplus liquid, which is poured into this receptacle for making false impressions.

Here are the lead and ladles (Fig. 7). The ladles belonged to a man who was forced to submit to

twelve years' penal servitude as recently as 1891. They are about one and a half feet long, and are used for melting the composition on the fire. The ladles are similar to those used by plumbers, costing perhaps eighteen-pence or a couple of shillings. When a ladle is not used, then a melting-pot or crucible is called into requisition (Fig. 8); even a saucepan would not be despised. When a pot or a saucepan is used the glittering liquid is taken out in a boiling state by iron spoons—and these spoons, of all shapes and sizes, designs and prices, are provided with a special corner.

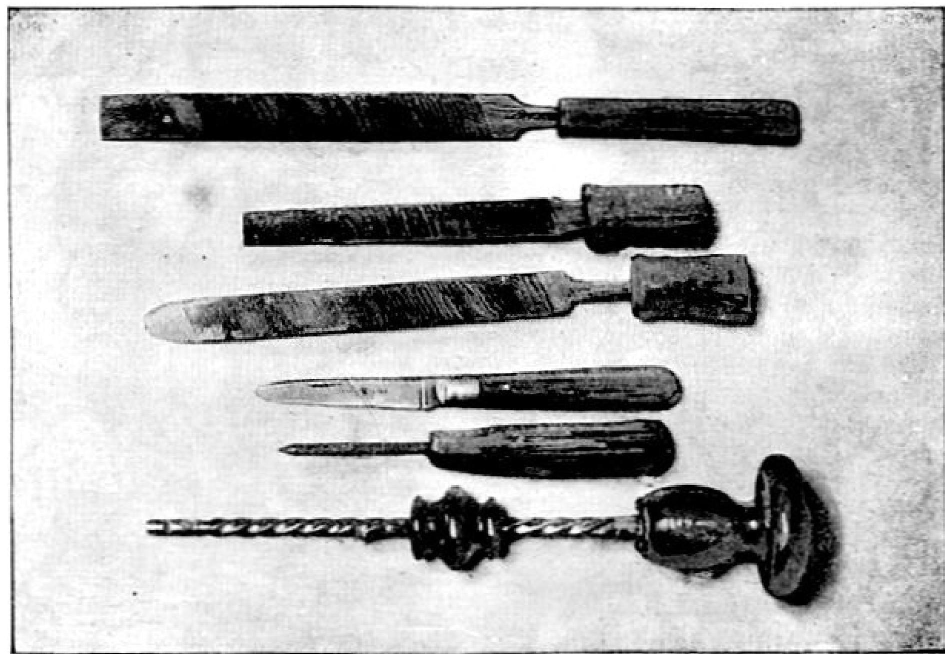


FIG. 3—COINERS' TOOLS.

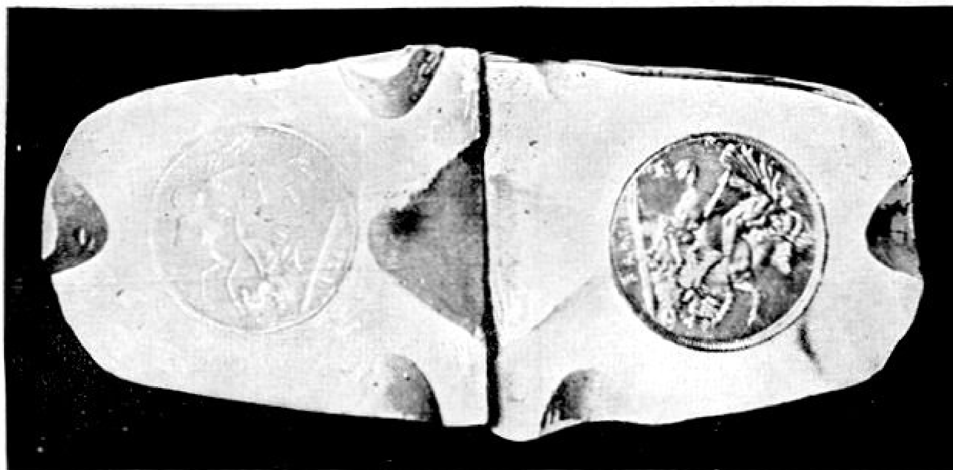


FIG. 4.—MOULD FOR FIVE-SHILLING PIECE.

Much speculation has always existed as to the real ingredients of a counterfeit coin. Solder here is another item in the plumber's outfit—is often the original foundation. But such lead is very poor in itself, and tin and bismuth have both been found to possess excellent hardening properties (Fig. 9). But the finest foundation for a counterfeit coin is obtained out of a certain receptacle from which your average working man invariably blows the froth previous to sampling the contents—pewter-pots! Here we have a reason for the frequent thefts of the traditional holders of mild and bitter, and when such a theft is brought home to a man, he is at once surmised, and very properly so, to be in league with coiners.

FIG. 5.—COUNTERFEIT COINS (UNFINISHED).

Whilst on the subject of pewter-pots, the writer is inclined to relate an amusing incident, communicated to him by an East-end publican. Some curious contests take place in Whitechapel and its environs, one of the most popular of which is that of pewter-pot cleaning, when James, the potman at the "Three Boot Brushes," meets William, who holds a similar position at the "Laughing Lobster," in friendly rivalry, to decide who can clean the greatest number of pewter-pots in an hour.

This particular East-end publican had such a contest at his "house" one Sunday morning, and after a most exciting contest his own particular potman won. This was all very comforting. But, by some

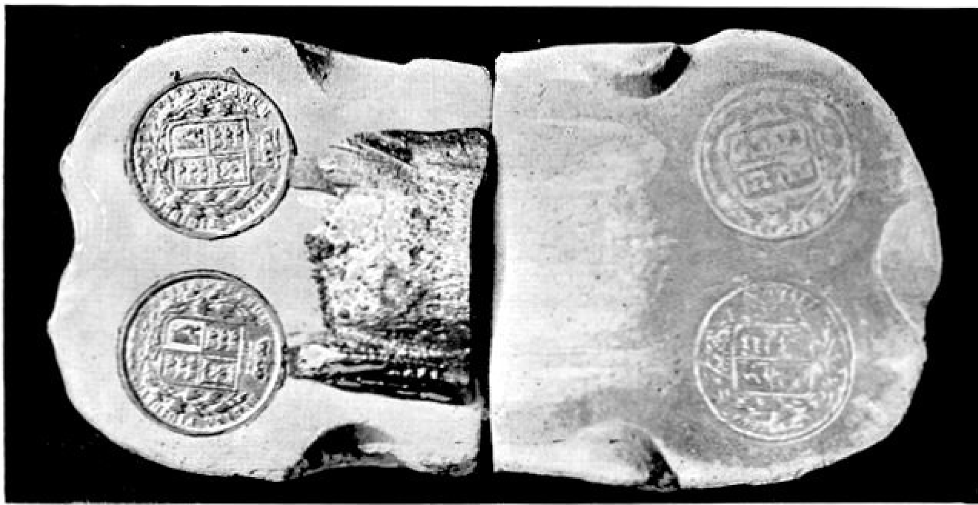


FIG. 6.—A HALF-CROWN MOULD, SHOWING "GET".

mysterious means, the same evening the public-house was robbed of a number of pots—and all clean, too!

"I wouldn't 'ave minded *that*, sir," said the communicative publican, with a decided emphasis on the "that," when relating this—"I wouldn't 'ave minded *that*: but what annoyed me was the remarkable number of bad two-shilling pieces me and the missus took over the counter a week afterwards!"

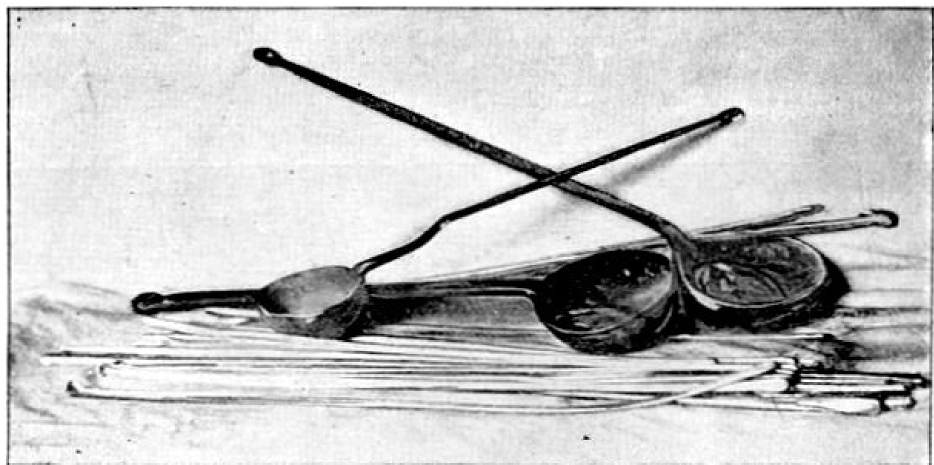


FIG. 7.—LEAD AND LADLES.

The pewter having been melted, the coins having been cast—the two sides of the mould being kept together by clamps made of strong hoop-iron, in order to secure a firm impression (Fig. 10)—filed and edged, and got as near the proper weight of a good coin as possible, a very important process now takes place. We will take "silver" coins as an example. The coins are put on battery racks. Several of these are to be found here—a pair (Fig. 11) near a couple of batteries (Fig. 12) will suit our purpose well. One is empty, and shows the wires made in various sizes to hold securely the coin intended to be immersed in the bath containing the silvering solution. The other, as will be seen in the illustration, is well charged with coins. The process of silvering coins is exactly similar to that of plating knives, spoons, forks, etc., though the vat—which is usually made of iron with a thin lining of wood—containing the plating liquid is very much smaller than those used by men engaged in a legitimate business.

FIG. 8.—MELTING-POT AND CRUCIBLES.

The "charged" rack is now put into the vat. Coins made out of Britannia metal, tin, or pewter are not dropped into acid before plating, but into a very strong and boiling hot solution of pure caustic potash. The coins are then scratched with a small brush especially made for this purpose, or at once taken from the alkali without having been immersed in water, and plunged direct into a cyanide of silver solution at about 190° Fahrenheit. An electric current of great strength is run through the vat in which are the coins

until they begin to receive a thin coating. After this they undergo a treatment of ordinary plating solution to receive the full amount of silvering required. This completed, they are fixed on a burnishing board to relieve them of any undue brightness.

We have already referred to a board of this kind, but there is one at New Scotland Yard of peculiar interest. In the first place, it is curious from the fact that it is made out of the seat of a common wooden kitchen chair (Fig. 13), and, further, it is surrounded by far more curiosity when it is known that it once formed part of the stock-in-trade of one of the most scientific coiners of modern times. His name can only be hinted at as "the Party from Fulham." He approached coining from a thoroughly artistic point of view. His ideas of counterfeiting and gilding were all carried out on the highest scientific principles, and an examination of his property revealed an extraordinary state of affairs.

When arrested he had in his possession 8s. 10-1/2d. in good money, together with a shilling and two sixpences, which, judging from their appearance, had evidently been used as "pattern" pieces. But his home-made coins were as extensive as they were peculiar. They included 1 five-pound piece, 8 two-pound pieces, 31 sovereigns, 18 half-sovereigns, 125 half-crowns, 51 florins, 101 shillings, and 171 sixpences. A capital and convincing collection! In addition, he had in the way of manufacturing paraphernalia, 17 moulds, 1 battery, 2 ladles, a quantity of plaster of Paris, melting-pot, plate of sand, 9 bottles of chemicals—including gold plating solution and liquid ammonia, a selection of which receptacles is shown in company with a Leclanché battery (Fig. 14), made out of a common three-pound jam jar—files, clamps, brushes, etc.; in short, everything to prove that he was the one to whom the expression of "You're coining money, old boy!" would be honestly applied by any enterprising detective anxious to slap him on the back and to decorate him with "the bracelets."

FIG. 9.—TIN AND BISMUTH.

Perhaps, however, the books he used are the most interesting. These consist of a couple of standard works on chemistry, which he had freely interpolated with marginal notes and pencil marks against anything calculated to assist him in the pursuit of his profession. But his "private" reference book is the good thing in his pack of literature. It is a book similar to that which any schoolboy would use to do his homework in. It contains the addresses of English taverns in Paris, servants' registry offices, sewing machine dealers, shops where furniture may be obtained on hire, house agents, money-lenders, addresses of statesmen, etc. The newspaper cuttings in this volume are of a varied character, and include an advertisement of "A Young Gentleman who has a Grand Piano for Sale," "A Good Cure for a Cold," "Cure for Chilblains," "Furniture Polish," and prescriptions for removing surplus hair from the back of the neck, the right treatment of headaches, the proper ingredients for making a highly satisfactory mustard plaster, and a certain cure for sluggish livers!

FIG. 10.—CLAMPS AND MOULD CLOSED—WITH CLAMP.

"The Party from Fulham" adopted—probably in his early career—an ingenious means of becoming possessed of useful information—a method which it would be well if those papers who reply indiscriminately to questions sent them would make note of. He would write to periodicals asking such simple conundrums as, "Will you kindly tell me the simplest way to make a battery?" or, "Would you kindly say in an early issue the simplest way to make solder for silver?" He often got replies, as is proved from a newspaper cutting, giving an answer to the last query—an answer we refrain from publishing, seeing that it gives a very efficacious recipe for the first step towards "making money."

Further, it is presumed that "the Party from Fulham" either kept a shop, was a receiver of stolen property, or else attended sales and purchased articles in the hopes of pawning them and securing a profit—the latter a distinct business in the East-end of London. The book contains an entry against the name of a well-known pawnbroker, of "a wedding-ring, 4s.," followed by the bitterly suggestive words, "ticket lost"! And there are entries relating to everything between a violin and a paillasse, a brass fender and a blue beaver coat. There is actually a ticket of admission to a cookery lecture, which all goes to prove that "the Party from Fulham" was a most prolific personage.

We propose saying something as to how counterfeit coins are circulated, with one or two instances of ingenuity on the part of those responsible for putting

them about. The coins being completely finished, they are wrapped up in tissue paper (Fig. 15) in parcels of a dozen or so, with a piece of paper between each coin in order to keep them from scratching and chinking when passed from one person's hand to another's. There are usually four persons employed in a delivery of counterfeit coin to the public: the maker, the agent, or go-between—in most cases a woman—the buyer, and the passer proper, the latter individual never knowing who the actual maker is. The bundles of coins are generally sold at street corners by appointment only or in public houses. They are conveyed to the rendezvous in many ways, perhaps the most original of which was that of the man who carried a couple of bird-cages—one containing a beautiful little singer which trilled away to its heart's content, and the other full of counterfeit money!

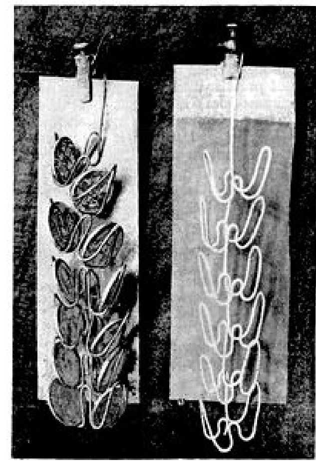


FIG. 11.—BATTERY RACKS.

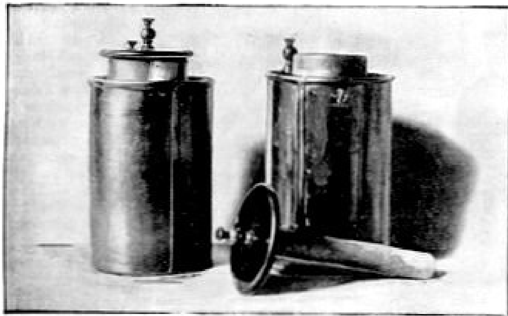


FIG. 12.—ELECTRIC BATTERIES.

Women, more often than not, lead to a conviction, as the would-be passer, say of a bad half-crown on a too-confiding grocer, has seldom more than one bad coin on him. He makes a small purchase at the grocer's and tenders the coin. The man of sugar and spice looks at it.

"Excuse me, sir," he remarks, "but I think this half-crown is bad!"

Artful one takes it back.

"Dear me, so it is! Ah! that's all right," giving a good one this time. "Thanks. No, don't trouble to send it home. Good day!"

Had he succeeded in passing the half crown, ten minutes afterwards he would have been supplied with one equally bad by the lady in waiting round the corner. This is where the police find such difficulty in bringing home a conviction to the actual passer, as anybody in these deceitful days might find himself the unfortunate possessor of a spurious coin. Perhaps the before-mentioned grocer would complain to a policeman. The man would be watched. He would be seen to "speak to the woman." That would be quite enough—and the possibilities are that they would find the counterfeit coins concealed about her person, as was the case with a lady whose Christian name was Harriet, and who owned to thirty-nine years of age at Clerkenwell Police-court, who had no fewer than forty counterfeit florins sewn up in her dress. It was sufficient to cast her husband on the hospitality of a country, the inhabitants of which are not inclined to grumble at being obliged to provide him with convict comforts for a period of eight years.

A frequent method employed is to "work" a publican—and this is the more enterprising on the "passer's" part, seeing that the generality of publicans are men who are not often to be caught asleep.

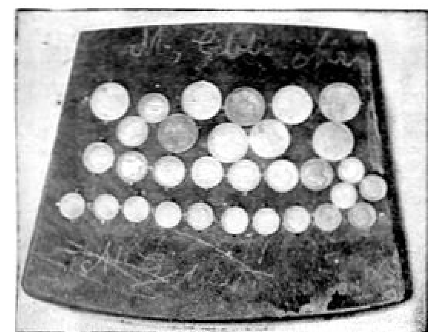


FIG 13.—BURNISHING BOARD MADE OUT OF CHAIR SEAT.

Scene: "The Last House."

Enter well-dressed man smoking big cigar.

Polite Publican: "Good evening, sir."

Big Cigar Proprietor: "Good evening. Brandy and soda, please!" (Throws down a sovereign, receives brandy and soda and change, the change all in silver. Big Cigar Proprietor picks up change.)

Big Cigar Proprietor: "Oh! excuse me—could you let me have half-a-sovereign for ten shillings' worth of this silver?"

Polite Publican (always ready to oblige): "Certainly, sir." (Does so.)

The publican gets, as he thinks, ten shillings' worth of silver back. Does he? Oh, dear, no! There were three bad two-shilling pieces amongst it!

It would be difficult to hit upon two more contrasting illustrations than the following. The first instance goes to prove that children are called into play as "passers"—though unconsciously so—in the case when the smallest "coined" piece is to be thrust on the public.

A man used his little girl to go into small confectioners' shops and purchase a farthing's worth of sweetmeats. The little one tendered a bad penny, obtaining her sweets and giving her father the three farthings change. Both were arrested and charged. The child, however, was taken out of the dock and put in the box to give evidence against her father. Her childish evidence was convincing enough, and at the end of the examination, the man, overcome with better feelings, contrived to catch the little one up in his arms, ere he was sent down below, caressing her fondly and covering her tiny face with kisses.

Such a method—an awkward method, and one in every way calculated to be eventually found out—stands in strong

FIG. 14.—LECLANCHÉ BATTERY, AND BOTTLES OF GOLD SOLUTION, ETC.

contrast with the really delicate and ingenious means employed by a lady whose efforts at changing a sovereign were worthy a better cause.

Her *modus operandi* was to select say a boot-maker's shop, generally in a well-populated suburban district, and purchase boots to the value of nineteen and sixpence.

"Will you kindly send them to my house, No. 42, Easyway Terrace, in an hour's time?" she asks the shopkeeper.

"Certainly, madam."

"I will pay the messenger when he brings them—I find I have not sufficient money in my purse. Mrs. Adams is my name," she further remarks, and leaves the shop.

In an hour's time the boy with the boots is on his way to No. 42, Easyway Terrace. Curiously enough, he is met outside by Mrs. Adams herself!

"Oh! are those boots for Mrs. Adams?"

"Yes, mum."

FIG. 15.—COINS PACKED IN TISSUE PAPER.

CARRYING COUNTERFEIT COIN.

"Thank you. Let me see," playing with her purse, "nineteen and six. There's a sovereign. You can keep the sixpence for being so punctual."

The lad is delighted, and away he goes whistling. The lady is equally pleased—away she goes with the boots to a pawnbroker's. The shopkeeper is in a rage—for the sovereign is a counterfeit one!

It will be well to state the best means of detecting counterfeit coin. The simplest and most effective test is to bite it. If the coin is bad, the bite will produce a very gritty sensation on the teeth, which is never produced by a genuine piece of money. This test will be found to be an infallible one.

THE COUNTERFEITER AND HIS CHILD.

Beauties.

MISS AGNES C. STEVENSON

From a photo. by Alex. Bassano, Old Bond Street, W.

MISS BARNETT

From Catford's Art Gallery, Ilfracombe.

MISS NORA WILLIAMSON

From a Photo. by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street, N.W.

MISS ANNIE O'DEANE.

From a Photo. by H. R. White, Birmingham.

MISS NANCY NOEL.

From a Photo. by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street. N.W.

How Composers Work.

II.

BY FRANCIS ARTHUR JONES.

MEYER LUTZ.

HERR MEYER LUTZ has the rather odd fancy of sitting in the dark for an hour or two at a time, and letting his fingers wander hither and thither over the keys, searching out those measures which set the fashion in the dancing world.

He composes anywhere and everywhere, in the streets, on tops of 'buses, and even in church.

truly yours

Herr Meyer Lutz

"I remember," says the popular Gaiety composer, "driving one Sunday evening to St. George's Cathedral, when the melody to an 'O Salutaris' struck me. I pencilled it down during the sermon, and my brother-in-law, Furneaux Cook, sang it after the sermon at Benediction the same evening."

Herr Lutz believes in taking up some verses and carefully studying them.

"This I often do," he says, "and soon seem to hear a fitting melody without trying it on the piano till finished."

Fugues and canons, in his opinion, want studying and mathematically experimentalizing. "Composers," he says in conclusion, "are musical poets, and 'Poëta nascitur, non fit.'"

The music in his autograph will, I imagine, be familiar to not a few of my readers.

A. C. MACKENZIE.

Most of Dr. Mackenzie's work is done in the morning from nine to one-thirty, and he never touches it in the afternoon. As a rule he leaves *scoring* for the orchestra or looking over the morning's work for the evening hours. "But," in his own words, "if I feel capable of *inventing*, why, I begin to work again about eight-thirty and continue until I am tired."

As a rule, the principal of the Royal Academy of Music sketches his music on two or three lines, as shown in the illustration.

"When I am engaged upon anything that absorbs my entire attention," he continues, "I carry a little musical note-book about with me and jot down roughly any idea which may occur to me, and I have found this plan useful. When I am composing I never lose the thread of it, morning, noon, or night; even at meals I am unconsciously occupied with it—this goes on until the work is finished."

Dr. Mackenzie decidedly disapproves of the manner in which composers in England are made to work—viz., to order.

"Such pressure," he says, emphatically, "is unproductive of the best work, and highly detrimental to one's general health and comfort."

For those reasons he objects to undertake commissions.

We have waited for long ... waited for long!

Tito Mattei.

Signor Tito Mattei composes most of his instrumental music at the piano, but songs are composed anywhere, wherever and whenever he feels so inspired.

One thing he considers absolutely indispensable to the success of a composer, viz., a thoroughly good musical education, without which no one, however gifted, can hope to make a name.

"As a whole," writes this composer, "the English people love music, but are not, strictly speaking, a musical nation, the reason being that they do not give sufficient time and care to the study."

The accompanying few bars of music are taken from his popular song "Beside Me."

Beside Me.

Dark is the night with-out, I fear The storm, beyond the bar!
Tito Mattei

Hubert Parry.

Professor C. Hubert Parry, whose last work, "Job," has been so enthusiastically received and criticised by the musical world, composes according to the nature of the composition on which he is engaged.

"There are a hundred and fifty different kinds of work to be done in composing," he says, "and they vary in accordance with its being a big work like a symphony or an oratorio, or an opera, or a little thing like a song or a pianoforte piece. Then, what one wants may come into one's head when walking or driving, or in bed—anywhere, indeed, but in front of the paper it has to be written on. Then there is the general scheme to be considered, which usually comes first, and has to be thought out in big, cloudy way, out of which the details emerge into distinctness by degrees, and often want doing over and over again."

Like many another composer, Mr. Parry prefers the morning for the mechanical part of the art, viz., the work of scoring and writing down and getting into order those ideas which have already been conceived.

"As far as new ideas and schemes are concerned," he adds, "I am glad enough to take them at any time of the day they are so obliging as to come."

It is wonderful how chary the English composers are of answering the question as to whether or no they consider their countrymen a musical race. It seems a subject on which they fear to express an opinion, and either treat the matter with silence or, like Sir Joseph Barnby, content themselves by saying "We're on the mend." Not so Mr. Parry, however.

"I consider," he says, "that the English are naturally the most musical race in the world, except the Germans. It would take a good many pages to explain my opinion, as it is obviously contrary

to all the received and accredited traditions, so I will not attempt to justify it at present beyond saying that I don't mean that the race is gifted with any natural facility, but that taking it all round there is more appreciation of what is genuinely and wholesomely good—Beethoven, Bach, Haydn, Brahms, Handel (at his best), Mozart, and the great madrigalists and so forth—than in any other country except Germany. The fact that the English people have no great taste for opera is all in their favour."

Mr. Parry concludes with a few remarks on the merits and demerits of writing "to order." "Certainly no one could turn out anything worthy of the name of art," he says, "if he had it on his mind that he was writing under pressure; neither will any man do anything really good when he is thinking more of the money payment, or suiting managerial ideas, than of the thorough working out of his own devices. But this should not be confounded with a man's undertaking work that is thoroughly congenial to him when he has plenty of time to carry it out honourably. If the Philharmonic Society or Richter ask a composer to write them a symphony, they put at his disposal a magnificent orchestra for the interpretation of anything that he may have to say in that line; or if the committee of any great festival invite a composer to write them an oratorio several years before it is wanted, they put at his disposal a splendid chorus and soloists, and all the resources a man can desire. With such opportunities, I should have thought a man had a better chance of being inspired to some purpose than if he were pottering about just when the humour took him."

I am fortunate enough to be able to give here, in facsimile, a bar from the original first score of "Job."

C. Hubert Parry

Ebenezer Prout.

Mr. Prout, when composing, makes first a very rapid sketch on two staves—with instrumental works generally only the upper part and a figured bass; with choruses, anthems, etc., usually the four-voice parts. For songs he writes only the melody, with just enough indication of the accompaniment to prevent his forgetting the idea.

"My first sketches," he says, "are always written as fast as the pen will go. I make it an invariable rule *never* to write unless I am in the humour, and if I find that ideas do not come as fast or faster than I can put them down, if I have to stop to think what should come next, I at once put the music-paper aside, knowing that I am not in the mood for composing. After completing my sketch I begin the fair copy, the full score, in the case of orchestral work, putting in the details and often making considerable improvements. My public works usually differ pretty widely from the original draft; but the first sketch, containing the fundamental idea, is invariably produced at what I may call a 'white heat.'"

Composition, in this composer's opinion, can be taught so far as the technique is concerned; but if a student has no ideas, these cannot be given by any instruction, though a latent talent may often be brought out and cultivated by proper training. By this he means that there may be a natural aptitude for composition of which its possessor is unaware till his teacher discovers and develops it.

Of his own works Mr. Prout thinks he is, perhaps, hardly an impartial judge, but his own favourites are among the instrumental work, his "3rd Symphony" and the two quartets in B flat and F; and among the vocal works, the cantatas the "Red Cross Knight" and "Damon and Phintias."

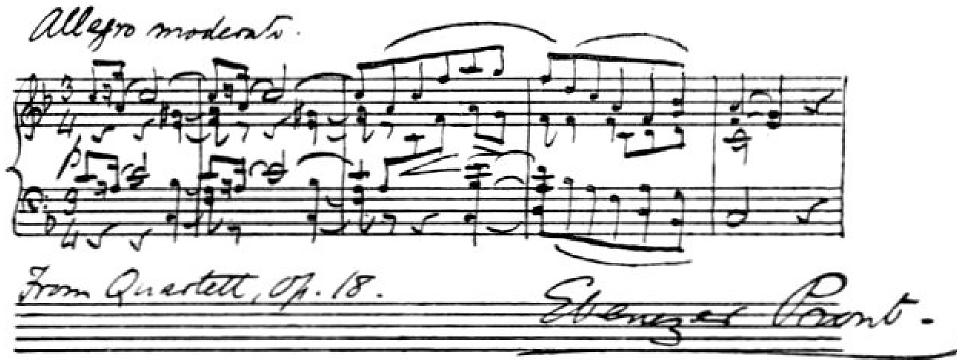
"It is difficult," continues Mr. Prout, "to give a definite opinion as to whether the English are a musical nation; it depends so much on the point of view. Judging by the number of concerts, etc., we are musical enough, but the want of general public appreciation of the best class of music, especially in the Metropolis, would incline me to a far less favourable opinion. In this respect I believe many parts of the provinces are far ahead of London.

"Do I believe in writing 'to order'? Well, I cannot speak for others, but for myself, when I receive a commission to write anything, I always accept, conditionally on the spirit moving me. If the work I am asked to undertake is sympathetic, the spirit generally moves pretty soon. Some of my best work has been commissioned, but to write *merely for money* is repugnant to me. I have never written a 'pot-boiler' in my life, and, please God, I never will."

Mr. Prout concludes by saying:—

"I usually compose in the evening, mostly between six and ten, seldom later. If I have a morning to spare, which does not often happen except during my holidays, I frequently find that a good time for composing. Recently I have composed very little, my time being too fully occupied with writing the series of theoretical works, which is still a long way from completion."

The MS. is taken from his well-known "Piano Quartet in F."



Ebenezer Prout.

RUBINSTEIN.

From Herr Anton Rubinstein I have obtained no information whatever. He has, however, with the kindness which characterizes him, sent me the accompanying MS.:—

Theme et Variations op. 88

Ant. Rubinstein

Some time ago Rubinstein left the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, where he had been for so many years, and visited Dresden, in search of rest and quietness, and laid aside all business for the time. For any further information, I must refer my readers to his "Autobiography," a fragment published in America, and "A Conversation Upon Music," published by Augner.

C. SAINT-SAËNS.

The French composer, Saint-Saëns, considers a piano a useless item in the art of composition, at all events in his case, for he rarely, if ever, makes use of one when composing, even to play over completed works.

Some MS. paper and a pencil are the only materials he works with, and he has composed whole operas without a musical instrument in the house.

This manner of composing M. Saint-Saëns finds a great saving of valuable time (and if composers' time is not important, whose is?), and he does not consider that ideas come any the more readily when seated before a piano; in fact, rather the reverse.

The portion of MS. will be familiar to those who have studied his works.

Stanford.

In Professor C. V. Stanford's opinion the art of composition can be cultivated, but never acquired. He composes according to the mood in which he happens to be, and never keeps to any fixed rule or time.

As to composers working under pressure, he imagines that must depend greatly upon the temperament of the composer. He expresses no opinion as to which he considers his best work, but says: "That is for the future to determine and individual tastes to decide."

The half-dozen bars of music are taken from his "Irish Symphony."

C. V. Stanford

Strauss.

Herr Johann Strauss, with whose dreamy waltzes most of us are familiar, for his part says that he is far too modest to designate any composition as his *best*. When he finishes one he forgets it completely for a time in the interest caused by his next work. Method he has none—only inspiration, genius—for in his opinion composers can never be made. "One may compose," he says, "very easily, or—not at all." The divine art must be innate, and a composer—like his brother genius, the poet—must be born, and can never be made. The music is taken from one of his well-known waltzes.

Johann Strauss

Berthold Tours.

Mr. Berthold Tours, who has written some of the finest anthems and "Services" of the present day, besides numerous songs, prefers the morning for composition, and being an early riser, is

generally to be found hard at work soon after 9 a.m., and seldom ceases his labours till two o'clock. He never composes at an instrument, and thinks that people who do are very apt to get their ideas from it and not out of their head; nor does he force himself to compose, preferring to wait till the inclination is upon him or the composition on which he is engaged has matured itself in his brain, when there only remains the mechanical part of writing it down, which very often takes up the most time. If engaged upon a song, he first of all reads his words over two or three times carefully and thoughtfully, so as to obtain a grasp of the style of the verses, and then the music begins and the composition proceeds smoothly to its close. Mr. Tours considers his "Service in F" the best work he has yet done. This composition is a universal favourite with lovers of Church music, and deservedly popular at festivals.

It is pleasant to hear that this composer considers England a musical nation. "Not quite so great as Germany, perhaps, but during the last twenty years there has been great talent shown in music. We are stronger now in clever composers than we have ever been, and no nation is so appreciative of good music as the English, or so quick to recognise and encourage true genius."

Like Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, Mr. Tours does not hold with the popular belief that composers produce as fine works when writing for commissions received as when left to follow their own inclinations, but acknowledges that many great works have been thus produced.

In conclusion, Mr. Tours says that the playing of good classical music, to those who know the rules of writing, might be a very great help, and would be an incentive to good composition.

The portion of MS. is taken from his well-known "Harvest Anthem."

While the earth remaineth

Harvest Anthem

Berthold Tours

P. Tschaïkowsky.

Klin, near Moscow, was the home of one of the busiest of men. It is here that the late Russian composer, Tschaïkowsky, lived and worked, devoting the greater part of the day to his art. Nine o'clock every morning found him hard at work, and it was one before he stopped for a light lunch. Two hours every afternoon were rigidly set aside for one of the few recreations in which he used to indulge, viz., walking; and it was during these daily strolls that most of the sketches of his pieces were conceived, and entered into a note-book which was always forthcoming. Home was reached soon after four, and from five to half-past eight was employed in arranging and setting in order the sketches jotted down during the walk.

A piano, he considered, is not absolutely necessary, and he composed much without the use of one. For instance, on a journey, or long voyage, or when rusticating in some primitive, far-away little hamlet, where the peacefulness and quietude are suggestive of composition, but where the running brook does duty for a piano and you fit your melodies to the sighing of the wind among the fir trees. Still, the instrument helped sometimes the development of his musical ideas, and generally when convenient he made use of one. "I believe," he said, "the creating power of music to be a precious gift of Nature, which cannot be obtained by work and study, but only improved and lighted by musical sciences, besides being purely *empérique*. With the belief that composers often work better and produce finer results when put under a certain amount of pressure the professor agrees, pinning his belief on history, which tells us of many masterpieces being done thus.

"I have never thought," he resumed, "of the reasons explaining why England, who produced such great poets, has had, comparatively speaking, but few musicians. It seems to me that the idea that the English are not gifted for music cannot be considered as 'definitive.' Who knows that a musical Shakespeare will not be produced? You have already men of much promise and whose work is very serious."

Of his own compositions, Tschaïkowsky considered his opera "La Dame de Pique" the best work

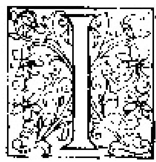
he had ever done, an opinion which is shared by many of his admirers.

P Tschaïkowsky

NOTE.—Cowen's opera, referred to in our February number as "Sigrid," should have been "Signa," which had not been produced when this article was written.

THE ZEALOUS SENTINEL

AN INCIDENT OF THE SIEGE OF PARIS

T was a chill and cheerless day towards the end of November of the year 1870. The siege of Paris was in full tide of determinate execution. For two months, and a little more, the German host had environed the city with a circle of glistening bayonets and loud-mouthed cannons, cutting off intercourse with the outside world, and effectually preventing the incoming of provisions; the smoke and fumes of burning powder filled the air; while shot and shell rained down upon the doomed metropolis, by day and by night.

Near the corner of the Boulevard Mazas and the Rue de Bercy was situated the wine-shop of Victor Rameau, a popular resort of the middling classes, but patronized by men of high standing, and often sought by those of the lowest strata of society. On this chill November day the spacious apartment on the street level was filled by a motley assemblage. There were present representatives of almost every trade, profession, and calling, though the military element predominated.

At one of the small oaken tables against the wall sat two men, with whom we have particularly to do; and at the table next to them, also against the wall, sat a third. Of the two, one was a sergeant of the National Guard, named Jacques Carlier, a middle-aged man, with a heavy red moustache, and a head of closely-clipped red hair. His face was likewise very red, and his two eyes were as nearly of the same fiery colour as they could be.

The guardsman's companion was a short, thick-set man, also of middle age, with dark brown hair and a full beard of the same colour. His stoutness was peculiar. It did not seem to be fat, but an unusual size of body and limb—somewhat as though in his youth a ponderous weight had fallen upon his head and shoulders and knocked him into that squat, uncouth figure. His hair was thick and tangled; his face, where the full beard did not hide it, darkly tanned and seemingly unwashed; and his clothing of the very worst—worn and soiled and ragged. He had given his name as Pierre Dubois, claiming to be from Ardennes.

The third man—he at the other table—was Colonel de Brèze, of the National Guard. Both he and the sergeant were in uniform, and, saving only the rags, neither of them could boast of a personal appearance very much better than was that of the poor wayfarer from Ardennes.

Pierre Dubois had dark lines under his eyes; a look of pain and distress marked his face; while a deep-reaching, rasping cough ever and anon shook his frame and interrupted his speech.

"I'd enlist this moment," he said, "if I could be put on duty under cover, out of the way of this miserable wintry wind. But what should I be good for in the trenches, or at the breast-works? You can see for yourself that I shouldn't last a week."

"Aye," returned the sergeant, "I see very plainly that you wouldn't be good for much in an exposed position. I should say consumption was carrying you off about as fast as it could."

"So—it—(a severe fit of coughing)—is."

"Are you fit to enlist at all?"

"Well, no; I do not suppose I am. But I'll be frank with you. I have a spice of the man Adam in me. It is Vengeance. I was at Sedan, as I have told you, and the Germans made me a prisoner. I wasn't fit to march: I could hardly stand; so they pricked me up with their sabre bayonets. Then, when I was thrown into a dirty prison, and begged for a bit of medicine for my cough, they gave me curses and a kick. I swore then, if ever the opportunity should be mine, I would volunteer to stand sentinel over a squad of German prisoners. You've got those fellows in limbo, haven't you?"

"Yes, plenty of them."

"And you've got strong, able, well men standing guard over them?"

"Yes, we have."

"Then, there's my opportunity. Put me there, and I'll do double duty, if I can stand it. At all events, I can perform the duties of a sentinel just as well as any living man."

At this point Colonel Brèze, who had overheard, faced about.

"Sergeant," he said, "we want this man. I want him at La Force."

At the sound of the name of that celebrated prison, a bright light gleamed in the provincial's eyes, and he quickly hid his face behind his beer-mug to conceal the emotion he could not keep back.

The sergeant nodded, and then to the man himself the colonel continued:—

"You are used to military duty, my good man?"

"Yes, Colonel. I was a conscript when I was twenty, and served four years; and I enlisted after that. I would be now with Trochu, in all probability, had not the Germans captured me at Sedan, when out on a sortie, and held me until I escaped."

"How did you manage to get through their lines when you entered our beleaguered city?"

"They did not see me. I crawled in through the rain, on a dark night."

"And you would like to do guard duty over German prisoners, eh?"

"I could like nothing better. I have prayed that the privilege might be mine."

"Very well, it shall be yours. I have command of the guard of La Force. I want you there."

IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

On that same November day—the day on which we heard the conversation between the colonel and the sergeant and the provincial—a prisoner sat in one of the strongest and most gloomy of the cells of La Force. Most of the cells were occupied by several persons, some of them containing as many as could comfortably lie down therein; but this man had been condemned to death, and placed in solitary confinement. He was a young man, not over thirty, fair-faced and handsome. He was of German birth—a German of Darmstadt—and though clad in the garb of a French labourer, he was yet a gentleman of education and refinement; his name, as had been learned from marked articles in his possession, Otho Maximilian.

Poor Maximilian! In his soldier's ardour and love of country he had volunteered to his Prince to enter the enemy's lines and bring away a correct draught of the outer and inner fortifications, together with proper plans of the disposition of troops. And all this he had come very near to doing; but, alas! not quite. Had he been content to carry away his observations and computations in his head, and made the visible signs of his espionage in the presence of his Prince, all might have been well. He had gained the interior of the city and its free range; he had made plans of all important things he wished to communicate, and he was apprehended and searched, with those neatly drawn plans upon his person.

Poor Otho! So young and so fair, with wife and three children praying for him, and waiting in the Fatherland, thus to die! He shed no tears; he gave voice to no complaints; he was sure his comrades would keep his memory green; that his Prince would bless him for what he had tried to do, and that his dearly loved ones would seek consolation in the thought that he had given his life to his country.

On the day after to-morrow he was to die. He was not to be shot, like a soldier, nor beheaded, as kings and noblemen had been; he was to suffer the ignominy of hanging. The thought gave him keenest torture.

That dismal day drew to a close, and, at eventide, when the attendant came with his food, he made one last earnest appeal for writing materials, that he might write a brief letter to his wife. But such a grant would be a violation of prison law; it could not be done. Then he closed his lips, resolved not to speak again save to the Heavenly Father.

The night passed, and another dark and dismal day. Another evening came, and another night shut down over the great prison. Otho's last night of earth, as the few grim marks on his dungeon wall told him.

At eleven o'clock he threw himself upon his hard straw pallet and tried to sleep. He heard the solemn bells strike the midnight hour, and a few moments later the warder of that corridor opened the little wicket in his door and looked in upon him.

Had our prisoner been on the outside of his cell at that particular time, he would have seen a movement on the part of the sentinel strange and unusual. This sentinel had softly and noiselessly followed the warder to that door, had stood very near while he looked in at the wicket, and then, when he had started on to the next cell, he leaped upon him as a cat would strike its prey. A single blow of a sand-bag upon the warder's head felled him to the granite pavement as though a lightning-bolt had smitten him. On the next instant the sentinel was upon his knees, those knees upon the fallen man's breast, with a folded napkin, in which was a broad, flat, fine sponge, pressed tightly over the mouth and nostrils. A brief space so, then the guardsman took from his breast pocket a small flask and renewed the chloroform in the sponge.

Otho Maximilian had heard the opening of the wicket, and had seen the face that had peered in upon him. He had again closed his eyes, when he heard a dull, heavy thud, as though a ponderous body had fallen upon the adamantine floor. The sound was so unusual, so strange and unaccountable, that he was startled—not with fear, but with a nameless, shapeless spectre of the unseen. He arose and bent his ear attentively.

Ere long he heard the light clatter of a key as it was inserted into the lock of his door, and presently the door was opened and a man came in—a man habited in the uniform of the National

Guard.

"—Sh!" whispered the guardsman. "Speak not, but do as I bid you. Throw off that ragged blouse. Sacré!—will you obey? Bah!—it is a friend! Now act, and quickly!"

"What!—you?—Mar——"

"Will you stop your tongue and obey? We will talk by-and-by."

Without another word the prisoner pulled off his blouse and threw it aside. At the same time the guardsman stripped off his uniform, threw off waist-belt and baldric, with the sword; then the coat with its gaudy facings; then the pants, gaiters, and the shoes; and he bade the other to get himself into them with all possible dispatch, which was done.

And yet the guardsman stood in full uniform as before. He had come doubly clad, even to the hat and an extra pompon. And there was still another dress inside the uniform in which he now appeared. No wonder he had looked strangely rotund and squat when we met him in M. Rameau's wine-shop.

"Come! Look out that your sword does not clank, yet be ready to use it if need be. Now follow me. Look neither to the right nor to the left. Are you ready? So! Forward! March!"

As they passed out upon the corridor, closing the door behind them, Otho saw the warder prone upon the pavement, and his sensitive olfactories detected the presence of the powerful anæsthetic that held him in thrall.

"A SPONGE PRESSED TIGHTLY OVER THE MOUTH."

On that corridor they were at liberty to move as they pleased—for though there was a post of observation commanding that whole floor, yet the officer whose duty it was to occupy it was the warder who now lay senseless, and whose keys the sentinel had taken into his own possession.

"Mark you," whispered the liberator, when they had reached the head of the stairs and were about to descend, "we have our greatest risk directly ahead. The sentinels below have just come on, and may not be wakeful enough to be over-inquisitive. We must make them believe that we have been relieved, and that we stopped behind to help M. Joubert examine a cell."

"Will they not know at once that I am not a true National Guardsman?" asked Otho.

"Not if you hide your face as best as you can. They know not me. I came on last evening for the first time. I only entered the service yesterday; enlisted on purpose for this bit of work. Oh, God, send that it prove a success! Now, forward! march!"

At the foot of the stairs was a door, which the zealous sentinel unlocked with a key taken from the pocket of the warder. As they were ready to step forth, he called out, imitating the gruff tones of the warder as closely as possible:—

"There—off you go! and I thank you for your help!"

"You are entirely welcome; but you've robbed me of nigh half

"HE READ THE PASS."

an hour's sleep, nevertheless; good-night, M. Joubert."

The last words were upon his lips as he stepped forth into the lower hall, and the sentinel there standing supposed, naturally enough, that he was addressing the warder of the above.

"Now, comrade," said our experimenting guardsman, to the sentinel there stationed, "if you will let us out, we shall be grateful. M. Joubert has kept us to help him care for a prisoner who was inclined to be restive."

"Certainly, comrade." And, without hesitation, the honest sentinel ushered the twain forth into the vestibule, whence they made way to the open court.

"Now, my boy, mark me once more: I am Pierre Dubois; you are Julien Bizet—both of the National Guard. I have in my pocket a pass, signed by Colonel de Brèze—or it will answer for his signature. I think this will set us free. Come!"

Boldly they entered the office of the night keeper, where Pierre exhibited his pass. Fortune favoured the adventurers at every turn. This keeper was a plethoric, heavy-eyed man, dull and sleepy. He read the pass and gave it back, and, with only a grunt and a growl at being disturbed, he got up and opened the way for the anxious twain to go free.

In the uniform of the National Guard, and with the pass of Colonel Brèze, it was an easy matter for the fugitives to make their way to the outer fortifications, whence they had no difficulty in slipping through into the German lines, where they were received with great rejoicing.

During the winter of 1875-76, Colonel Alphonse de Brèze was called, by business of State, to the Prussian capital, and while there he went to the theatre. The play advertised on the occasion of his first visit was called "The Guardsman," the leading character of which was a rollicking, fun-making soldier of the French National Guard, said character being enacted by a Berlin favourite, Martin Œsau. When the guardsman made his appearance on the stage, De Brèze was electrified. With the first effort of thought he recognised the man—his recruit of Rameau's wine-shop!—his zealous sentinel of La Force!—his Pierre Dubois!

De Brèze could honour and respect brave men. A few days later he called upon M. Œsau at his home, and spent a pleasant hour; and not long thereafter he met Otho Maximilian at the same place.

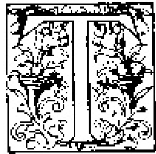
"My friends," the colonel said, as he put down his empty wine-glass, "had you seen and heard me on that November morning, five years ago, when my prisoner was demanded of me, and I found an empty cell and a sentinel missing, you would have been slow to believe that an event like this could ever enter into the story of our lives!"

"Thank high Heaven for peace and for friendship!" was Œsau's fervent response.

And they filled up and emptied their glasses to the sentiment.

The Queer Side of Things.

THE UNBELIEVERS' CLUB.

HERE had been silence for twenty minutes in the circle of our weekly convivial at the "Chain-Harve." The last word had been "ghosts"—or, more accurately, "ghostes." During that twenty minutes' silence, broken only by the puffing of pipes and the setting down of mugs, Mr. Coffin (who had been an undertaker, or something of that sort, up at London, and was considered the leading mind of the convivial club) had sat twinkling his eyes at the kettle-crane in a way that told those who knew him that something was to come out presently. At the end of the twenty minutes Peter broke the silence with:—

"He, he! Ghostes! Them's things as some folks thinks as ther' mebbe more in 'em ner is gen'ly thought—more'n wot some other folks thinks!"

Mr. Coffin transferred his twinkle to Peter, and then spread it over the company. But the company were engaged in twinkling for themselves—or, rather, in blinking (which was their substitute for twinkling)—at the kettle-crane. Most of them were wagging their heads very slowly from side to side.

"There's some as don't believe nothink," said old Billet.

"An' 'ow about Mrs. Skindle and them there lights down in the Low Medder?" said Peter.

"And 'ow about Master George's groom?" said Mr. Armstrong, of the Mill.

"Ar!" murmured the company.

Mr. Coffin had now completed the spreading of his twinkle over the company, and spoke:—

"It seems to me, gentlemen, that this club has a sort of duty in this very matter of ghosts and things. There's a great deal too much ignorance and superstition about."

The company, added to by the dropping in of occasional new arrivals, transferred their gaze—no longer a blink—to Mr. Coffin, in feeble surprise. Then, very gradually, the slow wag of the heads dissolved into a slow nod; as they said, very thoughtfully, "Ar!"

"It isn't only ghosts," continued Mr. Coffin. "It's superstition generally that it's our duty to put our foot down against. There's all sorts of nonsense about ill-luck from going under ladders, and spilling salt, and crossing knives—it's a sheer disgrace to the century!"

"Ar!" said the company, feebly.

"I'm glad you agree with me," went on Mr. Coffin, "because I've always felt strongly about the foolishness of these superstitions. Now, I was reading the other day in the paper about a club they have in London—it was there in my time, too; but that brought it to my mind. That club was established to ridicule those very superstitions; and they go at it with a vengeance when they are at it—regularly perspire over it, you might say. Well, now—why shouldn't we—this club—take up this matter too, just to show the people round about how sensible we are—eh?"

"Ar!" said the company.

"Very well, then, we couldn't have a more suitable occasion to inaugurate the new proceedings than to-night. This is Hallowe'en, gentlemen, the one night of the year on which people have the best chance of seeing ghosts—witches' night, you know; and what's more, there are just thirteen of us present, and that's another lucky thing; and what's more, Mr. Puter's yard dog has been howling all the evening, which is supposed to be a sign that somebody in this house will die shortly; and, by the way, I heard the death-watch most distinctly ticking in your parlour wall when I came in to-day, Peter; so, if you're as eager about the subject as I feel sure you are, why,

there's no reason why we shouldn't begin at once."

"Why not?" murmured the company, very low and hesitatingly.

"Very well, then—those who are in favour of the new departure will indicate the same in the usual manner, by holding up their hands," said Mr. Coffin.

And he turned his eye on each of the company in turn, and as he did so, the one gazed at feebly held up his hand, and then dropped it as quickly as possible.

They had failed to notice, before he pointed it out, that they numbered just thirteen. The attendance at the club varied from time to time, owing to some of the frequenters living in neighbouring villages, and to other reasons.

So Mr. Coffin called for two knives and a salt-cellar; and then each one present was blindfolded in turn and made to go through a ceremony of initiation over the crossed knives and to spill some salt; after which Mr. Coffin entertained them with a discourse about ghosts, rising gravestones, banshees, corpse lights, and other things which it was the duty of the new club to ridicule.

"The time is approaching when the landlord will request us to leave the premises," said Mr. Coffin; "and, as you are aware, the first of us to rise to depart must, according to the superstition, die within the year: a most laughable superstition, of course!"

Mr. Coffin looked round. Each one whom he fixed with his eye chuckled feebly and whispered "Ar—o' course!"

"Who volunteers to rise first?" asked Mr. Coffin, fixing his twinkle on the kettle-crane.

"TIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE."

There was a dead silence, broken by a low, blood-curdling, tremulous moan from the yard; a moan which swelled into a howl so prolonged that it seemed as though it would never cease. Then another dead silence, broken by a dreadful grating death-cry from the woods; only the cry of the screech-owl. Then the landlord looked in and said: "Time, gentlemen, please."

But no one stirred; Mr. Coffin's twinkle was still fixed upon the crane.

"I propose, brother Unbelievers," he said, "that Peter, as being the person in whose house the death-watch is ticking at present, is the fittest person to rise. This will give him a great opportunity of showing his contempt for absurd superstitions."

"That's right, anyhow—'ear! 'ear!" said the other eleven, quite heartily this time; and Peter desperately seized and emptied his glass of gin and water, and—pale as a sheet—slowly rose and buttoned his coat. As he did so, there resounded again, simultaneously, the howl of the yard dog and the death-cry of the screech-owl. Peter grinned a ghastly grin, wiped his brow, said tremulously, "Well—goo' night," and crawled out.

Then Mr. Coffin removed his twinkle once more from the crane, and rose, and beamed round upon the company.

"This *is* a magnificent opportunity for the display of our contempt for superstition!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "If I remember rightly, it was on a Hallowe'en, just seven years ago, that the tramp hanged himself to that oak at the turn of the road—your way home, by the way, Mr. Armstrong. Yes, it *was* Hallowe'en! How fortunate! And then there's Master George's groom who was thrown and broke his neck at the Squire's gate, and is said to haunt the avenue just inside so as to be seen from the road. Why, if he's to be seen *any* night, he's safe to be about on Hallowe'en—and that's on *your* road home, Mr. Billet; there's a chance for *you*! Then some of you have to cross the Low Meadow where old Meg was drowned, in the time of William the Fourth, and where the corpse-lights are to be seen, eh? Why, there's some fun for every one of you. There's the churchyard, too, with a lot of queer stories about it. Don't you remember about Joe Watts seeing that grey thing sitting on the grave that had been opened, no one knew how?

"Capital! I'll tell you what. Just come into my place and finish the evening, and then you can all start off in time to pass those places exactly at midnight. Come along; and I'll start you all off at the right time."

Getting skilfully behind them all—(for Peter had been found hanging about just outside the door of the "Chain-Harve")—he edged them into his cottage like a collie showing sheep into a pen; and made them all sit down; and told them about an uncle of his who had gone by a haunted spot for all the world like the turn of the road where the tragedy of the tramp had occurred; and had heard something following him, though he could see nothing; and had felt a feeling like a dead fish sliding down his back; and had been unable to stir from the spot or to turn his head, although he felt a something

behind him all the time; and had been found nearly dead in the morning. Then there was another tale of a maniac with blood on his nails, who lurked behind headstones in just such a churchyard as the one some of them had to pass through that night, and sprang out upon persons passing by; and was felt to be cold and slimy; and left those whom he touched paralyzed all down one side. And there was the story of the woman who saw a gravestone slowly rising—rising—rising of its own accord; and several other stories. Between the stories, in the dead silences, were heard the howls of the yard dog and the cries of the screech-owl: for Mr. Coffin lived close to the "Chain-Harve."

"SPRANG OUT UPON PERSONS PASSING BY."

"And now it's about time for some of you to be off," he said, rising. "You shall go one by one. Your road home lies by the Low Meadow, Peter; you'd better start now, and you'll just get there as the clock strikes twelve—you'll hear the church clock down there, so you can hang about a bit if you get there too soon. Good-night! Bless me, look at that thing in the elm tree! Doesn't it look like a man hanging there? Oh, of course, that's the light from my window on the leaves. Well, good-night, good-night all! Don't forget the rising gravestones, and the maniac, and the groom, and the dead fish!"

When the last of them had got round the turn in the road, Mr. Coffin put on his coat and crept out after them, walking on the turf at the side of the road so that his steps could not be heard. Presently he made a short cut across Farmer Worripp's third field so as to head them. At the other end of the field was the tramp's corner, with the fatal tree, now thin as to leaves, standing out blurrily against the dark sky. There, behind the hedge, Mr. Coffin waited to observe how Mr. Armstrong would pass the spot; Armstrong had been started off in good time to pass the spot a little before twelve; but the watcher waited in vain—no Armstrong turned up. So Mr. Coffin started off again, across country, toward the churchyard, arriving there just before twelve, and hiding behind King John's Yew; he strained his ear for the sound of feet, but no sound of feet was to be heard. No one going by the road could possibly have arrived there before him. The clock struck twelve, but no one came; he waited until the quarter-past—still no one came. Then he started off, still across country, to a point on Peter's way home, some three-quarters of a mile beyond the Low Meadow—but no Peter was to be seen. So Mr. Coffin went home across the Low Meadow without meeting a soul—or a spirit. Even down at the Low Meadow he could hear the distant howl of the yard dog—a marrow-chilling sound enough; but Mr. Coffin had absolutely no nerves, and simply chuckled.

How the members of the Unbelievers' Club got home that night nobody ever knew except themselves; but next morning Mr. Coffin was on his pony making the round of their dwelling or working places, and interviewing them.

But they seemed very grumpy and short that morning (one and all): and on his ride home Mr. Coffin twinkled so at the hedges and the trees and the sky, and chuckled so incessantly that even his pony (who was used to his ways) several times stopped and turned a brown eye round at its rider in surprise and inquiry. All that day twelve out of the thirteen members of the Unbelievers' Club were morose and out of humour; and that evening the majority of them happened to drop in at the "Threshing Machine," at the other end of the district from the "Chain-Harve." They said very little beyond "Good evening," and sat in the tap-room looking sheepishly at the fire, the important subject of the newly-established club being strangely avoided.

But reports of the prowess of the club on the previous night had been carefully spread by Mr. Coffin. He had told everybody he came across how Armstrong had sat and smoked right under the tramp's tree while the clock struck twelve, and how Billet had spent nearly an hour by the gate of the Squire's park, challenging the groom's ghost to show up, and making the avenue echo with his laughter; and so forth: so that the members of the new club had become heroes. Thus, one by one, the villagers were attracted to drop in at the "Threshing Machine" to gaze reverentially at the fearless ghost-defiers, and ask them all about it.

"It must hav' give yer a bit of a creepy feelin' when the clock began to strike?" said the saddler.

"Me? Golong with yer! 'Ope *I* ain't sech a turnip-liver as ter be frightened at bogies!" replied Armstrong, scornfully.

"Yur! D'ye take us for a set o' babies?" asked Billet, witheringly.

"Yah!" exclaimed Joe Murzle. "Wot next?"

Then the admirers stood drinks to the heroes; and by the time the latter got up—with more or less difficulty—to go home, there wasn't one among them who would not have given a week's earnings to meet the most creepy ghost about.

But the next morning they were silent once more; and Peter looked gloomily over the fence at Billet.

"Mighty queer about this 'ere pig o' mine, *that's* wot it is!" said he. "Bin ailing, he has, ever since yesterday morning."

"Hum!" said Billet. "We-el—if you ask *me*—I tell yer plain as I do b'leeve my roomatics come on wuss night afore last, and that's pat."

Then they were silent, shaking their heads for several minutes.

"I'll tell yer," said Peter. "'Umbug it may be; an' truck it may be; but there's things as is best let alone, and that I *do* think. Thur ain't no kind o' weak-mindyness nor credibility about *me*; but I says, wot's the objeck o' goin' a-spillin' o' salt, an' crossin' knives, an' settin' down thirteen?"

"MIGHTY QUEER ABOUT THIS 'ERE PIG O' MINE."

"Ar!" said Billet, eagerly, "that's wot I ses—let sleepin' dogs lie, ses I; and then yer won't git bitten, I ses!"

"I've got a kind o' notion as things are a-going somehow queerish like," said Armstrong, passing along the lane at that moment. "Do me if I can git the wind right way round into the mill-sails this mornin' nor yet yesterday; and what on earth shed make that there lot o' flour mouldy—well! That there pig's tail o' yourn don't look kind o' right—it's a-hangin' out straight as a dip. Wot's ailin'?"

Peter and Billet looked at each other and shook their heads. Then Joe Maydew came along, and told how he had his doubts about them turkeys of his being quite as they should be, and how Jem Baker the carrier's horse had gone lame the day before; and how other suspicious things were happening.

Now, as a fact, Peter's pig had been ailing over a week, and the mill had been refractory for five or six days—ever since the wind had been so choppy; and Baker's horse had gradually gone lame from a shoe-nail badly driven ten days previously. But the "Club" had not been nervously looking out for evil signs until some thirty hours ago, and so had failed to find any particular significance in the mishaps.

"It strikes *me*," said Maydew (one of the Unbelievers' Club), "that there's folks as is fools and folks as is bigger fools; and these 'ere last kind is them as must go a-sneerin', and unb'leevin', and defyin', and temptin' o' Providence. Wot's Providence provide bad luck for, if you ain't free to 'elp yerself to it? An' how are yer goin' to 'elp yerself to it if ther' ain't no proper reckernized means o' doing of it—hey?"

"Do jest seem like throwin' away the gifts o' Providence, don't it?" said Peter.

"And wot I ses, them as up and persuades others for to do that same, though bein' nameless, is got to answer to it," said Billet. "There's things as we knows about, and there's other things, as contrariwise, we don't; and when you ses unluck, and ghostes, and sech ——."

"All tomfoolery, aren't they, Mr. Billet? and no one's more convinced of that than you and Peter," put in Mr. Coffin, who had come along unobserved, fixing his persuasive eye on Billet.

The influence of Mr. Coffin's eye was remarkable: poor Billet and Peter stood on one foot and then on the other, and grinned feebly, while the other two stood scratching their chins; and, with a cheery wave of the hand, Mr. Coffin passed on; and when he was out of sight those four stuck their fists defiantly into the very bottoms of their pockets, and put their legs wide apart, and

muttered: "Is got to arnswer for it; and it's a mercy if there ain't bad luck for *them*."

For the rest of that week the Unbelievers spent their time in detecting signs of the ill-luck brought upon them by the rash proceedings of that fatal evening; for, in truth, they were as superstitious a set as one could well find. By the end of the week a thousand small misfortunes had happened, exactly on a footing with the small misfortunes which had been happening to them every week of their lives; but *now* these desperate deeds at the "Chain-Harve" caused everything.

"HE SET FIRE TO HIS THATCH."

Peter's pig got so ill that Peter was forced to sell it at less than quarter value to the local butcher, who was forced to send the carcass to London to dispose of it; and then Peter—always feeble-minded—began to grow moody and to stand about brooding on ills to come; and while he stood brooding with a candle in his hand he set fire to his thatch and burned off half his roof.

Then the evening came round for the weekly meeting of the "Unbelievers' Club," and Mr. Coffin sat in state in the club-room chair at the "Chain-Harve"; but at half-past seven (the regulation time for dropping in) not a member appeared, nor until a quarter past eight; and then Mr. Coffin set off for the other end of the parish, and found them all at the "Threshing Machine."

"Ha! Good evening, gentlemen!" said he, taking a big chair by the fire. "So you've decided to hold our club meeting here for a change?"

"'Ear! 'ear!" cried all those who were not of the fated twelve. Then came a ten minutes' silence. Then Armstrong said, doggedly:—

"As to clubs, there's clubs as is all right; and there's clubs as is, what you might say, otherwise—an' that's all about it!"

"Ar! That's jest where it is!" said old Billet.

"An' take it or leave it!" added Joe Maydew.

"Ar!" said the rest.

Peter sat in a dark corner, behind a string of onions, muttering to himself.

"Is it your pleasure, fellow Unbelievers, that we go into committee on the future programme of the club?" asked Mr. Coffin.

"'Ear! 'ear!" cried the curious non-members, eagerly.

But Armstrong rose and stuck his fists again into the bottoms of his pockets, and glared at the proposer.

"W'y, if it comes to that, no, it ain't!" he said, fiercely. "And take it out o' that!" And with that he stamped out of the "Threshing Machine," followed by Joe Maydew.

The non-members were terribly disappointed; Mr. Coffin's influence was powerless to set the proceedings going; the affair was a disastrous frost; and presently the party broke up. At the hour for closing Peter still sat in the dark corner behind the string of onions, rocking his chair on its two hind legs and glowering at his boots; and he had to be nudged three times before he started up and mechanically trudged out, with his eyes fixed on the floor.

Next day, at the time for going to work, Peter sat in his living-room with his chin upon his chest, and refused to budge. He had not attempted to repair the thatch of his roof; and the rain had soaked his bed, and spoilt his one or two books, and the coloured prints on his wall and other things; but he merely gazed hopelessly round like one under an irremovable curse, and gave it up. He had left the cover off his little flour-tub, and the rain had soaked the flour, and a hen was scratching in it; but there he sat and glowered.

Then he lost his employment at Farmer Worripp's, for the farmer could not wait his pleasure, and had to engage another hand instead; and so Peter had to go to the "house" for out-door relief. So he dragged on, wandering round his garden patch, with his head low, and glowering, and brooding, and waiting for the further developments of the ill-luck he had brought on himself by the proceedings at the "Club."

Then his landlord grew tired of receiving no rent, and Peter had to leave his cottage, after selling his few "sticks" to his neighbours; or, rather, after his neighbours had come forward and given him a trifle for this and that article, which he would otherwise have left behind without an attempt to sell.

And so he wandered out into the road, quietly, at dusk, when no one was observing, and stood for a moment at his gate, wavering which way to go; and then he turned at the sound of a dog barking, and went off slowly in the direction to which he had turned, with no pack—nothing but his clothes and the small amount from the sale in his pocket.

As he passed the "Chain-Harve," his head still on his breast, Mr. Coffin (who had been away for ten days, and had not heard of Peter's latest straits) was standing in the doorway and caught sight of him.

"Halloa, Master Peter," said Coffin. "Whither away now? Coming in to have half-a-pint?"

Peter suddenly stopped in the light from the tap-room window, raised his head, and glared fiercely at the speaker: then spat on the ground before him, and disappeared into the darkness.

The next morning, when Mr. Coffin heard all about Peter's recent troubles, he set off along the road the way he had gone, and searched for him high and low. Peter had been seen in the next village, and had bought a loaf and some cheese at the grocer's; but beyond this the seeker could not trace him. He tried the next day, and the next; but with no success.

It was eight or nine weeks after this that, at sunset, Peter dragged himself from under a haystack where he had been asleep, and drew himself slowly up to a standing position. He was scarcely recognisable: his unwashed face was seared and lined with exposure, misery, and incessant brooding on the ill-luck which had long ago developed in his feeble mind into a crushing curse—a curse deliberately brought down upon himself by some awful and inexpiable blasphemy—for such was the phantasy which had evolved itself out of those harmless acts of spilling the salt and so forth at the inauguration of the Unbelievers' Club. Day and night—until he had fallen down with sheer inability to keep awake—he had wandered on, with his chin on his chest and his eyes on the road, brooding over the "blasphemy" and the "curse." He looked like a skeleton; his eyes had grey hollows all round; his clothes were in rags; and he had been wet through for many days.

Suddenly, now, he glared at the setting sun; then sprang forward to a heap of flints on the roadside, and with trembling hand eagerly selected a large stone, and hugged it up inside the breast of his coat. Then he set off hurriedly—almost at a run—along the road; and walked, walked, at the same pace, into the dusk, into the darkness, under the stars. Now and again he would take out the flint and feel it caressingly; and once he suddenly stopped, and tore off a large piece of his coat, and wrapped the stone in it; and tied his old red handkerchief over that, and put the stone back in his coat. Stumbling along at the same pace, he arrived about ten o'clock at the window of the "Threshing Machine," and peered in; everyone was away that night at a merrymaking in the next village, and Mr. Coffin sat alone in the tap-room.

Peter pushed open the tap-room door, and suddenly appeared before Mr. Coffin, who started up in surprise. After a few moments' scrutiny he recognised the changed figure, and advanced and touched its arm, and sat it down in a chair; and went out and returned with some bread and cheese and a mug of ale.

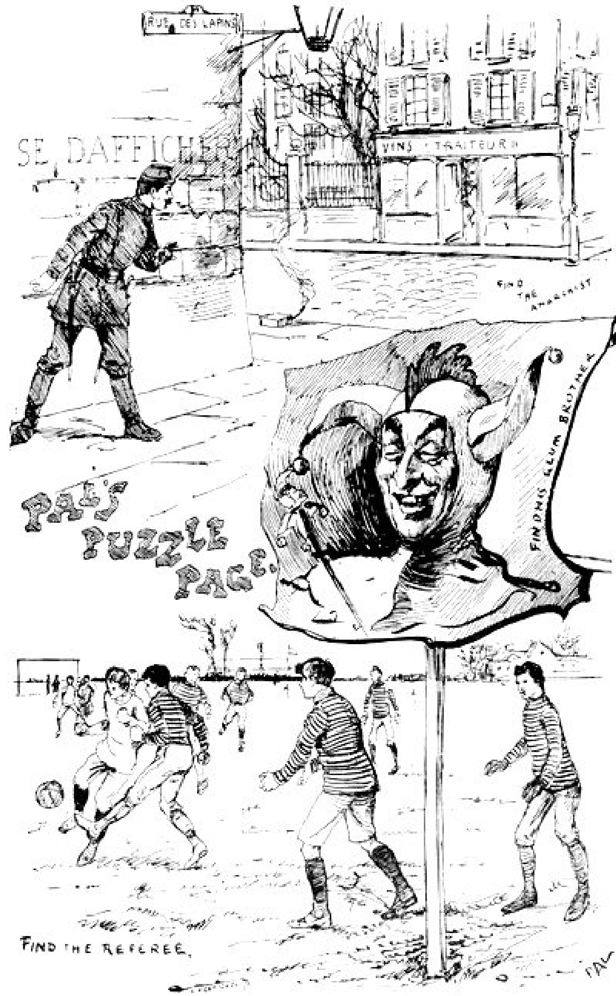
Peter pushed away the food and swallowed the pint of ale at a gulp, then held out the mug to be refilled. It was strong ale, not "swipes." Mr. Coffin took the mug and set it down; and while his back was turned Peter seized his untouched glass of hot rum and water and swallowed the liquor.

Not once did Peter speak, even in reply; but each time the other turned his back, he would bring out the flint in its wrappings and caress it, and glare at Mr. Coffin. Then suddenly Peter sprang up and tottered out; and Mr. Coffin, after a vain attempt to find him in the darkness outside, mounted his pony and set off for home. He took the lane for the Low Meadow; and after him, keeping on the grass or in the soft mud, crept Peter, caressing the flint stone.

"HE WALKED INTO THE DARKNESS."

Mr. Coffin did not return home that night, although his pony did; and the next day he was found on the Low Meadow with his skull fractured and a large sharp flint lying close by; and Peter was found lying face upwards, glaring at the sky through three feet of water, at the spot where tradition said that old Meg was drowned in the time of William the Fourth.

The Low Meadow is triply haunted now; and the villagers avoid it after nightfall more carefully than ever. The Unbelievers' Club exists no longer.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Simple spelling, grammar, and typographical errors were silently corrected.

Punctuation normalized.

Anachronistic and non-standard spellings retained as printed.

Title page and table of contents added by transcriber.

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