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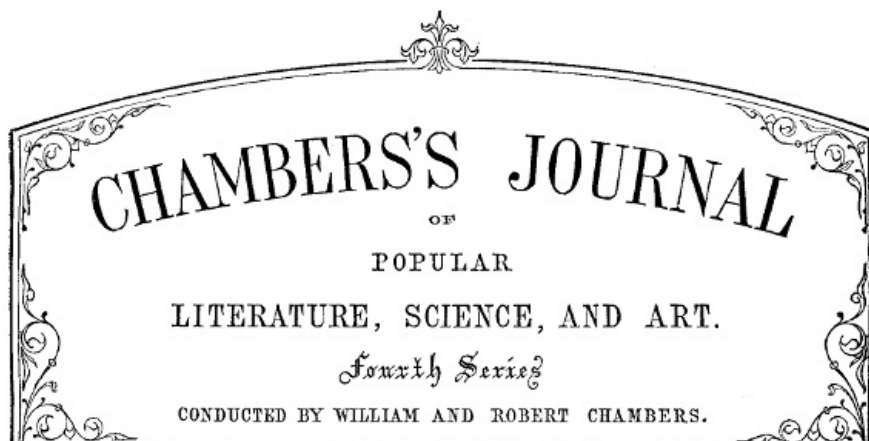
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**CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL  
OF  
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## THRIFT AND UNTHRIFT.

WE lately said a word on Rich Folks, hinting that so far from being the monsters of iniquity which moralists and preachers have for ages denounced them, they are, taken all in all, public benefactors; for without the accumulation of wealth, by means of thrift and honest enterprise, the world would still have been in a deplorably backward condition. Riches are of course comparative. An artisan who by savings and diligence in his calling has insured for himself a competence for old age, is doubtless rich and respectable. Doing his best, and with something to the good, he is worthy of our esteem. What he has laid aside in a spirit of economy goes to an augmentation of the national wealth. In a small way he is a capitalist—his modicum of surplus earnings helping to promote important schemes of public interest.

Great Britain, with its immense field for successful industry and enterprise, excels any country in the capacity for saving. In almost every branch of art there is a scope for thrift beyond what is obtainable elsewhere. Thriftiness, however, among the manual labouring classes was scarcely thought of in times within living remembrance. Savings-banks to receive spare earnings came into existence only in the early years of the present century. Now, spread in all directions, and established in the army and navy, they possess deposits amounting to nearly thirty millions sterling. Besides these accumulations, much is consigned to Friendly Societies; and it is pleasing to observe that within the last twenty years, the artisan classes have expended large sums in the purchase of dwellings purposely erected for their accommodation. All this looks like an advance in thrifty habits—a stride in civilisation.

But after every admission of this kind has been made, it is too certain that vast numbers live from hand to mouth, save nothing whatever from earnings however large, and are ever on the brink of starvation. In this respect, the working classes, as they are usually styled, fall considerably below the peasantry of France, who, though noted for their ignorance, and for the most part unable to read, have an extraordinary aptitude for saving; of which there is no more significant proof than their heavy loans to government when pressed to pay an enormous war indemnity to Germany. As the thrift of the French agriculturists sinks to the character of a sordid parsimony, which is adverse to social improvement, no political economist can speak of it with unqualified admiration. It only shews what can be done by two or three things—the economical use of earnings, the economical use of time, and the strict cultivation of temperate habits. From each of these predominating qualities a lesson might be judiciously taken. Though a lively race, fond of amusement, the French peasantry, and we may add, the peasantry of Switzerland, know the value of time. In them the 'gospel of idleness,' so pertinaciously preached up by indiscreet enthusiasts, has no adherents. In all our experience, we have never seen such assiduity in daily labour from early morn till eve, as among the French and Swiss rural population. They would repudiate any dictation of a hard and fast line as to hours. Time is their beneficent inheritance, to make the most of for themselves and families.

Pity it is that in our own country time is so unthriftilly squandered. Obviously there is a growing disposition among the operative classes to diminish the daily hours of labour, to the detriment of individual and general prosperity. When we began life, ten hours a day, or sixty in the week, were considered a fair thing. Then came a diminution to nine, to eight hours, along with whole and half-holidays, but no lowering of wages. How this is to go on, we are unable to explain. We fear that unless something like common-sense intervene, a degree of individual and national disaster will ensue scarcely contemplated by the votaries of 'St Lubbock.' In his late speech at the opening of the Manchester Town-hall, Mr Bright adverted to the awkward consequences of indefinitely shortening the hours of labour. He is reported to have said: 'We have for many years past been gradually diminishing the period of time during which our machinery can work. We are surrounded by a combination whose object is not only to diminish the time of labour and the products of labour, but to increase the remuneration of labour. Every half an hour you diminish the time of labour, and every farthing you raise the payment of labour which is not raised by the ordinary economic and proper causes, has exactly the same effect upon us as the increase of the tariffs of foreign countries. Thus we often find, with all our philanthropy in wishing the people to have more recreation, and with our anxiety that the workman should better his condition through his combination, that we are ourselves aiding—it may be inevitably and necessarily—but it is a fact that we are aiding to increase the difficulties under which we labour in sending foreign countries the products of the industry of these districts; and we must bear in mind that great cities have fallen before Manchester and Liverpool were known; and that there have been great cities, great mercantile cities on the shores of the Mediterranean, the cities of Phœnicia, the cities of Carthage, Genoa, and Venice.' Such sentiments are worth taking to heart. The preaching up of recreation, otherwise idleness, has gone rather too far. We begin to perceive that wages can be paid only in proportion to work done, and that if people choose to amuse themselves, there must correspondingly be a new adjustment of payments.

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At the late meeting of the British Association, there was some profitable discussion on work, wages, and thrift. One speaker emphatically pointed out that unthrift was more concerned in producing poverty in families than a deficiency in wages. He said, that where there was a deficiency of food 'it would mostly be found that what was wanted had been consumed in drink.' Adding, 'As a matter of fact, the large families did the best, and the greatest men in science and as statesmen were mostly members of large families and younger sons upon whom early struggles for mental growth had produced brilliant results.' This corresponds with ordinary

experience. Within our own knowledge, the greater number of persons distinguished in literature, the arts, and in commerce have been the sons of parents whose means of bringing up their families did not exceed a hundred, in some instances not eighty, pounds a year. Yet upon these slender resources, through the effects of thrift—as, for example, the case given by the late Sir William Fairbairn—families of six or seven children were respectably reared, and attained prominent places in society.

In almost every large town is observed a painful but curious contrast in the administration of earnings. On one side are seen the families of small tradesmen making a manful struggle to keep up respectable appearances at a free revenue of not more than a hundred a year; while alongside of them are families earning two pounds a week and upwards, who make no effort at respectability, and are constantly in difficulties. The explanation simply lies in thrift and unthrift. In one case there are aspirations and enlightened foresight; in the other there is a total indifference to consequences. A few weeks ago, the Rev. F. O. Morris, of Nunburnholme Rectory, Hayton, York, communicated to the *Times* some remarkable revelations concerning unthrift. 'A gentleman of my acquaintance,' he says, 'living in a midland manufacturing town, gave me, two or three years ago, the following instances of the unthriftiness, or rather the outrageous extravagance, of the artisans there; such cases being quite common, the exceptions only the other way. I must premise that many of them with families were at that time earning from eight to twelve pounds a week; a single man as much as five pounds a week, and yet, though paid on Saturday evenings, they would come on the following Monday night to ask the manager for an advance of the next week's wages. And this not for any legitimate expenditure, for even those who had families lived generally in one room, kept no servant, and only employed charwomen. Nevertheless, well they might be in want of ready-money, for often you would see a party setting out on a Sunday for an excursion to some place or other in a carriage with four horses, and dressed in the most extravagant manner, but at the same time with much taste, owing no doubt to their employment being in the lace-trade.

'A charwoman told the wife of my informant that she knew one married couple who can earn seven pounds a week who often came to her on a Thursday to borrow a shilling, their money being all gone. They lived in two rooms, very badly furnished. A needle-woman also told the lady that she knew a couple who earned eight pounds a week, or even more, between them, who lived in two rooms wretchedly furnished, without even a cup or saucer, besides the two they used, to give a friend a cup of tea; that the woman would give four or five guineas for a dress, and had given as much as six guineas, which she would wear all day, from the first thing in the morning till it was shabby, when she would buy another as expensive, or even more so, according to the fashion. She never cooked their own dinner, but bought the most expensive things, took them to a public-house to be cooked, and dined there, eating and drinking afterwards. The "hands" in the trade of the place would often order, for one week, black tea at 4s. a pound, and green at 6s. They would also buy cucumbers at 1s. and 1s. 6d. apiece, beefsteaks for breakfast at 1s. 3d. a pound, and would only eat them fried in butter; salmon in like manner when it first came in at 3s. or 4s. a pound, and lamb at a guinea a quarter. For more light fare they would buy oysters at 2s. or 2s. 6d. a dozen, put down gold on the counter, and eat them as fast as a man could open them for them. My friend saw two men thus eat 10s. worth standing at a stall in the market-place. A man earning L.3 a week, paid on the Saturday evening, got into a row with the police on the Sunday, was fined 25s. on the Monday, and not one out of a hundred or more of his fellow-workmen could advance him the money to pay the fine with, and he had to borrow it of the foreman. Another was earning L.4 a week. His master told him he ought to lay by. "Oh," said he, "I can spend all I make." "But," said the master, "what shall you do, if the times are bad, with your wife and children?" "Let 'em go to the Union," said he. The master himself told my friend this. Mr Baker, the Inspector of Factories, in one of his Reports, stated that a moulder, his wife, and boy on an average earn L.5, 10s. 6d. a week. He mentions a case of a moulder, his wife, and three children earning L.8, 7s. 2½d.

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'How can we wonder, with such facts as these before us, that Mr Sandford, Her Majesty's Inspector, stated in one of his Reports: "Out of 50 (lads) examined in nine different night schools, 29, or 58 per cent., could not read. These night scholars are certainly not the most untaught of the collier lads. 'There's none of them as can read in our pit,' I heard two young colliers say; 'no, nor the master neither.' And yet we wonder that our colliers do not invest their earnings wisely."

Loud and prolonged has been the denunciation of public-houses as the cause of crime and misery—so easy is it to mistake secondary for primary causes. While admitting that public-houses scattered in profusion are the cause of many evils, we go a little farther, and looking for what produces the cause, find that it consists in depraved tastes, want of self-respect, unthrift. To a man of elevated tendencies and intelligent foresight, the number of public-houses is a matter of no importance. He passes by the whole with indifference. Their allurements only excite his pity. He scorns their temptations. It is to this pitch of fortitude we should like to see the weak-minded brought, through education and the habitual cultivation of self-respect, along with a deep consciousness of responsibilities. In therefore so exclusively attacking public-houses as the cause of intemperance, we are in a sense beginning the process of cure at the wrong end. We are expending energies on secondary causes, leaving the seat of the disease untouched. Under infatuations of this kind, the misdirection of moral power is pitiable. The subject is wide, and might be expatiated on to any extent. We here confine ourselves to the remark, that the thing to cultivate is Thrift—not only as regards the expenditure of money but expenditure of time, and in saying this we fear that those who have systematically, though with good intentions, advocated a degree of recreation that must be deemed excessive and dangerous, have not a little to answer for in promoting habits of unthrift.

# FROM DAWN TO SUNSET.

## PART II.

### CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

It was about this time, or some three or four days after Kingston's arrival, that Mistress Dinnage was sitting—languidly for her—at the door of the lodge. Mistress Dinnage lived a life of constant energy; she did not sit and lament; she had her sorrows; but they were closed within the proudest heart that ever beat, and no man knew of them. But all the more dangerous is the stern sorrow that feeds upon itself, the aching, ever-present grief, so stoically disregarded. Mistress Dinnage indulged in neither tears nor regrets; bravely she did her duty day by day, and never would sit down to court a sweet and fancied dream. But when evening came, what had she to do? Father was not home; the tall clock in the corner went tick, tick, tick! Lady Deb was busied with her kinsman Kingston Fleming; old Marjory was no companion to Mistress Dinnage. Lives are so different. In some more genial lives, in some gay changeful or adventurous life, sorrow and despair are kept at bay. In contrast to this life of Margaret's, there was May Warriston far away, dreaming through courtly galleries, gazing on splendid pictures, listening to ravishing music, kneeling before gorgeous shrines. Amid such scenes as these, the heart-strings may be tuned to never a discordant note. But in eternal calm, in depressing sickness, in dreary hours of solitude, *then* the grim spectre looks on us face to face. We may work; ay, but when we pause to rest? Work, everlasting work, gives a stern sense of satisfaction and the comfort of 'something done;' but unlightened by sweeter moments, neither softens the heart nor strengthens the mind. Under that stern government, imagination sleeps, thought grows torpid, the poor wounded soul is grasped within the iron hand it defies, Nature herself lies bruised and bleeding.

In the hours of hard work and daylight, sorrow was to Margaret Dinnage unheeded, unheard, uncared for; but when forced inaction came, when the little room darkened slowly, and the lightest whisper of the breeze began to be heard above the hushed tumult of the world, then the tall clock told a monotonous tale moment by moment to the proud still heart—a tale of solitude and hopeless calm. She would go to the porch not to hear it; but to go out and roam about the happy fields she could not, for there she had played when a child. No; better stand at the door and watch; father would be coming soon.

One evening as Mistress Dinnage thus watched, the gate swung to; not the stooping form of old Jordan Dinnage, but a tall and tower-like figure loomed through the gloaming and darkened the doorway. Loud and full beat the heart of Mistress Dinnage; she could not speak. For the first time for years, she and Charles Fleming were alone.

'Who is at Enderby?' he asked, in a short stern voice.

'Mistress Deborah,' she answered, with hurried breathless utterance, 'an' Master Kingston Fleming.'

'Not my father?'

'No.'

'Has Master Sinclair been here lately?'

'Yes; he was over yesterday morning.'

Then the gloaming parted as it were to admit of a blink of sunshine, and the dark eyes that were gazing up sought the haggard eyes that were gazing down upon them, and all in a flash. Twilight and the wild sweet solitude around them drew those proud hearts together with a power that yearning nature could not resist. The spell of Love was woven around them. Not one word was uttered: stern silence, weary endless longing, pride, grief, trouble, despair, all were now hushed in one long embrace. Long and wordless as had been estrangement, so swift and wordless the wooing; no syllable was needed to tell what the soul had known. {644}

What mattered it in that supreme moment that he was a hunted ruined fugitive—that she was a poor and penniless girl—that they met but to part again? The sweet summer breeze was blowing round them; the trees trembled with gladness overhead; they were young; the world was wide and free. The solemn warning voice of the old clock, for them spoke in vain.

When Mistress Dinnage could speak, she whispered on his breast: 'Thou'rt in trouble.'

'In trouble? Yes.' Then, with a reckless laugh, he took her face between his hands, and answered by wild and passionate kisses.

'Nay; thou must speak,' she went on earnestly, and holding back his head with her little hands. 'Kisses will not aid thee, or I would kiss thee till I died. Speak, Master Fleming! Art thou ruined?'

'Ay; stick and stone.'

'I saw it in thy face, only now the love-light covers it. Oh, how canst thou look so glad for my poor love, when thou'rt ruined and *disgraced*? Bethink thee, Master Fleming. Thine old home will go to strangers. Thy sister will share in thy disgrace. Thy father will go in sorrow to the grave.

Thou'rt ruined, disgraced, *dishonoured!*'

He caught her to his heart, and then held her wildly from him, regarding her with infinite pathos. '*And wilt thou throw me over, Meg?*'

Then spoke she anxiously: 'What is it thou mean'st? Speak out to me. Let there be no secrets and no riddling. Dost thou love me *truly?*'

Then answered the proud liquid glance of those dark eyes; and whispered the youth low in her ear: 'I would like to kill thee for this questioning! *Truly*, love? Dost thou know Charles Fleming so little, that thou'rt in doubt? that thou canst believe he could wrong the only girl he ever loved? Ruffian, gamester, roysterer though I be, I would keep thee pure as snow—snowdrift. Thou shalt make me a better man, who knows? For thy love I thirst, Meg, and have thirsted long. Now—ruined, an outcast, a fugitive, is the moment I choose to seek thee! Wilt have me, Meg, for better, for worse? Wilt share the fortunes of a sinner? Perilous, comfortless, will be thy lot, love. Wilt thou be my wife?'

She could not speak; she answered by a low cry of love and joy. What reaked Mistress Dinnage of the proud grand home and the heir of the Flemings, all passed away! She loved—with all the pure abandonment of a woman's love—this houseless wanderer.

So came Charlie Fleming, and went, and haunted in the twilight round Enderby, and no one knew of it save Mistress Dinnage. She was put about, dismayed, torn by anxiety by all she heard; and the two loves of her life, the loves of father and lover, were wrestling wildly in her soul. Though fearing for her lover, yet, strange inconsistency, her step was light as air, her heart was filled with a new joy, and her eyes with happy tears.

'I must go,' thought Kingston Fleming desperately to himself, the morning after the above scene. 'The old fellow won't turn up, neither does Charlie. I mustn't compromise *her*. But she must not be alone. I doubt—I doubt sorely about the future. Poor sweet child! I will speak to old Marjory; she must hold that flighty Mistress Dinnage in the house. And I will get Deb to send for May Warriston.' So thinking, Kingston went into the garden, where he saw Deborah at her flowers, and abruptly he began: 'I am come to say farewell, Deb. Don't look scared, little coz; you shall not be left alone.'

'Then whom shall I have, King?' she asked, clinging suddenly to his arm. 'Father is away; Charlie is away; and I am in hourly fear of evil tidings. You say, *not alone!* O King, I shall be alone indeed!'

'Little one, I am going to write to May Warriston, to beg her to come and bear you company. Meantime, I am going to see your father. I know his whereabouts, love; I will send him home to-night. And have ye not Marjory, Jordan, and your beloved Mistress Dinnage?'

'Ay, I have them all. But what are weak women and a poor old man compared to your size and strength? With you, King, I am safe. In your presence I can be thoughtless and glad again. In your presence—I am happy.'

'O Deb, Deb! Don't persuade me. I mustn't stay with you. Ill tongues will be talking of you and me.'

'What! of brother and sister? Of kinsfolk? It cannot, cannot be. But let the world talk! What matters it? Will you, for paltry slander, forsake me at this strait?'

'Not forsake you, but consider you. Let go my hand, Deb! I am easily unmanned nowadays. I must go.'

'Well, go, go!'—and she pushed him from her. 'And indeed I would have you seek my father, King, for I am very sad at heart. Cheer him up; comfort him; wean him from his temptation if you can. It is that terrible gambling that is the ruin of the Flemings. Oh, tell him so! But above all things, send him home, for I have a dark, dark foreboding on me; and this night alone at Enderby would drive me mad.'

'He shall come.'

'Then go, King, quickly.'

'You are in a hurry to be rid o' me, now. Good-bye, sweet Deb; good-bye. You will not come and see me off?'

'Nay; I cannot.'

'Well, good-bye, Enderby.' Kingston Fleming bared his head and gazed round, strangely moved, at the old familiar scene. His keen blue eyes grew dim. It did not shame his manhood that tears were drawn like life-blood from his heart, as he nobly renounced a sore temptation. 'Good-bye, Enderby; good-bye.'

He was gone. But still Deborah Fleming, amid her gay and dazzling flowers, seemed to see him standing there, a tall graceful figure, a face full of sadness and regret, a bared head that reverently bowed its adieu; and the words still rang in her ears: 'Good-bye, Enderby; good-bye.' Ten short minutes and all life had changed for her; only when he was gone, she waked to her despair. The sun had ceased to shine, the birds had ceased to sing, the flowers to bloom. She left her gathered flowers to die, and went home like one stunned.

Sir Vincent did return that night; he had seen Kingston, he said. He was very late, and he was tired. He asked Deborah if Mistress Dinnage were with her.

'Yes, dear father. But you are going to sleep at home?'

'Ay; but I may be off early—too early for even thee, my bird of dawn.'

'Nay, father; I will be up, not to see thee off, but to hold thee here. Thou shalt not go tomorrow!'

He smiled. He looked pale. He kissed her fondly.

'Lady Wilful, I must. I want to see my boy. He is ever in trouble.'

'Nay; think not about it to-night, father. King has promised to find him out.'

And so they parted. Weary-hearted, with all the brightness called up for her father laid aside, Deborah sought her chamber, weeping. She recalled, the night when her father had told her Kingston Fleming was betrothed, her wild despair. But she was a child, and the bright morrow had then brought hope and healing. Now she was a woman, and a woman's sorrow lay deep within her breast. Tired out, Deborah undressed and lay down on her bed, not to wake and weep, but to sink into a deep dreamless slumber....

With a start she awoke. A start often wakes us from the soundest sleep, as if some spirit spoke. Deborah Fleming was so wide awake in a moment that she saw through her open window the little pale ghost of the waning moon, the drifting clouds flitting by. A strange feeling was on Deborah. Had she been dreaming that she had seen a light shining under her father's door? Dream or vision, she seemed to see it still, and was irresistibly drawn thither by a mysterious inner sense of alarm. She must go to her father's room, to see that all was well. With a wildly beating heart, she threw on her dressing-gown and went swiftly out. Gray dawn filled all the passages, a gray cold dawn, and the little birds were beginning to twitter. But yes—oh, strange and true, a light was glimmering under her father's door!

Deborah heard him moving; she knocked. 'Father!'—No answer.—'Father!'

'Who is there?'

'Deborah! Father, open your door; I must speak with you at once.'

She tried the door: it gave way; and Deborah saw a room scattered over with papers, in the wildest confusion. The window stood open, and Sir Vincent, looking gray and haggard in the uncertain light, stood against the table in the middle of the room. He was dressed; his long white hair was ruffled; his face was gray, pale; his eyes gleamed strangely on Deborah from under their lowering brows.

'Father!' said Deborah, 'my father!' A great trembling was on her, he looked at her so strangely; but she kept outwardly calm. She laid her hands upon his arm, and then her eyes fell from his troubled face to his trembling hand, which was striving vainly to hide something amongst the papers on the table. Deborah saw the handle of a pistol; she drew it out, and regarded him steadfastly. 'Father, father! what is this?'

He turned from her; his white head was bowed with shame in his hands, and she heard a bitter sob.

'I know it now,' said Deborah, with terrible calmness. 'God called me here. O dear father, what have you thought on? To get free of ruin, you would kill your soul. Kind heaven have mercy on thee! You would leave me, father; you would leave me and Charlie.' She flung the pistol out of the room; she threw her arms round him. Sobs were shaking the strong man's frame.

'O never think to leave me alone, father dear. It was sinful of you not to call me; you might have known your little daughter would sooner share your death, than wake to find you dead.'

'God forgive me, Deb; God forgive me;' and he sank into his chair faint, trembling, shuddering. Deborah, on her knees beside him, scarcely knew her proud father, he was so unmanned. She waited in silence, with her head laid down on his knee. When he could speak, he said: 'I see God's hand in this; I believe in Him as I never believed before. Child! nothing less than a miracle brought thee here, as heaven is my witness; in another moment, Deb, I should have been a dead man. I had the pistol in my hand; may He forgive me, Deb!'

Then Deborah looked up white and calm: 'What could have induced you, father? What ruin could be great enow to justify so great a sin? The loss of house and lands? Let them go. You and I had better live in some poor honest way, than keep at Enderby. Let it go. It is no great matter, so long as you have your children's love.'

He groaned. 'It isn't all, Deb; ruin isn't all. We have that, and enow. But ye know the old saying, "Death before dishonour."—Charlie, Charlie!' and the father's tremulous lips struggled piteously to utter more.

'Has Charlie *disgraced* us then? How, father?'

'God forbid that I tell thee how. My boy has killed me.'

'Will *money* save him, father?' The stern low voice scarcely seemed Deborah Fleming's.

'Money, ay; but we are beggars.'

Deborah started to her feet. 'Well, think of it no more; you are wearied to death, my father. Thinking won't right you nor save Charlie. Sleep in peace, father, for I will save ye both this day.'

He stared in her face. 'Heaven bless thee, Deb. I know not what thou say'st. I think my brain is

shaken, Deb. But *thou'rt* my only stay.' With that, the heart-broken old man, fallen so lowly from his high estate, lay down, and fell into a deep sleep. Not so Deborah.

Late in the morning, Sir Vincent awaked, and called for his daughter. It seemed that she was near, for he had scarcely called before she stood beside his bed. His strength was recruited; the strong and nervous spirit had regained its power, and lived again in torture. He gazed up at Deborah, piteous in his grim sorrow; still, in all his strength, he turned to her: 'Deborah, my child, what is to be done?'

'I am decided, father. I will be Adam Sinclair's wife. He has money enow to buy Enderby. Look you, you have nothing more to say; only see that he knows he may marry me.'

'Thou'lt marry Adam Sinclair! Deb, art in earnest? Can ye do this? But does it vex ye, love? Does it grieve ye *too* much?'

She looked so calm, he could not believe this sacrifice, but half believed her indifferent; he was sorely trembling. {646}

'Nay, father. How vexed? how grieved? Ask me no questions. You know, father, I was always "Lady Wilful," and very firm. Here now is a note writ by mine own hand to *him*. I am decided.'

Sir Vincent rose up; he knew not if he were most glad or grieved or scared, as he took her in his arms and blessed her. Never had Deborah received love or blessing so passively. She put the note in his hands, and looking at him with her great gray earnest eyes: 'Sweet father,' she said, 'it must needs be soon; and that he may know that I am in earnest, I have left that "soon" to him. I am sincere with him, father, and I tell him I have no love to give; but I would fain save Enderby; and so I ask him if he will save Enderby for love of me, and yet leave me free. There is a loophole, father, for I have no wish to wed. But if he must wed Deborah Fleming, and only this will move him, I am ready. But as he will choose the wedding-day, I stipulate for freedom till that day, never to write nor meet till the bells ring for the wedding. Let me be Deborah Fleming till then, and forget Adam Sinclair! Lovers and wooing I cannot abide. And life is long enow from the wedding to the grave!'

Sir Vincent stood with the letter in his hand. 'Deborah, ye speak strangely; yet you are smiling, and your eyes and cheeks are bright. Little one, tell thy wretched father if thou'rt unhappy over this? Speak, Deb, darling; and if it grieves thee, I will see myself in jail, and Charlie on the gallows, ere thou shalt sacrifice thy life. Deborah, be honest with me.'

'Why, I am honest always. It will not hurt *me*. I will be a good wife to him till the day I die, if it must needs be so. But would you have me say I love him, reverence him? This cannot be. But if he will not save Enderby otherwise, I will be his wife. Of the rest—I will not ask you—I dare not. But Charlie shall be saved.'

At these words Sir Vincent fell on his knees, and kissed his child's dress like one beside himself, and then pale and wordless, rushed away.... Then Deborah was left *alone*. The gay sun was shining in, and the birds were singing from far and near; away up, Deborah's pet bird the skylark was pouring out his supreme song of freedom in the blue fields of space. She heard the trilling cadence from the wild bird's throat. It drew her to the window, where she leaned out, and drank in those delirious strains of joy, and stretched out her arms to the blue sky, and thought of the little nest where the bird would drop, when tired with wandering and with song. Could she be Deborah Fleming? Would the messenger now speeding to Lincoln Castle bring her back freedom, or death in life? She must wait, she must wait! Meantime, the o'ercome was ringing in her ears of an old song that Kingston Fleming whistled when a boy, and the sweet warm sun was shining on her, and Deborah laid her aching head and her arms down on the window-sill and fell fast asleep. It was then that Mistress Dinnage stole in; her face too was pale and grave, but not so pale as the sleeping one over which she leaned. With her hands clasped, she stood regarding it till her lips quivered, and tears of troubled anxiety started to her eyes. 'Ay,' she said with stern tenderness, 'you will die for him yet; but *I* would die for *him* and *you*.' Then softly and in tender care, young Mistress Dinnage passed a soft cushion under the little head, and laid a light shawl over Deborah to shield her from the sun, and stole away.

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## MARKET-GARDEN WOMEN.

WHILE the fruit-harvest is in progress, travellers through the western outskirts of London will doubtless have noticed the numerous gangs of women employed in gathering and packing fruit and vegetables for market; the railway in that district running for several miles through market-gardens and orchards. The peculiar dress of these women—consisting of a large calico sun-bonnet, brightly coloured neckerchief, short skirts reaching scarcely below the knee, and large holland aprons—is alone sufficient to attract attention, even in the momentary glimpse one obtains of them as the train sweeps past. Daily, in sunshine and rain, these women are busy collecting the fruit and vegetables which are nightly conveyed to the London markets; and as some knowledge of their manner of life and the amount of their earnings may prove interesting, we offer to our readers the substance of a conversation held with a member of one of the gangs during the earlier part of the season.

'Do we get pretty good wages? Well, you see, sir, it all depends on the season. Just now, when strawberries are in and peas, we can earn as much as thirty shillings a week—some weeks more.

Raspberries and beans we do pretty well with, but gooseberries and currants ain't so good: eight-and-twenty shillings a week is as much as we can make at those, working hard and long for that. Of course we have to work long hours, beginning at four or five o'clock in the morning, and keeping at it till eight and sometimes later at night, generally taking about an hour's rest at dinner-time. But as we gather all the fruit by piece-work, and so to speak, our time is our own, what dinner-time we take depends on what sort of a morning's work we've made—sometimes longer and sometimes shorter. You see, this is how we work. In my gang there's six of us, that have always worked together for a good many years now. We get one on each side of a row of strawberries or raspberries or peas, or what not; and when one basket is full, we puts a few handfuls in our apron, always managing so as to take in all the baskets full together; and then at night, when our work is counted up, we share it equally amongst us. We always know every night how much we have made, but only get paid once a week, on Saturdays: Saturday, you know, being an easy day with us, on account of there being no market on Sunday. Our missis is very good that way: every Saturday, afore twelve o'clock, there is our money, much or little; though there is some of the masters as think nothing of keeping their women waiting about till six or seven o'clock at night before they pay them, and perhaps then only gives 'em a part of it; which comes hard on folks as live from hand to mouth, as we have to do; the shop at which we deal only giving one week's credit—pay up one Saturday night, and run on as much as you like till the next; or if you don't pay up, no more credit till you does.

'Apples and pears and such-like fruit we have nothing to do with—men gather *them* in. In fact as often as not the master sells the fruit as it stands on the tree, and the buyer has to get his own men to pluck it. But there's always some sort of fruit or vegetables to be gathered from the beginning of spring till the end of summer as we can do by piecework; and then the potatoes come in, which we pick up after they've been turned out of the ground by men or by a machine; but that we does by day-work, getting one-and-sixpence a day when we work from six to six; and one-and-twopence when we work from eight till dark. In winter-time there's always something to be done dibbing in cabbage-plants, weeding, and such-like; but what with sharp frosts and heavy snows, we don't earn much then, perhaps doing three or four days' work in a week. Of course if we haven't had the sense to put by some of the money we make in the good times of summer, times come cruel hard on us in the winter; and very few of us like to apply to the parish if we can anyhow help it. Not but what our missis is good to us in that way, often finding us a day's work when it ain't needed, and always giving us a half-pint of beer at the end of the day; which we can't claim, you know.

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'We don't take much count of rain either winter or summer, because, you see, people will have their fruit and vegetables fresh gathered; and so we wrap ourselves well up and make the best of it. As I said before, Saturday we don't do much; but then we have to make up for it on Sundays, so as to send the fruit fresh to Monday's market.

'Don't we suffer from rheumatics? Well, you mightn't think so, but it ain't often any of us ails much. You see, being out in all weathers, we get hardened to it; and besides, we always take good care to keep our feet warm and dry—that's why we wear such heavy boots; and that's the chief thing to look after, if you don't want to catch cold; so people say. There ain't many of us but what is on the wrong side of thirty; four out of *my* gang being widows this many a year, with grown-up sons and daughters; and it's the same in most gangs. Sometimes we have young women amongst us; but there's not many of 'em stays at it after they are married; not all the year through, I mean; perhaps coming for a day or two at the busiest times; but even then it hardly pays them, if they have a young family about 'em. The gangs of young women as you sometimes see, we don't count as belonging to us; they only coming up from Shropshire mostly—for a month or six weeks at the busiest part of the season. Children we never have working with us, I suppose because they wouldn't be careful enough about not crushing the fruit; which as *you* know, it would never pay to send crushed fruit into market. For my part, I'm very glad as there is no children allowed amongst us, as though it ain't very hard work, it's terribly tedious and back-aching. When our children is old enough, we send the girls out to service somewhere; and there's always plenty of work for the lads, of some sort, about the farms; which is a good deal better than breaking their backs at *our* work.

'We all of us in my gang live hereabouts, in those little cottages that you see yonder. Three shillings a week the rent of 'em is; but then there's a good piece of garden-ground at the back; and most of us has lodgers, young men what work on the farms and in the gardens mostly. Four rooms there is in my cottage; and I have three lodgers, sometimes four, two sleeping in one room. Good lads they are too. You see, as they get home before I do, I always lay my fire in the morning before I go out; and a neighbour of mine sets it alight in time for the kettle to be a-boiling when they come in to their tea at six o'clock; and they never misses leaving a potful of good strong tea for me to have when I get home; which you may be sure is all the more grateful through being the only hot drink I get all day, having only a drop of cold tea, which I carry in that can there, for my breakfast. And maybe if we are working near a public-house, we club up, and one of us goes and gets a drop of beer to drink with our dinners.

'If it wasn't for the lodgers, the gardens wouldn't be much use to us; but they generally take it in hand, and often comes to take a pride in it; so that we are never short of such vegetables as are in season; which helps a good way towards the rent. They also chop up my wood and fetch my water for me, and make themselves handy in a score of ways; indeed if I lost my lodgers, I don't know what I should do. It ain't much cooking I do in the week; but what there is to do I do after I come home. On Sunday the lads always look for a hot dinner; which when I'm at home, I cook for them; and when I'm at work I get all ready on Saturday night, and one of 'em takes it to the



bakehouse to be baked. When we do work on Sundays, if we anyhow can manage it, we try to get done by three or four o'clock, so as we may be in time to dress and go to church; which as a rule we mostly do.

'I can't read nor yet write, and I don't suppose as there's a-many amongst the oldest of us as can. It wasn't much chance of schooling girls like us got in my time, as we was sent out to work at something or other when we was about nine or ten. I did go to school for a little while; but if I learnt anything I must have forgotten it again. The young ones are better off for the matter of that, and are always willing to read or write a letter for us when we want 'em.

'Nineteen years I've been at it regular now, sir; and though I was left a widow with seven children, the oldest of 'em only ten and one at the breast, I'm proud and thankful to say as we've never had any need to ask once for a loaf of bread even from the parish, and trust as we never shall. I ain't the only one either, for there's Mrs Amblin as lives next door to me was left with nine children, oldest only twelve, and has lived to see 'em all doing for themselves without being beholden to nobody for a crust of bread. Some years, when the fruit has been backward or scarce, we've had a very close push to make ends meet; but it has only taught us to be more careful when we have a good season, and to put by a little more towards a bad one. We don't use any bank, bless you! what little we can manage to put by, we generally likes to have handy where we can put our hand on it when we want it. Of course, there's no telling what may happen; but while I have my health and strength left me, I shall always be able to earn as much as I need; and if it should happen as *they* fail me, well, what with lodgers and the shilling or two my children will help me with, I daresay I shall struggle along somehow. Mostly, though our children don't come to be much more than field-hands and farm-labourers, when the time comes they don't begrudge what is due to their parents, and manage somehow to keep 'em out of the workhouse. Not but some of 'em goes to the bad, as might be expected, seeing the little schooling we can afford to give them, and the temptations there is for them nowadays; but it is only here and there one, and they generally finish up by listing for a soldier, which soon steadies 'em. One of my lads is away now in the East Indies; and though I don't often hear from him, he seems to be getting on quite as well as ever he'd ha' done at home. Our girls mostly gets acquainted with one or other of the men working about the place where they are at service, and get married, sooner perhaps than what we old folks think they ought to—about nineteen or twenty—and settle down near where their husbands work.

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'We don't get much chance of holidays when once the season begins, until it is over; because, you see, sir, the master must keep the market supplied; and if he finds one of us not to be depended on to do our work every day, he very soon gets somebody in her place that is; which perhaps is one reason why young women never care to settle down to our life. Altogether, our work ain't so very hard; and if we do have to keep at it for a many hours at a stretch, it's all in the open air, which is a good deal better than being shut up in the walls of a factory; and if we are anyways steady and careful, we can always make sure of a pretty good living. So that you see, sir, there's many as is worse off than us poor garden-women.'

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## SEA-SPOIL.

SOMEWHAT more than a year ago, we called attention to the changes which are to be perceived in the relations of land and water; the action of rivers on the land, and the influence of delta-lands in restoring land, to the earth, being noted in the article alluded to; whilst the destructive action of the sea on many points of the coast was also detailed. In the present instance we purpose to examine a few of the more typical cases of sea-action viewed in its destructive effect upon the land, and also some aspects of earth-movements which undoubtedly favour the destructive power of the ocean.

As regards these destructive powers, much depends of course on the nature of the rock-formations which lie next the sea. A hard formation will, *cæteris paribus*, resist the attack of the waves to a greater extent than a deposit of soft nature; and the varying nature of the coast-lines of a country determines to a very great extent the regularity or irregularity of the sea's action. A well-known example of a case in which the ocean has acquired over the land an immense advantage in respect of the softness of the formations which favoured its inroad, is found on the Kentish coast. Visitors to Margate and Ramsgate, or voyagers around the south-east corner of our island, know the ancient church of Reculver—or the 'Reculvers' as it is now named—as a familiar landmark. Its two weather-beaten towers and the dismantled edifice are the best known objects amongst the views of the Kentish coast; and to both geologist and antiquary the 'Reculvers' present an object of engrossing interest. In the reign of Henry VIII. the church was one mile distant from the sea; and even in 1781 a very considerable space of ground intervened between the church and the coast-line—so considerable indeed, that several houses and a churchyard of tolerable size existed thereupon. In 1834 the sea had made such progress in the work of spoliation, that the intervening ground had disappeared, and the 'Reculvers' appeared to exist on the verge at once of the cliff and of destruction. An artificial breakwater has, however, saved the structure; but the sacred edifice has been dismantled, and its towers used as marine watch-houses. The surrounding strata are of singularly soft nature, and hence the rapidity with which the eroding action of the waves has proceeded.

An equally instructive case of the destructive action of the sea is afforded by the history of the

parish of Eccles in the county of Norfolk. Prior to the accession of James VI. to the English crown the parish was a fairly populous one. At that date, however, the inhabitants petitioned the king for a reduction of taxes, basing their request on the ground that more than three hundred acres of their land had been swept away by the sea. The king's reply was short but characteristic. He dismissed the petition with the remark, that the people of Eccles should be thankful that the sea had been so merciful. Since the time of the niggardly sovereign just mentioned, Eccles has not been spared by the sea. Acres upon acres have been swallowed up by the insatiable waves, and as Sir Charles Lyell informs us, hills of blown sand—forming the characteristic *sand-dunes* of the geologist—occupy the place where the houses of King James's petitioners were situated. The spire of the parish church, in one drawing, is indeed depicted as projecting from amongst the surrounding sand-dunes, which the wind, as if in league with the ocean, has blown in upon this luckless coast.

The comparison of old maps of counties bordering on the sea with modern charts, affords a striking and clear idea of the rate and extent of this work of destruction. No better illustration can be cited of the ravages of the ocean than that exhibited in maps of the Yorkshire coast-lines, and particularly in the district lying between Flamborough Head and the mouth of the Humber. Whilst the district between the Wash in Lincolnshire and the estuary of the Thames shews an equally great amount of destructive change. Three feet per annum is said to be no uncommon rate for soft strata in these localities to be carried away; and the geologist may point to the famous Goodwin Sands—notorious alike in ancient and modern history—as another example of the results of sea-action, and of the wear and tear exercised by the mighty deep. The contemplation of such actions fits us in a singularly apt manner for the realisation of the full force and meaning of the Laureate's words:

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O Earth, what changes hast thou seen!

It is highly important, however, to note that the sea receives aid of no ordinary kind in its acts of spoliation by the operation of certain forces affecting the land itself. Land frequently disappears from sight beneath the surface of the sea by a process of subsidence or sinking. We must therefore clearly distinguish between the land which the sea literally takes by its own act, and that which becomes its property through this curious subsidence and sinking of the earth's crust. No doubt the result is practically the same in each case; the sea being in either instance the gainer, and the land the loser. But the sinking of land being a phenomenon less familiar to the ordinary reader, we venture to note a few of its more prominent aspects.

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A primary consideration to which it is needful to direct attention consists in the due appreciation of the fact that the land and not the sea is to be here credited with the action under discussion. When a considerable part of a coast-line formerly existing above tide-marks is found to gradually sink below the sea-level, the observer is probably apt to assume that the sea has simply altered its level. The idea of the sea being a constantly changing body is so widely entertained, and that of the land being a solid and immovable portion of the constitution of the earth, is also so deeply rooted in the popular mind, that it may take some little thinking to throw on the land the burden of the change and alteration. It is nevertheless a fact that the great body of water we name the ocean in reality obeys the laws we see exemplified in the disposition of the water contained in a cup or bowl. The water of the sea thus maintains the same level, and is no more subject to violent and permanent alterations than is the water in the cup or bowl. Hence when part of a coast-line appears to become submerged, we must credit the land with being the seat of the change, seeing that the sea must be regarded as stable, unless indeed it could be shewn that the level of the sea had undergone a similar change on all the coasts it touches. Thus if the southern coast of England were found to have been depressed say to the extent of six feet, we must credit the land with the change, unless we could shew that the sea-level on the opposite or French coast had also changed. Now the alterations of land are mostly local or confined to limited areas, and are not seen in other lands bounded by the same sea or ocean as the altered portion. Hence that the land must be regarded as the unstable and the sea as the stable element, has come to be regarded as a fundamental axiom of geology.

When, therefore, the works of man—such as piers, harbours, and dwellings—become the spoil of the sea, the action has either been one effected by the force of the waves without any change of level of the land, or one in which land has simply subsided independently of the destructive action of the sea. In the extreme south of Sweden this action of land-subsidence is at present proceeding at a rate which has been determined by observations conducted for the past century and a half or more. The lower streets of many Swedish sea-port towns have thus been under water for many years, and even streets originally situated far above the water-level have been rendered up as prey to the sea by this mysterious sinking of land. Linnæus (as on a former occasion we remarked) in 1749 marked the exact site and position of a certain stone. In 1836 this stone was found to be nearer the water's edge by one hundred feet than when the great naturalist had observed it; the subsidence having proceeded at this rate and degree in eighty-seven years. The earliest Moravian missionaries in Greenland had frequently to shift the position of the poles to which they moored their boats, owing to the subsidence of land carrying their poles seawards, as it were, by the inflow of the sea over what was once dry land. On the coasts of Devon and Cornwall the observer may detect numerous stumps of trees—still fixed by their roots in the soil in which they grew—existing under water; the site being that of an old forest which was submerged by the sinking of the land, and which has become converted into the spoil and possession of the sea. Even the long arm of the sea—the 'loch' of the Scotch and the 'fjord' of Norway—which seen in the outline of a map, or in all its natural beauty, imparts a character of its

own to the scenery of a country, exists to the eye of the geologist simply as a submerged valley, whose sides were once 'with verdure clad,' and on whose fertile slopes trees grew in luxuriant plenty. The subsidence of the land has simply permitted its place to be occupied by water, and the vessel may sail for miles over what was once a fertile valley.

Occasionally the fluctuations of land may be exemplified to an extent which could hardly be expected, a fact well illustrated by the case of the Temple of Jupiter Serapis at Puzzuoli on the Bay of Naples. This temple, now in ruins, dates from a very ancient period, three marble pillars remaining to mark the extent of what was once a magnificent pile of buildings. Half-way up these pillars the marks of boring shell-fish are seen; some burrows formed by these molluscs still containing the shells by means of which they were excavated. At the present time, the sea-level is at the very base of the pillars, or exists even below that site. Hence arises the natural question—'How did the shell-fish gain access to the pillars, to burrow into them in the manner described?' Dismissing as an irrelevant and impossible idea that of the molluscs being able to ascend the dry pillars, two suppositions remain. Either the pillars and temple must have gone down to the sea through the subsidence of the land, or the sea must have come up to the pillars. If the latter theory be entertained, the sea-level must be regarded as having of necessity altered its level all along the Bay of Naples and along all the Mediterranean coasts. And as this inundation would have occurred within the historic period, we would expect not only to have had some record preserved to us of the calamity, but we should also have been able to point to distinct and ineffaceable traces of sea-action on the adjoining coasts. There is, however, no basis whatever for this supposition. No evidence is forthcoming that any such rise of the sea ever took place; and hence we are forced to conclude that the subsidence or sinking of the land contains the only rational explanation of the phenomena. We had thus a local sinking of land taking place at Puzzuoli. The old temple was gradually submerged; its pillars were buried beneath the waters of the sea, and the boring molluscs of the adjacent sea-bed fixed on the pillars as a habitation, and bored their way into the stone. Then a second geological change supervened. The action of subsidence was exchanged for one of elevation; and the temple and its pillars gradually arose from the sea, and attained their present level; whilst the stone-boring shell-fish were left to die in their homes. The surrounding neighbourhood—that of Vesuvius—is the scene of constant change and alteration in land-level; and the incident is worth recording, if only to shew how the observation of the apparently trifling labours of shell-fish serves to substantiate a grave and important chapter in the history of the earth.

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The statistics of wrecks and of the amount of human property which have fallen a prey to the 'sounding main' may thus be shewn to be not only paralleled but vastly exceeded in importance and extent by the records of the geologist, when he endeavours to compute the losses of the land or the gains of the sea. But on the other hand, the man of science asks us to reflect on the fact that the matter stolen from us by the sea is undergoing a process of redistribution and reconstruction. The fair acres of which we have been despoiled, will make their appearance in some other form and fashion as the land of the future; just indeed as the present land represents the consolidated sea-spoil of the past, which by a process of elevation has been raised from the sea-depths to constitute the existing order of the earth. Waste and repair are simply the two sides of the geological medal, and exist at the poles of a circle of ceaseless natural change. So that, if it be true that the sea reigns where the land once rose in all its majesty, as the Laureate has told us, no less certain is it that—to conclude with his lines—

There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

Thus the subject of sea-spoil, like many another scientific study, opens up before us a veritable chapter of romance, which should possess the greater charm and interest, because it is so true.

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## THE ADMIRAL'S SECOND WIFE.

### CHAPTER IV.—LAURA BROUGHT TO TASK.

THE Admiral says 'good-night' to the last of his guests; then he turns to his daughter, who is evidently preparing for a speedy retreat.

'Don't run away yet, Laura; we keep early hours at Government House, but it is not very late yet.'

Rather reluctantly, Mrs Best obeys. She knows perfectly well why her father wishes her to remain, and she shrewdly suspects what subject of conversation he is likely to introduce. Now that she has had her triumph, by carrying out a pet plan with regard to Katie, that very success makes her uneasy, for she knows she will be called to account. However, she resolves to be brave, and at once leads the way to the music-room. The servants have already put out most of the lights, but here the wax-candles are throwing lustre over scattered music and deserted seats. Laura gathers up some of the songs, wondering when her father will begin, and how the attack will open. She knows it is coming, for he is restlessly pacing to and fro the room with that quarter-deck march of his, that betokens an uneasy mind.

'Why were the Greys not here this evening, Laura?'

She smooths out the leaves of an Italian duet, lays it on the music-stand, and replies with

apparent indifference: 'Because they were not invited, papa.'

'Why not? I gave you the list, and I'm certain their names were down. Why did you omit them?'

'Is it always necessary to invite the same people over and over again? The Greys have been at every party that has taken place since I came here to stay.'

'Had you any *particular* reason for leaving them out, Laura?' asks the Admiral, turning round quickly, as he notes his daughter's slightly scornful tone of voice.

For a moment Mrs Best is undecided. Perhaps a slight meaningless excuse will do. But only for a passing second does she think thus. Her frank loyal nature asserts itself, and she says in a quick earnest manner, with her eyes a little lowered, her cheeks a little flushed: 'I had a good reason, papa. Kate Grey makes herself far too much at home here. One would imagine she has some special privilege in this house.'

'Well, and I am always glad to see her.'

'She knows that, and presumes on the knowledge. People seeing her so much at home at Government House, are beginning to talk in a most unpleasant manner.'

'What do they say, Laura?'

'They say you mean to make her your second wife. O papa, surely, *surely* you will never do that! A girl so selfish, so ambitious, so fond of admiration, so, so'—

'Stop, Laura! The category of faults you lay to poor Katie's charge is surely long enough. So people say I mean to make her my second wife, do they?'

A flush passes over the Admiral's face, and mounts to his brow. A quick throb rises at his heart, as for the first time he hears Katie's name coupled with his own. Till this moment, his thoughts about her have been vague and unsettled. He admires her very much—more than any other lady he knows; but the idea of making her an offer of marriage has never seriously entered his head. But now, his daughter's very cautions, her very reports of the world's gossip, shadow forth to him that a marriage between him and Miss Grey may not be so very preposterous after all, not such utter madness as he himself would have called it a few months ago.

Laura, seated on a music-stool, her hands clasped before her, and her eyes fixed on her father's face, reads its meaning at once; and as a brave, a loving, and a fearless daughter, she will not shrink from the duty she believes is required of her now. 'Dear papa,' she exclaims, 'let me entreat you not to risk your future happiness! Kate Grey would never make you a good wife. She cares far too much for herself ever to study the true interests of any other person.'

'Why are you so bitter against Miss Grey?'

'I am not bitter. I only tell the real sad truth. Don't let her come to rule in your house; don't let her rob me of my father's love.' {651}

Sir Herbert draws near his daughter, and looks tenderly down at her flushed face and moistened eyes. 'Be reasonable, my child! No one can ever rob you of my love; but' (here he pauses, as though hesitating how to word his meaning—adding composedly enough) 'should I ever marry Miss Grey or any other lady, you must not be prejudiced against my choice, Laura. My marriage can never injure you in the least. Remember, your poor mother's fortune was all settled on you before you married Robert Best.'

'I am not thinking of money, papa. Mere money considerations do not influence me in the least.'

'Possibly not. But let me allude to the subject once more while we are talking. Robert has left you mistress of his fine estate. You have duties and responsibilities that separate you almost entirely from me now. Is not that the case?'

'Yes. I wish I could be more with you.'

'You cannot, Laura, without neglecting your own interests. Therefore I am at times lonely—very lonely in the midst of surrounding society and occupation. My house needs a head. My heart yearns sometimes for congenial companionship. Don't grudge me happiness, Laura, if I can see my way towards gaining it.'

'I hope and pray every possible happiness may be yours, papa; but don't look to Katie Grey for such a thing. She would marry any one to obtain position and wealth.'

Sir Herbert turns away, and walks to the end of the room; but he soon comes back again, and sees his daughter watching him with eyes that are misty and tearful.

'I am thinking of my own precious mother. Oh, how different she was from this girl! Miss Grey is all unworthy to take her place.'

In her earnestness, Mrs Best has risen from the music-stool, and stands before her father with great tears coursing down her cheeks. She raises her clasped hands to him in the most imploring of all attitudes. The snowy crispy dress with its white folds gives her a shadowy, almost ghost-like look; and as her pathetic entreating face turns to the Admiral, it almost seems to him as though the soul of her mother is appealing to him through Laura's eyes. Never has the likeness struck him so much. It is as though his beloved Bess had come from the grave to bid him beware.

The daughter sees the impression she has made, and like many another, presumes too much on her success, and goes a step too far. Had she stopped at this point, perhaps her father would have given her the promise she requires, that he will not marry Kate Grey. But Laura wipes away her tears, and exclaims: 'You are coming round to my views, papa! You are beginning to see how

unfit this Katie is to be your wife. Miss Grimshaw quite agrees with me about her true character.'

Sir Herbert steps back—draws himself up to his full height. 'And what in the world does Miss Grimshaw know about the matter?'

'She has great powers of discernment. Indeed it was she who first raised my suspicions, and set me to watch Katie's manoeuvres.'

'Very kind of her! I ought to be particularly grateful for her surveillance!'

A cloud gathers on the Admiral's brow; but Laura, unwarned, goes on: 'Adelaide Grimshaw is *all* kindness. O papa, I wish you would fix on *her*! She would fill the position of mistress to your household with tact and taste, and would make you an excellent wife.'

'Thank you for your suggestion, Laura; but be assured if ever I do marry, Miss Grimshaw will not be my choice.'

He shudders as memory recalls to his mind the lank figure of the very elderly lady his daughter commends to his notice. He recalls the faded face, the thin wiry curls, the lymphatic eyes, the bleating plausible voice, with which, in the calmest manner, she is wont to gossip over the frailties of her neighbours, and pass hard judgments on those who are younger and more attractive than herself. Then his thoughts revert to Katherine Grey. Whatever her faults may be, fortunately they are all the very opposite of Miss Grimshaw's: mind and body are altogether formed in a very different mould. After this, the conversation comes to a close, and father and daughter separate—she to lament over the Admiral's infatuation; he to wander for an hour or two more through the dimly lighted empty suite of rooms.

Laura's words have moved him strangely. His pulse quickens as he remembers that what has been to him a half-formed purpose, a whispered secret, is already the town's talk, and that everybody is watching to see what will come next.

Has Katie herself heard of these reports, and begun to trace out the shadow of possible coming events? Would she be very much surprised if he tried to give these airy rumours a solid foundation?

Such is the train of thought which floats through Sir Herbert's mind long after the great house is closed for the night, and left apparently to sleep and silence. He hears the measured tramp of the sentry on the cold damp pavement outside; the distant sound of the ships' bells in the harbour, as it is borne in by the wintry blast; and the musical peals from the church steeples that chime the small morning hours; but the question still rings its changes in his mind and finds no satisfactory answer.

## CHAPTER V.—THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

The next morning Katie takes up her position at her father's writing-table. She has a letter to answer—a very confidential one from her friend and confidant, Liddy Delmere—and she feels bound to return confidence for confidence. Ere the epistle is finished, she starts up and thrusts it into her desk. Her eyes have been constantly wandering from the paper to the cold slippery streets, where people are jostling against each other as they make their way through the showers of falling sleet and gusts of rough wind. Surely no one would venture out except in a case of absolute necessity; yet the girl evidently expects *some one*; and by the rapid closing of her desk, no doubt the 'somebody' is in sight.

A tall upright figure may be observed emerging from the crowds of passers-by; an officer, by the gold buttons on his rough outside coat. Guiding his umbrella skilfully, Sir Herbert walks quickly on, and soon Katie hears his well-known knock at the door, and his well-known step in the hall, as he takes his way to her father's library downstairs.

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'He will come up here presently with some apology to me, or I'm much mistaken,' muses Kate, as she takes a swift look at herself in the glass; and ere long the door is thrown open, and Sir Herbert Dillworth announced. He glances quickly round the room, and this is what he sees: a pretty, well-harmonised interior, a blending of soft warm colours, and a blazing fire in the grate, that reflects itself in the polished steel surrounding it. And Kate Grey, the brightest point of the whole scene, is sitting beside the writing-table, and looking up with a smile to greet him. She wears a morning dress of ruby Cashmere, and a single knot of the same colour in the thick rolls of her dark hair. There is not a shadow of resentment in those lustrous eyes as she holds out her hand, frankly and pleasantly, to her visitor. Feeling perfectly self-possessed herself, she owns to a degree of satisfaction as she notices how disturbed Sir Herbert looks. The fact is his daughter's words are still ringing in his memory—'People say you mean to make her your second wife'—and he is wondering what Katie herself would say on such a subject. Will she ignore the dreary barrier of years that lies between them? Will she forget that he has gone some distance farther on in life's journey, while she is in the very prime and flush of girlhood? These thoughts flash through his mind, and make him appear nervous and absent as he begins to talk about last night's party. But his mind is made up.

'We missed *you*, Miss Grey. Will you pardon us that you had no invitation? My daughter is not much accustomed to sending them out.'

'Please, don't mention it, Sir Herbert. I am very glad to go to Government House when I'm wanted there; but one cannot always be invited, you know.'

'But I like you always to come. The omission shall not happen again. We had a wretchedly stupid

gathering. Spare me similar disappointments in future, Miss Grey, by—by taking the right of arranging these matters into your own hands.'

The girl looks up inquiringly. Nothing can be more unsuspecting and guileless than the questioning eyes that meet Sir Herbert's.

'Will you *take* the right, Katie? My life has grown strangely desolate and lonely of late; will you cheer it with your presence? In short, will you be my wife?'

The question is asked now, eagerly and impassion'dly, and Miss Grey's eyes droop under the Admiral's gaze. This vision has been dazzling her mind so long; she has dreamt of it, thought of it; and now the offer of marriage has really come! Though the triumph is making her heart throb, she can hardly tell whether she is glad or sorry. But she does not draw back. For the treasure of Sir Herbert's loyal affection, for his true earnest love, she will give in exchange her youth and beauty. She thinks the bargain a fair one, and wonders can anything more be required.

When Sir Herbert leaves his affianced wife, he goes down to her father, to tell him of what he calls his 'good fortune.'

'Yes; and mamma and Helen shall hear all about it from me. Won't they be surprised!' adds the young lady with a short low laugh, as the Admiral goes out of the room. She hears him close the library door, and then says to herself with another little spasmodic laugh: 'Every one will be surprised, as I am myself, to think how quickly it has all come about. Last evening I was excluded from Government House, and now I have promised to rule and reign there. Which has conquered—Laura Best or I?'

## CHAPTER VI.—FAMILY COUNSEL.

Mr Grey's library is a curious little room, fitted up quite in his own way. Maps cover the sides of the walls, and a large bookcase holds the books, which are mostly nautical. Models of ships and steamers are on various shelves, there is an astrolabe near the window, and a sextant and some pattern guns on the table. Mr Grey is busy at the moment with official papers; his nimble fingers are copying a 'General Memo.' with wonderful rapidity. Hearing the stately step of his chief coming along the passage, he naturally supposes the Admiral has returned to give further directions about some orders ere long to be circulated amongst the ships. So he glances up over his spectacles pen in hand. Great is his surprise at seeing evident signs of agitation in Sir Herbert's face, as he says in a low tone: 'Put aside your papers for an instant, Grey. I want to consult you on quite another subject. I have come to ask your consent to my marriage with your daughter Katie.'

'Your marriage with my daughter, Sir Herbert!' and Mr Grey lets a huge drop of ink splash on his 'General Memo.' in his surprise.

'You seem astonished, Grey. Have you any objection to accept me as your son-in-law?'

'Pardon me, Sir Herbert, pardon my hesitation; but you startled me for the moment. I am conscious of the honour you are doing us; but have you considered how young and inexperienced Katie is? A mere girl, in fact. She is but little used to the ways of the world; hardly wise enough to hold the high position you offer her.'

The Admiral smiles. 'I will take the risk of all that. Katie is willing, and I am ready to marry her just as she is.'

'Then I give my full sanction.'

'Wish me joy, Grey. You don't say a word about that.'

'I will wish you something better and deeper than mere joy, Sir Herbert. I pray you may have true and unmixed happiness with my daughter. May she prove a wife worthy of you, and may you never regret your choice.'

There is a tremble in Mr Grey's voice as he grasps the Admiral's hand and ratifies the new bond sprung up so suddenly between them; and he looks thoughtfully after Sir Herbert as he leaves the room. Surely women are fickle, and his daughter Katie the most fickle of her sex!

Only two months ago, Walter Reeves had come into that very same room on the very same kind of mission. The same, but with a difference. He has not actually proposed for Katie, but had asked permission to visit at the house with that intention, in the event of his love being reciprocated. And Katie knows all this, and up to the present has received Walter's attentions, and seemed to take them as her right. But now all this is set aside, and a man nearly as old as her father himself has stepped in and won the girl as a willing prize. Well may the old sailor marvel! Things have changed since the days 'long ago,' when *he* wooed his wife, and waited nine long years for her because he could not afford to marry sooner. His true old-fashioned love has but intensified as years have sped on; the trials of life have but drawn the wedded pair closer to each other. Will this be the experience of Katie and the Admiral?'

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Worthy Mr Grey cannot settle that point; so he goes up-stairs to hear what Katie herself has to say on the subject.

Miss Grey lingers in the drawing-room after the Admiral has gone. There seems something strangely sad and vague and solemn in the whole affair, now it has gone so far; and when her mother comes into the room with Helen leaning on her arm, she exclaims at once, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes and defiant tone: 'Wish me joy, mother, and Helen! I am going to be married!'

'I'm glad it is settled at last, Katie; and I hope you will be very happy. Walter has had plenty of patience, I'm sure,' says Mrs Grey in her quiet voice, as she settles Helen comfortably on the sofa and turns round to give Katie a kiss of congratulation.

But her daughter draws back with a look of annoyance.

'Why do you talk of Walter? I am not going to marry *him*. My intended husband's name stands far higher in the Navy List. I'm going to be married to Admiral Sir Herbert Dillworth!'

'Sir Herbert!' exclaim Helen and her mother together.

'Yes. Why are you surprised?'

'I'm sure we've good reason for surprise, considering all that has gone on about Walter. Katie, Katie! what new fancy has hold of you now?' The voice is Mrs Grey's, the tone one of reproach.

Katie is growing angry. 'The fancy is no new one, mother. Had you not all been very blind, you might have guessed what was coming long ago.'

'Do you really love Sir Herbert?' asks Helen, with that deep-seeing look of hers, that somehow always makes her elder sister a little in awe of her.

'I like him; the rest will come by-and-by; and I'm glad and proud of my lot.'

There is a ring in Katie's voice, as though she has flung down the gauntlet of self-approval, and challenges any one to take it up and contradict her. Her father is not the one to do this. He comes into the room at the moment, hears Katie's asseveration, and feels as if a world of doubt had rolled away from his mind. Considering his own word 'his bond,' he judges his daughter by the same standard. 'That's right, Katie, and sounds earnest. You may well be proud of your lot, and of Sir Herbert too: there isn't a better, braver, more honourable man alive; he's unselfish and high-principled to his heart's core. I've served three commissions under him, and ought to know him well; and I'd rather see a child of mine lying in her grave, than that she should bring discredit on his name. Kiss me, my girl! I wish you happiness. Well may you be proud of our Admiral!'

Katie receives the kiss just a little impatiently; she believes she has won 'high stakes,' and does not relish any doubts on the subject.

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## THE CROCODILE AND GAVIAL.

Two species of crocodile inhabit our Indian rivers, and both are especially numerous in such streams as the Ganges and its tributaries, the Berhampooter, and many others. Sir Emerson Tennent, in his *Natural History of Ceylon*, points out an error which Anglo-Indians and others are often given to—namely, of applying the term *alligator* to animals which are in reality *crocodiles*. There are no alligators in the Indian peninsula. The true alligator is the hideous cayman of South America, and differs in one or two important respects from the crocodile of the Nile and Ganges.

The first and by far the most widely distributed of the two saurians inhabiting our Indian rivers is the common crocodile, exactly similar to the animal frequenting the Nile and other streams of Northern Africa, and known throughout Bengal by its Hindustani title of 'Mugger.' The second species is the Gavial or Gurryal (*Gavialis Gangeticus*). This reptile is, I believe, only found in Hindustan, and is indigenous to the Ganges; hence its specific title.

The habits of the two creatures are in general very similar, but yet differ in one or two important points. The mugger often grows to an enormous size, not unfrequently reaching twenty feet in length, and is thick built in proportion. The limbs are short, feet palmated, the fore-feet furnished with five, the hind with four toes. The head (which in aspect is extremely hideous) is broad and wedge-shaped, the muzzle rather narrow, the eyes small, deep set, and of a villainous glassy green hue. The jaws when shut lock as closely and firmly together as a vice. The teeth are of a formidable description, varying much in size and length. When the mouth is closed, the tusks in the extremity of the lower jaw pass completely through and often project above the tip of the upper. The body is incased with scaly armour-plates, very thick and massive on the back, but to a less extent on the sides of the body. The reptile breathes through its nostrils, which are situated near the tip of the snout. By this wonderful provision of nature, the crocodile is enabled to lie in wait for its prey with the whole of its body, except the nostrils, concealed beneath the surface of the water.

The gavial much resembles the mugger in general structure (though the body is not usually so thickly built), with one notable exception, and that is the totally different shape and character of the snout. The jaws of the gavial are long, straight, and narrow; the teeth, which are regular, wide apart from one another, and even, are of a far less formidable description than those of the common crocodile. They much resemble in general appearance the rows of jagged teeth which garnish the edges of the upper jaw of the saw-fish. The snout is often several feet in length, and there is a peculiar knob or protuberance at the tip; and the nostrils, as in the other species, are situated near the extremity.

The gavial has been described by some writers as 'the scourge of the Ganges' and a 'ferocious animal;' but I venture to say that this is a highly exaggerated if not an altogether erroneous statement. It is possible that occasionally—though I am convinced *very rarely*—the gavial may seize a human being; but the reptile is essentially a fish-eater, and unlike the mugger, is little to

be dreaded by the swimmer or bather. I have frequently, when strolling along the banks of our Indian rivers, observed the head of a gaviol momentarily raised above the surface of the water in the act of swallowing some large fish held transversely across its jaws, the long beak and rows of sharp teeth with which nature has furnished it, greatly assisting the creature in snapping up such slippery prey.

Crocodiles frequent the wide open channels and reaches of our large Indian rivers, especially in the neighbourhood of large towns, such as Dinapore, Allahabad, or Benares. In such resorts, whole families of both gavials and muggers may be seen lying together side by side on points of sand or low mud islands left dry by the current of the stream; they delight to bask in the scorching rays of the mid-day sun.

The animals always lie asleep close to the margin, and generally with their heads pointing away from the water. They are extremely watchful; and on being alarmed by the near approach of some boat gliding past or human beings walking along the bank, after contemplating the objects of their suspicion for a short space of time, they one after another awkwardly wheel round, and with a splash and a flounder speedily vanish beneath the surface of the water, to reappear again so soon as the cause of their alarm has passed.

Though hideous and repulsive in appearance, these reptiles nevertheless fulfil a most useful office as scavengers. In the neighbourhood of large towns on the banks of the Ganges, hundreds of dead bodies are daily cast into the holy river by the Hindus; and in a tropical climate like India, were it not for crocodiles, turtles, and vultures assembling and devouring the corpses, speedily some dreadful plague would break out and spread death around.

Judging from the accounts of travellers, the crocodiles inhabiting the African continent must be far more dangerous than their confrères of Asia; for though we sometimes hear of muggers taking to man-eating, especially in Lower Bengal and parts of Assam, yet such practices are not the rule, as is generally supposed.

I have, however, seen patches of water near the foot of ghats or flights of steps fenced round with a close and strong hedge of bamboo stakes, driven firmly into the river-bed, for the purpose of protecting bathers or women drawing water from the assaults of man-eating crocodiles; and it is a dangerous practice at all times to bathe in pools frequented by such monsters. Cows, horses, sheep, goats, and dogs, besides the numerous wild inhabitants of the jungle, all form a prey of the mugger. The cunning animal, well acquainted with some spot where, towards sunset, flocks and herds, after the heat of the day has passed, are in the habit of drinking, there lies in wait concealed amid the sedge bordering the margin. Presently some unlucky victim in the shape of a poor bullock parched with thirst, comes hurrying down the bank and eagerly approaches the water; but hardly has its mouth reached the surface, when the blood-thirsty crocodile seizes it by the nose; and if once successful in securing a firm grip, the chances are, that unless the herdsman is at hand to render assistance, the unfortunate bullock, in spite of struggling desperately to free itself, is soon dragged down on to its knees, and later beneath the surface of the pool.

It has been asserted that tigers ere now have been seized, and after a hard fight, overpowered by the crocodile. Possibly this may occasionally happen; but I imagine such an occurrence to be extremely rare; and my impression is, that such redoubtable champions, each capable of inflicting severe punishment on his opponent, would avoid rather than risk coming to blows.

It is generally imagined that the plated coat of mail covering the crocodile's body renders the animal invulnerable to bullets. Such may have been the case in the days of brown-bess; but a spinning conical ball fired from a Martini-Henry or other grooved weapon of the present day, will not only readily pierce, but even pass completely through the body of the largest crocodile.

It is the extraordinary tenacity of life with which all the lizard family are endowed, that has in a great measure given rise to this notion of their invulnerability; for unless shot through the head, neck, heart, or such-like vital part, the crocodile, even when desperately wounded by a bullet through the body, will almost invariably gain the water, only shortly afterwards to sink dead to the bottom, to be devoured by some of its cannibal relations.

Near a station where I happened to be quartered for many years in Central India, there was a large lake where crocodiles were known yearly to breed. After some trouble, I procured two mugger's eggs from some fishermen who frequented the spot. They were of an oval shape, dirty white colour and rough surface. The female crocodile about the month of May, having scraped a hole with her feet in the sand or mud of some dry island, deposits her eggs therein, and carefully covers them up, leaving the heat of the sun to hatch out her progeny. Meanwhile she hovers about the spot, till at length the thin layer of sand covering the eggs upheaves, the young issue forth, and escorted by the mother, take to their natural element, the water.

J. H. B.

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## SHAMROCK LEAVES.

### A WEDDING.

AT Irish country weddings of the lower orders, the priest is paid by voluntary contributions of the wedding guests. The marriage is generally celebrated in the evening, and is followed, especially



among the farming classes, by a grand festivity, to which his "Riverince" is always invited. After supper, when the hearts of the company are merry with corned beef and greens, roast goose, ham, and whisky-punch, the hat goes round.

Honor Malone was the prettiest girl in the barony; and a lucky boy on his marriage day was the bridegroom; albeit on the occasion he looked very ill at ease in a stiff, shiny, brand-new, tight-fitting suit of wedding clothes. Lucky, for in addition to her good looks, the bride had fifty pounds to her fortune and three fine cows.

Very pretty and modest she looked seated beside the priest, blushing a great deal, and wincing not a little at his Reverence's somewhat broad jokes. And most becoming was the 'white frock' in which she was attired; a many-skirted garment, resplendent with 'bow-knots' and trimmings of white satin ribbons.

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'As good as new,' my lady's-maid at the Castle, from whom she had bought it, had assured her. 'Made by the grandest French dressmaker in all London, and worn at only a couple of balls; her young ladies were so cruel particular, and couldn't abide the suspicion of a crush or a soil on their gowns.'

In the midst of his jokes and his jollity (and with an eye to future dues, nowhere is a priest half so good-humoured as at a wedding), while apparently absorbed in attention to the pretty bride, whose health had just been drunk in a steaming tumbler, Father Murphy perceived with his business eye that preparations were being made for sending round the plate in his behalf.

The stir began at the end of the table where the 'sthrong farmers' mustered thickest. A goodly set they were, in their large heavy greatcoats of substantial frieze, corduroy knee-breeches, and bright blue stockings; their comely dames wearing the capacious blue or scarlet cloth cloak with silk-lined hood, which, like the greatcoat of the men, is an indispensable article in the gala toilet of their class, even in the dog-days.

In the midst of the group was Jim Ryan. Now this Jim Ryan was the sworn friend and adherent of Father Murphy; he would have gone through fire and water to serve his Reverence. He was rather a small man in the parish as regarded worldly goods, having neither snug holding nor dairy farm; but he was highly popular, being considered a 'dhroll boy' and good company.

When the proceedings of this devoted follower met the priest's business eye before alluded to, they caused considerable surprise to that intelligent organ, insomuch as greatly to damage a very pretty compliment his Reverence was in the act of making to the bride.

First Jim Ryan took hold of the collecting plate, and seemed about to carry it round. Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he stopped short, and dashed it down on the table with a clatter and a bang that made Mrs Malone wince, for it was one of her best china set.

Jim's next proceeding was to try all his pockets. He dived into his waistcoat, breeches, and swallow-tailed coat receptacles, one after another, but without finding what he wanted. At last, after much hunting and shaking, and many grimaces of disappointment, he pounced on the object of his search, and drew carefully from some unknown depths a large tattered leather pocket-book.

By this time every one's attention was fixed upon him. Deliberately he opened the book, and peering inside—having first ascertained by a covert glance around that the company were observing—he extracted from it a bank-note. This, when unfolded, he spread out and flattened ostentatiously on the table, so that all who looked might read 'Ten Pounds' inscribed upon it!

A flutter of astonishment ran through the guests, not unmixed with signs of dismay among the richer portion. Fat pocket-books that a few moments before were being pompously produced by their owners, were stealthily thrust back again. A sudden pause was followed by a great whispering and consulting among the farmers. Anxious and meaning looks were bestowed on the latter by their wives, to say nothing of expressive nudges, and digs into conjugal ribs where practicable. For there was always much rivalry in these offerings. Mither Hennessy, who drove his family to mass every Sunday in his own jaunting car, would scorn to give less than Mither Welsh; though *he* too was a 'warm' man, and always got top price for his butter at Limerick market. And now to be outdone by Jim Ryan! To proffer his Reverence five pounds, when the likes of him was giving ten! It was not to be thought of! So the result, after Jim had deposited his note with a complacent flourish on the plate, and had gone his rounds with the latter, was the largest collection that had ever gladdened the heart or filled the pockets of Father Murphy.

As the priest was leaving the place, Jim came up to him and laid his hand on the horse's bridle: 'A good turn I done yer Riverince this night, didn't I? Such a mort of notes an' silver an' coppers I niver laid eyes on! I thought the plate would be bruk in two halves with the weight. An' now'—in a whisper, and looking round to see there was no one listening—'where's my tin pound note back for me?'

'Your ten pound note, man! What do you mean by asking for it? Is it to give you back part of my dues, you want?'

'Ah then now, Father Murphy dear, sure an' sure you niver was so innocent as to think that blessed note was mine! Where upon the face of the living earth would a poor boy like me get such a sight of money as that? Tin pounds! I borried it, yer Riverince, for a schame; an' a mighty good an' profitable schame it's turned out. Sure I knew the sight of it would draw the coin out of all their pockets; an' by the powers! so it did.' A fact his Reverence could not deny, while—not without interest—he refunded Jim's ingenious decoy-duck.

## THE ITALIAN GRIST-TAX.

IN our own favoured realms millers have their troubles, no doubt, as well as other folk, but at anyrate they are not tormented with a *grist-tax*; and indeed in these enlightened days we should have thought that such an impost was unknown in all countries claiming to have attained a high degree of civilisation. Mr Edward Herries, C.B., late Her Majesty's Secretary of Legation at Rome, in the course of his elaborate Report on the Financial System of Italy, has, however, shewn us our mistake; and in tracing the history and present position of the tax, he furnishes us with some curious particulars respecting it.

As our readers will doubtless be struck with the anomaly of a powerful government having recourse nowadays to indirect taxation to augment its revenue, it may be well at the outset to cite a brief paragraph from Mr Herries' Report, in order to shew how it happened that the grist-tax came to be reimposed upon the people of Italy.

Towards the close of the year 1865, he writes, M. Sella, then Minister of Finance, having to meet a deficit estimated for 1866 at upwards of two hundred and sixty-one million lire (say ten million four hundred and fifty thousand pounds), and being compelled, he said, to have recourse to indirect taxation for a large increase of revenue, urged upon the Chamber of Deputies the revival of the grist-tax, which he considered as fulfilling more completely than any other new impost that could be found the essential conditions of great productiveness, wide diffusion, and equal pressure on all parts of the kingdom.

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The impost seems to have made its first appearance in Sicily, where it was a source of revenue during the Norman period, and there, no one was allowed to carry corn to be ground without first obtaining, after much delay, a permit, for which he had to pay the duty chargeable on the grinding of the corn. The attestation of the officer in charge of the mill was requisite for the removal of the flour, for which a certain route was prescribed, and which was always to be accompanied by the permit. The miller was not even allowed to keep the key of his own mill, and was prohibited from grinding corn between sunset and sunrise. The wants of the population, however, sometimes made it necessary to relax this rule; and in such cases the miller (whose family was never to remain in the mill with him) was securely locked and barred in for the night, without any means of communicating with the outer world, whatever might happen. This treatment, however, was at length seen to be cruel; and permission was granted to any miller exposed to imminent peril from fire, flood, or other calamity, to free himself from nocturnal incarceration by breaking (if he could) through the door, window, or roof. It does not seem to have been foreseen, Mr Herries aptly remarks, that such a gracious concession might be rendered nugatory by the strength of the barriers or the feebleness of the miller!

Up to 1842, the millers themselves were considered as responsible fiscal agents; but after that time, the supervision of every mill was intrusted to an official called a 'weigher' (*custode pesatore*); but not being usually a very faithful guardian, bribery soon became rampant. In the Ecclesiastical State, where the tax was farmed out to contractors, the mode of its exaction was in many respects similar to that existing in Sicily. By an edict of 1801, which deserves notice as a legislative curiosity, a miller was liable to be sent to the galleys, besides paying a heavy fine, for a variety of offences—such as that of grinding corn not regularly consigned to him in the manner prescribed; of receiving corn or sending out flour at night; and others of similar enormity. In the district of the Agro Romano, all bread had to be stamped; and the absence of the proper stamp exposed the guilty baker to a fine of one hundred scudi and corporal punishment, or even to slavery in the galleys. The inhabitants of this district were only allowed to use bread baked within it, and they might be compelled to declare where they got their bread.

Though the tax was temporarily abolished in its last strongholds in the year 1860, it was subsequently revived, until all the statutes relating to the subject were finally consolidated in 1874. The tax, which must now be paid to the miller at the time of grinding, is charged at the rate of two lire (of about tenpence each) per hundred kilograms on wheat; and one lira on maize, rye, oats, and barley. The miller pays periodically to the collector of taxes a corresponding fixed charge for every hundred revolutions of the millstone, to be ascertained by an instrument called *contatore*, which is affixed to the shaft at the cost of the government. The amount of this charge is determined for every mill according to the quality and force of the machinery and the mode of grinding. The miller may refuse the rate as first calculated; in which case the revenue authorities have the power to employ an instrument which will record the weight or volume of the corn ground; or of collecting the tax directly by their own officers, or of farming the tax. Should they not think fit to exercise such powers, the rate is determined by experts. The impost, it is perhaps hardly necessary to say, is an eminently unpopular one, and was only consented to under the pressure of extreme necessity.

The great difficulty in the way of the smooth working of the grist-tax was the impossibility of procuring the mechanical means of control contemplated by the law; and in point of fact, when it came into operation no effective instrument was in existence. By the end of August 1871, however, matters had changed, and no fewer than 78,250 registering instruments were supplied, and by 1874 the greater number of these *contatori* were in active operation. The *contatore*, however, does not give universal satisfaction; and Mr Herries thinks that what is wanted to remove doubts as to fair treatment, is some instrument capable of recording the weight or the quantity of wheat ground. Best of all would be the abolition of the grist-tax; but in a country where the mass of the people consume no articles of luxury which can be taxed by revenue

officers, and also from whom no direct impost could be exacted, the continuation of the grist-tax seems to be an absolute necessity.

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## SWEET LOVE AND I.

SWEET Love and I have strangers been  
These many years,  
So many years.  
He came to me when Life was green  
And free from fears,  
These present fears.

He came, and for a little space  
My life was gladdened by his grace;  
But soon he fled, and joy gave place  
To grief and tears.

'O Love, come to me once again!'  
My lone heart sighs,  
So sadly sighs.  
'Recall thy fearless nature, then,  
Sweet Love replies,  
Softly replies.

'Thou canst not? Then I cannot be  
The same that once I was to thee.  
There's no room in the heart for me,  
Where fears arise.'

A. C. S.

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