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AULD ACQUAINTANCE



RICHARD
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K.C.



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AULD ACQUAINTANCE

BY

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P R E F A C E

THE tales recorded in this volume are, as they purport to be, the real reminiscences of a family, of which Roger Buckram was the most illustrious member. He was called to the bar in the early part of last century. His great-uncle was also a barrister of the same Inn with himself, the Middle Temple. There are two or three stories, those, for instance, relating to Queen Elizabeth and Bunyan, which should be called *Traditions* of the family rather than reminiscences ; no one, of course, *remembered* his ancestor, Mr. Sergeant Harris, who was sent for by the Queen, but I have a very excellent MS. note of that visit, as the reader will see by the use I have made of it.

All the characters in this volume were real ; the people were not fictitious, but lived, and were either known to or known of by the writer.

I remember, when almost in my boyhood, going into the barber's shop with Uncle Roger, who was then an old man, and his showing me what he called a "law-officer" under the hands of the barber. I did not in the least understand what a "law-officer"

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meant, especially with a huge towel under his chin, which chin was invisible from its thick coating of lather. Lady Christmas was well known to me, and was pleased to term herself my "literary godmother." She has been dead many years, or might have helped me as she did Roger. But probably two generations of us might have been too much for her ladyship.

The "Crying down" story took place, I believe, almost exactly as Roger recorded it. At all events it is based on actual fact. So, too, was that of the lady with four husbands, and the "Naval Romance." But it is idle to assert in detail what I state generally. The stories are based on fact. All the characters of the "Hardupprians" I vouch for of my own knowledge; for I lived amongst them and knew them. Nor let it be supposed that the "Philanthropists of the West End" is a fiction any more than the "Archbishop's Garden Party." I would add that these are only a portion of the reminiscences of Roger and his family. I have over a hundred in MSS. before me, and if the public intimate the slightest wish to see the remainder I can only say it shall be cheerfully complied with.

RICHARD HARRIS.

42 FITZJOHN'S AVENUE,
HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

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AULD ACQUAINTANCE

I. SIR RALPH AND LADY CHRISTMAS : TWO OF MY EARLIEST ACQUAINTANCES

MY illustrious friend and patroness, Lady Christmas, is responsible for the publication of these Memoirs. Her Ladyship was of opinion that the public would be interested in the various characters I met with in my career, especially as they moved along the stage as actors in that great drama which we call "life," and were not merely portraits on a wall to be gazed at by passers-by. "Make them characters, Roger, and not puppets: men and women, not statues." Let me introduce her Ladyship to the reader.

Lady Christmas was the daughter of an eminent politician; and brought more of the real Christian into her daily life than many exalted churchwomen do on a Sunday. At the same time my lady was not without a certain degree of worldliness to redeem her character from insipidity. If she regulated philanthropic assemblies, she also attended to the fashion of tea-gowns, the structure of bonnets, and the mysteries of "social science."

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She was an "Influence," a "Social Renovator," a "Political Regenerator," and an up-to-date regulator of the fashionable world.

If this psychological analysis be not sufficient, I would add that my lady was a "personality," a "divinity," worshipped alike at the domestic hearth, the social reception, and the sportive stable. She understood scientific mysteries, and mysterious sciences, from the evolution of man to the development of whooping cough; and was as familiar with the perturbations of the heavenly bodies as with the irregularities of those bodies which are not heavenly. I shall, in its proper place, show that her Ladyship made a wonderful literary discovery, which has almost quadrupled the number of lady writers. She was proprietor and editor of the *New Woman's Magazine*, whose pages illustrated the girls of the period; she was the inventor of an extraordinary machine called "The New Woman," who was destined to crush out the old Adam, wherever found; she dedicated her life to the reconstruction of the female man and the improvement of the horse—so that the pace in both was accelerated. With all this talent, my dear patroness was gentle, affable, and kind, so that all classes alike revered or worshipped her.

There was a contrast between her Ladyship and Sir Ralph. She looked for the *reason* of things; he only endeavoured to discover the *law*; she studied science, he theology; if she stated facts, he argued that there were no such things as facts, that there was merely *evidence* of facts, and that the facts which the evidence *tended* to prove, could only be found to be facts by a jury, or a judge sitting as a jury. Sir

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Ralph was tall, precise, punctilious, pompous, and pedantic.

But discussions seldom took place in Sir Ralph's domestic circle ; if one did arise it never ended, except by effluxion of time ; because Sir Ralph was so mincing in his pronunciation, that you might count ten for a comma, twenty for a semi-colon, and a hundred for a full stop ; he would champ several times with his lips in the course of two or three words, as though her Ladyship drove him with a snaffle bit.

There never was a cloud over the domestic felicity of this happy couple ; for whenever Sir Ralph took his mild cigarette it was the signal for her ladyship's departure. I don't think the learned gentleman ever smoked more than one ; smoking being with him a newly acquired luxury. The knight was fond of the Church, which is a long way off from tobacco, no doubt, but in this instance there was a connection between them. On a great Church Conference Sir Ralph entertained the Bishop of Longborough. His Lordship smoked cigarettes and offered one to Sir Ralph. "If the Church smokes," thought the ecclesiastical lawyer, "it must be the correct thing ;" and, therefore, although he had never smoked in his life, put the cigarette into his mouth, and, to the amusement of the Bishop, learned to *chew* as well.

My lady's religion was sincere rather than ostentatious. She instructed servants how to rise—but alas ! not in the morning—which so improved them that they demanded four "nights out" a week, theatre hours, and latch-keys.

Sir Ralph used to read family prayers ; but one of the polished kitchen-maids complaining that "ur

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chawed ur words like a cow," her Ladyship took the matter in hand lest the domestic creature should lose her taste for family worship altogether.

As my lady bought her own horses she was a frequent visitor at Tattersall's, and thus acquired so much proficiency in the picturesque language of the stable that she became a contributor to *Bell's Life*, and wrote some of its most "racy" articles.

Sir Ralph was called to the Bar early, for, although Tennyson had not then written, "If you're waking call me early," Sir Ralph's father, who was an Arch-deacon and therefore knew his way about without the Laureate, was quite awake to the advantage of calling his son "early," if only for the sake of precedence over his contemporaries. An austere face, a hooked nose, and compressed lips that never smiled, but expressed an amount of goodness which humbler individuals in the same profession only *feel*—such was the husband of my great patroness, the true author of these legends of the Middle Temple.

The gentle reader is not to suppose that the worthy knight was a cypher whose value was only made up by number 1 (his better half) being placed before it. Her ladyship would have scorned to figure thus ; and so far from being nought, the lawyer was learned not only in that profound science which goes by the name of *Ecclesiastical Law*, the foundation of *Churchianity*, but also in other occult sciences such as *Theology*, *Astrology*, *Metaphysics*, and *Metempsychosis*. Had Sir Ralph's flow of language been equal to his profundity of thought, it is supposed the world would not have contained the books he might have written on Ecclesiastical matters, Church millinery, Genuflexions

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and the like. But it was notorious that at any meeting when Sir Ralph got on his legs, his admiring friends followed his example.

When the great epidemic known as "Reminiscences" broke out, and carried off so many elderly people, her Ladyship took charge of a great many helpless patients, whom she placed between the sheets of her highly pictorial *New Woman*, where, alas! most of them were buried alive or smothered. But if her Ladyship killed them she immortalised them also, for nothing confers so cheap an immortality as your Reminiscences. I was commanded to keep an account of the different characters I should meet from studenthood upwards, till I should be a Judge or at least a Queen's Counsel. My lady told me I was to have *three little chapters* of my early days, but desired that they should be different from the ordinary run of mud-pie-making incidents. "You know," said my gracious patroness, "a touch of boyhood makes all ages one; but you must nevertheless excel *all other boys* whose deeds have been recorded, or you will be insipid. This is a record-breaking age, and your reminiscences of boyhood must be up to date and beyond it—*one* chapter, but a really good one."

I promised to do my best with such materials as my life afforded. "But," said I, respectfully, "nothing shall tempt me, for the sake of effect, to abandon *Fact* and wander into the region of *Romance*."

II. HOW ROGER TAUGHT HIS GRANDMOTHER THE NOBLE ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

AFTER I had proceeded a little way with my work I submitted it for her Ladyship's approval, and with a slight touching up by her divine pen, this chapter shaped itself in the following manner :—

My illustrious father's country seat was at Bethnal Green, in which salubrious district I acquired that robustuous constitution which was the happiness of my after years. Our house, a semi-detached mansion, with a verandah over the door, was called the "Manor House"; and in this Manor House I lived in splendid insignificance until such time as my Grandmother, who was possessed of a devouring love, took me from the parental home and transplanted me to her own commodious residence at Highbury Park. Ostensibly this migration took place in order that I might be near a very high-class seminary at Islington; but in point of fact I was to be adopted by my ancestress and made her sole heir. At the age of fourteen, when, in my own opinion, I was sufficiently educated, she sent me to this genteel Academy for "Young Gentlemen," where only the sons of high-class gentility were admitted. Being a weekly boy, the other young gentlemen, who were called "Boarders," used to jeer at me, especially when they found I had very little allowance of pocket money. Our number was thirty, as it was desirable to keep the Academy as select as possible. The half-dozen youthful ruffians at the head of the school used to

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insult me in every possible manner; they inked my books, called me "meek 'un," "milksop," and "pauper."

The great bully was Tom Hurdy, who not only abused me himself, but set the smaller ones to follow his example.

I was nearly driven to my wits' end, but it occurred to my mind that if I could manage to get a few lessons in boxing, I might make things pleasant for Hurdy as well as others who took an interest in my welfare. At the time I am writing about, the prize ring was patronised by the greatest people in the land, even by ministers of State. It was no disgrace to be able to defend yourself, even if you had to give some one else a black eye. There were not nearly so many "goody goodies" in those days, and the "goody goodies" were not nearly such fools as they are now; so that I was by no means disgracing myself, in desiring to hold my own, when others might be unlawfully attempting to take it from me. The same reasoning applied to national affairs in those days, when old Fogyism was not so pantaloonic as it is now.

The means I employed may be interesting to those who desire to make up in skill what they lack in strength. I used to read an occasional *Bell's Life*, especially when it contained anything of her Ladyship's, and thus became acquainted with such names as "Ben Caunt," "The Tipton Slasher," "Tom Spring," "Dutch Sam," and "Cribb."

I ought to mention that I had an uncle Dick, who lived at Kingston-on-Thames, and through him I got to know Nat Langham. Nat lived at Soho, and I used to steal down there twice a week. I was amazed to

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find how much art there really is in self-defence. My teacher stood up and told me to hit him everywhere as hard as I could. Of course I could hit him nowhere. He brushed my hands away as if they had been thistledown, and I could no more reach him than I could the man in the moon. After a while, however, I began to acquire the trick of it, and to think within myself how surprised one of these days Tom Hurdy will be if he should threaten to punch my head again. I knew well enough he would never get near me, and further that he could never get away if once within my reach.

I must now ask the reader to stay for a few minutes at my Grandmother's coach-house on a summer afternoon. Everything was arranged as nearly like a miniature prize ring as I could conceive. Suspended from a beam was a sack of sawdust, on which I had drawn, with Day and Martin's blacking, the outline of a man's head and features, with half his body, stripped to the waist. At this I practised an hour a day, vigorously punching with my fists in the most scientific fashion, according to the instructions of my revered teacher ; now launching out with the right, now going in with the left ; now countering, now on the point of the jaw, now on the "Conk," fencing, dodging, following up, going down, retiring to my corner, and so on, as if I were actually engaged with a living antagonist.

One afternoon as I was practising in this manner, and taking it out of my opponent in fine style, whom should I see gazing at me but my Grandmother !

She was a tall, thin, dignified lady, excessively genteel, with bright dark eyes, an aquiline nose, and

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a firm mouth, dressed in black and bugles, while picturesque curls dangled on either side of her face.

It would have required something much less than Nat Langham to knock me down at that moment. I was ashamed of the duplicity I had practised, but have since learnt that there are things a young man may do without telling his grandmother. I did not know it then.

"Roger!" she exclaimed, with tragic solemnity. "Is that you? What *are* you doing? You *naughty* boy! What *is* the meaning of it?"

"Only a game, Granny," I meekly replied.

"Game! What game do you call it? What *is* that thing with a painted man on it? I thought croquet was your favourite amusement?"

"No," I said sheepishly; "it's better than croquet, Granny."

Truth goes farthest, even if it sometimes goes too far, so I made a clean breast of it at once, and told her all my troubles at the Academy.

As she listened I saw the sweet smile which ever assured me of forgiveness, be my faults never so heinous; and at last she protested that she saw no *great* harm in it. I then told her that the boys put upon me and called me "meek 'un." For a *Ramsbotham* to be called a "meek 'un" was enough to obtain her sanction for any measures I might take in vindication of the family honour. So I began to show her the various hits, stops, counters, &c., of the noble art, explaining as I did so the technical terms employed in the ring. Backwards and forwards I danced merrily, while my adversary, getting the worst of every round, staggered and swayed, now this way and now

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that, till at last I gave him his final knock-down blow ; and, as he could not come up to time, I informed Granny that he was done for.

In the exuberance of my delight I danced round my dear ancestress, and taught her the various modes of parrying blows. It was amusing to watch her nervous face as she hopped about while I put myself into attitudes of attack and defence.

“ Now,” said I, “ let me give you a lesson. Stand firmly there—so ; put yourself into this attitude. Throw out your right like this, and guard with your left like that.”

Her hands involuntarily moved in unison with mine, as though she were really trying to follow my directions.

“ Now, mark,” I said, “ I will not hit you, but show you how to counter with the left. Suppose you are trying to land on my top-knot—this is *counter* with the left. This is *right-hand counter* ; now you go in with a dash—so ! *Upper cut*—throw yourself forward—up with your left—careful, or down you go—and then your *second* picks you up and takes you on his knee.”

“ You shocking boy ! My *second* indeed ! Since your poor Grandfather went to his rest such a thought has never crossed my mind ! ”

We went gloomily indoors, I endeavouring the meanwhile to explain that “ *second* ” did not refer to a husband, but to the man who acts in the prize ring as the *supporter of his principal*.

III. A GREAT BATTLE WHICH HE FOUGHT

MY schoolfellows were most of them bullies, and, as I was less in stature and weight than the majority of them, and had less money, I was sat upon. They belonged to what are now known as "the upper classes." One was the son of an eminent rag merchant, whose place of business was in Shoe Lane: his name was Rookesly. Burley's people were tallow chandlers, so he was called "Cotton Eights." Billy Chubbs, who had a most offensive pug nose, was heir to a tanner, whose town house was at Bermondsey.

Tom Hurdy was the son of a sporting "wine and spirit merchant," and without exception the greatest ruffian I have ever known. He had a violent temper and a vindictive spirit; was selfish, overbearing, and malicious. His eyes never looked at you, and were always half-closed, as if afraid of being identified.

Our schoolmaster was just the savage creature which the times produced, merciless and cowardly. He hardly ever failed to give me my daily allowance of flogging; if he missed one day, he doubled it the next. Indeed, I was pretty nearly flayed alive. What hurt me even more than the cane was their calling me a "milk-sop," without the spirit of a mouse. But having now become somewhat practised in the noble art, I continued my spirit of meekness and milk-sopism until such time as I felt it was my duty to avenge the indignities heaped upon my family.

One afternoon when we were playing cricket, Tom Hurdy "sowed the seeds of discord" between Peebles

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and myself. Jack Peebles was the biggest boy in the school; and, with the exception of Hurdy, the ugliest. He was the lineal descendant of a noted calf dealer. Evolution had done little for him, even if his ancestor had been a calf. He was pug-nosed and pock-marked, with high cheek-bones and hollow jaws. If Hurdy wanted to punch anybody's head he always honoured Peebles by selecting him as his deputy.

After some altercation, Hurdy advised Peebles to give me my "cowardly blow," a mode of challenge which no one could decline to receive with honour.

"Hit him hard, Peebles, and show what a sneak he is. One blow'll do for him. Go at him, Peebles, and send him home to his grandmother."

Peebles clenched his fists in a manner which displayed a good deal of indetermination. He advanced a couple of steps in the same uncertainty of mind, and then hopped back three or four with much more alacrity and resolve.

"That's it," cries Hurdy; "well done, Peebles! that's it! don't let him say you're afraid to fight. Ha! look at him! Who's afraid now? The beastly coward! Yah!"

"Ha!" says Peebles tremulously, "who's afraid now? ha, ha!"

He came towards me with a kind of hop. I was leaning on my cricket bat with my left hand; but unfortunately for Peebles my right was free; the consequence was that three of his teeth were loosened, and down he went on his back.

"You shouldn't have hopped in so close," I said; "try again."

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As soon as he had sufficiently recovered as to stand on his legs, his backer advised him to "go in again," and to hit more from the shoulder. "Aim at his nose, Jack, you'll have him presently." He did very soon have me; I hit him in the eye.

"Go it, Peebles; wouldn't I give him one for that! A beastly coward! give him one in the ribs, Peebles, that'll double him up! give it to him! You'll see, Peebles will have him presently."

Peebles came again, with a pluck inspired by chagrin; and there was a general cry of "Bravo, Peebles! give him another! that's it, Peebles!" All this time Peebles was merely dancing about with an agility which was only dangerous to himself.

I put down my bat, and placed myself in an attitude of defence, knowing as certainly that he could neither hit me nor escape my blows. I struck out with my left as he came in, and his right eye was in trouble, and very soon the other one wept in sympathy: two black eyes for Peebles, and three teeth loosened! At last he put his arms across his face and sobbed. The champion was beaten!

"Let's give it him," said Hurdy, coming at me with a cricket bat in his hand. Fortunately I was a tenth part of a second too quick for him. I got in under the uplifted weapon and had him at my mercy: with one blow, straight between his eyes, I was rendered invisible to him, and with a second his nose bled: then he turned to run away, and I gave him a contemptuous kick as if he had been a football.

The rest of the boys came on bravely, one and all: they were twenty to one. My position was serious. Nothing but prompt action could save me. They

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shrieked, yelled, and spat at me ; kicked, called me names, and pushed one another against me. My blood was fairly up, and, without the least hesitation, I went for the crowd. One was knocked to the right, another to the left, a third laid on his back ; and all with such rapidity that I was astonished at the progress I had made. All around there were cries and threats, but every one who came within reach received his share without stint : none could complain of a partial distribution of favours : some crawled, some slunk away, but most of them ran, leaving me to contemplate the scene of my victory and consider what was best to be done.

IV. A LESSON FOR SCHOOLMASTERS

THE following morning when I entered the school-room, there was an ominous look on every face, and a foreboding silence. They glowered at me with malicious scowl. Expectation of revenge was in every eye; and no wonder, seeing how eyes had suffered: there were no less than fifteen black orbs distributed amongst eleven boys. This was an aspect of affairs that, however gratifying to my pride, was by no means promising for my comfort. What could I expect but to be flayed alive? And yet, there was a humorous view of the situation that made me laugh. To see those lubberly rascals with their bunged-up eyes, their swollen lips, and twisted mouths, turned the situation, tragic as it was, into grotesque comedy.

After a while the masterful brute came in with a savage scowl and a new cane: his fingers were working round it as if anticipating the cruel part they were about to play. He was a corpulent man with broad high shoulders, muscular arms, and a supple wrist, whose strength I had too often experienced. His flabby face and dimmed eyeballs, however, indicated the most degrading of all weaknesses: the most potent cause, perhaps, of his cruelty: for drink, as we all know, is a terrible instigator of violence. The gentleman's legs, as is usual with people of his intemperate habit, were spindley, while his corpulent body was too heavy for them adequately to support.

He strode down the room like a man with a set purpose which he had determined to execute, cost

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what it would. He gave a furtive glance in my direction, but did not look at me. This was ominous. When he reached his high desk, he turned up his coat cuff and readjusted his fingers and thumb round the cane, giving his wrist a kind of professional twist. I never saw a face look more vindictive than his at that moment, and never knew a human being who so enjoyed the sufferings he inflicted. His nature was more that of a fiend than a human being.

Having taken his seat he cleared his throat pompously, and said—

“Buckram, come this way.”

As I walked up I saw the deadly glitter of his eyes, and the whiteness of his hand as it clenched his instrument of torture. Had his hand alone been visible I should have known what it meant; for he knew no mercy, and had even caused the death of an orphan boarder a year or two before.

“Ruffian!” he shouted, “you have assaulted sixteen of my boarders in a most cowardly manner!”

“Sir,” said I—but before I could proceed, he roared out again—

“Don’t bandy words with me, sir—take that!” and struck a violent blow across my cheek which drew blood. But it drew more than blood. I was now in my sixteenth year, athletic and strong as a youth should be. I was red-hot, too, with rage, and my eyes must have blazed with indignation. Out went my right fist with the rapidity of a stone from a catapult, and with a blow full in the wretch’s face I sent him reeling backwards against the wall, which his head struck with stunning violence. I followed this up with another before he could recover his balance, then

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gave him two or three lively taps in his flabby face, and seizing his white cravat shook him till he was purple.

There was a dead silence through the school. The boys were livid with emotion. All this I could see in that moment of excitement when every faculty of mind and body was quickened.

I suddenly wrenched the cane from his hand and bade him kneel down. He hesitated, and trembled. "Down," said I.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"To thrash you, sir," I answered, "and you'd best take it like a man. Down, I say!" He went down on his hands and knees.

"This way," said I, pulling him round, "the boys will have a better view; that's it."

I then turned the long tails of his coat back, and after flourishing the cane in the air brought it down with all my might on his huge person. He twisted and cried for mercy.

"Coward!" said I, "when did you ever show mercy?" and I laid on again with might and main. I could hear the boys say, "Oh! my eye! Oh! Oh! look at the dust! Ain't he got it!"

After I had thrashed him sufficiently, I walked leisurely down the school. Not a sound was heard but my own footsteps; and although I had triumphed over this most inhuman creature, I felt sorry for his humiliation. The boys looked upon me with wonderment. Not only had they never witnessed anything like this beating of the common enemy, but they could not realise it; they were almost as stupefied as he was himself. Hurdy turned his face away as I passed;

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Peebles smiled; whilst the smaller boys whispered, "Well done, 'meek'un.'" I had no ill-feeling against them, and I am sure they had none against me. Several followed to the gate leading from the play-yard and wished me "good-bye," knowing well enough I should be seen there no more. Although I had been tyrannised over by the big ones, the others were endeared to me by pleasant recollections. I was in trouble, the result of which I could not foresee, and when in trouble how sweet is sympathy!

V. IN WHICH ROGER BECOMES A
MEMBER OF THE MOST HONOURABLE
AND WORSHIPFUL SOCIETY OF
HARDUPPIANS, AS WELL AS OF THE
MOST HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE
MIDDLE TEMPLE

I PASS over the remainder of my schooldays and university career, for nothing of any novelty occurred ; and as the Bar had been suggested as the arena in which I might be most likely to shine, I was entered of the Middle Temple. There I spent some of my happiest years and made some of my most brilliant acquaintances. My love for the old hall remains, and I can never forget its festivities and good fellowship ; while many of its characters will remain as precious memories that neither time nor circumstances will obliterate.

After my "call," which was a solemn function, where I figured in bran new wig and gown with spotless bands and a heart beating high with hopes of a convivial evening, I took "chambers," as they were called, dark, drear, and doleful, at the top of Middle Temple Lane, a place I should have thought could only be occupied by the devil—or some one whom he had misled. Then I indulged in appropriate gloomy thoughts as to how many hopeless creatures had made away with themselves or with somebody else in that ghastly den. Imagination so worked upon my nervous system, that one evening I escaped from the miserable rat hole, and rushed down the three pairs of

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stairs in about the same number of bounds. I was in a kind of nightmare and wandered listlessly along Fetter Lane ; even this unenchanted locality was a refreshing change from my chamber of horrors, and all at once the thought occurred to me that I would go in and hear a debate at the "Hardupprians" ; the good old Hardupprians I had so often heard of. There are many persons who have not heard of this distinguished society ; although from its numerous members have sprung from time to time all that is great in public life and all that is noble in private—poets, philosophers, artists, actors, statesmen, ministers, historians, novelists, generals, lawyers, and even bishops. Nor is there anything to wonder at, for it is a world-wide fraternity. All that can enrich the human race with talent and learning may be found among them, waiting only the opportunity to be called into activity, as the coal in the deep down strata of the earth. Sometimes, alas ! never to be found at all, but lost eternally in the obscurity of the grave. I learnt from it, however, amongst many other lessons, this, that a man's intellect can never be at its best until it has been strengthened by the buffetings of fortune : nor can the character be thoroughly developed until it has been tried by disappointment and adversity. We can endure our good fortune better than we can the good fortune of others, but we can bear the adversity of others with much more equanimity than we can endure our own.

Many associations whose object is philanthropic enjoy the luxury of relieving distress ; but the members of this society experience the discomfort of enduring it. Philanthropic bodies ever enjoy the satisfaction

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of knowing that they are doing good ; but your true Harduppian is tormented with the thought that he is doing no good at all either to himself or any one else, and is merely a weed that might be better rooted out of the world's garden altogether.

I took my seat at a little table where a small, intelligent-looking man sat, whom I recognised as a member of my Inn, a smart, small gentleman of the name of *Chipps*. I need not say that, my disposition being sociable, I felt at home with the strange, little individual, and soon discovered in him those excellent qualities which make me so much in love with myself, and which qualities became the basis of an enduring friendship.

I knew nothing of this Harduppian Society, and was much interested when O'Sullivan, another acquaintance, gave me an account, not of its origin (that is lost in antiquity), but of its doings. He informed me that it never accepted alms ; prided itself on its independence, and would rather owe its tailor for its trousers than have them mended by the needle of benevolence. "The needle of benevolence," I thought, was beautifully pointed. I stared at O'Sullivan's description, and perceived a twinkle in his roguish eye, as if he were *taking me in*. However, he went on with his graphic description.

"It's the oldest society in existence, or that ever was in existence ; and the whole of the Noaharkian family recognised themselves as genuine Harduppian when they found themselves on the top of Ararat. It has a larger number of members than any other brotherhood in the world, and they are united by a bond that all the forces in existence cannot break.

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Its branches are in the remotest wildernesses, as well as in the richest cities. Nor can wealth or poverty dissolve its intimate membership."

I confess I listened with profound awe as O'Sullivan rattled on. Nothing, however, disturbed the equal flow of his conversation.

"Look," said he, "you seem to doubt my statement. I don't wonder; you are a neophyte, and have much to learn. But let me put the matter in a less scientific mode. The qualification for membership into this ancient society does not depend upon birth."

"Well," said I, "can a man belong to the society before he is born?"

This, of course, amongst lawyers, was reducing the thing to absurdity.

"No," said O'Sullivan, "he must be born, but once born he has fulfilled all the conditions of Nature. It matters not whether he was born of a gipsy or a queen. Our noble society altogether ignores the usual analogy between demand and supply. Supply does *not* always keep up with our demand: consequently we are independent of all those economic laws by which less distinguished societies are regulated. Now, Roger, what do you say to that?"

I did not know what to say. But I thought I was well qualified to join where no qualification existed, and expressed my wish to be enrolled.

"Devil a bit," said O'Sullivan, to my great astonishment. "You can join the Ragamuffins, a darned lot of stuck-up snobs, who wear seedy clothes and pretend to be well off, boast family connections after the family has separated all connection between them."

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I was admitted, however, to membership and received with enthusiasm.

I am particular in recording the fact of my admission, because it was in this worshipful lodge that I had the honour of meeting so many gentlemen who will figure in these Memoirs, some few of whom rose to the height of the double-peaked eminence, ambition and anxiety; while others sank into the more delectable region of competence and humble content.

Many became my dear acquaintances. Timothy M'Sweeney, Esq., was one, a man endowed with an excellent humour but no discretion, unlike my little Chipps, who had a fine strain of comicality without being aware of it.

M'Sweeney was the grand master of the lodge at this time; took the chair and controlled the speakers, which he usually effected by doing the talking himself. Michael Dutt, a Hindoo, was another eminent member, whose chief characteristic was a broad black smile, which had got into a chronic state. I never saw him without his smile, and once told him so. His reply was that he supposed, when I looked at him, there was always something to laugh at.

Peter Malony had a high-born contempt for money. He was a man of a many-shaded character and not a few eccentricities, one of which was to paper his room with County Court summonses. This he called holding up his creditors to the contempt they deserved. He was a clever artist, and had drawn the most grotesque caricatures of some of those oppressive gentlemen it is possible to imagine, and pasted them underneath their respective summonses.

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Chippis informed me that he once was at the New Cut Lodge of this honourable society, and heard a philosophic speech from the most worshipful grand master of the New Cut Lodge. It was a masterpiece of cutting sarcasm on the Fiscal management of our "Parochial System."

The distinguished orator asked with a flourish of indignant scorn, "Who keeps on their legs these 'ere rate collectors? Ain't it the poor? Who keeps the Board of Garjunds? Ain't it the poor? Who keeps up parish doctors? Ain't it the poor? Who lives on our rates? Ain't it Garjunds and County Court bailiffs and County Court judges, and High Court judges, if you come to that? The time will come when we, the people, will make our own rates, and then we shall have the open hand of plenty, showerin' its blessin's on us.

"Now lookee 'ere, what makes the country prosperous? Ain't it rates? What keeps up our Hinstitutions? Ain't it rates? What's the bond between man and man?"

"Rates," cried the crowd, who were now up to the trick.

"What's most important to human nature—ain't it rates? What unites the rich an' the poor?"

"Rates!" they cried; "Rates keeps up the union."

"Yes, genelmen, and them as expects to find a heaven without rates had better try and find a openin' elsewhere—a needle's eye ain't a big gap."

I spent a happy evening. Our grand master was a graduate of Cambridge, as well as a barrister of my own Inn. He was one of the best lawyers I ever met, and the most eloquent speaker. Why he did not

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succeed, he said, was because he had no friends, and no manner of influence. I am inclined to think it was also because he could not steady his mind to the drudgery of business, and did not persevere; and yet how many have I known who persevered until they had never a shoe on their foot, and until their wigs were the colour of a tinder-box.

VI. AN EMINENT HARDUPPIAN, WHO PATRONISES THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION

I HAD no sooner been admitted to this honourable society than a career seemed to open before me. I was greeted everywhere with smiles and good fellowship. Men whom I had thought were luxuriating in wealth, were over head and ears in debt. Generally speaking, men who live high are in a low condition financially, and I agree with an eminent personage that, if you are to be a bankrupt, let it be done handsomely as well as the creditors.

One day a rising barrister honoured me with a visit. I felt much flattered, for he was quite a "don" in Society, and was looked upon with admiring eyes even by her Majesty's judges. Judges are only human after all, sometimes not even that. The high shirt-collar this gentleman wore was enough in itself to make him a judge; but, in addition, he had the roundest and the rosiest smiling face I ever saw. Then his perfect dress, down to the fawn-coloured spats on his patent-leather boots, and his straw-coloured kids were the admiration of the junior bar and the ladies. There was hardly a dinner party in the legal world to which this gentleman was not invited.

He had Joe Miller by heart; and let me say no one need be afraid of quoting it as his own, because, if any one should discover the imposture, that gentleman will be in the same line of business, and will not trip you up.

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"Mr. Walter Rugby" was the name on the card handed to me, and in he came, smiling all over the room as universal as sunshine. He was a handsome, fine man, and his personal appearance entitled him to succeed. Handsome men are often successful, and ugly men always.

It seemed to me a strange thing that this eminent man should be able to keep himself down to the level of harduppedness: rather than leave the society to which he owed so much—as in fact he did everywhere else—it was Mr. Rugby's rule never to pay anybody, which was so much to his credit: had he paid his way, he must have been expelled the honourable society.

He grasped my hand with the warm clutch of friendship, and made my fingers ache. "Dear me!" I thought, "is it possible this is the great Walter Rugby whom I have seen in court with his powdered wig, snowy bands, learned smile, spotless gloves, and scented cambric handkerchief? *Is* this the man, or am I dreaming?"

"Well, old chappie," said he familiarly, "briefs looking up, eh?"

"They don't look up at me," I replied despondingly.

"Well," he whispered in my ear, "I heard a little bird chirp——"

"I thought I heard a little mouse squeak to the same effect," I answered with a respectful smile.

"No papers yet?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes, income-tax papers, which, if our worshipful grand master saw, would be enough to kick me out of the society."

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"Never mind," said he; "keep it dark." And he seated himself in the only chair I had that you could sit in without injury to your spine; and, spreading himself out in the most benevolent manner, displayed his generous bosom to the universe. This looked more like disinterested friendship than anything I had yet seen. Who was *I*, to be thus honoured? I had never spoken to the man in my life, nor he to me. There was only one way to account for it. He was a great friend of E. T., another fashionable junior, equally clean cut and clean shaved. You heard of E. T. everywhere. He was the head of a select clique.

"You know E. T.?" said Walter Rugby.

"A curious thing," said I, "that you should ask me that. I spoke to him for the first time yesterday."

"Dear old E. T.," said Rugby; "one of the best-hearted fellows in the world—my oldest friend."

"He told me," I said, "that as he was coming down my staircase he saw the clerk of one of the best firms in London with a heavy brief at my door. I suggested that it must have been for some one else; for there were at least eight barristers in my rabbit-warren besides the boy who was clerk to us all.

"Your name's Buckram, is it not?' he asked, as though he *might* be mistaken after all.

"I assured him that it was.

"Well, *that* is the name I heard him mention as he handed in the brief—with a *cheque*—a cheque, my dear Buckram, under the tape.'

"I thanked him, and hurried up only to find the whole thing was a joke of E. T.'s."

"That E. T.," said Rugby, "is the biggest liar in

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the Temple, which is saying something for him, I can tell you. There's no doubt he's a good-hearted fellow—but"—here he dropped his voice confidentially—"don't lend him any money, mind that."

I thanked him for the hint, although it was quite unnecessary to one who had nothing to lend.

"I dare say," said Walter, who I learnt afterwards was a past grand master warden of the Harduppian, "you wonder why I have called?"

"I feel very delighted," I answered.

"Well," said he, "fact is, old chappie, your chambers are in the City and mine are in Middlesex. *Twiggie vous?*"

"No," I said, "not exactly; in fact, I may say I do not *twiggie vous* at all."

Then burst out the full sunshine of his gracious smile, and in a melodramatic whisper he said—

"To avoid a *ca sa*, dear boy, a Middlesex warrant does not run in the City, you know—*now* do you see?"

It was quite a wrinkle in law to me, and a delightful illustration of that extra-parochial character of the Temple and its immunities.

"Fancy," he proceeded, with an air of the most aristocratic contempt, "a *gentleman* being arrested for a paltry debt of seven pounds ten?—whew! I'm disgusted!" and he showed his disgust with a majestic wave of his arm. "Would you believe it, Buckram? Now, *would* you believe it?"

I perceived as he spoke he was looking with admiration at my gold chain, which was a massive cable, and strong enough to sustain a hundred-weight.

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"I had one once," he said, almost pathetically, "a beautiful repeater ; is *yours* a repeater, Buckram ?"

"I don't know," said I, drawing it from my pocket and holding it towards him.

He nodded his head, and observed in a desponding tone, " *You'll* never be arrested for seven pound ten while you've got this about you ;" and he held it in his hand with a face that would have done honour to a conjurer.

"It was my mother's," I said, "and I'll stick to it as long as I live."

"I admire your resolution," he ejaculated ; and, seizing my hand, grasped it cordially ; he was evidently a man of strong sentiments.

"I quite agree," he added, "nothing would tempt me in the circumstances to *part* with it ; but it would not be—unfilial—surely, to *pawn* it, supposing that you ever wanted to raise a few pounds—I say *supposing*."

I was a little startled, and said, "No—never——"

"No," said he, "you're too damned leary for that, Buckram," and he spread himself out again for the indulgence of a hearty laugh. I felt rebuked ; and a rebuke from so great a man makes one feel more acutely than one ought to.

"You don't know how to get into debt," he said ; "do you ?"

"Well," I answered, "I like to pay as I go."

"Yes," he said, "and I hope you'll never have to go without paying ; but—I suppose you'll come and see me in Whitecross Street Prison, won't you ? Or don't you care for people when they are down ?"

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“I shall be very pleased,” I said ; “but surely some friend or other——”

“Did you ever find one when you wanted him, Buckram, or did you never want a friend ? There are two kinds of them : there’s the friend who wants you, and the friend you want : avoid the first ; the second will avoid you.”

He said this with such a good-natured smile that I wondered how he could take his distress so easily. What a genuine, good-hearted and brilliant creature ! I felt sorry for him, and once more took out my watch. It was just twenty-five minutes to one. I returned it to my pocket.

VII. A JUDGE'S CIRCUIT DINNER, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE WIT OF THOSE FESTIVE GATHERINGS

No profession has a greater reputation for wit than the Bar. Nor does any profession deserve it more. Prominent amongst them for brilliancy, as for every other divine quality, are her Majesty's judges. Not that they are all equal in splendour. I will not pay even these exalted personages a compliment at the expense of truth. Some of them have tried all their lives, and gone to their family mausoleums without making a joke. Wit, like other natural productions, is born, not made. It may truly be said that Providence makes raspberries, and man makes jam. I am now to blind the reader with the dazzling brilliancy of Baron —, one of the greatest wits who ever adorned the English bench. But let not the reader think wit comes with the wig, and that the same barber who puts on the one endows them with the other. Wit in a judge might not be wit in a barber; it is not so much the thing said as the person who says it. No doubt by nature all judges are witty, but many spoil their gifts by outwitting themselves. Nature never fails to accomplish her purpose unless Art comes to her assistance. Nature has often made a wit, whom Art has turned into a fool.

Most public men's reputations are made by waiters who tell their wives and talk about the great men's sayings in the public-house parlour. Indeed, it may be said, as a rule, that only waiters have the true

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appreciation of dinner-table wit. The Baron's reputation was thus formed in all the circuit towns in England, until the lord-lieutenants themselves used to ask their friends, "Have you heard the Baron's last?"

The fat, panting, wheezy twenty-two stone waitership at his Lordship's lodgings, where we now are, knew all her Majesty's judges much better than I did: in fact I did not know them at all; and he used to laugh so after he had been waiting on the Baron, that his wife complained that he shook the bed in his sleep, and used to mutter, "Oh that there Baron! He'll kill me, will that there Baron. I shall die o' larfter!"

I was but a junior, and therefore a good way off from this great judge; and although I strained my neck till it ached in order to catch sight of him, my view was continually obstructed by the fiery occultation of a globular red nose, belonging to a Queen's Counsel, which was ever passing before the disc of the central luminary.

Opposite the Baron was his brother judge, quite a gentlemanly-looking man, and next to him a Queen's Counsel with a demure face, warranted not to smile. He was the most deferential man I ever saw; and had we been in Turkey I should have thought him the chief eunuch of the palace. Instead of laughing, he respectfully put his napkin before his face, and turned his eyes up at the Baron in the most beseeching attitude, and burst out crying. So far as the joke was concerned I should not wonder at it. But if laughter was impossible, he bowed with profound reverence to everything the Baron said. This he did

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so often that I caught the habit, and began bowing too, like a Chinese mandarin; and when he made a perpendicular slit with his lips, which was intended for a smile, I put my napkin up, and laughed politely behind it, then coughed, and wiped my eyes as though I had actually laughed till I wept.

Near me were two young counsel, who talked together the whole evening about some County Court case in which they had been engaged. They were on either side of me, and talked over my head, over my plate, and as I leant forward dodged one another behind my back.

Presently there was a muffled roar of laughter round his Lordship, admiringly loud, but respectfully controlled. The Baron had evidently lighted his set piece. I think he laughed even more than any one else: certainly he was louder. The pink-faced Queen's Counsel worked away at his head, and up and down it went with admiration and respectful deference.

I heard the fat waiter laugh, as it were, behind his own back in wheezy concatenations: I was afraid he would choke, and think he would have done so, had not one of the maids unfastened his stock and thumped him on the back. This will give some idea of what a judge's wit is like. The thump on the back was like the going off of a piece of ordnance, and the effect was that it discharged laugh, cough, and asthmatic wheeze at one explosion.

I leant forward, hoping to catch the judge's eye; for at dinner I had heard it was the right thing to do: again that terrible satellite, the red nose, interfered with my prospect, and possibly with my prospects in

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life; for if you only laughed at the Baron, he would do anything for you.

Meanwhile the County Court stars were revolving round one another at a great rate: they seemed annoyed at the interruption of their dialogue, and the louder the laughter the more loudly they raised their voices above it—like a boatswain in a storm.

I did not know whether I might inquire what the joke was of my opposite neighbour, but after great consideration and weighing of consequences, I ventured to do so.

“That’s just it,” said a young junior.

“What’s it?” I inquired.

“The joke.”

“What joke?”

“The joke is that everybody laughs when the Baron laughs: it’s the greatest fun out.”

I asked the waiter in an aside whisper.

“Thought I should ha’ busted. That there Baron’s a corshun, sir—O *dear*, dear, ain’t he a corshun, sir? as my wife says; George, she says, I hope——”

He was again interrupted, so I lost the answer to my question.

This man was a privileged person with judges and bar: the former liked him as the best audience for their jokes, and the latter for his quaint sayings and profound knowledge of the judges’ idiosyncrasies.

Upon this subject I shall some day give his views.

When he returned to my chair, he said, “Oh that there Baron, sir!”

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As I wanted the joke for my Memoirs I begged him to tell me what it was, so that I could write it on my cuff.

He laughed again. "*It was that one about the goose, sir,*" he said. "To hear his Lordship tell it, sir, in his wonderful larfable way, sir—it always sets me off—as my wife says when she hears me in bed of a night, 'George,' she says, 'you bin havin' that goose story agin—I knows you have—I knows the laugh, George.'"

I heard his Lordship talking a great deal about Wales. This pleased me, for I had spent much time there, and my ancestors were connected with many of their emperors and kings. As we were going, I said to his Lordship, "My Lord, I know Wales."

"Do you?" said his Lordship, shaking me warmly by the hand. "I am delighted to meet you."

"*North* Wales, especially," I said.

He dropped my hand instantly, as if it burnt him, and looked at me with that severe frown which characterised that great man when anything displeased him.

The night turned out wet, and, having enjoyed my pipe over a good fire in my sitting-room, I went to bed. I had not lain down more than a few minutes when my ears were disturbed by a mumbling noise under my window, as of men talking. I was so annoyed that I got up, threw open the window, and begged them to move on a little. Judge of my surprise when I discovered it was my two friends still discussing their County Court case, as they stood out of the rain under the shelter of the projecting roof.

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This will give the reader an idea of what "shop" means.

I heard that his Lordship, at the next dinner party, laughed heartily at my blundering simplicity, and told the story against me, saying—

"I was speaking of H.R.H., doncherknow?"

VIII. A GLIMPSE AT CHURCHIANITY; THE "DEAR BARON" ONCE MORE; THE DEAR BARON ALWAYS PATRONISED THE CHURCH

As I was supposed to belong to "a good family," I was now, after my fifth year of idleness, devoted mainly to the study of character, getting on very well in my profession, and taken notice of by persons of "position." Indeed I was received into the "best families." On the 18th of July, 18—, I had the honour to receive an invitation to a garden party at Lambeth Palace. It was, as a matter of course, a brilliant assembly. Ecclesiastical dignitaries, Ministers of State, ladyships of every degree, fashionable judges, aristocratic curates who knew how "to wait"; fashionable, professional, and amateur beauties, nobility and gentry, (ancient and modern), foreign ambassadors and other distinguished personages were there. "The dear bishop," a celebrated wit, was there; while, sauntering in ponderous meditation, came the Master of the Temple, as if he were the kingdom of heaven in his own person, smiling the smile of the just man made perfect, and showing to the world what an ecclesiastical Christian ought to be.

Suddenly a ripple of beautiful laughter animated the scene. "Was it the dear bishop again?" asked Lady Steeple, who worshipped bishops as part of her Apostolic creed. Her Ladyship was one of a group of resplendent Church beauties under a sycamore tree. "*Isn't* he delightful?" her Ladyship asked, as she watched her divinity in the distance. "So *very*

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original! *Is not he?*" "I *really* think his jokes," said Lady Belfry, "do more good than his sermons. They have such point, and are so penetrating, so delightfully cutting, there is no necessity for confession. He knows everybody's sins."

"You are very naughty," said Lady Steeple; "but here comes the dear major. Let us hear what *he* says. His opinion is always worth having, for he agrees with everybody."

"His grace looks very fit," said the major, lifting his hat.

"See that tall fellow with the orchid? He's the new millionaire from Chicago."

"*Pigs?*" drawled Belfry, pulling up her scarifying glass. "Pigs, my dear major? No; *surely* not pigs?"

"*That's Chicago Jones*, is it?" asked Lady Steeple. "And the lady? *Who* is the lady?"

"Dear Lady Christmas's protegée. Her ladyship's going to present her."

"Who next, I wonder?" said Belfry with a sneer. "The wife of a Portland convict, I suppose?"

"You are quite too bad, my dear," said Steeple. "But *is* Chicago Jones *pigs*, major? You know everything. I really could not endure pigs."

"Gambling, I'm *told*," answered the military officer.

"Come, now; that's better," said Belfry. "Gambling is at least aristocratic."

Meanwhile the jocular bishop approached the group where Chicago Jones was standing, when our dear Baron came up full of all that bland suavity which distinguished his intercourse with the fashionable world. He at once made a joke at Chicago Jones's expense, which drew from the millionaire the retort

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that he "guessed that in his country that would be called a *chestnut* which had come over with the Puritans, and had been knocking about in Pennsylvania ever since."

The dear Baron tried no other chestnut that day, but with good-humoured condescension turned away, and, slapping the archbishop familiarly on the back, asked how his Grace was, declaring that he thought the grand old palace looked more than ever the bulwark of Christianity.

The dear Baron could talk most eloquently when he pleased on divine subjects. That cursory observation, thrown off merely at random, found its way into all the papers, headed, "Opinion of the learned Baron on the Christian faith."

Next the Baron's attention was attracted by a superb and princely lady, whom he "duchessed" half-a-dozen times a minute (she was a dowager), and stared at politely through his eyeglass as though she were the statue of the famous Venus de Medici. She was a handsome woman, and the Baron honoured her by coughing politely almost in her face. After a little conversation he asked if the duchess had seen this and that member of the royal family lately, always mentioning them by their Christian names; and was good enough to assure her Grace how pleased he was that her Majesty was looking so well, and that he had never seen the dear Queen look better than last night at dinner.

A notable foreign gentleman now came upon the scene, and as we shall see more of him hereafter, I may as well give a sketch of his appearance so that the reader may know him again. He was of middle

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height, slim, with olive complexion, dark piercing eyes, an aquiline nose, black hair, and heavy moustache; exquisitely dressed, and of refined manner. He was one of Society's pets, soon to become a full-grown lion. He was known as "the Prince," and as he was a member of the Middle Temple I had the honour of occasionally meeting his Highness. He too was one of Lady Christmas's protégées. He was in the best society, and therefore was appreciated by the Baron, as well as others of her Majesty's judges, who invariably honour the best people.

The Baron put his arm with judicial fondness round the neck of the young neophyte, called him "dear boy," and inquired how he was getting on. But the judicial dignitary was interrupted in his emotions by the arrival of another personage, one of the world's greatest financiers. Instantly the Baron put his hand on the financier's heart, and addressing him as *my dear Fearrdy*, hoped he was well.

"My dear Fearrdy" had never seen the judicial personage before, except at a public dinner. Now came the sensation of the day. Peers might come and go; duchesses might smile or frown; it was transitory; but when my dear Lady Patroness came everything and every one smiled. Exquisitely beautiful and beautifully dressed, her Ladyship stood in the midst of that brilliant assembly most brilliant of them all. Every one seemed to feel her presence. For myself, I should say it was her loving nature, her beautiful personality and intellectuality in spite of her little vanities, that made the lower classes worship her. Bah! have we not all our faults?—except the Baron and Sir Ralph? Sir Ralph had followed her Lady-

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ship, mounted like Don Quixote on a beast that might have been a rocking-horse, for all the go there was in him. But man and beast were not unlike, so far as face and pace were concerned, and the solemnity of both.

Another young man was there, whom I must not omit from my catalogue of greatnesses, and whom we shall meet again. His name was Jonas Stump—a thick-set, stocky young man, with far more conceit than brains, and more pride than wit to enjoy it. His father was one of the richest men in the county of Yorkshire, whose first hope and greatest ambition was to found a family and ennoble it.

Having introduced the reader to this earthly paradise, where, if a serpent crawls, the reader does not see him, I take my leave, for it is time I went to other scenes. And as I pass the dear Baron I hear what I presume was the "*goose story*" being told to Lady Belfry.

IX. A GLEAM OF CHRISTIANITY

IF I followed Sir Roger's Journal strictly, I should relate in this place a number of wonderful incidents that occurred during the summer vacation: but a single volume cannot half contain the matter which has been recorded by the celebrated man.

I come therefore to a page headed "A Gleam of Christianity":—

While (says the Journal) I was a student, I made the acquaintance of a young man nobly born, with a brilliant intellect, and an excellent demeanour, whose name was Fletcher. He seemed to possess all the best and most beautiful traits of the human character: all that adorn and elevate our nature. After awhile he was called, not to the bar, but to a far higher sphere of duty. He abandoned hopes of fame, wealth, and society, all of which he might have enjoyed: took holy orders, and went as a missionary of the Gospel to the most loathsome dens which are to be found at the East End of London. To be sure he believed in God, for he strove mightily for the redemption of the wretchedest of His creatures: nor did he seek their redemption only in the world to come. He believed in the redemption of *this* life from its sin and misery.

On a gloomy November afternoon I was making a call on my friend. He was just setting forth to visit a young girl who was dying in a garret. He had found her the previous night in a state of helplessness too painful to describe. I accompanied him by his express wish, and we proceeded to a dark

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and narrow street where few would live who were not skulking from justice. It was a street where no constable was permitted to visit alone ; and when one saw the faces that scowled at you from doorways and windows, peeping, as if in dread of their lives, no one would wonder that the officers of justice were forbidden to risk their lives in such a place, which was the haunt of the worst of characters. We passed, however, unnoticed, except that some, even amongst this brutal group, touched their hats to the clergyman. Some seemed to wait for him to speak, and they were not disappointed. A word here and there he uttered in no spirit of upbraiding, but in a tone that marked his sympathy with their troubles.

“ How is she ? ” he asked, as he met a haggard old woman coming from the girl’s room. The woman shook her head.

“ Not gone ? ” he asked.

“ No, sir, but she ain’t for long ; it’s a pity she don’t give her name—but they never do ; she’s a *lady*, sir—you can see that.” We passed on, and I remained on the landing while my friend went in. Previously to doing so he begged me, in a whisper, under no circumstances to leave the landing without him. I understood the hint and remained. The door was ajar, and I saw a strange and solemn scene. A pale, emaciated, but still beautiful face, lay on the pillow as of one who had already passed away : but her eyes shone with the gleam of life, and I saw them look in grateful recognition on another beautiful face which was watching her with tender interest. It was the face of Sister Ruth, one of that blessed order

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of saints who are known as "the Little Sisters of the Poor." She was holding the patient's hand, and smoothing back the long auburn tresses from her forehead.

Harry went to her and knelt beside the bed. I turned away, for imagination began to work strangely upon me ; I felt a sensation in my throat. The girl's only hope was to die and be forgotten. She had given no name, history, or antecedents ; no clue to her birthplace or parents. Yes, there was one other hope she had, which Harry told me as we went away ; it was to see her mother again : but not *here* ! That was more to her than the hope of redemption itself : to meet *her* where there could be no shame, no remembrance of sin. "That," said Fletcher, "is a comfort to me, for I may, through that desire, awaken in her a belief in a future state of pardon and happiness."

Before my friend came out I once more glanced into the room ; the fascination was too strong for me to resist ; but were I ever such an artist, I would not try to paint that terrible picture, whose pathos touches me even now. It was no novelist's picture ; there was no ray of golden light of the setting sun through the lattice falling on her dishevelled head. It was a deepening twilight gloom settling down on the most woeful scene imagination can picture. I saw in the gloom Sister Ruth gently lifting the girl's head, while Harry was watching with intense interest but little hope. Soon all was hidden from me in the shadows and thickening gloom—and yet I believe, as I hope in Christianity, there was light breaking on the girl's mind. There was light in

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Ruth's eyes, as there ever is where human sympathy falls. It was a sad scene, and yet such a scene is a background on which Christianity throws its most beautiful tints : it was the scene of a broken heart and a healing love.

X. HOW ROGER WROTE TO A WEST
END FIRM OF PHILANTHROPISTS WHO
OFFERED TO LEND HIM MONEY;
HOW DAVID MACARTHY HAD A
LITTLE DINNER AT RICHMOND; AND
WHAT HAPPENED TO DAVID

As soon as I began to get on, that is, in the seventh year, I received the kindest offers of pecuniary assistance from unknown friends. Their wealth seemed as inexhaustible as their benevolence. I could have had any amount of money, upon almost any terms, from a West End firm whose mission in life was to help the impecunious. I had disinterestedly declined their assistance so many times, that I was ashamed of my seeming ingratitude, and took upon myself, by way of making amends, to act the good Samaritan on behalf of O. K. O'Toole, a most helpless member of the Harduppians, and others of my acquaintance, who were all manfully battling against duns, judgment summonses, and sheriff's officers. In furtherance of this happy thought, I wrote the following letter to Messrs. Hardcash, Trappem, and Company :—

DEAR SIRS,—While thanking you for this renewed instance of your kindness, and regretting that I am unable to avail myself of your generous offer, permit me to say that I have several esteemed friends who possess, to a remarkable degree, the qualifications which recommend the needy to your benevolence. O. K. O'Toole, Esquire, is a barrister of long stand-

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ing, having been called fourteen years, and never had a brief. David Macarthy occupies an equally eligible position, and is absolutely without means ; but he is, however, a young man of great promise. I. O. U. Walker is a man of letters and has fair prospects ; hoping as he does to realise a widow. I may add, with regard to I. O. U., that he has never had any visible means of existence since he sold his watch ; and further, that he is well known in the best circles, monetary and non-monetary.

I can assure you with the greatest confidence that these gentlemen not only come up to your ideal of “being *in want of a little temporary assistance*”—but go a great deal further ; their requirements are most *extensive and likely to be permanent*. “*No inquiries*” will suit them, as they ever avoid them. “*Secrecy*” they love ; and as for “SECURITY,” they would resent it as an insult. Should you, therefore, feel it to be your duty to make these gentlemen an advance, I can assure you most sincerely that they will be eternally indebted to you.

I am, Dear Sirs, &c., &c.

I had no sooner despatched this letter than there was a tremendous noise on my stairs of clattering feet and clamorous voices ; men talking, as it seemed, all together, and in every kind of language.

This thunderous babel was caused by seven or eight young fellows, in a state of intense excitement, talking their hardest against one another. Three were Irish, one Scotch, two Welsh, one Bahamian, and one Gold Coast. They broke into the room with a crash, and I could make out nothing from their

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jabber, although their gestures indicated that they were suffering from the old epidemic, which has ever made the Temple its headquarters.

If only that economic principle of supply equalling the demand could have been adopted among these learned societies, the Inns of Court, how happy they would have been! Alas! for the failure of supply! it has been the ruin of many a young man in the very heyday of his prime! It was a curious thing, that, whenever young fellows were at the worst stage of this distressing disease, they came to *me* as to a universal physician; nor had they ever to complain of the quantity or quality of my advice. In addition to this, they looked upon me as a BANK upon which they could draw whenever they pleased. In the present instance there was quite a run upon it—David Macarthy leading with a magnificent Irish yell; a kind of “Yoiks, i’ faith, found, me bhoys!” This gentleman was originally intended for the Church, but something went wrong with his theology one Sunday evening at some tea gardens where David had taken his sister, and he was not ordained. Of course the tea garden and his sister were not insuperable objections to his being called to the Bar.

As he rushed towards me, he hallabaloed the swiftest Irish I ever heard; it was like a thundering waterfall; but I gathered this much:—

“Now, Roger, my dear bhoys, like a good fellow, as you are, lend me a fi’-pun note till to-morrow. I always said, says I, if I ever want a fi’-pun note, I’ll go to Roger, who’ll do it in a moment.”

“What’s the matter?” I inquired.

“Matther!” said he, “everything’s the matther.”

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I always said, if I am ever in difficulties and like to go to the devil, I'll go to Roger—didn't I say so, Macdonald?"

"On my oath, you did," responded that witness, and struck the table a heavy blow by way of corroboration.

"You're the best fellow under the sun," said David in his sincere manner; "but the fact is," he whispered, "a lady's in difficulties!"

"What!" I cried, "a lady! where's my hat?—my last shilling on her safe deliverance!"

"Oh," grinned Murphy, "it's not so bad as that."

Amidst the general laughter I heard David remonstrating—

"Now, Murphy, my dear fellow, stop that joking; you see Roger's going to help us, like a good fellow."

"Yes," said another, "with his *last* shilling."

"I'll bless you till my dying day, Roger, for a fi'-pun note," said David pleadingly.

"Damned cheap at the price too," rejoined Murphy; "but, David, tell him the truth, it goes farthest; Roger, she's in pawn."

"Pawn!" cried I, my blood boiling. "Conceal nothing! David, tell me all! how is this? what do you mean? in *pawn*!"

"There's the ticket," said David, handing me the hotel bill; "it's a deal of money for a breakfast, Roger."

"Who *is* the lady?" I inquired, "and how came she in pawn, and how could they take a lady in pledge?"

"Not unless her health required it," said Murphy.

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"Silence, Murphy, devil take you!" shouted David, looking at me inquiringly.

"She's a *sister*," said the Bahamian.

"Where's my wig?" I cried; "where's my clerk? I will apply for a *habeas corpus*! the devil himself couldn't hold her against a *habeas corpus*. Where's my Littlejohn on Coke?"

"Stir the fire," said Murphy.

"But why are you all laughing?" I cried angrily. "There's some mystery about this; *is* the whole thing a lark?"

"Man alive," said the Bahamian, "it's no lark at all for the lady, I assure you; she's locked up in the room where they breakfasted at the hotel; there's no secret about it; there's nothing to be ashamed of; and they would have collared David's portmanteau and the lady's bag as well, only David was a little too quick for them."

"Portmanteau!" I exclaimed; "do you take your portmanteau with you to breakfast?"

David laughed: it was impossible to avoid doing so, for they all roared at my innocence.

"How came you to take your sister, David?" I inquired.

"I did not say she was *David's* sister," said the Bahamian.

"Then whose sister is she?" I demanded; "I must know."

"Then you'd better ask her," said Murphy, "if that's material."

My eyes opened! "David," said I, "I must refer you to her brother."

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“Nay ; but, Roger, everybody knows what a good fellow you are. I always said if——”

“But I haven’t a sovereign in the universe,” said I.

“Then why the devil didn’t you say so at first ?” he rejoined, “and save us all this trouble. Come, me bhoys, we’ll try old ‘Waterworks.’”

“Waterworks” was so called because he had a great many shares in that industry. He was a rich man, and had befriended a good many when in serious difficulties, but I think he drew the line at such misfortunes as David’s.

XI. AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE WHOM WISE MEN AVOID AND FOOLS TRUST

THERE is no place where the world seems so far away and so small as in a great cathedral. The jarring discords of the noisy little men who seek fame, and live on notoriety and noise, are hushed here ; the muffled roll of traffic is but a tiny echo that makes the silence more intense, while the whispering arches lull us into a reverie of peaceful dreams. In St. Paul's Cathedral I am especially soothed with this sense of isolation, and there I can contemplate the littleness of existence and the worthlessness of all the glitter that leads men to distinction or ruin, sometimes to both.

I was sitting in this contemplative mood one morning in St. Paul's, when I saw a man who seemed to have come from Australia. He was dressed for the part of an Antipodean traveller ; and yet his yellow tourist suit was one which a gentleman might wear who had never been beyond the English border. He was evidently a stranger to London, if you might judge by the air of curiosity with which he stared at the monuments ; and yet I had a feeling that, while he seemed absorbed in Copenhagen, the Nile, and Trafalgar, he was looking at me, and I felt the uncomfortable sensation of being watched.

After making a discursive tour, he came towards me : which was a relief. He asked one or two trivial questions, especially as to the architect, the dome, and so on.

I never object to talking to strangers unless they

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are fools. Rogues I have no objection to, and generally admire their ingenuity and their acting. Here was a man to my liking, a thorough rogue as ever lived. We soon became familiar, for I could act the part of simpleton as well as he. He told me he had just arrived from Australia, and asked if I had ever been there, then sat down and began telling me what a fine place it was, and what a chance there was for our surplus population. Then he soliloquised over the various styles of architecture which the cathedral exhibited, "Corinthian, Doric, Ionic, Greek, Gothic;" inquired if I had seen St. Peter's at Rome, and on my informing him that I had not, he held up his hands like one in despair.

"Not seen St. Peter's at Rome!"

"St. Peter's," said he, "is larger, it is true, but I give the preference to St. Paul's."

I was much obliged to him, although I did not know what good it did to St. Paul's.

Those who have never experienced the fascination of another's will—I do not mean a testamentary document, but mental influence—may not understand me when I say that I was amused and excited at yielding to this kind of spell. The gentleman worked upon me with almost mesmeric effect: much as a stoat works upon a rabbit, when he slowly but surely follows in his track; and when I was, as he thought, sufficiently under his influence, he told me that he was brought up to the medical profession, but that his uncle, a millionaire in Australia, had sent for him some years ago, and having no children, had left him an enormous fortune, which he was at a loss to know what to do with.

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I congratulated him, but said the possession of so much wealth must entail many anxieties and responsibilities.

"True," he said; "enormous! It is a constant worry; but it is not my own share in the will which is the greatest burden: it is a clause which makes me trustee of a hundred thousand pounds left for the purpose of assisting '*Struggling Geniuses!*'"

This statement brought me to myself, for I was ever a friend of that class of persons; and besides, I knew so many of them.

"Are those the words of the bequest?" I asked.

"The very words, sir, '*Struggling Geniuses.*' You must be a genius, and you must struggle, to entitle you to the benefit of the trust."

"I should think," said I, "the clause could *not* give you much difficulty; but, tell me, are there no persons in Australia answering that description?"

"Yes," said he; "but I forgot to tell you they must be native residents in Britain and Ireland; and, mark this, *domiciled in England.*"

"Dear me!" I exclaimed, "I wonder the old gentleman had such a predilection for a place that he never lived in."

"Do you happen to know any persons answering the class mentioned in the will?" he asked.

"*Know* any!" said I, "we're *full* of them—in Ireland they grow wild; in Scotland they are so numerous that it is difficult to find a distinguished man at all."

"Yes, sir," said my traveller; "but we must be careful to distinguish between *geniuses* and *asses.*"

"True; but what do you understand by *Genius?*"

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"Genius," he replied, "is intellectual ability of the highest order, combined with painstaking activity."

"I know a great many of *them*," I said; "poets, novelists, actors, lawyers, and——"

"Hold!" said he; "I don't think much of lawyers."

"They are the most likely candidates for your money," I answered; "you'll find them generally up to the mark. Try and take one of them in."

"I would rather keep them out," he answered, "but perhaps you can assist me. I want to get rid of this money and return to Australia, where I have a beautiful estate, a charming wife, and, although I say it, a beautiful family."

Of course I was aware that the "confidence trick" was being worked with the clumsy art which captivates so many fools, and was curious to see how far the rogue would get before he discovered that I was not the fool he took me for.

"Suppose," said I, "you were to establish a home for *disappointed* geniuses."

"Too many of them," said he, "and the words of the will are '*struggling*'; there are not quite so many of *that* class, I think. Genius always wants to be taken by the hand."

"We have a number of lunatic asylums," said I, "but no provision for fools."

"Fools never go mad," he replied.

"No," said I, "that is true; their brain puddle is not big enough for a storm."

"To convince you I am in earnest," he said, taking out a roll of bank notes, "look at these."

Alas! At this moment a gentleman with a somewhat foreign appearance passed. He was elegantly

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dressed, handsome, with olive complexion, dark, scintillating eyes, and an exquisite manner such as fops of the period of the Regency assumed. I had seen him before, but could not recollect where.

"Suppose," continued the Australian, "I entrust you with these notes to disburse to the best of your judgment by way of carrying out my uncle's wishes ; what would you say to that ?"

"I should say you were a fool," I answered.

"Exactly!" he retorted, "I *knew* you would say so ; precisely ; you would think I was a fool—because——"

He waited for me to complete the answer, but I said nothing.

"*Because*," he continued, in the conceited manner of a pedagogue examining a pupil, "*because* I should be reposing confidence in a perfect stranger who had given me no reason to believe that he had any confidence in *me*. Exactly! that is sound reasoning, and shows your good sense. You are a man of the world, sir, and *not* likely to be taken in."

I could scarcely refrain from laughing at the barefaced impostor's effrontery.

"We are all liable to be taken in," I answered.

"True ; but now suppose I were to say, in order to show my *bona fides*, let us know a little more of each other before we do business, let us exchange confidences ; let us dine together at The Bull and Mouth ; what do you say to *that* ?"

As he was speaking, the foreign-looking gentleman passed again, and, no doubt, gave him a signal.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "I think I have met

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that gentleman at my uncle's — I will return immediately."

As the rogue approached the *gentleman* the latter gave him a disdainful look and passed on. I went away in another direction, satisfied with this little experience as to the mode of working the confidence trick. I had been acquainted with the process professionally, but had never acquired the knowledge as to how so clumsy a deception is made to deceive. After all, character is the most difficult of studies, and none of us can ever see more than the outline.

XII. A LEGEND OF ROGER'S JUNIOR CIRCUIT DAYS: THE MILLIONAIRE AND "OLD BEN THE FIDDLER"

DURING my circuit peregrinations I became acquainted with many strange characters and diversities of human nature. A remarkable man whom I sometimes visited lived in one of the most beautiful districts of the Midland Counties. His name was Joseph Strange, and, but for his extraordinary wealth, there would not have been the development of those eccentricities of character which make him a proper subject for these memoirs. While engaged in his successful money-making operations it had been his ambition to be a "county man." His wealth accumulated so fast that it became almost as unendurable as poverty. The more money he acquired the more unhappy he seemed to be; for money could not give him, without education, the position he sought to attain.

He was not altogether an uneducated man, and he possessed a certain degree of unrefined taste in some matters with a lack of it in others. That he longed for a title goes without saying. But sometimes a king will not recognise mere wealth as a qualification for the peerage. It is always, however, a sufficient qualification for a justice of the peace; and Squire Strange, as he was called, had attained that dignity without any other aptitude whatever.

He was now seventy-four, a hale, healthy old man, a county gentleman, a deputy-lieutenant, and a discontented millionaire. His mansion, like himself,

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was in the style of modern gentility and ostentation, although some parts of it imitated an ancient order of architecture ; and yet there was no trace on window, architrave, balustrade, or gateway, which told of early splendour or picturesque antiquity. It was bold, bald, and blank. It was neither manor-house, moated grange, hall, nor priory. It more resembled a gigantic modern inn, built for all comers, and all kinds of goers, the fast and the slow. It lacked the refinement of culture and the modesty of breeding.

Mrs. Strange was the fitting mistress of this unlordly mansion. She had all the coldness of the stucco development, without those feminine graces that soften the unattractive and add the sweetest charm to the beautiful.

Her ambition to be "of the county" not having been gratified, she chafed and fretted as if the county had done her some grievous bodily harm. It was to be regretted, perhaps, that Society had not received her, because she would have lost some, at least, of the vulgar pride which, like other weeds, flourishes most where there is least culture.

There was an only child, a daughter by the first wife, *Marguerite*, who was the opposite at all points to her step-mother. It would have been a triumph for the step-mother to get rid of this daughter altogether, so that she herself might have been left sole possessor and sole devisee of all the old man's wealth. Most successful men are disappointed ; because there is always a point which they have not attained. That point makes their lives a failure. Those who do attain all that ambition prompted them to strive for, are yet disappointed that it falls short of expectation.

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Joseph Strange had miscalculated the power of money. The blessings he had were poisoned by discontent. He was even unhappy at the thought that one day he must leave his wealth to the enjoyment of others, who had never laboured for it. He had seen the end of all that he thought perfection in this world. Poor man, he was too rich!

But he embarked in everything that fancy suggested might bring him pleasure. He procured a fine breed of guinea-pigs, and took great interest in them for a while; but soon discovered that you cannot get much happiness out of a guinea-pig. Next he tried pug-dogs, pigeons, shire-horses, shorthorns, south-downs, even racers, all with the same result. From the animal world he went to the horticultural, and spent enormous sums on tulips, roses, and orchids. Then he collected snuff-boxes curiously carved and inlaid, postage stamps of all countries, for which sometimes he paid for a single stamp as much as would have posted all the letters of his life. Next he crammed his house with antique furniture, family portraits of unknown persons by unknown artists. The portraits grinned at him, as well they might. Next came punch-bowls and teapots. But if you want to be happy with these things you must have conviviality with the former and scandal with the latter.

Modern pictures came next, and so thick that they were piled up against the wall six deep. He could only see them in heaps; artistic skill was nothing.

Then old Strange would wander about his grounds in a listless sort of manner with his "paddle," as he had seen other squires do, if haply he could find happi-

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ness in meditation or a *mole*. The mole was the best idea, for it involved the element of sport; and when he saw one of these little creatures suspended from the stick he had set for that purpose, he really looked as if his lifelong efforts after happiness had been crowned with success.

There was one favourite spot where old Strange used to rest: it was where a stile crossed a footpath leading through his grounds from the public road. It was in reality a right-of-way. But he had resolved to stop it, and had caused a board to be put up informing the public that any one venturing to use this path would be treated as a trespasser and prosecuted *with the utmost rigour of the law*.

This was a little excitement for the old gentleman's declining years. The public took no notice of the board except that the boys unmercifully pelted it, and covered the ground all round it with stones and other missiles.

The old man used to sit on the stile, and if anybody came to pass over it, he abused him unmercifully, and threatened him with direful consequences.

"No business here," he used to say, "I'll have you to Derby. You see that board there, don't you? Well, what does that board say? This is my land, as far away as you can see, it's all mine." That was his humble frame of mind until he took a religious turn. He'd have a try at that.

This thought came through hearing the old vicar preach a sermon on the Prodigal Son: not an original subject, but new to old Strange. The vicar said, in applying the text, he hoped we were *all* prodigal sons.

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“Well,” thought old Strange, as he sat on the stile and tapped the ground with his paddle, “how on earth could the vicar apply the text to me? I can’t see how *I* am a prodigal. I’ve *saved* money all my life, and never spent a penny more than I was obliged to.” Just as he arrived at this scriptural difficulty into which he had got the vicar, an old man with a green baize fiddle-bag came round the corner from the inside of the grounds.

“Halloa!” shouted old Strange, “who the h—are you, I wonder: do you see that board? What’s *your* business? This property’s mine: all mine, as far as you can see, and I don’t allow trespassers. Off with you, and don’t let me catch you this side of the hedge again, or I’ll put you where you’ll be the wrong side of a wall, and where all tramps like you ought to be. It’s my property, this!”

“Glad to hear it, sir, and hope you enjoy it. There’s nothing like having something. *This* is my property in this *bag*.”

The old squire gave a hiss. “Property indeed! Call that property?”

“Yes, sir,” said the fiddler, blowing off the dust. “It isn’t *landed* property, you see, that I blow away as not worth having, and it must all be blown away with the last breath; but this of mine is valuable property, because it brings me happiness. I get as much pleasure out of it, begging your pardon, sir, as you do out of yours!”

“How d’ye make that out?” asked the squire.

“Well, I make it out like this, sir, that this violin can send me right away out of all the cares and worries of the world, and I warrant your property

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pins you down to 'em. Why, just now you were miserable at the idea of a man like me setting foot on your grounds!"

"Aye, and if you do it again I'll have you to prison, so I tell you. We don't have fiddlers here. Can't you do better than fiddle? Was man sent into the world to fiddle? It's a vagabond life, it's a rogue and vagabond's life, is fiddling. Why not take up with something useful? There's hedging and ditching!"

"Much obliged, sir, every one to his taste, I prefer my old fiddle. *You* carry a stick and I carry a stick—this one;" and he drew out his bow. "Now this stick, sir, will give me more pleasure in a minute than yours would give you in a thousand years."

"How's that, then?" asked the squire. "I've heard fiddles scraped before now, and seen fools dance, but what then?—why, nothing."

"Well, sir, if you will let me, I'll show what pleasure I can give you."

"Well, let's hear a scrape, then: but mind, you must stop when I go like that—" here he jobbed his paddle on the ground.

"All right, sir," said the fiddler, screwing up his pegs. "Now then." He commenced playing very softly, and there came a succession of such sweet plaintive notes that old Strange seemed inclined to fall asleep, while his head gradually rested on his breast. One cannot guess his thoughts; or, if he thought at all, he seemed to be in a trance. Tears rolled down his cheeks. I wonder if he had visions of the past!

He never gave the signal to stop, and when the last sounds died away, seemed to wake up as one

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from sleep. He turned away without speaking, towards his mansion : then bethought himself, and coming back offered the musician half-a-crown.

“Thank you,” said the latter, “but I don’t play that music for money, only for love.”

They parted, and the fiddler returned his instrument to its bag with the fond tenderness of a mother putting her child to rest.

• • • • • •
This was my old acquaintance “Ben,” whom I will introduce to the reader in his proper place and time.

XIII. THE COURTSHIP OF “LITTLE CHIPPS”

As I was ruminating in my chambers one afternoon, my most worshipful brother, Timothy M'Sweeney, came in. We lighted our pipes, and he commenced talking about our “Little Chipps,” whom everybody liked and nobody would trust. This was a cheerless prospect to M'Sweeney, because his own credit had so long been exhausted ; and, as his friends one by one became known, he was reduced to such a position that he could neither get into debt nor out of it. I, therefore, seemed to be his only remaining chance, or, as he termed it, his sheet-anchor, the sheet being a sheet of notepaper.

The said Chipps was possessed of one valuable quality, and that was his “magnificent conceit.” “Chipps,” he said, “has a chest of drawers full of rejected manuscripts, which he believes were refused because they are *too clever for the age.*”—“Well,” said M'Sweeney, “I'll tell you what I have done. I thought I must do something for Chipps, and if anything will do for him it's what I have advised, that is, if he succeeds.”

“What is that ?” I inquired.

“I have advised him to *marry* ;” said M'Sweeney, whereupon I burst out laughing.

“You may laugh,” said he, “but what other prospect is there before him ? What other chance is there of his getting a living ?”

“But the lady ?” I said.

“Oh, I introduced him to a rich mining woman

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who has an only daughter. The mother is tall, supercilious, and stout ; of a devil of a temper ; and proud as Lucifer himself."

"And the daughter?"

"Quite as tall, not very plain, nor altogether unpleasant ; she is young, and possessed of a goodish fortune, left by her father, besides her prospects, if the mother should ever die——"

"Halloa!" said I, as a knock came at the door—
"a brief?" No. It was Chipps himself.

"Talk of the old 'un," said M'Sweeney, "and in comes a chip of the old block."

"What a dry old rotten joke that is, M'Sweeney!" said Chipps.

"Never mind," said Mack ; "light your pipe and tell us all about your courtship. I see by your face you have made it all right."

"All right?" laughed Chipps. "Did you think I wanted so much mother-in-law as that?"

"Money! Chipps—money!"

"Beastly vulgar family though——"

"Did you see Miss Bodger?"

"See her!" said Chipps. "Yes, without a magnifying glass ; why, she's six feet two——"

"About."

"About! but who the devil wants a length like that? It's like buying a whole piece of calico to make a fellow a shirt. If I wanted to be on a level with her I should have to carry a pair of steps about with me."

"How did you like the mother? did she take to you?"

"Take to me?—rather! She put up a pair of

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glasses attached to a pole and looked at me as if she was hunting after a flea."

"Tell us all about it, Chipps, and we shall know what to think."

"Well, my dear boy, there is not much to tell: she soon came to the point; there is *that* about her that I admire. You must have told her I was a man of fortune, for at first she paid me every respect: hoped she would see me often, and talked a good deal about fashionable society; asked if I knew the Lawsons and the Spoonneys and the Boodles and a lot more. I said I knew some of them, and then I asked her if she knew the Cambridges and the Yorks and the Clarences and the Wales's!

"Up went her pole again.

"Then she alluded to investments and asked me if I had any particular liking.

"I said 'yes, I thought Havannahs as nice as any.'

"'What do you think of American railways?'

"'I prefer them,' said I, 'to English—they are quite as safe, and in the long run go farther.'

"Then we talked of fashionable topics, Goodwood, Ascot, and Lady Christmas's receptions, and as I knew nothing about them I talked pretty volubly, so that she had great difficulty in following, for I perceived she had not a very quick intellect, whatever might be the state of her pocket, and I think I may say I fairly talked the creature down. When I said I liked the idea of three per cents. the daughter left the room. Presently the mother looked at me in a manner that made my flesh creep. I daresay I told a prodigious number of lies, if the truth must be told, and I was sure she did not believe me. She put up her pole

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again, and looked at me as a detective would look at a thief. I could bear it no longer.

“‘Madam,’ I said, ‘if you are looking for a *pedigree*, which I daresay you would like to find, mine is a real scorcher—*Chippys*, madam—do you see, genealogical *tree*?’

“‘You call yourself a barrister?’ she said sneeringly.

“‘No, madam, my Benchers called me, and I’ve only been called once.’

“‘Indeed, sir!’ she sneered; ‘how *very* clever! we had a boilermaker once with just that turn of impudence.’

“‘Boiler?’ said I; ‘was it for washing purposes, or scalding pigs?’ She jumped up to her full height and towered above me.

“‘When,’ said I, ‘you have thought of the cutting repartee you intend, madam, I’ll call for an answer.’ I said this as I sidled to the door, for my impression was she intended to strike me.

“‘Who in the world *are* you?’ she asked.

“‘Strange, madam, I was just going to ask you the same question, especially after you mentioned the boiler; I hear they have *very* large boilers in *Chicago*!’

“‘You are a nice beauty,’ she said.

“‘Sorry I cannot return the compliment, madam, but that is impossible; really, the most partial friend——’

“‘Go!’ she roared, ‘and never let me see your face again.’

“‘And yet, madam, allow me to say, that if you should wish to extract information about me, you can

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go to *Pump* Court ; if you would like a shady retreat at any time, there's *Elm* Court ; and if to hide—well, your blushes——'

"Here she violently pushed me through the doorway, while I laughingly finished the sentence—'There's *Fig Tree* Court, madam.'

"When I got outside, would you believe it, the grand lady was actually making faces at me through the dining-room window ; of course, I returned the compliment, when she shook her fist—the fist, no doubt, with which she knocked the boilermaker down. Thus ended my pretensions to a mother-in-law, who, I believe, would have settled Bluebeard himself."

XIV. THE CELEBRATED COUNT DEVILLE: THE SOCIETY HERO

ANOTHER gentleman, whose acquaintance I had the honour of making at the Middle Temple, was the distinguished Count Deville. As his name implies, he was of foreign extraction. As already stated, I met him at the Archbishop's garden party. Subsequently I dined occasionally at his mess along with M'Sweeney and "Little Chipps." The Count liked Chipps, because Chipps looked up to him with a kind of boyish admiration: he liked M'Sweeney because M'Sweeney was the descendant of a line of Irish kings, and me because I was quiet and unassuming.

Society ladies not only admired Deville, but adored him. There was a charming mystery about the hero's birth and parentage. He was a kind of Lara and Childe Harold. Imagination had to fill in the outline of his personality. That he was a high personage every one believed, but no one knew the exact position he occupied in the land of his fathers. Nor was it quite certain what that land was.

Lady Christmas and Sir Ralph were his sponsors in Society; that was enough to ensure him a universal welcome. The judges of the land invited him to their houses: that was a sufficient guarantee of his accomplishments and talents. Ministers of State paid court to him, and even royalty patronised him. He sang in the Lord Chancellor's choir, where his Lordship himself sang, with great effect; and the consequence was that the Chancellor said Deville was the most promising young man at the Bar. If any one can make

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a promising barrister fulfil a Chancellor's expectations, his Lordship is the man. Deville's conversational powers were charming. His idea of the art of conversation was, not to attempt to display your learning, but to conceal your ignorance.

Fashion has always its pet in every walk of life : its favourite advocate, preacher, milliner, doctor, beauty, author, and barber. But it never had a more fashionable *lion* than Deville. He was the head of that illustrious section of Society which seeks admiration in shop windows, and fame in the mouths of fools. He was all things to all women. When he rode in the Park he was surrounded by a cavalcade of beauties. He was a knight of romance out of armour. And after the fair admirers had indulged their admiration in the Park, they feasted their eyes on his portraits in their albums. But he was not only the darling of their albums, he was the hero of their novels. He belonged to the best clubs and the most fashionable cliques. Indeed, to know Deville was to know everybody ; while not to know Deville was to be unknown.

One of the prettiest situations I have experienced was to see Society's beauties looking at him from under their eyelids and over their fans. Their dear eyes ! I wonder what their thoughts were ? Handsome is *not* as handsome does. Beauty will do things that are not beautiful, and which are sometimes even naughty. So the old proverb must go the way of a good many old proverbs that are made of sound rather than sense.

The melancholy Byronic expression of Deville attracted admirers, and added an extra charm to his

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placid features. The sweet darlings gazed into what they poetically called "the *dreamy depths of his orbs*;" themselves lost in a kind of ecstatic dreaminess which at last resolved itself into stupidity.

Some of them dreamed that the intellectual being was the heir to a dukedom; others that he had still higher pretensions—a native kingdom. But whatever he was, they marked his modesty in concealing it.

Deville acted on the sound principle of never denying anything good that is said of you. Society answered all its questions in his favour, while the touch of foreign taste with which he embellished his costume, and the foreign accent he gave to his conversation, increased the romance that surrounded his life, and lent a charm even to his classic features. Anything will make a lion interesting, even tickling his ears.

He often dined at Sir Ralph's, and her Ladyship got the most celebrated people to meet him. My Lady moved Society as though it were composed of marionettes. They danced to her bidding; while Sir Ralph, whose profound knowledge of human nature was everywhere recognised, proclaimed the young man as the most accomplished and brilliant of all the persons he had met in the course of his career. It took Sir Ralph a long time to say it; but, once said, it went farther to augment the young man's reputation than anything he could have done of himself.

But how wonderful is life! While this young prince, or whatever he might be, was at the very height of his leonine popularity, Society was startled one morning by the announcement of *the death of the Count's wife's mother!*

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“Count’s wife!” Society cried. Yes, sudden death of Count’s mother-in-law—most interesting paragraph! No one had ever heard of the Count’s wife. Society opened its eyes, as awaking from a dream, and yawned! Here was another romantic mystery indeed! Why had there been any secrecy? How the cups and saucers and tongues rattled at the tea-tables! What long puffs the gentlemen gave at their cigars at the dinner-tables! Who *was* the Countess? But what a curious accident! The mother-in-law was playing with a toy pistol, when it went off, and lodged the bullet in her brain. The mother-in-law had a life interest in her daughter’s fortune. Some time after the Countess died, and then there was another ruffling of Society’s plumage.

But the flood of conversation at length subsided, and left high and dry this one interesting *fact*, that Deville was a “first-class widower!” The spinsters all admired the chivalry of the man in not making love to any of them as he well might have done, and none of them the wiser. He had not committed bigamy with anybody. Chivalrous creature!

What a lion he was now! Lady Christmas had found out that he was of Hindoo extraction and a Rajah. Then he became a Maharajah. So easy are the steps to greatness! Paragraphs perpetually appeared in the Society papers about him, even to the number of lumps of sugar he took with his tea. He was in the chair at philanthropic meetings, and his gracious smile illuminated even learned associations. “There’s Deville!” cried the boys in the street. “There’s the Rajah!” cried the loungers in the Row. “Where’s the Maharajah?” asked the sweet ones at

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Goodwood. "Have you seen the Rajah?" was the byword of the drawing-room. "Is he not *sweet*?" whispered one young lady to another as they looked into the "unfathomable depths of his languid eyes," little thinking, poor fools, that unfathomable depths sometimes conceal a legion of devils. But what would Society do without its Devilles and its devils, its lions and its slaves?

Now came another social convulsion. The monarch was engaged to be married again! And what an engagement! A lady older than himself, the relict of "old Johnson," the millionaire meat contractor! Letitia Johnson was a motherly widow!

What a change came over Society! Lion-tamers and exhibitors turned up their eyes, as if appealing against their wrongs.

They asked, "Was he a *real* lion after all, or a mere adventurer?" Some asked one thing and some another; but the current of public opinion was setting in strongly against the lion. The more malignant asked, "Was the first wife really dead, don'cherknow? Did the pistol go off by accident that killed the mother-in-law? Was the lady's life insured?" Many of the fashionable darlings vowed that there was "*always* something about that man they did not like."

Meanwhile Letitia was unaffected by all this twaddle. She had caught the lion, and was taming him by her sweet disposition. She loved a quiet life, and the country would exactly suit her. They therefore bought a princely estate in the south of England and a very fine one in Scotland. Having settled affairs in this country, they resolved on a tour abroad. The monarch loved mountains; Letitia

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loved flowers. Their respective tastes could be gratified in the Austrian Tyrol.

Thither they went, and took up their abode in the hotel at ——. As the Maharajah travelled *incognito*, every one knew who he was, and the villagers paid homage to the man who was rich enough to pay for it.

The hotel was full. The season was at its height; and as greatness, like murder, "will out," Deville was the centre of attention and the admired of all comers.

The English pictorials had pictures of the hotel, and even of the rooms the king occupied, the antique bedstead on which he slept, and other articles in which the fashionable world takes an interest: his cigar-case, his mountaineering costume, his Swiss hat, and the cup out of which he drank. There were also picturesque descriptions of his excursions by "our special correspondent." Interviewers came, artists came, great people came, and the nobodies came. No royal personage ever received more homage and adulation.

The Maharanee loved botany, and had collected many specimens, which want of space forbids me to enumerate. It was quite an education for the Maharajah, who got to know the names of many of the mountain flowers, and he at length became quite as enthusiastic in collecting specimens as his dear consort. He would even climb the most difficult crags to obtain some rare and interesting flower. As they were united in love, so were they in this beautiful and innocent taste.

The heart of our hero, alas! was ever susceptible to the charms of beauty. He was a man, and, therefore, subject to man's weaknesses.

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It happened that an American lady, in all the glory of captivating widowhood, was staying at this hotel : and as all Americans have a predilection for titles, this lady soon admired the possessor of one so romantic and attractive. The widow was tall and slender, with aquiline nose and blazing black eyes. She called herself an American "gell" by way of impressing you with her skittishness. She arranged all the amusements of the hotel, assisted by Deville, who was a capital singer, whist player, and flute player, and was by far the smartest man the "gell" had seen since she commenced tourin' around, while in his opinion she was the neatest thing in widows.

"What on earth," asked the "gell," "did he bring such as *her* with him foolin' around ? I should think he saw enough of her at home, anyhow."

But the Maharajah was happy with his "Precious," although he could not but admire the beauty of the widow's cap.

An awful devil's trap that simple admiration of a woman's cap is ! or her glove—or even her shoe-string. Platonic admiration tends to mischief, in spite of philosophic decorum and cold-blooded resolve.

One day the happy pair went for their customary ramble to collect flowers in the mountains. They were away longer than usual, and when evening came were still absent. The gong sounded, the dinner was over, but still they came not. The brow of the beautiful widow was clouded with disappointment and anxiety. She talked little and listened less : it was a dull dinner : curiosity being the only thing that was at all lively. At last the shadow of a grave apprehension simul-

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taneously settled upon them as of a common presentiment of evil. There were dangerous precipices, where specimens dear to botanists were precious in proportion to the difficulty of acquisition.

Then came rumour, which every one knows to be a distinguished liar, and yet every one at first believes. It brought a dozen conflicting stories, not one of which had a particle of truth in it.

At last, the widow, watching from her window, saw the Maharajah, forlorn and dejected, hastening to the hotel. When he arrived he could scarcely communicate the sad intelligence. Letitia had slipped, and fallen down a precipice!—here the royal mourner broke down. After a while he recovered himself sufficiently to say she had fallen several hundred feet, and was lying in a helpless state, *almost dead!* There was, however, some hope, and a relief party was immediately organised.

The widow offered all the consolation she could. She held his hand in the palm of hers and rubbed the back, a mode of imparting sympathy which widows only understand. Then she gave him consolation with both hands, in the sweetest American tones, not unmixed with appropriate texts of Scripture. This she continued until the mournful procession reached the house *with the dead body!* It had been dead, the doctors said, for nine or ten hours!

I draw the veil over the following days. All was done that sympathy could suggest, and the dear one's grave was strewn with the beautiful flowers they had gathered on the fatal morning. Everybody was kind, and manifested that loving solicitude which friendship gives to sorrow.

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The widow was so considerate that she would have taken the disconsolate prince to her father's house in New York City, but he could not tear himself away from all that was dear to him, until he had proved the will and taken possession of the estates.

So, bidding farewell to the land of beauty and sorrow, hallowed by such pleasant memories and bitter grief ; by the love that can never change, and the hope that can never die, Deville came once more to England, accompanied by the faithful "gell."

II

OF course Society was swarming with rumours, that buzzed as busily as the bees amongst the flowers. Tongues wagged, eyes flashed, hearts beat, and women longed, for Deville was himself again ! once more a widower. What a Corsair he was, to be sure ! The adorable being whom fools and women worship.

But who was the American lady, with her vivacious eyes, and her matchless slang ? Lady Christmas would know all about her before she had been a week in Society. Of course, the widow kept herself aloof from the hero, but came out chaperoned by a decayed lady of title, who got a respectable living by introducing adventuresses into the "best society," and to Court.

Deville, however, was not left to pine alone in his grief. He rode in the Park with cabinet ministers and judges. He was still the distinguished man whom all men were proud to know. Sir Ralph paid him the most affectionate attention, which must have

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been a great comfort to him, and after a decent period of mourning was passed, our hero resumed his former habits, and his old place in Society.

One night there was a brilliant assemblage at my lady's: rank, beauty, talent, birth, and bunkum. Those of my readers, if there are any, who are not in Society can hardly imagine what this party was like. There were Indian princes, with large diamonds in their ears, ambassadors, bishops, judges, and officials of all kinds. The "gell" was there, a comparative stranger, but carrying herself with the most perfect American ease, and watching Deville with the eye of a cat, while she felt the uneasiness of the mouse: her mind full of suspicion and jealousy, especially when Deville danced with Lady Christmas's little niece Rosalind. It was just after this sprightly exhibition that some one was observed whispering confidentially to Deville. In a few moments he left the room.

Lady Christmas had expected to be taken in to supper by the prince, and was no little surprised at his absence. Indeed, every one was disappointed that the lion should have disappeared. They always went to see him feed.

The mystery, however, was cleared up to some extent the next morning, when the placards announced a "Sensational Scandal in High Life: Arrest of the Maharajah on a Charge of Murdering his Wife."

Society opened its eyes and wondered what would happen next. Had Society gone to Bow Street it would have seen its hero in the dock, while an application was being made to extradite him on the charge of murder.

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In a week or two he *was* extradited and shipped off to the Continent. Society took it coolly, as though it was not much out of the common ; Society, moreover, being so well bred, never gets excited or shows feeling—except at a horse race.

Lady Christmas, in her good nature, said the ways of Providence were inscrutable. Sir Ralph champed at the bit and mumbled, “ Er—hem—yes. That *is*—so.” The American “ gell ” said, “ ’Specially when you aren’t used to climbing precipices, I guess.”

How the teacups clattered again ! Virtue at one end of the table and scandal at the other. Old spinsters with money ; young spinsters looking for it ; all the ladies, in fact, who had escaped falling over the precipice, declared that, “ There was always something about *that* man they didn’t like.”

Nothing finds out our defects like misfortune.

The charming widow said, “ Wall, before I cross the stream to New York City, I’d just like to see two things, anyhow ; a gell that didn’t believe in a man, and a man that a gell could believe in ; that’s a fact ! ”

The lion was said to have commenced his splendid career as a *garçon* in a French café ; and truly enough did our hero say, after his conviction, “ A good-looking fellow with a dress-coat and a foreign accent can do what he likes with ‘ English Society.’ ”

XV. THE ELOPEMENT OF LADY CHRISTMAS'S DAUGHTER. THE MOST FASHIONABLE SENSATION OF THE DAY

AS I intend these Memoirs to be strictly accurate, I am careful in details.

The elopement of Lady Christmas's daughter was an event of world-wide notoriety, and gave rise to a thousand rumours, all of them untrue, which was extremely unpleasant to so illustrious a family. It was bad enough that Isabella had run away with the great tragedian, but it was not so bad as the rumour that she had been spirited off by the harlequin of the Drury Lane pantomime. The daughter of the great Sir Ralph, the eminent churchman, to marry a harlequin was more than even his Spartan nature could endure without wincing.

Sir Ralph, like most men, was tinctured with tyranny; and as he could not control his wife he reduced his daughter to the most complete subjection.

In order that there might be a permanent record of this sensational event, her Ladyship communicated to me the whole of the details; and with her sanction and the benefit of her revision I relate them for the reader.

I have said that as a churchman Sir Ralph was a religious man; as a member of a good family he was a proud man, and as the husband of her Ladyship a fashionable man. There was one thing, however, that this high-minded knight had a prejudice against. It was the Stage. To him it was the arena where the devil played his wildest freaks and ruined the fairest

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reputations. It was the curse of the community and the last degradation of human depravity. Imagine, then, his horror and indignation when the greatest actor of the day was presumptuous enough to ask for the hand of his daughter. The actor's name was on every tongue, and his fame filled the civilised world. Sir Ralph's anger was so great that he blamed his lady wife for the encouragement she gave to the Stage by witnessing its performances.

Her Ladyship was not in the least affected by Sir Ralph's anger ; she was only amused. Tyrant as he was with others, he was no Cæsar in the presence of his wife, and there was little heroism in his look when his wife put her veto upon his projected schemes.

She had often said how much she admired the dignity and refinement with which Willis played his parts, and she had even asked him to dinner one Sunday when Sir Ralph was at a meeting at Lambeth Palace.

It was hard for Isabella to be punished for loving Mr. Willis. It was so natural. Most women loved, and all mankind admired him. Sir Ralph was angry when his charming wife told him how *nice* he was—so angry that he shut Isabella up in a room by herself, as the old baronial tyrants used to lock up their daughters in mediæval ages. There she pined until it was seen plainly enough that the end of her imprisonment was death or Mr. Willis : for choice her Ladyship said Mr. Willis, and so did Isabella. How Fortune seconded the dear girl's choice not to die so young—so very young, as she said, the reader will learn.

Mr. Willis, whom Sir Ralph would never see,

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although he knew of the "little dinner," felt that his profession was insulted, and resolved, like a true tragedian, to stand up for its honour, and, if necessary, perish in the attempt. With him, then, the alternative was death or Isabella!

When two persons are thus agreed on their respective destinies, Fate is the only arbiter, and it will be seen that in these circumstances one cannot perish without the other. Both die or attain the object of their desire. The only means to avert the impending catastrophe to these two lives was elopement; and an elopement in the old days was itself neck or nothing. An elopement required contrivance, tact, presence of mind, courage, forethought, and all the qualities that make a great general. You must prevent surprise and distance pursuit; you must spend money and trust to post-boys. You must map out your course, and conciliate landlords, stablemen, keepers, ostlers, and waiters. When you have the dear one by your side in the chaise, you must be ever on the alert, and postpone the sweets of love to a more fitting opportunity; you must not be over-confident, and yet you must believe that success is certain if you have staying power in your horses, fidelity in your postillions, and energy in yourself.

I have found by consulting the official time-tables of the young lady novelists that, be the post-boys never so smart, whips never so loud, and fly you never so swiftly, that exactly three hours after the time of your departure, some feelingless parent or guardian will be on your track. Then come inevitable incidents of broken axle-trees, shedding of wheels, flying off of tires, casting of shoes and general breaks-

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down, but all repaired in the shortest notice and while you wait.

Fortune favoured Isabella and Mr. Willis from the very start, and it was in this wise: as luck would have it, there was another young couple in the same feverish state of anxiety about getting married, and as there seemed no way of curing themselves but by an elopement, they adopted that alternative to death, and were off too. The gentleman in this insupportable condition was Mr. William Sheridan, the leading comedian at the Vanity Theatre, a marvellously good actor who has left a name for all time on the annals of the Stage. He was in love with Julia Clifford, a sweet young actress at the same theatre, who also had a parent whose only object in being her father was to oppose her happiness with William. This despairing couple therefore, for the benefit of their health, resolved to take a trip to Gretna Green. It was a noted spa for the recovery from love sickness, one dose being generally sufficient.

As these gentlemen were old acquaintances and warm friends, they were in one another's secrets, and at first it was suggested that they should all go together on their elopement enterprise; but Isabella and Julia thought it would be safer to go separately, especially as two runaway couples would hardly be company for each other anywhere.

Then was devised, perhaps, the artfullest plan ever conceived in any reminiscence or novel: so simple and yet so ingenious. Sir Ralph was to be informed three hours after the start that Mr. Willis's chaise had been seen at a certain point, and had started for the north at a flying pace.

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Sir Ralph, knowing nothing of the elopement, of course, would be doubled up with surprise. He would never suppose that the carriage reported to be the one his unhappy daughter was conveyed in would be nothing of the sort, but the one in which William and Julia were to take their departure. In the meanwhile Isabella and Mr. Willis were to fly to the *west of England* to seek that happiness which was denied them in the east.

Oh the ruses that Love will devise to deceive those who are determined to break the fond one's heart!

When the news reached the polite ears of Sir Ralph that his daughter was seen in a chaise with four horses galloping along the great north road, presumably in the direction of Gretna Green, it quite took his breath away: his eyes first opened, then nearly shut; his nostrils dilated; his lips quivered, and his knees shook. He could not even mumble, and when he was unable to do that he was known to be bad indeed. At first his high breeding said, "Let her go;" but afterwards he thought his family dignity might be compromised; that must be saved if every member of the family should perish. He would *drag* his daughter back, and the villain who abducted her should have the law. Yes, but this blinded reasoner should have considered that she was two years past the period of abduction. Mr. Willis had clearly not transgressed the law even if he had violated the rules of this noble family.

In less than an hour Sir Ralph was ready, and very soon after was on the great north road, which he struck at Finchley. It was a beautiful night, and the country was lovely. It was the time when the

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cowslips "dot the meads" and the cuckoo's note is heard, but Sir Ralph was too preoccupied to feel the transports which cowslips and cuckoo's notes are so calculated to produce. He sat with folded arms, his head on his breast, and his beard spread over it; a slouched hat was pulled over his eyes, and his fur-lined coat wrapped close with the collar up. Indeed, he looked as fierce a ruffian as you could find on the road at that time. He looked fierce enough to frighten a footpad. The pace was fearful, for he had bade the postillion to spare neither horseflesh nor money.

Nothing is more exciting than a journey of this kind. There's the chance of having your throat cut by highwaymen; of being precipitated into a ditch, or smashed on the hard turnpike. There's the laughter of the turnpike man as you pass through; of the ostlers who take out linchpins, break the hooks or the loops of traces, and a hundred other little matters which make up this world of adventures—not one of which can possibly be in your favour.

As a commercial transaction nothing pays better than an elopement. At every crack of the whip "bang goes a guinea." But it is a luxury which no one minds paying for; so round go the wheels, and away go pursuer and pursued. Whip, whip, spur, spur! "There they are! No, it's a miller's waggon! Hi! you, out of the road! Seen anybody pass this way? Quick, quick! Have you seen a post-chaise, man?" "Yes." But, before the miller's man can answer, his four horses are drawn right across the road, in a heap, as it were, in front of Sir Ralph's carriage, and while he's saying "Yam, yam," the miller's man is getting his answer ready. He had had his bribe three hours

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and a half ago, and is now earning it honestly by a good, honest lie ; but he's obliged to make way at last, and after twenty minutes' delay Sir Ralph dashes on again fiercer and more determined than ever. But after many hours the journey becomes more and more exciting. The incidents, however, are more properly the business of the novelist—my duty is to record only the salient facts.

Sir Ralph at last, standing up in his carriage, caught sight, as he thought, of his future son-in-law's chaise ; it was then not far from the horizon, and he commanded the postillion to push on in the hope of coming up with them, not considering what he should do with a determined and enraged tragedian if he succeeded in reaching the horizon. They were now getting towards Preston, and by certain abstruse calculations Sir Ralph thought he would catch the guilty pair at that town.

At an old-fashioned hostelry, kept by an old-fashioned couple, arrived the comedian and Julia. Guilty Mr. Sheridan ordered a private room and a little dinner.

“ If,” said Mr. Sheridan to the landlord, with an air of confidential familiarity, “ a gentleman should inquire for me——”

“ What name, sir, if I may be so bold ? ”

“ Mr. Fergusson—show him up—well, I'll do that myself—show him in. Ask him to step up to my room.”

In the meanwhile Julia had been conducted to another room by a buxom chambermaid. It is not a great incident, but related for stage purposes. The servants were all in the highest state of excitement,

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and naturally concluded that money was to be made either by secrecy or disclosure, perhaps by both.

Next the comedian stepped down into the bar, and assuming an air of profound mystery, asked the landlord and landlady whether they had seen a cut-throat-looking individual loafing about—in fact a lunatic—and stating that the person he described had broken out of Bedlam two days ago, and he meant to have him, dead or alive.

“What like might he be, sir?” asked the landlord, whose name was Wallop.

“A tall scowling-looking fellow, with a hook nose, a heavy moustache, and a murderer’s eyes; he’d play the devil with any one if he got hold of him; he tore one of his keepers to pieces last week; didn’t you see it in the paper?”

Everybody gaped with fear and wonder, and there being many loafers round the bar, the news soon spread.

“It takes six men to hold him when he’s in his tantrums. He believes, poor wretch, somebody is always running away with his wife; sometimes it’s his daughter.”

They all hesitated and stared, but no one knew what to say.

“At all events,” continued the comedian, “there’s a hundred pounds for whoever catches him and takes him back to Bedlam—and, of course, expenses, all expenses will be paid.”

Mrs. Wallop was pale with fright.

“Look here,” said Mr. Sheridan, “you seem in such a devil of a fright you’d better have some gin all round.”

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This put them in better heart, and before they had "wet the other eye" they were quite restored.

"Where was 'ur seen last?" asked Wallop.

"Richmond Green, trying to tear up an elm tree, that he thought was the man he was after who had run away with his wife. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Who be 'ur, zur?" asked another.

"Oh, he's a gentleman, and believes he's a prince; but I must have him, dead or alive, mind that; but don't shoot him before you see me; I will not have him shot if I can help it."

"Don't have no truck wi' 'em, Sam, we don't want no blood-money," said Mrs. Wallop.

"Too dangerous," said Wallop.

"Not if you keep your eye on him—so," said the comedian, looking at them in a manner that made their blood curdle. "*I can tame him, as you'll find when you bring him before me.*"

They shuffled their feet and looked at their empty glasses.

"Fill again," said the actor; "and now let me warn you. When he's in a rage you've nothing to fear, you can guard against him, but when he's quiet and talks rationally, then look out, that's the time."

Wallop seemed to comprehend the situation with marvellous discernment, for he wagged his head and gave a wink of acquiescence.

"That's the way of 'em," he said; "I've 'eard tell on it."

"He's got an idea," continued the actor, "that it's his duty to murder everybody he suspects wants to run

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away with his wife ; but there, you know, Mr. Wallop—Wallop, I think, is your name ? ”

“That’s it ; you, you can see ’un over the door ; licensed to sell beer, wines, and spirits.”

“Well, if he saw you and Mrs. Wallop driving in your cart he’d swear that you were running away with his wife.”

“’Ur must be mad,” said Wallop.

“Well, be that as it may, if he comes, bring him to my room—I can manage him. My sister, who is on her way to Edinburgh, also knows him very well ; in fact they are distantly related ; but don’t forget to fix your eye on his. That’s the secret ; and be ready to clutch him by the throat if you see the least appearance of violence on his part.”

Having delivered this admonition, Mr. Fergusson went to his room to abide events.

It was soon all over Preston that a madman had broken loose from Bedlam, and a thousand pounds offered for his capture. Upon this, all Preston broke loose, and men came out armed with all sorts of weapons. The ostlers of the inn, with pitchforks and prongs, waited the arrival of the enemy, who was not long in putting in an appearance. In an hour up drove the chaise and four, and down sprang Sir Ralph, with as mad a bearing as a man could have. He rushed into the inn, shouting, “Where is she ? Where is she ?” The landlord fixed his eyes on Sir Ralph with a hideous gleam.

“What do you stare at me for, clown ?” Sir Ralph demanded. “Do you think I’m mad ? I want my daughter—and if you harbour her, I’ll pull your house down over your ears.”

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"Beggin' your pardon, sir—no call for that," said the landlord, staring most unmercifully at him.

"He'll murder thee, Sam," whispered his wife; "he'll murder thee, sure enough."

"What are you whispering about?" Sir Ralph asked; "do you think I don't know she is here? I'll have the house down unless you bring my daughter. I'll have the roof off."

"Would you like to see the genelman, sir? He'll be mighty glad to zee 'ee, zur. He said he'd be glad to zee 'ee."

"That he did," said Mrs. Wallop, keeping her eye steadily burning on him.

"What do you all stare like that for?" demanded Sir Ralph. "Am I a ghost, or what?—don't stare at me, I tell you."

It was curious that when Sir Ralph was in a passion his words came fluently enough, as some stammerers have been known to preach without hesitation who could not utter a sentence in conversation.

"Where," he asked after a pause, "is this miserable creature, and where is my deluded daughter? O G—! I shall go mad."

"Now it's come," said Mrs. Wallop. "Seize him, Sam."

Sam, who was a powerful man, clutched Sir Ralph by the throat, and held him fast by his neckerchief until his eyes protruded from their sockets.

"If thee bean't still, damn thee!" he said, "I'll kill thee, I'll throttle thee."

They then dragged the knight along the passage, followed by a bodyguard of stablemen and loafers, armed with prongs, while one of them had got the

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hoop of a cask round Sir Ralph's body, so that escape was impossible.

When they got to the room they let go, and Sir Ralph burst in crying—

“Villain! Villain! Thief!”

“Excuse me, sir,” said Mr. Sheridan, “but may I ask to what am I indebted for the honour of this visit?”

“Villain,” said Sir Ralph, “deliver up my daughter, or by the great——”

“Are you mad, sir?” asked Sheridan quietly.

“Nearly,” said Sir Ralph.

“You hear that?” said the actor.

“Aye, aye, sir,” cried they all, “we hear 'un—mad enough.”

At this point “wily Joe,” as he was called, a young helper in the stable, who was training to become an ostler, stooped down in the crowd and quietly fixed a rope, which he had brought with him, to the legs of the knight, so that in case he should try to escape, Joe would have him by a length of cord which he had attached to the piece with which he had bound his legs.

“Do you know who I am?” asked Sir Ralph with a tone of the utmost scorn.

“You are the Emperor of Mexico escaped from Bedlam,” said Mr. Sheridan, “and if your Imperial Majesty will permit them, these good gentlemen will convey you safely thither——”

“What is your name, villain?” asked Sir Ralph; “I will know how to deal with you.”

“My name, sir, is immaterial.”

“Come on,” said a voice (it was the parish constable), “let's have him.”

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“Scoundrel! Would you lay hands on a gentleman?”

“Ay, sir; come along; dooty’s dooty, gentle or simple.”

“Wait, fellow; let me see my daughter: in that room she is concealed, and I will see her.”

“Oh!” cried Sheridan, “if that is all the gentleman wants, let his curiosity be gratified.—Julia, my dear.”

“Fiend!” said Sir Ralph.

“Fiend!—no, Fergusson, sir, at present.”

“You have my daughter in that room, sir.”

“Take her, sir—perhaps you don’t mind obtruding yourself into a lady’s private chamber; we must make allowance for madmen.”

“Bring her out,” cried Sir Ralph, “bring her out.”

The door opened, and the beautiful form of Julia entered the room. There was a dead silence for some minutes; Sir Ralph sank into a chair and put his hands over his face, while he was convulsed with emotion.

“Is that the lady you have been mad enough to come from London in search of?” asked Sheridan. There was another long dead silence, and then Sir Ralph, looking up, said, “I beg your pardon.”

The comedian bowed in a manner that would have brought down the house with the curtain—“I hope I may do the same!”

XVI. A NEW SPHERE OF INDUSTRY FOR THE WORSHIPFUL GREAT GRAND PAST MASTER, M'SWEENEY

I HAVE always observed that stories which are the oldest, and have stood the test of time, are most commended by reviewers. I can claim no such distinction for my own adventures, and they must stand or fall by their credibility.

It will hereafter appear in another of my reminiscences that I was staying with Sir Thomas Williams at his country seat in Gloucestershire. When my visit terminated I sent my carpet bag forward, and proceeded myself on foot to London.

I had a pleasant and healthful ramble. Nor was it without incident, which, although not of an exciting nature, was yet the happy renewal of an old acquaintance.

I had reached the village of — in — shire, and had ordered a mid-day meal at the inn, when I saw a crowd of children rushing with leaps and bounds, shouts and laughter, towards a tripod which supported a black box with half-a-dozen glasses in the side. In fact it was a peep-show.

"Here's Tim," they cried. "Hooray! Here's Tim!"

"Come on, my little dears," said the showman. "Come along. Here we are again, as the thief said to the judge." What was my amazement, however, when I saw that it was the most worshipful past great grand master of the Fetter Lane Lodge of the Most Honourable Society of Harduppian! It was *years* since I had seen him, and yet here he was in a

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new capacity! this master of arts and letters, who had brains enough for a bishop or a lord chancellor, not to say a prime minister.

Tim welcomed his young audience with such delight that his face was like a bonfire of smiles. I think he was the happiest man in all circumstances I ever knew.

“Come along,” said he, “and see all the curiosities in the world collected by Timothy M’Sweeney, Esq., Peep-showman by Royal Appointment to their most Gracious Majesties the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family. Here be pyramids and crocodiles, the sheet anchor of Noah’s Ark, one of Pharaoh’s wheels from the Red Sea, and—now don’t crowd up on one another’s backs: only one can see through a hole at a time unless it’s big enough for two.”

“O master!” cried one of the urchins; “what’s this ’ere, sir?”

“What’s this ’ere?” said Timothy; “why, the ear of Balaam’s ass, to be sure.”

“No, sir,” said another, “it’s ever so big.”

“That, my dears, is the hippopotamus, one of the numerous family of the famous pair that went into the ark.”

“Oh, my eye! ain’t he a sight—look ’ere, Bill!”

At this moment up came a man of the name of *Coffee*, who was the village barber; and, in addition to that honourable profession, was the general letter-writer and amanuensis of the village. He knew, therefore, rather more about people’s private affairs than was expedient; and, being an artful sort of man, sometimes sold his knowledge, made mischief,

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and set people by the ears. Mr. Coffee had an overweening sense of his own importance, and an overbearing manner, with all the additional consequence of a wooden leg.

When he arrived, a certain Mrs. Rooky, the village laundress, to whom he was indebted for several weeks' washing, was enjoying the general fun of the peep-show. As soon as she saw the unprincipled Coffee, she saluted him with—

“Halloa ! old latherchin, what have you got to say to *that* ?” and then shrieked with laughter at the joke.

Coffee, in contempt of this uneducated woman, who could not make out her own bills, and therefore had to get the clergyman *to make out Coffee's*, much to the latter's annoyance, jobbed his wooden leg into the turf, tossed his head in contempt of his creditor, and called her what I cannot write.

“Oh, I say !” exclaimed one of the boys, “what's this, master ? ain't he got long ears !”

“That, sir,” said the showman, assuming the dignified tone of his office, “is a very distinguished animal ; the only question amongst scientists is, whether his ears are longer than his tongue.”

“What's his name, sir ?”

“It is called the Great Clap-trap worm, or the ‘*Vox Populi*.’ Observe his figure, ladies and gentlemen ; you perceive he stands up like a *village pump* with a large nozzle, and extends his arm like a handle. Now attend to this, my friends : when that handle's properly worked, and when in full activity, he is capable of throwing up *one hundred and eighty-eight words a minute*, each word being equal to a gallon of water. Don't forget the number, one hundred and eighty-eight

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words per minute: that is reckoned a sufficient volume to destroy the common sense of a town of two hundred thousand inhabitants in twenty minutes. It would have overwhelmed 'the villages of the plain'—that is, Sodom and Gomorrah—long before Lot's wife could have arranged her toilet."

"Does he *bite*, sir?"

"Only four times a day; but he is very snappish, and if anybody attempts to interrupt his *flow*, he snorts at them in the most horrible manner."

"What a *well* he must have, sir!"

"*Well*, sir? Oh yes, *well* to be sure, sir, a happy thought—well, the fact is, it is a '*deep 'un*,' as they say; but it has this peculiarity over all other wells, that *there's no truth whatever at the bottom of it*."

"Have you seen this animal, Mr. Latherchin?"

This question was addressed to Coffee, Timothy evidently thinking that was the name of the owner of the wooden leg.

There was much laughter at the mistake, Mrs. Rooky holding her sides once more, and shrieking as if she had a pig under her apron.

"Excuse me, sir!" commenced Coffee, and paused from excitement.

"I asked if you had seen the animal, Mr. Latherchin? If not——"

"Excuse me, sir——" said Coffee.

"Don't mention it, sir, don't mention it; you *shall* see him."

"Yes, but I do mention it, my name is——"

"Not Norval?" said Timothy; "never! Well, sir, I have many times heard of you—but——"

Then Coffee got so angry that he did nothing but

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stammer and splutter, much to the amusement of the crowd.

"My name's *Coffee*, sir," at last he blared out.

"Very well, sir, and suppose it is—there's not much in it *except Chicory*, perhaps; but that is not the point of the argument, Mr. Chicory."

"*Coffee*, sir!" stumped the wooden leg; "and if you've got anything to say, here I am."

"I've no wish to roast you, Mr. Coffee; but you will oblige me by standing aside while I show these ladies and gentlemen my bran new sea-serpent, caught in the Alps, and supposed—mind I only say *supposed*, for I am not going to have a law-suit about it—*supposed*, I say, to have towed Noah's Ark to the *Port of Ararat*."

"And what's that, sir, next to him?"

"That is one of a range of extinct volcanoes, well known in the British House of Commons. You see what *empty craters* (*hem*) they are."

"Will they ever catch light again, sir?"

"They don't catch light, my young masters. Burning mountains *erupt, belch, vomit, splutter*, and *devastate the neighbouring regions* with *their lava*; at present they have none; but the *pump* I showed you will pour the lava in, and then the volcanoes will pour it out. They are muzzle-loaders, as you observe, but their great ambition is to be turned into *breech-loaders*—they like their breeches—hem——"

At this interesting part of the exhibition there was loud altercation between Mrs. Rooky and Mr. Coffee, and, on turning round, I observed that Mr. Coffee had erected his wooden leg in so defiant a manner at his adversary, that it stood at an angle of forty-five; the lady had seized it near the hoof, and so kept the

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barber at leg's length in a kind of dance, turning him round and round at her will.

There was continuous laughter and a great deal of shouting at the combatants, and after much balancing and hopping, it was agreed that all matters in dispute should be referred to Mr. Showman, whose decision was to be final, "because," said Timothy, "if you like to carry this case up to the House of Lords, do so by all means ; it will be quite in accordance with modern litigation, but then you must *commence* the business with some other performer. I do not feel disposed to be merely *affirmed* by the House of Lords." This being agreed to, the arbitrator decided on the spot, without evidence or argument, except the natural conclusion of his own senses, that they must adjourn to the inn, but that Coffee was to leave his wooden leg in the custody of Mrs. Rooky, by way of bail, and at six o'clock he would make his award.

So the case was adjourned on those terms.

When I made myself known to Timothy, he was overcome with joy, and to overcome that condition, we had an excellent dinner and a bottle of old port, such as you rarely meet with in these days out of a country inn or a country house.

Timothy was in that splendid comic vein that distinguished him in his earlier days, nor did I ever see him in better health and spirits.

"You are a little surprised, Roger, at my new rôle. The fact is, I was tired of writing 'copy.' The wages of sin may be death, but the wages of an author are d——n."

"Hush," said I, "publishers are men of business ; readers are persons of leisure : authors, as a rule, are

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idle vagabonds, who, mistaking themselves for men of genius, think they ought to command the gods. If they would only consider that it is not the *merit* of their writings which commends them to the publisher, but the accommodation of their style to the public taste, they would not grumble if publishers declined to put their money knowingly on the wrong horse. They put it on what is likely to pay and not on what is likely to be immortal. Immortality does *not* pay."

"Well, well," said Timothy, "all the philosophy in the world will not alter the fact that I was advised by my doctor to travel. Meeting a man in the peep-show line who was retiring from business, I bought his stock-in-trade and good-will for what it was worth, so it did not cost me much, and set off on my journey; and, my dear Roger, so long as I am healthy, I care for nothing; health, the least valued, is the most valuable possession the Almighty has endowed us with."

Thus we spent a pleasant afternoon and at last reluctantly separated, never, alas! to meet again, I fear. I often recall this jovial, pleasant character as I saw him start off with his black box, his big stick, and his short pipe, as happy as any minister of state or king on his throne, and I think of him as the most brilliant man I ever knew as dramatist, scholar, poet, novelist, actor, or conversationalist, and yet his talents brought him nothing but a peep-show.

After all, his life was not unsuccessful; his writings, brilliant and beautiful, are known throughout the world, and will be an intellectual glory when the age in which they were written shall have become but a speck on the horizon of distant ages. Who then will know the *Mediocrities* who have risen?

XVII. SOME LINCOLNSHIRE SQUIRES: GRAND JURYMEN FOR THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN

MY Lincolnshire experiences on circuit were always happy, and I look back with pleasant memories on their festive evenings. On one occasion I was more than usually entertained by some Lincolnshire squires, who, of course, were justices of the peace as well; and as these gentlemen were all more or less engaged in the administration of the criminal law, I learnt a good deal from their conversation.

Religion on the Bench has ever been the worst of tyrants—witness Holy Kirk and its prosecutions. The history of the criminal law is the history of punishments; that of the Civil law the progress of civilisation; and I am glad to say this also has been humanized and refined by the influence of modern legislation.

We were at the White Hart Hotel on this memorable evening in the spring of 18—. Those were the days of long pipes and punch. The assizes were just over, and the gentlemen who invited me to dine were of the grand jury, and were quite as tremendous for “true bills” as hotel-keepers were for long ones. Indeed, it would be difficult for a bill to be anything else than true that received the indorsement of their learned foreman. It had been a very light assize, and yet was not without glory, since many unfortunate wretches were left for execution.

After dinner we gathered round the steaming

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bowl, the very fragrance of which made you so jolly that you could hang fifty rogues without feeling it.

Squire Bogy of Donkey Hall led off the conversation by stretching out his legs to their full extent, which was always a sign he was going to "deliver his mind" about something: it was like tuning a fiddle. Then he held out his long pipe at arm's length, and blew a cloud over the table.

"I say," he began, "that feller as stole the mare——"

"What about him?" inquired Squire Grampus, one of the largest landowners in the county.

"What *about* him?" said Bogy sarcastically, "he's a rank *bad* 'un—a *rank* bad 'un! I hope they won't let him off—he's a poacher."

"I don't believe in lettin' off," said Grampus. "Law's law, and lettin' off brings us magistrates into contempt."

"Better do away with hanging altogether if they don't hang he," said another old fellow, who was about eighty, and was generally looked up to as a man whose shire horses Yorkshire itself couldn't match. His opinion, therefore, on legal matters was generally looked up to with respect. "What do *you* say, Sir John?"

Sir John also was a great light in the county. He had been in Parliament, and was a staunch supporter of the landed interest, of the Church, the gallows, and the stocks. Sir John loved his wine as well as any man, but excess he at all times deprecated, and adapted his practice to his preaching, for he never went beyond the third bottle. That was his well-known rule.

"Do away with hanging?" said the Baronet.

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“What, because a rogue now and then escapes? Set that off against some that now and then are innocent—such mistakes will happen, you know, and we must take the average; if that’s kept up, substantial justice is done.”

Bogy was considerably chapfallen at this rebuke from one whose intelligence was so much respected as Sir John’s on account of his baronetcy.

“You’d better do away with trial by grand jury altogether, which I allow is the bulwark of English liberty,” said Grampus.

“I never could make out what a bulwark had got to do with liberty,” said Sir John, “unless it’s the liberty of a borough.”

“It’s Magna Carter, ain’t it?” asked old Portsoken of Portsoken Manor. “I always stand up for the Great Carter, and always shall.”

“You’re always quotin’ Magna Carta,” said Bogy.

“Because there’s everything in Magna Carter,” answered Portsoken. “I reckon you can’t do better than stick to that.”

“What about the man that stole the shoes, then?” asked Grampus. “Ain’t the offence the same relative nature like as stealin’ a horse—for why? Don’t they both carry us?”

“A glass of punch, old boy,” cried Bogy; “we don’t often hear a better than that, even on the bench, where I reckon that sometimes there’s more wit than wits.”

There was renewed laughter. When persons are talking about law, it is wonderful what a long way a little joke will go; but here a difficult point seemed to occur to the mind of old Squire Cock.

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“Look here,” said that astute magistrate, “it’s true there’s a similarity of action like, in one way, but not in another ; for instance, we ride on a mare, but we walk in the boots, so there’s the difference ; and that seemed rather to puzzle the learned judge when he came to consider whether they should both have death. How’s the law, I wonder, on that point, Sir John ? What do you say, Sir John ?”

“I think we’d better have a song,” said the Baronet.

“And nothing so good,” remarked Bogy, “as your grand old song, Sir John, ‘The Squire of Old Melton’ ; there’s nothing beats it.”

Here they thumped the table, cried “Hear ! hear !” and filled their glasses to the brim. Sir John put out his legs, threw back his head, held out his right hand and his long pipe, and then in grand voice struck up the song, which was as follows :—

“THE SQUIRE OF OLD MELTON.

“The Squire of Old Melton was jolly and broad,
He looked all good nature and lived like a lord :
With legs not too long for a body of weight,
He scaled eighteen stone, and he stood five feet eight.
Of friends he had many, for, honest and sound,
Like himself was his wine, when the bottle went round.

The Squire was a magistrate learned and kind :
And always at ‘Zizes’ the judges he dined.
’Twas then with a skill that but few understood,
He drew out their ‘*ludships*’ and learned all he could :
Then held up his glass with a wink most profound,
And smiled at ‘*my luds*’ as the bottle went round.

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He never pressed tenants when seasons were bad :
And even a word for the poacher he had.
Nor poacher nor vagabond told him a tale
Of sorrow or trouble, but tasted his ale.
And jolly he was when their cares were all drowned
In drinking his health as the tankard went round !

The Squire was a Churchman, all zealous and true :
Each Sunday you saw him asleep in his pew :
His eyes were soon closed when the text had been read,
But his mouth was wide open to all that was said :
No worse for the sermon he ever was found,
By the time he got home and the bottle went round.

Afield with the hounds, what a glorious sight !
His coat was so scarlet, his breeches so white !
His high-mettled horse was a picture to see,
And equalled the Squire in his grand pedigree :—
Hark away ! hark away ! Yoiks !—Gallop and bound !
What a run 'twill have been, when the bottle goes round !

The Squire was a bachelor, strange to relate,
And the maids of Old Melton lamented his state :
But who could suspect midst his mirth and his cheer,
He nursed a sweet memory tender and dear ?
That a place in his heart ever faithful was found
For the love of his life when the bottle went round ?

The Squire, he has gone ! and we know him no more !
But long we shall miss him, the rich and the poor :
His heart it was all that true men could desire,—
And all our good wishes have gone with the Squire :
Though never again at our board he'll be found,
We'll think of him still as the bottle goes round."

(R. H.)

While the applause was going on at the finish of the song, I will take the liberty of saying these dear old squires must not be judged by the standard of our civilised time. They were the outcome of the period,

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and while they had no scruple about hanging a dozen rogues at every assize, they could shed an honest tear over their old friend of the song, especially when Sir John's capital voice gave such effect to the pleasant and pathetic verses.

"What d'ye say to the man who stole that *bottle-green* jacket?" asked old Cock, returning to the theme that was uppermost in all their minds. "He'll swing for it, won't he?"

"Why not? If not, why not?" asked Bogy.

"Ain't there a pint o' law?" queried old Cock.

"I don't care if there's a gallon," returned Grampus. —"Give him a hogshead of law."

This joke produced as much laughter as if it had been the cleverest thing ever uttered; which is always a compensation to the small joker—the hearer makes up for it. Hence a bad pun is as good as the best. If you do not laugh at the joke you always do so at the joker.

"What do you say, Sir John?" asked old Cock.

Sir John was having a quiet thought to himself about the dear old Squire of Melton—but being thus appealed to, he asked—

"What is the point you are discussing now?"

"As to whether there's anything in *bottle-green*," said old Cock.

"Matter of colour," said Sir John, "isn't it? What is *bottle-green*?"

"I never heard of it before," rejoined Grampus; "there's *pea-green* and *invisible green*—but *bottle-green*! that beats me altogether."

"Look here," said Sir John, "I heard a judge say this much—if so be, said his lordship, that a man is

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charged with stealing a black horse, and it turns out to have been a grey mare——”

“He gets off,” said old Cock.

“Off the horse?” said Grampus.

“No,” said Sir John, “off the halter.”

This was so capital that they all filled up again, and had a fresh start.

“Gentlemen,” said old Cock, “this was my lord judge—if, said he, you should find——”

“Yes, but if you *don't* find——”

“It will be a bad day's sport,” said Grampus ; “now, let's find our rooms.”

The grand boom of the cathedral clock struck twelve, and away they went to their respective rooms after some of them had dropped their flat-bottomed candlesticks on the heads of those coming up the stairs behind them. They were very winding stair-cases in those days.

These old squires are now in their squirearchical vaults, and other squires occupy their ancestral pews and too frequently their time in reading their epitaphs on the mural tablets, instead of listening to the sermon from the family parson.

But with all their shortcomings in learning, refinement, and what not, they had what was better than all—*good hearts!*

The assize I refer to was held in one of the early years of the century, and it may be interesting to the reader to subjoin a list of the offences which these grand jurymen had to deal with at that time.

There was no offence of any gravity whatever, as we should think now.

“Breaking into a dwelling - house” (so - called

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“breaking” probably lifting the latch in the daytime) and “stealing a *bottle-green coat, velveteen jacket, and three waistcoats*”—found guilty and sentenced to *death*.

“Entering a dwelling-house, the door being open, *with intent to commit a robbery*”—*Death*.

“Two men ‘breaking in’ and stealing several goods”—*Death*.

“Assault and robbery in a field adjoining highway”—*two men—Death*.

“Stealing a mare, saddle and bridle”—*Death*.

“Setting fire to a *threshing machine and hovel* containing oats and straw”—*Death*.

“Stealing a *pair of shoes, a half boot and a half boot top* from a shop”—*Death*.

I have said nothing of the general conversation at this meeting, which turned on rates, removability of the pauper, game, turnips, and other interesting matters, or of my contributions to the amusement of the evening by way of song, anecdote, and recitation, because I think in writing one's Memoirs one should say as little of himself as he possibly can.

XVIII. A GENTLEMAN OF "FAMILY" WHO JOINED THE INN

VERY early in my career I made the acquaintance of a gentleman who attracted me in a most unusual manner, by the air of unconscious insincerity which characterised him. His great pride and weakness was *Family*. He boasted that he belonged to an ancient "house," but that his father, through family misfortunes, had been obliged so far to forget its dignity as to become an attorney-at-law; in which profession, however, he had amassed a large fortune without any danger of being struck off the rolls.

This was the story he told me one evening after dining in Hall:—

"My father," said he, "having made a considerable fortune, desired me to continue the business. But I declined—my pride would not suffer me to follow his profession. Not only had he made enough, as I thought, for himself and me too, but from an uncle on my mother's side I inherited a fortune which, had I been lucky instead of otherwise, would have been enough to keep me in the position which I was entitled to occupy. Besides, I was fond of the best society: it was a natural instinct. I loved sport; that love I inherited from my ancestors, who hunted boars and shot tigers on our family estates in Huntingdonshire. I moved, of course, in the best circles; had my town house in Mayfair and my country seat at Newmarket. I was moderately fond of gambling, but always avoided fast sets.

"One night one of my companions lost thirty thou-

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sand pounds at one throw of the dice, and as that was his last chance, he blew his brains out the next morning. On the same evening another of my chums had his brains blown out for him by somebody else whom he had accused of cheating at cards.

“My evidence at the inquest caused a verdict of *felo de se* against my old friend, Reuben, and he was buried in the usual manner at the cross roads with a stake in his body—the last stake he played for——”

“Hem!” said I.

“I beg your pardon,” said my friend, and proceeded. “This was a warning to me; such a funeral was not worth dying for, unwept, unhonoured—thought I—better live unhonoured than die disgraced.”

Here he lit a fresh cigar, and I asked whether he altered his mode of life.

“Not exactly,” he answered, “but to a great extent: as a gentleman of family you must mix with gentlemen—*noblesse oblige*—all others are only fit for tipsters and tapsters: you know that, Roger, as well as I do.

“My friend Reuben owed me some thousands of pounds, and as I knew that *Ike Abram*, the accommodating Jew, had everything in his own hands that had ever belonged to dear old Reuben, I naturally thought that out of the surplus of so vast a property he would have more than enough to pay himself and me. Judge my surprise, however, when, instead of handing me the money Reuben owed, he put his finger to the side of his long hooked nose and said—

“‘Holy Moshes! *pay* you? *vy*, there is notings at all; notings to pay me *fi’ per shent*—*von shillin’* in

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de pound! and I haf your acceptances for *twenty tousand*—goot—you must pay or I haf you to de Fleet. Twenty tousand or de Fleet. Ha! ha! dat is it.'

"All this was through my ignorance of the nature of a bill of exchange. I was Reuben's debtor, instead of his creditor; and 'Holy Moshes,' as I always called him after, skinned me alive. I now had nothing, and resolving, therefore, to lead a new life, I returned, like a true prodigal, to my dear father.

"He received me, I need not say, with open arms—and mother, with tears flowing down her cheeks, called me her 'sweet prodigal—her repentant boy—her own—she knew I would return,' she said, 'she was *sure* I was her darling boy after all.' And thus she caressed me with tears and smiles of joy. My father dwelt on the advantages of sincere repentance. I understood little of what he meant, but fully concurred in all he said, knowing I had no money, and that if repentance did not bring it, nothing would.

"It did. It brought more; my father made a new will, and I was once more his heir. I immediately took a class at his Sunday school and worked away with great vigour. Unfortunately for my peace of mind there was an infant class not far from mine, presided over by one of the most beautiful girls I had ever seen—her name was Louisa Searle. Unfortunately she was of no family, but I fell in love with her notwithstanding that impediment to our union, and as she loved me, I indulged her more perhaps than I ought to have done—so much so, in fact, that I promised her marriage; a gentleman could do no less. A thousand times did I wish the

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dear girl had been equal to me in station, and had possessed an abundance of wealth so as to have equalised our positions. I was so anxious to make her permanently happy: but it could not be—my poor mother was sensitive on this point, and against my wish I had to abandon my project of marriage.

“Poor father died; but judge of my disappointment when I found that the bulk of my fortune was postponed till after the death of my mother! To show my forbearance I forbore giving the order for the marble monument which I had resolved to erect to his memory. It was to have been a masterpiece of sculpture, with flying angels bearing my dear governor to the realms of bliss. I resolved to wait till mother should be called away, so as to include her in this act of filial reverence.

“In the meantime I made up my mind to enter the holy estate, not having sufficient means wherewith to keep up my dignity. Of course a marriage with Louisa was out of the question. I had promised my mother never to marry her on account of the disparity in our fortunes; and moreover, I considered that marrying for mere love was an act of gross selfishness—the mere gratification of the passions, while the greatest virtue of life is self-denial. I laid down two conditions for the regulation of my choice: first, my fiancée must satisfy the requirements of a gentleman of family; and next, possess adequate means to support the family dignity.

“After negotiations with several candidates one appeared who possessed the necessary qualifications. She was of good family, rich, and in a galloping

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consumption. The affection I felt towards her therefore was sweetened by sympathy. We married, and 'Carraway' (such was her sweet name) was my wife. Alas! that which I tried to steel myself against, namely, an uxorious fondness, grew upon me by insensible degrees; and, feeling that the time must come when my soul would be torn with insupportable anguish by her leaving me, I endeavoured to discount that woeful misery by gradually weaning myself from her dear society. I absented myself by degrees from home, returning later every night, so as to accustom her to my absence, until at last I stayed away for nights together. The joy of returning, however, made up for the distress of parting; her very cough was music to my ears.

"Thus by instalments," he continued, after again replenishing his glass, "I schooled myself for that eternal separation which I knew was approaching; and when it came it was indeed a blessed death and a happy release. But oh my grief! What to me was the fortune I came into? Trash! To mitigate my grief I plunged into dissipation such as a gentleman of family might indulge in. I frequented gambling hells, prize fights, the turf—and, having a taste for the fine arts, even the saloons where Nature loves to display the perfection of her charms; but, my dear Roger, let me say at once, this was wrong—I was quickly ruined.

"Unhappily I had ordered a monument to my dear wife, to be executed in marble by one of the first geniuses of the day, an Italian; it was sent home from abroad, and in consequence of not being able to pay the fees for obtaining a faculty, I had to

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deposit it at the pawnbroker's to prevent it being seized in execution for the balance of her funeral expenses.

"I was now bordering on insanity. My only hope once more was matrimony. I was no sooner, however, on the market than I was snapped up by an American heiress.

"She had not the quiet, gentle spirit of my dear Carry, far from it; but her back hair was much longer, her eyes were a great deal more vivacious, and she had more 'go.' I wished afterwards she had never come. Our honeymoon had scarcely entered upon its second quarter when a disagreement arose. It happened in this way. I had settled three thousand a year on Merinda (such was her name), not thinking it a farthing too much considering she had an equal fortune; but when she found I had nothing at present wherewith to meet it, and that I had merely drawn on the possibilities of the future in making the settlement, she smashed nearly all the furniture. However, as it did not belong to me I cared little."

"You seem to have been unfortunate," said I, "in your engagements."

"Unfortunate!" he exclaimed; "the worst has not come! Judge of my indignation, Roger, when I discovered that instead of having married an American heiress, I had been caught by a music-hall dancer of the lowest type, with a bad character and not a penny-piece in the world."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Do?—broke the rest of the furniture; for I felt it was my turn now; and left her to explain matters

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to the man I had hired it from. I was resolved to support her no longer. Fortunately she took to drink; in six months had *delirium tremens*, and died in a fit."

"Extraordinary!" I exclaimed.

"But I was determined," he continued, "not to be disheartened. I considered matrimony still as my sheet-anchor. But to protect myself against another ambushade, as soon as I met, as I considered, a proper object, I employed a private detective to watch her: the villain did, and married her himself, after defaming my character as the greatest villain that ever lived.

"A lucky incident now turned my attention to fire, life, and burial insurance companies: in which I became an active agent. There were fires everywhere, and more children's funerals in three months than any other collector had had in three years. Baby farms flourished everywhere, and no sooner had one crop of babies been reaped than another came on. But the insurance offices, although established for the purpose of doing business, were dissatisfied with my services, and instead of rewarding me for the amount of business I brought, dismissed me with a threat of prosecution.

"I then brushed up my learning, and took holy orders. Being a gentleman of family, I got a fashionable church, electrified the congregation, and especially a young lady who was the daughter of a peer—the Hon. Agnes Bugby. The father was a proud, surly old man who had made his way first in trade and then in politics: I hated him for both; but Agnes was charming, and I am

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almost afraid I married her for love. But be that as it may, the old man bought us an advowson. What a happy quiet life we then led for two whole years! At last I felt the sphere of duty too narrow, and sold the advowson, furniture, and wedding presents, which realised a large sum, and I set sail with my darling, as a missionary to New Zealand.

“My darling was as anxious as I to deliver the dear natives from ‘Satan’s chain’; and we sang together on board ship of an evening that delightful hymn, ‘From Greenland’s icy mountains.’

“We landed at *Hokitika*. The natives were savage, but *most* enthusiastic for conversion, and in raptures at our advent. Our exertions and zeal were in proportion to their enthusiasm and rapture. When we sent home our reports, Exeter Hall was almost out of its mind with delight at the awakening we had effected: especially when they read how the natives lay down flat on their faces before us, leaped into the air for joy, danced with tomtom and spear, and twirled themselves round with the most surprising agility, at the news of Salvation. Up went their tomahawks into the air; away went their arrows, disks, and knives—and they slapped their bare thighs, so loudly you might have heard it a mile off, in token of their joy.

“My darling was like an angel to them: she not only taught them the Gospel, but the English language and English morality. The last rather surprised them, and especially when they were informed of the excellent examples set by the aristocracy of England. They all loved Agnes,

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who went fearlessly amongst them: she sang to them, played the accordion, prayed with them. Thus for two years we laboured in delivering them from sin and Satan; and one of the bishops at Exeter Hall declared that there had not been such wholesale conversions since the days of the Apostles.

“Now comes the saddest part of my missionary experiences. Agnes had gone into the interior farther than usual to see one of her converts who was dying of a fever—and if ever there was a tender nurse it was Agnes: she did not return as usual, and day after day passed without any news of her whereabouts.

“I was distracted, and wandered away and away through unknown regions: everywhere I inquired diligently and offered up earnest prayers; but all was of no avail—there were no tidings. At last, when all hope was gone, and I thought I should never hear from her again, news came——”

Here I could not refrain from clapping my hands for joy—the poor fellow seemed so overcome with his own feelings. At last he said, with a pathos I shall never forget—

“Roger, *they had eaten my darling!*”

It was some time before he could sufficiently recover to add—

“And now I have come to the Bar, not, as you may suppose, to practise, for I am neither lawyer nor advocate; but in the hope that my family influence will obtain for me some lucrative judicial appointment.”

He was not disappointed.

XIX. HOW DR. JOHNSON, BOSWELL, AND OLIVER GOLDSMITH DINED WITH THE BENCHERS AT THE MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL

MY great uncle was always pleased to tell the story of *Dr. Johnson, Boswell, and Goldsmith* dining at the Middle Temple. He had it from his grandfather, who not only would talk of it over his pipe, but gave him his diary containing that famous dinner party.

The journal from which I am copying these details is written in the quaint style of the period, which I shall modernise for the convenience of the reader. My uncle's grandfather was a Bencher, and so had an opportunity of hearing the delightful conversation between the "Sage," his Satellite, and his friend "*Goldy*."

It is dated 16th November, and runs thus :—

"Dined with Johnson, Goldsmith, and Boswell at Middle Temple Hall. Johnson as Big, Boswell as Little as ever. Goldsmith greater than both together ; if you measured him by his writings, not by his conversation, which sometimes lacked relevancy and sometimes meaning.

"As we walked up the hall, the rolling figure of Johnson was known to the assembled barristers and students ; Boswell was unknown ; Goldsmith too. Ranging ourselves in front of the magnificent oak table, the gift of Queen Elizabeth, an officer in gorgeous robes, like the Caliph of Bagdad, gave three thundering claps on a table with a mallet ; and

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then the treasurer, a fine handsome man, read grace, but, I am bound to say, from a book which seemed to have been kept up the chimney. This Johnson admired exceedingly, cleanliness never being in his estimation next to anything but unholiness. We then took our seats, and I felt like the Queen of Sheba for curiosity, although doubtless far behind her in comeliness of appearance or beauty of apparel; but there, I was to listen to the wisdom of this second Solomon!" Who can conjecture when there will be another Johnson? The answer is, When there is another Boswell.

Lawyers, however clever, have great difficulty in talking of topics outside those on which they live. They remind me of silk-worms, who never get away from the mulberry leaf. But I must say, with a man like Johnson, it was very difficult to edge in a conversation when once he had laid down his knife and fork and wiped the perspiration from his brow; a sign the ever-watchful Boswell was looking for.

There was a brilliant company of benchers, but the atmosphere was not favourable to the clear shining of our own luminaries. The author of "Rasselas" was not there to discuss executory remainders, resulting trusts, or the last joke of the last new judge. It was soon seen what surpassing intellect could do in the way of conversation; for the Sage, while eating his walnuts, contributed to the instruction of the company by moistening his forefinger with his tongue, and dipping it into the salt-cellar. It somewhat startled me, I confess, and the quick eye of Boswell, ever on the watch for an opportunity, perceiving the incident, turned it to account.

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“Do you consider, sir,” said he, “that it is good to take salt with walnuts?”

Johnson: Why, to be sure, sir; it is the universal opinion of mankind: it is good for the digestive organs.

Boswell: I have seen some celebrated men, sir, press their *walnut* into the salt-cellar. I don't think that a good way, sir; but perhaps you would not mind favouring us with your views of taking salt with walnuts? There are many ways, I apprehend?

Johnson: Why, you are to consider, sir, that when you touch the particles of salt with your walnut, if the walnut be dry they do not adhere, but fall back into the receptacle which is wrongly called a salt-cellar. Whereas, if you do it thus, (here the Sage again dipped his finger into the salt,) you take up every particle that you touch; so that it is not only the most decent but at the same time the most economic mode of taking your salt.

Boswell observed that the doctor's was the most perfect reasoning he had ever heard, and looked around amongst the benchers for approval. I am sorry to say, however, that they seemed to lack appreciation. Then he said that he should not wonder if, after that exposition, the Sage's mode of taking salt should become universal.

“Why, to be sure, sir, except with the Scotch, who are too economic to eat salt at all, even if they have their walnuts given to them.”

Goldsmith: But, sir, ought not you to have a tub full of salt, and let each man keep to his own part of the tub? I should not like a man to put his finger into mine.

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Johnson: A ridiculous idea, sir ; you are to consider that salt is only a condiment, and the smallest portion is sufficient ; there's a lack of nicety, too, about your observation, sir, as if there was some contagious disease in a man's finger.

Boswell, who always acted as peacemaker whenever there was the least appearance of friction, immediately turned the subject, which he did very adroitly by asking : " Do you think, sir, the lower animals converse ? "

Johnson: Why, to be sure, sir ; why not ?

Goldsmith: They have no lexicographer, sir, to teach them the use and meaning of words.

Johnson: No, sir ; but what has that to do with it ? Men talked before they had lexicographers.

Goldsmith: But not so well, sir : you must allow, sir, not so well.

Johnson: Why, to be sure, sir, not so well.

Boswell: But they must have had some means of conveying their intelligence, must they not, sir ?

Goldsmith: And yet talking, sir, does not *always* convey intelligence ? (interrogatively).

Johnson: No, sir, it does not—— (smiling).

We benchers laughed by way of encouraging these great men, for we had now got into close quarters with the real grit of that conversational talent which we had heard so much about, and which constituted the rare merit of " Wits of the Coffee Houses." We were in the midst of the rarest literary talent ! After the wine had again circulated, Boswell, ever to the fore in philosophic conversation, said—

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“Sir, did you ever condescend to study the Three Card Trick?”

Johnson: Why, yes, sir; but you are not to consider the individual a disreputable being, merely because, forsooth, by a clever manipulation of the cards he deceives those perceptive faculties which are in fact betrayed by the visual organ.

Boswell: If a Cheesemonger deceived you, sir, by artfully concealing a weight under one of his scales, he would be a *Cheat*, would he not, sir?

Johnson: To be sure, sir; he would be worse than any pickpocket. But the three card operator is *not* dishonest—he is merely deceptive; and you may deceive without being dishonest, as you may be dishonest without deceiving; he merely says to the country clodhopper, “Sir, I can so manipulate these cards by making them present a delusive appearance to your retina, so that you shall presently be deceived and delude yourself into the belief that you are following a particular card, whereas in ‘truth and in fact,’ as our learned hosts would say, nothing of the sort is taking place. There it is, sir,” continues the performer, “there it goes, sir; follow it with your visual organ, sir; put down your sovereign, and take up the card. If your supposition is right, I pay two sovereigns, for the odds are exactly two to one.”

Here one of the benchers up spake and said he had tried that clever game himself.

“And pray, sir, how did you get on?” asked the Doctor.

“A sovereign I got on, sir,” said the bencher, “but I pulled nothing off. The curious thing was,

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that the man had turned up the very corner of the card I backed, or thought I backed."

"Why, sir, you should have turned up the man," said Johnson; "he was the artfullest card of all" (smiling).

"Was it not the right card after all?" asked Goldsmith.

"Why, no, sir," said Johnson; "it was the wrong one."

"It is a cleverer profession than most of our learned professions," said Goldsmith.

"What do you mean, sir? Our learned professions are the guardians of the body politic," said the Doctor.

"Yes, sir, and they all feed on the body corporate."

Johnson: Sir, I do not understand the antithesis.

Boswell: Do you think it right, sir, to force a young man into a learned profession against his inclination? Is it not like making a fresh-water fish live in salt water?

Johnson: Ask Goldsmith, sir; he knows more about the habits of fish than I do.

Goldsmith: You cannot make fresh-water fish *live* in salt water. You can only make them die there.

Boswell was very pleased with this answer, and laughed as heartily as those who were laughing at him. He then once more changed the subject so as to show off the mighty intellect from another standpoint.

"Do you think, sir," he inquired, "if a man had three legs he would go much faster than a man with two?"

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Johnson : Why, sir, you are to consider, that a man runs with two legs as fast as is necessary.

Goldsmith : Except, sir, when the bailiff is after him !

Johnson : To be sure, sir, although I have had no experience ; but you are to consider, sir, in discussing this question, that if you would superadd a third leg to the human body, a structural alteration of the building would be necessary ; otherwise the third limb could only be pendent.

Goldsmith : Like a leg of mutton, sir, in a butcher's shop.

Johnson : Yes, sir, like that.

Goldsmith : A biped with three legs would be a very strange thing, would it not, sir ?

Johnson : Why, to be sure, sir, a very strange thing ; and a quadruped with none would be stranger still ?

Goldsmith : Like a stump bedstead, sir ?

Johnson : Yes, sir, like a stump bedstead.

Boswell then asked if wealthy men were not entitled to more respect than paupers.

Johnson : Why, no, sir ; they may be entitled to less ; for the pauper may be the greater man in intellect. Yet the rich man is entitled to respect, because, although he may be a fool, he can exercise considerable influence.

Boswell : I have heard you say, sir, many times, that his chief influence is *spending* : how, sir, would it be if he hoarded ?

Johnson : Sir, he may be hoarding, under Providence, for wise men to spend, and all will covet a rich man's goodwill.

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Goldsmith: Especially if he's mentioned in it, sir.

Johnson: How, sir? I don't understand you.

Boswell: Goldy means, sir, being amongst our lawyer friends you were speaking about *wills*—testamentary documents.

Johnson: Pish! (angrily).

Goldsmith: But those who want money may toady to him, may they not, sir? and that would be bad, surely?

Johnson: To be sure, sir, he would be like a spaniel on its hind-legs begging a piece of cake.

Goldsmith: Or a tree bending, sir?

Johnson: Yes, sir, like anything that bends.

Goldsmith: And the rich man, sir, in those circumstances would be like a gander which erects its neck perpendicularly in a judicial attitude, would he not, sir?

Johnson: Yes, sir; like that.

Goldsmith: Adversity, sir, never makes a man contemptible, does it?

Johnson: No, sir, but *vanity* does (smiling).

Boswell then spoke of a man who was considered very great at the Bar, when Johnson said if he was really a great man, his greatness would be sure to have made itself visible in some way or other.

Goldsmith: Perhaps, sir, it oozed out in his childhood.

The treasurer of the Middle Temple here said—

“He makes a *great income*, sir.”

Johnson: You are to consider, sir, if that be the test of greatness. I know a far greater than he, who *sells tripe*, for he makes a larger income.

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Speaking now of some one who posed as a man of eminence, Johnson said, "He might have passed himself off as a clever man, if he had not taken so much pains to show that he was a fool. He reminds me," said the Doctor, "of a turkey that was always putting up its head to see if any one was looking at him."

Goldsmith : Or like a cock, sir, going to crow ?

Johnson : Like anything, sir. You don't improve a simile by a roundabout repetition of it: mine was quite sufficient and apt—I disallow all others.

Boswell : You will allow, sir, there is nothing more contemptible than the creature who fawns upon the rich man ?

Johnson : No, sir ; I allow nothing of the sort: there *is* a more contemptible thing, and that is the rich man who permits such homage.

Boswell : Do you think, sir, wit can be acquired ?

Johnson : Why, no, sir ; not even a poor play upon words which, amongst the ignorant, passes for wit: but is exactly the opposite ; for it is a mere similarity of sound without any sense: and there can be no wit without sense.

Goldsmith : Any more, sir, than a man can acquire *genius* : he would be like a goose imitating——

Johnson : Yes, sir—imitating nothing——

Goldsmith : Or like——

Johnson : We must have no more on't. I have allowed you one simile ; that must suffice. We do not require a dissertation on the whole animal world upon every observation I may chance to make.

Grace having been read, we proceeded down the hall amidst the cheering of the barristers and students,

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who knew Johnson by his hugeness, if not by his "Rasselas." As I was walking beside my brother bencher, whose name is of no consequence, he asked—

"Who is that funny little fellow? What do they call him—Goldsmith, I think, was the name I caught?"

"Oh," said I, "he wrote '*She Stoops to Conquer.*'"

"Oh, *that's* the man!" he said. I do not know if he understood me, but he seemed mightily pleased to learn that *that was the man*. I tried him with the "*Vicar of Wakefield*," but I might just as well have mentioned the Rector of Portarlinton. He knew more about attorneys than vicars.

Afterwards, as we discussed the merits of the guests, one of the most illustrious of our benchers, a member of the finance committee, who had to check the expenses of the Inn, said—

"*I'll tell you who the little Irish devil is! He's the man who is everlastingly worrying us for a new chimney-pot which was blown down a year ago!*"

"On reaching my quiet haven," says uncle, "that night, I could not but think how little regard lawyers pay to Genius when not arrayed in the Lord Chancellor's robes!"

Thus, my uncle. Let me now add, on my own feeble account, an incident which occurred to me one summer evening on leaving chambers. I had reached Goldsmith's Buildings by the church, when I met a very distinguished judicial personage; and while we were conversing on legal matters (we never talk about anything else in the Temple), the sweet voice of an American lady greeted our ears with the question:

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“Can you just pint out the locality of Oliver Goldsmith’s grave? I mean the poet, who wrote the ‘Traveller,’ and the ‘Deserted Village,’ and the ‘Vicar of Wakefield.’ I guess it’s here about somewhere.”

I was perfectly amazed at the young lady’s knowledge of our literature; but all Americans are gifted in that respect. My judicial friend’s genius lay in the legal department; and if she had said Goldsmith was the author of “Little Red Riding Hood” and other poems, he would have been no less puzzled than he was. My friend had lived in *Lamb Building* forty years, and he could not have lived much nearer to the poet’s grave without treading on it; and yet he looked at me with a countenance that seemed to ask if the young American creature was mad?

The lady came to his assistance by suggesting it was “somewhere around”; for she had been told by one of the benchers, “who was tattooed with a rearing horse on a silver plate fastened to his collar, that it was alongside the church.”

My friend blushed! The only time I ever saw that effect produced on a lawyer—and it was by a young American girl of certainly not more than sixteen summers! Let English maidens take note of this!

“I really don’t know,” he said, in that suave delightful tone which distinguishes a lawyer in a fix.

I stepped in. It was clear that the American lady’s future happiness was involved in the discovery of Goldsmith’s present abode:

“*There* it is!” I said.

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How she thanked me! "*I guess,*" she said, as she tripped along to weep over the poet's grave— But what she guessed I have never learned. I think it must have been something about my judicial friend's ignorance.

XX. THE LEGEND OF THE FASHIONABLE BARBER

THE fashionable barber of the Temple, many many years ago, was like most barbers of that day, a philosopher, a politician, and a humbug ; and, mixing so much with his learned customers, he became a pedant. All artists of his profession are of an inquiring turn of mind, and by practice they develop an insatiable curiosity. This gentleman knew more state secrets than any member of the Cabinet, whether of the Queen's or my fashionable lady's. While he shaved your chin till it was as smooth as a girl's, he drew from you information which you were not quite sure you possessed, until you heard it at the coffee-house the next morning. He picked your brain with the same dexterity that my youthful patrons of other days would have picked your pocket ; that is to say, if either of those receptacles had anything in it.

The views, therefore, of Professor *Bomb* (for so he was called), were not by any means confined to the lower prominence of the face ; he tapped your brain ; and pray what interviewer in the world ever had so good a chance of extracting information as the philosopher who holds you by the nose, while he puts words into your mouth or dabs his soap-brush into your eyes ? You were bound to submit to his loquacity and his lather, his razor and his rhodomontade. (This by way of alliteration, according to present fashion.)

At the time I write of I had no requirements for Professor Bomb's services, that is to say, for the pur-

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pose of taking off my beard, although I was hopeful enough to suppose that the same process might be useful in putting one on. Hence the situation in which I frequently found myself, under the operating hands of this great artist, and consequently my mind became stored with knowledge which I could obtain nowhere else in the wide world. All men find their level at the barber's, and there I could contemplate greatness from the standpoint of my own individuality—quite uninfluenced by any other relationship with the world whatever.

For instance, I have seen Her Majesty's judges under the influence of Mr. Bomb, looking like owls at midday, beneath his lather, and turning up their eyes like sheep in the hands of the shearer. Oh, the plaintive meek expression of those "dear eyes"!

How could I but think of the mutations of human greatness as I saw Bomb's finger and thumb tweaking my "lud's" nose? Greatness! thought I—is this greatness? Where be these great judges' jibes? their old familiar jokes, as Master Barber slaps their fat, lean, puffed, hollow, smooth, wrinkled, red, brown, white, yellow cheeks with his lather brush? Then, when he takes their learned noses, thick, thin, long, short, snub, pointed, flat, or bulbous, between his thumb and fingers, and squeezes them as it were for love, where, I have asked myself, be their ludship's ancient precedents, and modern instances? their cranks, crotchets, quips, quibbles, bad temper, snaps, snarls, and primeval jests, whose most valuable quality is their antiquity? Where that wondrous *humour*, that sends young counsel to bed laughing? Alas! poor Yorick! lather levels humanity, and

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makes the most arrogant modest for the moment. You cannot keep up your dignity with your nose in Master Bomb's fingers and your face covered with lather.

Then again, I have seen the law officers of the Crown sitting side by side, under the same influence, looking towards each other like two love birds on the same perch, and seeming to say—

“Ha ! it's what we all come to when we reach man's estate ! What now of our *Fiats* and *Nolle Prosequi's*, our *Prima Facie* cases, and the rest of our official equipments, technicalities, and precedents ?” Oh, that towel under their chins ! How young they look again ; how innocent ; how delightfully amusing ! and if Bomb had been going to feed them they could not have looked more happy in their bibs.

As I was reclining in his chair in later life, one early morning, and Master Bomb was flourishing over me like a green bay tree, he observed in his usual insinuating tones—

“Of course you know the *Baron*, sir ?”

I murmured, “Yes.”

The Baron, dear reader, did not mean the old English baron, but a *Baron of the Exchequer*, a judge of the High Court ; and in the present instance it meant a Baron renowned for his cultured taste, his high-bred manner, and the fineness of his wit. This, the reader will see, is the Baron of whom people used to ask one another, “Have you heard *the Baron's last* ?” or to vary the expression, “the last of the Baron's ?” The Baron told a capital story last night about a goose !”

As soon as I said I had the honour of knowing this great man, the Professor said—

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"Ain't he a wonder, sir? What a *mind*, sir! What a wit, sir! I suppose the finest wit of the day, is he not, sir?"

"I should hardly like to say that," I replied; "we have great wits on the Bench, especially the Common Law wits. They don't practise it much in Chancery."

"Indeed, sir, but he must be a great man, sir, begging his Lordship's pardon for calling him a man,—I should ha' said *Judge*. But as I were takin' the liberty of saying, I always understood, sir, his Lordship was of great descent—John o' Gaunt, I've heard say, sir, while some has it, he's a *Borebong*. What a descent, sir! Now, might I ask you, sir, were it his high connections as got him the judgeship? if I might make so bold; or might it be his *wit*? His *goose story*, *perhaps*? If I've heard the Baron tell that story once, sir, I've heard it fifty times. In fact, whenever I shaves his ludship——"

"What the devil do you mean?" I asked. "I don't know what you are talking about; it must be a damned old goose that." I was sorry after for being so angry. Mr. Bomb was not in the least disconcerted, and in order to give the conversation a turn, asked if I would like a little hair off.

"No," I snapped, "I would like a little on."

"If you please, sir," said the imperturbable villain, "we keeps it in bottles, three and four, and six and eight—same price as law, sir, only much more headifying."

I believe the brute thought he'd made a joke, so I pretended to sneeze. Although this made the barber jump, it did not silence him. He scraped away until

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he got my head back, as though he intended to break my neck.

"Might I take the liberty, sir, perhaps you wouldn't be angry, but might I ask, do *talent* count for much at the Bar, sir?"

"Nothing," I said.

"Indeed, sir; well, you do surprise me! But as I was going to say—although, p'raps, being his father——"

"I don't know in the least what you are talking about or driving at," I said.

"Excuse me, sir, but I'm coming to it." And he wrenched my head more and more. "I say, as the father of my son James, although I ought not to say it, James is a remarkable clever boy, sir, a *most* remarkable clever boy! They tell me, sir, his talents is extrordnary for a boy of his age—only twenty."

"If he's your son, that accounts for it," I said.

"Excuse me, sir, I am as heaven was pleased to make me."

"*Pleased!* Heaven was pleased, you think—very well; but what's your son James going to be—a barber?"

Here the professor drew himself up in perfect contempt of his own calling. "No, sir," he said emphatically; "there is but one profession fit for a man of his talent, only one outlet for such brains as his, *your own noble profession*, sir. He is already entered of the Middle Temple, and working fourteen hours a day, sir, and a good part of the night."

"Then," I said, "his talent is useless; if that is all he possesses, he can't get on at the Bar by talent alone."

"Then, sir, what might you recommend instead?"

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“*Friendship*,” I answered.

“Dukes, for instance, sir?”

“Yes; or you might even come down as low as an earl; but I should not go below that.”

“Indeed, sir. A hearl, you think.”

“And *women*,” I said.

“Raly, sir,” he exclaimed; “what a coincident! If I may take the liberty, sir, of saying, as between two gentlemen, and quite on the Q.T., my son James, I believe (here he whispered), has a tendency that way—a *ponshon*, as the French say; but of course, sir, as his father, I winks at his piccadillys. Young gentlemen studying for the Bar *will* be young gentlemen; you understand me, sir. As I says, unrestrained ’igh blood, sir, ’igh blood; but what a noble profession it is, sir!”

“What the devil are you talking about?” I cried, jumping out of my chair in a half-shaved condition, while his brother artists were laughing at the situation.

“Beggin’ pardon, sir; I thought you said *women*. Hope I’m not mistaken, sir. Were it women, sir, or were it not? Do the razor go easy, sir?”

“I did not mean it in that way,” I said. “You must be a fool to think I meant immorality.”

“Oh, indeed, sir; if you please, sir!” And here he reconducted me to my seat of humiliation, when up went his arms and down went his head in the most obsequious obeisance, and I heard him mutter, “*Not* immorality. Oh, indeed.”

I thought it proper now to explain what I meant, namely, “that the keen discernment of the sex often discovers talent that would be certainly passed over by the less observant minister, and in that way it was

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desirable to cultivate ladies' society of the higher order." I give him credit for at once seeing how grievously he had erred, and for making due apology for his mistake.

As I rose to go, he took down a bottle of fluid, which he called *The Baron's Own Mixture*, which his Lordship always used, as he was quite bald, and required something strong. He recommended me, however, a less potent commodity at a higher price. And once more quoting the Baron, I could not help saying—

"Damn the Baron!"

Alas! how bitterly since have I repented of my sin. That great wit afterwards honoured me by an invitation to dine, and then told me his goose story, punishment enough for all the sins I had ever committed.

"O sir, but his *stories!* The one, sir, about the goose! I've laughed a hundred times over that goose. But might you remember, sir, a little dark gentleman as used to come here, with long hair as though my scissors had lost their charm for him, sir? Ah! sir, he were a gentleman. Well, this comb, sir, is the one I used when I had the honour to comb his hair, and I keeps it as a hairloom in remembrance of his composin' so many beautiful airs, for he was a great musician, sir. I believe it was that wash that you've got in your hand as made him celebrated at last, for no man had longer hair than that composer. Ah, sir, what I've seen! But poverty, sir, haven't I seen that? Take that scoundrel, Walter Bayley, for instance, one of the leading men of his day, and as poor—— O dear, sir——"

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"He was my friend," I said, "and I never knew anything against him."

"Ah, sir," he said, with tears in his eyes, "you never shaved him for ten long years for *nothing!* or kept him in 'Jockey Club,' or lent him money to keep out of prison."

"I always thought him such a superior person," I said; "quite a superior person."

"All them superiour persons is like that, sir, when they wants to do yer; all superiour! Yes, sir."

"And I used to notice," I said, "how beautifully shaved he was."

Master Bomb sighed. "He shaved me, sir, closer than I ever shaved him. He promised to make a man of *James*, and to introduce him to clients, and said how he should hold his briefs, and when he was a judge what he'd do for him. Yes, sir, and what he did was to borrar James's money."

"He was a good sort of man," I said; "open-hearted."

"Oh yes, sir, what they call 'one of the best-hearted fellows in the world.' He borrowed money on the strength of going to be a judge. What I lent that man nobody knows, sir. Why, he was that good-hearted that he swore nothing but cent. per cent. should be my interest. He'd never allow me to take less; and there it is on his paper now, but all I can say is no more *post orbits* for me."

"Post orbits. How do you mean?"

"Post orbits on his judgship, sir. I hope I've seen the last of him."

"He's dead?" said I.

Mr. Bomb sighed. "Yes, sir, and I don't envy

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him where he is. It is the only place he ever deserved."

I ought to mention that James rose to greatness, and he did so in the only way which will make greatness sit well upon its possessor, namely, upright perseverance in well-doing. There are many roads to five thousand a year. There is only one to the esteem of mankind.

XXI. A YOUNG CLERGYMAN'S PEDESTRIAN TOUR

I MET a young man at Oxford named Harry Graham, who "took orders" soon after I left. I had had a successful tour from Oxford to London, having avoided as much as possible the highways, and keeping along unfrequented tracks. My journey had been so pleasant that Harry resolved to follow my example, although he did not follow my steps, but kept the highway.

At that time the roads between important towns were infested by highwaymen and footpads, gipsies, pedlars, strolling players, and tramps of all kinds. An inefficient police, a slow mode of travelling, bad roads, and desolate wastes gave every opportunity for plunder as well as escape.

To the lowest classes and worst characters a gentleman was particularly obnoxious. He was envied, hated, and plundered, sometimes murdered, without compunction or remorse, and generally without the least probability of capture or punishment.

The French Revolution had diffused through all the lower classes of Europe its devilish principle of Equality, which resulted in their thinking there was no class equal to their own; and their aim was to trample under foot and pillage every one who was above them in rank, wealth, or education.

Harry Graham was the son of a canon of Lincoln, and to that city he was journeying with the intention of taking London on his way. He was a man above the middle height, athletic, well-built, and agile, of a

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kind and gentle disposition, humane, and of an excellent humour.

At the time I introduce him to the reader he has arrived at a small village in Staffordshire, having walked a dozen good miles before breakfast. As he sits in the homely public-house partaking of his frugal repast of bread and cheese and a tankard of ale there are several loafers who call themselves "working men" drinking, swearing, and smoking. There was only one room for all comers.

One of the men was the most ill-looking man he had ever seen. He was the village bully, the local prize-fighter; and, if rumour were correct, a character much worse than either. His name was Jerry Hinshaw. He was tall and muscular, but dissipation had somewhat enfeebled his constitution. He afterwards became one of the most infamous men of his day, and a public exhibition for some years on Putney Heath.

The men drank till they had no money to pay for more, and quarrelled with one another because the landlord would not serve them. The bully turned upon Harry, thumped the table with his iron fist, and asked him whether it was right that they should be refused by the landlord.

"You're a gentleman, sir, we can see that," he continued; "and if so be you're a gentleman, why it stands to reason that you'll order some more beer. Ain't that about the size of it, sir?"

"I'm very sorry," said Harry; "but my means are small enough, and I've a long way to go."

"But you don't go without standing beer, Mister, means or no means."

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There was much laughter at the bold manner in which Jerry "tackled" the gentleman.

"Look 'ere!"

Harry rose, not wishing to argue with a man already half drunk.

Hinshaw took a quart tankard and told him to have it filled:

"Nay," said the bully, "Mr. Gennelman, thee doesn't leave without standing ale all round; we working men bean't gennelfolks, and them as is gennelfolks must *pay*—for why? because they got the money." And then he jeered vociferously at parsons, church, and religion.

"Friends," said Graham; "it's true I'm a clergyman, but I fall out with no man's opinions, and respect everybody's when they're sincere; it is a matter between our conscience and the Creator. As I respect your opinions, whatever they may be, I am sure you will be men enough not to insult mine."

"We ain't got none," they cried.

Then the bully cursed and swore about parsons in the most horrible manner, and threatened to knock Harry down. The village carpenter, however, who happened to come in, rolled up his apron and stuck his brown paper hat firmly on his head and said—

"Stop, Jerry, the man hasn't hurt you—don't let's have a bother, Jerry."

"What," said the ruffian, "stop for a d——d feller like that—not till I've took it out of him."

"Excuse me," said Harry, endeavouring to pass.

"Nay, nay, thee doan't leave like that, nuther," and he took off his coat. "Now, thee d——d parson,

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we'll soon see who's best man, and what thee be'est made of."

Graham's coat was off in an instant, and before Hinshaw could reach him he had cleverly parried the blow, much to the amazement of Jerry himself. He then got home with a warm one on the bully's nose and eyes, which caused him to reel and see sparks.

The excitement amongst the bystanders was intense—the blow was surprisingly delivered, especially for a *parson*—they laughed derisively at Jerry, and cheered the gentleman. Admiration follows success.

"It were a heavy blow!" said one.

"And Jerry knowed it wur," laughed another.

"Goo it, parson!" they cried. "Goo it, bully! I'll back the parson for a quart. Zounds! that be another good un: right on t' konk! Now then, bully, give un one in t' ribs. Oh! Oh! Oh!—that's killed Jerry, ain't ur? Noa, he's at un agin. Bravo, Jerry, thee's a plucked un. Tak's arter his mother!"

The bully, although a local prize-fighter, lacked the skill which science alone can give; while Graham had been the champion boxer at the 'Varsity. Jerry was roused to the verge of murder, and if he could only get his foe at a disadvantage kill him he certainly would. But Graham never lost nerve or presence of mind; he kept his position, and knew that the burly brute was at his mercy with fair play. Jerry thought if only one of his huge fists could alight in the neighbourhood of his opponent's ear he would be as dead as a herring; so he manœuvred to "get home," which Harry saw well enough; with the swiftness of lightning he threw his antagonist off his guard with a feint, and then, landing him a fearful blow in the eye,

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sent him backwards across the table. For the time he lay insensible, while his companions shouted applause.

They had never seen anything like it. As soon as they got him on his legs again he rushed at Graham, like a staggering bull; butted with his head, and tried to close with him. Harry was on his guard; evaded his tactics, and, stepping nimbly aside, delivered the finishing blow on the side of the ruffian's head, which brought him in violent contact with the door-post.

They tried to make him rally, but the brute was beaten at his own weapons. They thought he was dead, but he was reserved for a more distinguished fate—he was not born to be killed by a parson.

Graham now stood high in popular opinion.

“What a Bishop he'd make,” said one. “*A man as can whop Jerry Hinshaw—why, he'd lick the devil!*”

“Haw! haw! haw!” they roared. “Thee'd sooner hear un preach at thee than fight thee, wouldn't ur, Jerry?”

“I hope,” said Graham, turning to his adversary, “we shall be none the less friends, and that we may meet again in a more pleasant manner; let us forget and forgive, now it's all over.”

“It wunt be over till I put ee under the turf, nuther,” said the ruffian.

“We'll coom and hear ee preach, wunt us, Jerry?”

“Aye,” cried two or three voices, “that ur wull. We'll coom and hear thee preach, parson; thee be a raight good un to whop Jerry! for ur's the best fighter round hereabouts, and u'll fight anybody for a quart any day in the week, just the same as you'd

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toss un for a quart. Best fighter in these parts. Good-bye, parson, an thee must goo ; no ill-feelin'."

Graham shook hands all round, and giving them a friendly word of advice took his leave.

The old carpenter, *Caleb*, followed him out, and warned him of his danger on the road. He whispered that Jerry would be sure to have his revenge, if he did not take good care to avoid him, but begged particularly that he should take heed when he got to the cross-roads a few miles away.

Graham thanked the man, and started on his journey. The scenery was so beautiful, and the air so exhilarating, that he very soon forgot the events of the morning, and went on smoking his pipe without any thought of Jerry or the strange incidents even that had so recently occurred.

When he arrived at the cross-roads, however, he was reminded of the warning by Hinshaw rushing through a gap in a plantation with a pistol in his hand. He came towards Graham with a yell of curses, and was in the very act of aiming his pistol when a young woman rushed on the scene and struck it from his hand.

It went off and wounded the ruffian in the thigh. He fell, and lay cursing the woman who stood over him, and whose eyes gleamed and burned like a tiger's.

"Fool!" she said, "are you ready, then, for the gallows? Do you thirst for the blood of a man who is innocent of ill-will to you or anybody?"

"Curse you!" groaned the fellow.

"Yes, curse *me*, Jerry; you have done that already; you have cursed me and my life, but you shall do no

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more murder if I can help it—" Then turning to Graham she said—

"Help me, sir, to place him out of sight—I'll fetch something from the tent."

Even these words of kindness did not mollify the resentment of this brute, who continued to rave and foam in his helpless struggle for vengeance. As Graham was turning away, the ruffian told him he would see him again some day and send him to his father the devil if there was one.

Graham thanked the girl and asked where she lived.

"Nowhere," said the girl; "I am a gipsy."

"And the man——?"

"Do not ask," she said, "but come away."

"You are safe now from him," she added, "because he cannot follow you; but these roads are dangerous; robbery and bloodshed! robbery and bloodshed! Some rob for a living, but this man murders because he loves it. How could you come these roads alone and unarmed?"

"Are *you* safe?" he asked.

"Yes," said the girl; "I belong to them who know every highwayman and footpad on the road. Our tribe could deliver them up to the gallows at any time—they dare not injure us."

"But they might kill you?"

"That would be their own death sentence. A good many of them would hang in chains on this heath if our tribe told all they know; but, sir—might I make so bold as to ask you a question?"

"Certainly, my good girl—but I know what you would ask, 'Who I am, and how I came here?' I am a clergyman."

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"I know that," said the girl, "and your father is Rector of — near Cleethorpes."

"How do you know?"

"I did not know when I put the question," answered the girl, "but when you said the last word, a look came over your face that told me you were the Rector's son—we know him, and have had many a meal in the Rectory kitchen. We do his mending when we go to Cleethorpes."

Graham offered the girl a small gratuity.

"No, thank you, sir," she said; "I take no money unless I earn it, and never for a little act of kindness; but let me give you a word of advice as you value your life. This is a dangerous road. Almost everybody who travels it alone is attacked and robbed; but if you do what I tell you, you will reach London all right. You see that hill—a long way off on the left—go for the hill, but keep clear of the *main road*. When you get to the hill you will see a barn in a fir plantation on the right. Ask for *Annie Lee*—that's my name."

"But will you be there?"

"No, but my name will—that is all you want. The tribe is the *Gipsy Lees*. Tell them who you are and what has happened, and they will see you safe to your journey's end—that is all. Good day, gentleman."

Saying this, she turned away and Graham walked on, wondering more and more at the strange vicissitudes that make up life. He reached the barn, and his message from the girl secured a welcome. He then had the new experience of spending a night with the celebrated tribe, who might be said at that time to occupy more territory than any nobleman in

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England. And so ended with their protection the eventful journey.

Several years passed by, and I was present, by invitation of the sheriff, at a service to be held in Newgate. It was a strange and an awful scene, the gloom of which I can feel as I write this story, and was enough to banish hope itself from the human breast. What hope of heaven *could* there be in Newgate? Hope comes not in the grave; and here is the grave where all that can make life worth living is buried. Many of the congregation were under sentence of death; many were waiting to fulfil their sentence of transportation.

I can never forget the scene or the feelings it awakened. What had religion done for these hopeless outcasts? The world was against them, the law was against them, and religion itself *seemed* against them. But no, no, for ever no. Religion is ever the best and last friend if accepted. Who was on their side? Who? There was still One, if they only knew.

The chaplain of that terrible prison now entered with a face not depressed with despair, but, as it seemed, inspired with heavenly hope. I knew it in a moment. It was my old chum. Even *there* came back the happiness and delight of early friendship. I may have been weak, but I could not restrain my tears. I knew what a good fellow Graham was, but little did I think he was so good as to sacrifice all that was dear to him to come and minister to wretches like these.

Truly could he say in his Master's words, and in His behalf, "*I have come to seek and to save that which was lost.*" God knows how it came to pass, but there

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he was ! And when he preached it was a sermon that gave *hope* ! It seemed as if Misery and Sorrow must flee away like a dream when the day approaches. I am not ashamed to say I fairly cried. I "broke down," the more especially when I saw that harder hearts than mine were touched and melted, and that tears were on faces that perhaps had never felt them since childhood.

I recollected the story of the pedestrian tour, and learned long afterwards that *some of those who promised to come and hear him preach were there* ! They had kept their word, although they never meant to do so. Yes, his *old antagonist* was there, *condemned to die the next morning*, and to hang in chains on Putney Heath !

"I believe," said Graham, "that when I visited the condemned man in his cell, had he not been heavily ironed, he would have killed me, so fierce, so implacable was his resentment. I had injured his vanity by lowering him in the eyes of those who admired him for his brute courage, his fighting celebrity ; and when you wound one's vanity there is seldom forgiveness. He did nothing but rage, foam, and blaspheme."

"He knew you ?"

"Instantly, and his anger as suddenly broke loose. The fear of death will sometimes change a man's manner, but it cannot change his heart. God's grace alone can do that. Hinshaw remained impenitent."

The procession to the scaffold is newspaper intelligence. I need only say it was not wanting in ghastly detail. The culprit showed no change even in that awful journey. All was callousness and brutality.

Strange, however, to relate, an incident occurred which was like an electric flash on this obdurate man.

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In the crowd was a woman, who alone of that vast mass of human beings showed a touch of *sympathy*. It was enough. The culprit saw her. His hands, although he was pinioned, clasped violently together, and he cried with piteous exclamation—

“Annie! Annie!”

Yes! It was *Annie Lee*.

She had battled with all that was worst in his nature to reclaim him to the life that was best, but in vain. True, she was none of his, but she had loved him *once*, and for that love had been willing to sacrifice all that was dear to her, and even life itself. It was not the weakness but the strength of love that brought her where she now was. She had come, not to see him die, but to prove that the old love which he had cruelly despised had been true in all the days she had known him, true in life and true in death.

XXII. HOW ROGER MET LITTLE CHIPPS AT A POLITICAL RECEPTION

LADY MACPHERSON, who was the wife of an ex-Cabinet minister, had been so long out of office that she thought nothing would save the party but a political "rally." She said, "You may speak divinely, and decorate your speech with the choicest epigrams and flowers of rhetoric, but it will all be of no use without a 'rally.'"

A rally at Lady MacPherson's was something to remember—the next morning. Enthusiasm was always of the first quality, for the champagne was of superior excellence; so was the lobster salad. Once in the supper-room, belong to which party you might, you were bound to "rally."

The master of the feast was big enough to fill any vacancy which might be going; and he made so many speeches that they used to say in his concern for the British constitution, the wonder was that he did not destroy his own.

He was a large man, and the flow of his language never seemed to hurt him any more than a rill hurts the mountain. He was a heavy man, and it was fortunate that his speeches were not of corresponding gravity; but what he lacked in wit he amply made up for in self-consciousness, and a too obtrusive dignity of manner; that is to say, he lifted his shoulders and puffed out his cheeks. Had he possessed a tithe of the love for his country that he had for office, he would have been one of the greatest patriots ever known.

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I had stood for Parliament, and had learned the value of ignorant applause and insincere friendship ; so that I had ceased to wonder at the "cheers" that greet the conundrum sentence of the great man which requires some other mind to explain it than that of the speaker.

Her Ladyship had a "masterful mind," and was said to shape Sir Thomas's politics as she had shaped his career : "it was *her* money," they said ; so she had a right to mould his opinions. She put him on the fence like a cock pheasant, and whistled him down on which side the buckwheat lay.

Her Ladyship had a keen eye and a sharp tongue, with such a turn, they allowed, for wit and pungent repartee, that with a little more practice, it was supposed she would arrive at the dignity of a common scold.

As we crowded the marble staircase in order to reach the rallying point, where her Ladyship *received*, the heat was insufferable. If the great party had hitherto been scattered as sheep without a shepherd, here were the sheep all collected once more, and on the way that led to the shepherdess and the supper-room.

But where is my little Chipps all this time ? Hush ! he is smothered amongst the trains and skirts of half-a-dozen political angels with bare backs, who are fanning themselves up the staircase, and whose fans were as wings. They did not know my little friend was amongst them ; at least Mrs. Poole did not, for she was one of the great ladies whose backs were against little Chipps.

But he was in a capital position to hear what took

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place, and was much amused by the conversation. One lady, whose name was Corkram, said to another, who was a Mrs. MacTavish, and whose husband was an eloquent Scotchman with red hair: "Poor man, he has a large family; they ought to give him something."

"Shurrer," said Mrs. MacTavish; "it is neecessairy for the world's gude that the government should be turned oot."

"What a long time," said another, "poor Duncan MacGrath has been out of office."

"Aye, and wi sic a family too," returned Mrs. MacTavish; "but it's a garrand (grand) rally—this!"

When they reached the top of the staircase little Chipps ran out, and Mrs. Poole, startled with his appearance, cried—

"There he goes!—you little wretch!" as if he had been a rabbit.

A young military officer asked what Sir Thomas's politics were. He was a handsome man, who had come up the stairs with his arm protecting pretty little Miss MacTavish.

Everybody was shocked at the simplicity of the young officer.

Little Chipps answered, "His wife!"

But so rapid was he in his movements that before Mrs. Poole could stamp on him he was in the supper-room.

Miss MacTavish introduced the young officer, whom she called Captain Soames, to her "ma," and her ma asked how long she had known him.

"Oh, ever so long, ma! that is to say, I—met

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Captain Soames—" but before she could finish her white fib they were separated by the crush, and found themselves in the supper-room.

"Have you found out Sir Thomas's politics, Captain Soames?" asked Mrs. Poole with a pretty sneer.

"No," said the officer, "I really haven't; and I don't believe he knows himself!"

"What *are* you doing here?" asked Mrs. Poole, as Chipps once more made his appearance: "you have no vote."

"Nor you, sweet one," said Chipps. "You can get in here without voting; beautiful crush, madam! charming crush! Splendid rally! magnificent woman Lady MacPherson! fine fellow Fergusson. I mean Mac something. Capital champagne! Shall I have the honour of rallying with you, madam? Allow me! your health, madam, and—success to the rally! *success* to the rally!"

"Impudent chatterbox!" muttered Mrs. Poole, turning up her nose with a lofty sneer.

"Come," rattled Chipps, "shall we bury the lobster, my dear madam, and may I offer you a little hatchet?"

At this moment Sullivan came up, and Chipps changed the conversation. "Dear fellow, what a delightful surprise! thought you were the other side—shall we rally? Glass of champagne! Come, what a treat to find you are one of us—on our side! Isn't it delightful? This is, er—madam, allow me to introduce my charming friend. Oh, I beg pardon; it was my delightful friend, madam, I remember, who did me the honour, which I shall never forget, of

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introducing me to your Ladyship—I mean *future* Ladyship. Shall we rally, madam? You'd like a fresh glass. Waitress, a fresh glass for Mrs. Poole——”

Mrs. Poole would have struck him if she could—she would have annihilated him—and well he deserved it; but as she could do neither she turned away and directed her attention to the lobster salad with her friends.

I asked Chipps how he got his introduction to Lady MacPherson, seeing he was not a politician.

“Dress-coat, dear boy!” said Chipps.

XXIII. HENRY FIELDING AS A STUDENT OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE

I

FIELDING'S MESS IN THE HALL

I RELATE this legend from my great uncle's diary, merely modifying some of its quaint expressions, except where the latent humour requires a more literal observance :—

In Michaelmas Term, 1738, I dined at the mess next to Henry Fielding, who sat exactly under the panel which is now occupied by the arms of *Bibye Lake*, Esquire, the reader of 1781, on the right as you enter the hall. I knew Fielding personally, as well as from his writings. One of his dinner companions was an Irishman of the name of *Donovan*, a man with a sallow complexion, small deep-set eyes, dark protruding brows, and high cheek-bones. He seemed to have been almost everything in the professional line (except hangman), and was now a student at law and *literary critic*; one of the discriminating gentlemen of that period, whose qualification for the office was the aptitude to pounce on the defects of a writer, and to sneer at his merits.

He was a born critic; that is to say, he would tear every reputation to pieces that he could meet with. His delight was to destroy; and to wound and disable if he could not kill. He had failed in every department of art and literature which he had attempted. Nor did he succeed better in love, if such a passionless creature could ever be said to have tampered with

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the divine sentiment. Marriage for love was out of his line, while marrying for money, the only object he could ever have, was quite out of everybody else's.

I was sure something interesting would take place as soon as I saw the composition of Fielding's mess. One student of the name of *Didier*, the son of a West India planter, was a man of a facetious disposition, who always "enjoyed the fun of the thing," whatever it was; another was *Jedediah Mins*, a Bahamian, who looked at you with his white teeth, and kept his merry eyes in ambush as if he was always playing "bo-peep." He was within a few shades of being black, yet seemed to shine on you with his perpetually beaming smile. We called him "Jed."

The derisive sneer and insulting epithets of men like Donovan, "the Critic," were in the old days kept in check by the cold steel which gentlemen wore at their sides. But the benchers had some time before prohibited the wearing of swords, so "good breeding" amongst certain men relaxed; there was no weapon by which you could enforce civility. It was not wonderful, therefore, that "wits," like Donovan, should sometimes exhibit their malignant deformities at the expense of another's feelings.

There was little conversation during the first twenty minutes, for Donovan ate with a voracity that left no energy for other exertion; while his teeth were engaged, his tongue was at rest. Whether he had tasted food—save what he got from his vituperation of authors—since last term, I do not know; but so soon as he had satisfied his appetite, he began his favourite eulogy of his illustrious family, being the descendant, as he proudly assured his listeners, of

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six lines of kings! Then followed his dissertations on literature and abuse of every modern author he pretended to have read.

I think Fielding knew the man, and suspected that he had had a share in damning one of his plays; but I am sure he was moved by no ill-nature when he said, in reply to the observation of Donovan's monarchical descent—

“You are, then, of kingly mould.”

Ridiculous as it may seem, Donovan took offence, and cried—

“*Dirrt*, you mane, sir! ah, it's dirrt you mane!”

We all laughed, except Donovan. The laughter made matters worse, and the Critic immediately made a sneering observation on “The Temple Beau,” one of Fielding's well-known plays.

He next boasted of the number of authors he had demolished by his “reviews” of their writings.

“And do you do all this injury,” asked Fielding, “out of pure love of cruelty? or—or——”

“Or what?” asked Donovan contemptuously.

“*For a few shillings?*” said the author.

“Do you think a gentleman would do such a thing for money?”

“I do not think a gentleman would do it at all.”

“Then, sor, ye mane to insinuate——”

“Nothing,” said Fielding. “If you had read my plays you would know——”

“D'ye mean to say——”

“No—I do not—certainly not—by no means——”

“*We*, sir, the Critics, govern public opinion.”

“So much the worse for the public and the opinion; the *Town Crier* does the same kind of business.”

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“You must withdraw that, sor, or I’ll have satisfaction ; as a gentleman, I’ll have satisfaction.”

“Make your demand in any *other* character and I shall be happy to oblige you,” answered the dramatist.

“Come to Garrick’s rooms,” said Didier, wishing to stop the altercation.

“Garrick !” sneered the lofty-minded Critic—“a *stick!*—call *him* an actor !”

II

BUNHILL FIELDS

“FIVE o’clock to-morrow morning : Bunhill Fields,” was the message duly accepted by the parties. Mins for Fielding, and Didier for the high-souled one, were the “friends.”

Two more lively gentlemen than these seconds could not be found for carrying such arrangements into effect. They revelled in that kind of carnage which is produced by missing your adversary and returning to a good breakfast. They looked forward to a duel with as much anticipation of delight as Spanish ladies to a bull-fight, notwithstanding occasional mishaps ; and would rather see their principals flashing in glorious combat than making up their differences with a base apology.

But, to their credit be it said, they were quite prepared at a moment’s notice to take the places of their principals and fight as their representatives. Honour without justice is humanity without common sense ; but that is immaterial.

The battle was arranged, and if only the morning

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be fine, it will be a pleasant excursion. The duel is in the honour of *Literature*. If the author puts a bullet into the skull of the critic, literature is avenged. If the latter lodges it in the brain of the author, literature may lament its loss but will be proud of its martyrdom.

It must, however, be confessed that Didier's post was no easy one. He had the greatest difficulty in keeping Donovan up to blood heat. Donovan could neither pacify his mind nor quiet his nerves. He had never fought before, although he had often *challenged* his friends and been kicked by his enemies.

He would not fight even now, but, being a member of the Middle Temple, the honour of his Inn seemed to be entrusted to his keeping; although he would have given a thousand pounds (of anybody's money) to have let the Master Treasurer hear of it, so that the peace might not be broken—or his head.

But Didier was a source of inexpressible comfort. He cheered him when he was despondent, and encouraged him to hope that no funk on the *other* side would prevent their "turning up." He assured him that Fielding was a devil of a shot and could hit a bird on the wing wherever the bird liked.

Then he appealed to his pride of birth and his ancient pedigree. "What," he asked, "would his line of ancestral kings say, if it knew that their valiant descendant was about to exchange shots with the most wonderful marksman of the age! There comes in the glory, my dear fellow!" said Didier; "that's worth dying for."

"By the powers!" said Donovan, "I'll send him to hell."

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"That's it, my dear fellow, even if you follow him in a hearse," said the second, with a good-natured smile; "that's the spirit of it."

"But if the devil should back out?" said Donovan.

"Out of hell, my dear fellow? he has a title by prescription as well as by descent."

"I mane out of the foight."

"Oh, he'll not do that, never fear! Fielding's too fond of sport; he'd never play so low. He's a country gentleman, you know, is Fielding, and a man of honour; *he's* no coward—not he! by Jove!"

"The devil! But suppose somebody gets wind of it and intherrupts the proceedings?"

"Make your mind quite easy," said Didier, slapping him on the shoulder. "Everything is arranged happily, *with the greatest secrecy*. I have provided against surprise. Take a nap; who knows where you may sleep this time to-morrow? and in that sleep——"

"By my sowl," interrupted Donovan, "perhaps the devil at the last moment will *apologise*? D'ye think he'll apologise? Didier, you're a good fellow, will he apologise? Now, spake your mind."

"*Apologise!* my dear boy; he'd sooner kill you, twenty times over. Don't be uneasy about that—he'll *not* apologise; besides, I've heard him say, *three parts of the damned critics ought to be shot*. I proposed to him about some sort of a settlement, after the first shot or two had been fired, supposing neither was mortally wounded. And what do you think he said?—

"'No, sir,' said he. '*To the very death!* to hell

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with the man who lives by slander, and takes the bread out of a poor author's mouth! He's the most contemptible of the devil's agents, and to his principal he shall go. He's a damned hired assassin who stabs in the dark for his bread and butter.' Judge for yourself, my dear Donovan, whether a man with *such a spirit* is likely to forego his resentment and the opportunity of—putting a critic to death? Will *he* go down on his knees—*he*, Fielding?"

"I don't mane on his knees; he need not do that. The least expression of regret. I don't want to kill the poor devil. After all, he's only an author. Suppose he just says, says he, '*I didn't mane what he thinks I did mane——*'"

"Oh, but there's the difficulty, my dear fellow, to a man of his fine sense of honour: he *did* mean it, and told Garrick you were a damned cowardly scoundrel, who would sooner have your nose pulled than fight."

"Did the villain go as far as that, now?"

"Much farther; but I do not wish to hurt your feelings."

"Oh, niver mind that, my feelings are hurt already; but as sure as I can get a bullet into him, I'll kill him. And yet if I kill him—there's Newgate!"

"Or *Calais*. And if he kills *you*, a quieter place than either."

Donovan sighed: "Bedad!"

"But," said Didier, "as I love you, I will see that your remains are decently interred."

"But I'm damned, sor, if I'm in such a hurry to be interred. How would you like it yourself, Didier? Would you like to be interred?"

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“Should not in the least mind it, if I were properly qualified,” said the valiant second, lighting a cigar.

The next morning, after a sleepless night, they repaired to the waste of *Bunhill Fields*. It sounds sufficiently rural, but was the most cockneyfied horror of desolation one can imagine. It was in the grey twilight, when there was sufficient mist to render objects shapeless, and to give every shapeless form an exaggerated appearance. No sooner, however, had they arrived, than Donovan, with that quick perception of difficulties which characterised him, said, with a look of exultation—

“We are betrayed! we are interrupted! Bedad, this is too unfortunate!”

“By no means,” said the stranger, who seemed to have come out for the enjoyment of the morning air. “I should be sorry to interrupt any little amusement you may have on hand.”

“We have private business,” said Didier; “in fact, sir, it is a little matter of honour.”

“Indeed, sir,” said the stranger, “that makes it still more interesting. If it be an affair of honour, I should dearly love to be present. It is a sport, sir, I have longed to participate in, and have never had the opportunity!”

Donovan’s blood curdled. “Perhaps, sor,” said he, “you would like to take my place?”

“By no means, sir,” said the gentleman politely. “I am not a selfish man, and would not deprive you of the pleasure for worlds; besides, an untimely grave is my special abhorrence. I love life—*gaiety*, good humour, and enjoyment. The grave, sir, has no charms for me! Bah!”

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"Who *are* you, in heaven's *name*?" asked Donovan.

"Who am I, sir?" repeated the stranger. "A seeker of instruction, a philosopher, a naturalist, an anatomist. I dissect character, *and* the human body. I wish above all things to see how a man dies who is shot, let us say, through the *head*; and secondly, in the diaphragm."

"Excuse me, sor," said Donovan, looking very white.

"And excuse *me*, sir, I think I have the speaker's eye. Quite so! *Some* doctors maintain that when a man is shot through the *forehead*, mark me, and the ball works through that part of the empty receptacle where the brain ought to be, that he falls backwards. Others, on the contrary, affirm that he takes a leap of three feet or so into the air, and then falls *forward on his face*, sir. We shall see."

"Indade!" said Donovan, "ye same a nice sort of man."

"Not *nice*—no," said the stranger—"not particularly nice: those who live by murdering the reputations of artists, authors, and actors must not expect any one to feel very *nice* towards them. Oh no; they are a very *nasty* lot of creatures; and I could as soon feel *nice* towards a toad, or a snake, or a blackbeetle, or any other loathsome object—the necessity of whose existence is a mystery to us—naturalists."

"Excuse me, sir," said Didier; "but do you see you are disturbing the equanimity of my friend? His engagement requires all his nerve."

"Are duellists *all* like your friend?" asked the stranger. Here he planted his cane in front of his feet, and imitated the pose and bearing of Dr.

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Johnson ; so that one might have taken him for that philosopher.

"You jest, sor," said Donovan, "on a grave matter."

"A *grave* matter with you, sir, no doubt ; but not so with me ; I take the more lively side of eternity—but I see—excuse me, sir, I must retire—here comes your *friend*—I must dissemble."

As he walked away, Donovan said with a tremulous voice, "That fellow must be the divil."

"No," answered Didier, "but he is nearly as good : he is *Garrick* !"

III

THE DUEL

THERE never was a more valiant paper man than Donovan. He could scarify, torture, or kill. He could blacken the character of a man whose boots he was not good enough to brush. But here, away from his literary sphere, he was overcome with emotion, and afraid of the adversary whom he had maligned in the distance.

"Hold him up !" said Fielding ; "let me have one shot at him at all events. Is he ready ?"

Donovan did not move. Didier begged him to act like a man. "If you fall," he whispered, "you will fall gloriously."

"I don't want—to fall—*any* how," said Donovan.

"Come, come, man ! give me your hand—while you lie here you can only fall lower in our estimation."

"Give him a drink," said Fielding, throwing his flask.

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“Does he mane that as an apology?” asked Donovan; “if so, I’ll accept it. By Jasus, I don’t want to hurt the man. I’ll forgive him.”

“Not in the least,” said Didier; “he declines to apologise, and he will not forgive you.”

At this moment a chimney-sweeper lad came along with his soot bag over his shoulder, accompanied by half the roughs of the neighbourhood. These gentlemen were always on the look-out for affairs of honour.

A happy thought occurred to some one (I think Garrick) that the critic might either be made to fight or have his nose pulled by the sweep.

The proposition was put to the challenger, who promptly refused either alternative; upon which Fielding declared he would thrash him. Then Donovan became more reasonable, and consented to have his nose pulled by the sweep.

That artist, with a broad laugh, and amid the roars of the crowd, took a piece of tallow candle from his pocket, rubbed it into his fingers, and then dipping his hand into the soot-bag, took out enough to make a good paste with the tallow.

There was another preliminary, however, before the operation could commence, and that was the payment of the fee: sweeps, like lawyers, do not pull noses for nothing. The boy asked how much they were going “to guv him?”

“How much do you want?” asked Didier.

“Can’t do it under a crown,” said the sweep; “’taint a nice job.”

“Dirt cheap!” said Garrick; “you can’t get it

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done for less ; and I'm sure, by the look of the boy, he'll do it well."

"Give him the money," said Didier.

"I pay him?" cried Donovan. "I pay him to pull my own nose?"

"To be sure," said Garrick; "who do you think is going to pay for having your nose pulled? Do you expect to get up a subscription, or to have it pulled for nothing?"

"What right, sir, have *you* to interfere?" asked Donovan.

"I am the *stick* you insulted last night — DAVID GARRICK, at your service, sir. I had come to thrash you myself, had there been anything left after Mr. Fielding had done with you."

Didier paid the money for his principal, and the boy rubbed his hand over the critic's face as affectionately as a housemaid cleans a bell-handle. The critic tried to remonstrate, but a portion of soot in his mouth made him splutter instead, and, after a few moments of humiliation, he made a dash, escaped from the hands of his artist, and ran as hard as he could, with all Bunhill Fields at his heels hooting, yelling, and laughing, as if Bedlam had broken loose and was out for a holiday.

Such was my great uncle's account of this episode in the life of Fielding as a student of the Middle Temple. In my days we had no Donovans, and I verily believe, with a purer age of literature, there has arisen a truer age of criticism. There is no longer the envy of the seeker after fame, and no longer that

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intense longing after fame which obtained in the days when readers and writers were few, and a man became famous for writing a wretched lampoon, or effeminate verses to a butterfly. Those who can amuse an idle hour are greater benefactors in these days than those whose works are immortal, but never read on this side the grave.

XXIV. SIR RALPH AND HER LADYSHIP ENDEAVOUR TO REFORM THE STAGE AND WRITE A PLAY

EVER since the elopement of his daughter, Sir Ralph had decided on *elevating* the profession which the young lady had adopted. He had, of course, forbidden her all communication with "his family"; so that no tidings of her had been received since she went abroad.

In desiring to "elevate" the stage, it is not necessary to assume that Sir Ralph wished to elevate his daughter. She was gone irretrievably from his affection. It was not the father, but the philanthropist, who was concerned for this "degraded class."

As Lady Christmas was anxious to write a play, Sir Ralph said there was nothing more easy. It was a species of composition which required no learning, like a theological treatise; you had only to make your characters *talk*. It did not occur to this learned man that talking was a secondary part, after all, to the acting. But he did qualify his observation by adding that you must "bring in" something a little sensational at the end.

Whenever this eminent and learned knight considered deeply, he masticated his moustache voraciously, and made a little humming noise through his nose.

"There *must* be love in it," said her Ladyship.

"Hem—m—m—" said Sir Ralph.

"But, darling, how *can* we get on without love?"

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“Hem—m—m—” said Sir Ralph; “can’t we?”

But this humming always meant that Sir Ralph was to have his way, and therefore there was to be *no love*—a “mere *sentimentality*,” as he termed it. Moral sentiments were to prevail, and philosophical speeches, so that when the thing was finished it was as empty of humanity as a tinder-box.

The acting manager of Drury Lane at that time was no less a personage than Charles Keene; and it was to him that the extraordinary play was submitted. Sir Ralph’s social and official influence had procured this favour; and, as the object was a good one, namely, the elevation of, (not his fellow-creatures, for he had none,) but a “degraded portion” of the human family, Sir Ralph condescended to accompany her Ladyship to that celebrated man at the National Theatre, in order to learn his opinion of their first attempt in the dramatic line.

Behold, then, the long, attenuated form of Sir Ralph, seated in an easy-chair on the stage, with his legs drawn out, and his long solemn face leaning on his hand, while his elbow rests on the arm of the chair. Her Ladyship stands near with a toy dog-whip in her hand, which she now and then cracks with the daintiest grace of movement. Sir Ralph jumps a little at the sound, and then closes his eyes languidly on the worldly scene—and scenery.

He had never been in a “playhouse” before, and it seemed, to his ecclesiastical nose, to “savour of perdition.” Poor man, his morality was a public nuisance, and his religion a positive extinguisher of all happiness and pleasure. And yet he was the husband of the lady who led the society of that day.

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"You wish me," said the great actor, "to give my opinion of the merits of this play?"

Sir Ralph bowed condescendingly, without speaking.

Her Ladyship looked into the actor's face with the sweetest smile, and nodded.

"I am obliged to say," said the actor, "that it is, as far as *stage* purposes are concerned, deficient in all the necessary qualities," (Sir Ralph languidly opened his eyes); "and," continued the actor, "if I may take the liberty of saying so, it is *not a play at all!*"

"What *is* it then?" asked Sir Ralph languidly, again stung into existence by this blow to his vanity.

The actor said, "I really do not know, Sir Ralph."

"M—m—m—meow——*meow*. Not a *play*?"

"No, sir, it lacks the essential qualities of a drama."

Her Ladyship turned her head, gave another little crack with the whip, and laughed.

"M—m—m—— What *is* a *drama*, Mr. Keene?"

"That is *always* the question, Sir Ralph, which an author should ask *before* he writes the play."

"M—m—m—meow!"

"You make men without any human nature, Sir Ralph, and women without vanity."

"M—m—meow——"

"*No such people ever existed*: even Adam and Eve before the Fall had a *tendency* to sin—a *tendency*, Sir Ralph. I merely say a *tendency*: as no human being is perfect, we cannot possibly have a representation of perfect human beings on the stage."

Crack went the little whip once more!

"M—m—m—m—meow——" went the playwright.

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“What!” asked her Ladyship, with an irrepressible smile; “might we not draw women as they *ought* to be?”

“*How is that*, my dear lady?” asked the actor. “Does any one know?”

Her Ladyship turned aside; Sir Ralph looked the actor in the face—a very unusual honour; for Sir Ralph never even looked in his wife’s face—he only looked in his own face in the glass.

“But the *men*—come, now, Mr. Keene, you will surely allow that *they* are—human——” said her Ladyship.

“No, madam; pardon me; they are more like *judges* than men.”

“Come, come, sir,” said her Ladyship, “that is too hard—that is contempt of court, surely.”

“Nay, my lady, it may be too *flattering*, perhaps; but we poor actors are forced to live by pleasing others;—what I mean is, that those excellent qualities which we all, with one consent, ascribe to our learned men, are *not* to be found in human nature.”

“M — m — m — meow! But — Mr. — Mr. —— (“Keene, my love,” said her Ladyship.) Yes; but why describe on the stage the *follies* and *vices* of men and women?”

“Because we cannot get on without them. If you take away vanity from the fair creatures we adore, where would be our milliners and dressmakers? Angels want wings, not clothes, Sir Ralph. I hope I make myself clear, Lady Christmas?”

“Perfectly, Mr. Keene; commerce depends a good deal on our being imperfect, and in an imperfect state of probation.”

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“And *naughty?*” asked Sir Ralph; “would you say naughty?” slowly shaking his head.

“Certainly, Sir Ralph, or where would be our judges and advocates, policemen and parsons?”

“Forbear!” said Sir Ralph. “I pray you, forbear!”

“I was going to say,” added the actor, “you would turn ladies into wax dolls: they would not even—*wink at you.*”

“M — m — m — meow. You are rather hard, Mr.——”

“Keene,” said her Ladyship.

“Not at all, sir,” answered the actor.

“Do you call Lady Macbeth a *woman?*” asked Sir Ralph.

“Very much so, sir; and there are a great many Lady Macbeths about who do not murder Duncans, only because there is no Duncan to murder, and they are a little bit afraid of the gallows.”

“That I should have lived to hear this, Mr. Keene!” said her Ladyship.

“To have lived down a foolish prejudice is worth living for,” replied the critic. “But—have you seen how that same character of Lady Macbeth is being performed at the present time by the greatest actress of the day?”

“We don’t go to the theatre,” said Sir Ralph; and then correcting himself, added, “at least *I* do not.”

“To ignore human nature,” said the actor, “is an agreeable ignorance, but the ignorance of the lunatic who fancies himself anything but what he is—a king—a three-legged stool—a genius—a good man—or——”

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“Enough!” said Sir Ralph.

“Would you like the opinion of the lady I refer to on this drama? She will be in her room by now, and may give you a different opinion from mine.”

Anything to obtain a different opinion would be agreeable to Sir Ralph. He graciously bowed his assent.

“If you will excuse me a moment, then,” said the actor, who left the stage.

Her Ladyship had not time to crack her whip more than twice before the actor returned with a beautiful lady on his arm, who walked with a grace and dignity worthy the tragedy queen who had taken the town by storm. At first the lights prevented a perfect sight of her beautiful features; but a few more steps, and the hands of Sir Ralph slowly rose, while his head drooped; a few more, and *Isabella* was in her mother's arms!

It was a situation to bring down the house; and if Sir Ralph could have *played* the character in this charming drama as he *did* it in his own person, he would have been a great actor himself.

The other characters also were perfect, and especially when, as the curtain fell, *Mr. Willis* was seen at the left of the stage exultant in the success of the little comedy, performed for the first time on any stage, and, let me add, with the most *complete success*.

XXV. OLD JOE MIDDLETON, Q.C., THE GREAT "COMPENSATION CASE MAN"

I WAS talking one evening with my Lady, when the name of "old Joe Middleton" came up. Instantly she said, "What a character, to be sure!" and commanded me to relate some anecdote of him in my Memoirs.

"Not one of his many *chestnuts*," said her Ladyship. "These were his most glaring weakness—excusable enough at the dinner table, where he had to keep up a great reputation for wit among similar wits—but never excusable in a book that has the least pretensions to literary respectability."

Almost every one knew old Joe, and all who knew him loved his genial disposition and kindly nature; they loved him even for his weakness as a punster and a wit: two excellent qualities for a wet day at a country inn when the fish will not bite. Every one can see old Joe in his blue sailor-like suit, with the big trouser legs turned up at the bottom; his blue and white necktie, and his japanned sailor hat stuck rakishly on his great head with the full moon face and a smile always ready to burst out into a laugh on the smallest provocation, which ended in a kind of fat wheeze which made Joe say, "You'll kill me—I know you will."

The great counsel stood six feet high, and was so stout that he weighed five-and-twenty stone. He worked at the Parliamentary bar; that is to say, he

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looked at maps very knowingly through his spectacles, said "yes" and "yes," and "I see"; asked questions; took his fees, and smiled at his clients as though he said, "Pray don't mention it; I am only doing by you as I would be done by—you are under no obligation whatever—I will not listen to anything of the sort—no thanks whatever."

He was an inveterate old bachelor, who used to laugh at the way he had run the gauntlet of the young ladies, and prided himself upon the fact that every woman was in love with him, in spite of the attacks of gout in his big toe.

Joe was ordered horse exercise; when I heard this, I wondered, after it was taken, what the vets would order for the poor horse.

The learned counsel was a pious old infidel, and never thought of his soul unless he had gout. His last attack being very severe, he was serious, and for the first time had a professional lady nurse, the doctors being afraid the disease might get into his stomach. It was a pity, however, that they recommended such a brilliant pair of eyes to look after him, and such a lovely face to soothe him. *Twenty-one, too!*

But Joe, although he loved the society of pretty girls, was proof against their charms. He had such a masterful mind! Nevertheless, it would have been better if Constance had bandaged his eyes before handing him his medicine; while he was so sensitive that if her finger happened to touch his ever so lightly, out went a sigh on its eternal journey through space.

But once more old Joe's vanity got the best of him.

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He fancied Constance was in love with him, and wanted to effect his ruin. Of course he was on his guard, and summoned all his virtue to his aid ; then offering a powerful resistance, he was enabled to triumph as heretofore over everything, even over the gout, which now began to beat a tardy retreat.

I ought to mention that Joe looked upon love as an infectious disease, and to prevent his having it in any serious form, he took the opportunity when the fair Constance's hand was near to press it to his lips. He believed it had the same effect as vaccination. The result was that when he got well, as the young lady novelists say, "a delicious harmony of souls" subsisted between them, which in the philosophic minds of these charming writers prevents anything naughty. When old Joe felt it coming on he looked down into the depths of Constance's eyes, and Constance smiled into the depths of old Joe's "orbs." The result of all this was a little dinner at Richmond, to which Constance's Aunt Rachel was invited.

Incomparable Richmond ! with its incomparable waiters ! all with happy coughs, which they discharge outside the doors of private rooms.

Aunt Rachel was sweet, mincing, and middle-aged ; with nice crisp ringlets on each side of her face, a straight back, and susceptible heart. She adored eminent men ; and so eminent a man as a Parliamentary counsel with ten thousand a year, who could make an old joke look like new, was to her an *adorable* creature who would have been reckoned a deity in a less Christian age. She was in love with him, and when the wine and jokes went round, old

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Joe laughed so heartily, that the scene was more laughable than the jokes themselves, and Aunt Rachel more laughable than old Joe.

The dinner, the cigar, the row on the river, the return to town, passed off delightfully. There never could have been a more pleasant entertainment *for three!*

Alas! when Joe had wished them good-night, and the ladies were alone in Aunt Rachel's little parlour, the reaction set in, and Aunt Rachel turned cross, and began to lecture her niece on the impropriety of her conduct; her giddiness, and the extreme silliness of encouraging attentions from a gentleman of Mr. Middleton's years.

"*Unnatural*, my dearest Aunt!"

"I don't like Mr. Middleton's attentions, my dear."

"Then why not tell him so?" asked Constance; "he would not listen to me if I told him what you said."

"Then whom is he to listen to? But don't pray tell him that."

"You are the proper person to tell him, Aunt."

"Fiddlesticks! He is nice and clever and all that—but he is too elderly."

"There is not so much disparity between you, Auntie, that it should be an objection—*if you love him!*"

Aunt Rachel was so angry that she gave way to tears, and it seemed as if she would cry herself to death. However, Constance, who was ready-witted and intelligent, was not long in bringing her to.

"Auntie," she said, "you don't know what Mr. Middleton said of you!"

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Rachel looked up, and, holding her handkerchief near her eyes, so as to begin again if necessary, said—

“*Tell me nothing!* I am sure it was nothing! Oh, nothing! What *could* he say of me?”

“You will not be offended if I tell you?” inquired Constance.

“Oh, *never*, my dear child. It is for *your* sake *alone* that I am concerned—he is a most *eminent* man;—and so rare a thing nowadays—he is a *gentleman*; but of *course* he doesn't care for me—at *his* age. But what did he say, darling?”

“Well,” said Constance, “it was *nothing*—and I am sure he did not mean it.”

“Not *mean* it, Constance! *why* do you say such a thing? Is it for *you* to judge what a gentleman like Mr. Middleton means? Let me hear it instantly!”

“He only said he wished you at Jericho.”

Aunt Rachel gave a little scream and ran out of the room.

II

SOME weeks after the Richmond dinner, the eminent Q.C. called on his “little Constance” at Aunt Rachel's, and found her in tears.

All lawyers have tender hearts, and Joe's, contrary to most living things, got more tender as he got older.

“What is the matter, my little one?” he asked, in the most sympathetic of tones. “What *is* it, my little one?” and he took the little one's hand and fell to kissing it in the most fatherly manner.

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"Nothing is the matter," snapped the aunt, "only obstinate self-will ; that's what's the matter. People ought to have some regard for others' feelings ; that's what I say, Mr. Middleton."

"To be sure," said he, "to be sure ;" and he pressed the little one's hands more ardently to his lips than ever, without the least regard to Aunt Rachel's feelings. Then he put back her hair from her forehead, as if to kiss that too ; but he only looked steadily into her "orbs," and said, "Never mind, little one !"

Rachel persisted that people were so selfish.

"Not my little one ; no. Oh no ! I will not have it that my little one is selfish."

Aunt Rachel bit her lips, and rubbed one hand on the back of the other.

The advocate was quite carried away by his feelings, as he was at times in the committee rooms when vehemently defending some scheme which was intended to benefit the public at the expense of his client's pockets.

"My little one," he continued, "must not be thwarted ;" and he patted her cheek as though he were pointing out a particular part of the map through which his client desired to benefit the country by bringing his railway.

"She has had an excellent *offer*, Mr. Middleton ; an offer which no girl in *her* position should refuse."

"Indeed," said Mr. Middleton ; "and who was the impudent rascal ?"

"Rascal ! Sir, he is an eminent Russian tallow-merchant in—in—some lane."

"He'd better stop in some lane," said old Joe ;

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"I hope it's a lane that has no turning. Of course my little one refused!"

"And Auntie scolded me," cried the little one, encouraged to the attack on her aunt by the strong clasp of Mr. Middleton's arm.

"Auntie didn't mean it," said old Joe; "there! there! there!"

"Oh, but Auntie *did* mean it, and *does* mean it; he's on the verge of eighty, and Constance is throwing away a *great* chance."

"Of being made a widow," said old Joe.

"There's reason in all things, I hope, Mr. Middleton?"

"Especially in ladies," said old Joe. "They reason like a hurricane—you can't resist them."

The spinster always admired what was called the eminent man's wit (she seldom called things by their right names); but at last she was brought round to acknowledge the fact in her own clear mind, that if there was disparity between seventy and twenty there was something approaching to it in eighty and twenty. Constance, too, was brought to promise that she would never take any important step without consulting Mr. Middleton.

He also, in making matters up, prayed Rachel *always* to regard him as a *friend*; which made Auntie wonder whether in *law* that constituted a promise of marriage; if not, she was sure *a very little* more would do it.

Then she reasoned thusly—that all Mr. Middleton's attentions to Constance, in the *nature* of things could *only* mean that he looked upon her as a *mere* child, without any intention to marry her, and was sure the

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act of *kissing* her proved it, for no man in his senses would kiss a girl of that *tender* age if he meant anything by it. The few years between Constance and *herself* made *all* the difference, and kissing her would be a serious matter.

Months passed away, during which Aunt Rachel was alternately buoyed up with hope or depressed with doubt. She loved Mr. Middleton; she loved all eminent men, and adored witty men. Every old joke of Joe's was brand new to her. She laughed at the thought of "*a child like that*" being any more than a toy to him—as a bun to an elephant, as she put it. But who shall describe her ecstasy when Mr. Middleton asked her to dine at the Ship at Greenwich?

"At last!" she exclaimed; and then, accidentally turning over the last page, she saw a paragraph stating that "*of course dear Constance would be with her!*"

Aunt Rachel could only console herself with the thought, that however disagreeable it might be, it was only "*proper.*"

What a glorious dinner it was, to be sure! There was only one person too many; that was the drawback. When they strolled in the park in the evening, Joe made up for this little drawback by squeezing the hands of aunt and niece at the same time. What pleasure there was in that I do not know, except that lawyers always squeeze as much as they can out of everybody.

When Joe next saw Constance he was not in the least aware that he had made a fool of himself in the park. He hoped they had enjoyed themselves, and said what a charming park it was.

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“Very much enjoyed ourselves, especially Auntie,” said Constance, with a most insinuating smile. But Joe did not quite know how much it insinuated. He looked puzzled.

“Your aunt! little one; why your aunt more than you?”

“Oh, Mr. Middleton!” returned Constance, “when a gentleman proposes marriage, and is accepted, how can the lady but feel particularly pleased?”

I will not tell what exclamation escaped the eminent man—it was a little blasphemous—but he toned it down by degrees to “Good heavens! is it possible I could have made such a fool of myself?” whereupon the little one laughed till she almost had hysterics.

“I must see your aunt at once and explain.”

“Oh, but she’s gone to Yorkshire to tell her mother; did she not write?”

“Write? no——”

“Oh then you will hear from her, no doubt, in a day or two; and I am sure I hope you will be happy.”

When Aunt Rachel returned, Mr. Middleton called upon her with a view to an *eclaircissement*, as the scholars say.

Aunt Rachel caught him by both hands, and in the exuberance of her joy jammed the eminent man into a huge deep well of a chair, and there kept him. In vain he shuffled and attempted to recover his balance. The laws of nature were against him, assisted by Aunt Rachel.

“My dear Miss,” said Joe.

“No, no,” said Rachel; “I’ve been missed enough.”

Old Joe was dumbfounded—Rachel looked in his face and laughed in the most giddy manner; but it

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is fair to say that she knew nothing whatever of Constance's hoax about a proposal of marriage. They were therefore at cross purposes.

"Of course," she said, "you'll——"

"*You'll* what?" asked Mr. Middleton.

"Stay to dinner!"

"That's a relief," thought the eminent man.

"And then you'll hear about the proposed settlement."

"Settlement!" thought Joe—and sighed.

"I hope, Miss Carter," he said, after wiping his forehead, "I hope you have not been deceived."

"Deceived!" said she—"Oh dear no! and I am *sure* you will approve of it."

"Well," thought he, "this is the oddest business I ever was engaged in; a proposal of marriage without my knowledge, and a settlement without my consent."

"It's all arranged," she said, "and the house surgeon has agreed——"

The eminent man here so far forgot himself, that he said—

"D—n the house surgeon! What has he got to do with me? What does he want? To——"

But Aunt Rachel was sobbing; then Joe attempted once more to rise; she lent him a hand, but before he could shift the centre of gravity, he pulled her back on to his lap; and at this moment the door opened and in came Constance, who uttered a little scream and turned towards the door!

"Stay! stay!" cried both Rachel and Middleton in chorus.

"O Auntie!" said Constance, "who would have thought this of you?"

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"It's all a mistake," said Joe.

"Yes," answered Constance, "and mistakes like this *will* happen with the best-regulated ladies."

"I assure you, little one—it's—it's nothing," said old Joe.

"Very well; then if *that's* nothing, I'll show you something." Then she gave a little cough, almost like the chirp of a bird, and in came one of the handsomest house surgeons ever seen at St. Thomas' or anywhere else.

"Why, Joe!" cried old Mr. Middleton; "Joe, is that you? why, how is this? My nephew? how's this, Joe? I thought you were engaged all day long."

"Forgive me, Uncle," said Joe, "but—I *am* engaged all day long."

"Well, but how then?—what—why?—"

"I thought I'd come and tell you, Uncle, all about it."

"All about what?—Man—don't stand there like a schoolboy who does not know his lesson."

"Oh, *he* knows it well enough," said Constance, "if he would only say it; he has got his lesson by heart."

"I don't know," said old Joe, "whether I am asleep or not; but this is very much like a dream. You all seem mad."

Rachel, meanwhile, was looking out of the window to hide her shame.

"Come to me, my little one," said old Joe; "come and give me a——"

"Excuse me, Uncle—but——"

"But *what?*" asked Joe angrily.

"She's *mine*, sir!"

"Mine?" said the uncle.

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"You see," said Constance, "we have been together at the same hospital."

"And you had better now both go to the same asylum!" answered the uncle. "*I've* done with you. When I want you I'll send for you; but it will not be for the gout, I promise you—I have had enough of that: and, look here, little one, when I was so good to you, did you not promise not to take any important step without consulting me?"

"Yes, Mr. Middleton," said the ready Constance; "and that's what we've come for—to ask what you think of it? And if you *don't* approve of it—from this moment we part never to meet again; don't we, Joe?"

"Yes," said young Joe.

"*Who* are never to meet again?" asked old Joe.

"Your nephew and I," answered Constance. "We're never to meet again—never, never, or hardly ever. We made up our minds to it; haven't we, Joe?"

"Yes, sir," said young Joe; "it all turns on your answer; doesn't it, dear?"

"Yes, darling, all on Mr. Middleton's consent."

"You young devils!" said old Joe.

"I suppose we must part, sir? must we not? But you are very rude! you might have killed us less cruelly: but oh, my dear Aunt, *don't* turn *your* back upon us!"

Aunt Rachel took Constance in her arms.

"The best thing we can do," said old Joe, "in these distressing circumstances, is to go down to

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Richmond, have a little dinner, and talk it over. Come, Aunt Rachel, let us forget and forgive."

"Forget!" said Rachel, pressing his hand; "can I *ever* forget? Ah—*no!*"

"No more of that," said the eminent man; "I can't stand it."

My lady asked me if the old Q.C. "married Rachel after all?"

"No, my lady," I returned; "he did better for her than that: he made her comfortable for life."

XXVI. A CELEBRATED CLUB: BEING A CLUB OF CELEBRITIES

As the increase of talent is so great that hardly a family exists without one or two geniuses, I recall the memory of a young friend of mine who had an excellent opportunity of making his fortune in the stockbroking business, but was so beside himself with vanity that he thought there was nothing like the stage. His father was greatly concerned, and as he was a man for whom I had great esteem, I tried my best to cure the son's monomania.

I took him to Drury Lane, where that great actor *Etherington* was then playing. I was amused at the youth's simplicity and enthusiasm. The applause that greeted the actor actually brought tears to the youth's eyes.

"Oh," he said, "*that* is worth living for."

"Starving for?" said I.

"Oh yes," said he, "there's nothing like the stage."

"No," I said, "nothing like it."

When it was over I took him to a celebrated club, where perhaps more miscellaneous talent is collected night after night than at any other place in England.

There were celebrated men of all professions, but mainly actors, artists, musicians, and authors. There were also persons who were not celebrated, but who like myself were merely visitors. There were barristers, officers, and men of other callings who were guests. An old man was reciting a scene from

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"Othello" as well as he had ever done it in the days when his popularity was at its highest and he was earning twenty pounds a night. His popularity was gone, as all popularity must go. He has obeyed that eternal watchword of Time—"Pass on!"

I explained this to my young friend, who was a little touched at what he called "*the come down*," for he could see the man was *poor*!—a dreadful thing in the eyes of the young stockbroker, who could *starve* with complacency while surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth could purchase.

There was the great singer, too, who had charmed the ear of foreign courts as well as that of our great British public. The British public had transferred its favours to a newcomer. It loves new faces and new voices, new songs and new literature, as it loves new clothes.

There was an old Merry Andrew, merry as ever, but he had long ceased to win the applause of Drury Lane. Other Joves had arisen who made the laughter roar instead of him.

But it were endless to tell of all the men there who had been pets and favourites of that fickle god—the British public. Not that it is different from other publics. Nor is there any fault to be found in it. It is not so much that it changes its taste or its mind, as that it *changes itself* and obeys the immutable decree, "Pass on!" What *was* the public ten years ago is not the public to-day.

There were many men of wonderful talent whom I pointed out to my friend, who had failed from no fault of their own, but from *circumstances being against them*.

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“Will not *perseverance*,” he asked, “overcome all obstacles?”

“Look around,” I said; “here are men who have persevered for years, and are possessed of brighter talents than many of the most successful. Accident—or what we call accident—has been in favour of the one and against the other: that is all you can say. Again, sometimes by some ill-conditioned tone of the public mind, mortal genius has been eclipsed by immortal tinsel; you may see that in art and literature.”

I now directed his attention to an old man who was smoking his pipe in the chimney-corner; a remarkable-looking man whom I had seen before. I shook hands with him and introduced Arthur. In a short time he was entertaining us with a sketch of his early adventures, which were, as nearly as I can remember, as follows—quoting his own words:

“I began life as a strolling player. The proprietor of our show was a strutting little fellow with only one eye, which he kept focussed on his own interest. The company consisted of two ladies, *daughters of Peers*, travelling in disguise; Will Keywold the comedian, and myself the leading tragedian. As we were all persons of social distinction, I gave myself out to be a man whose noble birth was to be kept a profound secret till I was twenty-one. Will Keywold used to boast that his father was ‘Keeper of the Royal Preserves,’ a very distinguished post like that of Royal High Falconer, and that he was constantly in attendance on the Court. Would any one believe that this was the high-falutin for a *Warder of Cold Bath Fields Prison*?”

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“As we could not get our salary from Mr. Rosseur Tricky, we resolved to strike, and I am bound to say that when we waited upon our manager we were the raggedest set of celebrities and aristocrats even the French Revolution itself ever turned out.

“After stating our grievance, which was that we could not act without food, Mr. Rosseur Tricky coughed pompously, and then with a most theatrical air declaimed thus—

“‘Sir, you are playing the devil with my establishment!’

“‘No, sir,’ I exclaimed; ‘the devil acts his own part there, and if you will allow so humble an individual as myself the honour of saying so, he has in you a most competent understudy. I have no doubt, sir, that that most excellent tragedian will give you every satisfaction.’

“‘Damn you, sir.’

“‘I need not return the compliment,’ I answered, ‘because the leading gentleman you name will do so when we leave you, and the audience will vociferously echo his sentiments.’

“‘Where would you have been,’ he roared, ‘but for me?’

“‘At Drury Lane,’ I answered.

“‘At Horsemonger Lane, you mean.’

“‘No, sir, that is for those who play the part of rogues, knaves, cheats, and villains like—’ here I coughed.

“‘Speaking of horses,’ said Will, ‘there’s a very nice horse-trough near the brook, sir.’

“At the word *horse-trough* the little man turned white, as though he had heard the word before.

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“‘Sir,’ said he, ‘I will pay you something in *advance*.’

“‘Rosseur Tricky,’ I said, ‘thou art a villain—pay us our arrears.’

“‘Avaunt, fellow!’ said he.

“‘Horse-trough!’ laughed Will; ‘let’s have him in—let him liquidate.’

“I believe Will would have carried out his threat, only that the gentleman paid us something on account, and we remained until by Will’s excellent watchword we obtained the rest.

“After the termination of this contract, which resulted from effluxion of time, I obtained an engagement with a couple of pugilists who attended fairs and races, and gave exhibitions of ‘the noble art.’ It must not be supposed that I was engaged to fight the pugilists; my duty was simply to beat the big drum, which, as he made no resistance, I was able to accomplish. I also had to stand on the stage previously to ‘going in to begin,’ and bawl out the wonderful exploits of the champions, while the noble fellows posed on the platform and displayed their huge chests, and muscular arms which they folded majestically over their bodies. Then suddenly one would strike out at the distant church steeple; then they ramped up and down like the tigers at the Zoo waiting for their food, pretending to strike one another now and then so as to give some idea of the fearful contest which was to take place within.

“One afternoon an ill-behaved man in the audience said he would fight the pair of them!

“Now came my opportunity for displaying that presence of mind which characterises me. I stepped

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forward immediately, and held up my hand to command silence. The people held their breath to hear what was coming.

“‘*For one hundred a side, sir,*’ I said, ‘or up to five hundred: be good enough to deposit the stakes with the treasurer, whose office is on the left-hand side as you go out, and they will be immediately covered. The fight to take place after a week’s training.’

“The challenger looked confused, and the crowd laughed at him. I need not say the fight never came off.

“After the season I sold my drum to an artist just starting in the Punch and Judy line, and became a devoted lecturer on temperance. Here I was brought in contact with a great number of sour-looking females with straight backs; so many, indeed, that I thought I should go out of my mind; but I soon achieved an honourable separation from my captivity, done merely by saying in public that there was as much intemperance in tea-drinking as whisky-drinking, and that women that drank much tea were tea drunkards.

“After the tea business I turned my attention to a subject which was the most successful of all my efforts, namely, the composition of an universal pill. I studied the subject night and day for four months. How I lived during that time I do not know; probably my landlady can inform you. At the end of four months, having tried a multitude of combinations of chemical ingredients, I came to the conclusion that nature’s and not the chemist’s mixtures were best. So I made my pills of—well,

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there is an injunction to restrain one from revealing the secret ; but the efficacy of all pills is the *label* on the box—this was of so powerful a character that an extinct volcano might almost be revived into activity by throwing a shovelful into the crater. Then the name *Preventative* was so much better than *Curative*—which seemed only to apply to curates.

“I wished to attract the attention of the *healthy*, who are always more numerous than the sick ; besides, all other pills were directly administrative to those who were affected with *bile* or some other complaint. Let me give you an idea of the efficacy of my medicine as proved by repeated trials.

“It was found that they were good for the promoting of matrimony, preserving and restoring beauty ; removing wrinkles, restoring hair, preventing baldness ; stopping the decay of teeth, and producing new ones, up to the age of ninety. They quite did away with the old conventionality that you could only cut your teeth *twice*—they enabled you to cut the *dentist himself* and all his miserable works. They were also found to be efficacious in increasing your height, and so doing away with high heels ; they diminished rotundity of personage, and had a contrary effect on the scraggy. The label then finished up with a grand outburst of ‘No more cod-liver oil!’

“I went too far in the cod-liver diatribe—and brought the great cod-liver people against me in an action for libel—but, before the interim injunction was granted I sold my business to a gentleman, who was sold up very soon after, and threatened

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with a prosecution for obtaining money by false pretences.

“I was next appointed secretary to a society for promoting monuments to eminent men. Rather, I ought to say I got the appointment first and appointed the company after. The money poured in! I had not the least idea of the multitudes of eminent men we possess. It is the rarest thing in the world to find an ordinary man or woman. We were unable to execute the orders that came in; the sculptors sweated away, and the eminent persons goaded them almost to madness with their impatience. I remember one particularly *large block of marble*, measuring a hundred feet by forty, all ready to be cut out of the quarry as soon as the strike was over with the quarrymen.”

“Where was that, sir?” asked my juvenile friend.

“At Carrara, sir; the block is there to this day. We had two sculptors—one was our managing director and the other collected the subscriptions. Unfortunately for the subscribers most of them died before their monuments could be erected—so great was the demand; and as, if they were not put up in the lifetime of the subscriber, or the subscribers were not eminent, the subscriptions were forfeited—of course the company benefited so far by the course of nature or their customers’ shortcomings. At last the subscribers lost heart—and the company had to be wound up.”

“How many monuments did you put up, sir?” asked Arthur.

“I don’t think,” said the old man, “although

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there was a great number in hand, that any particular number was put up.”

With the quickness of magic the old man now threw off his disguise, and there, to the astonishment of my young friend, stood the *greatest actor of the day* — *Walter Etherington!*

XXVII. HIS FIRST LOVE : AN EXTRAORDINARY COURTSHIP

IN writing these Memoirs it would not be proper to leave out an incident which had a marked effect upon my career. Up to the present time I had never experienced the divine sensation which is called love, and had always thought it was synonymous with marriage. My Grandmother encouraged this idea by insisting that when I married it must be to some one in a superior station of life, so as to be in keeping with our own family importance.

But the unexpected is the essence of romance. I was on one of my visits to old Farmer Brown, and was fishing in the beautiful stream which nearly enclosed his farm. I remember, as clearly as if it had only happened yesterday, that I was adjusting my eel lines, when suddenly a beautiful voice came across the meadows and produced in me an indefinable sensation.

I was so affected that the line fell from my hands. It was the voice of a girl. And now, in a way I had never before experienced, my imagination broke loose. The lady, I thought, must be some almost divine being ; every surrounding object seemed glorified by her unseen presence.

The river was overhung with willows which drooped their graceful boughs into the waters. Like David's "fields of the wood" they seemed to rejoice, and kiss the stream for joy. The river was a river of pleasure. I certainly was in love

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with an unseen being too beautiful for imagination to conceive.

I peeped under the willows and through the underwood, but no one was visible. Strange that at such a moment, when my mind was dwelling on the almost supernatural, thoughts of my Grandmother's frown should project themselves across my fair vision like a shadow! I was absorbed in bliss; the music of my unseen love was thrilling my very soul, when my Grandmother's harsh tones grating on my memory said—

“Marriage must enhance, not *lower* the family dignity.”

How I cursed the family dignity as I blessed the angel that enchanted me. The voice came again, awakening all life's slumbering sensibilities. I had never *lived* till that moment! I was beside myself with joy. Was it a wandering princess? I knew there were some in the neighbourhood, lately arrived from the Tuileries. Perhaps she was the daughter of the Earl of ———, who lived not far off. But it was of no manner of use to guess. Then I pictured her features, her blue eyes, her sunny hair, her pink lips—in fact, all the beautiful attributes of an earthly divinity I saw in her without seeing the girl herself.

Thus I stood in the punt and dreamed. I was in love with an ideal. It was quite a new sensation: the sweetest I ever experienced. I had read of being “in love with an ideal,” in novels; perhaps this was it. I was certainly in love with a *voice* which seemed to fill the universe. The church bells in the far distance rang it in their sweet undertones,

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and the sheep bells in the meadows tinkled it, the trees whispered it, and the sweet hawthorn blossoms breathed it.

And yet there was no one near, so I did not land. Being taken with surprise I had not presence of mind to fasten my punt to the bank and see if any human being was at hand. I resolved at last what to do—and planned another visit to Farmer Brown's.

But, what with London work and circuit, the trees were tinged with their autumn colours, and the harvest was ready for carrying before I went down again. But it was a bonny time, and I lost none of it, for the very evening of my arrival off I started in the punt to lay my lines.

The sun was setting, and the autumnal scents pervaded the air. Arrived at the favourite haunt I quite forgot the lines and eels as I listened for the voice. Would it come again? Yes! there it was! beautiful as before!

Without a moment's hesitation I leaped ashore and secured the punt; then crept through the brushwood until I came to an opening that commanded a view of the meadows. Nothing was visible that could produce the voice; yet the voice was evidently coming round the hill and into the meadow where I was.

After some years of anxious waiting—at least it seemed years, as I watched and watched there came round that glorified hill, not a maiden—but a *large cow!* I knew the voice was not from the cow. She no sooner, however, saw the distant homestead where the milkmaids waited with their pails, than she set

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up a different kind of song from that of the precious beauty whom I longed to see.

Other cows followed: an endless succession of cows—all the cows in the world, indeed—seemed to be coming round that hill. But, O rapture! last of all—judge of my astonishment when I saw, unless I was deceived, the one being who had given all the thoughts I had uttered and could not utter, and the sweet unconscious cause of all my dreams, my wishes, and my hopes!

But how was she dressed? Not in satin or silk, with furbelows and flounces! no; but in a plain navy blue serge jacket and drab kind of skirt! In her hand she carried a wand—I mean an ash stick; wherewith ever and anon—I mean occasionally, she recalled some erring milky—I mean gave one of the cows a cut with her stick when she got out of the line.

I can say no more at present about this peerless cow-girl; not till I see Brown. The “infinite longing” was on me at last: a common complaint among heroes and heroines which I had never believed in before. Enough to say I was in love with this incomparable beauty. She was the cow-girl of my heart.

In spite of my Grandmother’s pride of pedigree I was determined that this divine cow-girl should be mine. The “backwoods” of America were at that time open to all explorers.

“A fig,” said I, “for pedigree. Better a humble maiden where love is, than a pampered, pompous, proud princess and disgust therewith.”

On my way to Farmer Brown’s, while these noble

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thoughts were rankling in my mind, I had changed her serge dress to beautiful brocade sparkling with a thousand diamonds, and invested her with the greatest dignity of birth and position that the world could afford, so that she was more fitting to lead the heavenly choir than to drive cattle.

I began to think there was nothing better in this world than marrying—especially if you can find a divine cow-girl. All turns on the sort of person you marry.

But, alas! how I wished for the sake of the dear one that I had not been so high-born! If my father had only been a happy peasant or a shoemaker, there would have been no obstacle to our immediate union and happiness. But who on earth was *she*? How came she to drive cows? How came she to be able to sing as she did? Her knowledge of music could not have been picked up, like vaccination, by milking cows! All was mystery, and the more I tried to solve it the more mysterious it became.

Of course I could talk freely to the Browns without any fear that they would suspect my sentiments. A man of my rank was hardly likely—especially a *Buckram*—to fall in love with one so infinitely below him in position.

So as we were sitting round the blazing log that evening in the house-place, smoking our pipes—that is, Brown and I—while Mrs. Brown was knitting stockings, I asked, as it were, inadvertently—

“Mr. Brown, what weight was the largest eel you ever caught?”

At this Mrs. Brown suddenly let her hands, knitting-

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needles, worsted, and stocking fall into her lap, and looked at me with a glance that first curdled my blood and then sent a hot flush all over my face. What with her curiosity and her cunning I felt as if I had been turned inside out.

Meanwhile Farmer Brown seemed to be deeply considering my question as one of importance, and rubbing it round and round with his hand on the top of his head so as to circulate it thoroughly before he answered.

“Eels?—hem—” he murmured; then paused. Then went at it again: “The biggest eel? well, I dunnow.”

Then he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and shook his head, as much as to say, “he’d caught some rare big ’uns in his time.”

“Biggest eel?” he repeated, after lighting his fresh-filled pipe. “I’ve cotched some big ’uns, I ’ave. Nancy, you’ve seen me bring ’ome some big ’uns, ain’t ur?”

Mrs. Brown shook her head, and laughed down into her ample bosom.

“Where do you reckon the best place, now, for catching the biggest eel, Mr. Brown?” I said, with a tremor in my voice and a choking sensation in my throat.

Brown sighed heavily, as though this only accumulated his difficulties. “The best place?” he murmured.

“I mean the best place for catching the biggest?” I said.

“Hem! well, you can’t do better nor down by the mill—what d’ye say, Nancy? Ain’t the mill a

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good place, think 'ee? or do 'ee think down by boat-house?"

"What do you say to the Alders," I asked, neither of those places suiting my fancy.

"What, down by Farmer *Hudson's*, d'ye mean, Mr. Roger?"

"I don't know the name," said I.

"He mean Farmer Hudson," said Nancy, laughing. "I knowed what ur were about as soon as ur spakt; I knowed *what eel* he were arter ketchin——" And she shook her head and laughed heartily.

"*Hudson!*" I repeated, with a face I could feel was crimson with shame, and yet pretending the most perfect innocence.

"She be a mighty pretty gal, Mr. Roger; but a rare and proud 'un," said Mrs. Brown, with a smile that almost made my hair stand on end.

Brown was a ponderous body, and difficult to move. At present he had not perceived the drift of Mrs. Brown's sarcasm. But it was no use beating about the bush any longer; so I came to close quarters, and told all about my adventure, feeling as a man does when he tells his creditors he has nothing to conceal and nothing to pay and nothing to be ashamed of. Brown shook his head. Mrs. Brown looked and sucked one of her knitting-needles. I asked her why she laughed.

"Laugh?" said Mrs. Brown; "she thinks herself good enough for a king."

"And so she is, I have no doubt," said I; "good enough for an emperor."

Mrs. Brown laughed even more loudly than before.

"Mr. Roger, you seem to think it easy to woo an'

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easy to win—but not with Miss May—why, she have had offers from Lords' sons !”

“That,” I said, “should not make her proud—it being altogether outside her merits.”

“Very good,” said Mr. Brown ; “but she have had offers and offers. She told I she'd have a man to her likin', or none at all—that ur did—and blame her not, says I.”

I wondered more and more who this damsel could be, to withstand the temptations of rank and wealth.

“Is she beautiful ?” I inquired.

“Beautiful enough,” said Mrs. Brown ; “but it's her singing that do it—they worships her singing.”

“Law, Mr. Roger,” said Brown, “I've 'eard her when she sings for charities—and you never 'eard sich a voice in your life.”

“*Trained in Lunnon,*” whispered Mrs. Brown.

“Trained in Lunnon by all account — they've offered her no end o' money to sing in Lunnon : she might ha' rolled in it,” said Brown.

“Yes,” added his wife, “but nothin' ain't good enough for she—ur carries her head that 'igh.”

“Her father, too,” said Brown ; “wonderful proud man ! and a scollard I've 'eard say. They picked up one o' his books, one day, some on 'em did, and there worn't not one about the farm as could tell which wus the right eend up of her—it was a larned Greek book, I 'eard tell.”

I saw now clearly enough that I was not good enough for the cow-girl, whoever she was. She looked far more like a princess in disguise than ever ; so I resolved to do what wisdom dictated, and think no more about her. Sticking, therefore, this feather of

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a fool's ignorance—this wise resolution—in my cap, I marched on.

But, in spite of my resolution, fate directed otherwise, and introduced me in the most marvellous manner to this lovely girl.

It happened in this wise. Brown was sending to Mr. Hudson a present of some wonderful Dorking fowls, and asked me if I would be good enough to go with the lad in the cart, and take a message for him. Of course, I jumped at the idea, and jumped into the cart with the boy and the fowls. I knew what neighbourly courtesy meant, and how to deliver a message between these high contracting parties.

But the boy was too slow for me ; he did not drive fast enough for one burning with desire to make one leap of it. I, therefore, took the reins and let fly at the mare with the whip. It was enough : she sprang from the ground and bounded forward at a fearful pace (she was thorough-bred), and I lost all control from that moment. The excitement was dreadful—faster and faster she seemed to fly. Fortunately, there was a sharp turn just as the straight road came to the quick-set hedge which divided it from the orchard.

Into that the mare leaped, and we were spilt, fowls and all, into the orchard. Mr. Hudson, a tall, handsome, middle-aged man, was soon on the spot and helping to quiet the mare, which he accomplished with wonderful skill, patting and soothing her till she was quite herself again.

Then I was invited indoors. I shall not attempt to describe my feelings when I was introduced to his beautiful daughter. She was all that had been said of her and a hundred times more. I was dazzled,

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blinded, and bewildered. Her smiles, her dimples, her eyes—but it is all in vain! It was a brief interview, but long enough to show what an immeasurable gulf separated her from me. My longing was increased, but my hope was quenched. So I took the only wise course that a fool could take in the circumstances, and resolved to think no more about her.

XXVIII. LEGEND OF QUEEN ELIZABETH
AND MASTER SERGEANT HARRIS
WHOM HER MAJESTY SENT FOR ON
ACCOUNT OF HIS GREAT WIT

MY family memory, fortunately, is not limited to the present illustrious reign, but goes back without any intermission to the Battle of Bosworth Field. I, however, confine myself in these legends to more moderate limits: beyond Elizabeth's reign nothing can tempt me to venture in the present volume.

In the year 1593, a great-uncle of my great-grandmother's was a sergeant-at-law, and he was possessed of a very proper wit; so brilliant was it, that he was always spoken of as "the witty sergeant"; and, in an age which was adorned by the most illustrious writers this country has ever known, it was something to be esteemed a man of intellect, a sweet conversationalist, and of a "merrie humour."

I have discovered that he was the author of most of those original anecdotes which are told at our brilliant dinner tables of the present day; and nothing has amused and amazed me more than to find that some witticism, repartee, or anecdote which has set the "table in a roar," has been set down in my ancestor's diary, and was so old even in *his* time that its antiquity was its principal merit.

I have read the most wonderful original sayings in modern reminiscences which were equally effective in the reign of Elizabeth. But so long as they produce a pleasing effect for the moment, I care not whether

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they be old or new ; what we want is a little relaxation from care. If they are new to the hearers, they are new enough, and none the worse for having been prepared for the occasion ; like the little garments which the second, third, and even the fourth son take in turns when the previous wearer has outgrown them.

Like all brilliant men, Sergeant Harris sometimes exceeded the occasion, and sometimes made it. It is not desirable to do either ; because wit out of place is like smoking in the dark : there is no sense of enjoyment. I would as lief have fireworks in a drenching rain as wit amongst dull intellects ; well, I would liefer.

One day, as my great ancestor told Manningham (see his diary), eleven new sergeants were to be "called." "When the Queen" (says that careful recorder of my uncle's sayings) "was moved to have called another, to have made up the twelve, she refused, saying she 'feared, if there were twelve, there would be one false brother amongst them.'"

Sergeant Harris heard that one of the name of *Barker* was called, and most wittily observed—

"It is well there should be one *Barker* amongst so many *Biters*."

Pray let the reader observe ; this wonderful witticism is more than *three hundred years old*, and there it is in Manningham's book as good as ever.

It is no wonder, surely, that the gracious Elizabeth, who knew all the great men of her day, hearing of this Solomon amongst wits, should send for him to her palace of Greenwich. She was witty herself and loved wit in others. The Queen of Sheba was not a

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greater admirer of splendour, whether in wisdom or material grandeur, than her Gracious Majesty of intellectual brilliancy or a handsome person.

The celebrated sergeant was almost beside himself with rapture at the royal condescension. We are told in the simple language of the time, "he could hardly contain himself for joy." Other men to him were as nothing. His elation was such that he passed them with a mere wave of the hand as though he would say, "I knew you once; but things are changed: her Majesty has sent for me."

He prepared himself with great care for the royal presence. Our fashionable barber did all that art could accomplish with the exterior of his cranium, while the interior was ornamented with the *bon mots* of the most celebrated men of the time, and with repartees suggested by "The Canterbury Tales," as well as a line here and there from a work which was beginning to be known at that period, called "The Faerie Queene."

The sergeant was not quite so modest as modern geniuses are. He conceived that a distinction no less than that of the *Chief Justiceship* awaited him. Alas! that the great should ever despise the small, or that they should forget that life is made up of small things and not great ones; that it is small things rather than large ones that determine our destinies; and that if you took away all the great events from the world except the Creation, the world would be pretty much the same as it is at the present moment. It would never miss its great things, any more than it will ever miss its great men.

As he went to the palace, the sergeant considered

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how best he should win her Majesty's favour. Doubtless her Grace would love to hear his wit; his brilliant repartee, his lively anecdote, and his philosophic observations. He knew Shakespeare; had met Raleigh, Leicester, and all the great men of the Court; doubtless, then, he would enjoy a merry bout with this queen of all the wits.

So he rehearsed speeches. Her Majesty would probably ask *this*, and he would answer *thus*. "Master Sergeant," she would probably say, "you have the greatest name at the bar; not only for learning but for witty humour, and we would like you to be of our counsel like Bacon"; or, "We would see you presently in a higher office"; or, "We would have you at our palace"; or, "We would thus and thus, Master Sergeant."

Then he thought, I shall say, "Your Majesty doeth my poor qualities too much honour; I am but a poor creature, whom many love for my humble pleasantry and good-humour and—want of—self-seeking;—my loyalty to your gracious Majesty is all that I can call my own; and, thank Heaven! your Majesty might take my head, but you could not deprive my bosom of its affection for my sovereign." He thought that would be about the kind of thing to please her Grace.

All this was pleasant thinking; and, full of these admirable sentiments, he was ushered into the royal presence. But let me describe his sensations in his own words:—

"I was," says he, "in no great exuberance of valour when I came to the point; my fine speeches,

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like arrant traitors, left me when I most needed their help. A confusing stupor seemed to take possession of my brain, and a kind of mist floated before mine eyes. Her Majesty's royal dignity was such, that in the mistiness of my intellect she uprose before me like a goddess—indistinct, and yet shining like as when the morning sun throws its golden beams on a mountain peak! By Heaven, it was a sight! I had heard of Elizabeth, but this looked like the Archangel Michael. To this very moment I doubt whether Elizabeth was a mortal being!

“My prepared compliments, like as I had heard Raleigh, Leicester, and Bacon should address to her, were gone; bubbles they were on my brain pool; I never felt so truly little in my life. My head felt as it were like a boiled pumpkin. I cannot tell if I saw her Majesty's face at all. I would almost swear I did not; it so baffled me. I heaved a huge sigh, and then sank down on my knees. The Queen was, as it were, a fiery pillar in front of me. Heaven! thought I, if this is *Majesty*, no more on't for me! My flesh did most villainously creep withal; and when her Majesty did speak, I had no more spirit left in me. I was, as it were, a mouse in a trap, or, to speak more truly, as an image of wax, and my legs melting away beneath the heat of her presence. Then, as I kneeled forward, on my elbows, I did hear a voice which for sweetness of tone was like running waters, but for intensity of purpose seemed like hell-fire out of a mountain top. These were her Majesty's gracious words:—

““Master Sergeant, we have heard that the Bar hath become right famous for its witticisms of late,

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and *humour* withal! and that jests do make our learned judges laugh right merrilie.'

"At this I seemed to pick up; and, as her gracious Majesty bade me rise, I got me on my legs, and then bowed most profoundly, so that I was even surprised at my own deportment. It was a great compliment from the lips of royalty; but I knew there was no other wit at the Bar who rolled off so many pretty sayings as I. Bacon was too heavy. So I stood modestly with downcast eyes, and could perceive that her Majesty was looking me right in the face, with admiration as I thought, and yet her look did seem to burn the roots of my hair. I was as one who dreamed, and saw a beautiful vision of the Faerie Queene, as Spenser calleth her.

"Then her Majesty spake again—

"'What say you, Master Sergeant?'

"I thought now she expected some sparkling reply, and was anxious to cap me, which I resolved to let her do.

"'May it please your gracious Majesty,' I said, with another obeisance, 'I am no judge.'

"'That pleaseth me vastly,' she rejoined; 'nor are like to be!'

"I saw a merrie twinkle in her eye as she said this, and was sure, that although she spoke in badinage, and was pleased to rally me, she did not dislike my answer.

"Then she added—

"'If the Bar become frivolous and the judges merrie, they may cease to be wise. There is nought to laugh at in justice, nor aught to make merrie about in administering the law.'

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“She paused a moment. I bowed low, and the Queen drew herself up right loftily, and in a tone, as I thought, less sweet than formerly, said—

““We have been informed that some one, with less wisdom than truth, Master Sergeant, informed you that *one Snigg had offered £800 to be made a Sergeant*; and that you, with less prudence than humour, did take upon you to say that you doubted not that you should shortly “*salute your deare brother Snigg, for that Argent makes Sergeant.*” Is *this*, pray, the wit of the long robe?’

“After this so gracious speech, there was scarcely breath enough left in me to answer. I could perceive that her Majesty was displeased, for her face was clouded with a frown, And what durst I say? I was whirling round and round, as if I were in a maelstrom, and there was no outlet. Seeing my unhappy stress, with the graciousness that ever characterised this princely Queen, she proceeded—

““Look ye, Master Sergeant at Law, it doth not become you or any of my judges or sergeants to turn buffoons; when you cease to be wise you must needs in your high positions become fools; and judges will then cease to be judges, I warrant. If they spend their time in pleasantries, they will have none for sober argument and justice. My people go to the courts for justice—at least some of them; others to evade it, and therefore there should be a careful watch on the tongue, and a keen watching with the eye, so that all may get not what they seek, but what they deserve. Least of all do they want their ears tickled with witticisms. When they do, they can get better served by our merry players, who do

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it much better, and at smaller cost. These be natural wits; *original*, and not *learned* wits. Learned wits are dull wits, as second-hand wits. As a sample of this dull stuff I will tell you a certain sergeant, *who shall hereafter be nameless in our presence*, unless he mind his manners, said—

“‘They talk of a *call of sergeants*; for aught I can see, we have more need of a *call of clients*.’ Go to, Master Sergeant, if wisdom, as the wise king said, “crieth in the streets,” let her come opposite our law courts, and bring her out of the streets for a change of venue, and let her “utter her voice” on the bench. But there be divers kinds of wit, Master Sergeant. There is the wit *ecclesiastic*, which maketh grave men blush; there is the *fool’s wit*, which maketh wise men sad; and there is the wit *judicial*, which maketh justice weep—and clients too.’

“I bent my head low before her Highness, and almost wished for a block to put it on, that I might hear no more.

“‘Remember,’ she continued, ‘a wise man’s wit is *thought*: a fool’s wit is *words*, mere *sound* which tickleth the ear only. There is a play of fancy, too, which some affect for want of wit, such as *metaphor*, *epigram*, and *antithesis*, suitable mainly for those who are moved by sound rather than sense; and prefer the thud of the big drum to the music of the reed. Lawyers need not affect this play of fancy, but had best deal with arguments based on sound reason. Imagination lives on dreams, but justice on the sufficiency of evidence. Those who administer *fun* in Court had best put off their wigs and don the cap and bells, or turn

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players; and then they can supplement small wit with huge grimace. But let such take heed, or by God I will take heed of them. My courts are not a place for merry andrews.'

"Hereupon I became so nervous that I would have taken leave of my gracious Queen, as I had long done of my poor senses; but her Majesty slightly raised her finger in that loving manner which pinned me to the spot—Who can resist the royal finger? Not we of the long robe.

"'We would have you,' continued her Grace, 'if you must needs be wits, emulate my little Keeper, Bacon, and Will Shakespeare, for their wit is wisdom, and they can distil wisdom from folly, as fools extract folly from wisdom. But, mark you, do not overdo your parts against these excellent wits; and see that ye outshine them not! Emulate their noble qualities, but make no attempt to outwit them. I brook no rivalry with Shakespeare, or my little Keeper.'

"Before I could raise my head, her Majesty had taken her departure, and right glad was I to take mine."

"What reflections that night!" says the diary, "and what mortification to compare the conceited Bacon and the play-actor with *me!*—a Sergeant at Law!"

It is said that this interview so affected the sergeant's head that he never was himself again; and he is thus spoken of by Manningham: "1602-3, *May*.—This day Sergeant Harris was retayned for the Playntiffe, and *he argued for the defendant*; soe negligent that he knows not for whom he speaks."

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He recovered his senses, and on a later occasion her Majesty sent for this illustrious man at the Middle Temple, and administered comforting words, which caused him long after to write—

“Although her Majesty could strongly rebuke, she could also graciously forgive.”

XXIX. HIS GRANDMOTHER AS A LITTLE GIRL, AND OLIVER GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, I fear, but for his grave, would be almost unknown in the Temple. His writings are not the literature that lawyers love, nor is his humour that of the learned sergeant in the last legend.

Even Goldsmith's grave is better known to Americans than to Englishmen. If the man who drafted the Statute of Frauds were resting where Goldsmith lies, a nation's tears might well besprinkle it, while lawyers' smiles would shine on the pearly drops. They have ever smiled on the splendid irony of an Act passed to prevent frauds, itself the prolific source of thousands more than it prevented.

My Grandmother told me that she remembered Oliver Goldsmith when she was a little girl, and had been to have a tooth out. Her mother took her into the Temple to cheer her up. They went to No. 2 Brick Court, on the right-hand side of Middle Temple Lane, where Oliver lived. What a humorous man he was! He seemed to be everybody in the "Vicar of Wakefield," except the cheat who bartered for the horse with the spectacles.

"I am thankful," said Grandmother, "I did not know Dr. Johnson; I am told he was a horrid man, and enjoyed Goldsmith's society because he amused him with his humour, which Johnson too often repaid by insult.

"When we got up the old creaking stairs the poet took hold of both my hands and whirled me round the room before I knew where I was.

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“Now look,” he said, “I’m going to show you some clever men.”

“Where are they, sir?” I asked.

“Well, here’s one ;” and then he made a face like a celebrated actor. Mother told me who it was, but I have forgotten ; but it was so funny that she laughed and clapped her hands. “Now,” he said, “this is Dr. Johnson, when he says,” holding up his finger, ‘Why, no, sir, you are to consider——’

Then he asked if I would like to hear him play the flute. I said—

“Yes, please, sir ;” and mother said, “Poor little thing, she has just been having a tooth out.”

“A pleasant outing,” said Goldsmith, and began to play the tunes he afterwards told me he played in foreign languages to the children when he was abroad. Next he made *me* play ; he blew the whistle and moved my fingers. Then we had soap bubbles, and he told me “he prided himself on his bubbles, because they were rounder and kept up longer than anybody else’s ;” and said, which I did not understand at the time, “that some gentlemen got up companies on purpose to blow these bubbles, and that many years ago there was one so big that it took all the South Sea to make it.”

This was, as I learnt afterwards, to amuse mother.

“The way to blow bubbles,” he said, “was to get plenty of soap—the softer the better—and throw them up before they burst.”

I did not understand at that time the depth of his meaning, but I do now. O the villainy of the world !

He then told me he was going to write about

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animals and what they looked like when they came out of the ark.

I was very pleased, and listened to everything he said as though it had been Scripture.

“My little dear,” he went on, “the lion, just before he came out of the ark, called the steward of the vessel, and standing up on his hind-legs, with the lioness by his side, looking very stately and lady-like, pressed their paws to their lean sides and asked the official ‘if he could give them anything to eat, for they had a long way to go as they lived in South Africa, not far off from the Cape of Good Hope, which you will see is some distance from Ararat.’

“‘I can cut you a sandwich,’ said the steward thoughtfully; ‘what do you say to a sandwich, sir, fresh from the islands?’

“‘*Sandwich!*’ exclaimed the lion; ‘haven’t you a bullock or two?—or a Sandwich Island with all its inhabitants wouldn’t be too much after this voyage—we’ve had very little to eat since we came aboard, and I shall certainly write to the authorities about our fare. I may as well add that I don’t think the waiting was any better than the *menu*.’

“‘I don’t call it much of a liner,’ said the lioness, pressing her lean shanks with her skinny paws. She was alluding to the ship, which was the only P. and O. of that day.

“‘No,’ retorted the lion. ‘Eggs and a few shrimps are not quite the lion’s share in this world, which, if not made for lions, had as well been left out of the bill of fare.’”

“Did they have to live on shrimps, sir?” I blushing asked. “It seems impossible, sir.”

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"Well, my little dear," said Goldsmith, "we must look upon nothing as impossible in my story.

"The steward shook his head, and said: 'He had only one cow, and they could not spare her for their majesties' lunch, as they wanted her milk, and her husband, the bull, could not be spared for love or money; or how, sir, will the calves get on?'

"'I know,' said the lion, 'he's only good for making *bellows*, that fellow.' At which the steward laughed, and said, 'It was very good, because what a lean thing a pair of bellows was, and how the bull was quite as empty.'

"'Well,' said the lioness, 'if we have to wait till the sons and daughters of our fellow-voyagers are grown up and fit to eat, we shall be starved to death.'"

"Did the *elephant* say anything, sir?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said Oliver, "I was coming to him presently. But first, the lion growled a good deal, and so did his wife, and said—

"'We could soon dispose of all the family in the ark, but you have been so kind in helping us to keep our heads above water, sir, and they are so uncommonly thin that they are not worth eating, although I don't know what's the use of being saved, if there's nothing to eat.' And away they went."

"What did they live on, sir?"

"They found an oyster bed," said Oliver, "where they passed the first night—the first bed they had slept in for weeks."

"It must have been very damp," said mother.

"Yes," said Mr. Goldsmith, "but they slept in their furs."

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“Now, the elephant, sir,” I said, “how did he get on?”

“The elephant,” he answered, “is a very fine animal, with a lively disposition, but very proud and lofty, so he asked the steward if there was a porter to be had to carry his luggage?”

“‘Porter!’ said the steward. ‘No, sir, we have no porters in this establishment.’ Whereupon the hyena laughed impudently, and said—

“‘Why, sir, you have only got one trunk, and I am sure you’re big enough to carry that yourself.’

“‘Indeed,’ said the elephant, with a scornful look—and lifting up his trunk he walked away with a disdainful smile and a noise like thunder.

“‘Next came the giraffe, who complained of ‘not having had anything to eat for six months.’ Whereupon the steward said—

“‘I beg your pardon, sir, every night we put a truss of hay in your cabin, but you carry your head so high that you take no notice of any one beneath you.’

“‘Why,’ said the fox, ‘that gentleman’—meaning the giraffe—‘was the one we nicknamed “the Astronomer Royal.” I saw his head up above the deck ever so high, as I was coming up the companion to look after a strayed fowl. The astronomer was looking at the great bear, who had got loose, and was ever so far away in the heavens, and how we shall get him down I don’t know.’

“‘Did you see, Mr. Reynard, what the great bear was doing?’

“‘He was going round the pole,’ said the fox.”

Then Goldsmith turned to mother, and said, with a laugh—

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“That, my dear Mrs. Ramsbotham, is the origin of ‘The Bear and Ragged Staff’!”

“Please,” I asked, “how did the lions open the oysters?”

“Ah! my dear little inquirer,” said he, “that is one of the things that has always puzzled philosophers: there is no reference to it in any account of the Deluge, and if we could only get some information about that, it might explain a great many other mysteries.”

“Oliver,” said mother, “you are incorrigible.”

Oliver was the original *translator* of the Elephant’s Trunk Story into English. It was first done from the Hebrew into Aramaic, and then into Greek.

XXX. TWO MEN OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

IN our time, when great men are so common that it is difficult to find one of an ordinary size, it is refreshing to notice the contrast that existed in the seventeenth century between genius and mediocrity.

I would not have it supposed that my individual memory goes back to the time of the illustrious men whom I am about to mention, but my family memory does, and one of the characters in the drama was an old acquaintance of my uncle, who had enjoyed the farmer's fireside on many a winter evening. I shall quote, as is my custom when I can, from his excellent diary.

12th July, 16—.—Staying at my old friend Farmer Adzooks' in Bedfordshire. Adzooks, good-hearted man, quick-tempered, swears anyhow without rhyme or reason. Somersetshire man originally, now otherwise situated. Great man for Church and defender of the faith: defends it mainly by swearing at Dissenters. Maxim of Adzooks: keep up corn and keep down rates; both antidotes to pauperism. Dress: long drab coat, cord breeches, leather gaiters, and hat with big flopping rim. To-night, coming from market, and turning into Green Lane, a strange sight presented itself to his keen, small, deep-set eyes. He involuntarily jerked reins of horse and said, "Coom oop."

In the distance he saw a swarthy gipsy-looking man crawling along the bank at the bottom of a

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quickset hedge. Nothing worried Adzooks more than a "tramp." But a tramp searching after game was like a burglar prowling after plate, only worse. The only legal position of tramps was the "lock-up."

As he got nearer to this illegal vagabond he cried out—

"Halloa! halloa! thee damned scamp, what t' hell be oop to there? Zounds! what be doin' thic fashion? Be I to keep oop hedges for thee to pull asunder? Thee be a d—d scoundrel, I warrant me——"

Swearing is heavy work, and I shall imitate Sir Walter Scott in making dashes, leaving the gentle reader to supply the words.

"Master," said the young man, getting up from the bank, "I am sorry if I have done wrong, but I thought no harm to thee."

"Dang my boottens," said the farmer; "what, no harm in breakin' down hedges? To —— with thee and no harm. I'll ha' thee afore jussisses. Why, thine's a pooty Bible, beant it? How about neighbour's landmarks and sich like? No harm, eh!"

"Why, master, I was but looking for a hedgehog, all said and done."

"And what's thee to do wi' hedgehogs, I wonder? I wish thee had 'un in thy breeches; they be my hedgehogs, beant um? I pay rates for um, doant I?"

"Isn't it the King's highway, sir?" asked the tramp; "and I pray, sir, don't hedgehogs belong to nobody?"

"Beest thee nobody, then? Malapert villain! Why, thy tongue be too long by half a mile; I'll

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have 'un snipped. King's highway! be the King's highway for robbers like thee? Thou beest on th' high way to gallows, I be thinkin'; and to gallows I'll ha' thee afore long."

"Sir," said the man, "it grieves me to hear thee blaspheme. If I have broken the law it will not be mended by foul words."

"Thou beest a pooty devil to talk to I. Thou'st no better than a snivellin' gospeller. I warrant me it was thee that robbed my hen-roost t'other night; I'll swear to 'ee as if I see 'ee do it."

"I be no thief, sir. I be an honest man, and live by my labour."

"Thee labour!" sneered the farmer. "Thou beest a devil."

"Abuse not thy master," said the man; "he may smite thee."

"*Thou!* my master! and *thou* smite I! Take that, thou villain!" Whereupon he cut at the man across the face with his heavy riding-whip. I don't know if respect for those above us in station is to be considered at all times as a sufficient reason for meekly abiding insult and violent assault. The man did not argue the point, but aimed a blow with his heavy stick at good Master Adzooks' head. It was what was called a "single-stick," which played in those days a similar rôle to that of the quarter-staff. It drove through the soft felt hat of the farmer with such force that it would have knocked out the brains of any other man, falling like a flail on a barn floor.

"Zounds!" cried Adzooks. "What! beat thy betters?"

"No, master, but thy betters beat thee! Shall

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we have another bout? I owe thee no ill-will, and in all good-will would cudgel thee well for that cut in the face which I no way deserved."

"What! and steal hedgestakes?"

"I stole no hedgestakes, master."

"Thee devil! I'll ha' thee to jail, for murder in the King's highway."

"Ha' me where thou likest, but I'll take no cut like thou gave even from the King—himself."

"Thou traitor to say so!" And he pulled his horse round to pursue his homeward journey. "I'll ha' thee at 'Zizes: and I'll hang thee, mind thic——"

As he turned his horse, a voice deep and solemn arrested him. His ear was still singing with the blow he had received, but he heard the tones which no man ever listened to in vain.

"Murder in the King's highway! Master Farmer! what is this?"

"Thic feller would ha' murdered I."

"Then why not! he could if he would, for he had the best of thee."

The speaker was rough and sunburnt, with a coarse large face. He wore a high sugar-loaf hat with broad brim, a russet coat, huge boots, and a cloak, which looked as if it had been arranged over the left shoulder.

"I witnessed," he continued, "thy act of violence against the young man."

"Thic feller be a rogue!" roared Adzooks. "These be fine times truly when a man can neither stand up for hisself or his property; why, thee be a rank gosseller! I see't in thy jib, and hear't in the twang o' thy nose: thee be a pooty feller to lecture I:

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out with thee for a knave, and a thief, and a liar !”

“Friend,” said the other, “it behoveth thee to keep a civil tongue : more than hedges will be broken before thou art laid to thy rest. The days of leveling are at hand, when the high mountains shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day ! The times of adjustment are at hand, and the times of chastening, when the Lord will afflict His people ; but He shall save a remnant for His own sake, and for the Gospel’s sake—and the sons of Belial shall be smitten.”

“Thee’s got the twang on’t to rights,” said the farmer. “I’ll goo to hell if thee ain’t. Why, thee beats Howler’s outpouring o’ the vials.”

“Friend,” said the stranger, “let not thy tongue do thee disservice ; it is an unruly member, and is set on fire of hell.”

“And to hell with thee and all o’ thy tribe o’ snufflin’ gospel howlers ! I’ll go to hell if thee beant a psalm-smitin’ devil.”

“These psalm-smitters,” said the stranger, “are armed with the sword of the Spirit, which is a two-edged weapon, and will hew leviathan in pieces ! You talk of jails and prisons, but we speak of deliverance and salvation for the captive exile.”

“Who beest thee, in the name of all the saints ?” asked the farmer ; “d——d if I can make thee out !”

Poor Adzooks felt as all men feel in the presence of superior intellect ; he was in contact with a power that no one could match or control. He felt as a roach might feel in the neighbourhood of a pike.

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“Who or what I am,” said the stranger, “concerns not thee, but I would that one ray of Gospel light might shine on thy darkened soul, which is yet within the bonds of iniquity ; thy jails for honest men have no such captive as thou. But the minds of your prisoners are not enthralled : *they* can break prison—but *thou* art in captivity of the devil, and thy very thoughts are his meshes wherewith he holds thee prisoner—why, the grave itself holds not such a captive as thou.”

“Master !” said the farmer, “thic silly man there braked down my hedgestakes : is that accordin’ to Gospel ? Ain’t I a right to my own land ? I pays rates and taxes to keep thic feller when he ’ave no hoame and no food ; and devil’s in’t if I ain’t a right to what I pays for and works for. Who be thee, I say ?”

“I marvel,” said the stranger, “not at thy thoughts : they are the devil’s ; not at thy rage : that is of the devil too ; but at thy *ignorance*, which is thine own. We gossellers stand up for liberty——”

“Liberty to pull down my hedgestakes ? I goo to hell if that ain’t a rum sooart o’ liberty,” said Adzooks.

“No, but for that liberty of soul which disdains to trouble itself about hedgestakes ; the liberty to worship God, and to do right for conscience’ sake !”

“My conscience tells me what’s what,” said the farmer ; “what’s thy conscience tell thee ? If it be a right ’un it ’ull tell thee to mind thy own business——”

“Ay,” said the stranger ; “thou hittest the mark. My business is to do God’s will and stand up for

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His Gospel, and to tell thee not to vex thy soul anent hedgestakes when thy country demands thy services. In our great matter, by God's help, we will do our utmost to perform what may be behind. See to it, friend ; gird thee with thy sword in *God's cause*. Put on helmet and breastplate, and withstand the wicked devices of THE MAN !”

Adzooks rode off, and many a time in after days this scene came back to him. When he next met them, as he did years after, the one was the *Victorious General of Marston Moor*, and the other the author of “ *The Pilgrim's Progress* ! ”

XXXI. RUY BLARNEY

I NEVER met a man of more sober demeanour, or a more religious tone than Ruy Blarney of Gray's Inn. He had come of an old legal family of whom it was said, at one time, that there never was an appointment going but the Blarneys had it—from the Chief-Justiceship of the King's Bench to the old apple-woman who sold gingerbread in Westminster Hall. And yet there was no man above mediocrity in the whole Blarney race.

Blarney's immediate progenitor was an orthodox church Christian, and worshipped exactly opposite the Lord Chancellor, who himself was the most pious churchman the law ever turned out. He was called the sacred poet, because he admired the penitential psalms done into doggerel by himself.

Blarney knew this and composed a new version of "The Lord is my Shepherd," and dedicated it to his Lordship. From that day the Lord Chancellor led him into rich pastures and beside the still waters which ran very deep round his Lordship's estate, in which there was nothing deeper than Blarney himself.

Blarney next contrived to sing in his Lordship's choir, and it was a beautiful picture of pious lawyers when Blarney looked up open-mouthed at his Lordship and they both chanted, "Thou shalt come to be our Judge." Blarney was so affected that the tears ran down his cheeks. He then joined the Inns of Court Christian Howlers' Association, the object of which was to propagate Christianity amongst the

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Temple laundresses. Of course the Chancellor was President and the Lord Chief-Justice Vice-President.

It happened one day that I was at the — Station of the — Railway, when I saw Blarney, with a deliciously pretty girl on his arm, walking down the platform. Whether he saw me I cannot say, at all events he pretended that he did not. The girl was about nineteen, and I had better say at once that she had been tried for stealing another religious student's watch and acquitted. I have always noticed that girls make a point of stealing from the person or the room of religious young men.

She had been in London only a week, and, as it seemed, had made the best use of her time. She was the daughter of a respectable German watchmaker, and had as good a character as most persons have before it is tampered with by the police.

Blarney was now evidently acting the part of the good Samaritan to this friendless girl. He came along the platform with the jaunty, triumphant air of a man who has captured a prize.

At this moment, there was coming from the opposite direction a stout, podgy man, with a hooked nose, an underhanging red lip, and a swarthy countenance. As he approached Blarney and the young woman, the latter hung back, pulling Blarney by the arm, which gave that gentleman the appearance of dragging her along against her will.

The Jew's eyes glared with paternal fire, and he stammered in his rage—

“Do you know, sare, that that young ladies is my daughter? What you mean, sare, by draggin' her off like so?”

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"Indeed!" said Blarney, "I was not aware, sir."

"Then you know now, sare; I vill make you know.—Emile!"

"Father!" cried the captive, "Father!"

"Yes," said the German, "fader—ven you vant a fader, you can call him, but how so is this? Vat you are do vith my daughter, sare?"

"I was going to take her home, sir."

"Home! take home, you say; and dam, sir, how dare you take my daughter home—your home is not a home for my daughter, sare: no—no!"

"I mean your home, sir," said the miserable Blarney.

"My home, sare! dis is not de station to my home. Ask my daughter; my home is Hackney Vick, and dis?—vell, Vauxhall!"

"Gracious me, sir! have I come to the wrong station?"

"I tink you haves, sare—vare much wrong station; you haves come to de wrong station. Ha! ha! the wrong station! Yes, yes, sare (with a sneer), de wrong station!"

"Father!" cried the girl, "I am innocent."

"Of what? How comes you here vid dis jack-napes, who by Gott I vill kill him like von door nail. You vill haf the kindness, sare, to giff your name and address, if you haf von, and vy you comes here vith my daughter, who lifs at Hackney Vick."

"With the greatest pleasure, sir," said Blarney.

"Vith greatest pleasure—yes! but it is no pleasure you comes here vith my daughter; no pleasure to me, sare."

"My name, sir, is Blarney, Barrister-at-Law, sir, of

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Gray's Inn, sir, who had the honour of defending your daughter on a false charge."

"False! sir! How dare you in connections with my daughter to call her false sharge! I vill haf you up—by Gott! I vill haf you piecemeal! Is it possible, a false sharge?"

"I assure you, sir——"

"Vy, sare! I t'ink you are debil—outlawed—you are debil, sare."

"Pardon me, sir, you mistake. I assure you, you mistake."

"Mistake! Is not dis my daughter? Am not I her fader? Are not you de villain? Mistake? Oh! Oh!" Here the outraged father snapped his fingers as loudly as a pistol shot and turned about.

"Emile! Emile! come vid your fader."

Thus they parted.

Blarney knew too well that this story would reach the Chancellor's ears—or rather, that the ears of the Chancellor would reach the story; so he made up his mind to tell it himself; and told it so well that the Chancellor said—

"Undoubtedly, my dear Blarney, under Providence, you have had the distinguished honour of being the humble instrument to restore the lost lamb to the fold of her father's bosom."

"And I hope, my Lord, she will be kept from the prowling wolf——"

"By the efficacy of prayer," said the Chancellor, "and the blessed influence of Divine grace. Let us pray."

After this, his Lordship took an even deeper interest in the young barrister, who was considered now as a chosen vessel. (He held a good deal too.)

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Blarney owed his introduction to this good man to the friendship of an old gentleman who had the not uncommon misfortune of marrying a young wife. One day when Blarney paid him a visit, as he generally did about five times a week, for he was very partial to the old man, he found him sitting lonely in his study, and, a thing that he had never witnessed before, weeping.

The young man's heart was touched, and he seized the old man's hand—

“My dear sir,” he almost sobbed, “what *is* the matter?”

The old man answered by a fresh outburst of feeling.

“Is it anything *I* may know?” asked Blarney. “Can I do anything? Only let me know. Can you make me your confidant?”

After a long time the old man looked up and faintly muttered—

“She is gone! Gone!”

Blarney put his hands to his eyes, and whispered dramatically, “Gone!”

The old man shook his head. “Oh,” he murmured, “that I could see her dear face *there*”—pointing to the opposite chair—“once more.” He bent down his head, the white beard spread like foam upon his bosom; the grey hairs hung carelessly over his grand brow. There was silence. He was dead!

Faithful to the last, Blarney followed his dear friend to his last resting-place, and wrote a beautiful epitaph in Latin to his memory.

But there was a sadder mourner than Blarney at that scene. When the last solemn offices had been

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performed, a woman clothed in deepest black walked across the grass to the grave. There was no theatrical air of tragic romance. She knelt at the grave like a statue, motionless and tearless. But there was a look of penitential reverence and awe. She looked down into the deep fathomless abyss (for such it is), clenching her hands together; and you might have heard her whisper, "God forgive me!" That was all.

The faithful Blarney did not approach her. He went on his way and the woman went hers. She, chastened with sorrow that brought no relief, was overwhelmed with penitence that brought no pardon.

He rose step by step to almost the highest altitude in his profession; for men in high places love an honest character. They love the religion which they can see; and the flattery they know how to reward.

The name of Blarney is a name to conjure by. He lived to a good old age, and died full of honours, respected by all who knew him—except one; she could neither respect, forget, nor forgive.

XXXII. BEN THE FIDDLER AND THE MILLIONAIRE ONCE MORE

I ALWAYS took an interest in village fairs. Nothing was more enjoyable than the dance with some rustic beauty in a booth on the village green. Her smile seemed more exhilarating than that of the fashionable beauty; as her eyes were more bright than the cold stare of the lady worn out with the London season. It possessed the witchery of youthful ardour. Those were merry days when old Ben, seated on his three-legged stool, fiddled away until the small hours of the morning, and we went home and awoke late the next day from dreamless sleep, refreshed and full of pleasant memories.

How often have I wandered with old Ben across country, listening to his tales and sometimes to a tune by the roadside; thinking, as I think now, that Society with all its charms has nothing comparable to the pleasant hours of a country ramble. His was a Bohemian life, and so was mine, but there was culture and refinement withal. I have listened to the best music from the greatest players (save the greatest of all on the violin), but I never heard old Ben surpassed; and I would rather record his beautiful performances, if I could, than the feeble witticisms of a phrase-mongering politician or the jests of a Court fool.

I cannot do this, but I can write the one or two incidents of his life which struck me as so remarkable. I have told one, and I will now record the other.

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It was a curious idiosyncrasy in his nature that he would never play before the great people or in "Society." He confined his performances to his friends, whom he selected here and there from amongst the multitude. His life was a riddle, and I never could understand how he had left so much talent to go to waste, or acquired a mastery of his instrument which the most gifted find it so difficult to achieve. His conversation was scholarly, at times brilliant; and always touched with a refined humour. Sometimes he affected the manners of the common itinerant fiddler, and would have me believe he was uneducated. But, actor as he was, this never could succeed except upon the stage. A close acquaintance-ship showed old Ben, whatever his acting might be, in his true character as that of a *gentleman*.

A long time after his adventure with the millionaire he was fiddling away to merry hobnails and rosy cheeks, when some one conveyed a message to him in a whisper.

He answered by winking his eyes, and fiddling away as fast as feet could go and his merry bow-stick fly.

"Hem!" said he to himself, as he twisted his pegs after the dance was over, "a dying man wants me to fiddle to him! Queer message that. Now, lads, partners for the next dance!" and he rapped his bow on his fiddle by way of further notice.

And away they went from night till early morning; enjoying themselves as, I venture to say, the dancers at no Court ball ever did or ever will.

The next morning he set forth on his way to the place where the old man lived or was dead, who had

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sent him the message to come and see him. It was the millionaire, whom he had met some years ago in search for happiness. Merrily over fields and meadows, heaths and commons, green lanes, hedges and ditches, went Ben with his fiddle in his green bag: happy as the birds that sang about him. Now he rested to have a smoke, and a little tune to himself and the birds. Then on again, until, looming in the distance, the great stone-built family mansion of the millionaire appeared before him. This was the home of the prodigal son without a father, and without repentance.

It was strange that the old Squire should send for a fiddler to console his last moments. But who knows human nature? As Ben entered this magnificent abode of sorrow, what a contrast it presented to the joyous outside scene. How the world and its greatness vanish in the sick room!

Even the musician's cheerful heart sank into sadness as he saw the emaciated form of the old millionaire stretched on his bed in all the helplessness of approaching death.

As he entered, a tall, hard, statuary-looking woman passed him, with a highly posed head, and a cold smile of contempt. She was the Squire's wife, younger by a good thirty-five years than her husband. She might be said, as the saying is, to love the ground he walked on, and everything belonging to him except his daughter, whom she had supplanted. If anything can take the pride out of a mortal being it is the presence of death. But this stony-hearted woman was inexorable, and as she passed the fiddler she gave him a look of mingled scorn and contempt. The daughter

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followed, a beautiful girl, whose loveliness seemed increased by the sadness of the scene. As she passed, her genial smile of welcome made up for the step-mother's scorn.

Ben had never before taken part in such a scene. As he glanced round the room his eye took in first one object and then another of peculiar interest; a vase, a clock, a work-box, an old Bible. His brow knitted, and in the kindling of his eyes you might have perceived that his mind was wandering far away from the place and the present time.

The millionaire, in a feeble whisper, recalled him from his dreams. Holding out his hand in an uncertain and listless manner, he said—

“Friend, friend!”

The fiddler took his hand gently.

“You remember me?” said the millionaire.

“Yes, sir,” said Ben; “I remember playing to you one summer day. It's a long while ago, sir.”

“You played something which abided with me,” said the old man.

Ben nodded.

“Can you remember?” asked the dying man. “Could you play it now? It may abide with me—where—I—am going.”

Ben opened his bag, and took out his violin.

“Was it this?” he asked, and striking two or three notes he brought back to the old man's face a look that seemed to belong to other days.

“Yes,” said he, and he clasped his feeble hands together as they lay on his breast.

The violin gave out a sweet memory—a thousand sweet memories—and God knows what scenes of

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bright days and gay pleasures before the love of money banished love of God and humanity from his soul.

I cannot describe music or understand it: I can only feel it; so the reader must accept my crude story of what took place as I tell it, without art. I can only say that the effect on the old man was so powerful that he seemed to have gone off into a kind of trance, with his eyes open. Ben, at first, thought he was dead, and ceased to play. The millionaire's eyes turned to him; he played again, and so softly, that the atmosphere seemed laden with sweet sounds, as it is in spring with sweet scents, and when at last it ceased the delicious melody was like a dream from which one would never awake.

Ben was about to replace his violin in his bag when the old man gasped—

“No—not yet—don't go—once more!”

The request was complied with, and the musician played with so much feeling that the hardest nature must have succumbed to its influence.

This was a wonderful drama in these two men's lives! Ben took the old man's hand to wish him good-bye, and as he leaned over him asked—

“Can you keep a secret?”

“Secret!” whispered the millionaire; “what secret?”

“The secret of a life—a family secret.”

“What? I don't— What do you mean?”

“You will not denounce me?”

“Denounce you, friend!” said the sick man, reviving his strength temporarily as he was rallied by excitement. “Denounce you as—”

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“As an impostor—for being poor, a vagabond musician,” said Ben.

The old man looked, and seemed dazed. “What,” said he, “do you mean? Who and what are you?”

Ben took both his hands and whispered—

“I am *Ben*!—your brother!”

.

Old Ben had not clasped that hand for fifty years, and yet his love was fresh as ever, in spite of all the scorn and contempt that had separated him from the millionaire during those intervening years.

The rich man had believed his brother to have been long since dead. His old father, who had cast him adrift because he chose music instead of wealth, had believed him dead, after repenting of his harsh conduct and awaiting his return to the old home to ask forgiveness and receive his last *blessing*.

But Ben never came!

Alone now, with the last of the old family, he told in few words all there was to tell. But nothing would induce him to make himself known to the proud woman who would have scorned and spurned him as a brother-in-law. He would leave as he came.

“God bless you!” he said; “God bless you!” And he looked his last look and murmured his last good-bye as he turned away with his green bag and sad remembrances.

Along the thick-carpeted corridor he met the stately, disdainful lady, his sister-in-law, who got as far from him as she passed as possible, nor gave him word or look. A few more yards, and then came the beautiful Margaret, full of love and tears. She looked at Ben

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with a sweet and grateful smile, which Ben returned with a respectful, almost idolatrous reverence.

She held out her hand ; he took it, stooped low his head, and at last, with all the delicacy of good breeding, knelt and placed it to his lips, as if he were swearing fealty to his sovereign.

Margaret affected no surprise whatever, but asked him, in tones which never left his memory—

“Will you come again?”

Ben pressed the tiny hand once more, but could not answer. The tears were in his eyes, and he turned away. A lifetime was compressed into that moment.

He passed through the hall, where the haughty liveried dignitary turned his back upon him, crossed the lawn, where he met the rector, passed the keeper as if he were skulking from justice ; and then in the shrubbery, through the trees, he caught a last peep of the pretentious mansion which contained all that was left of the millionaire, and went on his lonely way.

XXXIII. HOW SEVERAL OF OUR STUDENTS WENT TO GREENWICH FAIR AND MET THEIR GRACIOUS QUEENE ELIZABETH, AND ALL THAT TOOK PLACE

“WE were a sette of merrie wags, and nothing would do for us but a trip to Greenwich Faire.”

This is from the account given by Robert Dudley of our Inn—a kinsman of the famous and princely Earl of Leicester, the remainder of whose story I will render into modern English as well as I can.

“Our sweet Elizabeth,” it went on, “is ever to the fore in the sports and merrymakings of her people, and yet she never loses that dignity of mind or supreme graciousness of spirit which distinguish her from all the sovereign princes that have gone before.

On a bright and glorious day seven of our brilliantest young blades set off to Greenwich, but whether their edges were to be blunted afore their return who could say? What a glorious sight was spread before us on arrival at the royal town. Steeple, minaret, and tower were all aglow in the brilliant sunshine; while the river was like a celestial waterway on which were floating a multitude of fancy barques, barges, ships, and wherries, so that it was a vision of delightful splendour.

As we sauntered through the great crowd, my ears were dinned with the clamour of the multitudinous sounds: the cracking of whips, the bawling of itinerant merchants, the protestations of showmen, the beating

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of drums and clashing of cymbals, the blaring of trumpets, shooting of cannon, and a hundred other sounds which surely would have made Babel tumble headlong to the ground. Then there were the roarings of the wild beasts and the no less discordant vociferations of the town.

Suddenly from the direction of the noble palace came a tremendous uproar, like the bursting forth of a mighty cataract, so that all the sounds were hushed, and the lions in their cages ramped in silence. Eyes that had looked with such admiration at the Court gallants who ruffled it in their superb attire, were now directed to that part of the scene from whence the new clamour arose. The stalwart woman who up till now was furiously beating her frying-pan with a broken poker to call attention to her two-headed monster, was also quiet.

Every one knew that her most gracious Majesty was coming to the fair ; her most sweet Majesty, whose look was sufficient to make us happy for the rest of the year. Nothing filled her subjects with so much delight as their sovereign coming amongst them.

Now the crowds clave asunder so as to allow room for the royal cavalcade to pass ; it was a small space, but the queen never minded the proximity of her loving subjects, who would reverently touch the hem of her garment if possible.

Now was an awful uproar of great shouting ; and then, at the lifting of the whip of the master of the horse, as great a silence. Then came outriders in gorgeous livery and on magnificent steeds. At some distance from these, in all her glorious majesty of person and dignity, rode the queen like a triumphant

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leader of a victorious army. She was indeed victorious whithersoever she went.

Her Majesty was mounted on a pillion with that superb master of the horse, the courtly, magnificent Earl of Leicester ; dearer to the heart of the woman, than he was even to the sovereign. Behind was the crowd of mounted courtiers, men and women, so gorgeously attired that the sunshine reflected from the gold and silver of their uniforms caused them to shine like celestial beings.

But who that ever looked on the divine beauty of our sovereign could forget the sight ? All the pageant in all its glory was but, as it were, the trail of that majestic splendour ; so that once seen it remained a perpetual memory.

Yet, strange to say, the glory of the queen was ever the outcome of the loving heart of the woman ; and while your eyes were dazzled with her brilliance, they wept tears of joy and gratitude for her love and condescension. Never was one more truly queen and more lovingly woman.

So her Majesty had come to see the Buffoons and the Gingerbread, the Single-stick players, the Archers, the Merry Andrews, the Wild Beasts, the Tumblers, and *the children !* She was a woman with womanly sympathies, and, above all things, loved her children ; "her darlings."

As she rode slowly along, the people pressed close, while some tremblingly touched her robe, or the rich caparison of her palfrey ; indeed, so close did they sometimes press, that Leicester had to crack his whip with much pretence of menace over the heads of the crowds.

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“Pray, my Lord ; pray, my Lord !” cried the queen, “do not hurt my loving people !—Stand fast, my loving people, stand by.”

There were a great number of soldiers and sailors in the crowd, and these had at all times a special attraction for Elizabeth. She recognised amongst them many whom she had lately commanded at Tilbury, when the Spanish Armada was dispersed ; and her eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, and even tears, as she saw her volunteers and sailors who had done such service, and exhibited such splendid devotion in her cause.

“My loving people,” she said, “see our brave defenders, and let them be ever in your prayers and in your hearts. My brave soldiers, as I said, when we assembled at Tilbury to live and die there, if need be, for our England, there be some that talk of the treachery of our people towards us ; but I should not live your queen unless I were queen of a *loving* people. It is not my people I fear, nor ever will ; but it is my people’s enemies I distrust, and so will ever, till I rid them from the world. Nay, hear me finish ; we have won a victory over the enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.”

Tumultuous applause resounded on all sides ; hats and bonnets were flying high in air, and so great was the throng that it was some time before the cavalcade could advance.

At last the crowd made way once more, and the queen rode slowly along. Presently her Majesty espied a man in the crowd, who might probably have desired to escape her eagle glance ; but the queen whispered to her equerry, and I happened to be near enough to hear her gracious words.

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“I bethought me it was so,” said her Grace, “belike he wants to catch my eye; let him presently to our palace, and he shall be gratified; he is one of those pestilent fellows, who make politics a trade, and would have my government a stepping-block to their own power. But as I am Queen of England the stepping-block of such shall be their stumbling-block, and their heads shall lie where their feet should stand.”

They then moved on again, her Majesty graciously bowing on this side and on that; now stopping to speak to some mother whom she singled out from the crowd; now addressing a soldier or sailor whose sunburnt face spoke of hard service, and whose glad expression showed his honest loyalty.

They passed by a row of booths, on one of which some actors were performing a preliminary scene in order to attract the bystanders to the regular performance within. As her Majesty passed, the actors bowed low in respectful reverence. The queen bade them proceed with their business, saying, she had not come to stop the pleasures of her people, but to increase them by her presence; that as she was amongst them in person, she was of them in heart, and could enjoy their entertainments as much as ever themselves could do; “so, to your fooling, my good people, we are a judge of wit as well as folly; and as there may be wise folly, so there may be foolish wit.”

To the amusement of her Highness as well as the people's, a clown did with great humility request leave to speak on behalf of the poor players, which graciously granted, he said—

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“That the humblest parts any of her Majesty’s faithful subjects could perform, like the highest, could never receive a greater reward than her Majesty’s gracious approbation.”

“Let him that spoke that, to our palace this afternoon;—marry, it was well said!” observed the queen.

Soon after they came to some performing apes, which her Majesty studied with great interest, as though they were a branch of human nature.

“I marvel,” said the queen to Leicester, “how they do these ‘fantastic tricks’ (as Shakespeare calls them) without vanity, when men perform them out of pure conceit of themselves—think you, my Lord, the conceit of these creatures is counteracted by their tails? if so, I would that some of our courtiers had like appendages.”

“Your Majesty, I presume, is graciously alluding to the *Apes*?”

“Surely, my Lord, to what else can I allude? But I know not what they are; they appal me with their ugliness, and yet they amuse me with their tricks, which so resemble those of humanity that I wonder whether to call apes men or men apes; only that apes are less conceited, I trow.”

“May it please your Majesty, I know not what conceit is.”

“Because thou art made of it, my Lord, and canst not see thyself.”

They proceeded along the street, and, turning into the park near where the Observatory now stands, left the thousands of people to enjoy their pastimes as they would; her gracious presence having spread joy

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through the multitude, as though the sun had come out in his glory.

II

A STARTLING INCIDENT

As the queen was entering the Royal Park, an incident occurred that showed in a conspicuous manner the magnanimity of this great princess. A man was observed loitering on the road along which the royal cavalcade was to pass, and as her Majesty drew near, a pistol fell from his hand, while the unhappy creature seemed paralysed with fear. He was instantly seized by the Yeomen of the Guard, who would have conveyed him to the guard-house but for the interposition of her Majesty.

“What is this?” the queen demanded.

“Treason, your gracious Majesty!” said the officer, holding up the pistol.

“Is it charged?” asked the queen.

“It is, most gracious Sovereign; and another also loaded was found upon his person.”

“We will ourself examine into this business,” said the queen. “Come hither, friend.”

The man, expecting death or worse punishment, was held up before the queen, for he was too weak from fear and nervousness to stand of his own accord.

“Come you hither, good man, to take our life?” she asked.

The man burst into tears, and in spite of his supporters, sank upon his knees, or rather his knees sank under him.

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He made no answer.

“Answer!” said the Master of the Horse.

The man said “Yes.”

“And wherefore, good man,” asked her Majesty, “would it please thee so much to kill the Queen of England?”

“An it please your Majesty, I am not good, neither am I a man.”

“Art thou a *fiend*, then?” demanded the queen.

“A woman,” answered the prisoner, “an it please your Grace.”

The queen looked at the prisoner with more than her usual fierceness when she was angry, and yet with some pity in her glance.

“I am Margaret Lambrum, your Majesty. My husband spent his life in the service of the *Queen of Scots*.”

Her Majesty was visibly moved, nevertheless she preserved the calmness of demeanour which, in danger, was a chief characteristic of this great woman.

“What then, Margaret Lambrum? What wantest thou of the Queen of England?”

“He died—my husband died, of grief at the loss of his gracious mistress, Mary Queen of Scots; and—I—his wretched widow, would die too for love of her. I wish I were mad to imagine myself other than I am.”

“’Twere something to be mad for, to kill the Queen of England,” said her Majesty. “Wouldst thou be queen? It were madness, too, to wish that. All who would be kings and queens must be mad indeed. A king is God’s appointment, not man’s, and he must

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bear the weight of the crown on whose head God puts it."

"I ask not forgiveness, gracious Madam; let me die as I deserve," said the woman.

"We must disappoint you," said the queen. "My woman's nature pities you; and our kingly prerogative pardons you. Go in peace, and sin no more! Leave our realm, in God's name.—See, Leicester, that she obeys our commands.—And I would all my subjects had as faithful hearts for their sovereign as she for hers!"

"Gracious Majesty," said Leicester, "the subject that would not die for his sovereign is unworthy to live under her protection."

"'Twas well said, Leicester——"

"What is it, woman? Is there aught else thou wouldst say? Speak out, I will grant thy request or pardon it."

"Thanks, gracious lady——"

"Give your tears in repentance to God. I can do no more for you, except to protect your life while in this country. It is in danger where our faithful subjects are threatened with the loss of their sovereign. Begone. I will see thou hast an escort."

In the afternoon, when dinner was past, the palace was given to mirth and pleasure in their various forms; the Court ladies indulged in music and dancing, which her Majesty herself joined with an enthusiasm unknown, perhaps, to any other sovereign, except King David. Presently it was announced that one of the persons whose presence the queen had commanded was in waiting.

"The player?" inquired her Majesty.

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"The player in politics, an it please your Highness," said Leicester.

"And who thinks to rule our royal realm without royalty," returned the queen; "let him appear in G—'s name! we will see our sovereign's sovereign, and learn from him how we should be ruled. But stay, Leicester, what was it that this great prophet prophesied when he lifted up his parable? How went it? Did he not insult the army, of which we are the captain-general, and say it was *cruel* and *barbarous* in its warfare?"

"Such was the report, your Majesty."

Even when the queen was most affable, no one knew what concealed indignation or anger might be burning within her. The politician, who was now ushered into her presence, was a pompous man, with more cynicism than brains, and more cunning than integrity. He was a phrasemonger, who people said in time would talk his head off.

As he approached the sovereign he fell on his knees, really supposing the queen had sent for him for purposes of state.

Her Majesty looked at him with a glance of scorn.

"We are informed that you have complaints anent our brave army," said the queen, "and if they be well grounded, God forbid it should be thought there is no power in this realm, where I am king, that cannot reform what is amiss. It is not the army, but ourself, the head of it, that is to blame for its shortcomings and misdoings. It were better that our faithful subjects tell us of our faults as you have done, good master King of England! Truth is better than flattery. What say you, my lord of Leicester?"

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"They would be clever who could find aught but praise for my gracious sovereign," said Leicester.

"Stand up," said the queen, "unless we have before us another woman in disguise, and perchance a greater traitor."

"May it please your Majesty——"

"May *what* please our Majesty, sirrah? Calumny and lies please not our Majesty. We are not a rabble whom thou canst mouth at, and before whom thou art permitted to belittle thy country and our soldiers. If thou canst deny the charge made against thee do so; if thou canst support the charge against my army do so. We pause for thy reply."

"My most gracious sovereign, I would explain."

"Deal with *facts*, master talker, with *truth*, not with explanations: thus you gabble to the mob. You spouters of ignorance can give explanations when you cannot talk sense or propound reasons. Ye are mischief-makers, false accusers, sowers of discord, railers against authority. Now mark me, an thou bridle not thy tongue, we will bridle thee. The wise man thinks and speaks but little, the fool prates much and never thinks at all."

"I ask your gracious pardon——"

"My pardon is easily given," said the queen; "we would it were as easy to make thee a loyal subject, a lover of thy country and a teacher of the ignorant. It is ignorance and envy that breed discontent; but we will destroy the bastard offspring."

Thus saying, the queen turned away.

After this scene the revels recommenced, and amongst the revellers was the player from the booth in the fair, to whom her Majesty gave a gracious

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reception ; and so much pleased was she with his readiness of wit, his mimicry and exquisite pleasantries, that he became her most famous jester. His name was *Tarlton*.

This day's adventure was often told at mess in hall, we may be sure, and Robert Dudley must have been the hero of the hour. Of course, his high connection, his handsome person, and, as I gather from his manuscript, his brilliant wit, made him one of the many favourites of the queen.

He was never called to the bar, for he was soon attached to the court, and I believe went with Sir Walter Raleigh on his last expedition. He lived in high court favour till James the First came to the throne. Since then I have not investigated his career, for it was only this incident in his life that concerned me as a Templar.

XXXIV. STORY OF THE IDLE AND THE INDUSTRIOUS BROTHERS À LA HOGARTH

“THAT industry,” said my uncle, “does not always fulfil the predictions of those who love to see others work, and that it does not inevitably lead to wealth, is as certain as that idleness does not necessarily produce misery and rags.”

When I look at the huge men who thump the roads from morning to night with rammers and heavy groans, and yet never hear of one of them retiring with a handsome competence, to say nothing of accumulated wealth, I am inclined to doubt the grand old proverb, which may have been true at one time, but certainly not in recent years. There is something wrong about that moral precept, as I think the following story will abundantly illustrate.

There were two boys in a village in Berkshire : the one was named Robert, and the other James. Robert was most industrious ; he weeded the onions in his father’s garden, hoed the cabbages, chopped up the wood, turned the mangle, and took home the clothes in a huge basket on his head ; in the evening he held the baby, for it was one of those families where there is providentially always a baby to hold.

James, on the contrary, neither weeded, hoed, mangled, or held the baby. There never was a more idle boy.

He would walk about with his hands in his pockets, and whistle while he watched Robert working away at his hoeing or digging. “Never would work, wouldn’t

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James," said his mother, who worked so much herself that she had hardly time for meals, and certainly would have run short of time if she had not too frequently run short of meals. James even shuffled along with his feet, because he was too idle to lift them off the ground.

"What a difference," everybody said, "between the two boys!" Robert was such a *nice* boy. Thus industry always ensures us the commendation of the idle.

It has been said there is no nobler sight than a good man struggling with adversity. It is interesting to everybody but the good man, who sometimes thinks "the uses of adversity" a little overrated; but he leaves the question to philosophers, and sweats away at his struggle. Said James, "Adversity is a powerful rogue, whom it is no use to struggle with; you must circumvent him by cunning." The sagacious youth, therefore, turned a deaf ear when Adversity challenged him to "Come on, and have it out."

"Not for the world," said James; "you know a great deal too much for me."

Still, success was the object of James's ambition, if he could attain it without too much bother; he desired wealth so that he might enjoy himself, make a show in the world, and be a gentleman.

He had a fair prospect when he looked in the glass, for he was handsome, and pleasing in expression. This was his stock-in-trade, which he turned to so profitable an account that he married a lady with just enough money to enable him to take a house in a fashionable neighbourhood and live beyond his means.

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They moved in good society, and Mrs. Freeman's beauty was a passport everywhere. Not only did James become a great Society man, but his elegance, position, and dress soon obtained for him a directorship in one or two companies. So that he owed to his fashionable tailor something more than his bills.

When once you begin to put on an appearance of success, success is certain; for no sooner are the shareholders in one company ruined than another starts up with a fairer prospectus than ever. James soon became so successful that he bought an estate in the country, became a magistrate and a deputy-lieutenant.

Turn we now to Robert, the good man struggling with adversity, and getting the worst of every round, in spite of all the goody-goodies who ever wrote copy-book maxims. As nobody would trust him, he was never in debt. His pig, which he hoped to kill at Christmas, was sold to pay the rent; by which and similar means he continued to keep his family out of the workhouse. He was too proud to ask his brother for assistance, and James was too proud to offer it, or even to inquire if he wanted any. It would never do in his position to let it be known that he had so poor a relation as Robert. Besides, he recollected how Robert had looked down upon him when a boy for being idle, and how he said, in his pious manner, "James, if a man won't work, neither shall he eat." "We'll see about that," answered James. But Robert plodded on, firmly convinced that industry and integrity would have their reward. The industrious youth did all things necessary for that end, according to Hogarth; he

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attended chapel every Sabbath twice a day, being a Congregationalist ; sat in the shoemaker's pew with the shoemaker's daughter, Matilda ; sang out of the same shoemaker's daughter's hymn-book, and knelt on the same hassock—that is to say, they both had one knee on it, for which posture of devotion there happened to be just sufficient space with none to spare. James, on the contrary, had never attended a place of worship in his life of his own accord, being a Church of England boy, but remained outside, and sometimes came home with a black eye, which he got through fighting in the churchyard.

Robert's exemplary conduct did, indeed, meet with an early reward, for in a short time he married the shoemaker's daughter, which turned out to be a great success. He was blessed with four children in three years.

Every year added to his load of family blessings ; and, as if the weight were not sufficient, Robert became a miller's man, and had to carry sacks of flour up the ladder into the mill. Let it be considered that a sack of flour weighs two hundred and eighty pounds, and you will see at once that if industry did not attain its reward in this world, Robert bid fair enough to get it in the next.

The mother was often seen at her weeding in the fields with a baby strapped to her back ; and there she worked from morning to night till the very baby's back ached with so much stooping.

Being once again, however, in the usual state of expectancy, the earnings were somewhat diminished, and necessarily the weekly allowance of herrings and potatoes.

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The happy thought now occurred to the ever sanguine mind of Robert, that if he could only become the proprietor of a *sow*, he might by her progeny counterbalance his own.

To show the striking difference at this time between the luck of the brothers, I would observe, that while Robert was pinching and saving to buy his sow, James had equipped himself with *a four-in-hand*, and drove about like any prince of the blood. Robert drew some weekly savings out of the Goose Club in order to invest them in the sow. The prolific creature was obtained after great effort, and at the end of two months died without issue.

It is curious how fortune takes care of those who lead a virtuous life. About the time the sow, who was called "Mary," deceased, a testimonial was presented to Matilda in recognition of her efforts to promote the singing at Ebenezer Chapel. They said that since she had taken it in hand the tone had been raised, and so marked was the improvement that when Matilda sang you could hear nobody else.

Thus the Ebenezer testimonial more than made up for the loss of "Mary."

About this time Robert's father-in-law died, and Robert, having acquired great fundamental knowledge of shoemaking by mending for the family, thought it a good opportunity of going into business as a master tradesman. So he bought at a valuation from the executors the lapstone, stool, leather apron, and bristles, in fact the whole stock-in-trade, and commenced operations. But while waiting for orders his fertile brain saw future herds of kine crowding his meadows, if only he could buy a little calf to start with.

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The calf was bought, and, being of an economical turn of mind, instead of eating its head off, died and saved the cannibal meal. Matilda, being now fairly strong again for the ninth time, used to pen her children behind a hurdle in the washhouse while she washed for her neighbours.

The purchase of the tub was an event in these good people's lives, and while they were pinching and saving for it James was negotiating the purchase of a beautiful yacht, which he secured for £16,500. I mention this to show the difference in the boys' exertions and aspirations.

Let us, therefore, return to James. Soon after this event of the yacht he was taken seriously ill; and then began that operation of conscience which so seldom occurs in seasons of health and prosperity.

He not only turned his attention to higher things, but also to the lowly Robert, whom he had never thought of in his heyday of prosperity.

It was curious that he should wonder whether Bob was alive or dead, and how he was getting on. If he got better he would certainly inquire about him, for, after all, he was his brother, and if he had chided him for his laziness it was probably no more than he deserved.

Yes, if Providence spared him, he would certainly make it his business to find him out. Probably Bob was a rich man by this time, seeing how he had worked; but if it should turn out that he was poor he would assist him. It would at least show he had not forgotten him, although money was not a substitute for brotherly affection. James had still a glimmering of Christianity about him, which he picked up in the churchyard with his black eyes.

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But there was a difficulty in sending money. It might betray his relationship, and that must be kept secret, let what would happen. It would never do for smart society to know he had a poor brother.

When he got better, therefore, he set out on his benevolent expedition. He started for the old village early in the morning, and arrived in the afternoon of the third day. He put up at a little inn by the roadside a mile or two away from the village, so as to prevent his being recognised ; forgetting that years had made such a change that no one would know him, and that most of those who could have remembered him were gone.

In the evening he strolled down the well-known lanes, and came to the cottage where Bob lived and carried on his various businesses.

It so happened that James could peep through the old flap shutter, which had got some good-sized cracks in it, and see the family engaged in their evening industries. Such a sight might have blessed the eyes of all who regard honest labour as the crowning glory of a nation, the source of her wealth and the honour of her people. All but "Tilly" were there ; "Tilly" being away in service as a lady's-maid to a lady of title.

The mother was darning stockings ; Sally, one of the girls, was hemming a skirt ; Martha was mending little Dick's trousers ; Madge was rubbing the copper warming-pan, until it shone so that you could see your face in it ; while the eldest boy was reading for their edification a chapter in Job.

Thus were they all usefully employed as James peeped in on a scene of domestic happiness equal to the "Cottar's Saturday Night."

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Even he could not help thinking : " Here, indeed, is rustic felicity ! No cares of banks breaking, mines flooding, railways falling ; none of the hundred fears that distress the man of wealth, and too often drive sleep from his pillow. Here is contentment without a care, hope without a fear, and affection without a murmur."

James was a philosopher and a student of men. I forgot to say that Robert himself was repairing a chair whose bottom had dropped out.

With the loving familiarity that characterised him, he lifted the latch and walked in.

Suddenly every one dropped his work, and the bottom that was nearly in fell out of the chair ! They were seized with astonishment. The females stood up and curtsied, while Bob, after passing his heavy hand over his brow, thrust it forward, and said, " Why, Jem, how are you ? "

" How are you, Bob ? " asked the good brother in return. " How are you, old chappie ? And let me see, is this Matilda ? Ah ! I thought so. And are these all yours, Bob, eh ? A rare lot of them, eh ? "

" A smartish lot, beant they ? But they're as good as gold."

James drew a long breath, and smiled. " I dare say they're a great comfort, Bob. You see I've got none, so I don't know your happiness."

" Bob often talked about you, James, and wondered if we should ever see you again," said Matilda.

" I always meant to come," said he. " And how are you getting along ? Because that is the thing, after all, isn't it ? "

Bob was still rubbing his scant locks round his

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head, as he did when anything surprised him. "Glad to see you," said he, and shook hands with him again, without attending to the question. He was astonished to see what a fine gentleman James had become, and so stout with it, and full-faced. He couldn't say much just at present.

"How are you getting on, Bob, eh? Doing pretty well, I suppose?"

"Rubbin' along, James, rubbin' along like. We lost the calf, but we're all here, thank God, alive and well, James; that's the main thing, ain't it—alive and well like? 'Taint much good being alive if you ain't well; and if you ain't well, money ain't much good."

At this moment in came Matilda with a frying-pan and several rashers of bacon in it, and eggs in her hand ready for breaking.

"Out o' the way," she said to the children, "or else you'll get splashed."

The pan was soon hissing, and while Matilda was seeing to the cooking, Martha laid a snow-white cloth and arranged the table.

This was all they could do for their distinguished brother, and they did it with a simpleness of heart which would have done honour to a family of princes and princesses.

James appreciated the kindness more than the bacon. Of course there were no napkins, silver forks, and other things that he was accustomed to; but he was determined to make the best of it out of brotherly love, as he did on being called "uncle" all round. He thought it was a bit familiar, and that Matilda ought to have checked it. There was rather too much "uncling." But she was too simple-minded to under-

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stand the distinction that high society makes between rich and poor of the same flesh and blood, although she understood the difference between a cochin-china and a bantam in the same dunghill.

CHAPTER II

JAMES wondered how he should convey the little cheque he had in his pocket without appearing to be patronising. He was determined to show his brotherly feeling in a substantial form, so that he might atone for past neglect, and wash his hands of the family for evermore.

Cheques to him were so common, that he wrote them out as an overseer would an order for outdoor relief. Before he went away he shook hands all round, and was half inclined to kiss Martha, because she was so pretty. Martha met him half-way, and threw her arms round his neck; and, after this, he slipped the piece of paper into Matilda's hand, and slipped out as quickly as he could. Where there's a will to do a kindness there's always a way.

I will not attempt to describe the pleasure and curiosity with which the cheque was passed round so that all might have a look, before it was finally deposited in Robert's mole-skin purse.

The cheque was for *five hundred pounds!* a perfectly unrealisable amount to any one of the family; and a bewildering sensation kept father and mother awake nearly the whole night.

The next day was a memorable one in the family history, for, after prayers and one of Matilda's hymns,

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they all set off to rig themselves out in new clothes at the market town, six miles away; the great establishment at that time being Mr. Isaac Solomons' "Emporium," whose ready-made clothes were as celebrated for cut and fashion as those of Messrs. Moses and Sons themselves.

In due time the whole family was standing in wondering admiration round the great bay window, which was crowded with wax figures, arrayed in all the gaiety of the most fashionable costumes.

But they were no more filled with admiration than Mr. Isaac Solomons was with delight at so many possible customers. He was so polite as they entered, that he seemed the embodiment of all the graces; called for chairs for the ladies, and hoped they were quite well; and then, with a profound bow, asked what could he have the pleasure of showing them?

Robert tried on a nice coat, which would have fitted him better if it had not been three sizes too large. The same thing might be said of Billy's suit, especially the trousers, but Mr. Solomons assured them that it was better to be a great deal too large than ever so leetle too small, especially as the garments were of everlasting material and make. The boy would grow into them and fill them out in the course of a very few years.

"It's wonderful, sar, how boys grows! Yes, if you please, sar."

After they were fitted (the ladies in the meantime had been to the Court millinery department), Robert put down his cheque.

Mr. Isaac Solomons looked at it, held it to the light, sniffed, and went outside to see if there was a police-

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man about ; then went into his parlour, consulted with Mrs. Solomons, and came back.

“Sar, my vord ! you expect change ? No, sar ; five hun’ pounds ! vare you get dis ?”

“What odds is that to you ?” asked Robert, with a tone of honest independence and manly spirit.

“Odds ! my vort ! yes, you call it odds ! Would you step up to my bank, sar ? Odds ! yes, it is odds, and I vill be even vid you.”

“Fifty bankers,” said Robert boldly, “and fifty after that ; what d’ye think of that ?” And Robert snapped his thumb and finger triumphantly.

“I vill tell you presently, sar.”

They went to the bank—all of them, and as they ascended the steps it was like Noah and his family entering the ark, except that Solomons looked too much like a crimp, otherwise he might have made a respectable Noah.

After some little delay the bank, to the astonishment of Mr. Solomons, cashed the cheque. It was a branch of James’s London bank, and everything had been prepared for the presentation.

The civility of Mr. Isaac Solomons was now unbounded. He asked the family to have something before they set out on their homeward journey, and pressed his goods upon them in the most profuse form ; but there was a restraining prudence in Matilda which was proof to the blandishments of the most Israelitish of benefactors. He could not even tempt Mrs. Freeman with a second-hand ball dress or a sable muff “dirt cheap.”

The following Sunday was long remembered in connection with Ebenezer Chapel. It seemed as if

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the wax-work people of Mr. Isaac Solomons' establishment had mistaken their place of worship, and come to Ebenezer instead of going to their synagogue. Many an envious glance was cast over hymn-book and Bible at Mrs. Freeman and her daughters' finery ; and it was observed that Robert, although the sleeves of his new coat came almost to his fingers, looked quite the "gentleman" as he stood up at the conclusion of the service and brushed his glossy hat with his handkerchief.

In the course of a few weeks a snug farm of fifty acres fell vacant, just large enough to ruin any one with a little capital and not a great deal of judgment. Robert took it, and was described in the agreement as "yeoman," while his daughter, who immediately left her situation and the widower Baker to whom she was engaged, came home and was known as "Miss Freeman of Woodlands Farm."

In accordance with his new position, Robert bought a gig and a piano, although at present none of the young ladies could play, but they could all ride.

Robert's equipment for market was a green velveteen jacket with large mother-of-pearl buttons, cord breeches, and leather gaiters. Mrs. Freeman wore a tremendously large bonnet, such as was afterwards called a "coal-scuttle," than which nothing to my mind has ever looked *more* dignified and genteel in the way of head-dress.

Things went merrily for about two years, and then unfortunately a man came in under a bill of sale ; the sheriff's officer with a writ of execution, and the landlord for rent.

There is only one incident in connection with

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these various distresses which I will relate, because it possessed that which is generally wanting in these proceedings, namely, a touch of romance and humanity.

When they were taking away the piano poor Martha cried bitterly, and the young sheriff's officer was so overcome with emotion that he cried too. Nothing is more seductive and catching than a pretty girl's tears. Everybody said it was like water gushing out of a rock to see the tears on the face of the young sheriff's officer.

I need not say, where there was so much tender sympathy, Love was not far off, and in a short time the young pair were engaged, notwithstanding that Martha, like the rest of the family, had no home whatever and was billeted upon the neighbours.

The wealthy James hearing in some manner—it was thought Martha wrote to him—came nobly forward, and advised the family to go to the *far West*—the farther west, said James, the better, because he had heard that the land was better, and buffaloes might be had for the catching.

Robert assented, and the passage-money was paid. James saw them all on board, the newly-married pair as well, and, after many tears and waving of handkerchiefs, the party set sail for the land where “a man is a man if he's willing to toil.”

As things in this world are never stationary, not even the rocks, the whirligig of time brought many things to pass. In the course of a few years James died—his wife had died previously—and there being no children, Robert came into all his accumulated wealth.

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The young sheriff's officer was now of great importance in the management of the business. The family once more came to England, and took possession of the splendid hall and park. Here they lived for a while till things were arranged, and then Robert and his wife once more obtained possession of "Woodlands," where they enjoyed life, as they said, in that station in which it had pleased Providence to place them.

In the meanwhile the younger members of the family had teachers and tutors, and became in time fitted for a much bigger station than that.

But the master mind that guided them all in their stage of pupilage and ignorance of the world was the young sheriff's officer, Mr. Kenneth M'Stein, than whom there could not have been a better, a shrewder, or a kinder man.

Let others say what they will of sheriff's officers, here is an instance of their kindness of heart.

If it had not been for the piano being seized, Martha would have lost a good husband and the family a wise and useful friend.

Matilda married into a high family that was short of money, and the two younger girls fell in love with a couple of officers, one in the Life Guards, and the other in the Hussars—very worthy fellows—who sold out and lived as country gentlemen, and taught their wives to ride to hounds. They both had families, and these again married well, some of them becoming connected with the noblest families in the kingdom; but it were idle to tell of all the greatness and wealth that were the reward of the "industrious boy."

XXXV. THE LADY WHO MADE UP HER MIND NEVER TO MARRY

As we sat round the cosy fire one winter evening, Uncle Dick asked if he had ever told us the story of the young lady who made up her mind never to marry ; and, without waiting for an answer, commenced as follows :—

Marion Verney was the daughter of a naval officer, a widower, who, on his retirement from the service, lived at Southsea. He had left but a small pittance to his only child. This was eked out by working the extraordinary embroidery which decorated the Court dresses and shoes of the period. The work was wonderfully beautiful, and Marion seemed to excel all others in its manufacture. She had cultivated the art from pure love, and now it returned her devotion by affording a comfortable means of subsistence. Marion occupied, with a friend, Louisa Cripps, who was some years her senior, three rooms on Southsea Common, one of which they used as sitting and work room ; Marion occupied with her embroidery, and Louisa in water-colour drawings of shipwrecks, lighthouses, forts, and battleships, productions which found a ready sale at Portsmouth and other seaport towns.

The reason Marion at so early an age as seventeen was determined to live in celibacy, was, that marriage destroyed a woman's liberty, and too often gave nothing in return but indifference and neglect ; besides which, she had seen so much misery from ill-assorted marriages, to say nothing of that which comes from poverty.

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When a lady of seventeen reasons in this manner, you may take it for granted she is a deep and penetrating observer of human nature. Louisa, on the other hand, was by no means a convert to these ideas of "single-blessedness"; she held them to be contrary to reason and human nature, and that poverty itself might be sweetened by holy love. In the intervals of their work they used to talk over the matter, as they looked out of the window, with their arms encircling each other's waists. They would discuss the pros and cons of the married state, while they admired or criticised the soldiers, sailors, ladies, and others, who passed and repassed their window in constant succession. Sometimes they would examine the marriage service together, and see whether there was any information to be derived from that, in support of Louisa's or Marion's argument. This, however, afforded them no assistance; it said nothing about the main thing of all, in entering on so precarious a mode of enjoyment, namely, the marriage settlement.

As they were thus engaged in an interval of leisure one afternoon, Louisa uttered a sudden exclamation: "Look, look! dear! I *declare* there's Edmund!"

"Edmund, dear?"

"Lieutenant Knight, my cousin, dear."

"Navy, dear?"

"Yes, dear. Oh, such a jolly fellow; come along."

"Come along where? We cannot go after him, dear."

"Oh, but he's my cousin, dear; I'm going to scold him for not calling on me. He knows where I live, and doesn't call because of you, dear."

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Now this was nonsense. Edmund could not know where Louisa lived, and had never heard of Marion. But that is the way ladies sometimes reason when they have none.

As they had previously resolved to go that afternoon to Portsmouth, the one to get silks and the other paints, they set off at once, and never lost sight of the lieutenant until they got to "the Hard." Edmund was delighted, and as proud as if he had just captured a French battleship, when he was presented to Marion, while the thought instantly flashed through his mind that he had never seen so beautiful a girl in his life.

Marion, on the other hand, was indifferent to his attractions on *principle*.

Once let a woman's mind be made up to resist the allurements of a manly form in a naval officer's uniform, and a pair of brilliant laughing blue eyes in a handsome face, and she feels no more emotion than if she were gazing on a marble statue.

Nevertheless they passed a pleasant time together, strolling over the common, and along by the beach; sitting on the pebbles, and listening to the lisp of the waves, and the lisp of Louisa, and the merry conversation of the lieutenant, who had sailed in the *Victory* under Nelson. When the evening grew dusky, Lieutenant Knight saw them home, promised to call the next day, which he did, and then made more promises, all of which he kept as faithfully as a British sailor should.

Louisa, however, was not quite in the same affectionate humour, so she was even more profuse in her terms of endearment.

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As they were seated at tea, she said—

“Isn't he handsome, dear?”

“To tell you the truth, dear,” answered Marion, “I hardly saw him.”

Louisa gave a little scream as if she doubted Marion's word.

“Then it was not for want of *looking* at him, dear.”

“Louisa!”

“You scarcely took your eyes off him, dear.”

“How *can* you say so?” asked Marion; “but he *is* nice-looking, no doubt, and *very* agreeable; a charming man.”

“He has nice eyes, dear?”

“*Very* nice eyes, they have such an expression.”

This mutual agreement between girls on such subjects is the most unpleasant they can ever come to; and Louisa, before they had finished the discussion, got quite petulant and gave Marion an endearing answer or two which went to her heart; but Marion was not the simple baby to be slapped without experiencing some little inclination to resentment; so she asked Louisa if she really *cared* for him.

“N—no,” she answered; “only—as a cousin; nor do I think he cares for me, beyond that.”

“I don't think he does,” said Marion, and that brought the discussion to an end, for when you agree with your dearest friend to her own disparagement, there's no necessity for further argument.

Weeks passed by; the friendship between Marion and Edmund became more and more intimate, until it ripened into that stage which is called *love*; but Marion was firm enough to reject the pleadings of

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her unfortunate lover, and Louisa was delighted to think that he who had "deceived *her*," so she construed his conduct, was himself rejected in his turn. She had, however, constantly to support Marion in her resolution, and said everything she could in dispraise of the young lieutenant; even intimating that a girl must be foolish to marry a man who would be away from her for years together.

These arguments settled the question.

"No one," said Marion, "could control one's destiny."

"What about your resolution, dear?"

"Resolutions are cobwebs across one's path; Fate comes along and makes sad havoc amongst them; you may have all the *will* in the world, dear, to resist to the death, but you are a feeble creature after all in the hands of Destiny."

"Then how silly and weak to make resolutions at all."

"No, dear, they have their purpose, they fortify the citadel and prevent its too easy capture; they teach us the folly of relying on our own strength, and the wisdom of resigning ourselves to irresistible Destiny!"

"Rubbish!" said Louisa, "it's the jargon of the philosophical novelist."

CHAPTER II

WITH whatever nonsense Marion supported her arguments, she gradually yielded to the persuasive eloquence of the young lieutenant. They were married, and Heaven blessed their union with a fine

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boy. Louisa was angry, not at the fine boy, but at the mother ; nor was she sorry when her cousin at length sailed away, and she was left to comfort the forlorn Marion, with all those sweet reproaches which she knew so well how to administer.

Alas ! in ten months Edmund was taken prisoner by the French, and in a few more died in a French prison.

Marion was inconsolable ; not even her dear friend could comfort her, although she assured her that it was no more than could be expected.

Marion brooded and wept till the fountain of her grief was dry. Louisa consoled her with reminders of her inconstancy, and declared that it was "almost like" a judgment ; but she was good enough to take charge of the little boy when Marion resolved to make a pilgrimage to the grave of her beloved.

She remained some time abroad and composed a beautiful epitaph to the memory of Edmund. Having completed this act of devotion and made the most solemn vow over his grave that till death united them once more, her heart should be his and his alone, she rose from her kneeling posture, clasped her hands fervently, sighed, wept, and turned away.

On her voyage home she was in the depth of despair : the world was gone ; life a blank, and Heaven itself but a fanciful dream. What the poor soul would have done in her deep distress, except throw herself overboard, no one can imagine, had not a gentleman with brilliant dark eyes caught her in his arms when the vessel gave a most tremendous plunge as if to save her the trouble of jumping overboard. Sympathy in distress is perhaps the most blessed of

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emotions ; it blesses both giver and receiver. The sympathetic glance of those dark eyes Marion never forgot ; nor the soothing influence of his manly presence ; nor the words of comfort, nor the kind and friendly pressure of the hand when they bade farewell never to meet again on this side the grave.

True, their eyes met—hers in pious gratitude, his in touching sympathy ; but they met never to meet more in this world, and they bade farewell with as tender a feeling as though their friendship had been of years instead of hours.

“A lovely creature !” said the gentleman, as he looked after his luggage.

“Such is life !” sighed Marion as she called a “fly.”

It is not to be wondered at that Marion’s soul was now wholly devoted to the dear pledge of her husband’s love. She *lived* for him, and if it did not assuage her grief it at least assisted her to bear it. But her health failed, and her doctor insisted on her going into Society as much as possible. For her child’s sake, not for her own, she yielded.

Fortunately she had a friend at Portsmouth, the widow of a naval officer who was in good circumstances, and gave quiet entertainments, and who never brooded over past troubles.

Mrs. Pratt, such was her name, was delighted to see Marion once more take some little interest in the concerns of life.

One evening Mrs. Pratt had one of the “charming little dinners,” whereat the dishes are choice and the company select—not the “pay off” party, where the creditors come in of all degrees of acquaintanceship and no degree of friendship ; but agreeable friends

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whose intimacy has been cemented by unselfish kindness and unchanging love.

It was just the party Marion would have chosen—quiet, well-bred, and not too dull.

Amongst the guests was a gentleman whose name was *Hyde*. Mr. Philip Hyde was an officer of position in his Majesty's Dockyard—a handsome, intellectual man of refinement and taste.

Marion no sooner caught the glance of his bright intelligent eyes than her attention was riveted. There was something that reminded her of Edmund! How was it? There was no resemblance generally, and yet it was so striking that she found herself every two or three minutes looking in his direction. I have been told it is not uncommon with widows to see their departed husbands in others' eyes.

In the present instance, however, considerable doubt might be cast upon this general testimony by the fact that Marion's memory deceived her. It was not so much the look of her dear departed husband that she recognised as *Mr. Hyde himself*, as he had appeared on board the boat already mentioned. Such fantastic freaks do love and imagination play us!

But no sooner did Marion discover the sympathetic gentleman than the sympathetic gentleman perceived the disconsolate widow. Who can blame them if the beautiful emotions of the voyage were revived?

Marion and Mr. Hyde resumed their old and romantic acquaintanceship; they met as friends with endearing recollections.

It was that beautiful friendship, sweetest of all, which arises from Sorrow and Sympathy. There was no such thing as the faintest resemblance to Love.

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Had there been, Marion would have renounced the delightful intercourse for evermore. It was pure platonic affection, such as I only believed could exist between Husband and Wife.

But to pass over many joyous days, and many a struggle between sentiment and principle, the result of this cold platonic love was found in the register of a certain church in Portsmouth, where Marion was united to Mr. Philip Hyde. The sweet Louisa acted as bridesmaid on the occasion.

This marriage was equally happy, Marion proving how much she must have been endeared to the first husband by her devotion to the second.

Alas for life's vicissitudes! for all human bliss! After the birth of another boy, and several years of uninterrupted happiness, Mr. Hyde's constitution gave way. He was gathered to his fathers, and Mrs. Hyde once more lived for her children.

She wept as if her heart would break, and it was difficult to say for whom the fountain of her sorrow poured forth more copiously, for Edmund or Philip. Probably she had an eye for each.

CHAPTER III

MARION lived in her children's lives. She was six-and-thirty, and firmly resolved to devote her remaining years to their interests. Had it not been for her children she would have entered a convent, for the world and its charms had ceased to interest her.

In the meanwhile Louisa was happily married to an Irish gentleman of the English Bar. A man he was

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of rare attainments, social disposition, exuberant spirits, and a fine humour. His name was Felix Murphy, and, as no Irishman ever had long to wait for a lucrative appointment at the English Bar, he soon obtained one which enabled him to set up an establishment, for he was a man of persuasive tongue and much application.

Mrs. Murphy gave receptions and became a Society leader.

Marion had now arrived at an age when matrimony had lost its charms.

"At what age is that?" interrupted Lady Christmas, who was, as usual, one of our story-telling guests.

"I don't know," said Uncle Dick; "but suppose it is when you have lost your taste for it."

"Time passes quickly," he continued, "in stories and plays. So we skip over some years. The elder son is married, and the younger is at a naval school at Gosport. Mrs. Murphy was still the warm friend of Marion, and made her at all times a welcome guest at her elegant home, where Felix amused her with his ready wit and taught her whist. He had at this time staying with him a brother, Timothy, a captain in a marching regiment, handsome, lively, and of a charming humour, described by Felix as a man "who loved to meet his friends or foes." He was a confirmed old bachelor, and Louisa teased him unmercifully on that account.

Once she asked if he'd ever been engaged. "Yes," said he, "but never lost my head."

As he repeated this standing joke one night when playing whist with Marion, he looked at her over his cards with the most roguish eyes and such a merry

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glance that Marion held her cards over her face to hide her blushes.

When Mrs. Hyde retired for the night it was necessary to renew her vows of devoting herself entirely to her children.

Alas, how weak are unassisted human efforts ! Fate overruled her resolution, and after a while she united herself in matrimony to the young soldier of the marching regiment, and became Mrs. Timothy Murphy.

The happy pair lived in perfect harmony : nothing could exceed their bliss. But who could guarantee its continuance ? The time came, all too soon, when the marching regiment was ordered abroad, and Marion was left once more to disconsolate bereavement.

How, now, she wished that the seclusion of the convent had received her before she had broken her earliest resolution ! It was too late ; and all she could do was to hope for Timothy's speedy return.

How eagerly she devoured the news, accounts true or fabulous : now she learns that Timothy has lost a leg, now an arm, now that it is not *her* Timothy, and that he has gone to fight the Mahrattas.

Alas, the day-dreams with which hope torments the sanguine heart ! day-dreams never to be realised. Her Timothy had become a major, and in the same paper was the announcement that he had been buried at *Rajpootana* ! And there, too, were buried all her hopes of happiness in this world !

Fortunately she had a grandchild who could remind her, if not of Timothy or Philip, yet of Edmund, a prattling merry child, full of everything that Marion was deprived of : hope, mirth, happiness, and love. But if the sweet Margery reminded her of Edmund,

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she did not forget Timothy ; while *Philip* was represented by her youthful son, the handsomest cadet in the navy. So that, on the whole, there was a great counterbalancing of memories as well as griefs. Our joys must ever be set in the balance against our sorrows.

Once more she was back at her old quarters on Southsea Common, and there she pondered through the summer evening twilight on "the inscrutable ways of Providence." Thus she wrote to Louisa, "while life, dear, lies before me in a dim, impenetrable fog."

After some years of this foggy solitude, there came to reside at Portsmouth a wealthy shipowner of the name of *Pephir*, Mr. Joseph Pephir, who had carried on for many years a lucrative trade in the Newfoundland fisheries. He also was a friend of the Pratts : so it came to pass that Marion met Mr. Pephir at her friend's. It is one of the strangest of things, but no more strange than true, that Marion never met a man she did not fascinate. She was now well on in life, but in manner and beauty almost as young as ever. She was of the few who never seem to age. A bright and lively disposition, with a charming temper, are the antidotes to age, and keep the *mind* in perpetual youth. That is the great thing in life. At all events Mr. Pephir, although years Marion's senior, fell most irretrievably in love with her at first sight. But, of course, poor Pephir's suit was hopeless. Marion had had enough of marriage, ending, alas ! in hapless widowhood.

Pephir, however, was not the man to be daunted : his motto was, "Never despair !" Marion might reject, but he would persevere. He loved her as

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much as any of his predecessors ; why should he not succeed as well as they ? The loss of so many husbands might predispose her to a single life, but he would convince her it was her duty, as it was her privilege, to make as many husbands happy as possible.

Alas for Pephir's philosophy ! when he proposed marriage, the firmness and dignity of the woman appeared. Pephir was snuffed out with a look of almost indignant scorn.

"What !" said Marion, in her quiet but determined tone, "give my hand to another ! Mr. Pephir, I esteem, more than I can ever tell, the great honour you have done me ; but, never while I have breath to refuse, will I consent to marry again. With three dear husbands in the grave—" She burst into tears and left the room.

Pephir in turn became disconsolate : he wandered nightly along the beach mingling his sighs with the breeze, and his tears with the waves, as they do in the best novels ; and got at last into such a state of dejection that his friends said, "Pephir's mind is gone !" He would sit on the beach and count the pebbles until the fantastic idea came to his bewildered brain that if he could only count a hundred thousand, Marion would become Mrs. Pephir ; a strange mode truly of winning a widow or maid, but what will not love do in its wild phantasies ?

Whether he succeeded in counting the hundred thousand I cannot say, but he continued his suit as if he had. Marion, however, was adamant. No matter that Pephir pleaded, she assured him in the sweetest of tones that his fondest protestations were in vain.

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“Do you think I am a child, Mr. Pephir?” she asked with a smile of half pity, half scorn, “that you treat me thus?”

“No,” said Pephir; “but if, oh—if, my dear—but pray forgive——”

“No, sir,” she answered, “I will not forgive; your Persistence has been Persecution: I have told you my mind from the first: take my last word and leave me, if you have one spark of manly feeling.” She paused—Pephir also paused. Then Marion said, “Accept, Mr. Pephir, my final determination; not for the riches of the world would I change my condition. No—Mr. Pephir—no, sir—Joseph—never—much as—much as I shall ever esteem and value your friendship——”

Louisa heard this as she was leaving the room, and felt that Marion was safe; and so she would have been, but instead of Marion peremptorily *bidding Mr. Pephir leave the room*, and ringing the bell so as to show her determination, she parleyed with the enemy until that gentleman clasped her hand between his, and said, “Friendship cannot subsist between beauty and love; and as for the riches of the world, what are they to the treasures of the heart? The man who deserves to be happy will give his life for the woman he adores.” Pephir was a great novel reader.

Although Louisa had retired, she listened for the retreating footsteps of the rejected lover, but she waited in vain. Presently the door closed, but not with a bang. She thought the abashed lover had stolen away, ashamed of his defeat. So she crept up and gently opened the door; but judge of her sur-

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prise when she beheld the determined Marion *in Pephir's arms!*

Alas, for woman's inconsistency! For the *fourth* time she was led to the altar, Louisa's husband giving her away; so she became rich and happy, Pephir happy and glorious in his triumph, which shows clearly enough that man must ever be confident, but woman never.

A curious rebuke the bride gave the young clergyman at the marriage service. He had left out a certain, and, to my mind, impressive portion of the address on the objects and duties of marriage, which the lady, well accustomed to the beautiful service, noticing, said—

“Young man, just read the service properly; it is not for *you* to judge.”

XXXVI. HOW HE BROKE HIS LOVE ADVENTURE TO HIS GRANDMOTHER

THERE were two books my Grandmother believed in, the Bible and the Peerage. Her ambition was to see me well married; not me exactly, but the *family*. The "family" was her pride. Although I had agreed to leave the choice of a wife to her better judgment, I was rather shaken in my resolution when I became in love. But she was ever on what she called "the look-out"; and one day announced that she had "found a lady" who she thought would exactly suit me.

The sweet creature, it appeared, was my senior by some years, and wore a slight moustache, larger than my own in point of fact. Whether she thought that a qualification I do not know, but I was obliged, as magazines do with most contributions, to "decline with thanks." I said that I was resolved to lead a single life. But as soon as I got to be in love my resolution was somewhat shaken.

The difficulty, however, was, how was I to break it to Granny? Perhaps I might accomplish it by way of a joke. But what *kind* of a joke, with such an eagle-eyed watcher as my Grandmother?

It is always best in difficulties of this kind to let things go by chance. One evening she was reading the reminiscences of a "Lady of Fashion," a delightful book made up of all the sweet gossip of the tea-table, and family secrets unknown to everybody else.

I began my little joke by laughing at it before it was uttered, which is a good plan, because it is seldom that anybody laughs at it after.

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"Granny," cried I, "what is being in love? how does it feel?"

Down went the "Lady of Fashion" on the floor as if she had been struck by lightning; then my ancestress glared at me through her large spectacles with a blaze that burnt into my soul.

"You *will* laugh, Granny," I continued; "but I believe I've caught it. I've seen such a fine girl!"

"*Fine girl!*" she said, with a reproving tone and an arch look.

"Yes," I answered; "and it was all through laying eel-lines."

I then told her in the most jocular manner the way in which it was brought about. And when I came to the cow-girl, she laughed heartily and said—

"Roger, you spoke so seriously at first I really thought you were in earnest; it would have been dreadful if you had been in earnest."

Then I went into a minute description of the young lady's features and dress, her dignity of deportment, etcetera, when Granny said—

"Roger, you really should not joke about such things. Marriage is too serious a matter to be spoken of lightly."

I next told her how that the young lady had refused the heir to an earldom. We had another good laugh, and she asked who such a creature could be.

I replied, "The daughter of a Mr. Hudson, a gentleman farmer near Southwood; and that he, although living as a yeoman, was illustrious in his pedigree, and boasted his descent from John of Gaunt's grandfather."

"Roger!" she said; "how silly you are! you don't

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know how foolish you look while you say these things."

"I feel," said I, without noticing her rebuke, "as if the young lady were a real princess." Then, as I thought I had carried my joke far enough for that night, I turned the conversation upon more congenial subjects, so far as Granny was concerned. Some time after I took down Burke, and began to see if I could find a Hudson pedigree.

"Granny," I said, "I wonder whether *Hudson* really *is* an impostor, or whether he is a gentleman entitled to bear arms?"

"Silly boy," she said; "of course it is all fiction."

"Well," I answered; "I don't quite know. Here is a Hudson who goes back a long way——"

"If he went back to Nebuchadnezzar it would make no difference to me," she said; "a man is what he *is*, and not what his ancestors were."

This was quite against her usual theory; but I have learnt that women and politicians often change their opinions to suit the circumstances, and what they are to-day is no guarantee of what they will be to-morrow; on the contrary, is rather an indication of what they will *not* be.

"Well," said I, "the Hudson family is certainly a connection of 'Ramshorns.'"

"The Ramshorns, my love? they are a branch, although a junior branch, of the Ramsbothams, which is our family name!"

"Our own family name!" I exclaimed.

"On your mother's side, of course—there's where *your* nobility comes in."

This ended that scene. But I worked on from time

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to time in what I considered an artful kind of manner, making her familiar with the name of Hudson, so that she could at last talk about it without losing her temper. The scheme which I am describing in a few pages took several months to develop. The winter passed, and hay-making time came round again, when I induced my Grandmother, now completely off her guard, to pay a visit to the *Browns*. Her pride at first was a formidable objection to my scheme, but when I reminded her of the great kindness shown to me by these simple people, and pointed out that the gracious Princess Charlotte often visited the gipsies on Oxshot Common, and took blankets to their tents, Granny relaxed—she loved to imitate princesses—and it was arranged that she should pay a kind of state visit, in all the splendour of a fly and a pair of horses. The distance was seventeen miles. We changed horses at Kingston Hill, and went away from the old inn in fine style.

I have seen a good deal of dignity and splendour in my time : flunkies behind carriages, and judges on circuit pretending to be royal personages ; but I never saw flunkey or judge with so much dignity as my Grandmother displayed on this occasion. She sat in her fly in the most stately manner ; and by the time we reached the swing gate which opened into a private road leading to the farm, she was bolt upright, with one hand resting gracefully on the other.

We dashed up to the garden gate, painted cabbage-green, which opened to the path leading through box hedges up to the great door of the thatched farmhouse, an oblong building with a gable to every window.

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Of course the Browns had seen the fly as soon as it arrived at the swing gate, and had watched its approach. They were at the gate when we arrived.

Mrs. Brown was so appalled with the exceptional greatness of the visitor, that she stood in her blue cotton print dress, white apron and kerchief, in the most reverential attitude, and yet with all the fearless independence her simple nature could assume; that is to say, her hands were on her hips, and her red face shone out of her frilled cap with an expression of good-nature that would have made a less dignified person than my grandmother shake her with both hands, and kiss her into the bargain.

Old Farmer Brown stood just behind, with his billycock hat in one hand and his stout ash stick, with which he touched up a refractory beast, in the other.

My Grandmother, of course, did not condescend to look *at present*. She was so formal that she might have been at the church door with an archbishop by her side, instead of a junior barrister. Nothing could have been more perfect, even if it had been rehearsed as a stage performance.

Those who understand fashionable society, with all its pretty affectations of dignity, should have seen my Grandmother alight from her fly, not with the careless hurry and nimbleness of the butcher boy "round for orders," not with the mixed alertness and cool propriety of the young doctor who is attending for the first time a local celebrity, but with the lofty, lazy, look-at-me kind of dignity, whose every motion is a condescension, whose word is law, and whose existence is an honour to mankind. She looked not to the

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right or left, nor even straight forward; it was a vacant stare that requires culture as well as high birth. My dear Grandmother used to say, "You can always tell a lady by the manner in which she alights from her carriage."

This was the more remarkable, because through all my life I had never known her ride in one. It must therefore have been instinct.

I used to answer, "Yes, I suppose that is true, as you can always tell a snob when he tries to act the gentleman."

In my ancestress's stately dignity were the grace and bearing of centuries of Ramsbothams. She pretended not to see the Browns, until they stood right in front of her. *Then* with a graceful inclination of the head, and a sweet self-importance in her bearing, she watched the low curtsy of Mrs. Brown, as she said—

"Sarvant, marm, and glad to see ee!"

What a lesson this for modern jerry-built gentility!

"I felt at home with the dear creature at once," said Granny afterwards. (But she said at the time, "I have often heard my grandson speak of you.") "She saw, of course, my dear, what I was; that kind of people can always tell a well-bred lady."

"I hope, my lady," said Brown in his simple manner, "you will excuse our homeliness like. We be simple folk down here."

"Don't mention it, Brown," said my Grandmother, in the most ladylike voice she could assume. "What charming honeysuckles you have."

"*Westralia*, m'lady—" "M'lady" was not a country lady, you see.

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Meanwhile she sauntered along the gravel path towards the door, put up her eyeglass to take a survey, and said she was charmed with country life, and had been used to it in her younger days. I was afraid she was going to add *at Mile End*, but her presence of mind luckily restrained the ardour of her family importance. It was nothing to the disparagement of her taste for country life that the exigencies of a Government appointment in the docks had compelled her to reside where honeysuckles were unknown and gentility abounded.

"Well, Brown," she said, putting no "Mr." as being the height of fashionable breeding, "I have often heard my grandson talk of you. I'm *afraid* you spoil him, Brown—quite, quite spoil him. Brown, your parrot looks well; is he old?"

"Old b-t-h!" cried the parrot. Granny tapped the cage with her fan. "Ugly b-t-h!" said the bird. After that Granny took no more notice.

"Take keer, Marm," said Brown; "we be 'bliged to stoop abit—the doorways ain't werry high; we had a lady down here once as carried her head too high, and knocked her nose agin the lintel."

"That 'ur did," said Mrs. Brown; "not that 'ur were proud or anything o' that: she wur only tall."

When we crawled inside there was every comfort, and such an air of cleanliness as well as coziness, as could not be surpassed in the best-appointed mansion in England, or equalled. An old-fashioned country house is like no other, any more than its provisions are like any other provisions. Where in London will you get milk from the cow, eggs from the nest, butter from

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the churn? Here, too, was something else that Londoners never heard of—namely, cakes from the hearth; but it is useless to attempt an inventory of the good things provided for her majesty's visit: they were all exceptionally simple, homely, and good.

What a leveller is kindness even in a farm-house! There sat Granny, in a black silk gown covered with bugles, stirring the tea with the ease and grace of a marchioness; and yet so much at home with the hospitality of these "good people," that she condescended to smile approval of all she saw—even of the warming-pan, bright as copper could be, in the corner next to the great clock, which had been there for at least a century.

Most remarkable event of all, however, was a glimpse I caught of a bonny little straw hat with light blue ribbons, coming down the pathway leading to the house. There was also a sweet muslin dress accompanying it, white with little pink rosebuds all over it; and soon I perceived that these fascinating attractions belonged to Margaret Hudson, who arrived at the gate with her father.

How my heart beat as she came in! Strange are the caprices of fate! Here was my divine cow-girl in the presence of my Grandmother! Her spectacles were quickly adjusted, and she examined Margaret with the eye of a critic as she would a piece of silk, and then turned to the stalwart figure of Mr. Hudson. She was instantly fascinated with his handsome face and figure; for, after all, she was a woman, in spite of rank and ladylike hauteur.

A great deal of paper would have to be covered were I writing a novel; but to what purpose in these

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Memoirs? I am not writing for papermakers, printers, and trunkmakers; suffice it to say that after a proper introduction, my Grandmother, without in the least lessening her dignity, was quite affable and friendly. With her knowledge of breeding, she saw at once there was something of pedigree in the Hudsons, as you can see it in all thorough-bred animals.

Conversation flowed easily, and many little circumstances showed that Mr. Hudson was highly connected, which was a great thing. He was a "Cambridge man," had been in the army, was a man of rank and wealth, and altogether a desirable acquaintance.

We soon arranged a boating excursion to his farm, and went down the river to the place where I laid my eel lines; thence to the landing-place of Mr. Hudson's residence. Margaret played and sang. My Grandmother was so enchanted that she beat time with her foot, and I saw tears on her dear face.

At last the time came to take leave, and on our way home my Grandmother said she never saw a finer gentleman than Mr. Hudson.

"And I never saw a sweeter lady," said I, "than Margaret."

"*Fit for a Prince of the blood*, my dear! I wonder Mr. Hudson does not marry again!"

"And Margaret?" I asked; "why does she not marry, I wonder?"

"There's only one of that kind," she answered. "Oh what a voice!"

I told her how glad I was to hear her say so, and how thankful I was that I had agreed to defer to her

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judgment, which I now saw was quite equal to my own.

I need not say that in closing this portion of my Memoirs this was the happiest of all my reminiscences, for it has added to every joy I have ever known since that time.

.
And that was how I broke it out to Granny.

XXXVII. A ROMANCE OF THE NAVY

As I had several relations in the Royal Navy I often spent a few weeks at Gosport, where my uncle, Captain Buckram, lived, at Cold Harbour.

It was during my stay there on one of these occasions that a romantic incident took place, which needs no apology for inserting in these Memoirs.

In a thatched cottage, about two miles from the High Street, lived a naval pensioner with his wife and daughter. The old man was a jobbing gardener ; his wife took in washing, chiefly for the officers, naval and military, who lived in the neighbourhood.

Margery, their daughter, was a beautiful girl of seventeen, tall, fair, and graceful. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find a maiden more beautiful if you searched Hampshire through. There was a simplicity, too, about Margery which increased her charms. If she was aware of her attractions the knowledge inspired her with no thoughts above her position. She assisted in the ironing, mangling, mending, and in addition carried home the linen.

It was on one of these expeditions that the circumstance took place which makes her the subject of my story. It was a summer's evening, about the third week in August, when she was mounting the stone steps of the "India Arms," in the High Street of Gosport, with a basket of clothes. It was the best known inn in the district, and chiefly frequented by officers of both services.

As she was climbing the somewhat steep steps with her basket a young officer was smoking his

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cigar. There was never a brighter specimen of a naval officer. He was a fine, well-built man, with a face as classic as if it had been cut out of marble by one of the ancient sculptors.

As I do not intend to disclose his name, I will call him Brown, and as *Jack* Brown was an old friend of mine, I will give him the name of Jack.

As soon as he saw the blushing damsel struggling up the steps, he seized the basket and whisked it into the hall. It would not have been much more trouble, and would certainly have increased his pleasure, if he had carried Margery too: only that he might have dropped the basket. For a naval officer this was a mighty condescension. The reader does not know what a naval officer is unless he has been in the service, read Marryat, or lived at Portsmouth.

Margery sighed!

Lieutenant Brown, besides being one of the handsomest, was one of the bravest officers in the service; the mouth of a cannon or the mouth of a harbour were the same to him if it was his duty to go there: and the lips of a pretty girl—well, I pass that by for the present.

Margery had a great admiration for naval officers. It was born with her. She was the daughter of a captain of the foretop; and her father's brave stories of a winter evening had stirred her heart and filled her with admiration for the service. Naval officers to her were the picked men of all the world. No wonder that she blushed when Lieutenant Brown helped her with her basket! He was such a manly fellow too! Nor was Brown's admiration for the blushing face more stinted than her blushes. She

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was in great awe at his condescension, which was rather the result of her amazement than her timidity. She was not timid.

Margery's father was a peevish man, although not altogether ill-tempered. Nothing was quite right for him unless it was the ironing; but he loved his daughter with such intensesness that no man had ever dared to approach her; and he vowed a thousand deaths for the man who should take her away. She was never to marry while he lived. Such was the selfishness of paternal love. The man must be shot who attempted to marry her—if shooting were not too good for him.

Mrs. Stevens was of an easier and more natural disposition. Her one wish was that she might live to see Margery comfortably married to one who was worthy of her. Such a man had never yet been seen: and, I believe, by a mother's eyes never can be.

After delivering her linen, she found the lieutenant still on the doorstep. From that moment Brown was a changed man. He was in love! Their eyes once more met, and it would not be untrue to say that there was an interchange in those glances that fixed the fate of these young people for evermore. Such is the miracle called Love.

Old Stevens was leaning over his garden gate, smoking his short pipe and looking in the direction Margery would return. The moon's rays were exactly on a level with his eyes. He thought he heard voices in the far distance, and one of the voices sounded like Margery's. But that could never be, as the other voice was that of a man,

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and Margery would no more think of speaking to a man at that time of night than holding converse with the gentleman in the moon. So thought old Stevens. It was a problem he could not work out all at once, so he refilled his pipe. No sooner had he done so than he heard Margery's well-known laugh. Things began to look serious—at all events old Stevens did. He put up his hand to shade his face from the moon's rays, and then, to his horror, saw two figures, Margery's and that of a man! His pipe fell from his hand and his heart beat against the gate-post.

“By G—!” he cried, “it's Margery!” Could it be possible? The man, too, in a naval uniform! Now was the time for his gun! He turned towards the door.

“He'd see 'un, and he'd tell 'un what was what.” Having armed himself in a sufficiently warlike manner, he rushed out of the garden and shouted, “Margery! Margery!”

“Father?” said the girl, “this—this—is Lieutenant Brown!”

“What then!” he cried. “By —, sir! do I allow lieutenants to walk with my daughter, thinkee? Sheame on you, Margery! have I brought 'ee up for this? Oh, my God! that I should live to see it! In with you—go in, I say. And you, sir—do you call yourself a gentleman! If you are, my daughter is a poor man's daughter, and not for such as thee! I'll be the death of thee. I be a poor man, but my name's as good as thine, and my daughter as much to me as if I'd been the—” Here he burst into tears. After a little while the old man murmured:

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“She’s all to me, sir—” Then he added: “And God damn the man that injures a hair of her head!”

“Amen! with all my heart!” said Lieutenant Brown.

“I’ll shoot thee dead if I kitch thee wi’ her again—take warnin’, sir; officer as thee beest, I’ll shoot ee!—say Amen to that, will ee?”

“There’s a better way, Master Stevens—I am a gentleman——”

“Yes; and that’s what I doant like in ee. Hadst thee been before the mast, thou woudn’est ha’ dared to wrong her. My G—! my daughter’s no wife for a gentleman—what then?——”

“This,” said Brown; “nobody but a gentleman is fit for your daughter. Believe me, Master Stevens, I would tear out my heart if it harboured evil thoughts against her! I have come to speak to you quietly, and I don’t need firearms to say what I have got to say.”

“Father!” sobbed the poor girl, who had returned towards him.

“Go!” he shouted. “I cast thee off!—” and he turned down the little path, went into the house, and slammed the door with such violence that it shook.

II

IT is strange how reason returns after being banished by prejudice and ill-temper, and the mind becomes reconciled to its antipathies. In a few months, after Margery had promised never to see

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her lover again, it was clear even to old Stevens that his daughter was pining away.

All her cheerfulness was gone, and she sat silent for hours, looking at the fire. He was losing her! Even for his selfish love, it had come to the choice of evils—to let her marry, if so be the lieutenant would have her, or die! There might, after all, be some honour in a gentleman—God knows! and knows what is best for all.

To such a reasoning mood was old Stevens reduced when he thought of Margery dying, and of his being left childless. So one day, when he was holding her hand as she sat in her old place on the footstool where she used to sit when she was a child, he asked Margery if she thought Lieutenant Brown was a *true man*.

Margery did not cry; she looked her father straight in the face and said—

“Father, do you think your daughter a *true woman*?”

“Aye, my dear, and God will bless thee for’t; thou couldst be nothing else.”

“Then why fear my attachment to one who is worthy of the highest lady in the land?”

“That’s where it is, Margery; he belongs to a noble family.”

“And is none the less noble for it,” said Margery indignantly. “Do you think he would wrong me? or that your daughter would suffer him to bring disgrace on her parents? Father, *you* wrong *me*, and you wrong him—and—you wrong yourself.”

The old man dropped his head on his breast. He was an obstinate man, whom nothing ever convinced

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against his own ignorance. "He won't marry thee, Margery."

"I have only to say yes," said the girl.

"Then why not say it?" What could Margery answer?

After a silence on both sides the old man said—

"Margery, do thy liking, but blame not thy old father in time to come; it ain't right for a gentleman to love a poor man's child. I have done with thee for good and all;" and the old man went away out into the garden.

As time went on the mother's influence softened Stevens' heart a little, and some prejudices against high birth and rank were partially removed; so that when the ship went on her distant station, arrangements were made for her education, and she left home for the first time, and took up her abode at a very high-class establishment at Cheltenham, which at that time was noted for its gentility, as Kensington is at the present day.

To a girl of Margery's quick intellect study was a mere pastime. She was as smart at learning as Brown was at loving; and learnt in an hour what duller minds would not master in a week. Consequently she soon became an accomplished scholar.

But the thought sometimes crossed her mind as to whether the lieutenant would like her as well if she carried so much learning as he did when she carried her basket of linen. The only cure for this was to throw all her books on etiquette and behaviour into the fire, and not spoil the natural grace of Margery by artificial acquirements. Those who require to be taught by books to be ladies, she thought, will never

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be ladies at all. It was a good idea, and she promptly carried it out.

Shakespeare had the same thought when he denounced painting the lily or gilding refined gold.

In spite of the slowness of time, one autumn evening the —— was sighted off Spithead. Would Jack be true? Aye, true as the dawning light. Not a month passed before Alverstoke church was crowded with naval officers and blue-jackets. It was as pretty a sight as ever was seen, especially Margery, whose tall beautiful figure moved down the little aisle like a queen.

The wonderful part of my story is to come. Lieutenant Brown was heir to a peerage—he was Lord ——, but it does not matter: Stevens knew nothing of it till after the marriage. He had never even *asked* who the man was—more shame for his ill-temper, selfishness, and prejudice.

In a short time the ship was to sail for the West Indies. The happy pair had been on their honeymoon, and were shortly expected. The old people were in their cottage, Stevens smoking at the fireside as usual, while Mrs. Stevens was ironing. I will not say sometimes a tear did not hiss on the iron, nor that old Stevens did not now and then feel a lump in his throat, for neither had become reconciled to the empty corner where Margery used to sit. They were both dreaming of their desolation. Margery was gone! All was gone to them. She was no longer theirs, come when she would. She was a lady!—a terrible thing for a poor family to own. A white elephant would be a godsend to that.

As they were thus bemoaning, there was a sound

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of voices merrily chattering as the visitors came along the pathway: then there was a thundering knock at the door.

Down fell the iron, down went old Stevens' pipe, and up he got. It was not long before Margery and her husband, both beaming with happiness, came in. Kind, brave, and generous was the noble Lieutenant, free from the little vanities that sometimes cause jealousy between classes. He loved Margery, and was never the man to scorn her parents.

"Cheer up, mother," said he as he gave her a hearty kiss. "Don't you like Margery to be happy? I'll take care of her, aye, and bring her to you again as soon as we've tackled these *Mossieus*."

"She be a fine lady now!" said the mother.

"Aye, as fine as *you've* made her. I can't make her finer, nor more a lady, than she ever was before. And there's no lady living that she shall strike her colours to, God bless her! not even my own mother. Come, you must cheer up. We shall cruise together till we come into port, where we must all anchor at last."

But all Jack's words were powerless to wake the old couple. They could but have their doubts, say what he would, and think: "O God! *if she should not be all he needed!*"

Jack rattled on, however, and was so kind in his manner, that they laughed one moment and cried the next. Even Margery had enough to do to keep back her tears; but her love and beautiful face did all that could be done to cheer up the old people, and make them feel that, wherever she might be, she was still their own—never less and never more than

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Margery. So at last they wept for joy, and were able to take leave, in the fullest trust that God would take care of her.

III

“GIVE me your flipper!” said Jack, who was now *Captain* ——, as he took Margery into his dingey. She was clad in a long mackintosh and sou’wester, and down she sat beside him while the blue-jackets swung away at their oars and rowed out to sea to the man-o’-war.

The old couple were on “the Hard” at Portsmouth, and watched the boat through their tears, which seemed as big as waves as they looked through them—sometimes they saw two boats and sometimes none. The mother returned Margery’s farewell salutes, waving her handkerchief as high as she could, so as to show the height of her affection; while old Stevens flourished his big stick, almost as large as a quarter-staff, round his head, and lucky it was for the passers-by that it did not reach any of their heads, for he had by no means the dexterity of a drum-major who performs his operations with such grotesque accuracy.

Of course the “upper circles” of society were much scandalised at the marriage. Everybody pretended to be so lowered in the estimation of the world. What the peerage was coming to nobody knew—at that time! But there were not wanting philosophic minds who declared that the infusion

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of healthy plebeian blood now and again would prevent the aristocracy from becoming imbecile and decrepit.

The old marquis was a man of the world. He had his pride of birth as a matter of course, but true pride never made man a snob. Her ladyship, on the other hand, was inclined to lose her senses. I don't stop to measure the loss, and certainly exculpate her from any blame. Jack was her favourite son, and it was but natural she should have looked forward to a splendid alliance. *Royalty* itself was not beyond her maternal aspirations—and now! well, it was a terrible disappointment, say what you might.

When the marquis saw her weeping, for she was not too high-minded for tears in these circumstances, he said in his bluff way—

“Hang it all, mother, Jack was ever a good judge of horses and women. He's got something worth looking at, I'll swear; and if Jack likes her—so shall I—I'll go and see her; but mind, if he hasn't come to my idea of a woman—damme, I'll never see him again.”

“What a thing life is, to be sure! Who knows the way of a man with a maid?” says the Psalmist.

It was not exactly the Psalmist, but it was near enough surely for a marquis.

When the old gentleman *did* see Margery, he could not restrain himself. He just caught her up in his arms and kissed her half-a-dozen times with the greatest enthusiasm.

“Jack!” he said, “the very thing!” Then he held her a little way off on the lee side, and looked at

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her again. "Why don't you cry?" said he. "What's your name, my pretty—Margery! why, the very name I love best—Margery!" And then he placed in her little hand a beautiful crimson morocco case, and told her she must not look at it until she was out of sight of land. Then he kissed her again and again—gave Jack a hearty slap on the back—called him an undutiful rogue who had nearly made him a widower; but commended his devilish good taste which had made *him* a husband, and so left them, as glad as if he had just got married himself.

When he told the marchioness, she was by no means so enraptured; the girl's beauty was no matter of pride to *her*—she would perhaps have wished her a little plainer, but when the old man said—

"The highest praise, Catherine, I can give her is to say that she is *worthy to be even your son's wife and your daughter*," she was mollified, and made up her mind to gratify her mother's love and her woman's curiosity by going to the ship and seeing her boy before he sailed; she was not sure she would see his wife. Indeed, she half made up her mind never to see her.

The same afternoon she went, and Jack was so delighted that he left his mother and was skipping off to his cabin to fetch Margery.

"Stay!" said the marchioness in her peremptory manner; "you have been very naughty, Jack—and I cannot forgive you!"

"Oh, but the temptation, mother! you don't know the temptation; let that plead for me; our sins must be all measured by our temptations, or we're done for."

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“You foolish boy!”

“Stay till you see her, mother; you will not think I was so foolish after all”—and away he went, returning soon hand-in-hand with his beautiful wife. Right up to her ladyship they came, and the blushing Margery bowed reverently her beautiful head to her mother-in-law, who looked at her with a dignified chill which would have done for a refrigerator, vainly struggling to hide her emotions. All her anger went away after that first glance, and she at once loved Jack’s wife, and taking her hand, kissed her cheek.

After leaving the vessel, she felt she had one positive duty as a lady to perform. There were the old people whom she must see, and if need be comfort. She went, therefore, and with all the ease and unassuming sweetness of a lady, talked to them of their children’s happiness while she expressed their mutual hopes. There was no touch of condescension, the marchioness was a lady; and she talked to them till they were quite happy—for they felt now that their dear Margery was not despised by Jack’s “*relations*.”

It is a strange reminiscence: the marchioness in the old thatched cottage, where was born and brought up one of the noblest women the English aristocracy ever knew.

XXXVIII. A REMINISCENCE OF POOLE
IN DORSETSHIRE: "CRYING DOWN"
A GIRL

I HAD been working hard professionally and politically (for they work in "The House" who only sit and listen), and was taking a good deal of needful rest at the little town of Poole in Dorsetshire.

Wandering one night along the principal street I was startled by the raucous tones of the town-crier, that celebrated deliverer of public speeches, than whom no orator is listened to with greater interest, and who is an example and a lesson to almost all other speakers, for when he opens his mouth he has something to say, which is seldom the case with most of our blatant word-mongers.

The announcement which this public gentleman had to make was that a *Mrs. Bodger* had turned her servant-maid out of doors for misconduct, and warned any and everybody against harbouring her on any pretence whatever—God Save the King!

This was at that time the humane process known as "*Crying down*," and our modern Lauras, Violas, Beatrices, and others of the divine school of servantalism, may congratulate themselves on the fact that they did not administer their patronage to the upper classes at Poole in the year 17—. Let us see what free and merrie England was at that good old time.

It was a bleak winter's night, the sleet was falling, or rather driving along with a fierce and terrible nor'easter. I was almost blinded, but curiosity urged

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me to see what was meant by the announcement, if haply I could approach the important public officer who carried the bell.

Now came a hullabaloo from a neighbouring street, such as I never heard before, except when an infuriated bull broke loose upon the people in Smithfield. At the head of a shouting, cowardly crowd ran a young girl, certainly not more than fifteen years of age, tall, slender, and good-looking, without shawl or bonnet, her long hair driving in the wind.

It was an extraordinary sight! Then out came from a kind of alley a burly, brutal-looking specimen of an undeveloped man, who rushed to the girl, and seizing her skirt, tore it out of the gathers, shouting meanwhile, "Halloa! halloa! my pooty, what's this 'ere?"

"*That there!*" said a voice, which came from a youth who wore a midshipman's uniform; and as he answered the question, delivered such a blow on the face of the inquirer as sent him on his back.

"How d'ye like that?" asked the midshipman. "Tastes like an Englishman's fist, doesn't it?"

The brute growled and cursed, and swore he'd do for the midshipman.

"Look 'ere," he growled, "governor, two on us can play at that geame."

"Not at present," said the middy, as the fellow rose and fell again with another taste of the Englishman's handiwork. This was quite enough for the bully. No one ever knew a cowardly ruffian desire more than two helps at a feast like that, and the participant, being satisfied, hid himself amongst the crowd, and then slunk away to Thieves' Alley again.

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"Now, then, my girl, tell me what's the matter?"

The girl caught the young midshipman's arm, and drooped her face to hide her tears. She was a brave maiden, and determined, if possible, not to cry; nor would she have done so, but for the unexpected kindness of her protector. Such are the curious contradictions of our nature.

"Come with me," said George, "I'll take you to my grandmother's, you'll be safe enough there; but first of all, tell me all about it."

"My mistress, sir, beat me and turned me out of doors!"

"Let's go and see her. Where does she live? I'm on the job, and it suits me down to the ground. What's your name, my girl? Laura! Well, come along, Laura, and we'll have a look at this slave-driver. Just lead along."

It was one of those very elegant houses that had no knocker, for fear of being jarred down; but George's stick gave it a good sounding blow, nevertheless. There was a shuffling of feet within, a little ladylike cough, and an unbarring of the door.

Then appeared a high-nosed lady of thin, shadowy appearance, a swarthy pale face, lips that fitted like a vice, and eyes that glittered like a snake's. Behind her was a diminutive kind of man, with a diminutive spirit. He was evidently the nominal husband of the tall creature, if indeed he was not rather the slave. He came with the lady to protect her in case of need, and stood, therefore, about three yards behind, so as to "take a good run."

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I've come to ask why this young woman has been treated so cruelly——"

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"Cruelly, sir! a pampered, good-for-nothing slut! to be in my house living on the best, and as insolent as you please. And who are *you*, pray, that you are to question me?"

"Oh, I'm a midshipman in his Majesty's ship *Victory*. My name's Gould—George Gould."

The lady was a little cowed, because her poor thing, who called himself her husband, was something in the harbour, but whether under government, except his wife's, I never could ascertain.

"Indeed, sir!" she said; "but if you only knew all that I've had to put up with from that girl ever since I took her out of the workhouse, for she's only an orphan, sir——"

"That's enough," said George, "to entitle her to my services, and by all that's holy, she shall have them, as sure as your name's—— I beg your pardon?"

"*Bodger*," squeaked the harbour official.

"Hold your tongue, sir!" said the lady. "Allow *me* to manage, if you please."

The little "henpecked" drew back, and covered his mouth with his hand, while he uttered a little cough.

"Look, sir," said the lady; "I took that girl out of pure charity, and all she had to do was to keep things going; but she can neither scrub, cook, bake, wash, darn, sew, make puddings, clean the plate" (here the husband coughed again behind his hand), "nor even dress my hair. So I'm to give her four pounds a year, all found, for doing nothing, I suppose. What are things coming to, I wonder? And then I'm to be attacked in this manner——"

"Excuse me, madam; but what I should like to

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know is whether there is anything against the character of the young woman?"

"Highty-tighty! here's a pretty kettle of fish! a midshipman wants a character with a girl he picks up in the street——"

George turned from her with a feeling that could only be subdued by facing the blast of sleet and rain that was blowing with increased violence. So he went at it without further parleying with the good-natured lady.

II

GEORGE'S grandmother was a dear old lady, with a very high cap, and lived in a snug handsome cottage about a mile from Poole. She was a Scotch lady of Presbyterian principles as well as practice. With her lived an unmarried daughter; in fact, her only daughter, George's mother having died in his childhood.

The widower, honest Sampson Gould, George's father, lived at Southsea. He was an exceedingly well-to-do man, engaged in the Newfoundland fisheries. Fond as he was of George, he always allowed him to spend a good deal of his leave at Granny Finlaison's. So that George was in a fair way of becoming the most virtuous midshipman in his Majesty's fleet; and was always spoken of between aunt and granny as a "good Christian young man with very sound principles."

This was the first time George had been "out of an evening" since he had been at granny's, and

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it certainly was an extraordinary and memorable expedition.

The two ladies sitting over the fire were talking about the dreadful night it was, and hoping poor George would not catch cold, and wishing he had not gone out, when all at once bang went the door, and in he came with his handsome, open, cheery face flushed with excitement and the wind.

But what a surprise it was to the ladies to see him leading, almost dragging, into the room, what first looked like a boy, but soon turned out to be a most beautiful girl dressed in George's pea-jacket and his midshipman's cap!

I can no more describe the sensations of the ladies than the feelings of the gentleman in the moon. Whatever was the good Christian young man doing with a girl dressed up in his clothes?

"For shame, George!" cried both in one breath. They were too well-bred to speak, but they did pray "the Lord preserve us," as though burglars had got in. But there stood George in front of them as brazen-faced as if his moral character were not clean gone for ever!

"What is this, George?" asked the grandmother, with a touch of anger in her voice.

"A girl, granny."

Granny put on her spectacles as if she hoped it was not true.

"A girl!" echoed the aunt; "what do you mean by a girl?"

"This sort of thing," said George, laughing; then he kissed them both and said—

"As soon, granny, as you have done your

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examination and given her something to eat and something to put on, I'll tell you all about it— Oh, she's not poison, aunt, you need not draw back ; but do let her warm herself, and find something to put round her."

"What wickedness have you been guilty of?" asked the grandmother. "George—how came she in your clothes?"

"Because I thought I could bear the cold better than Laura!"

"Laura!" exclaimed both.

"Well, then, I must tell you, granny, she was being hunted in the street, and I saved her from the mob. Would you have had me see her killed? Remember she's a human being, and entitled to human sympathy."

"Was she being cried down, my dear?" asked granny.

"And *run* down, and *hunted* down," said George, his indignation returning to his cheeks. "And now, my dear granny, please help her—give her something to warm her, and I should really like a little of your mountain dew before I tell the story."

"Mountain dew," sweet reader, is *Anglicè* for Scotch whisky of a particular species.

The ladies were kind-hearted enough to relieve any one in distress, even were they undeserving, notwithstanding their being so exceedingly proper. I never heard that propriety destroyed a real good nature: and they no sooner heard the story of the girl's ill-treatment than they turned off one fountain of tears and turned on another. Their disgust at George's supposed profligacy in bringing home a

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girl he had picked up, dressed in his clothes, was enough to make them weep tears of shame. *Now* they wept tears of sympathy. Oh, tears: what a number of different "bottles" they are kept in, all labelled to suit the particular occasion.

But if they were sympathetic, what was George? He durst not tell his grandmother, but stood aloof until such time as they were going to send her into the kitchen, and then persuaded them that it might be better for all parties if they allowed her to remain where she was. The clever old ladies understood in a moment, and, "considering all things," as aunt said, she had *better* remain there.

I need not say she became quite an object for George's eyes when his grandmother was using hers in another direction. By degrees they became very interested in the "young creature," she was so lively and intelligent, and, as auntie said, "so good!" She had the making of a very good woman in her. "A little finishing off at a Sunday School," suggested George, "would make quite an angel of her."

But be that argument as it may, the ladies were induced to send her to a very good school at South-sea, where her parentage was not known any more than it was to herself; and, although she nearly broke her heart when George went away, she was grateful for his goodness, and sobbed that she would never forget him as long as she lived; never! George felt similarly inclined.

It was wonderful how she got on at school, and how delighted the grandmother and aunt were with their protégée. It was so nice to think of it: their little *protégée*! George liked to read it in their

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letters:—"You will be glad to hear that our little protégée is growing quite a delightful young woman—*so bright, so intelligent, so affectionate*——"

Yes, he was glad, especially with "the delightful young woman."

They next adopted her between them, half a daughter each, and declared that she was such a darling they would not part with her for the world, and that "if anything happened to them," George's wife, when he married, was to be good to her and make her a home. And thus they cheered themselves, with frequent sighs over the prospect of future events.

George became commander, I will not say in which battle, because I do not wish to disclose secrets; and in the meantime Laura was getting promoted in stature and beauty, so that she was quite the centre of attraction wherever she went, that is to say, where they were not *all* ladies.

But the reader will probably like to know how things looked when Captain —— came home. There was no suspicion, of course, in the minds of either of the ladies "that there was anything wrong." No, no! no suspicion of love—even the spectacles did not see that; until one day, quite unexpectedly, grandmother came into the parlour and caught George and Laura having *one* kiss to see what it was like. George declared that was all!

I never attempt to describe situations; imagination is the best story-teller, so if the reader will kindly follow that up until we come to the argumentative and good advice period of the drama, he will be able to see something which otherwise he would not from these pages.

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Granny and aunt knew so well how to talk to young people that they really had no doubt they would be able to talk him out of his youthful folly.

No sooner, however, were obstacles of a respectably formidable character placed in George's way than with the felicitous agility of a sailor he leaped over them like a kitten over your hands. Of course there was a struggle between his proper sense of duty to his grandmother and his tender feelings towards some one else. But his relations had a joint interest in his future, and the clear right to forbid the banns of any marriage not of their choosing. That was the law of England in their day.

Now came a more powerful obstacle. Laura herself was the great difficulty. She cried and declined his offer. It was impossible, and so she urged all those pretty self-denying arguments which poor maidens use when one very much above their station proposes. But, more than all, there was that feeling of gratitude to the grandmother and aunt which could never, never, no, hardly ever, allow her to accept the hand of the being she loved best on earth. She was sure she could never look them in the face again if she committed so gross a breach of trust.

For their sakes, therefore, she hoped, nay she besought, even while George had one arm round her neck and was holding her face to his in the most unambiguous manner, never to mention it again—no, never—never.

Poor Laura, what distress! Never in the British Isles, perhaps, was there a more affecting picture! But the British Islands were never daunted yet.

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George called the operation I have just described "nailing his colours to the mast," which is the surest mode of any to keep them from being blown away, even by the cannon's mouth. Not that he defied his grandmother ; oh, by no means. She could not last for ever, much as he loved her, and as for his aunt, he had a place to send her to if matters came to the worst, for hers was only a kind of collateral authority which could not be enforced. She was only an imitation lioness without teeth or claws.

And thus matters stood till he sailed away again on board his ship for distant seas.

I must here relate how that George's father owned a fleet of vessels in the Newfoundland trade, and was very rich ; but no more rich than proud of his son's position in the Royal Navy. To see his name continually mentioned in the despatches of that period of England's naval warfare was more glorious to old Mr. Gould than all his money and all his fleet. It was the crowning blessing of his life when George was posted. He was living at Southsea, and it is said that no less than a thousand rockets visited the heavens that night from the common.

But more than this, the old man was soon after knighted—not on account of the rockets, although I have known some gentlemen made baronets and peers for fireworks of a less dazzling and beautiful kind. "It seemed as if the family was picked out for distinction," old Sir George said. Added to all this, Laura lived half her time with the knight, and he was nearly as much in love with her as George, only that it did not show itself in so marked a manner.

The grandmother, of course, was still obdurate,

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because family pride is such a breakwater to the full tide of other people's happiness. If grandmothers, mothers, and aunts can poke their noses into other people's affairs, they will do so, as a rule. As an exception, there are some fairly good people in the world—at times.

But old Sir George made so bold as to say that if George did not pretty soon take her off his hands he would take her off George's. Need I tell more of this part of my reminiscence? What does the dear reader *think* happened?

Seven years passed of the most beautiful married life any couple ever enjoyed in this world. Meanwhile, old Sir George was made a baronet and received other marks of the royal pleasure; and richly did he deserve them, for he was one of the most patriotic and benevolent gentlemen you ever read of. And when in the fulness of time he was gathered to his fathers, he left his son one of the richest men in England, with a wife you would have to go a long way from Southsea to find before you could match for beauty and real goodness of heart.

III

I SHOULD like now, as contrast is the distinguishing feature of these reminiscences, to return to Mrs. Bodger, the "lady born." We may have a tear or two to shed over that elegant person, but I hope they will be tears of comfort.

Mrs. Bodger had contrived to make herself a widow, although quite unintentionally. Poor Bodger

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contracted a pulmonary complaint, which relieved him in time from the further support of a burden that crushed him : and as there was no pension for the lady she took up the profession of a begging letter-writer. I suppose everybody knows that in this line of life the central idea is to make the answer of one benefactor the means of obtaining half-a-dozen others.

Procure an envelope with a ducal coronet or a bishop's mitre on it and you are pretty sure to keep the correspondence alive until you have exhausted the list of the charitably disposed ; especially when you inform the noble-minded that your misfortunes have really arisen from having married beneath you. This is always an excellent card, although it was really the only thing that a gifted lady like Mrs. Bodger *could* do if she married at all.

Imposture, however, is a business, no matter how respectable, one cannot keep up for ever. Mrs. Bodger found this out : her "clients" diminished in number and their contributions in amount. She studied herbs and made pills, but the difficulty was in getting people to take them. She, of course, got into debt, and then into prison ; for in those days a debtor was treated as a thief, except that the thief sometimes had the advantage of being hanged.

At length it was thought that it would be quite a mercy to send her to the workhouse. This form of mercy is cheap. They took her, therefore, in their loving sympathy to the very workhouse from which she had received the orphan who was "cried down." It was her "*right*," and I am glad that one woman got that.

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Gentle reader, do not say this is "made up" merely as a tale. All my stories are founded on fact, and wherever I touch up it is only to bring out some hidden beauty or concealed truth. And here let me warn the sympathetic reader who is saying "poor creature!" that the quality of sympathy, any more than that of mercy, must never be strained; for while some cry "poor creature!" over Mrs. Bodger, I never heard any one of my listeners say "poor thing!" over Laura. There is so much sympathy for the person who comes down, and so very little for those who are kicked when they *are* down.

How ingenious sometimes is Nemesis! Here is the Bodger finding her level at last, and yet so far losing her ladylike head as to believe that she was the lady of a great castle waiting for the return of her lordly baron "from the wars!" She commanded the presence of her steward, who came obedient, and put her into a quiet and desolate room. This was after she had mistaken herself for Queen Elizabeth, and slapped an old woman in the face whom she supposed to be a lady of the bedchamber. What a wonderful thing imagination is! and what a still more wonderful thing "*out of the mind*" is!

In justice, however, to the lady of the bedchamber, I must say she returned her Majesty's blow with interest, "fetching a compass" right round on the left cheek. After this, and a little detention in the solitary room, all her fantastic royalty departed, and Mrs. Bodger stood once more revealed to herself and others in her own proper person. And yet she

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never realised her exact position, but believed she was in what would now be called a "*Hydro*," where she was paying well for accommodation.

There was an unfortunate actress, one of great note, in the same ward, who could not help enjoying the situation by encouraging the Bodger's pretensions to authority, and looked to her, she declared, to redress the grievances of this oppressed community. Although it caused much amusement to the inmates, it was little to the advantage of Mrs. Bodger, who had to submit to much unpleasant treatment before she dimly realised her conduct.

But I am obliged to say that in her senses she was worse than ever, for she raved about the "cursed inequalities of fortune," the cruelty of her position, and the reason of her being in this "disgusting atmosphere," seeing that she was a "lady born" and belonged to the highest families—even "to the quality."

The matron treated her with kindness and did everything she could to soothe her, receiving in return, as a matter of course, the most ladylike abuse and contemptuous insolence that *can* only come of high birth.

"*Calm!*" screamed the lady born; "*you*, the daughter of a greengrocer! *I* know you! Greens, twopence a bunch! *ha! ha! ha!*"

There was an elderly lady in the same ward who had been a governess. She annoyed Mrs. Bodger with her "tameless of spirit," because she would never complain.

"You must have been brought up in a shed," said

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the lady born; "no one with the least pretensions to gentility could endure this abominable place as you do; why don't you show some spirit?"

There was never an answer. Julia Bradshaw (such was her name) accepted the situation, which she had come to by no fault of her own, without a murmur.

One morning the matron, accompanied by a lady, entered the room where Mrs. Bodger was indulging in her favourite amusement of heaping abuse on Miss Bradshaw.

"This," said the matron, "is the sitting-room."

"Sarvant, marm," sneered Mrs. Bodger, with a mock curtsy; "what's the price of greens this morning? I'll take a pennorth of turnip tops, if it please your ladyship."

The matron took no notice, but continued her course, which was once more interrupted by Mrs. Bodger informing her that *her* parents were not greengrocers.

"And you," she added, turning to the lady, "*you* must come sneaking here to gloat over our misery; you may come to it yourself some day, there's plenty of time for it, with all your fine airs and graces."

"My good friend," said the lady, "why do you attack me? I have not harmed you, and if I could help you I am sure I would, with all my heart."

"Help *me*!" sneered Bodger, "do you think I need *charity*? God forbid! I am a *lady*!—do you think I am so degraded as to come here for help? It's a temporary convenience—that is all."

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“You are not degraded by being here,” said the lady; “only our own conduct can degrade us.”

“Indeed!” sneered Bodger; “not degraded by being mixed up with——”

“Better people than yourself,” said Miss Bradshaw, whose spirit had come at last. And she gave her lip such a little tender curl of a sneer that almost took Bodger’s breath away.

“Hush!” interposed the matron; “we should at least spare the feelings of others, if we have none of our own; remember the other inmates.”

“*Other* inmates!” shrieked Mrs. Bodger; “do you dare to insult me by insinuating that I am an *inmate*? I can only tell you that I will shake the dust off my feet on this wretched den of infamy as soon as my affairs are settled; remember I have friends!”

“Whom you little dream of, perchance,” said the stranger; “few know their friends, and fewer appreciate them, I fear.”

“Indeed, madam, and what do you know about it? You are a fine bird, no doubt, if fine feathers can make one, but——”

“Be calm, my dear woman!” said the matron.

“I’ll let you know that I am a *lady*, if you please, madam,” returned Bodger, “not a green daughter—I mean not the daughter——”

“Hush! hush!” said the lady, “we are all of God’s family, live where we may.”

“That’s all very well for a couple of beauties like you, who get the best things on the family table. We are only the dogs under it. God’s family in-

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deed! And what family likeness have *you* got, I wonder? A nice member of the family you are! Whew!" and the poor distracted woman turned contemptuously away.

Not long afterwards the matron sent for her to hear some good news, and when she was in the "presence," as she termed it, was informed by a gentleman, who had the benevolent appearance of a solicitor when he salutes a new client, that she was entitled to a considerable annuity which had been granted to her by a "friend of the family."

"I have no doubt, sir, the same friend who has robbed that family for years and years, kept my property from me, and reduced me to this degraded condition."

The solicitor coughed: the professional cough which is so eloquent of a righteous soul that "beareth all things, and endureth all things" with such placid equanimity. Then he gave another little cough as the lady went raving on, and asked who the wretch was that had done her this infinitesimal act of justice, declaring that there was a great deal more in the family that belonged to her, only that a lot of rascally solicitors had cheated her out of it. She was thankful, however, that there was another world where the debts of this would be paid in full, if there was any truth in religion.

There was much more which it is unnecessary to repeat. Suffice it to say, that all the elegance of the born lady came to her as she peremptorily demanded that a maid should be sent for to pack her boxes.

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I need not inform the reader as to the identity of her benefactor, or who the "friend" was who relieved her from her poverty and degradation.

I last saw the beautiful lady at the great Naval Review off Spithead, on the celebration of her Majesty's marriage.

THE END

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