

HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT

FRANK LESLIE'S

ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER

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LITTLE WILLIE'S CHRISTMAS GREETING.—DRAWN BY A. HUNT.

SEE POEM ON PAGE 298.

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

IF I could, my little lady, I would give to thee,
The fairest, rarest, brightest, of gifts on land or sea.
I would search the wide world over for treasures rich
and rare,
And give thee, for a Christmas gift, my little lady
fair.
If I could, I'd weave the sunshine into a golden
crown,
And at thy dainty feet I would lay my offering down.
I would deck thy brow with jewels, rich gems to flash
and shine,
And sparkle like those merry, bewildering eyes of
thine.
The earth is full of treasures, the world is glad and
wide;
But the dearest place to me, oh, maiden sweet, is at
thy side.
I ask no brighter sunshine beneath the azure skies,
Than the tender smile of welcome within thy dear
blue eyes.
I have no gift to offer, except a loyal heart;
A love which loves thee only, tho' near thee or apart!
Wilt thou accept my offering, this Christmas gift of
mine?
Then I'll take my Christmas gift from those rosy lips
of thine.

MARY D. BRINE.

A Story of the Ring.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER IN PARIS,
1881 A.D.

By JOSEPH HOWARD, Jr.

PART ONE—THE PREPARATION.

IT is the morning of the twentieth of November, 1881, in the city of Paris. Napoleon the Fourth believes himself firm on the throne of his family. Peace and plenty reign with him over France, and Paris is once more the gayest city in the world. The vast corridors of the Grand Hotel are as busy as the outposts of a hive of bees—so busy, in fact, that no one notices a one-legged man who, by the aid of a crutch, makes his way to the door of the Private Office, at which he knocks. The man is tall, swarthy, intelligent-looking. He wears the slouched hat of an American, his other costume being in accordance with settled usage.

He knocks a second time, impatiently pulling the end of his long mustache, from under which he ejects a flood of tobacco-juice.

The door opened.
"Can I see the manager?" Bluff, straightforward and business-like.

"In person?"
"Certainly."

"I will see, sir."

Again the tobacco-juice, more pulling of the mustache, and subdued impatience. Presently the door reopened.

"Walk in, sir. Monsieur will attend you here in a few moments. Will you allow me your card?"

"Never mind the card. My name is Thompson. I come on business. Give me a paper. I'll wait."

The attendant retired.

As he did so, in the ceiling of the room a miniature slide was drawn from the forehead of a frescoed cupid, and the eye of the manager looked down upon the guest whose peculiar appearance and extraordinary composure warranted the servant in wondering.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for keeping you so long," said the manager of the Grand Hotel, as he entered the room, and approached the gentleman of the name of Thompson. "Can I serve you in any way?"

Mr. Thompson pushed his soft hat on the back of his head, revealing a high, broad, well-developed forehead, thick, strong hair, piercing black eyes, and an unusually acute expression of countenance.

"Are you the manager?"

"I am."

"Have you any partners?"

"None. The hotel belongs to a company, and I am the sole manager."

"Good. Elevator?"

"Certainly."

"I want to see the best rooms in the house."

"They are occupied, sir."

"I don't care if they are. Can't I see them?"

"I think so, but—"

"But me no buts. Allons."

Impressed, amused, annoyed, the manager hesitated.

"I see you don't understand me, monsieur," began Thompson. "I don't come here for fun. I come on business. I want to see the best six rooms in your hotel. If they suit me, I wish to hire them from the twentieth to the twenty-ninth of December. But I must see them first."

The rooms were shown.

They were on the first floor, above the grand entrance, communicating *en suite*, carpeted with velvet, furnished sumptuously, curtained gorgeously, and fitted with every appliance known to modern art.

Thompson looked them through without a word.

Being finished he said: "This will do for a reception-room, this for a parlor, these four for bedrooms. I wish there was a seventh."

"For what?"

"For a dining-room."

"And here it is, sir," said the manager, and at the word he threw open the folding doors which shut off the reception-room from an apartment thirty feet long and twenty feet wide, carpeted and furnished with chandeliers and mirrors only.

"Just the thing," said Thompson to himself.

Then he closed the doors, walked through the reception-room into the parlor, carefully noted everything, passed into each bedroom, inventoried everything there, and then, as though he had determined a matter in his mind, said: "Now, monsieur, listen. On the morning of the twentieth of December these apartments become mine. If guests are in them, transfer them elsewhere. Have all these curtains taken down, remove the carpets,

clean the rooms thoroughly, refit them perfectly. Don't allow any one who is not here on that business to enter the rooms. The two selected for the reception-room and parlor furnish appropriately, but with the greatest elegance. As they say in America, 'do yourself proud.' I shall come here the day before Christmas, to see that all is done as I order. On Christmas day four gentlemen will dine here. How long they remain is their business, not mine, not yours. They will all be gone before the twenty-ninth. That dinner must be the *chef-d'œuvre* of your professional career. Let it be superb. Spare no expense. Restrain no fancy. Now, then, the price. What do you charge for the seven rooms from the twentieth to the twenty-ninth? Put it in dollars—gold dollars."

"I really cannot—"

"Oh, yes, you can. Go ahead."

"Well, if monsieur insists. Say for the cleaning and refurnishing—but the thing is impossible. We will let that stand for the present. For the six apartments, say \$50 each *per diem*. For the dining-room—one day?"

"No; all the time."

"For the dining-room—it being on the first floor, you remember—say \$75 a day."

"And the dinner?"

"That depends; but we will lump it at five hundred dollars; and, if other meals are ordered, the regular prices will be charged. That would foot up something like this—"

Six rooms at \$50—\$300 for ten days.....	\$3,000
Dining-room at \$75	750
Dinner	500
Total.....	\$4,250

Yes, I should say \$4,500 would cover it," said the manager.

"Yes. Well, we'll call it \$5,000. I'll give you \$1,000 down as a guarantee of good faith. On the morning of the twentieth a second thousand. On Christmas morning \$2,000! The balance the day the last man leaves. Is it a bargain?"

"My dear sir!"

"And you can hold your tongue?"

"My dear sir!"

"All right. Now send for some whisky."

The burning fluid was brought.

In a few moments Thompson pulled his soft hat over his eyes as before; adjusted his crutch, and walked away as quietly as he came in; leaving the puzzled manager in a condition of mental fog to which a Newfoundland bank isn't a circumstance.

PART TWO—THE ARRIVALS.

PARIS was bright and beautiful on Christmas morning.

The bells were ringing.

The streets were filled with gayly dressed strangers and the boulevards were thronged with sightseers.

The Grand Hotel was, as usual, a social centre.

Rushing here and pushing there were currents and crowds of men of every nationality.

Each one had his cue for the day. All were busy with their own affairs.

But, busy as they were, every eye was turned toward the main entrance when at ten o'clock, with a dash and a clash, six prancing steeds, elegantly harnessed, furiously rushed down the street and noisily entered the courtyard.

A richly dressed footman jumped from his seat and officiously opened the door of a huge traveling carriage, the interior of which resembled a lady's boudoir, so well furnished was it with the comforts of home.

Throwing off his rich fur coverings, an elderly man stepped carefully to the pavement, looked up at the queer facade of the hotel, and without a word hurried rapidly into the corridor, followed by a servant bearing a small box, a valise, and an afghan, while with a crack of the whip the coachman started his lively horses into a run and at a slapping pace whirled away towards the stables.

As the new arrival proceeded towards the hotel office, his quick eye caught sight of Thompson, who quietly beckoned him to follow.

He led the way to the elevator, thence to the reception-room, the door of which he opened, revealing a glowing fire in a vast fireplace, in front of which was a huge, well-stuffed armchair and a little table with files of late American and English papers.

Presently a modest hack stopped at the hotel. A sallow-faced man opened the door from the inside, and with a gray shawl on his arm stepped out unaided.

The driver was on his feet in a second.

"How much do you want, driver?"

"Five francs."

"Five francs? You don't say so. Why, the *depot* is but a few blocks off. I could have walked easily. I wish I had. Here, take two francs, and that's more than you've earned."

"I want five francs," shouted the driver.

"Well, well, don't make so much noise and I'll—"

By this time quite a crowd had gathered about the disputing men, and a police officer was about to interfere, when a man with a slouched hat and a crutch stepped up.

He slipped a five-franc piece into the driver's hand, and taking the old gentleman by the arm, led him into the hotel, and then to the reception-room, where without entering he left him.

As he returned to the office he saw in the nick of time a tall, well-formed, rather portly person, with a gray mustache, English clothes and eyeglasses, approach the clerk.

Before he had time to say a word, Thompson shook his hand and conducted him also to the reception-room.

An hour passed, Thompson still standing at the office-door.

He was waiting for the fourth diner.

Time and again he consulted his watch.

He smoked incessantly, and after looking up and down the street, walked to and fro like a disappointed lion.

At three o'clock the dinner was to be served, and the hands now indicated ten minutes of that time.

With an indescribable feeling of wonder and apprehension he went up to the reception-room and knocked at the door.

It was cautiously opened.

"Boss," said he in a whisper, "where the deuce can Peter be?"

"Peter?" answered the man behind the door; "why, he's here."

"Here! Why, how did he get here?"

"Blamed if I know. I found him reading the *Herald* when I came in."

That was a crusher.

With the hat very much over his eyes, Thompson took an extra lump of tobacco, went to the office, and told the manager to serve the dinner.

PART THREE—DINNER AND DESSERT.

THANKS to the vigilance of Thompson and the punctuality of the *maitre d'hotel*, at the striking of the hour of three dinner was served, and four lackeys, "silent as shadows, quick without haste, and attentive without importunity," moved about the table to the infinite delight and entertainment of the guests.

They were, as we have seen, four in number.

The eldest was, perhaps, sixty-five years of age. His hair was light and thin; his eyes, a piercing blue; his skin, parchment; his bearing apologetic; his manner, underhanded.

He sat at one side of the table, his *vis-à-vis* being the elderly man who drove to the hotel with a flourish that attracted universal attention. This one was an unusually large framed, large-built person. He had very little hair, a full beard, a kind blue eye, a huge paunch, and at times an absent look.

The foot of the table was taken by the third arrival. He was costumed *à la mode* and wore eyeglasses with no guard. He seemed old and young together.

At the head of the table sat a quiet-mannered, dark-complexioned man; medium in height, with thick hair and mustache tinged with gray. His black eye was never still. It seemed to bore into the rest of the company. Evidently, like McGregor, it made no special difference where he sat. His chair, perforce, indicated the head of the table.

The dinner was prolonged until nearly nine o'clock.

The hotel justified its reputation.

At nine, the steward, having placed the fruits, nuts, *glacés*, liqueurs and cordials within easy reach, removed the waiters by direction of the gentleman at the head of the table; first indicating the ivory key, by a touch of which he could be summoned.

For a few minutes silence prevailed.

Reaching for a pecan nut, the man in the eyeglasses said:

"How did you like the Egyptians, Connolly?"

"Not at all," replied the man of the five-franc dispute. "They're a miserable set."

"In-Sultan, I suppose," said the other.

"Same old Oakey as ever," laughingly said the one called Boss.

"Why is the Turk like the old Tammany gang?" asked Oakey.

"Give it up," said Connolly.

"The idea of your giving anything up, is the best I've heard in a long time," rejoined Oakey.

"Well, I'll tell you why the Turk is like us: because he believes in the Bos-phor-us."

"Do you think you can ever settle down?" asked the silent man at the head of the table.

"No, I don't believe I ever can. You see you are more used to settlements than I am. That's why you don't appreciate my unsettled condition."

"What a rum go this is," said Tweed.

"Yes; almost as good as a go of rum," replied Oakey.

"Oh, give us a rest!" rejoined Tweed.

"Certainly," said Oakey; but I thought you had all the arrest you cared for."

"However," interrupted Sweeny, "I must admit that the Boss is correct. This is a queer meeting after so many years of absence. I think I haven't had this pleasure since 1871. What a change, what a change!"

"Not so much change as we had before," said Oakey.

"Come, come, Oakey; we came here for a little comfort," broke in Tweed, impatiently.

"Well, all right, old man; if you've com-for't you shall have it."

At this, they all laughed heartily, especially Oakey; after which they emptied bumpers all around.

"I hear you cleared a hundred thousand dollars by your lecture, Oakey. If there's no secret about it, tell us how it was."

The speaker sat opposite Boss Tweed, and looked like the ghost of his former self. In spite of all that had hardened his nature, developing the foxiness which even in early life had secured for him the nickname "Slippery Dick," there was much that was good in the old man. He loved his wife, he loved his children, and though close and mean in all that pertained to money matters, his instincts were kindly, and his temper even.

He toyed with his wineglass, looking furtively at one and another as though he was not quite certain of his position even there.

"Secret?" replied Oakey; "the idea of my having a secret is the best joke out."

Sweeny smiled.

"Of course I'll tell you all about it. A hundred thousand dollars now-a-days is a tolerably large sum. There was a time when it didn't go very far—"

"As far as Albany," interrupted Tweed.

"So I have heard. But those times are gone. And as the Squire aptly put it, What a change is there, my countrymen. How fit it is that we should assemble here, strangers, and in a foreign land. For one, I mean to enjoy myself. Why not? As the poet said, or would have said had he thought of it—"

"Last scene of all," that ends the year,
And ushers in brave Christmas cheer,
Come, decked as thou wert wont to be,
In festive smiles and revelry;
With roasted beef and minced pies,
And pudding of gigantic size!
Fit emblem of our wealth's "vast sum";
I'd be contented with a plum.

No, Boss, I didn't make a plum by my lecture

but I did pretty well. Of all the parts I ever played, I think that was the best."

"Did it beat the 'Crucible'?"

"No more of that, if you love me."

"Tell us how you came to go to London," said Tweed.

"Wart for I came to go? Well, I will. One day, I was sitting in my office, looking over the head of the Franklin Statue at Printing House Square—by-the-way, that was a good speech I made at the Franklin banquet—and I saw Harry Palmer standing on the steps of the City Hall. I sent my boy to him, asking him to come over. He came, and we talked about everybody and everything. Finally, we naturally talked about myself. He knew how unjustly I had been accused of—"

"There, there, Oakey, don't you think perhaps you might remember whom you are talking to?" asked Sweeny.

"By George, I forgot. Excuse me. Hanged if I didn't think I was in the Lotos Club. Well, Harry thought a spicy lecture would pay. I jumped at the idea, but said nothing to him."

"Oh, that won't do. The idea of your silence in the presence of a second party, you know, is too absurd."

"That's so. I think, perhaps, I may have said a little. To make a long story short, I managed to see a few fellows; impressed on the minds of each a belief that I was about going somewhere or doing something the next day or the next week; and then, having made all my arrangements with my friends, quietly and mysteriously left Gotham for London."

"Then came the advertising."

"Was there ever such a card in the *World*?"

"Speaking of the *World* reminds me. You seem," said Sweeny, "to have pulled the wool completely over the eyes of its London correspondent."

Oakey Hall, for a wonder, said nothing, but his wink was very significant.

"Then you saw no woman with a wart?"

"Not a wart."

"Nor a woman?"

"That I didn't say."

"Well, suppose we resolve ourselves into a penitential quartet, this room into a confessional, ourselves the priest, and tell each his story."

"That would be his-story," said Oakey.

"Up to a certain point," said Tweed.

"Or an uncertain one," added the Squire; but he spoke to himself, and no one else heard him.

PART FOUR—THE CONFESSIONAL.

"I never was a good hand at story-telling," said Connolly, as he squinted through a glass of extra dry; "I'll listen."

"But listeners never hear any good of themselves," replied Sweeny. "I think you would better begin."

"Yes, and begin better," put in Oakey.

"It's rather a singular fact," said Connolly, after swallowing his wine at a gulp, "that this Irish Ring, about which so much is said, was composed entirely of Americans, with the single exception of myself—and what an humble part I had—"

"Or took," said Hall.

"You all know. Now look at it. The Boss was born in New York. The Squire was born in New York. The Mayor was born in New York. I am a native of Cork—"

"And floated over, I suppose," interrupted the ex-Mayor.

"But my parents brought me over to this garden—"

"Castle Garden?"

"To this garden of the earth when I was but three months old, so that all my education, tastes and habits are as much those of New York as any of yours. I mention this fact because it was generally believed by the public—"

"And the press."

"Oh! the press! What did the press know, or care to know? The corporation papers kept still because they had their pap, and the outsiders because they hoped for it. As I said, it was generally believed that an Irish Ring controlled affairs. As matter of fact, not one of the Ring could fairly claim to be an Irishman. Personally, I suppose, I worked the two elements more thoroughly than any of you—the Irish and the Catholic. All the T. A. B. societies, all the Father Matthew boys, and all the Associations were mine, up to the handle. Whatever they wanted, 'Uncle Dick' gave them. And the Cathedral! Well, well, if we didn't boost that along, I don't know what I am talking about. I don't regret it. But I never lost anything by that sort of thing, I tell you. And the Fenians. Gracious me, how we played the Fenians. Do you remember the subscription? I think we made up \$21,000 in about ten minutes for some of the refugees—but it never did us a mite of good."

"There was no might in 'em," said Hall.

"For once you are right, Oakey," said Sweeny.

"I don't know," said Tweed; "I took considerable stock in the Fenians."

"You? Oh, you took stock in everything, from a chair-factory to a hotel."

"That's so," sighed the old man; and, pulling out a \$10,000 diamond, held it in the hollow of his hand to admire its sparkles.

"I gave away a great deal in charity," continued Connolly.

"You?" exclaimed Tweed. "Why, don't you remember that \$50,000 worth of flour and coal I gave, at one lick?"

"Boss!"

That was all Sweeny said.

Tweed winked, and balanced a knife on his fat forefinger.

"Yes, I gave a great deal in charity. Whenever I got \$20,000 from Watson, I put \$100 in a plate, or—"

"Or a savings bank," said Oakey.

"No, no—or gave it to some society. The rest I invested in United States stocks and bonds. I never shared your real estate fever, Tweed."

"No; and you never shared my Ludlow Street fever, either," sung out the old man; at which they laughed as heartily as boys who had found a nest of chipmunks.

"That was what made it so easy for me to give bail. That enabled me to offer that remarkable financier, O'Connor, a round million of dollars—which, by-the-way, he did not take. That gave me a good send-off when I reached this part of the world, where money can accomplish everything and procure everything, even the peace of an empire."

"But not the peace of mind," said Sweeny. The four looked at each other. They were absolutely dumb. The Squire's hammer of fact had struck the nail of fate squarely on the head and driven it home.

"Oh, see here, this won't do, you know," said Oakley. "This isn't the kind of funeral we were invited to. This is a corpse of a different complexion. Tell us about that famous Examining Committee, Dick."

A sickly smile passed over the pallid features of the old man as he recalled the absurd scrutiny of his accounts by a selected few of New York's great merchants.

"That was a very simple matter," said he. "The fact is, not one merchant in a hundred understands books. Why should he? He starts life as a boy—"

"How queer?"

"I mean a store boy. He sweeps, runs errands—"

"Steals postage stamps."

"Runs errands, and little by little, grows up."

"Queer again."

"I mean to a position. In the course of time he becomes a merchant. He has bought and sold—"

"Or been bought and sold?"

"All his life, but knows nothing of book-keeping. He is literally at the mercy of his bookkeeper. Well, these old gentlemen were flattered by my choice—"

"Choice flattery, I suppose."

"And their examination was such a farce."

"Worse than Oakley's 'Crucible'?" asked Tweed.

"Wait till your turn comes, old man," rejoined Hall.

"Oh, I'm done to a turn already."

"Well, don't turn dun, unless you want to be paid in your own coin," replied Oakley.

"I kept in with the 'respectable element' by giving job printing to its favorite journal; with the religious people by donations and remittance of taxes; with the politicians by appointments; with moneyed men by favors in the Tax Department that would make even your eyes open like saucers."

"I never saw-cers eyes as those."

"The petty devices of our richest men to escape assessments and taxes would fill a volume. We played see-saw."

"Did they see what you saw?"

"They served me by not seeing and I served them by saving their money—"

"For yourself," said Oakley, and then, seeing that his jest was ill-timed, added: "I beg your pardon; my tongue is slippery, Dick. By-the-way, that's a joke. See it? Why is my tongue like the late Controller? Because my tongue is slippery, Dick, and he is Slippery Dick too—that just makes two, doesn't it?"

"Well, Oakley, there's no use in being vexed with you. You don't mean half you say," replied Connolly. "My road has been anything but slippery, I assure you. The fearful struggles I had in Egypt, the constant mortifications I encountered everywhere, the sad death of Townsend, my son, the never-ceasing sufferings of my devoted wife and children; this terrible pain and that infernal judgment of eight and a half millions of dollars combined to give me a blow from which I can never hope to recover."

Burying his head in his hands the poor old man, albeit he could command the use of millions, sunk back in his chair and wept like a child.

The scene was sad indeed, and embarrassing too. For a moment perfect silence reigned, and the situation became painful.

At a sign from Sweeny, Oakley rose, and in spite of an emotion which interfered somewhat with his utterance, said: "A bumper, friends! Here's to our old chum, Dick Connolly. Good luck to him! Having endured like the Israelites the plagues of Egypt for a season, like them he made his exodus, and in spite of the seven million judgment of Judge Noah Davis, may he never suffer anything more than Noah's bark. Bumpers, friends, and the best of future fortune to dear old Dick."

The three men rose, and taking hold of hands waited for Connolly to join them.

With evident effort he did so.

Then with a hand-shake all around, each tossed off his wine.

"Mr. Tweed will now oblige," cried Oakley, with capital mimicry of a Free and Easy manager.

"Oh, certainly," laughed Tweed; "Mr. Tweed has been obliging everything and everybody ever since he entered public life. Why shouldn't he continue? God knows, boys, I am fond of all three of you, but I wish to Heaven I had never seen either one of you."

"Come, old man," said Hall, "that's scarcely fair to us. We might better have said that than you. For one, I'm heartily glad to have known you. Now, don't be absurd. We're all in a hole together."

"Yes, but when I put my head out of the hole the public chop it off."

"That's because they want brains. By-the-way, Squire, do you remember how they used to flatter you with that name, Brains?"

Sweeny smiled and nodded.

"Go on, Tweed," says he, "it's getting late, and we have much to do before we part."

"I often think," began the ex-Boss, as he leaned back heavily in his huge armchair, and wound and unwound a bit of string upon his chubby fingers, "that I have been much more of a fool than a knave. When I see what a chance we had and how ridiculously we threw it away, I could cry with anger."

"How about shame?"

"Well, put it as you please. I was fooled by every one I ever dealt with, and at the very time I thought I was smarter than they."

"They made you smart," said Oakley.

"They did. Who gave money? who loaned money? who subscribed money? Tweed. Always Tweed. And what did I get?"

"That's what I never quite footed up," said Oakley; "but I don't think you lost much."

"Well, sir, I paid hard on to a million of dollars to lawyers. Just think of that. And all they accomplished was to rivet the chains they found on me. It does seem to me I must have been crazy. One Summer I cleared \$150,000 a month in Erie speculation. Fisk and I manipulated the pool, and—"

"Pulled together, I suppose."

"Yes, sir. What a royal fellow Jim Fisk was, to be sure. By George, if he had lived, do you know, I think we could have got through all right. I had too many friends, that was what ailed me. They made money for me and then spent it. I gave scores of thousands to charities. No woman ever asked me for a dollar that didn't get ten. Hard up newspaper men bled me. Impeccable politicians robbed me. Every boy had his hack—"

"And charged it to the city?"

"Charged what?"

"The hack."

"Pshaw! Every boy had his hack at me, and if it hadn't been for my enormous income, I'd have been beggared twice over. One time at Albany I put \$47,000 in a desk for a high-toned Senator. No one knew it was there but the Senator, a reporter and myself. The Senator didn't get it. I never saw it afterwards. I went up to Albany with a million dollars in my trunk one time. It disappeared in \$50,000 checks in less than a week. I prided myself on being liberal. I gave half a million dollars to one party, and I'm glad of it. It did a world of good. If I hadn't, I wouldn't be here to-day. Now and then you find a square hand, but not often."

"Did men go back on you?"

"You bet. I have an easy temperament. If it wasn't for that, long ago I would have sunk into the grave. Just look at it. A monarch to-day, a fugitive to-morrow. Millions to-day, a shadow to-morrow. An army of friends to-day, an army of vilifiers to-morrow. Omnipotent to-day, an outcast to-morrow. Why, I've seen the day when no man's life was safe an hour, had I willed it otherwise. Within a week I was lucky to preserve my own."

"Who was the most ungrateful of all your creations?"

"Without a moment's hesitation, I say little Gunnie Bedford. What a miserable little pusillanimous sneak he was. The idea of his attempting to commit me to the Toms without bail, in a case of misdemeanor. Well, well, but he was too small even for his insignificant little carcass. But he was well paid for it in his humiliating defeat. Served him right. Personally I led a queer, hermit kind of a life. I never smoked. I never drank. I cared nothing for cards, and rarely played except to let some legislator win a thousand dollar bribe. By George, I don't remember a single dissipation of any kind."

"You dissipated your cash."

"Well, partly, yes. But when I see some of those editors who slangwhang me and those parsons who use me as a text, with their fast horses, their cigars and wine, and their scandals, I think that perhaps after all I'm not so much worse than they are. That isn't much comfort, but it's some. I used to pay newspapers to pitch into schemes we cared nothing about, provided they kept mum about those in which we were interested. And isn't it rich to read their diatribes now? German, English, and Irish, it's all the same. I found an immense quantity of human nature in newspaper people. The funny thing, the funniest thing was the sinecure list. I used to have more Park Inspectors and Sewer Inspectors than you could shake a stick at. I think there was a keeper and ten assistant keepers in charge of Bowling Green."

"Andy Green needed more than ten to watch him."

"You bet. He's a corker, isn't he? How near he came to being Secretary of the Treasury. If Uncle Sammy Tilden had been fortunate in his little game, Green would have handled the funds."

"And that," said Sweeny, "would have been better even than the Park Department."

"When I discovered that every boy was going back on me, and saw those double-decked scoundrels earn immunity by turning state's evidence and lying worse than Sam Hill, I made up my mind to give up."

"Your money?"

"Well, not exactly. I was willing to give up all they could discover. The rest was nothing to nobody."

"But something to somebody."

"Precisely. So I consented. And what did I gain? I was fair, but they weren't. They made me dribble out all manner of stuff in their own interest, and I gained nothing at all, except the contempt of men who had felt kindly to me, because I held my tongue. It was a sad mistake, and I bitterly regret it. I feel all the time now as if the public said 'Well, the old man hadn't so much backbone after all,' and that hurts my pride more than detected wrong, or loss of absolute power. In many senses I am broken up. I preserve the semblance of Tweedery, but in reality, boys, I'm sick at heart. I have enough to live on—you know that. But to all intents and purposes, I'm all alone. Outside of my family, not a tear will fall when I die—when I die. Great God! when I die, the flood-gates of scornful obituary will open, and a tide of malignant reminiscence will sweep my name from the face of the earth."

Tweed stopped short.

In his earnestness he had become eloquent. His companions sat spellbound by the magic of his manner.

"Let us drink," cried he.

The charm was broken, and all breathed free again.

"Perhaps you'd like to hear my lecture?" said Oakley, as he refilled his glass.

"Spare us, good Hall," replied Sweeny; "but as the clock does not yet warn us of the newborn day, we shall be glad to hear your contribution to this most interesting confessional."

Oakley was dressed elaborately.

He never looked better.

In spite of advancing years, whitening locks, and care and trouble, he preserved his jaunty manner, and was very little changed, save that the lines were drawn tighter about his mouth, and a few deep marks radiated from the corners of his eyelids.

Emptying his glass, as he wiped his lips he rose and said:

"May it please your Honor, and gentlemen of the jury."

"Oh, fear not in a world like this, And though shalt know ere long, Know how sublime a thing it is To suffer and be strong."

Don't you believe it? Look at me. What was I when you found me? What was I when you left me? No bark o'er started on a voyage more hopelessly than mine;—was ever wreck more sad? I tell you, friends, frenzy does no good. Philosophy is what we need; and when men know what they want, what fools are they if they fail to get it. Don't you forget it. It's a great thing to know your weak points. I know mine. I am diffusive. I have wasted, not to say waisted, too much in different directions. I had in me the making of a great editor. Mr. Bennett told me so; and had I gone into harness I might have Benn-ett now. I succeeded as a lawyer. I generally won my cases; but the case is I didn't stick to my work. I entered politics. For what? I rose like a balloon—and burst like one. Can you tell me any good I gained by my service to the city? I've had my trials—two of 'em—as well as you. I never handled any money—"

"Oakley!" said the silent Sweeny.

"Well, what I mean is, I never handled any great amount of money, but spent my time in joking with the boys, and occasionally with the girls. I wasn't satisfied with my countrymen, so I undertook to blarney my Erin brothers from Ireland, and one day wore a suit of green, with a sprig of shamrock in my coat and a shillelah in my hand. Now, what infernal nonsense all that was. Still, it was my fate, and I don't repine."

"Tis all a great show, The world that we're in— None can tell when twas finished, None saw it begin; Men wonder and gaze through Its courts and its halls, Like children, whose love is The picture hung walls."

I don't recognize the good in Uncle Dick's abjection, nor see any use in the wailings of the Boss. I take things as they come. I don't mean what you think I mean. Thus far I have had my share of good and ill. I've been toadied to by toads just as you have. I've seen through them all the time, but why make them unhappy by exposure? Why expose your own wit? I entered heart and soul into all your political schemes, and did my best to make myself Governor. I failed—so did you. Since then recall my tribulations. Great heavens! they are an array of gnats, each potent to sting a giant to death, unless he clad himself in armor. That's what I did; and, as foolish boys hit an aching thumb to make it ache the more, so I, when melting in the crucible of scorn, put up a Crucible of my own and tried it on again. But there was no gain in it. Then, disgusted, I fell back on my legal oar, and, looking o'er the field ahead, made up my mind to enter it as a lecturer. Printers' ink is a big thing. I had paid printers a great deal of money, and I determined that they should aid me. My disappearance in the slums of Brooklyn, via London, did me a good turn, and I turned lecturer with ease and profit. Well, friends, after long, long years of separation, as the clown says, 'Here we are again.' We are knit together like a Cardigan jacket; and though we may never meet in life—"

"Though the deep between our souls, Friendship shall unite our souls; And in fancy's rich domain Oft shall we four meet again."

Let us not forget, but profit, by the past; and whenever, wherever we hear each other mentioned, let it revive only pleasant memories of the days gone by. Here's good fortune for us all!"

The first applause of the evening followed this genuine exponent of Oakley's better self, and he resumed his seat more firmly fixed in his friends' esteem than ever.

"Good talker, isn't he?" said Tweed to Sweeny.

"None better," replied the Squire. "I have often regretted his removal from the District Attorney's office. He could have held that place for life with profit to the city and credit to himself."

Tweed sighed heavily.

"What time is it?" asked Connolly.

"Just one o'clock to-morrow morning," replied Oakley. "Now, then, bumpers again, boys. Let's drink to the health and good fortune of our old time chief, the Brains of the Ring."

Bumpers were filled.

Bumpers were drained.

"I suppose," said Mr. Sweeny, as he pushed his chair and put his thumbs in his trousers' pocket, "you will scarcely ask me to imitate the lugubriousness of the late Controller—he has a headache; nor expect me to serve up such a dish of reminiscence as the Boss—he has a storehouse full; nor could your wildest fancy picture me astride so spirited a Pegasus as that which the late Mayor has just turned loose. But I very gladly acknowledge your pleasant compliment. I have been much pleased with the plan of modern Paris. Its sewage—"

"What we want is New York, you know, not Paris," interrupted Tweed.

"Yes, I'll come to that. Nothing is so detrimental to health as bad sewage. I remember reading that Alexander's first care was for the ventilation of the houses in the cities he had conquered. Consequently the ancient Greeks had—"

"How about the modern Greeks in New York," asked Oakley.

"As you say, New York suffers from the same defect; if I had any influence in New York, I think the first thing I would propose is a change in her sewage arrangements. Then I should endeavor to secure an underground railway as by all means the best—"

"Oh, come, Peter, you always got the best of everybody. Now, what's the use of your going on like this?" said Connolly. "It's nearly half-past three, and I am tired as a dog. I can scarcely keep my eyes open."

"Open another bottle, then," said Oakley, and he suited the action to the word.

Sweeny had taken his seat.

"Now, then, bumpers," shouted Hall, and all four drained the long, thin glasses upon the rims of which the sparkling bubbles danced.

"I wanted to ask you about Jim Taylor's will," said Tweed. "Is it true that Jim's widow is in destitute circumstances in New York?"

"You'll have to ask the Controller about that. The Surrogate admitted the will, you remember."

"Oh, yes; that's so. It was Rufe Andrews found it, I believe, but I've forgotten. Queer jig that. But I'm awfully sorry about Jim's widow."

"Well," said Oakley, "so am I; but if we begin to be sorry, when and where are we to stop? We have too much of this, say I. Let's have a drink."

"The thirsty earth soaks up the rain, And drinks and gapes for drink again The plants suck in the earth, and are With constant drinking fresh and fair: Fill up the bowl then, fill it high; Fill all the glasses there, for why Should every creature drink but I; Why, man of morals, tell me why?"

Hello! why, where's Peter? Sure enough, where was he.

PART FIVE—THE FINALE.

TWO days after Christmas the tall man with the slouched hat and crutch entered the manager's office of the Grand Hotel.

"Here," said he, "is the balance due you. Give me a receipt in full. Thanks. The dinner was perfect. Everything was as it should be. The old gentleman's fever has left him. He took the train an hour ago."

"Which train?"

"I didn't ask. The three beds afforded entire sat—"

"Three beds? There were four."

"Three only were used. One of the gentlemen left town quite early in the morning. The others were much pleased, especially the largest, who slept until nine to-day. You will please divide these thousand francs among the servants."

"Monsieur is liberal. May I not offer some refreshments?"

"You may."

"What shall it be?"

"Whisky straight."

It came.

The slouched hat was pushed far back on the stranger's head. Filling the glass to the brim, he nodded to his host. "How," said he, drank the whisky, and hobbled off.

Miss Dulcimer's Dollars.

By N. ROBINSON,

AUTHOR OF "THE LAST PLUNGE FOR A PEARL."

HE has retired from business, lives on Fifth Avenue, and can give his daughter \$300,000. This is totting him up in a few words. He wears a soft felt wide-awake, a compromise between the stage villain's and a Western stock-raiser's, and his superfluous black garments, soft as a poodle's ear, cling to him in shiny folds. His shirt is a linen snowflake, is lustrous in its white shine, as are his easy boots in their darker hues.

"I wear no diamond studs, sir, or pins, or sleeve-links, or a gold watchchain, not I. I leave 'em to my daughter, sir. A bit of string keeps my turnip straight"—a \$500 watch—"and a few bone buttons take care of my linen. I am a queer fellow, sir, but queer as I am, I can give my daughter \$300,000; yes, sir, \$300,000."

His nose is tinted with the roseate hue of bee-winged port, and his capacious stomach, fit for a London alderman of the old régime, bespeaks a love for the mahogany, and for those tidbits, the consumption of which renders the lives of a certain class of worthies at once a pleasure and a pain. He is jocose, all fat men are; but his jubilation never comes to a full blossom, it perishes in a premature laugh, or dies of sheer inanition. His peers vote him a dreadful bore, but young, unmarried men regard him in the light of just the class of individual a fellow ought to look for in a father-in-law. There is a "bless you, my children," in his fat, oily voice, and an unctuous glow in his most famous utterance, "I can give my daughter \$300,000, sir," which would have made his fortune on the stage as the heavy father. He is a peculiar man and does peculiar things.

His entertainments are thoroughly sound. Even old Blake, of Wall Street, who would skip across his father's grave to a good dinner, and who uncorks his wine under the immediate supervision of a thermometer, imbibing Lafitte, La Rose, or Margot, according to Fahrenheit, grunts a surly approval of Tim Dulcimer's chef, and has been known to throw over the select coterie at the Knickerbocker Club, in order to swim in the vintages at No. 500 Fifth Avenue.

Miss Dulcimer's dances, too, are none of your carpet-beating, piano and ice-cream gatherings.

"No, by George," says young Winkee Irwin, to me, in a burst of enthusiasm. "Miss Dulcimer knows how to do it, sir, and she does it;" and the honest fellow button-holes me with a vivid description of floors, fiddles, fools and flowers, "and the supper," smacking his lips, "none of your lemonade, sandwich and sawdust business. No, begad; lobster salad with real salad and real lobster, and champagne, sir. Champagne to the mast-head. Heidsieck, extra dry, and flowing like the North River."

Tim Dulcimer was lucky enough to have a silver spoon upon the premises when he was born, which was immediately thrust into his mouth by that most considerate of nurses, Dame Fortune, and although when grown up to man's estate he followed

commerce, it was more from habit than anything else, and as an innocent kind of recreation.

Of course he was eminently successful, everything he touched turning into greenbacks. Had he been an anxious, hard-working poor devil, heavily weighted and endeavoring to struggle to the front, he would have come to grief as a matter of course; but as he was utterly careless as to whether he lost or gained, he won, and won heavily.

"My father (that's his portrait over the sideboard) came to New York with thirty shillings in his pouch. He worked many a long day for his board, and thought himself a very fine fellow when he roomed with a fellow-clerk in a two pair back in the Bowery. He never missed a chance, and later on when he got a good one he took it flying. He married money, and believe me, sir, that's the secret. Marry for money, sir. I can give my daughter \$300,000."

This was over a second bottle of Margot. I had dined with him; Annabella—Miss Dulcimer—was at Staten Island spending the day. We had had sherry with our soup, hock with our fish, champagne with the *entrée*, and a dash of maraschino after the second course. He was in a bland and beatific state, and I was in a daring mood. Life was but a fire-escape, the bolder the climb the more to be snatched from the devouring element.

This very pointed advice adhered right to my waistcoat, and followed up by the declaration as to the great sum he intended bestowing upon his daughter, led me to infer that perhaps this \$300,000 had been accumulated for me. Now, my pecuniary resources are of the most limited and modest description. My club subscription is the borderland of my luxuries, and outside of this the expenditure of a five-cent car fare must be cautiously and carefully considered. \$1,000 was a fortune, but as for \$300,000! I drank off a bumper to pull my ideas into some rational groove of thought. To be candid, I had been attached to No. 600 Fifth Avenue, not so much by the *châtelain*, as by the cook. I freely confess that I looked more to the piquancy of the *entrée* than the *persiflage* of Miss Dulcimer; but now that she was placed as it were within reach, and in such a golden frame, too, her charms commenced to reveal themselves in the most entrancing way, and a path seemed opened up to name, fame and fortune.

This was a chance too good to be thrown away, and, hastily imbibing another glassful of the luscious, velvety wine, I essayed to speak.

Vox faucibus hæsiti. My voice clung to my jaws, and I felt as though my heart were a cricket-ball bounding against the bare bones composing my ribs. At length, however, I gurgled.

"You—your d-daughter," Mr. Dulcimer. He nodded.

"She's as b-beautiful as a picture," I exclaimed, rapturously.

"If it wasn't for her nose she'd be a real pretty gal," observed her father, closing a critical eye as if gazing through a visionary telescope.

"Her nose is Grecian, sir—Grecian."

The fact is, I quite forgot at that particular moment whether it resembled the nasal organ of the late Duke of Wellington, or that of King Theodore of Abyssinia.

"Grecian! It has a Grecian bend, upward," and Mr. Dulcimer coarsely laughed.

It is the correct thing to follow suit, especially when trumps are led, and if the father of a girl with \$300,000 chooses to laugh at his own wooden jokes, it is only good breeding to join in the melancholy mirth. In an unhappy moment I yielded to the conventional rule, and suddenly, upon glancing at the mirror in the sideboard, and when grinning from ear to ear like a Cheshire cat, beheld, to my utter consternation and dismay, no less an apparition than that of Miss Dulcimer herself. My grin died into a sickly smile, and I envied, how I envied the Spitz dog underneath the table.

"What are you saying about my nose?" asked the little lady, in an imperious tone.

"He says it's a Grecian, my dear," roared her father.

"Thank you, Mr. Pinchball," says mademoiselle, taking the sides of her dress in her two dainty hands and dropping me a *minuet de la cour* courtesy. "Thank you very much."

Is a woman ever so *piquante* as when she is annoyed with you?

Annabella Dulcimer is *petite*, built as they say of saucy schoolboys, upon beautiful lines, and as graceful as a young willow. Her skin is a marvel of fairness and her blush refreshing to behold as a shower of rosebuds. Her clear blue eyes are full of truth and *naïveté*, while her ripe red lips resemble crimson flowers upon which the morning dew still lovingly lingers, as by my troth it ought. Every gesture is expressive, and a fresh grace is always coming to the surface when least expected. Now her nose is not by any means her worst feature. That it is *rétroussé* is undeniable; but that it is tip-tilted like the petals of a flower is also true, and I have heard one or two knowing, case-hardened down-town men pronounce it "adorable."



MISS DULCIMER'S DOLLARS.—"I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I SAID; I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF WHAT I DID; I BELIEVE I KISSED DULCIMER."

When in a moment of temporary insanity I was about to ask her father for her hand and \$300,000 I never thought about her nose—why should I?

"Have you any further fault to find?" asked Annabella. "What do you say to my mouth?" presenting that luscious object in most tempting proximity, "or my figure?" turning a pirouette, "or my hands, or my feet?" displaying a Cinderella-like slipper, surmounted by a pink rosette the size of a moss-rose in full bloom. "Please say to my face what you were saying behind my back; and as for my nose—"

"I did not say anything about your nose!" I interrupted.

"Papa says you did," she retorted.

"Don't blame Pinchball," said Mr. Dulcimer.

"Your father is the father of the joke."

"A pretty subject to joke upon," with a toss of her head.

"A very pretty subject," I added.

"You were laughing at my poor little cocked nose"—glancing slightly at the mirror. "Oh, very well, Mr. Pinchball. I shall have a chance at you some fine day."

I did not propose for Annabella. That cursed pleasantry of the author of her being cut off my chances, but I knew three other fellows who did plunge for the \$300,000 and like the ruined gamester who, although precluded from the excitement of the game, feels something akin to pleasure in the mere looking-on, I watched the movements of my enterprising friends with mingled feelings of curiosity and chagrin.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that a girl with a portion of \$300,000 is a prize for which a great many take tickets, in the hope that their

number may prove the winning one. Miss Dulcimer was *fêted*, courted, caressed. Baskets of flowers, opera-stalls, boxes of gloves, rained upon her, while *bombons* came thick as leaves in Valambrosa. She was offered the entire roof of the Tally-ho coach by one, while another placed his steam-yacht at her disposal. A third sent to Europe to match a bit of Chelsea china, and a fourth telegraphed to London for a slug-nosed pug. I have begged cigars from the best man at the Club for Dulcimer, cigars that I couldn't get for love or money, and I actually annexed—that is not a bad word—Fred Burnaby's bamboo walking-cane which he left one night at my rooms, for the purpose of presenting it to her father. I merely mention these trifles in order to show that I, too, was in the current—that maelstrom in the whirling waters of which so many good men went down. To Annabella I never gave anything except a five-cent bunch of violets. I must confess that my original designs upon No. 000 were directed against the cook, but by degrees they ascended from the kitchen to the drawing-room, and from the *chef* to the *châtelaine*. Annabella acts in this capacity, as Mrs. Dulcimer is very delicate; at least she imagines herself so, being a victim to lobster salad, pine apples and patent medicines. The road to her affections lies through *crustacea*, home-grown pines and Doctor Duchendorf's last; but as she seldom appears, she counts for very little in this eventful narrative. Having now sufficiently introduced the inmates of No. 000—Ah, I had nearly forgotten Mademoiselle Tourette, Annabella's *dame de compagnie*, a spinster of uncertain age, affecting literature, and of a very romantic temperament. I shall proceed with my story.



MISS DULCIMER'S DOLLARS.—"SHE WAS GLAD TO SEE ME, A BEAUTIFUL BLUSH COVERING EVEN HER LITTLE SHELL-LIKE EARS AS SHE GAVE ME BOTH HER HANDS. 'HOW GOOD OF YOU TO GIVE UP YOUR ENGAGEMENT TO COME TO US!'" SHE CRIED.

Mrs. Dulcimer was "At Home" on Friday night, and one lovely evening in the merriest month of May, in the year of grace 1876, shortly after the little dinner I have been reluctantly compelled to refer to, incensing myself in *costume derigueur*, and with my opera-hat beneath my arm—this is very effective in entering a drawing-room, like the striking of the clock in the "Critique," "it begets an awful attention"—I strolled up to No. 000. Annabella was too good-natured to remember my discomfiture, and received me with a cordiality that possessed too much of the sisterly to make it all that could be desirable to me. Her eyes were exceptionally bright, and a small rose petal on either cheek betrayed an abiding excitement.

"You are radiant to-night, Miss Dulcimer!"

"I feel awfully jolly! Papa is going to take me to Europe!"

"To Europe?" I gasped. And I thought of the 3,200 miles that were to separate us.

"Yes; we start on the 1st of June."

"By the Cunard line?" cut in a young fool, standing near.

"Oh dear, no! I swear by the White Stars."

"I never travel by any other line," observed a tall, handsome man, as straight as a whip, with an Irish gray eye and a dash of Hibernian impudence, whom I had never met at the house before.

"You were the first person I heard speak of the White Star boats, Mr. O'Reilly, and if we go down, you shall be accountable."

"Make it the 1st of July, and I'll go down with you," said O'Reilly.

"Are you going to Europe?" arching her brows, in a bewildering surprise.

"I did not intend it, but now I feel that I must!"

This was too much for me, and I retired to an open window to cool what poets are pleased to term a fevered brow.

That O'Reilly was "on" the \$300,000 was evident. He would follow her to Europe. A meeting beneath the blue skies of Italy, or in sunny Spain, or in glittering Paris, would be the inevitable result. His chivalry would reap its reward, and she would return his affianced bride. This hideous calculation passed through my brain as I leant out of the balconied window beneath the ivory light of the young May moon, and I felt dejected, miserable, despairing. Somehow or other Annabella came to the fore now, the dollars forming a golden background. Hitherto it had been quite the reverse; the fortune smiled beneath my nose, and the fair one only showed in the dim distance.

"So Miss Dulcimer is going to leave us," observed Mr. De Lamballe, shoving his body beside mine, and speaking as much to the placid moon as to me.

"Yes," I said, bitterly. How much can be crowded into that small word. It bristled as it brushed past my lips.

"For long?"

"It must be for months, and it may be for ever."

"Good heavens, what do you mean, Pinchball?"

You are *l'ami de la maison*, your language contains a hidden meaning," he whispered, in a hoarse, agitated way.

"I know nothing but that she leaves on the first of June and—that Mr. O'Reilly crosses on the first of July."

"Why, O'Reilly was only introduced to her at Nottingham's Ball on Tuesday night."

"He is an *Irishman*," I muttered, moodily.

"Ah, I had forgotten that," and De Lamballe, who was of French extraction, sighed a sigh, such as ought to have brought the tears into the eyes of the man in the moon who was gazing unwinkingly down upon us.

"This is another victim," I concluded; "he little imagines what I am suffering at this present moment."

De Lamballe leant his elbows on the iron rails of the balcony, and his chin on his hands. He was thinking in French, for the words *mois*, and *mille francs* escaped beneath his hay-colored mustache. He was a good-looking young fellow, with a pair of very languishing brown eyes, parted his hair in the centre and wore gloves imported direct from Paris. He was not rich, but *sans peur* as regards duns, and *sans reproche* as regards birth and position; a gentleman in every act and movement.

"I'll do it," he said, half aloud. "I'll ask for a *rendezvous* in Europe, and can leave about the tenth of June."

Another man going on chance while I would have to remain in New York and grill, both mentally and physically. Bitter, bitter destiny.

"What are you two fellows doing here, laying in pneumonia?" and a hand was laid upon both of us by Dr. Dennace. The doctor was a great pet of the house, his father being the family physician, and his mother on terms of the "waxiest" intimacy with the Dulcimers. He was young and handsome in the mental qualification of the word. Tall, slim; with a head fit for the torso of a Greek statue, a calm intelligence, and although but six and twenty, was already in the running.

"I am thinking that I'm infernally sorry Miss Dulcimer is going to Europe."

"Who said so?" he asked, sharply.
 "She told me herself."
 He paused for a moment. He seemed stunned at the intelligence.
 "When does she go?"
 "On the first of June."
 "Who goes with her?"
 "The old man," and I added with a malicious grin, "O'Reilly goes after her."
 "What the deuce has O'Reilly to do with her?" he demanded, imperiously.
 "You'd better ask her."
 "I shall," and he turned upon his heel.

This man had been hit, too. It was a disease, then. Every man in the room must have had a bleeding heart beneath his shirt-bosom. The idea of separation had forced all our hands—as for myself I was out of the running, the madness of the vinous moment had left but a sort of dreaminess, backed up by a comical despair. There were moments when I laughed loudly and long at my presumptuous folly. Moments, too, when I longed to tell Annabella what an ass I had been and what a philosopher I had become.

"Let's have some champagne-cup, Pinchball," said De Lamballe, "and I'll tell you a secret."

I knew his secret, but I repaired to the region of the champagne-cup.

"I love Annabella Dulcimer," said De Lamballe, in a plaintive tone, after he had hastily emptied his tumbler twice.

"So do I," said I.

"You!" and he stepped back a pace or two, as if about to lunge at me with a rapier.

"Why not? But, bless you, I haven't a chance." And I told him what had occurred. When a man or a woman imparts a secret to me, I always place myself on a level with their confidence by confiding a secret in return. Thus I can cry quits, and no person feels overweighed.

"*Pauvre garçon*," he said.
 "Why, that is what I was going to say to you, De Lamballe."

"Ah, you doubt my chances!"

"I do."

He glanced at himself in the mirror, and smiled. I stared at my big forehead, blue, wondering eyes—I hate my own eyes, always wide open and bewildered, while if I close them ever so little I cannot see—and frowned. In that glance we cast up accounts; his was a Cr. and mine a Dr. balance.

Dennace came into the apartment with Annabella on his arm.

"And you really think of picking us up in Paris!" she exclaimed.

"I shall be at the Grand Hotel on the eighth of July," was his response, and we could see him press her glove of eighteen buttons against his ribs.

"I wish I was going to Europe," I laughed; "but I'm not."

"Why won't you come with the rest?" and, blushing deeply—for she guessed I couldn't afford it—she blundered into some meaningless observation about an old friend—how jolly—some other attraction—and nonsense of that description.

"I have no money," I said; "and if I had, I would go with the rest."

And so saying I brushed away.

It was the night of the 30th of May, the eve of the departure of the Dulcimers for Europe. I had been to No. 000 but once since the reception. Private business had carried me to Baltimore, and I got back just in time for a farewell party. O'Reilly, De Lamballe and Dennace were at their posts, and Annabella looked positively charming, attired in a quaintly cut gray traveling costume, fluffy, feathery, but fitting like one of De Lamballe's gloves.

"Ah, Mr. Pinchball, I was really afraid we were about to leave without saying good-by!" she exclaimed, holding out her graceful little hand. "I shall devote myself to you this evening, as I shall see these gentlemen t'other side of the pond," and she actually came out on the balcony with me, and we had fully fifteen minutes all alone.

A thousand minutes too few, yet ten times ten thousand too many—*ay de mi*.



MRS. FIZZLEBURY'S NEW GIRL.—"AND THERE SHE STOOD AT THE HALF-OPENED DOOR, AS OBSTINATE AS A MULE, AND AS DEAF AS AN ADDER TO THE REPEATED INVITATIONS OF THE OTHER DOMESTIC SIREN WHO, IN OCCUPYING WHAT SHE ESTEEMED TO BE HER 'HALF' OF THE LITTLE BED, AND ALMOST ENTIRELY FILLED IT."—SEE PAGE 290.

I was at the dock in due time next day, and before any of the party had arrived. The first man "on" was De Lamballe, bearing an exquisite casket—I cannot call it a box—of *bonbons*. I couldn't have afforded ten cents' worth of common candy.

"She cannot help thinking of you every time she looks at it," I said, to cheer him up, which it evidently did. Heaven knows I required a little cheering up myself.

"It is pretty," he replied, glancing at it with the air of a man who has picked the best thing in the market.

Presently Dennace put in an appearance, laden with a basket of rosebuds of every hue, from inky black to dazzling white, deftly arranged in color lines, and surrounded with a blue rim of forget-me-nots, supported by the greenest of hot-house ferns.

The chagrin of these two gentlemen, and indeed my own, may better be imagined than described, when, upon the arrival of the Dulcimer carriage, we perceived Mr. O'Reilly upon the box-seat.

"Confound his impudence!" exclaimed Dr. Dennace.

"*C'est de trop*," murmured De Lamballe, throwing his cigar into the river, and plunging to the assistance of Annabella, whose skirt had become fastened on the carriage, thereby revealing a *chausure* worthy of the Boulevard des Italiens, and such a foot and ankle!

I helped Dulcimer to alight; somehow or other I always found myself foisted upon the father when I would have much preferred the society of the daughter.

"This letter was left for you at our house, Pinchball, and I took it on"—presenting me with an epistle addressed in an unknown hand.

"I cannot conceive why any person should take the liberty of addressing me at your house, Mr. Dulcimer."

"It came from the Club."

I thrust it without opening it into my waistcoat pocket and went on board the *Germania*. In the saloon, Dennace, by order of Annabella, placed his basket of flowers opposite her position at the table.

"I have brought you something more useful than *bonbons* or flowers. A case of *very dry cham-*

pagne," said O'Reilly, "and if you feel inclined to be seasick, think of me and finish the contents of one of the bottles."

"What have I done to deserve all this?" cried Miss Dulcimer. "I think I shall return directly for the purpose of leaving again," and she began to expatiate on her recent acquisitions to a bevy of friends who buzzed around her.

"Now, gentlemen, a parting drink!" shouted Dulcimer, as if he were lashed to the rigging, and bawled against the storm. "Ahoy there, steward, a couple of bottles of champagne."

While the willing official was flying to execute the order, Dulcimer asked me if I had received bad news in the letter, as I looked so glum.

I told him I hadn't opened it, and that I was sore and sorry at parting with him and his daughter.

I lugged him in out of sheer courtesy, as it would not do to lean entirely on Annabella.

"You ought to come with us," said Dulcimer. "Plunge, for once in your life; I'd like you to be with me, Pinch."

To do Dulcimer justice, he was always very attentive to me.

"I have no money," I replied.

"Ah! it's not the money; it's that little French milliner, whose note I fetched you, ha! ha! ha!"

"A French milliner! It's from a man, sir!" and I pulled it out of my pocket, showing him the superscription.

"Oh, that's all mighty fine; how do we know what tender—"

I interrupted him at once, fearing that his daughter might overhear him, and tearing open the envelope, cried, "Read for yourself."

Two pieces of paper fell to the ground. One of them was a note for \$1,000, and the other contained the following, written in a disguised hand, "Restitution to James Corny Pinchball."

Restitution to me! I had not lost anything. There was a mistake somewhere. I was not the person intended. Perhaps it was a practical joke. No, the note was pronounced good. What could it all mean? True, some years before I had lost money at cards, but not so large a sum as this. Had I been cheated, and was this the outcome with interest added? I am dumbfounded, dazed.

"Well, are you going to throw the note into the sea, Pinchball?" asked Mr. Dulcimer.

"I must advertise it in the *Herald*, sir."

"Bosh! I'll tell you what you'll do. Just come along with us, and spend it in Europe. If that gives out, I'll be your banker."

What a plunge my heart gave. What a vista of all that was delightful, bright and worth living for. What a rush of sensation whirled through my brain. New joys, new impulses, the bleak shadows of gloom dispersing as if by an enchanter's wand, and sunlight rushing into my very soul! For an instant only, for I felt bound to let the curtain fall, to extinguish the lights, and accept the cold, pitiless reality.

"It's not mine, sir."

"Your father was in business. I often heard him say that he was robbed. This must be one of the guilty parties whose conscience smote him," urged Mr. Dulcimer. "Come here, Annabella," he added, "and try and persuade Mr. Pinchball to accept a gift which fortune has buckled on his back," and he told her the story as it stood.

"Do come, dear Mr. Pinchball," said she, placing her hand caressingly upon my arm.

I don't think I would have minded that so much, although the pressure was inconceivably delicious; but unhappily I looked at her, and—

Oh, the wrench that 'no' cost me—oh, the fierce struggle against an inward something that whispered me, "That money is not yours."

Dulcimer swore at me, called me an ass, a nincompoop, and other derisive appellations; and Annabella—

She did not press me to go, and as I took her hand at parting she said, "Perhaps you are right, after all, Mr. Pinchball; but promise to meet us when we return, won't you?"

The worry brought on by the possession of the mysterious \$1,000 bill proved more or less distracting, and served to wean my thoughts a point or two, as mariners say, from Annabella. If there is one position in this hard fact called life more soul-sickening than another, it is in being left to the humdrum, everyday routine of a colorless existence, while the girl for whom every throb of one's heart is fiercely beating goes from us, leaving us on the bleak and barren shore—alone. I felt all this anguish; I passed through this valley of desolation, and were it not for that \$1,000 bill I think I should have taken to stimulants, or to learning the flute. The flute ere now has been a source of soothing to many unhappy swains, and Tompkins, one night, in the smoking-room of the Club, most generously offered to furnish me with one. Tompkins is a good fellow; I know he felt for me during that despairing time, and I thank him from my heart to-day.

The three suitors followed Miss Dulcimer in due time, and to me remained the melancholy satisfaction of seeing them off. All promised to write, but not one of them kept tryst. The first man to



MRS. FIZZLEBURY'S NEW GIRL.—"THAT LADY ADJUSTED HER SPECTACLES, OPENED THE PAPER, FROWNED, AND LOOKED, AS ONE PUZZLED, TOWARD PARKIN. 'ONE PAIR!' SAID MRS. FIZZLEBURY, READING; 'ONE PAIR PANTALOONS, FIFTEEN DOLLARS! ONE PAIR—'"

return was Dennace. At the Club he was very moody, very silent. I asked him if he had seen the Dulcimers.

"Yes."

"In Paris?"

"Yes."

"How was Miss Dulcimer looking?"

"Hang Miss Dulcimer!" says Dennace, flinging himself into an easy-chair, and pretending to read *Punch* upside down.

This was very strange conduct on the part of Dennace, and I did not hesitate to tell him so. We became very cool towards one another after that.

O'Reilly was the next man to turn up.

"Did you see the Dulcimers?"

"Faith, I did."

"In Paris?"

"I did. I may as well tell you, Pinch"—everybody calls me Pinch; I suppose it's all right—"I popped for Annabella in the gardens of the Tool-eries, and—"

He paused. My heart ceased to beat.

"She refused me, Pinch. I went on a jamboree in Paris, and here I am. Hurroo!" he gayly exclaimed; "there's as good fish in the sea as ever were caught."

I began to wonder if Dennace shared the same fate,



MRS. FIZZLEBURY'S NEW GIRL.—"SEVERAL LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AT WHOSE HOUSES WE VISITED FROWNED OMINOUSLY AS THEY BEHELD POTT AND ME WALKING AT EITHER SIDE OF A GIGANTIC SERVANT-GIRL, WHOSE NEWSPAPER BUNDLE I WAS ACTUALLY CARRYING FOR HER."

I hinted at this to O'Reilly.
 "Not a doubt of it, Pinch. He thought he'd have a walk over, but he wasn't even placed."
 "What chance has De Lamballe?"
 "I can't say. He hadn't shown while I was in favor."
 Then De Lamballe was the coming man. How I envied him.

It was Christmas Day, and I was alone in the Club. Not a human being put in an appearance. The servant on duty seemed to pity me, and was sadly polite and attentive.

I had no invitation to dinner on this most jovial of all festive days. It was not that I was unpopular, but people imagined that I possessed home, family, friends, and that it would be but a French compliment to ask me. Among all the stools I came to the ground. I was very low—very wretched. I thought of Annabella, and wondered whether she was in Merrie England or in la belle France. I mused over the luck of De Lamballe—on the prize he had won; not the \$300,000—laugh! but the glorious girl—she, that rare and radiant maiden whom the angels called not Lenore but Annabella. I laughed myself to scorn for still clinging to her image; placing myself in the pillory of my own thoughts and pelted myself with my dead hopes. Yes, I was sick and weary upon this Christmas day, and the withered leaves of the past rustled round my aching heart.

"A letter for you, sir," said the servant, with something approaching a joyousness upon his face.

I gazed on it as it lay on the salver. The superscription was in a lady's handwriting—very fine, very elegant.

I took it up mechanically; opened it, and with a heart beating a psalm of joy, read as follows:

"No. 000 Fifth avenue,
 Christmas morning."

"MY DEAR MR. PINCHBALL: We arrived last night. Do come and dine here to-day if not too strongly engaged, and hear all our adventures. Papa is most anxious to see you."

"Yours, very sincerely,
 ANNABELLA DULCIMER."

I bounded from my chair; I danced round the room; I whooped; I yelled; I shook the servant by the hand—a fine, worthy fellow who has since told me he was perfectly wretched on my account—and hastily writing a note to Miss Dulcimer, rushed to my garret to bask in the sunshine which had suddenly burst upon the gloom of my existence.

She was still unmarried. But what was she to me.

There was a gulf between us—a river of gold, that could not be bridged by me.

She was glad to see me, a beautiful blush covering even her little shell-like ears as she gave me both her hands.

"How good of you to give up your engagement to come to us," she cried.

"I had no engagement," I said. "I was utterly forgotten."

"Not by me."

I took her hand and pressed it fervently. After a delicious conversation of some twenty minutes, during which she told me much, Dulcimer came in. His greeting was warm as usual.

How happy I felt as I led her into dinner. She leant upon my arm, not placing the tips of three fingers on the sleeve of my coat, but clasping my arm close and until her beautiful warm young form leant against mine. Mrs. Dulcimer was unwell and dined in her own apartment.

I did not miss her society.

"Well, Pinch, how did you spend that thousand dollar bill?" asked Dulcimer.

"I didn't spend it. I have it here."

"Well, you are an honest fellow."

How beautiful she looked—hawthorn blossoms on her brow, roses on her cheeks, and oh! such lustre in her glorious blue eyes!

I ventured to ask her if she had seen much of De Lamballe.

She blushed vividly as she replied
 "A good deal."

I felt ice at my heart—that blush!

"She gave him his walking-ticket," said Dulcimer, with a facetious wink.

"Oh, papa!" she expostulated.

"Yes, you did, you hussy," cried her father, treating it as a very good joke.

When Annabella left us to our wine, Dulcimer, who had been partaking very freely of champagne and other exhilarating liquids, suddenly exclaimed:

"Why don't you get married, Pinch?"

"I can scarcely afford to keep myself, to say nothing of a wife, Mr. Dulcimer."

"Why not look out for a girl with a fortune?"

"That's a mean thing to do."

"But if the gal with the fortune had a sneaking kindness for you, it wouldn't do to disappoint her."

"No girl will ever have a sneaking kindness for me," I exclaimed, ruefully.

"Perhaps not," and he indulged in a boisterous fit of laughter.

After a silence:

"Say, Pinch, what I was saying about giving three hundred thousand dollars with my daughter is all a fiction."

A fiction! A mist swam before my eyes, a thousand conflicting emotions struggled for mastery; with one bound my love for Annabella came to the front. Now I dare hope. Now I dare do all that might become a man.

"Yes, all a fiction," he continued, toying with his wine-glass, "as I mean to give her five hundred thousand."

That moment crushed my life out.

Happening to gaze upwards, I caught sight of Annabella in the mirror.

"I mean to give her five hundred thousand dollars, and—to give her to you, Pinch!"

I do not know what I said; I have no recollection of what I did; I believe I kissed Dulcimer—I know that I kissed Annabella, young, and warm, and lovely, and all my own.

It was Dulcimer who sent me the thousand dollar bill: but I need not go on.
 Such a sad Christmas morning!
 Such a glorious Christmas night!

Mrs. Fizzlebury's New Girl.

By R. J. DE CORDOVA.

THE first scene to which I would introduce the reader of this narrative is an attic floor in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fizzlebury, in Never-mind-what Street, and at no-matter-what number, at a tolerably short distance up-town in the City of New York. It was a square and very bare compartment, which had been partitioned to make two small bedrooms, evidently for the occupation of servants. The rest of the floor remained as the builders had left it, save for the presence of four old weather-beaten trunks, which looked as though they might once have been new and could tell of better days.

Of the two apartments in this attic both were rudely and sparsely, not to say coarsely, furnished. Each had its wooden bedstead and its little table with a chipped washbasin on it. The walls, bare of paper and sadly in need of paint, were dirty, and exhibited proofs that many matches had been made to contribute to the burning of the midnight oil—evidently oil, as there were no gas burners. The coverlets had the appearance of having been deprived of the attention of a laundress for many months, and the pillow-case in each room—there were two pillows on each bed but only one of them was treated to the luxury of a case—was dirty as with stains of grease. A small bit of rug, so full of holes that it was hard to tell how little of the floor it might have occupied when it was new, or how much it could ultimately occupy before it fell altogether to rags, was in one room. The floor of the other chamber was entirely bare. In the apartment which was beautified with the rug just mentioned, there was a small bit of looking-glass, held in its place against the wall by the aid of three nails; a glass of no shape known to civilized geometry, though it might have found its counterpart in any piece, taken hap-hazard out of those curious little ivory boxes containing Chinese puzzles. Both apartments were so extremely small that a servant called upon to occupy either of them might properly have regarded herself in the light of a document, to be pigeonholed at night and taken out in the morning.

The chamber which had the advantage of the rug and the looking-glass was evidently in the occupation of a woman servant, for a black dress and a bonnet were hanging on nails driven into the wall. The rugless and mirrorless apartment was without an occupant at the time of which we are speaking, and was closed and locked.

To explain why I have said "at the time of which we are speaking," it is necessary to declare at once the peculiar feature (well known to all the dwellers in the neighborhood) of these two apartments.

Mrs. Fizzlebury kept two servants—that is to say, that her residence passed at the intelligence offices for a house where two servants were kept. For consistency's sake, therefore—if for no better motive—two servants' rooms were provided. But during the fifteen years of Mrs. Fizzlebury's tenancy of that house, both servants' rooms had never been known to be occupied at one and the same time. The reason whereof was that Mrs. Fizzlebury so frequently changed her servants that when she had a cook she was always without a housemaid, and was on the lookout for one. And before she had acquired a housemaid the cook had either been dismissed or had given in her resignation and left, of her own sweet will, the Fizzlebury service. Why this adverse destiny hung continually over the Fizzlebury mansion, confusing the Fizzlebury breakfasts and ruining the Fizzlebury dinners, leaving the house and furniture unclean and untidy, and in short throwing everything into disorder; souring the temper of Mr. Fizzlebury, hardening the heart of Mrs. Fizzlebury and worrying Miss Fizzlebury out of much of the romance affected by that young lady, must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER II.—THE FIZZLEBURY FAMILY.

MRS. FIZZLEBURY was a remarkably fine woman; with a remarkably fine husband whom she "ordered about" in their domestic relations and worried—not to say badgered—in their daily life; and a remarkably fine daughter who, Mrs. Fizzlebury said, "had an eye that showed that she was born to command." Mrs. Fizzlebury was, likewise, one of that very numerous class of women who aim at so playing the cards of society as that they shall be regarded as very fashionable persons, without going to much expense; though they are ready to go to any amount of trouble to entitle them to that distinction. To this end, Mrs. Fizzlebury gave, twice every season, two grand parties, whereto very many rich people were invited of whom few came, and to which very few poor relations were asked, of whom all came. At these splendid "reunions," as Mrs. Fizzlebury loved to call them (though she understood no more of French than the little dog which she ostentatiously carried when she took her airings in the hired carriage with a driver in livery-stable livery, all buttons and a bad hat). At these reunions, there was always "supper" skillfully arranged to look very grand and hospitable, but very weak in material and soon consumed. Nobody was ever known to have an indigestion or a headache caused by a Fizzlebury supper.

In all this Mrs. Fizzlebury was to the fashionable world what the frog in the fable was to the ox. She was ready and willing to try, even to bursting, to obtain a status in what persons who are in society call "society," but she had not yet succeeded.

Mr. Fizzlebury, who was simply the clerk in attendance on his wife, we might say her cashier,

paying her bills, and running on errands, sometimes to the butcher's or grocer's, and always to the intelligence office, was likewise a very fine man, and a highly pious man, being a churchwarden, and occasionally letting his name appear in the newspapers in lists of collections for charitable, and especially for missionary, purposes. He was to the general body of Christian philanthropists what the tadpole is to the frog; he might be one of them as soon as he found the grace to be so, but he had not yet found the grace.

Miss Fizzlebury was called a remarkably fine girl by her flatterers; who might have been sincere if they really liked a tall, meagre, osseous, high-shouldered figure with thin, compressed lips, sandy hair, and that eye (it was a gray one and so was its fellow) which showed, according to her mamma, that Miss Fizzlebury was "born to command."

The Fizzlebury family were, therefore—as was plain to be seen and understood by everybody—a remarkably fine family. But—

But they could not keep a servant longer than a week or ten days. Why such was the case I cannot explain, and if I could I would be afraid to do so; I can only repeat what was said, on both sides, on this subject.

Mrs. Fizzlebury said that she could not account for it; except that "the servants in this country are the most horrid, dirty, untruthful, dishonest, uncivil, treacherous, ungrateful wretches, my dear, that it is possible to imagine."

I know of families who, starting on the principle that even servants have feelings like other Christians; that they require more food than persons who do not perform manual labor; that they can be sensible of a kindness, can resent an injury or an insult; contrive to keep their servants for years, and to make them attached to their home and its members.

But Mrs. Fizzlebury, who was a very fine woman, and Mr. Fizzlebury, who was a remarkably pious and charitable man, started with servants on a totally different theory. These excellent and fashionable persons regarded servants as animals with preposterous appetites which it was not wise to indulge; as creatures who, being ignorant and holding a station which offered no advantages whatever to the Fizzlebury family, must, from the outset, be regarded with suspicion and made to understand that everything said by them would be received with doubt until it could be proved by subsequent investigation. In short, the position of a servant was of itself *prima facie* evidence that it demanded vigilance on the part of the mistress to prevent the milk from being drunk like water and then watered like strong drink; the cold meat, bread, sugar, coffee and tea from being surreptitiously abstracted for the benefit of relatives outside; and the coal from being disposed of with the swill, to the dishonest soap-fat man, before the family came down in the morning. Thus the idea of a servant's presuming to respect the comforts of a moderately well-furnished bedroom, or being entitled to such luxuries as a servants' bath-room or a clean table-cloth at meals or to reasonably frequent changes of bed-linen, was scouted as "simply ridiculous."

"My dear," Mrs. Fizzlebury has been heard to say to one of her fashionable friends, "my dear, they are just like the brutes of the field that we read of in the Scriptures. They cannot appreciate a kindness. I gave that rubbishy Maria one of my old collars last Monday, and she left me on the Tuesday. You cannot do anything for them. They are so ungrateful. And liars! oh!"

The servants, on the other hand, told an entirely different story. They said that the suppers at Mrs. Fizzlebury's parties might look very splendid, eked out as they were with cheap wine from which the labels had been carefully removed before the bottles were set on the table; but that the food, all the rest of the year, was very scant, and what might be called "very short commons"; that the tea and sugar which Mrs. Fizzlebury gave out on Saturday night with the admonition that they must serve for the coming week, were insufficient for three days, but that the supply was never increased; that the help was treated as if they were dogs, and, to sum up, that the house was the meanest, stingiest, and most miserable in all the City of New York.

Accordingly, a servant would seldom remain many days, and could leave only after endless haggling concerning the exact amount of wages due, how much was to be deducted for the breakages and forfeitures for not having remained longer, accompanied sometimes by the calling in of a policeman to turn out the refractory servant with less money than she ought to have had; with other and similar meannesses for which some remarkably fine families are unenviably notorious. And thus it was that the house got a bad name at the intelligence offices, and that Mrs. Fizzlebury was regarded as a highly cantankerous old girl who was always wanting a new girl.

CHAPTER III.—THE OPENING SCENE IN THE ATTIC.

THE reader will now return with me to the attic mentioned in the first chapter, for the purpose of being introduced to the new girl, whose very brief residence in Mrs. Fizzlebury's house is to be described in these pages.

No servant had ever entered that service so unwillingly or had stayed in it so short a time (the new girl was only twenty-eight hours in the Hotel Fizzlebury), or was so glad to leave it.

I have, then, the privilege of presenting the new girl to you, as she stood, in an undecided attitude and with a troubled and even disdainful and angry countenance, outside the bedroom which had the advantage of the rug and the bit of looking-glass. The other pigeon-hole was closed and locked, and we shall have no further business with that department.

The door of the more favored room already occupied by the cook of the establishment, was half-open; and, if you had stood there, good reader, as the new girl did, you would have remarked, as she did, that there came from it an unpleasant and musty odor, as of long imprisoned clothing originally laid in a damp condition. It may have been for this reason, or from some equally powerful

motive, that the new girl, instead of entering the room which she was to share with the cook, and retiring for the night as any other new girl should and probably would have done, remained outside the door with an anxious, irritated and even terrified countenance, betokening, to say the least, uneasiness of mind.

She was a somewhat masculine woman was the new girl, with cunning, spiteful eyes, and a rough face that might have belonged to a closely shaved man.

And there she stood at the half-opened door as obstinate as a mule, and as deaf as an adder to the repeated invitations of the other domestic siren who, in occupying what she esteemed to be her "half" of the little bed, almost entirely filled it.

"Whist now!" said cook, "what are ye doin'?" "Ain't ye comin' to bed?" It's rale cold here anyhow, wid the door open?"

"Why can't I have the other room to myself?" inquired the new girl.

"Didn't I tell you already down-stairs?" replied cook. "Didn't I tell you there's a rat, and goodness knows what besides, dead somewhere in the flooring, and the smell's so awful bad that you couldn't bear yourself in it at all? I can smell it in here this minute, and the room's locked up till the smell goes away entirely, so you'll have to sleep in here wid me, and I wish you'd come in at once and let me shut the door, for I'm shivering now."

The new girl vouchsafed no answer and moved not a step.

"I'm only two days in the house myself," pursued the cook, speaking to herself, "and I don't think I'll stop here long, anyway. This is the most inconvenient pippen of a room I was ever in in my life, and the bed's that hard—as hard as owd cider. It's your first night here, and I don't believe you'll sleep much at all, at all. But say? Are you goin' to stay there all night, or are you comin' to bed? I want to shut the door."

"You can shut the door as you please," said the new girl at length, with a curious accent, which was neither Irish, German, English nor American, and with a gruff voice (another unwomanly feature), and in a quick, impatient and somewhat spiteful manner (a perfectly womanly feature). "You can shut the door as you please; I'm not coming into the room!"

"Eh! what?" cried cook, rising to a sitting posture in the bed and turning half round, a movement which caused so much creaking from the bedstead as to impress the new girl with the idea that the entire contrivance, cook and all, must inevitably tumble to pieces. "Eh! what's that you say?—you're not comin' into the room to-night?"

"I am not," responded the new girl, if possible more testily than before.

"The saints be good to us!" exclaimed cook. "What's that for?" and there was a pause. "Is it because I'm Irish that you don't want to sleep wid me?"

"Oh, don't be a fool," responded the new girl—her temper evidently rising; "I'm Irish myself; but I'm not coming into the room because I don't want to."

"Holy mother!" cried cook, again turning round in the bed, to the audibly imminent danger of utterly destroying the ancient structure beneath her. "Holy mother! Maybe it's because I'm Catholic that you won't come to bed?"

"Oh, go to—!" began the new girl, in answer, but suddenly correcting herself. "Shut up and mind your own business, will you? I'm Catholic myself; but the priest has put a penance on me that I'm not to sleep in a bed for two months."

"Oh, galory!" cried cook, devoutly crossing herself, and falling back to a lying posture in the bed, whereupon the bedstead so groaned and creaked under the weight of that lady that its remaining whole could be regarded only as a miracle—"oh, galory! are you goin' to sleep out there on the cold floor here in the dead of Winter?"

"I am," replied the new girl, saying which the bony, brawny young woman strode like a dangerous giant into the little apartment, pulled a quilt off the now recumbent form of the sleepy cook, causing another series of awful groans from the bedstead, laid the coverlet down on the floor outside in the company of the trunks, wrapped herself in that dirty covering, and, to all appearances, went to sleep.

How it fell to Mrs. Fizzlebury's lot to acquire the services of this remarkably ungainly, awkward, ugly and ill-tempered girl will be explained in the chapter after the next.

CHAPTER IV.—MR. OTTO POTTHAUSEN.

MANY years have not elapsed since the memorable season when the Fizzlebury family spent a few of the hottest weeks of the year at Lake Mahopac. And it can scarcely be necessary to say much here of that fashionable watering-place. Everybody knows that while the Summer company is usually slow and solemn at Niagara; highly respectable but excessively old-fogy at Sharon; fast and sufficiently mixed to make it somewhat dappled at Saratoga; very much of *polloi* and so much mixed that one might almost call it, in local language, "snarled" at Long Branch; and quiet, but delightfully social and genial, at that sweet American Eden known as Lake George; the company at Lake Mahopac combines the characteristics of all the other watering-places.

Thither, however, went the Fizzlebury family—father, mother and daughter; and thither also, among thousands of others, went a young gentleman who was evidently a person of means. He drove a splendid team in a costly dogcart; he dressed superbly and in pretty good taste—for Lake Mahopac; he kept a boat on the lake; he played on the piano pretty well, and sang English and German ballads fairly—for an amateur; he frequently made to his lady acquaintances such innocent presents as the philopona permitted and mammas could not object to; he was admirable in the waltz, laudably persevering in the galop, and indefatigable in the German; and his name was Otto Potthausen.

And this Mr. Otto Potthausen fell in love with rawboned Miss Arabella Fizzlebury, whose eye

"showed that she was born to command."

It was rare fun for the bystanders to see how

tenderly he looked into that eye when, he sang, with so much feeling and sentiment that many believed him to be on the point of breaking into tears, "Du hast die schönsten Augen." And Arabella went so near falling in love with him as to excite wonder that when he made his final shake at "Mein liebes, was willst du noch mehr?" she did not plumpily answer "Potthausen." All of which was not only very delightful, but was even a little exciting for Pott (as his friends were accustomed to call him in the way of brevity), until at length society at the Lake began to talk about it, and to say that if Miss Fizzlebury was really "born to command"—for that little joke had got wind in some of the hotels—she would, in all probability, shortly command Mr. Potthausen.

Mr. Fizzlebury was not a whit displeased at this aspect of affairs. The rule of his house was similar to the rule of the "Fossil" Club to which he belonged—namely, that "poor men were not wanted there;" and he was rather tickled with the idea that a wealthy young fellow was likely to propose to his daughter. Nevertheless, Mrs. Fizzlebury, who fully shared her husband's hopes in this respect, adopted the tactics usual with that description of mamma known as the maternal intriguer. She pretended not to be aware that Mr. Potthausen was particularly attentive to her daughter, and she took her husband and child away with her from the Lake, in order to let "the world" of that little place suppose that papa and mamma did not care to do anything that might be supposed to foster the attachment. Mrs. Fizzlebury accordingly gave Mr. Potthausen a cordial, but by no means pressing, invitation to visit the family in the Autumn, and gracefully retired to the city residence.

Mr. Potthausen did make several visits to the Fizzlebury family after they had but a short time returned to the city; and he must have been rather demonstrative of his affection for Miss Arabella, seeing that, soon after my return to town, I received a visit one morning from a highly starched and very dignified gentleman, who looked as though he might recently have swallowed a gingham umbrella with the case on—so straight and puffed-up was his appearance—and who announced himself as "Mr. Eliphalet Fizzlebury."

He came, he said, "to inquire into the standing and means of Mr. Otto Potthausen, who has been—ah—paying visits at—ah—my house, and who seems to have intentions touching—hem!—my family in a manner—hem!—not now necessary further to particularize. He has spoken of you to my—ah—my daughter, in fact, as a friend, and I would be obliged for any information on the subject."

Now, Pott was a good fellow, in the social application of this somewhat common phrase; and I frankly told Mr. Fizzlebury all that I knew concerning that young gentleman. Said that I did not regard Mr. Potthausen as a very learned party; but that I knew him to be an amiable, honorable, generous, good tempered, one-bottle man, whom it was a pleasure to know, and whose friendship it was a privilege to obtain.

"Is he," inquired Mr. Fizzlebury, "is he—ah—wealthy?—that is to say, has he any means?" "Not much of his own that I know of," I answered; "but it is generally believed that his father is reasonably wealthy, and it is within my knowledge that he is extremely generous to his son."

"Ah! then," said Mr. Fizzlebury, "his father is living?"

"Oh, yes."

"In this city?"

"Certainly," said I, "in the Eighth Avenue."

There was a curious expression on Mr. Fizzlebury's countenance when I mentioned the Eighth Avenue as the residence of Papa Potthausen. It might have meant consternation, and it might have meant disgust, or it might have been induced by a mixture of both.

"In the Eighth Avenue!" exclaimed Mr. Fizzlebury.

"Precisely," said I.

"What, then," inquired Mr. Fizzlebury—"excuse me, but what, then, may be the elder Potthausen's profession, or business?"

"What, old Potthausen?" said I. "Don't you know? I thought that everybody had heard of old Potthausen. He is and has been for ever so many years at the old-established place in the Eighth Avenue. He is a baker."

Now Mr. Fizzlebury had for many years been a carriage-builder, in which capacity he had not shrunk from building carts, and, I believe, even wheelbarrows. But he had retired from business, and, as a retired capitalist, naturally looked down on bakers, butchers, and other persons whose ideas were so groveling as to lead them to be still industrious. So that when his aristocratic mind was informed that the elder Mr. Potthausen was *only* a baker, Mr. Fizzlebury exclaimed with dignity "A baker!" and took up his hat and cane for an immediate departure.

"Yes, a baker," said I, as Mr. Fizzlebury, pale and evidently horrified, prepared to leave me. "And a very excellent baker, too, I assure you." Mr. Fizzlebury was going without even saying "good-morning." I saw at once that he was a fully developed "snob," and, unwilling to spare him, I bawled to the retreating old fool, pursuing him even to the landing outside to finish what I had to say: "I cannot boast of his German bread, because I never eat that kind of stuff, and don't like it; nor of his twists, which are rather softer than suits me; but his French bread is excellent, and his rolls and *petits pains* are delicious."

Mr. Fizzlebury had decamped, and I returned to my easy-chair and laughed till I fairly wept.

It appeared, however, that I had unwittingly done young Potthausen much mischief by my too frank revelations to Mr. Fizzlebury. A few days afterward Pott, accompanied by our mutual friend, Fred Parkin, who was something in the Custom House, came to consult me concerning the totally unexpected and most deliberate insult which had been put upon Mr. Potthausen, junior, by the Fizzlebury family.

Pott said that Mr. Fizzlebury was a purse-proud aristocrat, who, after inviting him and receiving several of his visits, had recently left a message for him with the servant to the effect that the

family would in future be very happy to take their daily supply of bread from his father, but that the visits of the son could no longer be tolerated.

Under these circumstances, Pott, who had vainly sought effective counsel from Parkin—a most agreeable young fellow, but utterly bankrupt in the commodity of advice—had come to consult me.

I recommended him to write to the young lady and request her to say frankly if the conduct of her parents in this matter met with her approval. But Pott said that he had written to her many letters—as many as three in one day—and that he was certain that they were intercepted and had not been allowed to reach her. He had even laid in wait, at the corner grocery for the Fizzlebury servant, and had presented her with a fee of five dollars as a recompense for delivering a letter into Miss Arabella's own hands; but he had since learned that the servant had been discharged that same day, and turned out of the house, through the agency of a policeman, and—as Pott believed—had not had an opportunity of delivering the letter.

"Suppose," I suggested, "suppose you try another five-dollar bill on the new servant."

"My dear friend," responded Pott, "it would be of no use in the world. I tried that this very morning; but they are always changing girls in that house, and seldom or never have a servant. When I rang the kitchen-bell this morning, expecting to see the cook answer it, Mrs. Fizzlebury herself came to the door—frightening me almost out of my wits—and slammed it in my face. I went directly up to the corner grocery, and was there informed that there were not any servants in the Fizzlebury establishment, the two girls having left, the evening before, in a condition of remarkable emaciation from the want of food."

CHAPTER V.—POTTHAUSEN, PARKIN & CO. IN THE "INTELLIGENCE OFFICE" BUSINESS.

"THEN there are not any servants, at present, in the Fizzlebury mansion?" said I.

"So it would appear," said Pott, somewhat equivocally; "only a cook; and she cannot be suborned, because she does not go out at all. Old Fizzlebury does the marketing and the errands, I suppose."

"Then they want a girl now?" I inquired.

"Of course they do," replied Pott. "They are always wanting a girl."

"Well, then, my dear Pott," said I, "the means of communicating with the young lady are at once apparent. They know you, and you can't go there. Mr. Fizzlebury knows me, for he was at my apartments a few days ago, and I cannot go there. Now, Parkin, do they know you?"

"They never saw me in their lives," answered Parkin.

"You do not visit them?"

"Not I," replied Parkin.

"Did you never come in contact with Mr. Fizzlebury in the way of business?"

"Never," said Parkin. "Being in the Custom House, as you are aware, I never go out in the business parts of the city, and, as Mr. Fizzlebury never has anything to do in the Custom House, he would not know me from Adam."

"Then, Parkin, my boy," I exclaimed, "as Nathan the Prophet said unto David, 'Thou art the man.' The moment has arrived when you can render yourself immortal by performing an act of devoted friendship. Pott, communicate immediately to Parkin your message for the young lady. Send directly to the customer's on the avenue for the complete costume of an Hibernian Biddy. Send me a shaving-brush and a razor, and I will at once shave Parkin, and he shall call this evening provided with a character which I will write for him, and he shall hire himself to Mrs. Fizzlebury in the capacity of a chambermaid, in which position he will remain in that family a quarter or half an hour, or as long as may be necessary for the delivery of your message and the obtaining of an answer. His interview with that young lady will enable you to know her sentiments by eight o'clock this evening."

Pott's countenance brightened at the idea, which, I rather flatter myself, was an excellent one. Parkin's face, on the contrary, was pale, and exhibited evidence of great perturbation of mind. He was a fellow of a quick sense of humor; but he was afflicted with a feeling not common in the New York Custom House—he was bashful.

"Do you mean to say," cried Parkin, in alarm, "that I am to go to Mrs. Fizzlebury's as a new girl?"

"You undoubtedly are," said I, peremptorily. "You have guessed it rightly the first time; and uncommonly well you will look when dressed for the character."

"What, with a mustache?" exclaimed Parkin.

"A mustache!" said I. "Certainly not. I am about to take that off. It isn't much of a mustache to part with, you know, Parkin," (and really it was not; a little, fluffy thing, and nothing to speak of in society, though probably what is vulgarly called a "big thing" in the Custom House.) "You will have that taken off, Parkin; it doesn't amount to anything, you know. And, after all, it will only be a masquerade of an hour at the utmost. There is nothing in it. I would do it myself if I were not known to Mr. Fizzlebury, and—"

In short, we overruled Parkin's objections by loud talking, and refusing to listen to his excuses. We expatiated largely on the proof which he was about to render of his friendly devotion to Potthausen, which we greatly applauded. I shaved him carefully, if not so closely as an expert might have done, after which solemn performance we dined sumptuously at Pott's expense and in his apartment. The hired costume arrived at half-past four, and by five o'clock we had Parkin elegantly rigged out in servant's costume, with a red wig and an old bonnet on him; making up for him the indispensable "bundle," composed of his coat, waistcoat and trousers, enveloped in two copies of the New York Herald, after transferring his watch and money to the pockets of the cotton gown now upon his person.

Pott and I then did our best to put Parkin

through his paces, which were much too energetic for his costume, and to drill him in the tactics becoming his assumed position. Our greatest difficulty was in the proper toning down of his voice to the feminine key. He invariably began very well, in a fine falsetto, in the sentences prescribed for repetition in our improvised rehearsal, but before he finished a sentence his own voice would lapse again into the hoarse gruffness of a Custom House official replying to troublesome inquiries from a member of the stupid and importunate public.

However, we had him drilled and fairly ready for our enterprise by about half-past five o'clock, at which hour we endeavored to start him on his friendly mission. But all our persuasion failed to prevail on Parkin to go out into the street, appareled as he was, before dark. He did not care, he said, whether the place was filled or not, before he arrived at Mrs. Fizzlebury's house. "I am making an awful fool of myself," said Parkin, "and for no other man than Pott would I have consented to sacrifice my mustache, which I have been so long and so carefully rearing. But, if I go any further in this most foolish and ridiculous affair, I must be permitted to have my own way in it; and my own way most decidedly is, not for any consideration that can be named, to appear in the street with this absurd costume on, before it is quite dark. If the situation be already taken by some other girl—"

Up to this point we had fairly kept our countenances; but when Parkin so far merged his identity in his own proper character, as to speak of another girl as his alternative, Pott and I could not contain ourselves any longer, but broke into uncontrollable laughter.

Parkin ground his teeth, and continued his remarks with a determination of manner worthy of a collector of customs. "I say again, if the situation be already filled, I shall be sorry—indeed, I shall be very glad—for you fellows are taking advantage of my good nature and my unfortunate inability to say 'no,' even when I positively ought to say 'no' to my best friend, to make a perfect fool of me; a dolt—an ass—that's what I am!"

We did all we could to console Parkin with the reflection that his masquerade and the duty which he had so nobly undertaken would not occupy more than an hour. But Parkin was deaf to our remarks, and almost burst into tears when in his angry strides he chanced to pass the looking-glass.

However, as there was nothing to do but to wait, we waited until it was quite dark, and then Parkin consented to go out. And such, indeed, was our own want of sagacity, that, unmindful of appearances and unable to dissociate in our minds the absurd figure before us from our friend, Fred Parkin, we actually sallied forth to accompany him to the near neighborhood of Mrs. Fizzlebury's residence. We sorely repented this lack of discretion when we met on our way three several parties of ladies and gentlemen at whose houses we visited, and who frowned ominously as they beheld Pott and me walking at either side of a gigantic servant-girl, whose newspaper bundle I was actually carrying for her.

To confess the truth, we were both heartily ashamed of the company of our poor victim before we had gone a hundred yards with him, and were very glad indeed when, arriving at the corner which had been agreed upon as our stopping-place, we bade him God-speed and left him to perform the remainder of his mission unaided and alone.

There were tears in Pott's honest eyes at this proof of Parkin's devotional sacrifice on the altar of friendship, as he remarked while watching the new girl's monstrous strides down the street, "He's a good fellow, now, and I'm sure it's most kind of him, and I shall never forget his friendship. But, as you say, it will be only half an hour's inconvenience for him, and when he comes back we'll drink a bottle of champagne with him, and I declare I don't know of anything that he asked me to do that I wouldn't readily do for him."

(To be continued in No. 1162 of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.)

The Captain's Christmas Wedding.

By Walter Edgar McCann,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHURCH CLOCK SECRET," ETC.

IT is within a week of Christmas. Mildred Bassenthwaite, from the famous eminence which, as all tourists who have visited that part of the country know, commands Wymondley and its large sweep of splendid acres, with the background of forest and mountain, utters a little sigh as she looks down. She is mistress, she is sole mistress, of all this, and of I know not of how much wealth besides; and yet there is something strangely pathetic in this scrutiny of her possessions and in that deep-drawn respiration. The omnipresence of suffering is not a new theme. This young lady who has so much wealth and has exercised its power, and who, one would think, should not have a care, has yet her secret unhappiness, the torture of which is cruel at times and as much as human nature can bear.

Desolate and chill is the Winter evening, and the last faint glow of the rich sunset is dying out of the western skies, and overhead the crows, with melancholy cawing and in wide ranks, fly homeward to their dormitories in the distant woods.

Miss Bassenthwaite is not alone. A few yards away stands shivering, with one foot on a large stone, a tall, slight old lady, dressed in black silk.

"Oh! Aunt Don," calls the young girl, suddenly rousing from her reverie, "isn't it growing very late?"

Miss Donica Torrington, kindest of old maids, looks up from some object she has been attentively observing in the winding lane below, and, with a rather thoughtful and puzzled expression on her pleasant face, approaches.

"Very late, and we must go."

"Stop. Look at Wymondley now—never so pretty as in that light! The old chimneys and the gray gables peeping through the foliage. Such melancholy and seclusion! Dear old Wymondley! mine no more after this week, Aunt Donica. I bring Captain Daryl a handsome Christmas gift," says Miss Mildred smiling sadly, "to make up for my own want of beauty."

Plain, cruelly plain, is this great heiress; very homely some call her, with her small gray eyes, and coarse, even masculine features, in which there is, in certain moods, something sinister and very nearly repulsive. Suffering and resentment have, perhaps, had their share in tracing these forbidding lines, for Miss Bassenthwaite is perfectly aware of her want of beauty, as she has just owned, and broods every moment of her life upon that dismal fact.

"Captain Daryl is too sensible, I hope, to care about mere beauty," observes Miss Donica, with a rather stern-closing of the lips. "Expression and—a—animation, and that kind of thing, are much more likely to please a husband."

"But you know what Shakespeare says, dear, 'the eye must be fed,' and it is so true! When I think of the contrast I shudder. He is so divinely handsome!"

"So he is; the very handsomest man in the whole world, I believe."

"And I the plainest woman! Oh, Aunt Don, how can I hope to keep his love?" She clasps her hands almost in a sort of agony.

"There, dear, don't let us talk of it. I dare say you will make a very happy couple. Don't you notice something in the road there?" asks the old lady, peering downward anxiously. "I have been watching it for the last ten minutes and can't make out what it is."

"I see—something red—scarlet," replies the young lady, whose gray eyes, though small and uninteresting, are quite keen and serviceable. "It is a woman with a red cloak on. How very odd that she should stand there alone so long, isn't it? I can make her out very distinctly, now, and she seems lost and bewildered. Let us go down to her."

Miss Donica, whose curiosity and interest, already piqued, are much heightened by these revelations, agrees with alacrity, and, walking swiftly, the two descend to where that strange, motionless figure is barely visible.

More in evidence it becomes as they approach, and a very singular apparition is presently disclosed—a tall, dark, and extremely beautiful woman, wearing a scarlet cloak. Lithe and slender she is, with wild, starry eyes, and a face in which there is something peculiar and *funeata*.

"Why do you stand here, my good woman?" asks Donica, rather abruptly, and, perhaps a little suspiciously. "You must be very cold without any wrap but that thin cloak. Are you not well?"

"I have lost my way," replies the woman, in a low, rich voice, shuddering; "I am cold—so cold!"

"And hungry, I dare say," adds practical Donica, with a sharp nod. "I suppose you have no idea of remaining here all night?"

"I—I don't know where to go."

Mildred and her aunt consult. Who is this odd person with the beautiful, tawny face and lustrous black eyes? How curiously romantic and picturesque she looks in her scarlet cloak!

"Well, you must come with us," says Donica, with her customary decision, at the close of the whispered confab with her niece.

The stranger demurs, but they are resolute, and the end is that she walks beside them homeward. Mrs. Linnett, the stout housekeeper, is a good deal puzzled at the introduction of this new guest at Wymondley, and with a rather dry hospitality takes charge of her.

Although the Christmas wedding of handsome Captain Daryl with Miss Mildred Bassenthwaite is still a week off, the house has already begun to fill, and a very pleasant company are enjoying these country quarters. The three Miss Fentons, with their small noses, distinguished by the family leaning to redness, and bilious complexions, have arrived, and are to figure as bridesmaids. Old Doctor Scorton and his conceited and rather brilliant and sarcastic nephew, Lionel Denbigh, have also made their appearance. Mr. Peterfield, the family lawyer, is here, and stout Doctor Prawley, the clergyman, who is a relative and under engagement to perform the marriage-service. Other connections of the family and friends, whose names I know not, also the shed the light of their presence within the sombre confines of the old mansion.

Some of these guests are, I am afraid, rather fond of gossip and satire, and speculate freely upon the approaching wedding. Nobody can pretend that Miss Mildred Bassenthwaite has any attractions but her money, although in her two seasons she has been very much pursued. Is, then, the affection of the remarkably handsome Captain Daryl altogether disinterested? There are, alas! stories about this Adonis. Very wild he has been, say those who should know—a rake and a gambler, and something perhaps worse—and people have been shaking their heads over his wooing ever since it began. Mr. Peterfield, who has been a kind of father to the young lady most concerned, had a hard battle with her, but came off discomfited. It is simply fate—she is infatuated with her handsome and penniless soldier, and resigned to take the future on risk.

Cards, music and the dance make a pleasant evening, and about nine Mildred steals away from her guests and seeks out Mrs. Linnett and the black-eyed stranger. That sad and mysterious beauty has by this time really distracted good Mrs. Linnett, who is a somewhat inquisitive lady, and has been putting her unwelcome guest through a very unsatisfactory catechism, now at length exhausted.

"Have you found out anything about her?" inquired Mildred, in a whisper, drawing the housekeeper apart, while the stranger, sitting by the fire, eyes the stranger with a stern and haughty stare.

"She do puzzle me, miss," says Mrs. Linnett. "I'm only sure of one thing—she's a gypsy; but she seems kind 'o lady-like, and, though she's as poor as can be, she's just as proud as if she owned

Wymondley and everybody in it. I think she has had trouble in her time; but she won't say so—won't say anything—not even her name."

Mildred went over and took the stranger's hand. "You must stay with us to-night, and to-morrow—as long as you please. You must be very tired, and what shall we call you? You interest me very much."

"Charmian Trent."

"Charmian? That is a very pretty name, and a little peculiar, isn't it? Well, Charmian, you will remain here to-night, won't you? You look so worn and fatigued. You shall have a room all to yourself, and shall be treated as a guest."

Mrs. Linnett coughed uncomfortably, and held her head higher at this proposition, for in her secret heart she had her own notions about this handsome person, and also about the propriety of admitting unknown people to Wymondley on the terms suggested. But Mildred was firm. As she now chatted gently with the stranger, her interest in her unaccountably deepened. She had never seen any one half so beautiful—and was she also refined?—and then so sad, haughty and unfathomable.

We know misfortune intuitively, and shun or pity it as our temperaments dispose, and here was that aspect of mingled pride and wretchedness which is something so infinitely touching, and always appealing. This Charmian Trent—if such was her name—accepted charity as a favor granted, not given, and yet somehow did not repel sympathy—invited it, rather—and, in short, was growing into a very pleasing enigma, such as Miss Bassenthwaite did not anticipate being puzzled about when the episode of finding her, half frozen and lost, in the road, began.

Next day, Mildred saw more of her odd guest. Yes; it was quite true; she was a gypsy, and admitted it; but that was all. Upon every other point she was reticent, and though Mildred questioned her with a very adroit circumspection, the young lady was quite baffled.

The snow is crisp, and the ice as iron; but the sun will surely melt it. Kindness and sympathy found a way at last to the heart of the gypsy girl. A gentle lady, unspoiled by wealth, was Mildred Bassenthwaite; perhaps the secret torture of mortification at the ugliness with which nature had branded her made her compassionate; but at all events she took a wonderful interest in this wandering Egyptian, and in a day or two almost loved her.

Charmian's shyness wore off, and she allowed herself to be introduced among those guests more *en règle* than herself. Donica Torrington disapproved, and some others thought it scandalous, and old Mrs. Protherwood threatened to go home; but after all, as my fat friend, Doctor Scorton, argued one evening in his quarters, with his particular friends and some capital whisky and cigars—was there in this anything more than a whim, a caprice? Mildred had always been a little eccentric, *queer*, by Jove, at times; to be so confoundingly ugly will make a girl morbid, you know; and the whole thing had best be passed over unnoticed. Christmas was nearer by four days. Nearly all who were expected had arrived except Captain Daryl himself. Outside, the snow was deep and still falling; within, crowded parlors, light, warmth and enjoyment. Laughing, chatting, and busy in all sorts of ways are these good people; the elders chiefly at cards, the younger disposed about variously; but those of a flirting turn of mind chiefly in corners and other secluded places, and Mr. Lionel Denbigh, who avows that he plays nothing but waltzes, usefully employed in that kind of performance at the piano.

It is very shocking, I know; but Charmian Trent is present, in obedience to Mildred's entreaty, and the two are seated together, Mildred on an ottoman, and the wise and beautiful daughter of Egypt is about to reveal her future fortune by the lines upon her palm.

"Cross it with silver," smiles the sibyl.

Mildred does so, and presents her hand, and Charmian, still smiling, looks down at it, and instantly her dark cheek pales.

"Stay!" cries Mildred, fiercely, white as death, in a sharp, cutting whisper. "Misery for me—you see it in my hand. Oh, my God, girl, you might have seen it in my wickedly ugly face! Why did He give you such beauty—a stroller, an outcast of the peoples of the earth—and me—the heiress, the chosen—the hideous mask I wear!"

"Miss Mildred," said the gypsy, startled, and with a rising flush visible through her tawny skin, "you insult me. Don't envy me my beauty. Know this—beauty will be the cause of misfortune to both you and your husband. You laugh at my fortune-telling, perhaps—the lines in your hand have told me—and you will see."

"Yes, he is beautiful, Charmian," said Mildred, calming herself, but laughing a little hysterically. "I expect my life with him to be torture—nothing else, nothing else. But there, forgive me, and tell me why I should not envy you your beauty."

handsome, this man—deep, dreamy, violet eyes, the complexion of a girl—silken hair and mustache—the form of a Greek god. He stepped in, smiling, and kissed his betrothed, and she turned to present him, when, on a sudden, Captain Daryl's gaze suddenly was smitten with the sight of Charmian Trent.

A society man, the Captain was not easily put out; but now he looked at the gypsy with a dark and frightened stare, as a man might look at a tiger suddenly encountered in his path and prepared to spring. His very ill-bred stare was returned with one of haughty and listless indifference—not a rebuke, but something too much like contempt.

But he recovered, and so was presented, and presently he and his affianced had quite a chat together on the sofa. Dry work for the Captain, I dare say, for he got up soon, and circulated else-

surprises; but this, I confess, knocks me over quite. How did you find out this place, I say?"

"By accident."

"Do they know who you are? I rather think not," he sneered. "It is only reasonable to suppose your presence here denotes mischief."

"Vivian, you must give me back my little girl. Ever since you cast me off and took her away from me I have been searching for you. You must give her back to me."

"I shall do no such thing. I've no idea of allowing her to be brought up among a band of strolling vagabonds. As for you, the very wisest thing you can do will be to return to them and resume your fortune-telling, horse-stealing, or whatever it is."

"What on earth can you have to say to Miss Trent, Captain Daryl, that is so absorbing?" called out Mildred, a very marked uneasiness in her tone—so marked that several looked up.

"We are discussing the origin and history of the nomadic tribes on the earth," replied the Captain, agreeably.

"You cast me off to marry this rich young lady, Vivian," said Charmian. "You do not love her—only her money—but she adores you. I can prevent the marriage. I have already told her that I had been betrayed, but she does not know by whom. She pities me, and as wildly as she loves you, she could yet give you up if she learned the truth. You see fate has been very kind—nothing but a single accident has thrown me here—I hold all the cards; would I not be a fool to play them?"

"By Jove, you talk like an actress in a melodrama! A little experience in fashionable society has done wonders for my Charmian. Well, if Miss Bassenthwaite has been so kind to you, it would be but a poor return to break off her marriage with the man she, as you say, adores. I have always heard your noble race had a rather quixotic sense of gratitude, and can't be persuaded to steal a fellow's poultry who has given them the use of his haystack."

"There are other revenges. Give me back my little girl or you may regret it."

"Captain," calls Miss Bassenthwaite, interrupting, "Miss Fenton is anxious to hear you sing. She told me to ask you."

He rises instantly and signifies his pleasure, and so the next moment is at the piano, delivering with wonderful skill the serenade from "Don Pasquale."

But no more that night he talks with Charmian Trent, and next day also he avoids her. He is not much more with his betrothed. It is such a bore to talk with a plain woman when there are so many very pretty ones available, and as for love-making, all that will keep very well for the honeymoon; and so the Captain, as his marriage draws nearer, still relishes the little remainder of his liberty.

And the next day is Christmas Eve. Captain Daryl is guilty of an atrocious scandal—he takes a long walk with Charmian over the snow to Knowlton churchyard to read the epitaphs, forsooth! The dowagers bridle and grow red in the face, the old gentlemen call him "a scamp, sir," and Mildred is wretched.

"That baggage has led him into a flirtation," says Aunt Don, severely. "You should never have brought her here. I really never heard of such a thing—a gypsy tramp, of whom one knows nothing, brought in and made a—made an equal of! But so it is—all women will fall in love with his pretty face, and he will always be ready with an unlimited amount of encouragement."

In a short while the pair were discovered returning, the lady walking very fast, staring luridly at the glistening snow, and her carriage as suggestive of swagger as feminine grace will permit; the gentleman serenely twirling his mustache, and apparently not much more agitated than so simple an expedition as he had been upon called for.

Capital spirits he was in at dinner. He told several good stories, was bright and satirical, put down that conceited fellow Denbigh more than once, and certainly did not neglect the wine. Mildred kept her eyes fixed in his direction. He had



THE CAPTAIN'S CHRISTMAS WEDDING.—"AS HE LOUNGED ABOUT THE ROOM, PAUSING SOMETIMES TO TALK TO A PRETTY GIRL, BENDING OVER HER AND POURING INTO HER EAR THE MELTING MUSIC OF HIS FLATTERY, HE, WATCHING ELSEWHERE, WAS IN HIS TURN WATCHED."

"Because it has been my ruin. Miss Mildred, I have done you a great wrong. I wished to tell you, but was so afraid you would despise me. You have called me an outcast; it is so—even from my own people. I have been betrayed"—she spoke softly and hung her head, an image of beautiful shame and penitence.

"Oh, Charmian!" cried Mildred, shocked in spite of herself. "I never thought that, of all things."

"Yes. I have told it and am better. I must leave your house this night, for I am no longer fit to stay."

"You shall not go, Charmian. What you have told me I will repeat to no one. But you—"

At this point there was the sound of sleigh bells outside, and after a minute a sharp and merry jingle at the door-bell. Mildred Bassenthwaite rose to her feet, her hand upon her heart, and wild pleasure dancing in her eyes. It was he.

Another minute, and before she could get to the door to welcome him, in he came. Strangely

where about the room, all the while keeping the corner of his eye upon the beautiful creature who sat, like Cleopatra, alone over by the window.

Captain Daryl was one of those men, such as most of us have seen, who can scarcely meet any woman without conveying in the manner, attitude and voice, an indescribable air of flirtation. As he lounged about the room, pausing sometimes to talk to a pretty girl, bending over her and pouring into her ear the melting music of his flattery, he, watching elsewhere, was in his turn watched.

If these manoeuvres were part of a concerted plan, it succeeded; for by a little adroit management he found himself in a little while by the side of Charmian Trent. His first words to her were, "I'm afraid, rather coarse."

"What the deuce are you doing here?" he asked, smiling, but a strange glow of repressed rage in the depths of his violet eyes.

"I have the privilege, Mr. Darnley."

"Mr. Darnley—bosh! You have heard my real name. Well, I fancied I was past the age of



A CHRISTMAS DREAM.—DRAWN BY KATE GREENAWAY.

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never looked handsomer, had never appeared to more advantage.

A rather quiet evening followed. Charmian Trent appeared; but the flirtation was apparently over; for the captain resolutely avoided her, and, like a truly penitent sinner, made amends for his morning's folly by very deep devotion at the proper shrine in the evening. He talked more with his affianced than at any time since his arrival—doubtless spoke love, and certainly looked it.

And so in due course the company took their candles and trooped away to their bedrooms. Captain Daryl, and one or two other fellows, old and young, had, *sub rosa*, a weed and a "nip" in old Scorton's chamber before retiring, and my friend the doctor, who, after his tankard, which, I must say, was always modest, was given to joking, poked a little fun at the handsome soldier.

"What a pretty fury the gypsy was in to-night, Daryl! It was lucky there wasn't a paper-knife or pair of scissors about, or I think we should have had a tragedy."

The captain pooh-poohed all this with the serene indifference of a man who has had abundant experience with the jealous sex, and presently, with a yawn, went away to his own quarters. A pleasant fire was burning there, and, though awfully sleepy, he undressed lazily and slowly. As he took off his cravat he stood before the glass, and, with a listless simper, studied the reflection of his handsome image in its depths.

"If I am not the handsomest man that ever lived," he said, and added, with bated breath, a wicked imprecation, at which, when it had passed his lips, he himself was a little appalled.

And so at last he extinguished his light and got into bed, and in a few minutes was asleep.

Two hours must have passed when he was awakened by that uncomfortable sense of danger which is experienced by the suspected presence of some one in the room. He drowsily called out, "Who's there?" and sat up, trying to pierce the profound darkness; but there was no reply, and he was about to lie down again, when his alert ear caught the sound of breathing. The captain in his time had seen outpost service on the frontier, and had so trained his faculties as to have them at command instantly; and now he sprang out of bed, and had taken a step across the floor when he pushed against something—unmistakably a human figure—and grappled with it. The struggle lasted but a second; in the next, something was thrown into his face which made him cry out with anguish and release his hold upon his mysterious assailant. The burning pain of this liquid rendered him very nearly frantic. Frenzied with his torment and his rage, he heard his enemy moving away, and staggered in pursuit. The door leading into the corridor opened, and in the dim light he saw the tall form of Charmian Trent; and then it closed with a crash, and he fell to the floor in a swoon.

Christmas morning—Captain Daryl and Mildred Bassenthwaite's wedding-day. Up came Mr. Gridley, the butler, to the captain's room with that gentleman's shaving-water. It was not exactly Gridley's business; but then, is not Christmas the season of gifts and other pleasant things? and would not, by to-morrow, the captain be master of Wymondley, with the absolute control of its retainers? In a sad plight honest Gridley found his prospective master—lying on the floor, groaning with torture, his face a mass of blisters.

The alarm was given. In came Scorton, M. D., and others, and the general agitation may be fancied. Scorton got the captain to bed, turned out intruders, and sent post-haste for Doctor Langham, the local practitioner, and for certain drugs, and then put some shrewd questions to the patient.

"I know what you mean," whispered Daryl, faintly. "It occurred here about two or three o'clock, and was done by Charmian Trent. She came to my room expressly for the purpose, and not for any other reason. For God's sake stop the pain; I have fainted twice, I think!"

"The shock, you see," said Scorton, concerned and pallid. "The woman's gone, I believe; Gridley says no one has seen her this morning. I—I wish that fellow would come with the things—and—a—this—the wedding, you know; you are not in a state, you see; and I'm afraid you're in for a—siege. Lord, what an unfortunate thing!"

"You—you don't think I am maimed for life, I hope?" inquired the captain, with a sudden and very stern anxiety.

"Well—a—acid, you know," stammered Scorton. "Your eyes are all right, thank heaven—and—"

"Tell me the truth," said Daryl, seizing his wrist.

"There—a—there may be a mark or so; nothing serious, let us hope—and drink this. The shock has been severer than I could have believed."

"Mildred—does she know?"

Mrs. Linnett came in crying, and, when she saw the captain, uttered a little shriek, and for a minute hysterics seemed imminent. But when she had grown a little calmer her news was unfolded. Everybody in the house knew of the accident; word had been sent to the police in the neighboring town; Mildred was nearly wild; all things in disorder.

Doctor Langham and his medicines arrived, and for an hour he was closeted with the patient and old Scorton, and at length came the bulletin that the captain's pain had left him, that his eyesight was certainly safe, and that matters were a much better aspect than at first.

How about the wedding? To the general amazement Mildred insisted that it should take place. Listen to what her friends called reason—one's own view is, of course, always the only reasonable one—she would not. And so it followed that on this beautiful Christmas day, which had promised to be so merry, a marriage took place in Captain Daryl's bedchamber like one in *extremis*. A strange, sad scene it was: the bridegroom sitting up, his face covered with bandages; the bride standing at his bedside, sobbing convulsively; all the ladies of the company in tears; the gentlemen pale and depressed; and good Doctor Prowley, with broken voice, making Vivian Daryl and Mildred Bassenthwaite man and wife until death should them part.

And so, this done, the pleasant party at those hospitable country quarters suddenly broke up, and their Christmas festivities came to an untimely end.

About a month afterwards, Captain Daryl was well enough to take his wife upon their honeymoon

tour. Rather oddly they chose to leave Wymondley by night. To everybody's surprise, they went to Europe. I have a letter by me from Miss Caroline Mannering, who met them unexpectedly in Paris, in which that charming young lady says:

"The Daryls have resolutely avoided every one but to-day I accidentally caught a glimpse of the captain, and now all is explained. You know how handsome he was. He is to-day the ugliest man in Europe, a perfect fright. His face is a mass of terrible scars, revolting to look on, and when I saw him I almost screamed."

Captain Daryl, I have learned, was very anxious to seek out and bring to justice, Charmian Trent; but his wife would not listen to it. In fact, she had grown more eccentric than ever in her ways, and the couple were a source of wonder wherever they went. She seemed to love her captain with an adoration bordering upon lunacy. At times she was seized with strange fits of gloom, when for days she would sit in her room, crying ceaselessly; at other periods she would be extravagantly gay, devouring the unfortunate captain with kisses and saying: "Now you are uglier than myself, darling, and no one will love you but me;" at which the captain looked by no means consoled.

On a sudden, one day at Nice, Mrs. Daryl fell down in a fit, and when the doctors revived her, she ordered them out of the room and called her husband to her side. She apparently had some direction to give him, in case of her death; but on second thoughts seemed to have postponed it, and very unluckily, for that night she had another convulsion and died.

So now Captain Daryl was a widower, and master of all his late wife's great wealth. After a brief period of mourning, he attempted to re-enter society. Somehow the man's hideously scarred face made him shunned. Women shuddered in his presence, and children ran away, crying with terror. Savage with mortification, he left Europe and returned to his own country, with the single purpose in his heart of finding out, if possible, the fiend who had ruined him, and punishing her as she deserved.

For a year he traveled, visiting every band of gypsies he could hear of, but never learning anything of Charmian Trent. Another Christmas was nigh, and he was in the South. He was returning to his hotel from a long ride, when in a field but a short distance away, he noticed, with a thrill at his heart, the familiar evidences of a gypsy bivouac—the gayly painted wagons, the corral of horses, the swarthy and stalwart men lounging about in every attitude of laziness, the withered crones by the camp-fires, the dark and handsome girls.

He approached and entered the encampment, under fire of all those weird black eyes, and one who was apparently the chief, a strong fellow of forty, came forward, anticipating, I presume, a horse-trade; for a man with such a malign countenance as Captain Daryl's must have long ago given up any hope of luck in love from his planet.

"Is there a woman in your party by the name of Charmian Trent?" asked Daryl, as he had asked in many a camp before.

He had scarcely spoken when the curtain of a tent was pulled aside and a tall, beautiful woman stepped forth, Charmian Trent, and but little changed.

Daryl in his astonishment was speechless, Charmian Trent burst into tears.

He got off his horse and strode towards her. "You cry at the sight of my face, do you?" he said, hoarse with passion. "You may well weep at your damnable work, you hag!"

"I did not do it, Vivian," she said. "You did not do it!" and he laughed with a kind of hysterical irony.

"Your wife did it."

"Do not wrong the memory of the woman who was so kind to you, with that infernal calumny. She is dead."

"She did it, I swear, Vivian," said Charmian, with uplifted hand and a choking sob. In her voice and manner, there was that accent of truth which appalled him. "I knew there was danger for you that night and I could not sleep. I rose from my bed to go to you and give you warning, and when I reached your door I heard your cry, and met your wife, white and haggard—*mad!*—coming out. What she had done I knew not; but my heart told me it was something terrible. She had befriended me, and I was determined to save her, and, Vivian, I closed the door against you that you might not see her face, and you saw only mine."

He felt that this was the truth; for it explained all that happened afterwards—his wife's strange periods of gloom or fondness—her insanity—for such it was—the secret she wished to disclose on her death-bed; but would not, for fear he might hate her memory when she was gone.

"She was mad with a jealous love, Vivian. You must know. What motive had I? You had told me where to find my little girl on that very morning, when we visited Knowlton churchyard. Oh! it was your unhappy wife, Vivian, and not I; for I loved you too much, and loved you differently?"

When he parted with Charmian for the last time, Captain Daryl returned to Wymondley and lived a life of strict, and indeed, morbid seclusion. Some rather queer stories were told of his caprices which, perhaps, are scarcely worth repeating; nor are they, in fact, quite authentic. Brooding over the past, he lived in his solitude for several years, and finally died suddenly, like his wife, of aneurism of the heart.

Christmas at Valley Forge.

By EDWARD EVERETT HALE,

AUTHOR OF "A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY," ETC.

CHAPTER I.—THANKSGIVING DAY.

"THERE!" said Elam Ford, swinging himself down from a heavy wooden table on which he had been standing. "I'll stomp all the dogs in the haven to push her open now!" and the squad of lazy soldiers around him rang applause and approval of the success of an enterprise for which none but Elam had the spirit.

"Elam means to have one hull turkey for himself, and he's afraid the dogs will get part of his share."

"Or the cats!" growled another of the squad, and a general laugh saluted the jest, which contained an allusion to some wretched mess anecdote.

Nobody laughs so easily as boys or girls off duty.

"Well," said Elam, "I said last night, I did, ses I, when old spitfire there come sneaking up from the cellar and poked his nose in and then come in himself, I says, ses I, I did, 'I'll be darned if I don't get the trunnion of the gun we bust and hang it fur a weight to that 'ere dor, and I'll be darned if I lie here all night and have dogs and cats and weasels and kittens and puppies smellin' over my bunk, 'cos Enos or Jotham or Micah, or any of you fellers, was so stoopid you could not latch the cellar-door.' I said I would, and I've gone and done it."

And with one last, loving touch he tested his handiwork.

He swung the door open, and the pulley weight of the heavy trunnion banged it too, with force that shook the whole cabin, from ground-sill to roof-tree.

It was a wretched-hole at the best. It was a log cabin which this squad of men had built for themselves as the Winter came on.

The English army, under Howe, was taking its ease in Philadelphia; and Washington, on the Wissahickon Creek and the Schuylkill River, was watching them, and occasionally making a stroke at a foraging party.

The particular company with which we are concerned had been sent up to inspect a ford of the larger river, and eventually to throw up a redoubt which should command it.

They had made themselves as comfortable as they could by building this cabin for their quarters.

In the hole below, dignified by the name of "cellar" or "suller," as the reader chooses to take the English or the Yankee pronunciation, they had such stores of potatoes, of cabbages, and of salt pork as the commissariat or their own vigor ous foraging provided.

Bunks, in which they slept, were arranged around the walls; a fixed table, with benches on each side, occupied the middle of the cabin, and a fire, which would have served Cyclops, blazed at one end.

"We can't do nothin' more about dinner," said Elam, who was evidently the most energetic person in the party, "till 'Siah's off and Michael."

And after looking out at the open door, he turned back a little dissatisfied.

"In theyre, pinkin' and foolin', in powderin' their hair, most likely, for the General's party and the women folks there. There's that poor mare looks 'zif she'd freeze, while Michael's puttin' more pomatum on his queue."

Another general guffaw saluted this irreverent allusion to an officer.

For "Josiah" and "Michael," as Elam called them, were the Captain and Lieutenant in command of the outpost.

They were old companions in 'school and in play of the men whom they were now supposed to command.

It was by a severe strain that the traditional decencies of English and German armies had been so far preserved that they had a different cabin from those occupied by the men.

It was with the greatest difficulty that the men were held to any tokens of outward respect on drill or parade.

When they were by themselves the officers were plain "Michael" and "Josiah" again.

To-day they were going to eat their Thanksgiving dinner with General Knox at his headquarters, and at this moment the mice were waiting for the cats to go away, that their own Thanksgiving might begin.

The Thanksgiving day was, in fact, appointed a week later than that.

They had not to wait long.

In a few minutes the jingle of sleighbells told that the toilets of the officers were completed, and in a moment more Captain Josiah Marion knocked, and without waiting an answer came in on the men.

The tokens of respect which met him were of the slightest.

But such tokens there were.

"Well, boys," he said, "it's a spare Thanksgiving any of us will have at best; but I've brought you over all the rum we have left, and if you take it all, it will not hurt you; you're welcome. You got the big rooster? I wish there were anything else. But you must make the junk do for filling. You Cape Codders, I suppose, like a Cape turkey best. A pleasant night to you all. You know Silas is on duty. Don't make them wait for the relief, but I shall be back before then. Good-night to you."

"Good-night, good-night, sir." And the captain joined his companions, and was off.

No sooner had the door closed than Elam swung back his cellar-door and vanished, only to reappear with both hands full, and a very droll imitation of the captain's manner:

"Wal, boys; it's a spare Thanksgiving any of us will have at best," he said. "But I've brought you this old gobbler; and these three little biddies, and this here goose, and a pair of ducks; that was all strutting and parading last evenin' down to the old Dutchman's at the crossing. The Dutchman did not know it was Thanksgiving day; so he did not know what they was good for. But I know'd mighty well, only I thort I'd let him keep 'em for us till we was ready. Now, here's my ramrod, and that goes through gobblers and quack-quacks. Who gives his ramrod for little quack here? not so little either, and for young cut—cut—ke dar cut—"

There was no lack of ramrods, nor of cooks to tend the roast.

By preconcerted invitation, the men from the captain's quarters and those from another cabin in the hollow soon joined. And what with the captain's rum and old Freinhardt's poultry, the revel of the Thanksgiving evening went forward with as much plenty, if not as much elegance, as would

have been found that night in any household in New England.

"Half an hour yet before the relief," cried Micah Stearns. "There'll be no need of turning out till then. Gin us another song, Dot."

And Dot wet his whistle for the tenth time, and sang—

"'Twas up to Uncle Tracy's,
The fifth of November,
Last Thanksgiving night,
As I very well remember.
And there we had a frolic,
A frolic indeed;
And we drank ten full glasses
Of good aniseed."

"And there was Mr. Jones,
And there was Perez Drew,
And there was Seth Gilout,
And Seth Thomas too.
And there were too many,
Too many for to name;
And by-and-by I'll tell you how
We carried on the game."

"We carried on the game,
Till 'twas late in the night;
And one pretty girl
Almost lost her eyesight—
No wonder—no wonder,
No wonder indeed,
For she drank ten full glasses
Of good aniseed!"

A heavy knock at the door broke in on the closing words of the song, and again Captain Marvin threw it open.

"That's right, boys; make a jolly time of it. I looked in to see if you were all ready for the relief. But I see nobody's asleep here."

And he did his best not to see the carcasses of the turkey, the ducks, and the chickens, which lay in horrible disorder on the table.

Elam, with a wholly unnatural effort at military etiquette, sprang to his feet, and saluted. "All right, captain. I command the relief myself, and I'm sober—sober—sober, captain, as the clock."

"I see you are," said the captain, laughing, and turning away as quickly as he could from the scene he was sorry he had looked in upon.

"Lights and fire must be out, after the relief marches, boys. Parade at sunrise, you know," and he was gone.

Alas! the provant was all gone, too; the result of Elam's injudicious foraging. The last drop of the rum had gone to wet Micah Stearns's whistle and the company were fain to break up, when a bugle from below announced that the officer on duty expected the relief.

The men put on such apologies for overcoats as they had.

The guests of the cabin bade good night. Elam gave the word, "Forward, march," and the Thanksgiving revel was ended.

CHAPTER II.—RECOMPENSE.

THE morning parade of the company was steady enough. It was not till Saturday morning that compensation came. We are never so stiff the day after a rough ride as we are on the second day.

On Saturday morning every man who could be spared from the little outpost was marched a mile and a half or more, to brigade headquarters, nobody knew why. The men, as they marched, even guessed that some sudden dash at one of Howe's outposts might be proposed. But nobody could guess why the regular arrangements for the relief and duty on the picket-lines were broken up. Broken up they were; and, if anybody had noticed, the whole party of Thanksgiving revelers were present at the parade of the brigade.

The parade went off sufficiently well, though some people's hands were cold with handling musket-butts in the frosty air. But, after the parade, the men were held while a brigade General Order was read. The major-general commanding that division had been appealed to by old Freinhardt, whose poultry-yard had been stripped. It was at the very moment when they were deciding at headquarters whether the whole army should not be brought up for the Winter to Valley Forge. It was particularly desirable, therefore, that the few farmers in that region should be conciliated. And so it was that one example of great severity had to be made, of the frolic which might have been winked at otherwise, of Elam Ford and the other boys. Much of this was set forth in the rather cumbrous General Order, which ended by ordering six of those soldiers under arrest for a week, and by directing that Sergeant Ford should be reduced to the ranks, and be kept under arrest for a month at that. The Order went so far as to say, that, but for this act of disobedience, he would have been promoted to a lieutenantancy on the first of the year. Now a lieutenantancy was exactly what Elam had been looking forward to, with good reason, ever since they crossed the North River.

The rage of the whole company knew no bounds. Marvin and Guthrie—who were both very fond of Elam—were as sorry as anybody could be, and had been at work, if he had but known it, all the day before, pleading with the colonel, and been doing their best with General Glover at brigade headquarters. But nothing would do. The Dutchman must be conciliated. The whole army was probably to move at once up the river and take post at Valley Forge, and there must be an example made, and poor Elam was the example. Sour and cross, the company marched back to its quarters, the men under arrest following behind. Sour and cross they spent the days, not to say, the weeks which followed. When the whole army marched across to join them, from the Wissahickon and up from below, that changed the externals of things a little, but what are the externals? At heart, every man, whether under arrest or no, was enraged. All the revelers were as guilty as Elam, and those not punished used to go to the captain and lieutenant, Marvin and Guthrie, and to say so, with a freedom which in any other service would have been severely punished; but which in the democratic New England regiments of those days was universal. Yet Marvin and Guthrie could not even whisper that the punishment had been inflicted in face of their eager protest. The tie which held privates with the army was none too strong at best, and it was not for them to loosen the cords of discipline.

Readers must not suppose that these men who were under arrest were chained, like Baron Trenck, by wrists and ankles, to blocks of stone in underground dungeons. The resources of Valley Forge were not equal to such confinement, had there been cruelty enough to desire it, as there was not. It was expected that they would report at the guard-house several times in a day. It was also understood that they would not appear at guard mounting and parade. But not a man of them even affected to be pleased by this relaxation from duty. They were disgraced before the brigade, and it was a disgrace they did not deserve, they said. As for military duty, that was what they had come for, and they thought it no hardship. Indeed, with the scanty resources of their outpost, the poor occupation of drill and guard-mounting was more a pleasure than toil.

They hung about, grumbling. Elam's punishment lasted three weeks longer than the others. For a month he had nothing to do. To pass away the time he amused himself with old Freinhardt's children, not because they were his enemy's children, but because they were somebody's children. Not one of Freinhardt's family could speak a word of English, and Elam did not know that he could speak a word of German. But he soon found out that "come here," with a red apple, presented by the speaker, meant much the same to a little German tot, as if he had said "komm hier," and he and the army of brats became good friends. The heavy teams and the artillery sleds hauling stones up from the Schuylkill had made a very tempting coast, and the bigger boys had availed themselves of the facilities thus given, to make a crowd of what the Canadians call "toboggans," and of little "jumpers," to borrow a Virginian phrase. But Elam and Micah astonished them by a Yankee combination of two very large sleds, in the genuine pattern of the largest of "double-runners" of the New England hills. And, when a party of twenty were piled upon this craft and it shot down near half a mile upon the frozen river, even grumpy old Freinhardt himself would take out his eternal pipe, long enough to express his approbation. There was not a woman in his household who did not, sooner or later, take a ride down the hill on the "John Hancock" as the rude vehicle was called. And Gottfried, the big boy, whom Elam secretly meant to enlist into his company in the Spring, was soon as skillful as Elam himself in all the mysteries of steering. For other amusement Elam had skating, in which he was an adept, from old Merrimac experience, and Gottfried stealthily purveyed a pair of Dutch skates from the garret of Freinhardt's house, to the soldier's cabin for Elam's personal use. Little did the "old Dutchman," as he was always called, though he never was in Holland—little did he suppose that his arch-enemy was gliding on his own fleet irons, when he had to grumble out his confession that the Yankee's skates seemed to answer as well as if they had been made in Amsterdam.

None the less, in all these sports, was Elam disgusted; a little disgusted with himself, perhaps, but thoroughly enraged with his colonel, and with the brigadier. Such was his condition at bottom. Superficially, at top, his rage was that he should be "fooling away his time." For to the genuine Yankee, eager of purpose, and with a quite definite conviction that Almighty God has left to him, personally, the greater share of the direction of the world, mere recreation, after the third day, always becomes an insufferable bore. He despises any person whom he sees engaging in it. He despises himself equally if circumstances have forced him into it.

Meanwhile, the entire neighborhood of Valley Forge assumed unwonted activity. The whole army under Washington had been ordered thither, to hold a position where General Howe, the English commander, could be watched through the Winter. Axes were served out, and heavy timber, as the men were to build cabins for themselves. The cabin which Elam's men had built, some weeks before, when they were first bidden to hold this bridge over the Schuylkill, became a pattern much studied and much admired. Wood there was in plenty, for the hills were covered with it. But there was little plenty of anything else. Still the army was in good spirits, and did not yet know what was before it, as that weary Winter should pass by. The regiment to which Marvin's company belonged was already so well hatted, that no great change was made in their quarters. And Elam and his companions were free to give such counsel and assistance as they might to working parties who had not had their experience.

CHAPTER III.—SURPRISE.

SO matters ground along for the first three weeks of poor Elam Ford's disgrace. The other privates tried to be specially kind to him, but their clumsy efforts in that line seemed only to remind him of his misfortune. His superior officers in the immediate command—especially Marvin and Guthrie—also tried to be kind to him, but their kindness he could and would resent as almost an insult. Not that he once suspected Captain Marvin of having "peached" upon him. He knew perfectly well that it was by other testimony that he had been convicted at brigade headquarters of the onslaught on the Dutchman's henyard. But he was angry that these men, who were of his own time, old schoolmates and allies, had not used their influence to save him. For little did he know that they had both strained all the means of grace they had to the very utmost.

At last the month of "arrest" was nearly over. But the last days were, perhaps, the worst of all. Every cabin near him was finished, and he had no excuse for lending a hand among working-parties. The very worst day came, when Marvin and Guthrie again ordered round the sleigh which was the only vehicle for the use of the whole post, and with the poor old mare that had taken them to Thanksgiving at General Glover's, drove off to a grand Christmas dinner which was given by Smallwood, of the Maryland line. Elam was quite alone as he saw them go. All of his messmates were on picket duty that day. He would have been, were it not for his cursed arrest. He crawled up into his bunk, pulled over him the wretched blanket

which was his only night-covering, turned his face from the light, and did his best to sleep.

He had not lain there five minutes before the door of the cabin was flung open, and, to Elam's surprise, a crowd of men thronged in, voluble with oaths and ejaculations. An instant taught him, though; as he lay, he could see that these were a squad of English dragoons, who had stealthily crossed the little patch from the woods behind, where they had been waiting till the detail of Americans should move down the hill, and now, so soon as their backs were turned, had taken possession of the cabin.

"All gone!" said the officer in command, with more oaths than need be repeated here. "So much the better. Every shot saved is so much time gained. A good fire they have left us—no thanks to them. William, take the boys down the hill. Ferguson will stop every blackguard in the other barracks here; do you join his men at the fork; wait for the party of the Queen's at the barn in the hollow, and I will find you there. I'll just warm my fingers here, and make sure about the lane road."

As he spoke, he drew a bit of tracing-paper from his pocket, opened it on the table, and began to study the map upon it, as he clapped his cold hands together. The subaltern touched his hat and withdrew the men.

The orders given were enough to show to Elam in the instant what was the design; and a design wonderfully well-laid it was. Relying on the Christmas festivities of the Pennsylvania brigades as confidently as Washington, a year before, had relied on those of the Hessians, the English colonel, who had, by a bold push, ridden round the American army with two companies of dragoons, had broken them into small squads, who had worked their way through the woods, and were now on the eve of reunion quite inside the only picket lines held by the Americans on that side of Valley Forge which was most distant from Philadelphia. Had the roads been hard, a ten minutes' gallop would take them to the very house where thirty of the most distinguished officers of Washington's right wing were dining. As it was, they were expecting to arrive there just after dark, and in the confusion of such an onslaught, they would have a good chance to make prizes. All this passed through Elam Ford's mind in an instant. He sickened as he thought of the treachery which had taught them where to strike their blow. He did not dare to move, lest he should lose every chance of rendering service, yet he should die, he knew, if he did nothing.

From this distress, however, a single minute relieved him. The English captain, perfectly unconscious in the darkness of the cabin that he was not alone, turned to the fire to warm his hands over the embers, and lifting a heavy log, flung it across the bricks which served as andirons. Availing himself of this noise, and the movement of the other, Elam turned instantly on his elbow, saw the situation at once, sprang from the bunk upon his feet behind the other, and, taking him wholly unawares, pushed him down as he bent over into the very fireplace which he was feeding. Then, without pausing a moment, Elam drew open the cellar door, sprang down the rough steps into the darkness, gave one wrench at this ladder, enough to loosen it and throw it upon the ground, and then pushed open a bulkhead at a passage where they were used to haul in such stores as were kept there. He could hear the oaths and cries of the officer above him, and he knew that at best his time was very short. He was even glad to see no movement at the other cabin, and to hear no sounds from below; although these were indications that the raiding party was already some minutes on its way towards its quarry.

He was closely pursued, as he knew that he should be, but fortunately for him the pursuit was arrested as suddenly as it began. The English captain recovered himself from his fall, not without scorchings and burnings, which at another time he would have thought horrible, but which at this instant did not hinder him for a moment. The bang of Elam's door had taught him only too well the way of his escape, and it required but a minute to find, in the gathering darkness, the trick of opening it. He swung it back and boldly sprang down as the other had done, but to a longer leap. He fell, badly bruised, upon the rough stepladder, and as he tried to extricate himself found his hands and arms fettered by the accident that his dragoon's cloak, trailing behind him, had caught upon something in the floor above, and was already firmly secured by the heavy swing of Elam's door. At first the poor captain had a feeling that both above and below some bear or panther had pounced upon him; for the English army was full of imagined terrors of the wilderness; and in a dark hole like this, alone on a Winter's night, even a man of his experience resorted to the stories which told of them. But in an instant more he made sure that nobody was pinioning him but himself. He did not, however, so quickly find how he was to be unpinioned. His left arm, which lay under him, refused so stubbornly to come the rescue that he was afraid it was broken. His right arm was all twisted out of its place by the tight strain of the cloak upon it, and, when he brought round the burned fingers to the clasp which bound this at his throat, it seemed only too clear that this was in one of those tangles which even the saints call "infernal," and that no power which those poor, blistered fingers could bring upon it would make it yield.

With every effort which he made to rise upon his knees, the steps of the ladder beneath him seemed to trip him and tumble him over, and every such effort taught him that his left arm was broken, or dislocated at the shoulder. Once and again, indeed, in such efforts, he thought he should be choked by the bearing of the throat-latch, which would not be undone. He was in utter darkness, because Elam had closed the opening through which he had rushed into the open air. It was thus that the unfortunate officer lost the precious minutes in which alone his pursuit of Elam would have been effective.

These minutes, indeed, were very few. Before two minutes were past, Elam Ford was half a mile away, safe on the firm ice of the

Schuylkill. If, as he left the cabin, he had the slightest doubt as to his course, that doubt was solved for him as, with his first glance around he saw the bulky form of the "John Hancock" by the roadway, where Gottfried and the other boys had left her when summoned home by the horn which called them to their Christmas dinner. Had Pegasus, full-winged, stood before him, or a champing war-horse pawed to do him service, Elam would not have been so well pleased. For, indeed, here was a charger whose paces he understood better than those of hippogriff or destrier. In half a minute he had drawn the "John Hancock" to the brow of the hill. Less than half a minute was enough to roll and throw upon the hinder sled a heavy log, which the men had hauled thus far to cut and split for firing. Then Elam started the huge machine, ran an instant by its side, flung himself upon the foremost sled with the two steering-spikes which had lain upon it, and with a speed such as race-horse never rivalled, dashed down the icy hill.

Colonel Belford's line of mounted pickets had been thrown out with true military precision, to make sure that no straggler of the Rebels carried any news of the English advance down his well-worn way. In that line of pickets was a York-shireman, as near-sighted as the average York-shireman, and not badly mounted. He sat upon his horse, wondering how long it might be before the main party should return, and with sufficient care watching the roadway in the gathering twilight.

The sun was already down. But what care could arrest the flight or the headlong charge of the well-directed "John Hancock"? Nay, what horse of the best of training would stand without flinching the sight of such an apparition? As Elam dashed by on his lightning track, the trooper's horse shied wildly, and although the man fired his pistol, he fired it at nothing, and the only effect of the discharge was to startle the American pickets, unconscious till this moment, that they had been wholly outflanked, and that an enemy was inside their lines.

Elam Ford rushed on, on his unobstructed way. From the crest where he started to the smooth ice of the river is perhaps half a mile. And for such a vehicle, well steered, thirty seconds was enough for the descent. Plunging upon the glaring ice, Elam threw his whole weight upon the sharp steering-pike, which he drove into the smooth surface on his larboard side. The huge sledge obeyed its helm, and, after one critical moment, when it seemed tottering as if to turn over, it dashed down the river. It shot forward nearly half a mile more before it lost the impulse of the hill. So soon as its motion slackened, Elam drew himself up, loosened from one of the posts of the sled a pair of skates which hung there, and, before the "John Hancock" had well stopped, he had strapped them upon his feet, and was ready for his further journey.

Just as he stood upon the ice, against the white snow of the hill, he saw another moving figure coming fearlessly towards him. Elam could not avoid the stranger if he would, and in an instant, was glad he had made no effort to, when he recognized the friendly voice of Gottfried. "I shouldn't 'a been more tickled," said Elam, afterwards, "had it been an angel from heaven." To send Gottfried to the guard-house above, and warn Lieutenant Faunce of the enemy's position, while he himself carried the alarm to the Christmas party of officers below—if yet there were time—this was his effort. But how to send a messenger who does not speak one's language? Elam seized that intuition of speaking loudly and slowly, which has served so many wayfaring men, though fools, ever since the days of Babel. He pointed to the block-house, which was full in sight, though near a mile up the river, and cried, "Faunce! Faunce!" "Ja wohl! ja wohl," cried the willing Gottfried, "Faunce, Faunce." "A hundred troopers!" screamed poor Elam, so loudly, that even Faunce himself could have heard were he listening. "Ja wohl, ja wohl," said Gottfried, again, "hundert truppen, hundert truppen, ich verstehe." "Smallwood," screamed Elam, pointing now down the river. "Ja wohl, Smallwood," said the other, to whom that general's name and person were perfectly well known; and, had Elam written him a dispatch of forty folios, he could not have understood better than he did, that a force of a hundred cavalry was threatening Smallwood, and that he was to carry that news to Faunce's little outpost. He dashed up the river faster than a bird. Never had he skated on such an errand, or with such a motive. The little mile between him and the outpost was nothing; in as little time as one describes it, he had passed over the distance on the river, and as he clambered up the low bank was within call of Faunce's puzzled men. The bugler had already given the alarm. The pickets were falling in from every side, leaving only a line of observation. Lieutenant Faunce himself, perplexed, ran down to the bank to receive Gottfried's message. The boy was too well known in the whole company to be doubted. There were men who well understood him when he spoke in his own language, and his perfectly coherent story was enough to induce the lieutenant to lead the greater part of his detachment, by the quickest pace possible, through the heavy snow by the river road, direct to the Forge in the Valley.

CHAPTER IV.—A DINNER PARTY.

MEANWHILE, at the little central village of the improvised town, General Smallwood had collected his Christmas party. It was made up on no principle of rank; but, by his inviting gentlemen whom he had met in the severe service in the last year, whatever the State line to which they belonged, Smallwood pleased himself with the thought that he was thus bringing together officers from all parts of the country. Marvin had been his especial favorite, since he covered the rear in that sharp skirmish in Greenwood, the day of the fatal battle of Brooklyn. And Smallwood was never more pleased—though he was certainly surprised—than when the young New Englander told him, as he entered the room, that this was the first Christmas dinner he had ever eaten with the recollection that it was Christmas-day.

General Smallwood's satisfaction was complete when, just as they were to sit down, one of his aids came clattering to the door with a message from the "Marquis," as Lafayette was everywhere called, to say that he was unexpectedly at liberty, and would accept General Smallwood's invitation, which he had before declined. The table, served for thirty, in the long log cabin which had been run out behind the little inn to serve as a dining-room, was readily arrayed for the distinguished guest, and De Kalb, whom he had brought with him. The varied uniforms of the different State "lines" had not yet all given way to the Continental blue and buff, and blue, white and green varied the long line of the table; and even the red coat, which was, in general, the sign of an enemy, appeared in two instances, as the uniform of Morgan's horse. Never had a more distinguished party gathered under the newly-baptized American flag.

Marion winced a little as Smallwood turned to him, as soon as he began to carve a twenty-pound turkey which lay before him. "Marion," said he, "we have not let Glover's line eat the gobblers for their Thanksgiving. We have a few more left in the plantations; and they do say there are some of the blue hen's chickens at the other end of the table."

The Thanksgiving Order of the Day at Glover's Brigade had become camp talk.

"I am afraid," said Marion, "that the Maryland turkeys travel better than ours from the Merrimac Valley."

The answer pleased the Marylander, who explained to Lafayette, who sat on his right, that his wife had sent a special express to camp, which had arrived only the night before, to supply the stores for the full feast which was before them. But it was impossible for the genial Marylander to understand that feeling—closer than feudal feeling—which bound the New England captain to his privates. And little did he think that in his joke he had renewed the only bitter sting which that day could have to the brave young officer of whom he was so fond.

This little story must not stop to tell of the gay talk of that gay dinner. Lafayette told bright stories of London life, even of the very men who were in front of them in Philadelphia. He spoke grammatical English, with a fascinating French accent, and an occasional blunder in idiom which gave a zest to his slow narration, whose enforced delay contrasted oddly with the eagerness of the flow of his thought. Even De Kalb told stories from the French mess-rooms. The Southern gentlemen had negro stories, Indian stories, and no end of rallying of the New Englanders, who knew so little of Christmas. The New Englanders were not behind in pity for men who had never heard of Thanksgiving. Everybody who had been within a hundred miles of Trenton and the dash on Rahl, the year before, fought that battle over again; and gayer and gayer sounded the talk, and brighter and more joyous was the song, in German, in French and in English, as the afternoon passed and as the sun went down.

Lafayette had just been singing, to the amusement of everybody, some new French words to "Mironion, Mironion, Mironion," when, at a word from Smallwood, a white-haired old negro—the same who had conveyed the poultry from his plantation—entered at the head of a black procession, who bore three extemporized chandeliers, made from barrel-hoops wreathed in evergreen, and tallow-dips, which were already lighted.

"Yes, Zeno, you may stand on the table," said Smallwood, laughing.

And the old man mounted with dignity, and hung his elegant circle of light on a hook in the rafter, already provided. He took a second hoop from the man behind him, and the gentlemen fairly clapped him, in laughing praise of his dexterity, when the further door of the dining-room was flung open, and at the same moment a bugle outside sounded "To horse," in a strain which every man there understood perfectly.

Elam Ford sprang in at the open door. He was, of course, instantly recognized by Marvin and Guthrie.

"Belford's horse—a party of two companies—i on the river-road."

"General," said Elam, even in that moment reporting with military precision to his own brigadier, General Glover, "they have dodged our pickets. They met at the hollows, and are coming down the river-road to this place. I have heard the order."

And outside, as he spoke, Harry Lee's bugleman sounded "To horse—to horse—to horse!"

The gay party melted from the scene no man knew how. Every man of them, of course, was dressed according to the old rule of chivalry, which required that a gentleman should always be ready to mount and to ride as for his life. Windows and doors flew open, and in a moment there was no man at the gayly-lighted board. Each officer was searching for a horse and on his way to his command.

Light Horse Harry himself sprang on a white horse he found at the door—he knew not whose—and rode to the side of his bugler, who was still sounding "To horse—to horse."

Elam Ford, as he left the table, seized the American flag, which hung over the host's chair. Had Elam known it, it had been embroidered in silk by Mrs. Smallwood's friends on the "Eastern Shore." Elam thrust the steering-pike, which he still held, through the silken folds, and ran out to the road, which was as light as day from Zeno's blazing chandeliers within the open room.

"Rally on the colors," cried Elam, lustily—"rally on the colors! Yes, boys, form by twos on the colors," in the language of tactics long since forgotten: "Form on the colors—form on the colors—for God's sake form on the colors! Where are you going, butternut? Form on the colors."

"Looking for my company," said the frightened Jerseyman.

"Company! dang it! Form on the colors, or you'll have no company. That's right, shirt-sleeves; form on the colors." And then as old Zeno appeared behind him, "Take these colors, darkey, and stand here till I bid you move." He ran down the extemporized platoon, and dressed it by pushing or pulling the men. "Load while we

wait," he said to them in a loud tone, and then running back to the black man, "Form on the colors, boys, form on the colors."

A minute was enough to bring in thirty or more men of every arm—dragoons without horses, artillerymen from Knox's brigade, riflemen of Morgan's, and infantry from half a dozen regiments. Well pleased, Elam now took the colors from Zeno, and gave them to a sixfooter from the Blue Ridge, saying:

"Bid them form on the colors, and when you get forty men, find an officer, if you can. But anyway, as soon as you have forty, follow me."

Then, running in front of his extemporized company:

"Mark time, gentlemen: poise firelocks, column of fours—forward, march—quick time."

And the little company disappeared into the darkness, while the Virginian in his turn shouted:

"Form on the colors. Why don't you form on the colors?"

A minute more, and Elam had his men on the run, in double-quick time. Just in time was he to post them behind the wreck of a fence built above some prostrate logs where the old road made a sharp bend northward, and where they had thus much cover as they lay, which in the darkness might deceive the advancing cavalry. Not one minute passed before, at a hard gallop, the Englishmen came down the road in fours.

"Hold your fire till I bid," said Elam. "Remember Bunker's Hill, every baby of you. Hold your fire. I tell you I was there. Butternut, Shirtsleeves, No. 2, and Peleg, cover your men when they pass the tree, and fire when you have them. That will do."

Crack! crack, crack! crack! These were the answers to the order, and the poor doomed fellows rolled off their horses, every man of them. The whole advancing column reined up in wild confusion.

"Storow's company to the right! Double-quick time!" cried Elam. "Three files to the bridge! Double-quick time! Curtis, send to the General that we have every man of them."

Whether these impromptu commands to imagined forces were heard or not, it would be hard to say. The unfortunate commander of the English party was killed. His most experienced captain, with a broken arm, was at that moment feeling his way around the inner walls of Elam's cellar, two miles away. The other captain, in the rear, was giving orders, which no man heard in the wild confusion. A storm of random pistol-shots from excited troopers confused everything, and made order impossible. All of them had for five minutes heard the drums of Faunce's company behind them, and from the way his boys beat them you would have thought there were forty drums. They dared not, therefore, turn upon their tracks to meet a regiment of infantry in their rear.

The rear files of horsemen thought, and thought wisely, that discretion was the better part of valor. They leaped the low fence on their right, ran their horses to the river, and crossed it on the ice. A moment more, and the same movement became universal. Men who thought, thought it had been ordered. Men who did not think, followed because it promised safety. Sooner than he meant, sooner than he wished, Elam saw his enemy retiring.

"Give them a volley, boys! Fire!" he cried, almost disappointed. And the men fired, probably with no effect. At that moment Light Horse Harry himself, with a squadron of some thirty men, appeared. Elam pointed eagerly to the flying foe.

Lee thanked him and followed.

"Tally-ho! gentlemen!" he cried to his men, and they also leaped the fence in pursuit.

"Well, boys!" said Elam, "guess our job's done. Form on your sergeants! Column of fours! Quick time—march!"

At this moment Faunce and his men came up, well flushed with running, and well pleased with success. They followed Elam's command. He led the whole party back to General Smallwood's head-

quarters. He met the tall Virginian with the second company.

"All out!" he called: "all out!" in the quaint phrase of the old-time fire companies; and this company also returned to the stable-yard of the old tavern, and, like Ford's and Faunce's, stood at easy rest, listening to know if there were any other alarm.

No! The work was done, and well done. Smallwood himself, with the gentlemen of his staff, were sitting on their horses. From time to time one and another orderly or mounted officer rode in, and reported that all was still. A buzz and whisper, after half an hour, told that young Hamilton had ridden in with a message from the commander-in-chief. Smallwood himself now rode across to the improvised infantry.

"Captain," he said to Elam, "His Excellency is in the road, and will be here in a minute. Will you call your men into line that we may salute him."

under arrest," said Elam, proud as *Cœur de Lion*.

"I am obliged to you, none the less, captain," said Washington, pressing his hand this time. "We shall know each other better. You may dismiss your men. The alarm is all over. A Merry Christmas, boys!"

"General," said Smallwood, "if you would dismount, there is a cold turkey here and a glass of good Madeira. Ask your gentlemen to join us. Colonel Lee will be thirsty after his ride, and we shall all wait for him. Then, turning to Ford, and beckoning to Faunce and to the Virginian, "Gentlemen, will you also join us in a glass of wine?"

He whispered to his orderly, and in a minute more the bugler, who had just now blew so different a strain, was sounding forth to the wind:

"Peas upon a trencher—peas upon a trencher."

"We heard him as we came. To tell the truth, Glover thought his glass was not empty." And they could all afford to laugh now.

Then they also saw the commander-in-chief, and apologized to him, and exchanged their formal congratulations.

"Glover," said Smallwood, who did not mean to forget his friend. "You Yankees do not know much about Christmas."

"We know good Madeira when we see it," said Glover, laughing.

"They do say that you Marblehead men steer your regiments with a tiller and rudder," said Smallwood, and the laugh was turned again. "I won't say as much for you, generals; but if I am to turn out in two minutes in the dark again, I hope I may have a private of the 19th to rally my men under fire."

For the first time, Glover took in the position. But he was quick, and though he did not know Elam Ford by sight, he understood it. He bowed, well pleased at the compliment.

"I always told you that I had not a man in my brigade but would make a good colonel."

"Well said, General," said Washington, smiling, "and very true. Will you oblige me, General and gentlemen, by drinking the health of Captain Elam Ford? To our better acquaintance, Captain Ford. Really, Smallwood, I must not stay another minute. We thought we would look at all the forts. If we find any other company paraded, we shall have to wish them 'A Merry Christmas.'"

CHAPTER THE LAST.—PROMOTION.

AT Brigade General Headquarters of "Glover's," on the 27th of December, the whole brigade paraded. At the end of the parade, the officer on duty read the General Order, which closed with the words:

"For gallantry in action, Private Elam Ford is relieved from arrest."

"For gallantry in action, at the special request of his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, Private Elam Ford is promoted to serve as Captain, *vice* Wilderspeir, transferred to the Naval Service."

Out in the Cold.

By Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, AUTHOR OF "FASHION AND FAMINE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A CARRIAGE, to which a pair of fine bays were attached, stood before the Thurber mansion, where it had been, as usual, permitted to wait until all the fashionable loungers passing up or down the Fifth Avenue in that neighborhood had full opportunity to admire the costly splendor and newness of its appointments. The portly black coachman on the box rather liked this sort of display, and looked down from his high seat upon the pedestrians below with the benign self-complacency of a monarch on his throne. The horses, however, full of animal spirit, were eager to be off, and made a little

commotion on the pavement, champing their bits, tossing their heads, and pulling at the reins in the hands of that grand potentate, with restless impatience.

A young mulatto, in new livery, posed himself magnificently against a pillar of the broad stone entrance-steps, sunning himself in the admiration of the crowds, until the door opened, when he made a rush for the carriage-door, which he opened with a dash and noise that drew general attention that way.

The lady, who appeared at the door in full carriage costume, fluttering with lace and bright with jet, paused a moment, as if it rather pleased her to complete the sumptuous picture with her own pretty person; then walked with slow grace down the steps and stood upon the pavement long enough to give what seemed very elaborate directions to the footman before she entered the carriage and drove off, assuming an exceptionally easy attitude, such as persons to whom the possession of a splendid equipage is a novelty sometimes insist on taking.



OUT IN THE COLD.—"AS SHE SPOKE, THE EXCITED YOUNG WOMAN FELL UPON HER KNEES AND HELD UP HER CLASPED HANDS IN PITEOUS PLEADING. BEFORE THE OLD MAN COULD SPEAK THE DOOR WAS OPENED, AND THE WOMAN WE HAVE SEEN ENTERING HER CARRIAGE STOOD IN A MAZE OF ASTONISHMENT AND SMOTHERED RAGE, LOOKING UPON THE SCENE."

"Attention, company! Right dress! Poise firelocks! Shoulder firelocks! Slow time—march!" cried Elam.

"Attention, company! Right dress! Poise firelocks! Shoulder firelocks! Slow time—march!" cried the tall Virginian.

And Faunce repeated the order.

The clatter of horses' hoofs, and the well-appointed staff of the commander-in-chief rode up, and he himself was at Smallwood's side, and gave him his hand in eager congratulation.

"Present arms! present arms!"

Washington turned to the men, uncovered his head, and said:

"We cannot thank you enough, gentlemen! With such soldiers, America will never be conquered. A merry Christmas to you all!"

Then he bent in the saddle, took Elam Ford by the hand, and said:

"The best parade I ever saw, sir! May I know rank and name?"

"Elam Ford, Private, Massachusetts 19th,

The extemporized party was scarcely as noisy as that whose places they had taken.

The start which they all had was too fresh, and all ears were too much on the alert for a new alarm.

Washington was courteous; Hamilton was affable; Reid made himself at home. Smallwood, trying to put all his guests at ease, called Lafayette, who had returned with the commander-in-chief:

"Marquis! if you ever want to teach the king's infantry of the line how to rally in a panic, ask this gentleman to give you lessons. By Jove! I sat on my horse in wonder to see those frightened boys fall in."

And he presented Ford to the Marquis, and they took wine together.

A minute more, and with a little bustle, Glover and Learned and Patterson came in.

"We have come to finish the Madeira, General," said Patterson, laughing.

"Then my bugler blew loud enough to call you?"

This carriage was scarcely lost sight of in the crowd of vehicles going to the Park when a young woman appeared before the mansion it had just left. She went hurriedly up the steps, then paused and stood for a while with her face half turned to the street, as if tempted to return to the pavement again. She was plainly, even poorly, dressed, and the sweet young face, though pale and worn, was beautiful in spite of some trouble that must have swept away its first bloom.

After a brief delay she attempted to pull the bell, but her hands, evidently trembling from nervousness, failed to move the bronze knob, and she took a step downwards as if again tempted to go away; but, suddenly possessed of desperate courage, she turned, with pressed lips and shining eyes, gave the bell a sharp pull, and stood waiting for some one to let her in.

A middle-aged negro opened the door, but drew back with a startled look when he recognized the young creature standing there.

"Thomas!"

"Miss Ella, how did you come here?"

"Oh, Thomas! I am so glad they have not sent you away."

The negro laughed cautiously.

"Sent me away! Not that, anyhow, as yet, miss. The new madame tried it, but master sot his foot down there, and this old colored person stays on; though the Lord-a-mercy only knows how long he'll be here to stand by any one."

"Oh, Thomas! Is he so very ill?"

The negro shook his head.

"Mighty bad, I'm afeared; mighty bad."

"Thomas, I must see my father—I must!"

Again and again I have been refused; but you will help me now?"

"Yes, I'm going to do that, anyways. Mighty lucky this old man was about when you rung the bell. Don't stand on no ceremony, but run right up; and if any one asks who let you in, tell 'em it was old Thomas, and he'll do it again."

The young woman gave him one grateful glance, and went upstairs in swift haste. She knew the house well, and went straight to a door in the second story.

Softly turning the latch, she entered a large chamber that seemed strange to her, though she had played in it, as a child, many a time, and every object in there ought to have been familiar, but for the pain that took away her breath and almost blinded her.

The window-curtains of rich, heavy silk; the bed with its semi-canopy, from which like draperies fell to the floor, casting faint red shadows on the snow of the pillows, were to her one confused mass of coloring.

But, nearing the fire, burning in its grate of polished steel, she saw, with terrible distinctness, a large, cozy chair, in which was an old man, with his feet resting helplessly on a Persian rug, spread, in all the blending of its rich tints, far beyond the glow of light that revealed them.

One glance at this half-prostrate figure, at the noble head pressing the cushions so wearily, the face, worn and white with continued pain, rendered more pallid by the contrast of color around it—a single glance had turned everything else into nothingness.

One moment the young woman stood dumb upon the threshold. Then she went swiftly across the room and fell upon her knees at the old man's feet.

"Father! oh, my father!"

The old man started and lifted himself upright in his chair.

Looking down upon her with dark, keen eyes, which seemed to penetrate everything they searched, he said, with more strength of voice than seemed compatible with the feebleness of his frame:

"Ella, have I not forbidden you to enter my house again?"

"Oh, father, father! do not be so hard with me. I could not keep away. I could not keep away; forgive me, forgive me. It was only because you were sick that I came. I ask nothing. I want nothing; only one kind word, one look."

"Are kind words and looks a fit reward for treachery?"

"Treachery! No, no, father; I was not treacherous. Never! never!"

She took the pale hand that lay on the old man's knee, and would have kissed it, but he resisted her fiercely as his strength would permit.

"Do not touch me, girl!"

"Oh, father!"

This cry of pain sent a shock through the sick man. A faint moan broke from him, and his eyes closed.

The young woman dropped both hands from her face, and looked at him, breathlessly.

"Have I killed you, father?" she whispered.

"Has the sight of your only child killed you?"

"I have no child."

Ella could scarcely make out the words, they came so feebly from his lips; but the whisper was faint with pathetic anguish, and beneath the quiv-

ering eyelids she saw a tear steal slowly—one of those drops of pain that are wrung from the aged with such agony.

The daughter's heart ached at the sight.

"My father," she said, touching his hand with her lips, and gaining hope when she saw other tears wetting the old man's cheek. "If you could only learn to endure me near you. If you would only read one of my letters!"

The old man opened his eyes.

"Letters!"

"My poor letters, begging forgiveness. She promised me, again and again, that you would answer them, but you never did."

"Letters? Who promised?"

"My governess; the lady you married."

During some minutes, Mr. Thurber lay motionless; but across his face came a flush of color that dried up the tears on his cheek like flame. Then he sat upright, and the old fire came back to his eyes.

"You are making some charge against my wife, the woman who tried so hard to keep you honest; who was scarcely my bride before she was forced into becoming my nurse."

"No, father; I make no charge. If she let me have my own way in that which gives you so much offense; if she was wrong in promising that you would consider how dearly I loved the man I was so rash in marrying and be sure to forgive me, it was not her fault. She thought you loved me a little more than you did. It was not her fault that you were implacable, and grew angry when she pleaded for me."

"Implacable."

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A gleam of satisfaction shot into the blue eyes, now turned upon the daughter.

"I am glad you have done nothing to excite him!" she said; "but we must not run the risk. He does not seem angry. That should be enough. Another time he will be able to converse."

The young woman did not move, but stood, with her eyes, full of tender yearning, fixed on the old man's face.

Mrs. Thurber left her position by the easy-chair as she spoke, and laying her hand firmly, but caressingly, on the daughter's arm, drew her aside.

"You see how completely he is exhausted," she whispered. "The very sight of you has done that—go now—go, if you would not kill him!"

"I must speak to him, I must. He was about to forgive me, I know he was," answered the poor woman, aloud and passionately.

The invalid moved in his chair, as if disturbed by this outburst, and meeting the eyes of his child imploring him through their tears, made a faint motion that his daughter should leave the room.

She went at once, weeping bitterly.

"Come again when he is stronger," said the wife, stealing after her.

"When can I be sure of seeing him? I have waited so long!"

"To-morrow, any time. Now that I have persuaded him to see you once, all will be easy; but I hope, I really hope you have had no disturbing conversation."

"I don't know; all that I thought of was his forgiveness, the time was so short."

"Too short for explanations, I know, but they will be quite unnecessary. Remember you have a friend in camp."

Then the poor woman was drawn into her stepmother's arms and kissed effusively. By the time they were at the street door, which Thomas came forward to open; but Mrs. Thurber saved him the trouble, and turned the latch with her

On the first Christmas after the death of Mr. Thurber, two such pictures stood out from the events of the year with cruel prominence.

One was the mansion he had owned, adorned and enriched even beyond the magnificence of his time by the woman he had raised from obscurity, and to whom he had bequeathed a vast, undivided estate.

The old man had not been dead a year yet, when the blinds of his old home were flung open that Christmas morning.

All traces of mourning were swept away from those spacious rooms where statues gloomed and pictures glowed, and silken draperies enriched the very sunlight as it poured through the windows.

While the mistress slept, servants were busily completing the preparations for a sumptuous dinner-party that was to open a new life for the widow.

They passed in and out through the rooms, carrying greenhouse plants that were to fill all vacant spaces with bloom and odor; trailing evergreen wreaths over the moss-like carpets and oriental rugs that half covered them with a luxurious beauty of coloring, and weaving them among the cut-crystal of gasaliers or brackets laden with delicate objects of art.

For an hour all this pleasant confusion gave an air of tumult to the house.

Then the Christmas Day wore on, clouding over at noon with a threatening of storm, which broke at last into gusts of wind and clouds of whirling snow.

When Mrs. Thurber took her breakfast that morning she wore a dainty little cap of white lace, beautifully crimped about the face, under which her brown hair had miraculously turned golden during her ten months of widowhood, but when she came down from her dressing-room an hour before the dinner-party was to assemble, this was cast aside, and the golden glory of her hair surmounted

her head in puffs and braids, and fell down to her bosom in one soft ruffy curl, that turned to sunbeams in the gaslight.

Not a shade of color was allowed to desecrate the spotless white of her second mourning, but the material was of lace, delicate as frost-work on a window-pane, and under it you caught the shimmer of a silken garment that rustled beneath the soft flow of lace as she came downstairs.

In a little boudoir which she had furnished anew, as a wren feathers its nest with bits of down and soft threads of silk, the widow found some one, waiting by previous arrangement, an hour before the other Christmas guests should arrive—a slight, dark-haired man, who was half-lounging among the cushions of her nest-like couch when she came in, and held out both hands to receive, even without rising, as if the boudoir had been his, and he had a right to welcome her there.

She gave him both her hands, and he drew her down to his side, kissing her upon the smiling lips.

"At last, at last!" he said, "I see you without that hideous cap! Dressed as a bride too!"

"No, no; you must not say that. White is mourning. As for the cap, I am sure you are the last man on earth to gibe at it. Think what a fairy cap it has been for us."

"That may be, but I shall always hate it, thinking of the two black years that I suffered while you—"

"While I suffered a thousand times more than you could, and only that we might be sure of all this at last, as we are—oh, Allen! as we are!"

"Did you really do this for me? Were you not just a little weary of the old governess life as well?"

"I was weary of the poverty that kept us apart; terrified by the restlessness that drove you into such doubtful ways of living; but for that, I never would have married the old man; or helped the girl to disinherit herself by that love-match with the music-teacher."

"A thing that I am very much obliged to her for doing," said the man; "though it did lead to the awful wrench of giving you up for what seemed an endless time. Even now I can scarcely forgive you."

"Not when a few months more will make you master of all this, and my own, own husband. Ah! now, I can understand the infatuation that made Ella so reckless of the wealth she flung away. Still, that was nothing to the life I took up for your sake; the deception, the constant vigilance lest the father and daughter should meet and be reconciled before all was safe."

"But they did meet at last."

"Yes, but that was after the will was made. Oh, how frightened I was! But for some instinct that sent me back from the very entrance of the park that day, all might have been lost. She was on her knees by his side, and he was crying."

"It is strange that, after that, he left her nothing," said the man, thoughtfully. "I do not wonder you were frightened."

"So near the end, too. I think in my whole



CHRISTMAS AT VALLEY FORGE.—"MARION," SAID SMALLWOOD, "WE HAVE NOT LET GLOVER'S LINE EAT ALL THE GOBBLENS FOR THEIR THANKSGIVING.

life, I never spent such a day. Every time the bell rang, I expected that some lawyer was coming to alter his will."

"Fortunately for us, no one came, isn't it?" said the lover, drawing his companion closer to him.

"Yes, yes; but think of my anxiety," said the young man; "but even if he had forgiven her, the law would have made you rich."

"Yes, if his wealth had been left in real estate, where he made it. But Mr. Thurber was a shrewd man, and watched the market closely. When that was at its highest, he foresaw the reaction which has ruined so many; sold out and invested everything, except this house, in personal securities. A third of this house I might have claimed for life; but little more than that, if he had sent for a lawyer, and changed his will in her favor, as I feared."

"Whew? That would have been a pretty look out," said the young man. "But fortunately for us, he did not send for the lawyer."

"No; only one or two old friends, that he always would see, came in after that. So I became tranquil about it."

"Tranquil! I should think so. He only troubled you a week after that; for which I pay devout homage to his memory. We will drink to it with the best wine in his cellar on our wedding-day. But when is that to be, sweet lady-bird? The sight of this dress makes a fellow impatient," said the gentleman.

"After two months you shall name the day," answered the widow, yielding herself to the clasp of his arm, and resting her head for a moment on his shoulder.

"And then?" he said, triumphantly.

"And then," she whispered, "I shall know what it is to be happy."

CHAPTER III.

THE other picture. Ah me! I do not like to draw it; up there in the very garret of a tenement house, crowded with coarse, poverty-stricken people, that hopeless young couple were sheltered.

No, not sheltered; for both wind and hail came whistling through a broken pane of glass, from which the piece of paper Ella had pasted over it had been torn away by the storm; and she could find nothing with which to replace it.

Two chairs, mended carefully; a pine table and a small stove, in which a handful of fire gleamed; and a cooking utensil or two, were all the household goods left to them.

But in a corner of the room, furthest from the window, and nearest to the stove, stood what had been a baby's carriage, with the wheels wrenched off, and many of the willow-twigs broken about the edges.

In that lay a little girl, scarcely more than two years old, asleep, yet troubled in her slumbers, as an older person might have been; for now and then her forehead, white and almost transparent in its fairness, was drawn together, and she moaned faintly, as if pleading for something in her wild dreams.

By this cradle sat a young man, whose fine, sensitive features contracted painfully as he watched the child—his dark eyes full of gloom, his lips quivering now and then, as the little creature moved restlessly or moaned in her sleep.

"I will light the candle. There are a few drops of milk left in the cup, and I am keeping it warm over the fire."

The fire!

Edward Hunter turned his face towards the stove, and a bitter smile crossed his lips.

"Oh, it is enough to keep her supper warm. I will pour a little water into the milk and it will seem more," said the mother, absolutely smiling as she lighted a few inches of candle, which shed a sickly glow of light over the empty table, but only drove deeper shadows back against the broken walls.

"And you, Ella—where is your supper coming from?" questioned Hunter, rising from his seat in a passion of distress. "You have not had a mouthful since yesterday, and this is Christmas."

"Oh, by-and-by we will attend to that," answered the wife, putting on a jaunty little air, as if plenty of food lay about, which she did not care for; "of course we must think of the baby first."

"Think of the baby first!"—as if both were not thinking of it all the time, ready to give the best blood of their hearts to the pretty lips moving so hungrily, if that could have appeased their longing.

The child awoke, sat up in her cradle, and called out, "Mamma, oh! mamma! 'tittle Clara's hungry for supper—nice supper, 'cause its Kismus."

Ella Hunter went to the stove, and came back with a small tin cup in her hand, which she shook gently, to make it seem as if running over with milk, and held it to the child's eager mouth. She drank greedily, then looked down in the cup and shook it for herself.

"Most gone," she said, with half-ruefulness. "Now Clara'll take bread, an' cake, an' oh! ever so many, 'cause it's Kismus; Clara wants supper so big."

Here the child spread out her little thin arms, as if she expected a world of Christmas gifts to fill them.

"But, Clara, I have got nothing more," faltered the poor mother, turning her face away, that its anguish need not pain her husband.

He could not have seen it, for both hands were pressed to his face, and his frame shook from head to foot as it had never shaken with the cold. At last he started up, dashing his hands apart.

"I have done my best—God knows, I have done my best: begged for work as hungry dogs scout for bones; but no one cares, no one will give it to me! I have not asked alms yet, but I will! I will!"

Before the unhappy mother could move to prevent him, Hunter snatched up his worn hat and went down one rickety flight of stairs after another till he reached the street. There he paused an instant to button the thin Summer coat over his chest, and then faced the storm.

Up through the dark, narrow street he went, folding both arms over the thin coat that scarcely

sheltered his bosom, with an unconscious effort to shield himself from the sharp wind and the sleet that pelted him as if with human malice.

He came out near one of the public squares in a neighborhood where he had given lessons before his clandestine marriage with a rich man's daughter had made people afraid to trust him in their families.

Now the place seemed strange to him, coming as he did, out of utter darkness, for the mansions were all lighted up, carriages were moving to and fro, and men passed him every moment hurriedly, too eager for amusement for any notice of his wretchedness.

Once or twice he attempted to reach out his hand, but something stronger than hunger or cold held him back.

That woman and child were freezing and starving at home, and he had eaten nothing since a longer time than they dreamed of, but the man could not hold out his hands for alms or stop any one of those prosperous men in the street and cry out:

"I'm hungry, and my family are perishing at home. Help me! help me!"

No, he could not do that.

But in the very depth of his misery a thought that was like an inspiration came to him.

Once he had possessed a fine tenor voice. Had want taken that from him?

He did not know.

But there was a time when good judges had felt it a pleasure to hear him sing.

He had known people give money even to organ-grinders. He had seen silver pieces thrown from windows before now. Surely his singing would be better than that.

Close by him was a mansion lighted up brilliantly.

Through the windows he could see young people moving to and fro, chatting and laughing, now and then, till he could hear them in the street.

The poor man turned his back to the storm, and made an effort to clear his voice.

It was hoarse, and partook of the cold shivers that ran through his frame.

But he would not be conquered so.

With a great effort he threw out his voice, but the wind swept it away from his very lips.

Drawing close to the steps, he made another effort so strong and fierce, that it broke forth in a shrill wail, that softened and swelled into something weird and indescribably mournful as he went on.

There was a hush inside.

Two or three blooming faces appeared at the window.

Then the door opened, and a servant came down the steps.

Hunter stopped singing, with a great sob, and eagerly held out his hand.

"Please to stop singing," said the man, so busy sheltering his uncovered head from the storm, that the outstretched hand escaped his notice. "It quite damps all the fun in there; so be so good as to, move on."

He did move on.

The shivering hand fell to his side; his head drooped forward; a groan broke from him that would, indeed, have made the young people sad, could they have heard it.

Then he moved slowly away, with tears dropping down upon his beard and freezing there; away from the lighted square, down the narrow streets, and up into his garret again, where he sat down shivering and dumb, giving out all the misery of his disappointment through his eyes without the need of speech.

His wife knew it all, and her heart yearned towards him with unutterable sympathy.

"Be patient," she said, moving the little girl from her lap. "Do not give way, husband! Wait a little, my darling! and you shall have some supper."

"Great big supper?" questioned the child.

"Yes, dear; only be a good girl! That's right, snuggle close into papa's bosom! That will keep you both warm till I come back."

"You must not go, Ella. The night is terrible!" said Hunter, too, broken for an earnest protest.

"Stop! stop! Let me try again."

With the child huddled close to his breast, he followed the resolute little woman to the top of the stairs, but while he was speaking she had disappeared.

Out into the storm she went, the wind whistling through her scant garments and sweeping back the thin Summer shawl which was all the covering she had to breast it with. Unlike her husband, she had a settled destination and made her way directly to the old home.

The mansion was lighted up so brilliantly, that the sleet, wind and snow took golden tints as they swept by the windows. Ella gave no heed of this, but rang the bell, with a sharp, desperate pull.

The door opened at once, and Thomas stood on the threshold. When he saw her, the faithful fellow reached out his hands.

"Miss Ella—oh, Miss Ella! come in out of the storm!"

He drew her into the hall, and shook the hail from her dress, which melted as it fell; for it was like passing from Greenland into a tropical climate when she crossed that threshold. The soft lights, the delicious warmth, and a sweet gust of perfume that stole over her made the woman faint. She leaned against the wall, dazed by the sudden change, and bewildered by a scene that presented itself through the parted folds of an Oriental portier at the dining-room door.

There, beneath a gasolier of cut-crystal, sparkling with the light of shattered rainbows, sat her father's widow, presiding with queenly grace at a table surrounded by a band of guests in the full tide of luxurious after-dinner enjoyment. In front of each was a crowd of glasses, filled or half-filled with wine, ruby-tinted, amber-hued and deep-red, all huddled together in the rich confusion of a bouquet almost completed. Fruits and flowers added a deeper glow to the festive scene, which mocked the woman in her wretchedness, but gave the strength of righteous indignation to her purpose.

"Is any one in my old room?" she said, standing upright. "I will go there. Then ask the lady

yonder to come to me. She can leave her guests so long."

Thomas led the way into what had been Ella Thurber's sitting-room, but was now transformed into the silken boudoir, where the widow had received her lover that evening.

Ella did not sit down among the cushions as he had done, but stood before the fire while her wet garments dripped upon the rug, as Thomas went in to his mistress.

"A lady wants me—in my boudoir? What lady?" questioned the widow, when Thomas whispered his mistress:

"One who must see you!" he answered. "She is waiting."

Mrs. Thurber made a gracious apology to her friends, and went out, half-angry, half-curious.

When she entered the boudoir and found the woman she had wronged, and, therefore, hated, standing by the fire in her poverty-stricken garments, a flash of haughty red shot across her face and she drew back imperiously.

"What, you here, Mrs. Hunter! Did not the servant tell you that I was engaged with company?"

"Yes; he told me all that you would wish; but I have come at last to ask something like justice at your hands. Surely, I, an only child, have a right to some small portion of my father's wealth. I would not ask it but my husband, my suffering child—"

The widow interrupted her.

"Do not go on. There is no need of that. I have never been wanting in charity," she said.

Going to a little cabinet, she took some money from a drawer, and held it out. "I am willing to help you now and then, but these demands must not be often."

Ella Hunter drew back, and a flash of pride higher and grander than the other woman's was, shot across her white face.

"Put away your donation," she said. "I claimed some right in my father's wealth; not charity from his widow."

"Indeed, if you are so well off, I will not insist," said the widow, tossing the money into the open drawer. "As for your claim, there is one thing my husband desired that you should have. To save you the trouble of coming again, I will get it now."

She turned away, went swiftly up the stairs, and came back again, carrying an old Bible in her hand; very old it was, for the covers were worn, and a large clasp of oxidized silver held it closed together.

"This is all that he desired you to have," said the woman, forcing the book upon her. "Now, perhaps, you will permit me to join my friends."

With these words she swept out of the room.

"It was my mother's Bible," murmured Ella, gathering the old book reverently under her shawl, "and he's left it to me."

Her eyes were full of tears as she went out, forgetful for the moment that she had nothing but that to carry home.

Thomas insisted on going with her, but she refused him with firm gentleness.

Still the old servant left his post, and followed her progress through the storm unnoticed through the dark streets, and up to the very top of that tenement house.

Standing back on the stairs, he saw her enter the garret room, where a gleam of candle-light revealed the figure of a man sitting by the stove with a child in his arms that was answering his caresses with piteous sobs of disappointment, but struggled down as the mother came in and ran towards her, crying out:

"Mamma—mamma! is de supper comed?"

Thomas waited no longer, but went blundering down-stairs and into the street.

Ella Hunter turned away, smitten to the heart, by the hungry cry of her child.

"I have brought but this," she said, with sad humility to her husband, as she laid the book on the table and drew little Clara within her arms. "Don't, don't sob so, darling; it breaks my heart. You see, it was Clara's grandmother's big book. Will Clara see the pictures in it? Pretty pictures."

Clara checked her tears while her mother unclasped the book with her numbed hands and laid its great black-letter pages open, not at a picture but where two folded papers were pressed.

One of these papers was addressed to herself.

Drawing the candle close, she read it:

"My child! my only child! I have been unjust, but there is yet time. I have been up all night long, writing with my own hand the will, which you will find here. God has given me strength to do that, and I am ready to die in peace."

YOUR FATHER.

Hunter had risen to his feet. Trembling with weakness and excitement, he sank to his knees by the table, and then read the will; wiping away the great tears that flowed from his swelling eyes as he read.

"This, loved husband! is it true?"

"True as God's own bountiful mercy!" he answered, adding, "Oh, Ella! oh, my child—my child!"

"Oh, papa, papa, does it say supper is coming?" said the child, clapping her hands and dancing freely up and down.

"Yes, little darling, it does just that, and old Tom with it. Just you come here! Lady's-fingers, candy, quarts of milk, and chickens roasted, a whole paul of hot coffee, and the best supper all round that the old darkey could get hot from a restaurant."

Thomas unloaded a great market-basket as he spoke, and looked round for a fire. Then seeing a little basket of coal hoarded in one corner, he emptied it into the stove with reckless prodigality, and lighting a new candle, planted it in front of the book.

"Read it agin—read it agin! while I set out the eatables," he said, laughing and crying, as he worked. "It's the very paper he wrote that night. His two best friends came and signed it next day. I went after 'em myself. Hey Betty Martin! what will she say? Here, baby, is a cooky for you. There now, Christmas supper is ready!"

Little Willie's Christmas Greeting.

AH my darling poppet, sweet!
Are you come mamma to greet
With a kiss this Christmas Day?
Yes, I know what you would say;
Glibbest tongue could only tell
What your bright eyes say as well.
'Neath your sprig of mistletoe
Kiss me, Popsy, so, so, so!
My pet, Willie, bright-eyed Willie,
Thus I kiss you, willy-nilly:
First a quiet, lingering kiss;
Then take this, and this, and this!
So my kisses fall like rain
Upon lips that kiss again.
Come, my lambkin, to your mother!
Let me hug you, almost smother
You with lovingest caressings;
May all choicest Christmas blessings,
All blest things beneath the sun,
Fall to you, my pretty one!

The Story of a Pilgrim Bottle.

(Continued from page 300.)

I never saw the old pocket-book—a peculiar one, of a dull olive green with a red rim about it—without recalling that time with a shudder. This empty pocket-book was all the heritage left me. He had probably been robbed, for there was no money left about him. Empty, did I say? There were a few scraps of torn paper in it which I had kept, and tried sometimes to put together into some sort of meaning, but in vain. I took them out mechanically on this night, those yellow bits of paper; but I was in no mood to make any more vain attempts. I soon pushed them back again, and shut the drawer.

I believe I said I had no relatives. I had, however, a godmother living about six miles off, and I decided on going down there on this night. Her husband, my godfather-in-law I might call him, was a gruff, overbearing, purse-proud man, who esteemed a person according to his success in life. You may, therefore, imagine his opinion of me.

But, there was a daughter.

I could not spend that evening alone with my despair. The very thought was maddening.

I picked up the remains of the pilgrim bottle and gazed at them with the grief of one who sees a shattered hope before him.

"As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I looked on these."

There were the strange, tawny pink buds, struggling out of the cloudy blue gloom of the background; the yellowish green leaves had caught the very tint of the original—and the wandering stem; ah! it was too much.

I laid the fragments down tenderly, and hurried away.

Mrs. Sproule eyed me suspiciously as I passed her open door, as if she feared I carried my belongings surreptitiously away.

The night had closed in stormy and cold, but my old frieze overcoat, once purple, but now with a bloom all over it like a plum, kept out the rain.

It was the last of November and the stores already had put on a holiday appearance.

I could see their bravery through the slanting showers; their splendor struck athwart the gloom of the night, and brought a new pang.

What part had I in Christmas cheer and joy?—I, with starvation staring me in the face, a gaunt spectre which would not be laid.

I must confess that the fat turkeys aggravated me, so gorged with over-feeding as they appeared; and the savory strings of sausages, how appetizing they appeared. I did not notice the fruit much; I was too hungry.

I had six miles before me, and I felt already faint and sick; so I spent my last cent for a penny roll.

What a wretched walk it was, through mire and water, with a keen wind cutting my face like a knife all the way; but I tramped on in a sort of grim despair.

I would look once more in Nelly Masters's sweet face, and then—let death come: "the shorter the struggle, the longer the sleep."

Hiram Masters had been a banker in the city I was leaving; but had retired two years before and bought a handsome place in the country. I had often been there, although I could see that I was not a welcome guest to him. I braved all his sneers and cutting words for Nelly's sake. Her mother, a silly, inconsequent sort of woman, who had been cowed into imbecility by her ferocious husband, still seemed to have some lingering tenderness for me in her heart which she dared not show; but I felt grateful for it.

Oh! how long the way was. My head fairly reeled before the end, and the road seemed to rise and fall like waves. At last, a few twinkling lights showed the little village of Burnham—a mere suburb of the city.

I dragged myself through the gate, and leaned exhaustedly against the pillars when I rang.

I was shown into the library, where the warmth and light almost sickened me.

The family were all there. Nelly, in a pretty olive-green silk, with her fair hair gathered in a mass of curls behind, and short ones clustering about her white forehead. Perhaps she was not a regular beauty; but her face seemed sweeter to me than all the fabled beauties of the Greek ideal. She had soft, bluish-gray eyes, of the appealing kind; a straight little nose, and a mouth—well, it's no use trying to describe Nelly's mouth—in fact, most descriptions are bosh; I could not even paint that soft, fleeting smile, or the ghost of a dimple that always—

But I must not linger over Nelly, or I shall never get on.

Old Masters, whose head was as bare as a plaster cast, save for a fringe of gray hair about it, had fierce, gray eyes under a gray thatch, and a set of false teeth which he seemed to gnash as he talked.

"Oh! hullo, Noel!" he growled. "Down again? No business yet, I suppose?"

"Not just now," I said.

"Oh! how wet you are!" cried Nelly. "Let Sam take your coat."

"You're dripping all over the carpet," growled old Masters.

"Come near the fire," suggested his wife, whom I had always called Aunt Pam.

I hurried out of the library—which, I have forgotten to say, was furnished in most luxurious style. Old Masters prided himself on having all that money could buy, and he kept an accurate account of the prices, so that he could state them to any visitor. He knew nothing of bric-a-brac, but he bought it, as he did his library: so much a volume. He never read one, or understood the other. He would, nevertheless, point various objects out with pride:

"Hideous, isn't it, that majolica plate? Well, it stood me in—about fifty dollars. It's genuine—what do ye call it? You know—well authenticated what's-its-name?"

I had sent away my rough, wet coat by Sam, and sat down before the cheerful fire, shivering somewhat from the chill of the weather and the chill of the welcome. Nelly was silent, but her sweet, pitying eyes were upon me. Aunt Pam went on nervously knitting, and old Masters eyed me maliciously.

"Eh!" he grunted; "in my day a young fellow would scorn to be dawdling around in such a useless way. I'd go and break stones in the road—"

"But Noel is not strong enough," ventured Aunt Pam.

"Then let him sell peanuts," growled the old hyena; "or dance a tight-rope, or learn to eat fire. Blast me! juggling tricks are better than idleness!"

I did not answer. I felt that I was turning white, and the room began to swim.

"Bless me, the boy's going to faint," cried Aunt Pam; and Nelly forgot prudence and sprang to my side.

"Can we get you anything?" she whispered.

"I'm—hungry," I answered, in an almost inarticulate voice, forgetting all pride; "that is all."

The others did not hear, but Nelly sprang up and disappeared. Soon an ample tea-tray was brought in. How delicious was the bread and butter; how the cold meat disappeared.

"Umph! not very ill, I take it," growled the old man. "Did you ever read Solomon, young man?—if a man will not work, neither let him eat."

"But Noel wants to work, papa," said Nelly, goaded into my defense. "He can't get it; he's tried everything. You know these times are not like when you were a young man."

"Bosh! Where there's a will there's a way. Look at me. I began without a cent; no help, no favor from any one. Let him begin at the bottom of the ladder; sell peanuts, I say."

And then he buried himself in his newspaper, and I was thankful.

"I did know a man, really, Noel," mildly mandered Aunt Pam, "who made an immense fortune out of dolls' eyes: the first who made them open and shut, I believe. Don't you know, Nelly—those Beadles, who lived in Park Place: you turned down Wintergreen Street, and it was a white house two, or, well, perhaps three doors from the corner, on the right side. And they had such poor relations, too. Why, Mr. Beadle's cousin's sister used to—"

And so on in a mild stream till bed-time. "S'pose you mean to stay all night?" growled old Masters, at last getting up with a yawn.

Nelly and I had arranged by cabalistic signs, understood by ourselves, that we must have a few words alone; so, when I was sure the old folks were in bed, I took off my shoes and stole softly down-stairs to the library where my darling waited for me, looking very sad. We had known each other from babies.

"Oh! you poor, poor boy," she cried, "to think that we have so much and you are starving."

"Never mind; it is a cordial to see your dear face again, Nelly. I can live on that for a week. But I own I feel pretty low to-night," and then I told her about my discouragements and the pilgrim bottle.

"Why I think we must have one very much like that," she said, more cheerfully. "Dear old boy! don't give it up. See here; I have a five-dollar gold piece here. You must take it for a new capital—and I'll lend you ours to copy. It stands to reason that you'll do better with one before you. Now, I'm sure you'll succeed this time, and there is really such a fancy for this sort of thing at present—"

I took the shining gold piece the dear little girl pressed upon me so anxiously.

"You are an angel," I said, "and I must take heart again since you do not give me up."

"I never know exactly where papa keeps his keys," Nelly said, as she rummaged about. "He likes to change the place, I think. I know the pilgrim bottle is in this cabinet, and he'll never miss it for a few days."

She had found the key of the small drawers which were in the bottom of the cabinet, and I stood by her side looking on as she opened them.

As she opened the last—of course the key was in the very last—I saw lying there a small olive-green pocket-book with a red rim about it, the exact counterpart of the one I had left lying in my drawer at home.

I cannot tell why the insane idea crossed my mind that this pocket-book also contained some scraps of paper, or why I felt an irresistible longing to examine it. But I did; I stared at it as if it had been the ghost of mine, and, while dear little Nelly had her back turned, I snatched up the strange phenomena and slipped it into my pocket. I must see what it held, and I promised myself that I could make a chance to return it the next day, even if I had to tell Nelly the whole story.

"Here it is," said Nelly, holding up the pilgrim bottle before my covetous eyes.

It was a gem. The groundwork a rich brown, paling into a buff, and out of the gloom, great white trumpet-shaped flowers bloomed amid odd tufts of green.

"But it is so large," said Nelly.

"Oh, I think I have a pocket in my old friez

which will hold it," I said; and on making the attempt it proved successful.

"But how gingerly I will have to walk with such a precious load? I shall start out on my pilgrimage with new courage, darling."

"It is so little, so little I can do for you," murmured my darling, in such a softly pathetic voice, that I could not resist snatching her up in my arms and pressing kiss after kiss on her sweet lips.

"You have done everything," I cried; "you have given me back hope and life! Oh! Nelly, if I could only believe that one day you would be mine I could bear anything. But that old curmudgeon of a father of yours—"

"Humph!" said a gruff voice at the door, which made us start and tremble as if a thunder-clap had interposed, or the floor yawned in a gulf under our feet. In fact, I should have welcomed any such yawning chasm at that moment if I could only have vanished in it utterly.

"Humph!" growled old Masters, a baleful fire gleaming out under the gray thatch of his eyebrows. "The old curmudgeon would see you blown into perdition before he would give you his daughter. Ho, ho! this is the plot, is it? You are to step into fortune by an easy process; no hard work for my gentleman! By Jove! an easy way to get rich, by deluding an innocent girl. Go to bed, Nelly! You are a hussy—a bold, forward hussy! So you meet young fellows when the old folks are snoozing, do you? Go, girl! I shall not forget it."

"How can you abuse your position to slander your daughter?" I said, roused to indignation for Nelly. "Is it anything that she should have remained here with me a few moments; haven't we played together from children?"

"You—young jackanapes," he cried, almost inarticulate with fury, "don't let me see you again. You've abused my kindness, you scamp! You betrayed my hospitality, you villain! Don't darken my doors any more. I'll not turn you out in the storm, to-night, because I've promised my foolish wife; but don't let me see you in the morning, sir. Mind that, you idle dog!"

Nelly stood there pale as a ghost, her pretty beseeching eyes fixed on my face, or I am sure I should have felled the old man to the floor. My blood boiled so that it seemed as if a hundred wheels were turning in my brain. I longed to go out of the house at once, but the storm was terrific and I was not strong enough to face it.

"You are arrogant because you are prosperous," I said, in a choked voice; "but there are worse ways of getting money than marrying a rich wife."

I don't know what demon prompted me to say this. I had heard vague rumors that he had not been very scrupulous; but I never calculated on the effect of my words. His face flamed and I heard his teeth gnash frightfully. A sort of convulsion passed over his face; but he could not articulate a word, and he turned away, and walked up-stairs, holding on to the balusters like a weak old man.

I crept up to the little bedroom appropriated to me, trembling from head to foot with excitement. The gas was burning low, and I sat down weak and shaken beneath it.

"The purse-proud old wretch," I thought; and then I remembered the pocket-book. How could I ever return it now; what madness ever to have taken it.

I opened it, wondering at my own temerity. Why should it be odd that there were two pocket-books alike? Probably there had been a thousand made at the same time."

But—ah! this was odd. No one could deny that this was a singular coincidence. In old Masters' pocketbook there were scraps of torn paper; just as yellow, just the same in number, and with disconnected letters on them as in my father's."

This roused me from dwelling on the stormy scene that had just passed, and took me into a bewildering region of doubt and conjecture, which kept me awake all night.

The morning was frosty and clear. A new day! Somehow it always brings a little hope. There are so many possibilities in a new day. I rose very early, and was slipping quietly out of the house when Sam arrested me.

"Miss Nelly, sir, said as 'ow business would call you up herly, as the cook has a bit o' steak an' a 'ot biscuit ready, sir."

Dear Nelly! I thanked her in my heart for her thoughtfulness, for I had lived low lately, and did not feel very strong for the walk.

It was still early when I found myself on the road, the ground frozen, the frost sparkling everywhere. Pleasant little country houses were scattered here and there. One, half-hidden in honeysuckle, which still bravely held its leaves and a few fragrant buff blossoms, had a bill on it, "To let." That bill seemed to open the gates of dreamland to me. If Nelly and I had the place, what a delightful home it would make. Just imagine what a Christmas would be together, in our own house, with no ogre to gnash his teeth at us—alone with our love. Ah!

A long-drawn sigh over the bliss of it was brought to a sudden end by the fall of something almost at my feet. The something was a man. He had not fallen from the clouds evidently, but from a high, spiked wall that he had apparently been trying to scale. He lay as one dead, and I saw he wore an odd uniform, and his hair was cropped.

"An escaped lunatic, I suppose," I thought, remembering that this was the wall of an asylum. "Poor dog, he has escaped the madness of life altogether."

But, bending over him, I found he still lived, and I looked about for water, and remembered the pilgrim bottle.

"He has never had such a lordly drinking-cup before," I thought, when I had found some water and was trying to restore him to consciousness.

I bathed his head and he opened his eyes, then swallowed a mouthful and looked around timidly.

"Oh!" he said, with a shudder, and most painful utterance. "Don't—let—them take me again."

I felt sure the poor fellow had had a fatal fall, and that it would not be long before he would be beyond all mortal fear.

"You are safe," I said, consolingly. "I will take care of you." And I stripped off the old frieze coat and put it on him to cover the well-known uniform. A carter happened to be passing by, and I hailed him.

"Just take my friend to the nearest cottage," I said. "He has had a bad fall."

Between us we lifted in the groaning man, and in a few moments he was laid in a clean bed in Mrs. Grigs's cottage, and the good woman herself was waiting on him kindly, while her son went for the doctor.

The man lay there silently, with his eyes fixed on me. He was not very old, although gray was sprinkled in his hair, and deeper lines than those of time marked his face.

"I am going to die," he said at last, quite calmly. "I have really escaped this time."

"Oh, wait for the doctor's opinion," I answered, cheerfully.

"You will see. I am right," he said, "and I am glad."

He was right. The doctor said at once that he would not live till night. He forced the truth from the suave man of medicine, and smiled.

"It is the best news I have had for ten years," he said, looking at me. "Man, you wonder. But if you had been buried alive for years you'd be glad to die out and out."

I was once more alone with him when he said that, and I felt an awful pity for the poor creature, so—

"Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery—
Glad to be hurled
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world."

"If there is any one to whom you wish to send a last message—" I said.

"Yes, there is some one," he cried, with sudden strength. "Tell Hiram Masters that I have gone to tell my story to the Judge of the living and the dead."

The words struck me like a blow. A cold sweat broke out on my forehead. I drew out my handkerchief, and the old olive-green pocketbook fell on the bed. The man, crushed and dying as he was, seemed to recoil in absolute terror.

"What!—whose?" he faltered. "Who are you?"

"My name is Noel Grandon," I began.

"Grandon! Oh! my God!" he groaned.

"And your father—how did he die?"

"He was foully murdered," I answered. "And now you must tell me why you ask."

"I will, with God's help," he moaned. "He must have brought you here. But I must tell it in few words. You will not give me up, now I'm going before—a higher court? A little water."

I gave him a drink, and he began to speak very feebly.

"Your father and I were friends—such friends as boon companions make. We drank together, we gambled together, we won—mark you, we always won together. We had our own ways. Well, at one place our gains amounted to twenty thousand dollars; we had broken the bank. There was a hue-and-cry about cheating. We took our gains and escaped. We wished to deposit them in a safe spot till the noise was over. Your father thought of Hiram Masters. He was president of a bank. We did not dare to go openly. We went at night. He took the money and gave a certificate of deposit. We did not trust one another, so we cut the paper into bits, and each took half. The money was not to be given till both halves were produced. I happened to have two new pocket-books, which my nephew had given me as samples—he was in the pocket-book line. I gave one to your father, and kept one. We put the papers in them."

The man paused and choked. I gave him more water.

"As we went away, in a lonely spot, the devil took possession of me. I wanted all. I tried a blow first, but he defended himself. Then I took a knife. But I did not find the pocket-book. Some one passed, and I was forced to hide myself. So I committed the crime, but did not get the prize."

"And then?" I muttered.

"Then, after a year, I went to Masters, to try and get my half of the money. He is a worse villain than I. He denounced me, or threatened. I was weak. He offered to take care of me. He took the pocket-book and sent me to the asylum. There, among gibbering maniacs, I have lived. Part of the time I was mad."

"And if the papers are put together in these pocket-books?" I asked.

"They make a certificate of deposit for twenty thousand," he answered; "and it is yours, if you are James Grandon's son. It is a small reparation for me to make, to give up my share, which I have never had; but that rascal Masters can be brought up now. If he can be punished, I die happy. I have repented my crime, with tears, for ten years. God must forgive me. I wish I had died when I was learning my prayers at my mother's knee."

The disclosure overcame me. I felt stifled, and went to the door for a breath of fresh air. Old Masters was just passing along the road, and I slipped back, that I might not be seen. But the lynx-eyed old man was not to be deceived. Stranger still, he crossed the road towards the house. When I saw this I went back boldly and met him at the door. I saw that his whole face was convulsed with wrath, but I was ready for him. He did not seem able to speak.

"Well, sir?" I began to help him along.

"Blast your impudence!" he said, in quite a hoarse voice; "I want my property. If I had my way I'd have started out with a policeman, though I didn't know you were skulking in the neighborhood."

"It's well you thought twice before bringing a policeman," I said, "or he might have had more business than he expected."

The old fellow grew blasphemous.

"My pocket-book, you sneak-thief!" he cried. "and that other thing, blast me, the what's-its-name. Oh! my daughter owned up."

"Then she told you she lent me the pilgrim bottle! As for the pocket-book, it does not belong to you."

His face twitched. "What—what?"

He could not say more.

"I know what I am talking about," I answered coolly, "because the real owner of the pocket-book is lying here at the point of death, and he has told me his story?"

"His story, eh? A lunatic's story! You'll not make much of that," he faltered.

"We'll see. Remember that I have the other pocket-book, and between them we may make a certificate of deposit for twenty thousand dollars."

The man's courage left him then.

He saw the game was up.

"Is poor Neal in there?" he said, his face quite white. "Dying, did you say?"

"Dying, because he tried to escape from the living death to which you had consigned him," I answered.

"I'd—better not see him, I think—"

"I think you'd better not."

"We can arrange this, Noel," he went on in a cringing tone that I hated more than his tyrannical one; "no need to let it get out of the family; the money's all right; you can have it. I've used it, it's true, but I've plenty to pay up."

"And Nelly," I asked. "I care more for her than for the money."

"You shall have her," he answered, looking as if he had swallowed a very bitter pill. "She, poor little girl, it would break her heart if this got out."

"It shall not, if you keep the conditions," I said.

And then I went in to the poor man, who had fallen into an uneasy slumber.

He did not wake from it, but slipped quietly away from the troubles and the crimes that had embittered his life.

I shuddered as I looked at him, and remembered how he had struck down his friend in cold blood, and sent him all unprepared before his Maker. He had time given him at least to repent. What a mystery it all was!

Old Masters had forgotten the pilgrim bottle after all, and I had the courage to go to the house to return it.

I met a very different reception from the last; so I grew bold enough to press my suit for a very early day.

"Twenty thousand is a small fortune," I said, "but under the circumstances—"

"Yes; under the circumstances!" said old Masters, gnashing his teeth; and I felt that I should never love my father-in-law.

Nelly made a few objections when I told her my dream of keeping Christmas in our own house. "Only four weeks!" she exclaimed.

"But money will do it, and we will be at home. Oh! what unutterable joy to me, after Mrs. Sproule's lodgings."

"I suppose it isn't very nice," said my darling, nestling up to me.

"Oh, it's charming!" I said, laughing; "furnished in strictly Eastlake style. No bent wood." And then I told her of the pretty little cottage in the honeysuckles, and she consented.

What a Christmas day it was, to be sure! Never did the solemn yet joyous church-bells usher in greater joy and peace to two hearts than to ours, as we looked about our home, decked in holly and evergreen, and furnished according to my ideas of correct decoration.

Nelly flitting around in her pale blue merino; with holly-berries in her hair, was quite correct art also in my opinion.

We did not care that the storm fell without. Indeed, when Nelly peered through the window, and announced that the sleet was driving like mad, and that papa would never venture out such a day, I felt I only needed that to complete my felicity.

And Nelly has ensnared the pilgrim bottle as one of our household gods, for she says, "If you hadn't broken yours, you poor boy, you'd never have walked out that stormy night, and I should never have offered you ours, and you would not have seen the pocket-book, and you would not have had the quarrel with papa, and gone out early in the morning and met the man who told you the story—" and so on, like the House that Jack Built.

A Christmas Dream.

DEAR, dainty little miss!—she has dropped off into slumber, and her dreams are peopled with fantastic shapes from Elf and Fairyland. Christmas is at hand, glowing with mirth and happiness and joy. There shall be no stint to plum-pudding and mince-pie, to apples, to oranges, and preserved fruits. These tricksome elves are wantonly sport-ing with her fears. One spider-legged little fellow makes a football of the precious plum-pudding; another mocks her with a mince-pie balanced on his outlandish head. A third offers her an empty glass, the wine being spilled from a decanter in a shower-bath over a white-faced urchin, directly overhead. Two elves tear a bonbon apart; another couple amuse themselves with the nut-crackers, one of them being squeezed with its vise-like grip. What frolics are being played around the preserved ginger jar, and how merry is that long-nosed urchin at her feet, who balances an orange with the skill of an acrobat! Sweet little princess, dream on until you are awakened, as was the sleeping beauty in the wood—by a kiss!

CASTLES IN WALES.

THE border barons of Norman blood, who took possession of this region forcibly when William the Conqueror became King of England, were compelled to hem in the Welsh people by a chain of tremendous military castles. These structures were not enough for the Norman lords marchers; in some cases they used the site of the Saxon fortress to build their stone castles on, but the site was all that had value to them. In order to keep what they had forcibly seized, they must intrench themselves in strongholds, defying the most terrific sieges, and which, furthermore, must be large enough to hold their families and retainers, as well as their warriors in enormous numbers. Hence the prodigious strength and extent of the border castles, whose ruins now make the country picturesque.



THE STORY OF A PILGRIM BOTTLE.—“HE HAD NOT FALLEN FROM THE CLOUDS EVIDENTLY, BUT FROM A HIGH, SPIKED WALL THAT HE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN TRYING TO SCALE. HE LAY AS ONE DEAD, AND I SAW HE WORE AN ODD UNIFORM, AND HIS HAIR WAS CROPPED.”

The Story of a Pilgrim Bottle.

By HELEN W. PIERSON.

AUTHOR OF “WHO BREAKS, PAYS,” ETC., ETC.

“NO, sir; we can’t make any use of them. You seem to have no notion of what the public require. Now, is that your idea of a pleasant design for wall-paper, sir? This thing, which looks like the half of a scarecrow, what do you call that, sir?”

“That’s the split-eagle pattern,” I answered, in a crest-fallen tone.

“Split eagles! And who the deuce wants to see a hundred—a thousand—no, hundreds of thousands of split eagles on his walls? Why, sir, it would be a sort of delirium tremens to a fellow. Not that any one would recognize a likeness to our noble national bird in these things—they are more like skeletons of starved chickens. I’m sorry to disappoint, but we don’t like your style. Now, here is something like a wall-paper.”

And the wretch held up a very lively design indeed: a garden trellis, with morning-glory vines running all over it, and pink and white blossoms everywhere.

“There, you see; Nature itself. Makes a perfect bower of a room. If you could do anything in that way—”

“But decorative art should not copy Nature,” I said, very firmly, though there was a strange choking in my throat. “It should typify, not imitate.”

The fellow smiled, as though compassionating my ignorance.

“All right, sir. I know what my customers like, and what will sell. Good-morning.”

I bowed in a dispirited way, and went out. It was a drear November day, and a fine, mist-like rain was falling. I had eaten a penny roll for breakfast, and I was provided with the requisite amount for the same ample repast for dinner or supper. I was a young man, with plenty of energy, but I belonged to the great army of the unemployed. I was artistic in my tastes, and had advanced ideas on the subject. I was an artist of the future, and therefore at present could find nothing to do. I was just starting in life, but could not get the chance to start. I had wonderful ambitions. I saw Fame’s misty ladder rising before me, its summit cloud-capped, but I could not find a place for my feet, even on the first round. I walked gloomily to my lodgings, but made a slight detour that I might look once more in a certain window, to which I had made many pilgrimages of late. I had stood there sometimes a half-hour at a time, studying a certain Limoges pilgrim bottle. I had rashly spent my last money in buying one of the same shape, in the hope that I might succeed in making a good imitation and sell it luckily.

The clouded blue background baffled me; the strange tawny tints of an inexplicable flower were hard to catch; the heaped-up color, as if it had been thrown on in lumps; the long, straggling stem, the half-faded leaves—all these made a difficult task.

After making another study of it I went on towards the quarter where I lived. The mist had turned into a decided rain, and it was nearly dark, although not yet five o’clock. In the narrow street where stood the dingy house in which I made my home the lamps were already lighted, and showed the dirty, glistening walks and squalid surroundings. But I hurried to the shelter, miserable as it was, for a chill, not wholly from the weather, seemed to freeze

my blood. Heart-sick as I was, I went first to the window to examine my pilgrim bottle. If that sold, my prospects would brighten. I could not see the outline of it standing there, so I groped about for a match. Horror! it was not there!

One glance at the floor showed me the fragments. My last hope was shattered. I sat down and covered my face with my hands. I must own to some unmanly tears. I had no money to buy again, to experiment any more. I had no friends from whom I could borrow, for the poor have so few friends, and I had seen how soon a man’s friendly smile froze over when the idea of borrowing was introduced. I was sick, faint, hungry. There lay my work, ruined!

And the tints were so good; a little brighter, perhaps, but a success.

I sat for a few moments paralyzed, and then I called Mrs. Sproule, my landlady—deferentially, of course, because I owed her rent. Besides, she was stout, and resented coming up-stairs.

“Look at that,” I said, with contained wrath. “Do you know how it happened?”

“Lors, now, how should I?” she answered, indifferently. “Likely it’s that Lucindy, drat her; she’s allers a-droppin’ somethin’; or the cat.”

“If Lucinda did it, she must pay for it!” I exclaimed, reviving somewhat at the idea of getting damages out of some one.

“More like the cat, since you set it in the windy,” answered Mrs. Sproule; “an’ talkin’ of pay, Mr. Glandon, it would come werry convenient like if you’d settle up.”

“I’m sorry,” I answered, “but just now it is impossible. Next week, perhaps—”

“Oh, come now,” said Mrs. Sproule, working herself up into wrath, “I can’t stand this sort o’ work now, I can’t. Parties as can’t pay must go. That’s the ticket. Come now!”

“I’ve given you an answer,” I said.

“But not the money,” she answered sharply. “Ugh! I’ve no patience with ye’s. An able-bodied young fellow a-spongin’ on a poor widder! Go to work! a-wastin’ of yer time daubin’ up crockery, an’ hidjus daubs too, you make. As I was sayin’ to Lucindy, ‘Wotever is the thing like? Nothin’ in the ‘evings above or in the earth beneath!’ Remember, now, young man! my money in two days or go it is!”

And then she was kind enough to leave me alone, and I heard the clock strike six. I took out my pocket-book and scrutinized it carefully. I squeezed it, in hopes a lucky dime had lodged somewhere. Then I looked through the rickety chest of drawers for something to sell or pawn. They were, alas! almost emptied already.

One by one I picked up the few articles lying there, and dropped them again with a sort of groan. It was no use. Fate was too hard for me. Here was an old pocket book that had been taken from my father’s pocket when he was found dead, murdered, and thrown into a ditch. My father, it must be confessed, was a *mauvais sujet*, and I had no reason to mourn his demise. I was no more alone afterward than before; yet I could not forget the shock of it. I was only a boy of fifteen at the time, and it seemed to open before me terrible vistas of crime. Murdered! I was haunted for days by the fearful scene called up by a vivid imagination. The stealthy stab with a sharp, glittering knife—the groan—the fall!

(For continuation, see page 293.)



THE STORY OF A PILGRIM BOTTLE.—“IT WAS A GEM. THE GROUNDWORK A RICH BROWN, FADING INTO A BUFF, AND OUT OF THE GLOOM GREAT WHITE TRUMPET-SHAPED FLOWERS BLOOMED AMID ODD TUFTS OF GREEN.”