

THE

IDLER





Mark Twain.



THE IDLER.

FEBRUARY, 1892.

The American Claimant.

By MARK TWAIN.

EXPLANATORY.

THE Colonel Mulberry Sellers here re-introduced to the public is the same person who appeared as *Eschol* Sellers in the first edition of the tale, entitled "The Gilded Age," years ago, and as *Beriah* Sellers in the subsequent editions of the same book, and finally as Mulberry Sellers in the drama played afterward by John T. Raymond.

The name was changed from Eschol to Beriah to accommodate an Eschol Sellers who rose up out of the vasty deeps of uncharted space, and preferred his request—backed by threat of a libel suit—then went his way appeased, and came no more. In the play Beriah had to be dropped to satisfy another member of the race, and Mulberry was substituted in the hope that the objectors would be tired by that time and let it pass unchallenged. So far it has occupied the field in peace; therefore, we chance it again, feeling reasonably safe this time, under shelter of the Statute of Limitations.

MARK TWAIN.

HARTFORD, 1891.



THE WEATHER IN THIS BOOK

NO weather will be found in this book. This is an attempt to pull a book through without weather. It being the first attempt of the kind in fictitious literature, it may prove a failure, but it seemed worth the while of some dare-devil person to try it, and the author was in just the mood. Many a reader who wanted to read a tale through was not able to do it because of the delays on account of the weather. Nothing breaks up an author's progress like having to stop every few pages to fuss up the weather. Thus, it is plain that persistent intrusions of weather are bad for both reader and author. Of course, weather is necessary to a narrative of human experience. That is conceded. But it ought to be put where it will not be in the way; where it will not interrupt the flow of the narrative. And it ought to be the ablest weather that can be had, not ignorant, poor-quality, amateur weather. Weather is a literary speciality, and no untrained hand can turn out a good article of it. The present author can do only a few trifling ordinary kinds of weather, and he can not do those very good. So it

has seemed wisest to borrow such weather as is necessary for the book from qualified and recognised experts—giving credit, of course. This weather will be found over in the back part of the book, out of the way. (See *Appendix*.) The reader is requested to turn over and help himself from time to time as he goes along.

APPENDIX.

WEATHER FOR USE IN THIS BOOK. SELECTED FROM THE BEST AUTHORITIES.

A brief though violent thunderstorm which had raged over the city was passing away ; but still, though the rain had ceased more than an hour before, wild piles of dark and coppery clouds, in which a fierce and rayless glow was labouring, gigantically overhung the grotesque and huddled vista of dwarf houses, while in the distance, sheeting high over the low misty confusion of gables and chimneys, spread a pall of dead leprous blue, suffused with blotches of dull glistening yellow, and with black plague-spots of vapour floating, and faint lightnings crinkling on its surface. Thunder, still muttering in the close and sultry air, kept the scared dwellers in the street within, behind their closed shutters ; and all deserted, cowed, dejected, squalid, like poor, stupid, top-heavy things that had felt the wrath of the summer tempest, stood the drenched structures on either side of the narrow and crooked way, ghastly and picturesque under the giant canopy. Rain dripped wretchedly in slow drops of melancholy sound from their projecting eaves upon the broken flagging, lay there in pools or trickled into the swollen drains, where the fallen torrent sullenly gurgled on its way to the river.

“The Brazen Android.”—W. D. O'Connor.

The fiery mid-March sun a moment hung
Above the bleak Judean wilderness ;
Then darkness swept upon us, and 'twas night.

“Easter Eve at Kerak-Moab.”—Clinton Scollard.

The quick-coming winter twilight was already at hand. Snow was again falling, sifting delicately down, incidentally as it were.

“Felicia.”—Fanny N. D. Murfree.

Merciful heavens ! The whole west, from right to left, blazes up with a fierce light, and next instant the earth reels and quivers with the awful shock of ten thousand batteries of artillery. It is the signal for the fury to spring—for a thousand demons to scream and shriek—for innumerable serpents of fire to writhe and light up the blackness.

Now the rain falls, now the wind is let loose with a terrible shriek, now the lightning is so constant that the eyes burn, and the thunder-claps merge into an awful roar, as did the 800 cannon at Gettysburg. Crash! Crash! Crash! It is the cotton-wood trees falling to earth. Shriek! Shriek! Shriek! It is the demon racing along the plain and uprooting even the blades of grass. Shock! Shock! Shock! It is the fury flinging his fiery bolts into the bosom of the earth.

“The Demon and the Fury.”—M. Quad.

Away up the gorge all diurnal fancies trooped into the wide liberties of endless luminous vistas of azure sunlit mountains beneath the shining azure heavens. The sky, looking down in deep blue placidities, only here and there smote the water to azure emulations of its tint.

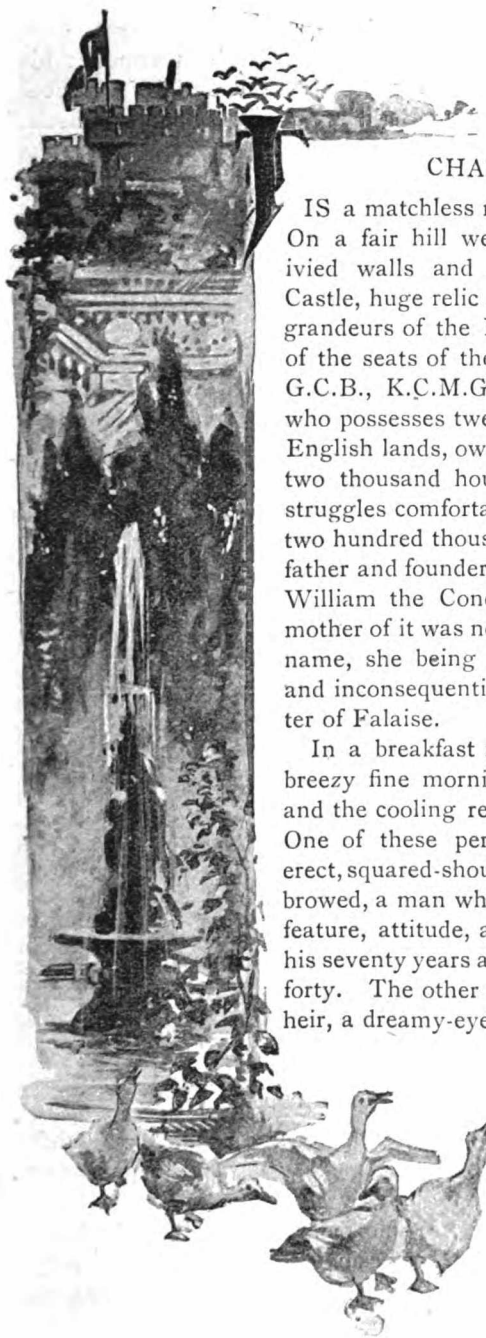
“In the Stranger’s Country.”—Charles Egbert Craddock.

There was every indication of a dust-storm, though the sun still shone brilliantly. The hot wind had become wild and rampant. It was whipping up the sandy coating of the plain in every direction. High in the air were seen whirling spires and cones of sand—a curious effect against the deep blue sky. Below, puffs of sand were breaking out of the plain in every direction, as though the plain were alive with invisible horsemen. These sandy cloudlets were instantly dissipated by the wind; it was the larger clouds that were lifted whole into the air, and the larger clouds of sand were becoming more and more the rule.

Alfred’s eyes, quickly scanning the horizon, descried the roof of the boundary-rider’s hut still gleaming in the sunlight. He remembered the hut well. It could not be farther than four miles, if as much as that, from this point of the track. He also knew these dust-storms of old; Bindarra was notorious for them. Without thinking twice, Alfred put spurs to his horse, and headed for the hut. Before he had ridden half the distance, the detached clouds of sand banded together in one dense whirlwind, and it was only owing to his horse’s instinct that he did not ride wide of the hut altogether, for during the last half-mile he never saw the hut until its outline loomed suddenly over his horse’s ears, and by then the sun was invisible.

“A Bride from the Bush.”

It rained forty days and forty nights.—*Genesis*.



CHAPTER I.

IS a matchless morning in rural England. On a fair hill we see a majestic pile, the ivied walls and towers of Cholmondeley Castle, huge relic and witness of the baronial grandeurs of the Middle Ages. This is one of the seats of the Earl of Rossmore, K.G., G.C.B., K.C.M.G., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., who possesses twenty-two thousand acres of English lands, owns a parish in London with two thousand houses on its lease-roll, and struggles comfortably along on an income of two hundred thousand pounds a year. The father and founder of this proud old line was William the Conqueror his very self; the mother of it was not inventoried in history by name, she being merely a random episode and inconsequential, like the tanner's daughter of Falaise.

In a breakfast room of the castle on this breezy fine morning there are two persons and the cooling remains of a deserted meal. One of these persons is the old lord, tall, erect, squared-shouldered, white-haired, stern-browed, a man who shows character in every feature, attitude, and movement, and carries his seventy years as easily as most men carry forty. The other person is his only son and heir, a dreamy-eyed young fellow, who looks about twenty-six, but is nearer thirty. Candor, kindness, honesty, sincerity, simplicity, modesty—it is easy to see that these are cardinal traits of his character; and so when you have clothed him in the formidable components of his name,

you somehow seem to be contemplating a lamb in armour; his name and style being the Honourable Kirkcudbright Llanover Marjoribanks Sellers Viscount Berkeley, of Cholmondeley Castle, Warwickshire. (Pronounced K'koobry Thlanover Marshbanks Sellers Vycount Barkly, of Chumly Castle, Warriksshr.) He is standing by a great window, in an attitude suggestive of respectful attention to what his father is saying, and equally respectful dissent from the positions and arguments offered. The father walks the floor as he talks, and his talk shows that his temper is away up toward summer heat.

"Soft-spirited as you are, Berkeley, I am quite aware that when you have once made up your mind to do a thing which your ideas of honor and justice require you to do, argument and reason are, for the time being, wasted upon you—yes, and ridicule, persuasion, supplication, and command as well. To my mind——"

"Father, if you will look at it without prejudice, without passion, you must concede that I am not doing a rash thing, a thoughtless, wilful thing, with nothing substantial behind it to justify it. I did not create the American claimant to the earldom of Rossmore; I did not hunt for him, did not find him, did not obtrude him upon your notice. He found himself; injected himself into our lives——"

"And has made mine a purgatory for ten years with his tiresome letters, his wordy reasonings, his acres of tedious evidence——"

"Which you would never read; would never consent to read. Yet, in common fairness, he was entitled to a hearing. That hearing would either prove he was the rightful earl—in which case our course would be plain—or it would prove that he wasn't—in which case our course would be equally plain. I have read his evidences, my lord. I have conned them well; studied them patiently and thoroughly. The chain seems to be complete; no important link wanting. I believe he is the rightful earl."

"And I a usurper—a nameless pauper, a tramp! Consider what you are saying, sir."

"Father, if *he* is the rightful earl, would you, could you—that fact being established—consent to keep his titles and his properties from him a day, an hour, a minute?"

"You are talking nonsense—nonsense—lurid idiotcy! Now, listen to me. I will make a confession—if you wish to call it by that name. I did not read those evidences because I had no

occasion to—I was made familiar with them in the time of this claimant's father and of my own father, forty years ago. This fellow's predecessors have kept mine more or less familiar with them for close upon a hundred and fifty years. The truth is, the rightful heir did go to America with the Fairfax heir, or about the same time—but disappeared somewhere in the wilds of Virginia, got married, and began to breed savages for the claimant market; wrote no letters home; was supposed to be dead; his younger brother softly took possession; presently the American did die, and straightway his eldest product put in his claim—by letter—letter still in existence—and died before the uncle in possession found time—or, maybe, inclination—to answer. The infant son of that eldest product grew up—long interval, you see—and *he* took to writing letters and furnishing evidences. Well, successor after successor has done the same down to the present idiot. It was a succession of paupers; not one of them was ever able to pay his passage to England, or institute suit. The Fairfaxes kept their lordship alive, and so they have never lost it to this day, although they live in Maryland; their friend lost his by his own neglect. You perceive now that the facts in this case bring us to precisely this result; morally the American tramp is rightful earl of Rossmore; legally he has no more right than his dog. There now—are you satisfied?"

"There was a pause; then the son glanced at the crest carved in the great oaken mantel, and said, with a regretful note in his voice—

"Since the introduction of heraldic symbols, the motto of this house has been *Suum cuique*—to every man his own. By your own intrepidly frank confession, my lord, it is become a sarcasm. If Simon Lathers —"

"Keep that exasperating name to yourself! For ten years it has pestered my eye and tortured my ear, till at last my very foot-falls time themselves to the brain-racking rhythm of *Simon Lathers, Simon Lathers, Simon Lathers!* And now, to make its presence in my soul eternal, immortal, imperishable, you have resolved to—to—what is it you have resolved to do?"

"To go to Simon Lathers, in America, and change places with him."

"What? Deliver the reversion of the earldom into his hands?"

"That is my purpose."

"Make this tremendous surrender without even trying the fantastic case in the lords?"

"Ye-s," with hesitation and some embarrassment.

"By all that is amazing, I believe you are insane, my son. See here; have you been training with that ass again—that radical, if you prefer the term, though the words are synonymous—Lord Tanzy of Tollmache?"

The son did not reply, and the old lord continued—

"Yes, you confess. That puppy, that shame to his birth and caste, who holds all hereditary lordships and privilege to be usurpation, all nobility a tinsel sham, all aristocratic institutions a fraud, all inequalities in rank a legalised crime and an infamy, and no bread, honest bread, that a man doesn't earn by his own work—*work*, pah!"—and



A BLACK-BORDERED ENVELOP.

the old patrician brushed imaginary labor-dust from his white hands. "You have come to hold just those opinions yourself, I suppose," he added, with a sneer.

A faint flush in the younger man's cheek told that the shot had hit and hurt, but he answered with dignity—

"I have. I say it without shame—I feel none. And now my

reason for resolving to renounce my heirship without resistance is explained. I wish to retire from what to me is a false existence, a false position, and begin my life over again—begin it right—begin it on the level of mere manhood, unassisted by factitious aids, and succeed or fail by pure merit or the want of it. I will go to America, where all men are equal, and all have an equal chance; I will live or die, sink or swim, win or lose, as just a man—that alone, and not a single helping gaud or fiction back of it."

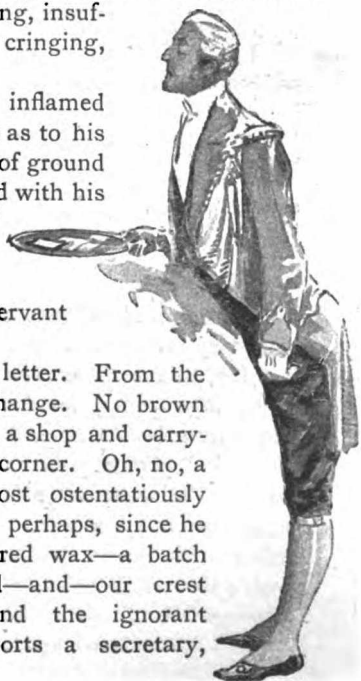
"Hear, hear!" The two men looked at each other steadily in the eye a moment or two, then the elder one added, musingly, "Ab-so-lutely crazy—ab-so-lutely." After another silence, he said, as one who long troubled by clouds detects a ray of sunshine, "Well, there will be one satisfaction; Simon Lathers will come here to enter into his own, and I will drown him in the horse-pond. That poor devil! always so humble in his letters, so pitiful, so deferential; so steeped in reverence for our great line and lofty station; so anxious to placate us, so prayerful for recognition as a relative, a bearer in his veins of our sacred blood—and withal so poor, so needy, so threadbare and paupershod as to raiment, so despised, so laughed at for his silly claimantship by the lewd American scum around him—ach! the vulgar, crawling, insufferable tramp! To read one of his cringing, nauseating letters—well?"

This to a splendid flunkey, all in inflamed plush and buttons and knee-breeches as to his trunk, and a glinting white frost work of ground glass paste as to his head, who stood with his heels together and the upper half of him bent forward, a salver in his hands.

"The letters, my lord."

My lord took them, and the servant disappeared.

"Among the rest, an American letter. From the tramp, of course. Jove, but here's a change. No brown paper envelop this time, filched from a shop and carrying the shop's advertisement in the corner. Oh, no, a proper enough envelop—with a most ostentatiously broad mourning border—for his cat, perhaps, since he was a bachelor—and fastened with red wax—a batch of it as big as a half-crown—and—and—our crest for a seal!—motto and all. And the ignorant sprawling hand is gone; he sports a secretary,



evidently—a secretary with a most confident swing and flourish to his pen. Oh, indeed, our fortunes are improving over there—our meek tramp has undergone a metamorphosis.”

“Read it my lord, please.”

“Yes, this time I will. For the sake of the cat!”

14,012, Sixteenth Street,

Washington, May 2nd.

My Lord,

It is my painful duty to announce to you that the head of our illustrious house is no more—The Right Honourable, The Most Noble, The Most Puissant Simon Lathers, Lord Rossmore, having departed this life—(“Gone at last—this is unspeakably precious news, my son”)—at his seat in the environs of the hamlet of Duffy’s Corners in the grand old State of Arkansas, and his twin brother with him, both being crushed by a log at a smoke-house raising, owing to carelessness on the part of all present, referable to over confidence and gaiety induced by overplus of sour-mash—(“Extolled be sour-mash, whatever that may be, eh, Berkeley?”)—five days ago, with no scion of our ancient race present to close his eyes and inter him with the honors due his historic name and lofty rank—in fact, he is on the ice yet, him and his brother—friends took up a collection for it. But I shall take immediate occasion to have their noble remains shipped to you—(“Great heavens!”)—for interment, with due ceremonies and solemnities, in the family vault or mausoleum of our house. Meantime I shall put up a pair of hatchments on my house front, and you will of course do the same at your several seats.

I have also to remind you that by this sad disaster I, as sole heir, inherit and become seized of all the titles, honors, lands and goods of our lamented relative, and must of necessity, painful as the duty is, shortly require at the bar of the Lords restitution of these dignities and properties, now illegally enjoyed by your titular lordship.

With assurance of my distinguished consideration and warm cousinly regard, I remain,

Your titular lordship’s

Most obedient servant,

MULBERRY SELLERS EARL ROSSMORE.

“Im-mense! Come, this one’s interesting. Why, Berkeley, his breezy impudence is—is—why, it’s colossal, it’s sublime.”

“No, this one doesn’t seem to cringe much.”

“Cringe—why, he doesn’t know the meaning of the word. Hatchments! To commemorate that sniveling tramp and his fraternal duplicate. And he is going to send me the remains. The late Claimant was a fool, but plainly this new one’s a maniac. What a name! *Mulberry Sellers*—there’s music for you. Simon Lathers, Mulberry Sellers—Mulberry Sellers, Simon Lathers. Sounds like machinery workings and churning. Simon Lathers, Mulberry Sel— Are you going?”

“If I have your leave, father.”

The old gentleman stood musing some time, after his son was gone.

This was his thought—

“He is a good boy, and lovable. Let him take his own course—as it would profit nothing to oppose him—make things worse, in fact. My arguments and his aunt’s persuasions have failed; let us see what America can do for us. Let us see what equality and hard times can effect for the mental health of a brain-sick British lord. Going to renounce his lordship and be a man! Yes!”

CHAPTER II.

COLONEL Mulberry Sellers—this was some days before he wrote his letter to Lord Rossmore—was in his “library,” which was his “drawing-room,” and was also his “picture gallery,” and likewise his “workshop.” Sometimes he called it by one of these names, sometimes by another, according to occasion and circumstance. He was constructing what seemed to be some kind of a frail mechanical toy, and was apparently very much interested in his work. He was a white-headed man, now, but otherwise he was as young, alert, buoyant, visionary, and enterprising as ever. His loving old wife sat near by, contentedly knitting and thinking, with a cat asleep in her lap. The room was large, light, and had a comfortable look—in fact, a home-like look—though the furniture was of a humble sort, and not over-abundant, and the knick-knacks and things that go to adorn a living-room not plenty and not costly. But there were natural flowers, and there was an abstract and unclassifiable something about the place which betrayed the presence in the house of somebody with a happy taste and an effective touch.

Even the deadly chromos on the walls were somehow without offence; in fact, they seemed to belong there, and to add an attraction to the room—a fascination, anyway; for whoever got his eye on one of them was like to gaze and suffer till he died—you have seen that kind of pictures. Some of these terrors were landscapes, some libeled the sea, some were ostensible portraits, all were crimes. All the portraits were recognizable as dead Americans of distinction, and yet, through labeling, added

by a daring hand, they were all doing duty here as "Earls of Rossmore." The newest one had left the works as Andrew



LIKEWISE HIS WORKSHOP.

Jackson, but was doing its best now as "Simon Lathers Lord Rossmore, Present Earl." On one wall was a cheap old rail-

road map of Warwickshire. This had been newly labeled "The Rossmore Estates." On the opposite wall was another map, and this was the most imposing decoration of the establishment, and the first to catch a stranger's attention, because of its great size. It had once borne simply the title SIBERIA; but now the word "FUTURE" had been written in front of that word. There were other additions, in red ink—many cities, with great populations set down, scattered over the vast country at points where neither cities nor populations exist to-day. One of these cities, with population placed at 1,500,000, bore the name "Libertyorloffskoizalinski," and there was a still more populous one, centrally located and marked "Capitol," which bore the name "Freedomslovnovich."

The mansion—the Colonel's usual name for the house—was a rickety old two-story frame of considerable size, which had been painted, some time or other, but had nearly forgotten it. It was away out in the ragged edge of Washington, and had once been somebody's country place. It had a neglected yard around it, with a paling fence that needed straightening up, in places, and a gate that would stay shut. By the door-post were several modest tin signs. "Col. Mulberry Sellers, Attorney-at-Law and Claim Agent," was the principal one. One learned from the others that the Colonel was a Materializer, a Hypnotizer, a Mind-cure dabbler, and so on. For he was a man who could always find things to do.

A white-headed negro man, with spectacles and damaged white cotton gloves, appeared in the presence, made a stately obeisance, and announced—

"Marse Washington Hawkins, suh."

"Great Scott! Show him in, Dan'l, show him in."



The Colonel and his wife were on their feet in a moment, and the next moment were joyfully wringing the hands of a stoutish, discouraged-looking man, whose general aspect suggested that he was fifty years old, but whose hair swore to a hundred.

"Well, well, well, Washington, my boy, it is good to look at you again. Sit down, sit down, and make yourself at home. There now—why you look perfectly natural; ageing a little, just a little, but you'd have known him anywhere, wouldn't you, Polly?"



"Oh, yes, Berry, he's *just* like his pa would have looked if he'd lived. Dear, dear, where have you dropped from? Let me see, how long is it since—"

"I should say it's all of fifteen years, Mrs. Sellers."

"Well, well, how time does get away with us. Yes, and oh, the changes that—"

There was a sudden catch of her voice and a trembling of the lip, the men waiting reverently for her to get command of herself and go on; but, after a little struggle, she turned away with her

apron to her eyes, and softly disappeared.

"Seeing you made her think of the children, poor thing—dear, dear, they're all dead but the youngest. But banish care, it's no time for it now—on with the dance, let joy

be unconfined, is my motto—whether there's any dance to dance or

any joy to unconfine, you'll be the healthier for it every time—every time, Washington—it's my experience, and I've seen a good deal of this world. Come, where have you disappeared to all these years, and are you from there now, or where are you from?"

"I don't quite think you would ever guess, Colonel. Cherokee Strip."

"My land!"

"Sure as you live."

"You can't mean it. Actually *living* out there?"

"Well, yes, if a body may call it that; though it's a pretty strong term for 'dobies and jackass rabbits, boiled beans and slap-jacks, depression, withered hopes, poverty in all its varieties——"

"Louise out there?"

"Yes, and the children."

"Out there now?"

"Yes, I couldn't afford to bring them with me."

"Oh, I see—you had to come—claim against the Government. Make yourself perfectly easy—I'll take care of that."

"But it isn't a claim against the Government."

"No? Want to be a postmaster? *That's* all right. Leave it to me. I'll fix it."

"But it isn't postmaster—you're all astray yet."

"Well, good gracious, Washington, why don't you come out and tell me what it is? What do you want to be so reserved and distrustful with an old friend like me, for? Don't you reckon I can keep a se——"

"There's no secret about it—you merely don't give me a chance to——"

"Now look here, old friend, I know the human race; and I know that when a man comes to Washington, I don't care if it's from heaven, let alone Cherokee Strip, it's because he *wants* something. And I know that as a rule he's not going to get it; that he'll stay and try for another thing and won't get that; the same luck with the next and the next and the next; and keeps on till he strikes bottom, and is too poor and ashamed to go back, even to Cherokee Strip; and at last his heart breaks and they take up a collection and bury him. There—don't interrupt me, I know what I'm talking about. Happy and prosperous in the Far West, wasn't I? *You* know that. Principal citizen of Hawkeye, looked up to by everybody, kind of an autocrat, actually a kind of an autocrat, Washington. Well, nothing would do but I must go as Minister to St. James's, the Governor and everybody insisting, you know,

and so at last I consented—no getting out of it, *had* to do it, so here I came. *A day too late*, Washington. Think of that—what little things change the world's history—yes, sir, the place had been filled. Well, there I was, you see. I offered to compromise and go to Paris. The President was very sorry and all that, but that place, you see, didn't belong to the West, so there I was again. There was no help for it, so I had to stoop a little—we all reach the day some time or other when we've got to do that, Washington, and it's not a bad thing for us, either, take it by and large all around—I had to stoop a little and offer to take Constantinople, Washington, consider this—for it's perfectly true—within a month I *asked* for China; within another month I *begged* for Japan; one year later I was away down, down, down, supplicating with tears and anguish for the bottom office in the gift of the Government of the United States—Flint-picker in the cellars of the War Department. And by George I didn't get it."

"Flint-picker?"

"Yes. Office established in the time of the Revolution, last century. The musket-flints for the military posts were supplied from the capitol. They do it yet; for although the flint-arm has gone out and the forts have tumbled down, the decree hasn't been repealed—been overlooked and forgotten, you see—and so the vacancies where old Ticonderoga and others used to stand, still get their six quarts of gun-flints a year just the same."

Washington said musingly after a pause:

"How strange it seems—to start for Minister to England at twenty thousand a year and fail for flint-picker at——"

"Three dollars a week. It's human life, Washington—just an epitome of human ambition, and struggle and the outcome; you aim for the palace and get drowned in the sewer."

There was another meditative silence. Then Washington said, with earnest compassion in his voice—

"And so, after coming here, against your inclination, to satisfy your sense of patriotic duty and appease a selfish public clamor, you get absolutely nothing for it."

"Nothing?" The Colonel had to get up and stand, to get room for his amazement to expand. "*Nothing*, Washington? I ask you this: to be a Perpetual Member and the *only* Perpetual

Member of a Diplomatic Body accredited to the greatest country on earth—do you call that nothing?"

It was Washington's turn to be amazed. He was stricken dumb; but the wide-eyed wonder, the reverent admiration expressed in his face were more eloquent than any words could have been. The Colonel's wounded spirit was healed and he resumed his seat, pleased and content. He leaned forward and said, impressively:

"What was due to a man who had become for ever conspicuous by an experience without precedent in the history of the world?—a man made permanently and diplomatically sacred, so to speak, by having been connected, temporarily through solicitation, with every single diplomatic post in the roster of this government, from Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James all the way down to Consul to a guano rock in the Straits of Sunda—salary payable in guano—which disappeared by volcanic convulsion the day before they got down to my name in the list of applicants. Certainly something august enough to be answerable

to the size of this unique and memorable experience was my due, and I got it. By the common voice of this community, by acclamation of the people, that mighty utterance which brushes aside laws and legislation, and from whose decrees there is no appeal, I was named Perpetual Member of the Diplomatic Body, representing the multifarious sovereignties and civilizations of the globe near the republican court of the United States of America. And they brought me home with a torchlight procession.'



THE COLONEL.

"It is wonderful, Colonel—simply wonderful."

"It's the loftiest official position in the whole earth."

"I should think so—and the most commanding."

"You have named the word. Think of it. I frown, and there is war; I smile, and contending nations lay down their arms."

"It is awful. The responsibility, I mean."

"It is nothing. Responsibility is no burden to me; I am used to it; have always been used to it."

"And the work—the work! Do you have to attend all the sittings?"

"Who, I? Does the emperor of Russia attend the conclaves of the governors of the provinces? He sits at home, and indicates his pleasure."

Washington was silent a moment, then a deep sigh escaped him.

"How proud I was an hour ago; how paltry seems my little promotion now! Colonel, the reason I came to Washington is—I am Congressional Delegate from Cherokee Strip!"

The Colonel sprang to his feet and broke out with prodigious enthusiasm:

"Give me your hand, my boy—this is immense news! I congratulate you with all my heart. My prophecies stand confirmed. I always said it was in you. I always said you were born for high distinction and would achieve it. You ask Polly if I didn't."

Washington was dazed by this most unexpected demonstration.

Why, Colonel, there's nothing *to* it. That little, narrow, desolate, unpeopled, oblong streak of grass and gravel, lost in the remote wastes of the vast continent—why, it's like representing a billiard table—a discarded one."

"Tut-tut, it's a great, it's a staving preferment, and just opulent with influence here."

"Shucks, Colonel, I haven't even a vote."

"That's nothing, you can make speeches."

"No, I can't. The population only two hundred——"

"That's all right, that's all right——"

"And they hadn't any right to elect me; we're not even a territory, there's no Organic Act, the government hasn't any official knowledge of us whatever."

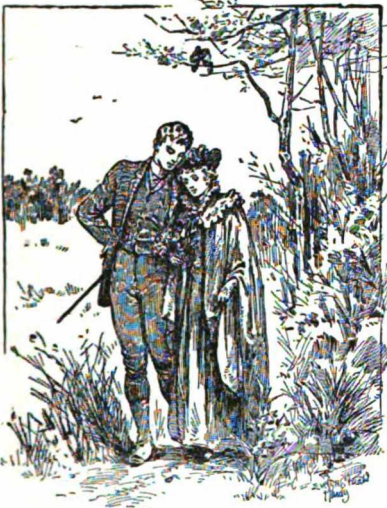
"Never mind about that; I'll fix that. I'll rush the thing through, I'll get you organized in no time."

Will you, Colonel?—it's *too* good of you; but it's just your

old sterling self, the same old, ever-faithful friend," and the grateful tears welled up in Washington's eyes.

"It's just as good as done, my boy, just as good as done. Shake hands. We'll hitch teams together, you and I, and we'll make things hum!"

(TO BE CONTINUED).



FEBRUARY

THE IDEAL.

Lovers' pairing time is this,
And the air is sweet with
love.

What though summer skies we
miss?

Lovers' pairing time is this.
Love makes summer with a
kiss,

Though the clouds be thick
above:

Lovers' pairing time is this,
And the air is sweet with
love.

THE REAL.

The bards are all raving, of
course,

Of billing and cooing, and
such.

Though the rain beats with
pitiless force,

The bards are all raving, of
course.

While I'm chained to my
bedroom, and hoarse,
And Catarrh has me close
in his clutch,

The bards are all raving, of
course,

Of billing and cooing, and
such.



H. GORING.



Dead leaves whisper

DEAD leaves whisper," so they show it,
Chalked upon a London wall.
O my unknown friend and poet,
If we could but know it all.

Know, say, from what tree they showered,
On what garden path beneath,
Of its beauty then disflowered
In the days of mist and death.

Yes, and you yourself to-day, friend,
Have you ceased that sound to hear;
Or still pressing on your way, friend,
Is it yet within your ear?

"Dead leaves whisper" in strange places,
Whisper in a city square,
Whisper where no faintest trace is
Of the summer once so fair.

And we listen, and we ponder
Of the days before they fell,
When the world by summer's wonder
Was more fair than man could tell.

Dead leaves in the twilight glistening,
Dead leaves shivering in the breeze—
What pale ghost-souls may be listening
'Neath the desolated trees!

"Dead leaves whisper." Right, my brother!
Whisper down life's tragic ways.
Will they whisper in some other
Life of unconjectured days?

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.



BY ANDREW LANG.

TO dream over literary projects, Balzac says, is like "smoking enchanted cigarettes," but when we try to tackle our projects, to make them real, the enchantment disappears. We have to till the soil, to sow the seed, to gather the leaves, and then the cigarettes must be manufactured, while there may be no market for them after all. Probably most people have enjoyed the fragrance of these enchanted cigarettes, and have brooded over much which they will never put on paper. Here are some of "the ashes of the weeds of my delight" — memories of romances whereof no single line is written, or is likely to be written.

Of my earliest novel I remember but little. I know there had been a wreck, and that the villain, who was believed to be drowned, came home and made himself disagreeable. I know that the heroine's mouth was not "too large for regular beauty." In that respect she was original. All heroines are "muckle-mou'd." I know not why. It is expected of them. I know she was melancholy and merry; it would not surprise me to learn that she drowned herself in a canoe. But the villain never descended to crime, the first lover would



THERE HAD BEEN A WRECK.



not fall in love, the heroine's own affections were provokingly disengaged, and the whole affair came to a dead stop for want of a plot. Perhaps, considering modern canons of fiction, this might have been a very successful novel. It was entirely devoid of incident or interest, and,

consequently, was a good deal like real life, as real life appears to many cultivated authors. On the other hand, all the characters were



flippant. This would never have done, and I do not regret novel No. 1, which had not even a name.

The second story had a plot, quantities of plot, nothing but plot. It was to have been written in collaboration with a very great novelist, who, as far as we went, confined himself to making objections. This novel was stopped (not that my friend would ever have gone on) by *Called Back*, which anticipated part of the idea. The story was entitled *Where is Rose?* and the motto was

Rosa quo locorum

Sera moratur.

The characters were—(1.) Rose, a young lady of quality. (2.) The Russian Princess, her friend (need I add that, to meet a public demand, *her* name was Vera?) (3.) Young man engaged to Rose. (4.) Charles, his friend. (5.) An enterprising person named "The Whiteley of Crime." The rest were detectives, old ladies, mob, and a wealthy young Colonial larrikin. Neither my friend nor I was fond of describing love scenes, so we made the heroine disappear in the second chapter, and she never turned up again till chapter

the last. After playing in a comedy at the house of an Earl, Rose and Vera entered her brougham. Immediately afterwards, the brougham drew up, empty, at the Earl's door. Where *was* Rose? Traces of her were found, of all places, in the Haunted House in Berkeley Square, which is not haunted any longer. Beyond that, Rose was long sought in vain.

This, briefly, is what had occurred. A Russian detective "wanted" Vera, who, to be sure, was a Nihilist. To catch Vera he made an alliance with "The Whiteley of Crime." This gentleman was the Universal Provider of iniquity. He would destroy a Parish Register, or forge a will, or crack a crib, or break up a meeting, or burn a house, or kidnap a rightful heir, or manage a personation, or issue amateur bank notes, or what you please. Thinking to kill two birds with one stone, he carried off Rose for her diamonds and Vera for his friend, the Moscovite official, lodging them both in the Haunted House. But there he and the Russian came to blows, and, in the confusion, Vera made her escape, while Rose was conveyed, as Vera, to Siberia. Not knowing how to dispose of her, the Russian police consigned her to a nunnery at the mouth of the Obi. Her lover found her hiding place, and got a friendly nun to give her some narcotic known to the Samoyeds. It was the old *truc* of the Friar in *Romeo and Juliet*. At the mouth of the Obi they do not bury the dead, but lay them down on platforms in the open air. Rose was picked up there by her lover (accompanied by a chaperon, of course), and was got on board a steam yacht, and all went well. I forget what happened to The Whiteley of Crime. After him I still rather hanker—he was a humorous ruffian. Something could be made of The Whiteley of Crime. "What offers?" as the people say in the *Exchange and Mart*.

In yet another romance, a gentleman takes his friend, in a country place, to see his betrothed. The friend, who had only come into the neighbourhood that day, is found dead, next morning, hanging to a tree. Gipsies and others are suspected. But the lover was the murderer. He had been a priest, in South America, and the



IS FOUND DEAD.

lady was a Catholic. Now the friend fell in love with the lady at first sight, on being introduced to her by the lover. As the two men walked home, the friend threatened to reveal the lover's secret, his tonsure, which would be fatal to his hopes. They quarrelled, parted, and the ex-priest lassoed his friend. The motive, I think, is an original one, and not likely to occur to the first comer. The inventor is open to offers.

The next novel, based on a dream, was called *In Search of Qrart*.



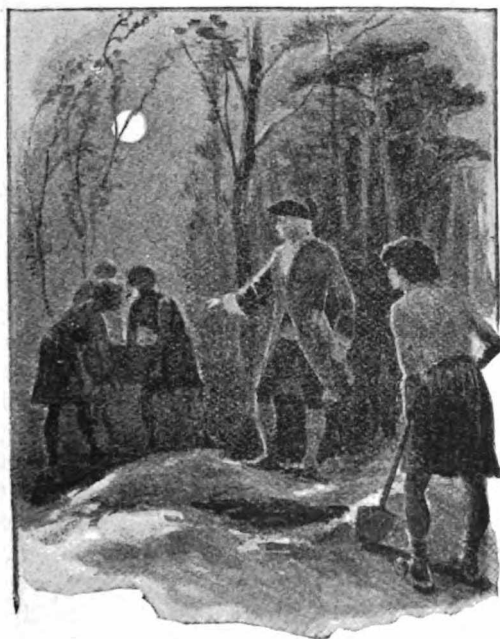
THE BRIDE OF A GOD.

What is *Qrart*? I decline to divulge this secret beyond saying that *Qrart* was a product of the civilisation which now sleeps under the snows of the pole. It was an article of the utmost value to humanity. Farther I do not intend to commit myself. The *Bride of a God* was one of the characters.

The next novel is, at present, my favourite cigarette. The scene is partly in Greece, partly at the Parthian Court, about 80—60 B.C. Crassus is the villain. The heroine was an actress in one of the wandering Greek companies, splendid strollers, who played at the Indian and Asiatic Courts. The story ends with the representation of the *Bacchæ*, in Parthia. The head of Pentheus is carried by one of the *Bacchæ* in that drama. Behold, it is not a mask, but *the head of Crassus*, and thus conveys the first news of the Roman defeat. Obviously, this is a novel that needs a great deal of preliminary study, as much, indeed, as *Salamambo*.

Another story will deal with the Icelandic discoverers of America. Mr. Kipling, however, has taken the wind out of its sails with his sketch, "The Finest Story in the World." There are all the marvels and portents of the *Eyrbyggja Saga* to draw upon, there are Skraelings to fight, and why should not Karlsefni's son kill the last Mastodon, and, as Quetzalcoatl, be the white-bearded god of the Aztecs? After that a romance on the intrigues to make Charles Edward King of Poland sounds commonplace. But much might be made of that, too, if the right man took it in

hand. Believe me, there are plenty of stories left, waiting for the man who can tell them. Thus, what became of the 20,000 golden



BURIED AFTER CULLODEN.

louis that Murray of Broughton buried after Culloden? Mr. Louis Stevenson, where is that mass of bullion? Did Allan Breck know where it was hidden? I have said it before, but I say it again, if I were king I would keep court officials, Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Kipling, and others, to tell me my own stories. I know the kind of thing which I like, from the discovery of *Qrart* to that or the French gold in the burn, or in "the wood by the loch side" that Murray of Broughton mentions.

Another cigarette I have, the adventures of a Poet, a Poet born in a Puritan village of Massachusetts about 1670. Hawthorne could have told me my story, and how my friend was driven into the wilderness and lived among the Red Men. I think he was killed in an attempt to warn his countrymen of an Indian raid; I think his MSS. stories have a bullet-hole through them, and blood on the leaves. They were in Carew's best manner, these poems.



KILLED IN AN INDIAN RAID.

Another tale Hawthorne might have told me, the tale of an excellent man, whose very virtues, by some baneful moral chemistry, corrupt and ruin the people with whom he comes in contact. I do not mean by goading them into the opposite extremes, but rather something like a moral *jettatura*. This needs a great deal of subtlety, and what is to become of the hero? Is he to plunge into vice till everybody is virtuous again? It wants working out. I have omitted, after all, a schoolboy historical romance, explaining *why Queen Elizabeth was never Married*. A

Scotch paper offered a prize for a story of Queen Mary Stuart's reign. I did not get the prize—perhaps, did not deserve it. You must know that Queen Elizabeth was singularly like Darnley in personal appearance. What so natural as that, disguised as a knight, her Majesty should come spying about the Court of Holyrood. Darnley sees her walking out of Queen Mary's room, he thinks her an hallucination, discovers that she is real, challenges her, and they fight at Faldonside, by the Tweed, Shakespeare holding Elizabeth's horse. Elizabeth is wounded, and is carried to the Kirk of Field, and laid in Darnley's chamber, while Darnley makes love to my rural heroine, the lady of Fernilee, a Kerr. That night Bothwell blows up the Kirk of Field, Elizabeth and all. Darnley has only one resource. In the riding habit of the rural heroine he flees across the Border, and, for the rest of his life, personates Queen Elizabeth. That is why Elizabeth hated Mary so bitterly (on account of the Kirk of Field affair), and *that is why Queen Elizabeth was never married*. Side-lights on Shakespeare's Sonnets were obviously cast. The young man whom Shakespeare admired so, and urged to marry, was—Darnley. This romance did not get the prize, but I am conceited enough to think it deserved an honourable mention. Enough of my own cigarettes. But there are others of a more fragrant weed. Who will end

for me the novel of which Byron only wrote a chapter ; who, as Bulwer Lytton is dead ? A finer opening, one more mysteriously stirring, you shall nowhere read. And the novel in letters, which Scott began in 1819, who shall finish it, or tell us what he did with his fair Venetian courtesan, a character so much out of Sir Walter's way ? He tossed it aside, it was but an enchanted cigarette, and gave us *The Fortunes of Nigel* in its place. I want both. We cannot call up those who "left half told" these stories. In a happier world we shall listen to their endings, and all our dreams shall be coherent and concluded. Meanwhile, without trouble, and expense, and disappointment, and reviews, we can all smoke our cigarettes of fairyland. Would that many people were content to smoke them peacefully, and did not rush on pen, paper and ink !



The
King.



ART & the KING.

Being a Deplorable Truth set forth in
the Pleasant Disguize of a Parbole,
with many Curious Observations which may be not
unworthie Perusall, either for Reflection or Entertainment.

NOVV there w^{ld} in a certaine
Lande a mightie King (or Tyrant),
who was call'd *Mammon*; & he had
Swaye ouer a vast King-dome both far

& wide; and hys Power was as the Power of the Gods, or (to speak it more
justly), of the Diuels. And in the Capital of hys King-dome hee set vp a
great Idol, the w^{ch} hee nam'd *Demos*, (which is to say, the *Publick*), &
the Image of it was fear-full to look vpon,
fashion'd in hard Stone, but the Head was
of Wood. This the King put vp in the
Temple of the Gods; euen in the Holie
Shrine. Then straight-waie he made
Proclamation thorough hys whole Countrey,
with great Shew & Circumstance, that
all hys Svbietts shoulde worship the Im-
age he had set vp, if they wolde scape hys
Choler. So from euerie part of the Lande,
both neer & a far, a great Trovpe of People
assembled, as the King had inioyn'd; there was
euerie sort, *Bishop*, & *Marchant*, & *Iudge*,
& *Souldier*, & *Clerk*, & *States-Man*, &
Scho-



The Idol.

Scholer, & euerie Kind of Ingenious Men; & each, whether be-cavse he feared the King hys Maïestie, or that the awe-full Visage of the Idol made hym to quake, bended hys Knee before it, & worship't; the most part willinglye, of theirowne chusing, but some few with an ill Relish; & onely for their safetie sake were perswaded. ¶ And the Painters of Pictures

al-so came, & lay'd Offerings before Demos, which were Tablets, paynted, bearing the deuise of a Girl childe & a litle Dogge, for these were esteem'd to be pleasing to the Idol. And (be-like) it was so in-deed; for here-vpon did the Figure nod its Head up & down, & the Portent was interpreted for a happie Token. Then came they



The Painter's Offering



that comptrolled the Play-Hovses & Publick Spectacles of the Citie, & all the Practicers of the Drammatick or Theatral & Scenick Arts in whatsoeuer waye; making a braue Parade, with much Imbellishment & Pageantrye. Bvt 'twas a curious thinge to mark, how that vpon the Backe of euerye *Intendant* (or *Manager*)

of a Theatre, there rode (sitting a-stride of hys Neck), a kinde of Familiar or *Demon*, of verie grim & austere haviour, who held hym that hee be-strode in Toyls or Chaines, & goaded hym with Pricks, & did not cease to plie hym all-whyles with tedious Discovrse. And these *Demons* bore each vpon hys brest the legende. Member of the Councill of the Comtpe;

The Comtpe Counciller



The Director of the Play-hovse

So the *Intendants* of the Play-Hovses came & did Hommage to the Idol, crawling prone before it & praying a-lowde to it, & kissing it's Feet, & fvrtther-more they anointed it with much store of *Butyrum*, or Butter, & a sort of soft Soape, according to the Custome & Rybrick of their kinde, & Demos (the Idol) agen nodded it's Head, w^{ch} (mark you) was of Wwoode, for a sign of Complaisavnce. And with them came the Actours, reading with lovde cryes certaine imprinted writings call'd *Pars* and *Not.*

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Notices, each one concerning hymself & the Vertues of hys Presentment of this Part or that, And others came too, that gaue Spectacles in a strange kind of Theaters call'd *The Halls*, but these were not nam'd Actovrs nor Mimes, but *Artiffes* (w^{ch} is a very detestable word, translated out of *France*.) They were of many & diuers sorts, somthing



Iels graue then the Actovrs, & array'd in more fantastickal stile; some there were that sang strange Ketches or Songes (the most part-express'd in iests, but some emptie of aught saue Dulnelles), & others that danc'd *Ballets*, or enacted Scenes of *Burlesk*; with *Tumblers*, & *Clownes*, & *Buffs*, & so. And to these more then the others the Image nodded its Head for token of fauour. With them were also the *Intendants* of those *Halls* I spoke of, euerie one loaden on hys Backe with a Comtye Conncillovr of yet more sower complexion then they who harass'd the Play-House Directovrs: so that the *Intendants* intreated them saying Leau to goad vs a while, *Masters*, that wee may the easilier do reuerence to the God that ovr King has set vp, for loe wee are tyr'd & ake; & ovr Backes are sore. But the Conncillours answer'd Nay wee will keep you fast bound, lest you fall into error & vnseemlinesse w^{ch} shal chock ovr God *Denas*; but for your Backes, we will examine them, to see if in-deed they be sore.

¶ Now it befel that among the Concourse there stode one a-part, weeping, whiles the worship of the Image went forward; whose Beautie was aboue all the Beauties of that lande, though her face was vail'd from sight. And when it was her turn to pass before the Idol to make obeisance, shee stay'd erect, as one in anger, & look'd vpon the Monster, which did not nod it's Head, but shook it side-waies, like one that does not vnderstand.

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Nei-



Neither woulde shee bend the knee nor worship, byt strode neer to it, & strook it vpon the Head, so that it fell from it's throne; & set her heel vpon it's throat Then went vp a mightye buz of anger from them that stode arovn'd, & each man ask'd hys neighbor, Who is this that flovt's the God that has bin giuen vs to adore? Lets bind her & bring her before the King. But the Woman slept ovt before them, & sayd I wil go before your King; who is he? And they told her, *Mammon*; but her voice was strange to them, nor wolde shee discover her face. And when shee stode before the King, & the Chiefs had told hym the euyl thing shee had done, how she woulde no-ysse bend before the Idol, but had contemned & smitten it, so that it had fall'n & was a Wrack, he was verie wroth, & demanded her name, that hee might pvnish her. And she answer'd hym, I am a stranger, & a Trauailer in this Lande; but I too am a Ruler, & my Kingdom is greater then your's. Some call me *Beau-tye*, & some *Truth*, & some *Art*. I saw your Idol,

that it was false & vain, & I ouer-threw it. But pvnish mee you can-not, nor dant mee; neither wil I reueal my face to you. And the King was more then euer cholerick, & sayd I do not know you, but you shal smart wel for this defiance & scoffing, though you be a Queen. And he commanded hys seruants to teare the Vail from her face. And manie tryed to do soe, & bind her captiue, & make her bow before the King, yet coulde not. And she pass't through the midst of them like a Flame, & spreadde wings for her owne Mountaines. And the People did not understand; but fel abov't a-making Restauration of *Demos* the Idol. And so fare wel.



The Stranger & the fall'n Idol.



*Parabolam istam veridicus narravit Iohannes Bernardus
Perdix et imagines quosdam expressit lineavit*

LONDON, Emprinted for Chatto and Wind's, & are to be sold by them at their house in Piccadilly, hard by S. James hys Chvrch. M^occcxci.

Neither woulde shee bend the knee nor worship, bvt strode neer to it, & strook it vpon the Head, so that it fell from it's throne; & set her hael vpon it's throat Then went vp a mightye buzz of anger from them that stode arovn'd. & each man ask'd hys neighbovr, Who is this that slovts the God that has bin giuen vs to adore? Lets bind her & bring her before the King. Bvt the Woman stept ovt before them, & sayd I wil go before your King; who is he? And they told her, *Mammon*; bvt her voice was strange to them, nor wolde shee discover her face And when shee stode before the King, & the Chiefs had told hym the euyl thing thee had done, how she woulde no-ysse bend before the Idol, bvt had contemned & smitten it, so that it had fal'n & was a Wrack, he was verie wroth, & demanded her name, that hee might pvnish her And she answer'd hym, I am a stranger, & a Trauailer in this Lande; bvt I too am a Ruler, & my Kingdom is greater then your's. Some call me *Beauty*, & some *Truth*, & some *Art* I saw your Idol, that it was false & vain, & I ouer-threw it Bvt pvnish mee you can-not, nor dant mee; neither wil I reueal my face to you. And the King was more then euer cholerick, & sayd I do not know you, bvt you shal smart wel for this desiance & scoffing, though you be a *Queen*. And he commanded hys seruants to teare the Vail from her face. And manie tryed to do soe, & bind her captiue, & make her bow before the King, yet coulde not. And shee pass't through the midst of them like a Flame, & spreadde wings for her owne Mountaines. And the People did not understand; bvt fel about a-making Restauration of *Demos* the Idol. And so fare wel.



The Stranger & the fal'n Idol.



*Parabolam istam ridiculus narravit Johannes Bernardus
Perdix et imagines quasdam excuspidas lineauit*

LONDON, Emprinted for *Chatto and Wind's*, &
are to be sold by them at their house in *Piccadilly*,
hard by *S. James* hys Chvrch. M^occcxci.



BY JAMES PAYN.

"IT is better to be born lucky than rich," says the proverb, and though what is certainly *best* is to be born both, the aphorism is indisputable: for you may be born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and lose it; whereas if you have luck you may find and appropriate it, with a whole service of plate beside. Now Lorry, as we always called him—and if his friends only used his Christian name abbreviated, what possible reason can the public have for demanding his surname—was and is the luckiest of men. He has no need to "shake the pagoda tree" because the wind does it for him; he has only to hold out his hand for the golden fruitage. His case is peculiar—and I don't know any ante-type which precisely prefigures him—but if you take Sisera, and picture his exact opposite you get something like him; for "the stars in their courses," you remember, "fought against Sisera," whereas they have always been in favour of Lorry. Wordsworth used to have such luck that De Quincey says of him: "If I was in the enjoyment of any post or pension which Wordsworth wanted, I should hasten to give it up at once," feeling sure that if he didn't he would be carried off by flood or fire, or some other immediate catastrophe in order that the poet might get it. Similarly, if Lawrence wanted anything—but, fortunately for the rest of us, he doesn't; he has got everything that man can wish for—its proprietor would be doubtless "removed," if not to a higher, at all events to another sphere instant. Yet there was a time, it is whispered, when Lorry wanted a good many things. Indeed, in moments of genial confidence, when he is not patronising universal nature, or expressing his high opinion of the judiciousness of Fortune (for having befriended him), he will confess as much.

"I admit, my dear fellow," he will say, with a very charming condescension, putting one hand upon our shoulder, and pointing with the other to the splendid surroundings of his establishment, "that these things—that picture of Meissonier, that bust by Canova, and I need not say that noble malachite table voted to me (as you well know) by the Committee of my Company—were not inherited; my enemies—for all men in my great position must have such—are accustomed depreciatingly to remark that they 'dropped from the clouds'; I accept the observation as a correct (though undesigned) description of how they came into my possession; they did drop—let me say it with reverence and gratitude—from the quarter to which they allude. I have always been the favorite—well, you are a man of the world, and (forgive me) incapable of understanding the sublimer emotions, let me say then



IN MOMENTS OF GENIAL CONFIDENCE

—of Fortune. Yes, there is no question about it"—and here the more spiritual expression would vanish from his noble features, and he would wink his eye—"I've been deuced lucky. How it began was curious. It wasn't so just at first, you know: *you didn't know*; oh yes, you did"; and then Lorry would laugh in a rich and mellow manner, tickled with the notion of anyone on the earth's surface attempting to deceive him at that time of day.

"Well, I'll tell you, though you don't deserve it (trying to humbug me! What an idea!), how my first stroke of luck befell me.

"It was all through Symonds, the City man. He is still a power in it; his name is good, doubtless, for six figures; but commercial prosperity"—and here Lorry rolled his cigar in his mouth, like a "sweet morsel under the tongue"—"is a matter of comparison. Still" (here there seemed to be an ellipsis of some kind) "I can remember the day when Symonds appeared to me the very type of financial success. Humanly speaking—and I purposely adopt that method to render myself intelligible to you—Symonds has been my good angel. Difficult as it may be to picture him in that capacity, it is still more so, perhaps, to do so as taking the person who now stands before you," and here Lorry looked several sizes larger than before, "by the hand. But he did so. I acknowledge it; and if Symonds ever comes to grief he will never find me an opposing creditor to his passing through the bankruptcy court."

The magnanimity of this sentiment was as nothing compared with the magnificent—nay, the imperial—air with which it was expressed.

"Well, at the time I am speaking of (such are the changes and chances of human life), Symonds's house was good for five large figures, and mine, perhaps, for one; but it would have to be a modest digit—say, a fiver. I lived in very unambitious lodgings at Ealing, where I knew nobody. Symonds lived there in splendid style, and was cock of the walk. Still, as my intelligence was very far in advance of my means, I had a first-class season-ticket, and went to town and back every day in his com-



pany. Everything comes to him who waits, and one morning I found myself in possession of the last copy of the *Times* and Symonds without one. I need not say what happened, nor repeat the honeyed phrase in which I expressed my conviction that the City article was of much more consequence to him than to me. The old fellow—for he

was not young, even then—asked me to dinner. I made no pretence, as a fool would have done, of taking out my pocket-book to see if I had a previous engagement; and flatter myself that my manner implied that if I had had one I

would have dined with him all the same. Unfortunately, the invitation was for the Derby day, a race about which Symonds knew nothing, though he had a son who was better informed; still there was plenty of time to get to Epsom, and back for a seven o'clock dinner at Ealing. I scarcely know which entertainment I would have been most unwilling, at that date, to miss.

"I went to the Derby, and met young Symonds, and we lunched together, not wisely but too well. Before he got very bad he said, 'You are dining with the governor to-night, be sure you don't let out that you met *me* here. I am hard at work as usual at my office.' He did not ask me to tell a lie, of course; but merely to make a 'mental reservation' such as has found approval with the greatest theologians.

"*"I am hard at work at my office, myself,"* I said, a repartee which he failed to understand, not because he was drunk, but because he was a donkey. He had not the sagacity (though a good deal more vivacity) of his respected father. I lunched after that with some other people, and though far from intoxicated (a condition most deleterious to any person who dreams of distinction) I felt myself very unfitted to meet with a possible patron upon equal or indeed on any terms. I had (just) the sense to dodge my future host at the Paddington Station and to get out after him at Ealing.

"As I watched him depart in his carriage for his palatial residence at 5.25 the question occurred to me, 'How is it possible with my head going round like this that I shall be fit to dine with so highly respectable an individual at 7 p.m.?' As there was some objection, arising from the same cause, to my being seen by the eagle eye of my landlady, I thought I would see if a little walk, and perhaps forty winks of sleep in some secluded spot, might recuperate me. At that time Ealing was a 'truly rural' spot (though I could not have described it in those words just at that moment), and you stepped from the station into country lanes and meadows. Presently I came to a field with large and luxurious hedgerows; I climbed over the gate, and throwing myself on the soft grass in the shade—for the afternoon, though it was so early in the summer, was hot, and I was hotter—was fast asleep in a moment. My slumber was heavy, but perturbed with visions. I thought that I had not only been to the Derby but ridden in the race: I thought that the excellent Symonds, about to take me into partnership, was introducing me to his commercial friends when he suddenly exclaimed, 'Why do you dress in red and yellow, like a vulgar woman?' I could not well explain that they were my



"DON'T LET OUT THAT YOU MET ME HERE."

riding colours, and with a movement of not inexcusable irritation he pushed me down the steps of the Chamber of Commerce.

"Sad as was the denouement of my dream, it was nothing," compared with the horror of those waking moments when I beheld the moon high in the heavens, and on reference to my watch (a silver one, now worn by my valet) I found it to be twelve o'clock at night! Imagine my feelings, five hours late for Mr. Symonds's dinner, and without a vestige of excuse for my non-appearance! As for Luck, it occurred to me that I was just the most unlucky man in the world, nor was it the least satisfaction to reflect that my misfortune was owing to my own fault, if taking two luncheons instead of one could be called so. In the City 'surplusage is no error,' and why should things be different on Epsom Downs? Socially speaking, I felt I was done for. The dinner that would undoubtedly have been the prelude to a hundred feasts, and the acquaintance of all that was respectable in Ealing—"the polite circles of Paisley"—could never now come off. I had always been an outsider, but now I should be an outcast. Thus, to use a phrase that was then unfamiliar to me, I 'speculated for the Fall.' I never dreamed that this

astounding misfortune was to prove a blessing in disguise, that Fortune had at last recognised (let me say) my modest worth, and that this was Her First Smile. Since then we have known one another better. Like Napoleon—between whom and myself partial friends fondly trace some resemblance—I now trust to My Star. But where was I? Lying under a hedge in the vicinity of Ealing, drenched with dew, and feeling like the Peri in the poem, only worse, for I had closed the gates of Paradise—Symonds's door—against me with my own hands. An ordinary person would have gone home and written him a letter, telling him some lie or other about sudden indisposition having prevented my taking advantage of his much-appreciated invitation; but duplicity is foreign to my character, and, besides, I was well persuaded that my landlady could not be trusted to corroborate such a statement. She was a weak creature, and under the least cross-examination on the part of 'Squire' Symonds (as she fulsomely entitled him) would break down. I simply did nothing; let matters drift, so some would say, but in reality left them in other and (as it turned out) far wiser hands. It would be ungrateful of me indeed, whatever my humble merits may have been, to deny that Fortune favoured me.

"I presented myself at the station as usual the next morning; and Symonds was there; I felt his presence in the air, or what there was of it (for it was precious foggy), though I had stationed myself at the extreme end of the platform, in order to avoid him. I heard a heavy step upon the boards, I felt a huge hand laid upon my shoulder, and then came those never-to-be-forgotten words: 'Young man, I honour you. Your conduct does you credit indeed. It gives me a higher opinion of you than even that which I had already entertained. It not only shows tact but good feeling.' I really thought old Symonds was going to cry, but what about? That was my difficulty. I kept my eyes fixed on the platform, and mustered up a melancholy smile, indicative (I flatter myself) of sympathy and conscious worth. The position was embarrassing, for I did not know the nature of the obligation under which I had evidently laid old Symonds. 'You are naturally unwilling,' he went on, 'to speak of the generous motives that caused you to absent yourself from my table.'

"I bowed my head in assent, for what he had said was quite true; I was not only unwilling but quite resolved not to speak of it—till I knew what it was.

"'I admit with gratitude,' he went on in a voice broken with

emotion, 'that the painful spectacle which my son exhibited to his family circle last night would have been much intensified had a stranger been present. It was kind of you to spare us that. But, my dear sir, we are strangers no longer. You have gained a friend.'

"With that he hurried into his railway carriage, into which I, for my part—still full of delicacy and good feeling—took good care not to follow him.

"From that moment old Symonds stuck to me like wax, and at that period of my career proved extremely useful.

"The story is slight," said Lucky Lawrence, in conclusion, "but I venture to think interesting as exemplifying the special protection which Fortune extends to those who (despite, perhaps, some shortcomings) are not undeserving of her favours. She has shone upon me ever since, but I have always looked upon that little incident as Her First Smile."



Choice Blends.

THE idea has doubtless occurred to many that if it were possible to treat our statesmen in the same way as our gardeners treat their fruit trees, and by some simple operation of brain-grafting or blood-transmission to infuse into the several good qualities of A. some of the good qualities which B. possesses in superabundance, and in which A. is universally acknowledged to be deficient, and *vice versâ*, we might ultimately arrive at a very choice blend of politicians indeed.

Thus, if to Mr. Gladstone's vast experience we could add some of Lord Rosebery's stiffness of backbone in foreign affairs, and could dower Rosebery with Gladstone's accumulated experience; if to the late Mr. W. H. Smith's simple straightforward devotion to Duty could have been added just a tincture of Mr. Arthur Balfour's caustic sprightliness;—in time, and with patience, both on the part of the experimenters and the experimentees, we might surely hope to arrive at the ideal statesman.

What we cannot at present do with their minds we fortunately can do with our statesmen's faces, as the following pages show.

These are no ideal touched-up portraits, but the actual results of the various blends exactly as the camera reproduced them.

In several cases the combinations work out so curiously that experiments have been carefully made to see what variations might be obtained under different conditions as to time of exposure, &c., but the results come out practically the same.



LORD SALISBURY.

From a photo by Elliott and Fry,
Baker Street, W.



RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH.

From a photo by Russell and Sons,
Baker Street, W.



RIGHT HON. A. J. BALFOUR

From a photo by Russell and Sons,
Baker Street, W.]



RIGHT HON. G. J. GOSCHEN

From a photo by Russell and Sons,
Baker Street, W.



SALISBURY—SMITH.



SALISBURY—BALFOUR.

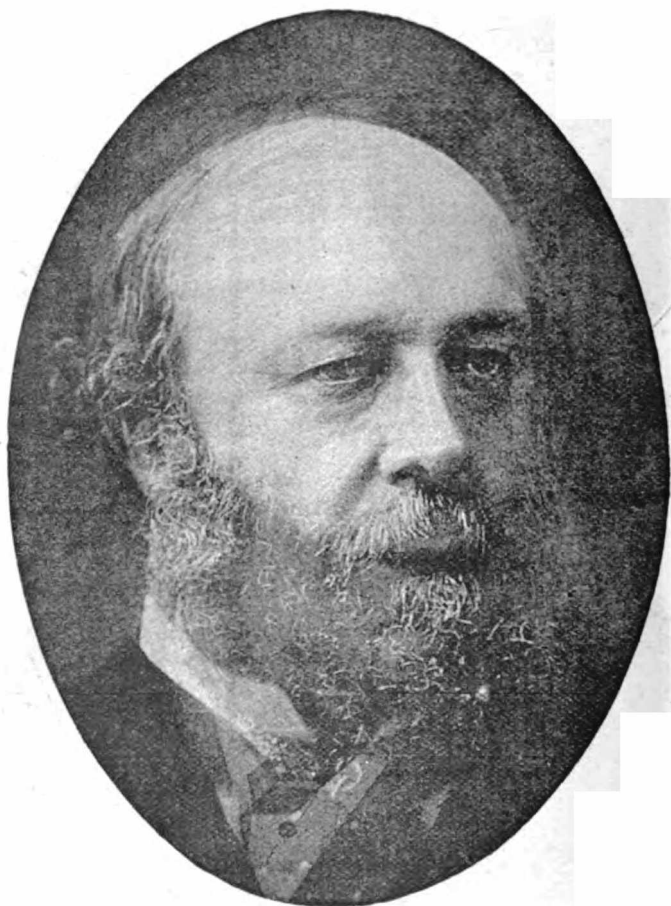


SALISBURY—GOSCHEN.



SMITH—BALFOUR—GOSCHEN.

Composite photos by Boning and Small, 22 ; Baker Street London, W



SALISBURY—SMITH—BALFOUR—GOSCHEN.

Composite photo by Boning and Small, 22, Baker Street, London, W



GLADSTONE—HARCOURT—ROSEBERRY—MORLEY.
Composite photo by Boning and Small, 22, Baker Street, W.



RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

From a photo by Elliott and Fry,
Baker Street, W.



SIR W. V. HARCOURT.

From a photo by Elliott and Fry
Baker Street, W.



LORD ROSEBERY.

From a photo by Elliott and Fry,
Baker Street, W.



RIGHT HON. JOHN MORLEY.

From a photo by Elliott and Fry,
Baker Street, W.



GLADSTONE—HARCOURT



GLADSTONE—ROSEBERY.



GLADSTONE—MORLEY



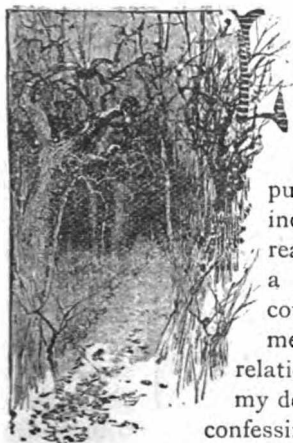
GLADSTONE—HARCOURT—ROSEBERY

Composite photos by Boning and Small, 22, Baker Street, W.



SALISBURY—GLADSTONE—SMITH—HARCOURT—BALFOUR—ROSEBERY—
GOSCHEN—MORLEY.

Composite photo by Boning and Small, 22, Baker Street, W.



SILHOUETTES

By JEROME K. JEROME.

LIKE most men who have the reputation of being funny—or of “trying to be funny,” as the genial pressman would put it—I am myself a somewhat gloomily-inclined personage. My own favourite reading is pessimistic poetry and stories of a pathetic or tragic tendency. The discovery that I was a humourist surprised me even more, I think, than it did my relations—even more, I think, than it did you, my dear cultured critic. While in the mood for confessing, I will acknowledge that I always fancied myself possessed of a pretty wit, together with humour in a mild and inoffensive degree; but my real strength, I told myself, lay in the direction of the tearful and the terrible. Had circumstances left me free to follow my natural bent, I should now be engaged in writing realistic novels, and plays almost gruesome enough for acceptance at the Independent Theatre.

I mention this in charity, hoping it may alleviate the sufferings of those who grieve because I write as I now do. They will be well advised not to stir me too deeply with their complainings. I do not like to seem to threaten, but, perhaps, it is only fair to them to state that I have, sketched out and stowed away in my desk, a six-act tragedy, and that it would not take very much to make me hunt it out and finish it.

My sympathies are always with the melancholy side of life and nature. I love the chill October days, when the brown leaves lie thick and sodden underneath your feet, and a low sound as of stifled sobbing is heard in the damp woods—the evenings in late autumn time, when the white mist creeps across the fields, making it seem as though old Earth, feeling the night air cold to its poor bones, were drawing ghostly bedclothes round its withered limbs. I like the twilight of the long grey street, sad with the wailing cry of the distant muffin man. One thinks of him, as strangely mitred, he glides by through the gloom, jangling his harsh bell, as the High Priest of the pale spirit of Indigestion, summoning the devout to come forth and worship. I find a

sweetness in the aching dreariness of Sabbath afternoons in genteel suburbs—in the evil-laden desolateness of waste places by the river, when the yellow fog is stealing inland across the ooze and mud, and the black tide gurgles softly round worm-eaten piles.



I love the bleak moor, when the thin long line of the winding road lies white on the darkening heath, while overhead some belated bird, vexed with itself for

being out so late, scurries across the dusky sky, screaming angrily. I love the lonely, sullen lake, hidden away in mountain solitudes.

I suppose it was my childhood's surroundings that instilled in me this affection for sombre hues. One of my earliest recollections is of a dreary marshland by the sea. By day, the water stood there in wide, shallow pools. But when one looked in the evening they were pools of blood that lay there.

It was a wild, dismal stretch of coast. One day, I found myself there all alone—I forget how I managed it—and, oh, how small I felt amid the sky and the sea and the sandhills. I ran, and ran, and ran, but I never seemed to move; and then I cried, and screamed, louder and louder, and the circling sea-gulls screamed back mockingly at me. It was an "unken" spot, as they say up North.

In the far back days of the building of the world, a long, high ridge of stones had been reared up by the sea, dividing the swampy grassland from the sand. Some of these stones—"pebbles," so they called them round about—were as big as a man, and many as big as a fair-sized house; and when the sea was angry—and very prone he was to anger by that lonely shore, and very quick to wrath; often have I known him sink to sleep with a peaceful smile on his rippling waves, to wake in fierce fury before the night was spent—he would snatch up giant handfuls of these pebbles, and fling and toss them here and there, till the noise of their rolling and crashing could be heard by the watchers in the village afar off.

"Old Nick's playing at marbles to-night," they would say to one another, pausing to listen. And then the women would close tight their doors, and try not to hear the sound.

Far out to sea, by where the muddy mouth of the river yawned wide, there rose ever a thin white line of surf, and underneath those crested waves there dwelt a very fearsome thing, called the Bar. I grew to hate and be afraid of this mysterious Bar, for I heard it spoken of always with bated breath, and I knew that it was very cruel to fisher folk, and hurt them so sometimes that they would cry whole days and nights together with the pain, or would sit with white scared faces, rocking themselves to and fro.

Once when I was playing among the sandhills, there came by a tall, grey woman, bending beneath a load of driftwood. She paused when nearly opposite to me, and, facing seaward, fixed her eyes upon the breaking surf above the Bar. "Ah, how I hate the sight of your white teeth," she muttered; then turned and passed on.

Another morning, walking through the village, I heard a low wailing come from one of the cottages, while a little further on a group of women were gathered in the roadway, talking. "Ay," said one of them, "I thought the Bar was looking hungry last night."

So, putting one and the other together, I concluded that the "Bar" must be an ogre, such as a body reads of in books, who lived in a coral castle deep below the river's mouth, and fed upon the fishermen as he caught them going down to the sea or coming home.

From my bedroom window, on moonlight nights, I could watch the silvery foam, marking the spot beneath where he lay hid; and I would stand on tip-toe, peering out, until at length



I would come to

fancy I could see his hideous form floating below the waters. Then, as the little white-sailed boats stole by him, tremblingly, I used to tremble too, lest he should suddenly open his grim jaws and gulp them down; and when they had all safely reached the dark, soft sea beyond, I would steal back to the bedside, and pray to God to make the Bar good, so that he would give up killing and eating the poor fishermen.

Another incident connected with that coast lives in my mind. It was the morning after a great storm—great even for that stormy coast—and the passion-worn waters were still heaving with the memory of a fury that was dead. Old Nick had scattered his marbles far and wide, and there were rents and fissures in the pebbly wall such as the oldest fisherman had never known before. Some of the hugest stones lay tossed a hundred yards away, and the waters had dug pits here and there along the ridge so deep that a tall man might stand in some of them, and yet his head not reach the level of the sand.

Round one of these holes a small crowd was pressing eagerly, while one man, standing in the hollow, was lifting the few remaining stones off something that lay there at the bottom. I pushed my way between the straggling legs of a big fisher lad, and peered over with the rest. A ray of sunlight streamed down into the pit, and the thing at the bottom gleamed white. Sprawling there among the black pebbles it looked like a huge spider. One by one the last stones were lifted away, and the thing was left bare, and then the crowd looked at one another and shivered.

"Wonder how he got there," said a woman at length; "somebody must ha' helped him."

"Some foreign chap, no doubt," said the man who had lifted off the stones; "washed ashore and buried here by the sea."

"What, six foot below the water-mark, with all they stones a' top of him?" said another.

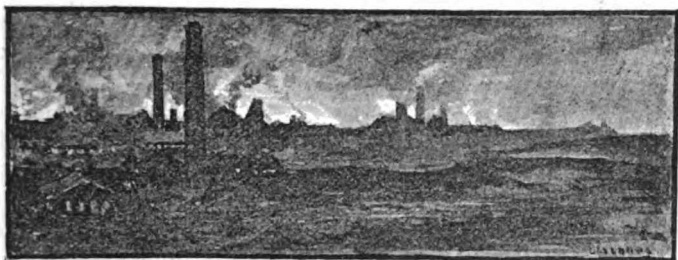
"That's no foreign chap," cried a grizzled old woman, pressing forward. "What's that that's aside him?"

Some one jumped down and took it from the stone where it lay glistening, and handed it up to her, and she clutched it in her skinny hand. It was a gold earring, such as fishermen sometimes wear. But this was a somewhat large one, and of rather unusual shape.

"That's young Abram Parsons, I tell you, as lies down there," cried the old creature, wildly. "I ought to know. I gave him the pair o' these forty year ago."

It may be only an idea of mine, born of after brooding upon the scene. I am inclined to think it must be so, for I was only a child at the time, and would hardly have noticed such a thing. But it seems to my remembrance that as the old crone ceased, another woman in the crowd raised her eyes slowly, and fixed them on a withered, ancient man, who leant upon a stick, and that for a moment, unnoticed by the rest, these two stood looking strangely at each other.

From these sea-scented scenes, my memory travels to a weary land where dead ashes lie, and there is blackness—blackness everywhere. Black rivers flow between black banks; black, stunted trees grow in black fields; black withered flowers by black wayside. Black roads lead from blackness past blackness to blackness; and along them trudge black, savage-looking men and women; and by them black, old-looking children play grim, unchildish games.



When the sun shines on this black land, it glitters black and hard; and when the rain falls a black mist rises towards heaven, like the hopeless prayer of a hopeless soul.

By night it is less dreary, for then the sky gleams with a lurid light, and out of the darkness the red flames leap, and high up in the air they gambol and writhe—the demon spawn of that evil land, they seem.

Visitors who came to our house would tell strange tales of this black land, and some of the stories I am inclined to think were true. One man said he saw a young bull-dog fly at a boy and pin him by the throat. The lad jumped about with much sprightliness, and tried to knock the dog away. Whereupon the boy's father rushed out of the house, hard by, and caught his son and heir roughly by the shoulder. "Keep still, thee young —, can't 'ee," shouted the man angrily; "let 'un taste blood."

Another time, I heard a lady tell how she had visited a cottage during a strike, to find the baby, together with the other children, almost dying for want of food. "Dear, dear me," she cried, taking the wee wizened mite from the mother's arms, "but I sent you down a quart of milk, yesterday. Hasn't the child had it?"

"Theer weer a little coom, thank 'ee kindly, ma'am," the father took upon himself to answer; "but thee see it weer only just enow for the poops."

We lived in a big lonely house on the edge of a wide common. One night, I remember, just as I was reluctantly preparing to climb into bed, there came a wild ringing at the gate, followed by a hoarse, shrieking cry, and then a frenzied shaking of the iron bars.

Then hurrying footsteps sounded through the house, and the swift opening and closing of doors; and I slipped back hastily into my knickerbockers and ran out. The women folk were gathered on the stairs, while my father stood in the hall, calling to them to be quiet. And still the wild ringing of the bell continued, and, above it, the hoarse, shrieking cry.

My father opened the door and went out, and we could hear him striding down the gravel path, and we clung to one another and waited.

After what seemed an endless time, we heard the heavy gate unbarred, and quickly clanged-to, and footsteps returning on the gravel. Then the door opened again, and my father entered, and behind him a crouching figure that felt its way with its hands as it crept along, like a blind man might. The figure stood up



when it reached the middle of the hall, and mopped its eyes with a dirty rag that it carried in its hand; after which it held the rag over the umbrella stand and wrung it out, as washerwomen wring out clothes, and the dark drippings fell into the tray with a dull, heavy splut.

My father whispered something to my mother, and she went out towards the back; and, in a little while, we heard the stamping of hoofs—the angry plunge of a spur-startled horse—the rhythmic throb of the long, straight gallop, dying away into the distance.

My mother returned and spoke some reassuring words to the servants. My father, having made fast the door and extinguished all but one or two of the lights, had gone into a small room on the right of the hall; the crouching figure, still mopping that moisture from its eyes, following him. We could hear them talking there in low tones, my father questioning, the other voice thick and interspersed with short panting grunts.

We on the stairs huddled closer together, and, in the darkness, I felt my mother's arm steal round me and encompass me, so that I was not afraid. Then we waited, while the silence round our frightened whispers thickened and grew heavy till the weight of it seemed to hurt us.

At length, out of its depths, there crept to our ears a faint murmur. It gathered strength like the sound of the oncoming of a wave upon a stony shore, until it broke in a Babel of vehement voices just outside. After a few moments, the hubbub ceased, and there came a furious ringing—then angry shouts demanding admittance.

Some of the women began to cry. My father came out into the hall, closing the room door behind him, and ordered them to be quiet, so sternly that they were stunned into silence. The furious ringing was repeated; and, this time, threats mingled among the hoarse shouts. My mother's arm tightened around me, and I could hear the beating of her heart.

The voices outside the gate sank into a low confused mumbling. Soon they died away altogether, and the silence flowed back.

My father turned up the hall lamp, and stood listening.

Suddenly, from the back of the house, rose the noise of a great crashing, followed by oaths and savage laughter.

My father rushed forward, but was borne back; and, in an instant, the hall was full of grim, ferocious faces. My father, trembling a little (or else it was the shadow cast by the flickering lamp), and with lips tight pressed, stood confronting them; while we women and children, too scared to even cry, shrunk back up the stairs.

What followed during the next few moments is, in my memory, only a confused tumult, above which my father's high, clear tones

rise every now and again, entreating, arguing, commanding. I see nothing distinctly until one of the grimmest of the faces thrusts itself before the others, and a voice which, like Aaron's rod, swallows up all its fellows, says in deep, determined bass, "Coom, we've had enow chatter, master. Thee mun give 'un up, or thee mun get out o' th' way an' we'll search th' house for oursel'."

Then a light flashed into my father's eyes that kindled something inside me, so that the fear went out of me, and I struggled to free myself from my mother's arm, for the desire stirred me to fling myself down upon the grimy faces below, and beat and stamp upon them with my fists. Springing across the hall, he snatched from the wall where it hung an ancient club, part of a



trophy of old armour, and planting his back against the door through which they would have to pass, he shouted, "Then be damned to you all, he's in this room. Come and fetch him out."

(I recollect that speech well. I puzzled over it, even at that time, excited though I was. I had always been told that only low, wicked people ever used the word "damn," and I tried to reconcile things, and failed.)

The men drew back and muttered among themselves. It was an ugly-looking weapon, studded with iron spikes. My father held it secured to his hand by a chain, and there was an ugly look about him also, now, that gave his face a strange likeness to the dark faces round him.

But my mother grew very white and cold, and underneath her breath she kept crying, "Oh, will they never come—will they never come?" and a cricket somewhere about the house began to chirp.

Then all at once, without a word, my mother flew down the stairs, and passed like a flash of light through the crowd of dusky figures. How she did it I could never understand, for the two heavy bolts had both been drawn, but the next moment the door stood wide open; and a hum of voices, cheery with the anticipation of a period of perfect bliss, was borne in upon the cool night air.

My mother was always very quick of hearing.

Again, I see a wild crowd of grim faces, and my father's, very pale, amongst them. But this time the faces are very many, and they come and go like faces in a dream. The ground beneath my feet is wet and sloppy, and a black rain is falling. There are women's faces in the crowd, wild and haggard, and long skinny arms stretch out threateningly towards my father, and shrill, frenzied voices call out curses on him. Boys' faces also pass me in the grey light, and on some of them there is an impish grin.

I seem to be in everybody's way, and to get out of it, I crawl into a dark, draughty corner and crouch there among cinders. Around me, great engines fiercely strain and pant like living things fighting beyond their strength. Their gaunt arms whirl madly above me, and the ground rocks with their throbbing. Dark figures flit to and fro, pausing from time to time to wipe the black sweat from their faces.

The pale light fades, and the flame-lit night lies red upon the land. The flitting figures take strange shapes. I hear the hissing of wheels, the furious clanking of iron chains, the hoarse



shouting of many voices, the hurrying tread of many feet; and through all, the wailing and weeping and cursing that never seem

to cease. I drop into a restless sleep, and dream that I have broken a chapel window, stone-throwing, and have died and gone to hell.

At length, a cold hand is laid upon my shoulder and I awake. The wild faces have vanished, and all is silent now, and I wonder if the whole thing has been a dream. My father lifts me into the dog-cart, and we drive home through the chill dawn.

My mother opens the door softly as we alight. She does not speak, only looks her question. "It's all over, Maggie," answers my father very quietly, as he takes off his coat and lays it across a chair; "we've got to begin the world afresh."

My mother's arms steal up about his neck; and I, feeling heavy with a trouble I do not understand, creep off to bed.



"What on earth do you have that telegraph machine on your mantelshelf for? It quite makes one giddy to see that needle incessantly dodging about like that!"

My dear boy, it isn't a telegraph machine—it's a barometer."



JAS. F. SULLIVAN.

YE'VE seen the new shop? Just a wonderful place,
Chock full of all manner—ye wouldn't believe—
As couldn't be counted or mentioned!
I tell'ee they'd think it a mighty disgrace,
And say they was backing to Adam and Eve,
To have any article showing its face
As wasn't just newly inventioned.

Why folks was as sleepy and foolish and slow
Away in our parts, till they opened that shop
And knowledge was able to reach 'em!
Such thousands o' things we was wanting to know;
Our minds and our manners was all at a stop;
It's a wonder the breezes was able to blow
Till SCIENCE came forward to teach 'em!

For that is the name written over the front—

“MR. LATTERDAY SCIENCE, REMOVER OF ILL,
AND GENERAL WORKER OF WONDERS.”

It told in a jiffy, to senses as blunt

As the side of a stack, “ye may try as ye will
Your old-fashioned manners is out o’ the hunt :

But *now* for an end to the blunders !”



To see the machineries ! One, if you please,
As a party could talk wi' his natural voice,
And, bless you, as soon as he's started
He's heard by acquaintances over the seas :
And one as I wouldn't be hearing for choice,
As gives to you, like it was borne on the breeze,
The voice of the dead and departed.

"All done by electric," says SCIENCE to me ;
A-changing vibrations to currents instead,
And back again into vibrations.
By changing of things into others," says he,
"(As light into motion) our wonders are bred :
Turn this into that, and you get at the key
Of Science's grand operations."

Ah, then I was thankful ! I knew as I'd found
A thing as I'd wanted for many a year—
A thing as some others was seeking—
A engine to change all the sorrow around,
Before you could whistle, to joy and good cheer :
And here it was springing up out o' the ground
And all to be had for the speaking !

I fancied old Margaret, fresh
wi' the news
Of Billy, her boy, being
drownded at sea,
Might call it a likely invention ;
And Joe, as is paralysed,
mightn't refuse
To see the contrivance ;
and Charity Leigh,
Who's blind and deserted,
might give us her views ;
And others a party could
mention.



So "Mister," I answers : "I'll take one o' they."

"But," says Mr. Science, "it ain't in our line :

It ain't in our catalog's pages :

You'd better enquire for it over the way."

And points to a shop with a dingy old sign—

A shop as was there in my grandmother's day,

And *then* was as old as the ages !

It didn't sell nothing but patience, and trust,

And hope, and the like of 'em—old-fashioned stock,

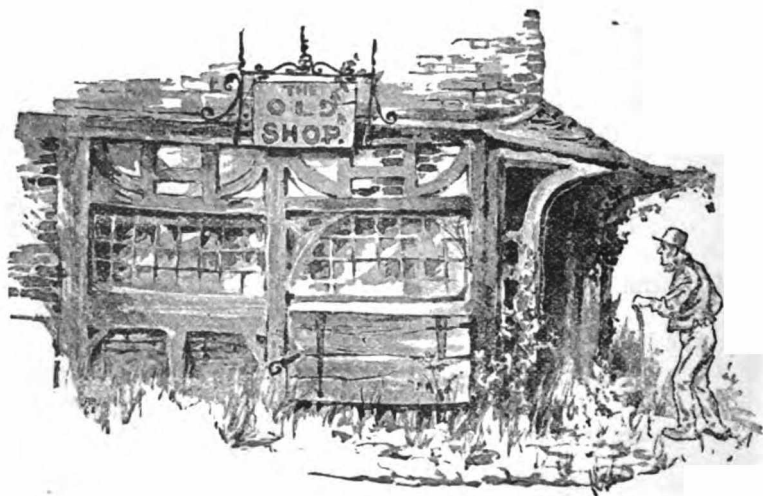
Which most o' the customers flout it :

A dowdy old shop ; but we saw as we *must*

Continue to deal at it after the shock

Of our hopes in the new 'un all down in the dust—

And never no choosing about it !



The English Shakespeare.

By I. ZANGWILL.



THE DRAMATIC CRITIC.

EVERYTHING comes to him who will not wait, and by working shamelessly shoulder to shoulder, and by undertaking to write even on subjects with which they were acquainted, the members of the Mutual Depreciation Society had captured the town with all its magazines. They believed in human nature, did Tom Brown, Dick Jones, Harry Robinson, Taffy Owen, Andrew Mackay, and Patrick Boyle, and their success justified their faith. For if it had not been for the rule binding

each member to sneer in private at the work he extolled in public, their campaign would have been a failure.

Men cannot work together for a common object without discovering they do not deserve to get it, and it is the tension of mutual admiration that kills the cliques and sows discord where all should be amiable contempt. Having slanged one another savagely at the monthly symposia, the Mutual Depreciators were able to write one another up with a clear conscience. And the more they succeeded, the more they depreciated one another. For you can get tired even of hearing your own dispraises, and the jaded appetite must needs be pampered if it is to experience anything of that relish which a natural healthy hunger for adverse criticism can command so easily. This was the sort of thing that went on at the dinners.

"I say, Tom," said Andrew Mackay, "what in Heaven's name made you publish your waste-paper basket under the name of 'Stray Thoughts'? For utter and incomprehensible idiocy they are only surpassed by Dick's last volume of poems. I

shouldn't have thought such things could have come out of a lunatic asylum, at least not without a keeper. Really you fellows ought to consider me a little. It isn't fair to throw all the work on me. How can I go on saying that Tom Brown is the deepest thinker since Hegel with a gift of style that recalls Berkeley's, if you go on turning out twaddle that a copy-book would boggle at? It's not sticking to the bargain to expose me to the danger of being found out. You ought at least to have the decency to wrap up your fatuousness in longer words or more abstruse themes. You're both so beastly intelligible that a child can understand you're asses."

"Tut, tut, Andrew," said Taffy Owen, "it's all very well of you to talk who've only got to do the criticism. And I think it's deuced ungrateful of you after we've written you up into the position of leading English critic to want us to give you straw for your bricks! Do we ever complain when you call us cataclysmic, creative, esemplastic, or even epicene? We know it's rot, but we put up with it. When you said that Robinson's last novel had all the glow and genius of Dickens without his humour, all the ripe wisdom of Thackeray without his social knowingness, all the imaginativeness of Shakespeare without his definiteness of characterization, we all saw at once that you were incautiously allowing the donkey's ears to protrude too obviously from beneath the lion's skin. But did anyone grumble? Did Robinson, though the edition was sold out the day after? Did I, though you had just called me a modern Buddhist with the soul of an ancient Greek and the radiant fragrance of a Cingalese tea-planter? I know these phrases take the public and I try to be patient."

"Owen is right," Harry Robinson put in emphatically. "When you said I was a cross between a Scandinavian skald and a Dutch painter, I bore my cross in silence."

"You others have out and away the best of it," retorted Andrew. "It's much easier to write bad books than to eulogize their merits in an adequately plausible manner. I think it's playing it too low upon a chap. It's taking a mean advantage of my position."

"And who put you into that position I should like to know?" yelled Dick Jones, becoming poetically excited. "Didn't we lift you up into it on the points of our pens?"

"Fortunately they were not very pointed," ejaculated the great critic, wriggling uncomfortably at the suggestion. "I don't deny that of course. All I say is, you're giving me away now."

"You give yourself away," shrieked Owen vehemently, "with a pound of that Cingalese tea. Don't you agree with me, Boyle? *You* manage to crack up our plays without being driven to any of this new-fangled nonsense."

"Plays!" said Patrick, looking up moodily. "Anything is good enough for plays. You see I can always fall back on the acting and crack up that. I had to do that with Owen's thing at the *Lymarket*. My notice read like a gushing account of the play, in reality it was all devoted to the players. The trick of it is not easy. The only time, Owen, I dare say that your plays are literature is when they are a frost, for that both explains the failure and justifies you. But, an you love me, Taffy, or if you have any care for my reputation, do not, I beg of you, be enticed into this new folly of printing your plays."

In this wise things would have gone on—from bad to worse—had Heaven not created Cecilia nineteen years before.

Cecilia was a tall, fair girl, with dreamy eyes and unpronounced opinions, who longed for the ineffable with an unspeakable yearning.

Frank Grey loved her. He was a young lawyer, with a fondness for manly sports and a wealth of blonde moustache.

"Cecilia," he said, "I love you. Will you be mine?"

He had a habit of using unconventional phrases.

"No, Frank," she said gently, and there was a world and several satellites of tenderness in her tremulous tones.

"Ah, do not decide so quickly," he pleaded. "I will not press you for an answer."

"I would press you for an answer, if I could," replied Cecilia, "but I do not love you."

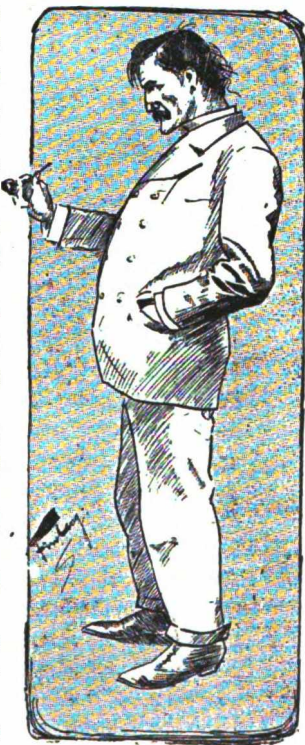
"Why not?" he demanded desperately.

"Because you are not what I should like you to be?"

"And what would you like me to be?" he demanded eagerly.

"If I told you, you would try to become it?"

"I would," he said, enthusiastically. "Be it what it may, I



ROBINSON.

would leave no stone unturned. I would work, strive, study, reform—anything, everything.”

“I feared so,” she said despondently. “That is why I will not tell you. Don’t you understand that your charm to me is your being just yourself—your simple, honest, manly self? No, Frank, let us be true to ourselves, not to each other. I shall always remain your friend, looking up to you as to something staunch, sturdy, stalwart; coming to consult you (unprofessionally) in all my difficulties. I will tell you all my secrets, Frank, so that you will know more of me than if I married you. Dear friend, let it remain as I say. It is for the best.”

So Frank went away broken-hearted, and joined the Mutual Depreciation Society. He did not care what became of him. How they came to let him in was this. He was the one man in the world outside who knew all about them, having been engaged as the Society’s legal adviser. It was he who made their publishers and managers sit in an erect position. In applying for a more intimate connection, he stated that he had met with a misfortune, and a little monthly abuse would enliven him. The Society decided that, as he was already half one of themselves, and as he had never written a line in his life, and so could not diminish their takings, nothing but good could ensue from the infusion of new blood. In fact, they wanted it badly. Their mutual recriminations had degenerated into mere platitudes. The wisdom of the policy was early seen, for the first fruit of it was the English Shakespeare, who for a whole year daily opened out new and exciting perspectives of sensation and amusement to a *blasé* Society. Andrew Mackay had written an enthusiastic article in the so-called *Nineteenth Century* on “The Cochinese Shakespeare,” and set all tongues wagging about the new literary phenomenon with whose verses the boatmen of the Irrawady rocked their children to sleep on the cradle of the river, and whose dramas were played in eight hour slices in the strolling-booths of Shanghai. Andrew had already arranged with Anyman and Son to bring out a translation from the original Cochinese, for there was no language he could not translate from, provided it were sufficiently unknown.

“Cochinese Shakespeare, indeed!” said Dick Jones, at the next symposium. “Why, judging from the little extracts you gave from his greatest drama, *Baby Bantam*, it is *the* blankest rot. You might have written it yourself.”

“Don’t you think it a shame,” broke in Frank Grey, “that we

English are debarred from having a Shakespeare. There's been one discovered lately in Belgium, and we have several American Shakespeares. English is the only language in which we can't get a nineteenth-century one. It seems cruel."

"Peace. I would willingly look out for one," said Andrew Mackay, thoughtfully. "But I cannot venture to insinuate yet that Shakespeare did not write English. The time is scarcely ripe, though it is maturing fast. Otherwise the idea is tempting."

"But why take the words in their natural meaning?" demanded Tom Brown, the philosopher, in astonishment. "Is it not unapparent that an English Shakespeare would be a great writer more saturated with Anglo-Saxon spirit than Shakespeare, who was cosmic and for all time and for every place? Hamlet, Othello, Lady Macbeth—these are world-types, not English characters. Our English Shakespeare must be more autochthonic."

"Excellent!" said Andrew. "He must be found. It will be the greatest boom of the century. But whom can we discover?"

"There is Henry Arthur Smith," said Tom Brown.

"No, why Henry Arthur Smith? He has merit," objected Taffy Owen.

"And then he has never been in our set."

"And besides he would not be satisfied," said Patrick Boyle, "any more than Running Brooknonon."

"That is true," said Andrew Mackay reflectively. "I know, Owen, *you* would like to be the subject of the discovery. But I am afraid it is too late. I have taken your measurements and laid down the chart of your genius too definitely to alter now. You are permanently established in business as the dainty neo-Hellenic Buddhist who has chosen to express himself through farcical comedy. If you were just starting life, I could work you into this English Shakespeardom—I am always happy to put a good thing in the way of a friend—but at your age it is not easy to go into a new line."

"Well, but," put in Harry Robinson, "it none of us is to be



THE PHILOSOPHER.

the English Shakespeare, why should we give over the appointment to an outsider? Charity begins at home."

"That is a difficulty," admitted Andrew, puckering his brow.

They sat in thoughtful silence. Then suddenly Frank Grey flashed in with a suggestion that took their breath away for a moment and restored it to them, charged with "Bravos," the moment after.

"But why should he exist at all?"

Why indeed? The more they pondered the matter, the less necessity they saw for it.

"'Pon my word, Grey, you are right," said Andrew. "Right as Talleyrand when he told the beggar who insisted that he must live: *Mais, monsieur, je n'en vois pas la nécessité.*"

"It's an inspiration!" said Tom Brown, moved out of his usual apathy. "We all remember how Whately proved that the Emperor Napoleon never existed—and the plausible way he did it. How few persons actually saw the Emperor! Conversely, it should be as easy as possible for us six to put a non-existent English Shakespeare on the market. You remember what Voltaire said of God—that if there were none it would be necessary to invent Him. In like manner patriotism calls upon us to invent the English Shakespeare."

"Yes, won't it be awful fun?" said Patrick Boyle.

The idea was taken up eagerly—the *modus operandi* was discussed, and the members parted, effervescing with enthusiasm and anxious to start the campaign immediately. The English Shakespeare was to be named Fladpick, a cognomen which once seen would hook itself on to the memory.

The very next day a leading article in the *Daily Herald* casually quoted Fladpick's famous line:

"Coffined in English yew, he sleeps in peace."

And throughout the next month, in the most out-of-the-way and unlikely quarters, the word Fladpick lurked and sprang upon the reader. Lines and phrases from Fladpick were quoted. Gradually the thing worked up, gathering momentum on its way, and going more and more of itself, like an ever-swelling snowball which needs but the first push down the mountain side. Soon a leprosy of Fladpick broke out over the journalism of the day. The very office-boys caught the infection, and in their book reviews they dragged in Fladpick with an air of antediluvian acquaintance. Writers were said not to possess Fladpick's imagination though

they might have more sense of style, or they were said not to possess Fladpick's sense of style though they might have more imagination. Certain epithets and tricks of manner were described as quite Fladpickian, while others were mentioned as extravagant and as disdained by writers like, say, Fladpick. Young authors were paternally invited to mould themselves on Fladpick, while others were contemptuously dismissed as mere imitators of Fladpick. By this time Fladpick's poetic dramas began to be asked for at the libraries, and the libraries said that they were all out. This increased the demand so much that the libraries told their subscribers they must wait till the new edition, which was being hurried through the press, was published. When things had reached this stage, queries about Fladpick appeared in the literary and professionally inquisitive papers, and answers were given, with reference to the editions of Fladpick's book. It began to leak out that he was a young Englishman who had lived all his life in Tartary, and that his book had been published by a local firm and



ANDREW MACKAY
COLLABORATING.

enjoyed no inconsiderable reputation among the English Tartars there, but that the copies which had found their way to England were extremely scarce and had come into the hands of only a few *cognoscenti*, who being such were enabled to create for him the reputation he so thoroughly deserved. The next step was to contradict this, and the press teemed with biographies and counter-biographies. *Dazzle* also wired numerous interviews, but an authoritative statement was inserted in the *Acadæum*, signed by Andrew Mackay, stating that they were unfounded, and paragraphs began to appear detailing how Fladpick spent his life in dodging

the interviewers. Anecdotes of Fladpick were highly valued by editors of newspapers, and very plenteous they were, for Fladpick was known to be a cosmopolitan, always sailing from

pole to pole and caring little for residence in the country of which he yet bade fair to be the laureate. These anecdotes girdled the globe even more quickly than their hero, and they returned from foreign parts bronzed and almost unrecognizable, to set out immediately on fresh journeys in their new guise.

A parody of one of his plays was inserted in a comic paper, and it was bruited abroad that Andrew Mackay was collaborating with him in preparing one of his dramas for representation at the Independent Theatre. This set the older critics by the ears, and they protested vehemently in their theatrical columns against the infamous ethics propagated by the new writer, quoting largely from the specimens of his work given in Mackay's article in the *Fortnightly Review*. Patrick, who wrote the dramatic criticism for seven papers, led the attack upon the audacious iconoclast. Journalasia was convulsed by the quarrel, and even young ladies asked their partners in the giddy waltz whether they were Fladpickites or Anti-Fladpickites. You could never be certain of escaping Fladpick at dinner, for the lady you took down was apt to take you down by her contempt of your ignorance of Fladpick's awfully sweet writings. Any amount of people promised one another introductions to Fladpick, and those who had met him enjoyed quite a reflected reputation in Belgravian circles. As to the Fladpickian parties, which brother geniuses like Dick Jones and Harry Robinson gave to the great writer, it was next to impossible to secure an invitation to them, and comparatively few boasted of the privilege. Fladpick reaped a good deal of *kudos* from refusing to be lionised and preferring the society of men of letters like himself, during his rare halting moments in England.

Long before this stage Mackay had seen his way to introducing the catch-word of the conspiracy, "The English Shakespeare." He defended vehemently the ethics of the great writer, claiming they were at core essentially at one with those of the great nation from whence he sprang and whose very life-blood had passed into his work. This brought about a reaction, and all over the country the scribblers hastened to do justice to the maligned writer, and an elaborate analysis of his most subtle characters was announced as having been undertaken by Mr. Patrick Boyle. And when it was stated that he was to be included in the Contemporary Men of Letters Series, the advance orders for the work were far in advance of the demand for Fladpick's actual writings. "Shakespearean," "The English Shakespeare," was now constantly used in connection with his work, and even the most hard-worked

reviewers promised themselves to skim his book in their next summer holidays. About this time, too, *Dazzle* unconsciously helped the Society by announcing that Fladpick was dying of consumption in a snow-hut in Greenland, and it was felt that he must either die or go to a warmer climate, if not both. The news of his phthisic weakness put the seal upon his genius, and the great heart of the nation went out to him in his lonely snow-hut, but returned on learning that the report was a *canard*. Still, the danger he had passed through endeared him to his country, and within a few months Fladpick, the English Shakespeare, was definitely added to the glories of the national literature, founding a whole school of writers in his own country, attracting considerable attention on the Continent, and being universally regarded as the centre of the Victorian Renaissance.

But this was the final stage. A little before it was reached Cecilia came to Frank Grey to pour her latest trouble into his ear, for she had carefully kept her promise of bothering him with her most intimate details, and the love-sick young lawyer had listened to her petty psychology with a patience which would have brought him in considerable fees if invested in the usual way. But this time the worry was genuine.



"Frank," she said, "I am in love."

The young man turned as white as an evening sheet (early editions). The sword of Damocles had fallen at last, sundering them for ever.

"With whom?" he gasped.

"With Mr. Fladpick!"

"The English Shakespeare!"

"The same!"

"But you have never seen him?"

"I have seen his soul. I have divined him from his writings. I have studied Andrew Mackay's essays on him. I feel that he and I are in rapport."

"But this is madness!"

"Madness! Why? why may I not cherish the hope that he will return my love? Am I not worthy of it?"

"Yes, Cecilia, you are worthy of an archangel's love. I do not mean that. But are you sure it is love you feel, not admiration?"

"No, it is love. At first I thought it was admiration, and probably it was, for I was not likely to be mistaken in the analysis of my feelings, in which I have had much practice. But gradually I felt it efflorescing and sending forth tender shoots clad in delicate green buds, and a sweet wonder came upon me and I knew that love was struggling to get itself born in my soul. Then suddenly the news came that he I loved was ill, dying in that lonely snow-hut in grim Greenland, and then in the tempest of grief that shook me I knew that my life was bound up with his. Watered by my hot tears, the love in my heart bourgeoned and blossomed like some strange tropical passion-flower, and when the reassuring message that he was strong and well flashed through the world, I felt that if he lived not for me, the universe were a blank and next year's daisies would grow over my early grave."

She burst into tears. "A great writer has always been the ideal which I would not tell you of. It is the one thing I have kept from you. But, O Frank, how am I to get him to love me?" A paroxysm of hopeless sobs punctuated her remarks.

It was a terrible position. Frank groaned inwardly.

How was he to explain to this fair young thing that she loved nobody and could never hope to marry him? There was no doubt that with her intense nature and her dreamy blue eyes she would pine away and die. He made an effort to laugh it off.

"Tush!" he said. "All this is mere imagination. I don't believe you really love anybody!"

"Frank!" She drew herself up, stony and rigid, the warm tears on her poor white face frozen to ice. "Have you nothing better than this to say to me, after I have shown you my inmost soul?"

The wretched young lawyer's face turned to the fifth edition and back again into the second. He could have faced a football team in open combat, but these complex psychical positions were beyond the healthy young Philistine.

"For—or—give me," he stammered. "I—I am—I—that is to say, Fladpick—oh how can I explain what I mean?"

Cecilia sobbed on. Every sob seemed to stick in Frank's own throat. His impotence maddened him. Was he to let the woman he loved fret herself to death for a shadow? And yet to undeceive her were scarcely less fatal. He could have cut out the tongue that first invented Fladpick. Verily, his sin was finding him out.

"Why can you not explain what you mean?" wept Cecilia.

"Because I—oh hang it all—because I am the cause of your grief."

"You?" she said. A strange wonderful look came into her eyes. The thought shot from her eyes to his and dazzled them.

Yes! why not? why should he not sacrifice himself to save this delicate creature from a premature tomb? Why should he not become "the English Shakespeare?"

True, it was a heavy burden to sustain, but what will a man not dare or suffer for the woman he loves? Moreover, was he not responsible for Fladpick's being, and thus for all the evil done by his Frankenstein? He had employed Fladpick for his own amusement and the Employers' Liability Act was heavy upon him. The path of abnegation, of duty, was clear. He saw it and he went for it then and there—went, like a brave young Englishman, to meet his marriage.

"Yes, I," he said, "I am glad you love Mr. Fladpick."



CECILIA SOBBED ON.

"Why? ' she murmured breathlessly.

"Because I love you."

"But—I—do—not—love—you," she said slowly.

"You will, when I tell you it is I who have provoked your love."

"Frank, is this true?"

"On my word of honour as an Englishman."

"You are Fladpick?"

"If I am not, he does not exist. There is no such person."

"Oh, Frank, this is no cruel jest?"

"Cecilia, it is the sacred truth. Fladpick is nobody, if he is not Frank Grey."

"But you never lived in Tartary?"

"Of course not. All that about Fladpick is the veriest falsehood. But I did not mind it, for nobody suspected me."

"My noble, modest boy! So this was why you were so embarrassed before! But why not have told *me* that you were Fladpick?"

"Because I wanted you to love me for myself alone."

She fell into his arms.

"Frank—Frank—Fladpick, my own, my English Shakespeare," she sobbed ecstatically.

At the next meeting of the Mutual Depreciation Society, a bombshell in a stamped envelope was handed to Mr. Andrew Mackay. He tore open the envelope and the explosion followed—as follows:

Gentlemen,

I hereby beg to tender the resignation of my membership in your valued Society, as well as to anticipate your objections to my retaining the post of legal adviser I have the honour to hold. I am about to marry—the cynic will say I am laying the foundation of a Mutual Depreciation Society of my own. But this is not the reason of my retirement. That is to be sought in my having accepted the position of the English Shakespeare which you were good enough to open up for me. It would be a pity to let the pedestal stand empty. From the various excerpts you were kind enough to invent, especially from the copious extracts in Mr. Mackay's articles, I have been able to piece together a considerable body of poetic work, and by carefully collecting every existing fragment, and studying the most authoritative expositions of my aims and methods, I have constructed several dramas, much as Professor Owen re-constructed the mastodon from the bones that were extant. As you know, I had never written a line in my life before, but by the copious aid of your excellent and genuinely helpful criticism I was enabled to get along without much difficulty. I find that to write blank verse you have only to invert the order of the words and

keep on your guard against rhyme. You may be interested to know that the last line in the last tragedy is :

“Coffined in English yew, he sleeps in peace.”

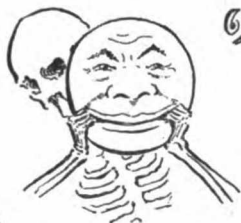
When written, I got my dramas privately printed with a Tartary trademark, after which I smudged the book and sold the copyright to Make-million & Co. for ten thousand pounds. Needless to say I shall never write another book. In taking leave of you I cannot help feeling that, if I owe you some gratitude for the lofty pinnacle to which you have raised me, you are also not unindebted to me for finally removing the shadow of apprehension that must have dogged you in your sober moments—I mean the fear of being found out. Mr. Andrew Mackay, in particular, as the most deeply committed, I feel owes me what he can never hope to repay for my gallantry in filling the mantle designed by him, whose emptiness might one day have been exposed, to his immediate downfall.

I am, gentlemen,
Your most sincere and humble Depreciator,
THE ENGLISH SHAKESPEARE.



The Fatal Smile

A FAIRY TALE



by

Cynicus



Once on a time,
So stories shew,
There roved this world long long ago
A malevolent Sprite
Whose wicked delight
Was to vex and affright poor mortals below
By acts of the most malignant spite
And every sort of conceivable woe
Whose only endeavour
Seemed how to disserve
From man every source of enjoyment whatever.
And even still;
When we think of the ill
And sorrow and grief which the world doth fill,
This imp even yet, seems to wander at will.
Be this as it may—



One Christmas day,
When the weather was bright and the world was gay,
It entered a house,
How, nobody knew
And quiet as a mouse,
Without any ado
It found its way to a room, where reposing
In innocent slumber a baby lay dozing
And all the while
Unconscious of guile
Its little face beamed with a heavenly smile



* * * * *
The imp drew near
With an ominous sneer
And said, with a most diabolical leer

"Fit every time,
"In every place.
"Still wear this smile upon your face.
"Should Fortune frown, or foe beguile
"Still wear this everlasting smile.
He then withdrew
From mortal view
And swiftly out by the chimney flew,
And what had happ'd
While in slumber wrapt
The baby napp'd
No one, not even its mother knew.



* * * * *
Soon, a terrible ache

Caused the child to awake
(It had eaten too much of the Christmas cake)



The Idler



And mother and nurse
Not knowing the curse,
But being beguiled, as the little chap smiled,
Gave him more cake and pudding

which made him worse.
And all were deceived
For no one believed
That a child while it smiled, could be sickly or grieved.



And as infancy passed
Into boyhood at last,
No one had detected nor even suspected
The shadow which over his life had been cast,
When at school, with his curious smile-haunted face
Amongst his companions he takes his place.
But the boys can't make out
What he's laughing about.

And indignant surprise



Is expressed in their eyes
As they whisper forbodingly "Wait till we're out!"

Even his teachers with like indignation, resent
Such unseemly, indecorous merriment.



So the poor little duffer
Has only to suffer
His pathway through life growing rougher and rougher

But how may I tell
What further befell
For what happened at school happened elsewhere as well
And wherever he went.

They mistook what he meant
And even at church misdivined his intent
For though really godfearing



They thought he was jeering
And said, "It must be at the Church he is sneering!"

So with noses in air,
And a horrified stare

At the impious boldness of one who could dare
Their Faith to deride —!

In sanctified pride
The godly passed by on the other side.

His odious impiety
Shocked their propriety,

And they one and all scouted him out of society.

(Of course this all happened quite long ago

This sort of thing isn't done now, you know

And who could object,

To their scorn and neglect

Of one who had shewed such a want of respect?

But alas! for the victim (whoever he be)

Of the pharisees' pride and malignity

Christmas morn breaks clear and fair

Christmas bells ring through the air

The snow lies white

In the morning light

And mirth and gladness are every where

Within the great cathedral pile

The anthem swells through the vaulted aisle

As the people raise their songs of praise

And the pealing organ is heard the while

Who is he? Stretched in the snow

On the marble steps at the western door

Who can he be? Does nobody know?



The Idler

The sound of the anthem sweet and clear
Faintly falls on his dying ear

"Peace on earth, good will to men
Joy has come to earth again"

And while the people kneel to pray
A broken spirit has passed away.

The service over

Through the great church door

They flock on their way through the world once more
When lo! in the shade
Of the portal, laid

On the spotless bier which the snow had made

"Now who can it possibly be?" they said

On his white drawn face

There is still the trace

Of a smile, so gruesome, so out of place —

And see! they said

He smiles tho' he's dead

What a happy life he must have led

Ah! often we make

A sorry mistake

When we think we can trace

By a tear or grimace

The thoughts of the heart, by the looks of the face



MARK TWAIN.

A CONGLOMERATE INTERVIEW, PERSONALLY CONDUCTED BY
LUKE SHARP.

I.—SHOWING REASONS FOR NOT INTERVIEWING.



I HAVE been asked to interview Mark Twain for *The Idler*. I have refused to do so, and I think it only fair to the public to state my reason for the refusal, before beginning the interview. It is simply because I am afraid of Mark Twain. When we were talking about interviewers a short time since, he said to me in slow and solemn tones that would have impressed a much braver man than I am :

“ If anyone ever interviews me again, I will send him a bill for five times what I would charge for an article the length of the interview.” Now such a threat means financial ruin to an ordinary man. However modest Mark Twain himself may be, his prices do not share that virtue with him. Baron Rothschild might be able to write a few words on a cheque which would cause that piece of penmanship to be of more value in the commercial world than a bit of Mark Twain's manuscript, but few men have the gift of making their “ copy ” as costly as the Baron and Mark Twain. I saw that if I ventured to interview Mark Twain I should very likely spend the rest of my natural life in eluding that gentleman and the bailiffs he employed. I have no desire to incur such a liability as would be represented by five times the amount of Twain's inflated prices. I have, therefore, invited several estimable gentlemen to assist me in this hazardous adventure. In

union there is strength, and while Mark Twain might run one or us down, he will find his hands full if he attempts to deal with us all together.

The pictures which illustrate this interview with Mark Twain were taken by a small but industrious Kodak, which

"Held him with its glittering eye,"

on board the French liner, "La Gascogne," at that moment approaching Havre. The anecdotes in the second section of this interview have been written for *The Idler* by Mr. Joseph Hatton.

II.—GOOD STORIES OF MARK IN LONDON.



WHAT do I know about Mark Twain? Not much. Nothing that is not pleasant. I would stick to that even if I were under cross-examination. No amount of bullying should induce me to try and remember anything that is not to his credit, as a man, an author, and—a champion prevaricator. I don't know when I have liked him most—when he has been telling the truth, and when he has not. What a pleasant, tantalising little kind of stammer it is! Charles Lamb's

was a real stutter—it must have been very delightful; and Travers, of New York, how captivating was his impediment!

"Why, Mr. Travers," said a lady, "you stammer more in New York than you did in Baltimore."

"B—b—bigger place," stammered Travers.

A chestnut you say? Well, what of that? There are chestnuts and chestnuts. Some men's chestnuts are better worth having than other men's newest stories. But as I was saying, Mark Twain's is not exactly a stutter; it is a drawl; not perhaps a drawl. Is it simply that he pauses in the right place? Or has he a dialect? It is quite clear he knows the value of his peculiarity

of speech whatever it is. Did you hear him lecture in London? The point that broke the general titter into a hearty laugh was when he talked about that very cold mountain out in Fiji or somewhere; "it is so cold up there that people can't speak the truth—I know, because I have been there."

When Mark Twain paid his earliest visit to London, he did me the honour once or twice to sit under my mahogany. The first time he came to my house it was to meet some thirty pleasant people at supper. It was his first entertainment in town. He was very desirous of observing the customs of the country. He came in a dress coat. That was all right. He was very glad he had put on his dress coat. He took the late Mrs. Howard Paul, a very clever, charming woman, down to supper. He consulted her touching certain social customs. She was in her way quite a humorist, and in those days a bright and lively woman. Knowing that on no account did I ever permit speech-making at my table; knowing, indeed, that even in artistic society this kind of thing is never resorted to, she explained to Mark Twain that quite the contrary was the case; that if he desired really to show that he was up to all the little tricks of the great world of London, he would, as the greatest stranger, if not the most important guest, rise and propose the host's health; that everybody would expect it from him, and so on. Presently, to the astonishment of everybody, Mark Twain arose, tall and gaunt, and began to drawl out in his odd if fascinating manner a series of complimentary comments upon the host, at the same time apologising for not being quite prepared with a speech, for the reason that the lady on his right had been instructing him all the night with personal stories of everybody at the table. The table squirmed a little at this. It had "no call" to squirm. It was above reproach. Genius, beauty, wealth, and even the nobility (he was a real lord if he was but a little one) were well represented; but you might have thought from his manner that Mark Twain had heard some very strange stories of his fellow-guests. It was a happy, clever, odd little speech; and both he and Mrs. Paul were forgiven—he for making it, she for misleading him as to the manners and customs of the world of Upper Bohemia.

If you are a humorist you can make mistakes that are condoned as witticisms; you can even be stupid, and someone will find fun in your very stupidity. People have always half a grin on their faces ready for the professed humorist before he begins to speak. I am not a humorist. One night at Kensington Gore,

when the late Mr. Bateman, the Lyceum manager, lived there, Irving told to Mark Twain and half a dozen others a very good story about a sheep. It was a very racy story, racy of the soil, I said, the soil being Scotland. Irving told it well, dramatising some of the incidents as he went along. He was encouraged to do so by the deep interest Twain took in it. I suggested to Twain that he should make a note of it; it seemed to me that it was one of those nationally characteristic anecdotes that was worth remembering, *because* it was characteristic, and national. Twain said, "Yes, he thought it a good idea to make a note or two of English humour—of national anecdotes in particular." He took out a small book, and quite won my heart by the modest, quiet way in which he made his memoranda about this story; I even gave him one or two points about it, fresh points. We were sitting in a corner of the room by this time, chatting in a friendly way, and Mark Twain seemed more than necessarily grateful for my suggestions. I had reason afterwards to wonder whether he thought I was chaffing him, or whether he was chaffing me. I did not know any more than Irving did that the story about the sheep was really one of Mark Twain's own stories.

I was innocent enough about it anyway, and Irving had never heard, I'll be bound, of the Hotten volume in which the narrative of the sheep and the good Samaritan had been set forth in Twain's best manner. It is quite possible that to this day Mark Twain is under the impression that I was engaged in a pleasant piece of fooling at Bateman's that night, and believed himself to be just as pleasantly checkmating me. Of course, he saw through the whole business. He pretended to fall into my little trap, which was not a trap at all. Perhaps he thought I was a humorist.

Do you know that he smokes three hundred cigars a year—or a month, I forget which—and that he once tried to break off the habit against which King James uttered his great but ineffective blast, and that after a fair test of life with and without tobacco he came to the conclusion that a weedless life would be too utter a failure even for an accidental humorist. He was no doubt right. I wonder if he consulted his conscience about it? Do you remember, how his conscience once visited him? It was his conscience, was it not? A little wizened, pinched thing that hopped about his study and talked to him. I don't remember a more weird bit of satire than his account of that strange visit. Such an egotistical, deformed little chap! And with such wise, strange, cutting words! I think I liked our friend the better for his story of that

graphically narrated meeting with his conscience. Mark Twain told an interviewer the other day that he disliked humorous books ; that he was only himself a humorist by accident. But what has he not told interviewers ?

III.—FLIRTING WITH THE LADY NICOTINE.



MR. HATTON appears to be in doubt whether Mark Twain smokes three hundred cigars a year—or a month. There is a slight difference both to tobaccoist and consumer. I have been told that his annual allowance is three thousand cigars. But it must not be thought that his devotion to tobacco stops at this trivial quantity. The cigars merely represent his dessert in the way of smoking. The solid repast of nicotine is taken by means of a corn-cob

pipe. The bowl of this pipe is made from the hollowed-out cob of an ear of Indian corn. It is a very light pipe, and it colours brown as you use it, and ultimately black, so they call it in America "The Missouri Meerschaum." I was much impressed by the ingenuity with which Mark Twain fills his corn-cob pipe. The humorist is an inspired Idler. He is a lazy man, and likes to do things with the least trouble to himself. He smokes a granulated tobacco which he keeps in a long check bag made of silk and rubber. When he has finished smoking, he knocks the residue from the bowl of the pipe, takes out the stem, places it in his vest pocket, like a pencil or a stylographic pen, and throws the bowl into the bag containing the granulated tobacco. When he wishes to smoke again (this is usually five minutes later) he fishes out the bowl, which is now filled with tobacco, inserts the stem, and strikes a light. Noticing that his pipe was very aged and black, and knowing that he was about to enter a country where corn-cob pipes are not, I asked him if he had brought a supply of pipes with him.

"Oh, no," he answered, "I never smoke a *new* corn-cob pipe. A new pipe irritates the throat. No corn-cob pipe is fit for anything until it has been used at least a fortnight."

"How do you manage then?" I asked. "Do you follow the example of the man with the tight boots;—wear them a couple of weeks before they can be put on?"

"No," said Mark Twain, "I always hire a cheap man—a man who doesn't amount to much, anyhow—who would be as well—or better—dead, and let him break in the pipe for me. I get him to smoke the pipe for a couple of weeks, then put in a new stem, and continue operations as long as the pipe holds together."

Mark Twain brought into France with him a huge package or boxes of cigars and tobacco which he took personal charge of. When he placed it on the deck while he lit a fresh cigar he put his foot on this package so as to be sure of its safety. He didn't appear to care what became of the rest of his luggage as long as the tobacco was safe.

"Going to smuggle that in?" I asked.

"No, sir. I'm the only man on board this steamer who has *any* tobacco. I will say to the Customs officer, 'Tax me what you like, but don't meddle with the tobacco.' They don't know what tobacco is in France."

Another devotee of the corn-cob pipe is Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who is even more of a *connoisseur* in pipes than is Mark Twain, which reminds me that Mr. Kipling interviewed Mr. Clemens, and, although the interview has been published before, I take the liberty of incorporating part of it in this symposium.

IV.—RUDYARD KIPLING ON MARK TWAIN.



HE re-curled himself into the chair and talked of other things.

"I spend nine months or the year at Hartford. I have long ago satisfied myself that there is no hope of doing much work during those nine months. People come in and call. They call at all hours, about everything in the world.

One day I thought I would keep a list of interruptions. It began this way. A man came but would

see no one but Mr. Clemens. *He* was an agent for photogravure reproductions of Salon pictures. I very seldom use Salon pictures in my books. After that man another man, who refused to see anyone but Mr. Clemens, came to make me write to Washington about something. I saw him. I saw a third man. Then a fourth. By this time it was noon. I had grown tired of keeping the list. I wished to rest. But the fifth man was the only one of the crowd with a card of his own. *Ben Koontz, Hannibal, Missouri.* I was raised in Hannibal. Ben was an old schoolmate of mine. Consequently I threw the house wide open and rushed with both hands out at a big, fat, heavy man, who was not the Ben I had ever known—nor anything of him. 'But is it you, Ben?' I said. 'You've altered in the last thousand years.' The fat man said, 'Well, I'm not Koontz, exactly, but I met him down in Missouri, an' he told me to be sure and call on you, an' he gave me his card and'—(here he acted the little scene for my benefit)—'if you'll wait a minute till I can get out the circulars—I'm not Koontz, exactly, but I'm travelling with the fullest line of rods you ever saw.'"

"And what happened?" I asked breathlessly.

"I shut the door. He was not Ben Koontz, exactly, not my old schoolfellow, but I had shaken him by both hands in love, and I had been boarded by a lightning-rod man in my own house.

As I was saying, I do very little work in Hartford. I come here for three months every year, and I work four or five hours a day in a study down the garden of that little house on the hill. Of course I do not object to two or three interruptions. When a man is in the full swing of his works these little things do not affect him. Eight or ten or twenty interruptions retard composition."

I was burning to ask him all manner of impertinent questions, as to which of his works he himself preferred, and so forth, but standing in awe of his eyes I dared not. He spoke on and I listened.

It was a question of mental equipment that was on the carpet, and I am still wondering whether he meant what he said.

"Personally I never care for fiction or story books. What I like to read about are facts and statistics of any kind. If they are only facts about the raising of radishes they interest me. Just now, for instance, before you came in"—he pointed to an Encyclopædia on the shelves—"I was reading an article about mathematics—perfectly pure mathematics. My own knowledge of mathematics stops at twelve times twelve, but I enjoyed that article immensely. I didn't understand a word of it, but facts—or what a man believes to be facts—are always delightful. That mathematical fellow believed in his facts. So do I. Get your facts first, and"—the voice died away to an almost inaudible drone—"then you can distort 'em as much as you please."

Bearing this precious advice in my bosom I left, the great man assuring me with gentle kindness that I had not interrupted him in the least. Once outside the door I yearned to go back and ask some questions—it was easy enough to think of them now—but his time was his own, though his books belonged to me.

I should have ample time to look back to that meeting across the graves of the days. But it was sad to think of the things he had not spoken about. In San Francisco the men of the *Call* told me many legends of Mark's apprenticeship in their paper five and twenty years ago—how he was a reporter, delightfully incapable of reporting according to the needs of the day. He preferred, so they said, to coil himself into a heap and meditate till the last minute. Then he would produce copy bearing no sort of relationship to his legitimate work—copy that made the editor swear horribly and the readers of the *Call* ask for more. I should like to have heard Mark's version of that and some stories of his joyous and renegated past. He has been journeyman printer (in those days, he wandered from the banks of the Missouri even to

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Philadelphia), pilot cub, and full-blown pilot, soldier of the South (that was for three weeks only), private secretary to a Lieutenant-Governor of Nevada (that displeased him), miner, editor, special correspondent in the Sandwich Islands, and the Lord only knows what else.

V.—MARK TWAIN ON RUDYARD KIPLING.



I ASKED Mark Twain if he remembered Kipling's visit to him at Elmira. He said he did. He was apparently much impressed by the young Anglo-Indian, and thought the young man would be heard from, although, at the time, he was entirely unknown. Twain kept Kipling's card, and when the latter became famous he looked up the card, and found that the writer who had caused such a sensation in the literary world of London was the man who had visited him.

This gave Mark Twain the opportunity of remarking, "I told you so," which he generously refrained from saying. He thinks that young writers might profitably study the works of Kipling if they wish to see how a story can be tersely, vigorously, humorously, and dramatically told.

Mark Twain has not a very high opinion of interviewers in general. He said, "I have, in my time, succeeded in writing some very poor stuff, which I have put in pigeon-holes until I realised how bad it was, and then destroyed it. But I think the poorest article I ever wrote and destroyed was better worth reading than any interview with me that ever was published. I would like," he added, "just once to interview myself in order to show the possibilities of the interview." He partly promised to do this, and let me have the result, so that it might be published in *The Idler*, but up to the hour of going to press the "copy" has not been received. I tried to show him the vast opportunities that lie before the man who interviews himself. I told him that if he did

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it truthfully and faithfully there was every chance of his being arrested the moment he set foot in any civilised country. A man knows his own weak points, and can, therefore, cross-examine himself with an effectiveness that a stranger could not hope to emulate. If he has committed any crimes he can lay them bare, and although he can escape the inquisitiveness of an outside interviewer, he cannot escape from himself.

We were leaning over the rail of the steamer as I pictured to him the advantages of self-interviewing, and I fancied that his bronzed cheek became paler as he fully realised the possibilities. I do not wish to accuse the humorist of anything indictable, but merely want to point out that up to date he has not attempted that interview with himself.

I give now an extract from an interview which Mark Twain did not like. He says that the man who interviewed him did so for the purpose of publishing the interview in England, but sold it instead to a New York paper. "They come," says Mark Twain, "to me on the social tack, and visit my house with a letter of introduction. I try to treat them well, and then the next thing I know the conversation appears in some paper."

VI.—MARK TWAIN HAS "NO GREAT TASTE FOR HUMOUR."



"I HOLD that T. B. Aldrich is the wittiest man I ever met. I don't believe his match ever existed on this earth.

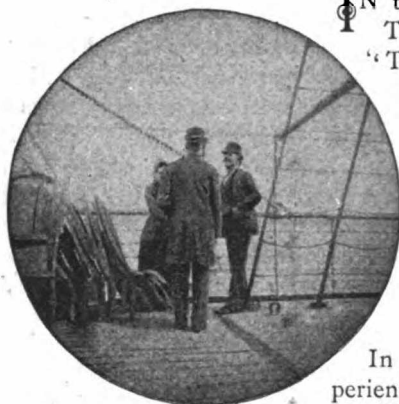
It is not guesswork, this estimate of mine as regards the limits of my humour and my power of appreciating humour generally, because with my book-shelf full of books before me I should certainly read all the biography and history first, then all the diaries and personal memoirs, and then the dictionaries and the cyclopædias. Then, if still alive, I should read what humorist books might be there. That is an absolutely perfect test and proof that I have no great taste for humour. I have friends to whom you cannot mention a humorous book they

have not read. I was asked several years ago to write such a paper as that you suggest on 'Humour, and the comparative merits of different national humour, and I began it, but I got tired of it very soon. I have written humorous books by pure accident in the beginning, and but for that accident I should not have written anything.

At the same time that leaning towards the humorous, for I do not deny that I have a certain tendency towards humour, would have manifested itself in the pulpit or on the platform, but it would have been only the embroidery, it would not have been the staple of the work. My theory is that you tumble by accident into anything. The public then puts a trademark on to your work, and after that you can't introduce anything into commerce without the trademark. I never have wanted to write literature; it is not my calling. Bret Harte, for instance, by one of those accidents of which I speak, published the 'Heathen Chinees,' which he had written for his own amusement. He threw it aside, but being one day suddenly called upon for copy he sent that very piece in. It put a trademark on him, at once, and he had to avoid all approaches to that standard for many a long day in order that he might get rid of that mark. If he had added three or four things of a similar nature within twelve months, he would never have got away from the consequences during his lifetime. But he made a purposely determined stand; he abolished the trademark and conquered."

Whether Mark Twain liked the above interview or not, it is certainly true in one respect—that he thinks Mr. T. B. Aldrich the most humorous man in America. Mr. Clemens looks upon himself as, in reality, a serious man, and a glance at the excellent portrait published as a frontispiece to this magazine will show that his looks carry out the idea. He said that he and Aldrich were staying together at an hotel in Rome. Aldrich came in and said to him, "Clemens, you think you're famous! You have conceit enough for anything. Now, *you* don't know what real popularity is. I have just been asking that man on the *Piazza di Spagna* for my books. *He hasn't one*,—not *one*. They're all sold. He simply can't supply the demand. It's the same all over Europe. I've never seen one of my books *anywhere*. They're gone. Now, look at *your* books. Why, that unfortunate man on the *Piazza* has 1,600 of them. He's ruined, Clemens. He'll never sell 'em. The people are reading mine. That's genuine popularity."

VII.—THE EVIDENT FOUNDATION OF "THE AMERICAN CLAIMANT."



IN this number of *The Idler*, Mark Twain begins his new story, "The American Claimant." Although the novelist does not say so, it is evident that the story was suggested to him by his own family history. This fact comes out incidentally in Mark Twain's article, entitled "Mental Telegraphy," which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1890.

In relating the extraordinary experiences he has had in mental

telegraphy, Mark Twain says :—

"My mother is descended from the younger of two English brothers, named Lambton, who settled in America a few generations ago. The tradition goes that the elder of the two eventually fell heir to a certain estate in England (now an earldom), and died right away. This has always been the way with our family, they always die when they could make anything by not doing it. The two Lambtons left plenty of Lambtons behind them; and when, at last, about fifty years ago, the English baronetcy was exalted to an earldom, the great tribe of American Lambtons began to bestir themselves—that is, those descended from the elder branch. Ever since that day, one or another of these has been fretting his life uselessly away with schemes to get at his 'rights.' The present 'rightful earl'—I mean the American one—used to write me occasionally, and try to interest me in his projected raids upon the title and estates by offering me a share in the latter portion of the spoil; but I have always managed to resist his temptations.

Well, one day last summer, I was lying under a tree, thinking about nothing in particular, when an absurd idea flashed into my head, and I said to a member of the household, 'Suppose I should live to be ninety-two, and dumb and blind and toothless, and just as I was gasping out what was left of me, on my death-bed——'

'Wait, I will finish the sentence,' said the member of the household.

'Go on,' said I.

'Somebody should rush in with a document, and say, 'All the other heirs are dead, and you are the Earl of Durham!'

That is truly what I was going to say. Yet until that moment the subject had not entered my mind or been referred to in my hearing for months before. A few years ago this thing would have astonished me, but the like could not much surprise me now, though it happened every week; for I think I *know* now that mind can communicate accurately with mind without the aid of the slow and clumsy vehicle of speech."

This conglomerate interview will now be concluded by a poem from the pen of Oliver Wendell Holmes, which, as far as I know, has never before been published in England.

VIII.—TO "MARK TWAIN," S. L. CLEMENS.

On his fiftieth birthday.)



AH! Clemens, when I saw thee
last,

We both of us were younger,
How fondly rambling o'er the
past,

Is memory's toothless hun-
ger.

So fifty years have fled, they
say,

Since first you took to
drinking,

I mean in Nature's milky way,
Of course no ill I'm thinking.

But while on life's uneven road,

Your track you've been pursuing,

What fountains from your wit have flowed,

What drinks you have been brewing.

I know whence all your magic came,

Your secret I've discovered,

The source that fed your inward flame,

The dreams that round you hovered.

Before you learned to bite or munch,
Still kicking in your cradle,
The Muses mixed a bowl of Punch,
And Hebe seized the ladle.

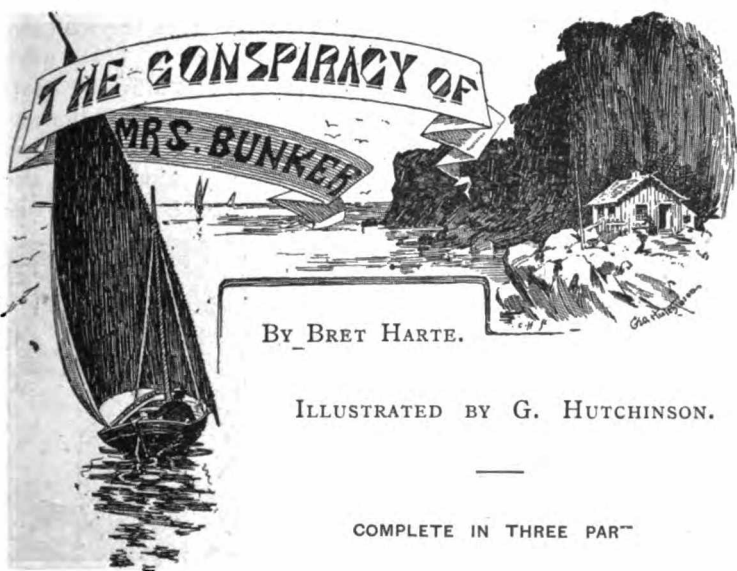
Dear Babe, whose fiftieth year to-day,
Your ripe half-century rounded,
Your looks the precious draught betray
The laughing Nine compounded.

So mixed the sweet, the sharp, the strong,
Each finds its faults amended,
The virtues that to each belong,
In happiest union blended.


And what the flavor can surpass,
Of sugar, spirits, lemons?
So while one health fills every glass,
Mark Twain for Baby Clemens.

O. W. HOLMES.





I.


 N the northerly shore of San Francisco Bay a line of bluffs terminates in a promontory, at whose base, formed by the crumbling *débris* of the cliff above, there is a narrow stretch of beach, salt meadow, and scrub oak. The abrupt wall of rock behind it seems to isolate it as completely from the mainland as the sea before it separates it from the opposite shore. In spite of its contiguity to San Francisco—opposite also, but hidden by the sharp re-entering curve of coast—the locality was wild, uncultivated, and unfrequented. A solitary fisherman's cabin half-hidden in the rocks was the only trace of habitation. White drifts of sea-gulls and pelican across the face of the cliff, grey clouds of sandpipers rising from the beach, the dripping flight of ducks over the salt meadows, and the occasional splash of a seal from the rocks, were the only signs of life that could be seen from the decks of passing ships. And yet the fisherman's cabin was occupied by Zephas Bunker and his young wife, and he had succeeded in wresting from the hard soil pasturage for a cow and goats, while his lateen-sailed fishing boat occasionally rode quietly in the sheltered cove below.

Three years before Zephas Bunker, an ex-whaler, had found himself stranded on a San Francisco wharf and had "hired out" to

a small Petaluma farmer. At the end of a year, he had acquired little taste for the farmer's business, but considerable for the farmer's youthful daughter, who, equally weary of small agriculture, had consented to elope with him in order to escape it. They were married at Oakland; he put his scant earnings into a fishing boat, discovered the site for his cabin, and brought his bride thither. The novelty of the change pleased her, although perhaps it was but little advance on her previous humble position. Yet she preferred her present freedom to the bare restricted home life of her past; the perpetual presence of the restless sea was a relief to the old monotony of the wheat field and its isolated drudgery. For Mary's youthful fancy, thinly sustained in childhood by the lightest literary food, had neither been stimulated nor disillusioned by her marriage. That practical experience which is usually the end of girlish romance had left her still a child in sentiment. The long absences of her husband in his fishing boat kept her from wearying of or even knowing his older and unequal companionship; it gave her a freedom her girlhood had never known, yet added a protection that suited her still childish dependency, while it tickled her pride with its equality. When not engaged in her easy household duties in her three-roomed cottage, or the care of her rocky garden patch, she found time enough to indulge her fancy over the mysterious

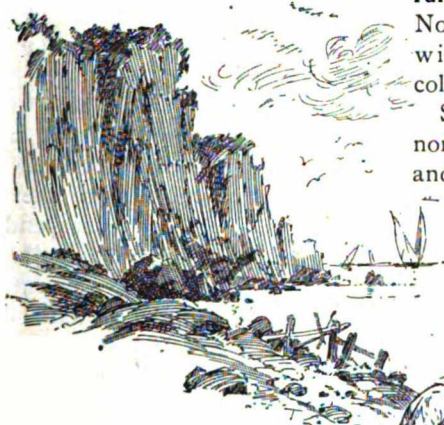


haze that wrapped the invisible city so near and yet unknown to her; in the sails that slipped in and out of the Golden Gate, but of whose destination she knew nothing; and in the long smoke trail of the mail steamer which had yet brought her no message. Like all dwellers by the sea, her face and her thoughts were more frequently turned towards it; and as with them, it also seemed to

her that whatever change was coming into her life would come across that vast unknown expanse. But it was here that Mrs. Bunker was mistaken.

It had been a sparkling summer morning. The waves were running before the dry North-west Trade winds with crystalline but colourless brilliancy.

Sheltered by the high, northerly bluff, the house and its garden were exposed to the untempered heat of the cloudless sun re-



fracted from the rocky wall behind it. Some tarpaulin and ropes lying among the rocks were sticky and odorous; the scrub oaks and manzanita bushes gave out the aroma of baking wood; occasionally a faint *pot-pourri* fragrance from the hot wild roses and beach grass was blown along the shore; even the lingering odours of Bunker's vocation, and of Mrs. Bunker's cooking, were idealised and refined by the saline breath of the sea at the doors and windows. Mrs. Bunker, in the dazzling sun, bending over her peas and lettuces with a small hoe, felt the comfort of her brown holland



sun-bonnet. Secure in her isolation, she unbuttoned the neck of her gown for air, and did not put up the strand of black hair that had escaped over her shoulder. It was very hot in the lee of the bluff, and very quiet in that still air. So quiet that she heard two distinct reports, following each other quickly, but very faint and far. She glanced mechanically towards the sea. Two merchantmen in mid-stream were shaking out their wings for a long flight, a pilot boat and coasting schooner were rounding the point, but there was no smoke from their decks. She bent over her work again, and in another moment had forgotten it. But the heat, with the dazzling



reflection from the cliff, forced her to suspend her gardening, and stroll along the beach to the extreme limit of her domain. Here she looked after the cow, who had also strayed away through the tangled bush for coolness. The goats, impervious to temperature, were basking in inaccessible fastnesses on the cliff itself that made her eyes

ache to climb. Over an hour passed, she was returning, and had neared her house, when she was suddenly startled to see the figure of a man between her and the cliff. He was engaged in brushing his dusty clothes with a handkerchief, and although he saw her coming, and even moved slowly towards her, continued his occupation with a half-impatient, half-abstracted air. Her feminine perception was struck with the circumstance that he was in deep black, with scarcely a gleam of white showing even at his throat, and that he wore a tall black hat. Without knowing anything of social customs, it seemed to her that his dress was inconsistent with his appearance there.

"Good morning," he said, lifting his hat with a preoccupied air. "Do you live here?"

"Yes," she said wonderingly.

"Anybody else?"

"My husband."

"I mean any other people? Are there any other houses?" he said with a slight impatience.

"No."

He looked at her and then towards the sea. "I expect some friends who are coming for me in a boat. I suppose they can land easily here?"

"Didn't you land yourself here just now?" she said quickly.

He half hesitated, and then, as if scorning an equivocation, made a hasty gesture over her shoulder and said bluntly, "No, I came over the cliff."

"Down the cliff!" she repeated incredulously.

"Yes," he said, glancing at his clothes; "it was a rough scramble, but the goats showed me the way."

"And you were up on the bluff all the time?" she went on curiously.

"Yes. You see—I——," he stopped suddenly at what seemed to be the beginning of a pre-arranged and plausible explanation, as if impatient of its weakness or hypocrisy, and said briefly: "Yes—I was there."

Like most women, more observant of his face and figure, she did not miss this lack of explanation. He was a very good-looking man of middle age, with a thin, proud, high-bred face, which in a country of bearded men had the further distinction of being smoothly shaven. She had never seen anyone like him before. She thought he looked like an illustration of some novel she had read, but also somewhat melancholy, worn, and tired.

"Won't you come in and rest yourself?" she said, motioning to the cabin.

"Thank you," he said, still half absently. "Perhaps I'd better. It may be some time yet before they come."

She led the way to the cabin, entered the living room—a plainly furnished little apartment between the bedroom and the kitchen—pointed to a large bamboo armchair, and placed a bottle of whiskey and some water on the table before him. He thanked her again very gently, poured out some spirits in his glass, and mixed it with water. But when she glanced towards him again he had apparently risen without tasting it, and going to the door was standing there with his hand in the breast of his buttoned frock coat, gazing silently towards the sea. There was something vaguely historical in his attitude—or what she thought might be historical—as of somebody of great importance who had halted on the eve of some great event at the door of her humble cabin.

His apparent unconsciousness of her and of his surroundings, his pre-occupation with something far beyond her ken, far from piquing her, only excited her interest the more. And then there was such an odd sadness in his eyes.



"Are you anxious for your folks coming?" she said at last, following his outlook.

"I—oh no!" he returned, quickly recalling himself, "they'll

be sure to come—sooner or later. No fear of that," he added half smilingly, half wearily.

Mrs. Bunker passed into the kitchen, where, while apparently attending to her household duties, she could still observe her singular guest. Left alone, he seated himself mechanically in the chair, and gazed fixedly at the fireplace. He remained a long time so quiet and unmoved, in spite of the marked ostentatious clatter Mrs. Bunker found it necessary to make with her dishes, that an odd fancy that he was scarcely a human visitant began to take possession of her. Yet she was not frightened. She remembered distinctly afterwards that far from having any concern for herself, she was only moved by a strange and vague admiration of him.

But her prolonged scrutiny was not without effect. Suddenly he raised his dark eyes, and she felt them pierce the obscurity of her kitchen with a quick, suspicious, impatient penetration, which as they met hers, gave way, however, to a look that she thought was gently reproachful. Then he rose, stretched himself to his full height, and approaching the kitchen door leaned listlessly against the door post.



"I don't suppose you are ever lonely here?"

"No, sir."

"Of course not. You have yourself and husband. Nobody interferes with you. You are contented and happy together."

Mrs. Bunker did not say, what was the fact, that she had never before connected the sole companionship of her husband with her happiness. Perhaps it had never occurred to her until that moment how little it had to do with it. She only smiled gratefully at the change in her guest's abstraction.

"Do you often go to San Francisco?" he continued.

"I have never been there at all. Some day I expect we will go there to live."

"I wouldn't advise you to," he said, looking at her gravely. "I don't think it will pay you. You'll never be happy there as here. You'll never have the independence and freedom you have here. You'll never be your own mistress again. But how does it happen you never were in San Francisco?" he said suddenly.

If he would not talk of himself, here at least was a chance for Mrs. Bunker to say something. She related how her family had emigrated from Kansas across the plains and had taken up a "location" at Contra Costa. How she didn't care for it, and how she came to marry the seafaring man who brought her here—all with great simplicity and frankness and as unreservedly as to a superior being—albeit his attention wandered at times, and a rare but melancholy smile that he had apparently evoked to meet her conversational advances, became fixed occasionally. Even his dark eyes which had obliged Mrs. Bunker to put up her hair, and button her collar, rested upon her without seeing her.

"Then your husband's name is Bunker?" he said when she paused at last. "That's one of those Nantucket Quaker names—sailors and whalers for generations—and yours, you say was MacEwan. Well, Mrs. Bunker, *your* family came from Kentucky to Kansas only lately, though I suppose your father calls himself a Free-States man. You ought to know something of farming and cattle, for your ancestors were old Scotch Covenanters who emigrated a hundred years ago, and were great stock raisers."

All this seemed only the natural omniscience of a superior being. And Mrs. Bunker perhaps was not pained to learn that her husband's family was of a lower degree than her own. But the stranger's knowledge did not end there. He talked of her husband's business—he explained the vast fishing resources of the bay and coast. He showed her how the large colony of Italian fishermen were inimical to the interests of California and to her husband—particularly as a native American trader. He told her of the volcanic changes of the bay and coast line, of the formation of the rocky ledge on which she lived. He pointed out to her its value to the Government for defensive purposes, and how it naturally commanded the entrance of the Golden Gate far better than Fort Point, and that it ought to be in its hands. If the Federal Government did not buy it of her husband, certainly the State of California should. And here he fell into an abstraction as deep and as gloomy as before. He walked to the window, paced

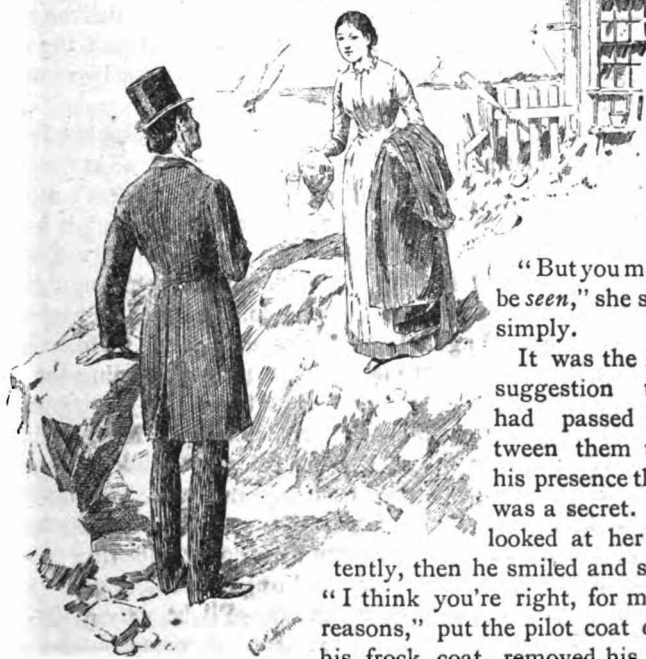
the floor with his hand in his breast, went to the door, and finally stepped out of the cabin, moving along the ledge of rocks to the shore, where he stood motionless.

Mrs. Bunker had listened to him with parted lips and eyes of eloquent admiration. She had never before heard anyone talk like *that*—she had not believed it possible that anyone could have such knowledge. Perhaps she could not understand all he said, but she would try to remember it after he had gone. She could only think now how kind it was of him that in all this mystery of his coming and in the singular sadness that was oppressing him, he should try to interest her. And thus looking at him, and wondering, an idea came to her.

She went into her bedroom and took down her husband's heavy pilot overcoat and sou'-wester, and handed them to her guest.

"You'd better put them on if you're going to stand there," she said.

"But I am not cold," he said, wonderingly.



"But you might be *seen*," she said, simply.

It was the first suggestion that had passed between them that his presence there was a secret. He looked at her in-

tently, then he smiled and said, "I think you're right, for many reasons," put the pilot coat over his frock coat, removed his hat

with the gesture of a bow, handed it to her, and placed the sou'-wester in its stead. Then for an instant he hesitated as if about

to speak, but Mrs. Bunker, with a delicacy that she could not herself comprehend at the moment, hurried back to the cabin without giving him an opportunity.

Nor did she again intrude upon his meditations. Hidden in his disguise, which to her eyes did not, however, seem to conceal his characteristic figure, he wandered for nearly an hour under the bluff and along the shore, returning at last almost mechanically to the cabin, where oblivious of his surroundings he re-seated himself in silence by the table with his cheek resting on his hand. Presently, her quick, experienced ear detected the sound of oars in their rowlocks; she could plainly see from her kitchen window a small boat with two strangers seated at the stern being pulled to the shore. With the same strange instinct of delicacy, she determined not to go out lest her presence might embarrass her guest's reception of his friends. But as she turned towards the living room she found he had already risen and was removing his hat and pilot coat. She was struck, however, by the circumstance that not only did he exhibit no feeling of relief at his deliverance, but that a half cynical, half savage expression had taken the place of his former melancholy. As he went to the door, the two gentlemen hastily clambered up the rocks to greet him.

"Jim reckoned it was you hangin' round the rocks, but I couldn't tell at that distance. Seemed you borrowed a hat and coat. Well—it's all fixed, and we've no time to lose. There's a coasting steamer just dropping down below the Heads, and it will take you aboard. But I can tell you you've kicked up a h—ll of a row over there." He stopped, evidently at some sign from her guest. The rest of the man's speech followed in a hurried whisper which was stopped again by the voice she knew. "No. Certainly not." The next moment his tall figure was darkening the door of the kitchen; his hand was outstretched. "Good-bye, Mrs. Bunker, and many thanks for your hospitality. My friends here," he turned grimly to the men behind him, "think I ought to ask you to keep this a secret even from your husband. *I don't!* They also think that I ought to offer you money for your kindness. *I don't.* But if you will honour me by keeping this ring in remembrance of it"—he took a heavy seal ring from his finger—"it's the only bit of jewelry I have about me—I'll be very glad. Good-bye!" She felt for a moment the firm, soft pressure of his long, thin fingers around her own, and then—he was gone. The sound of retreating oars grew fainter and fainter and was lost. The same reserve of delicacy which now appeared to her as a duty kept her

from going to the window to watch the destination of the boat. No, he should go as he came, without her supervision or knowledge.

Nor did she feel lonely afterwards. On the contrary, the silence and solitude of the isolated domain had a new charm. They kept the memory of her experience intact, and enabled her to refill it with his presence. She could see his tall figure again pausing before her cabin, without the incongruous association of another personality; she could hear his voice again, unmingled with one more familiar. For the first time, the regular absence of her husband seemed an essential good fortune instead of an accident of their life. For the experience belonged to *her*, and not to him and her together. He could not



understand it; he would have acted differently and spoiled it. She should not tell him anything of it, in spite of the stranger's suggestion, which, of course, he had only made because he didn't know Zephas as well as she did. For Mrs. Bunker was getting on rapidly; it was her first admission of the conjugal knowledge that one's husband is inferior to the outside estimate of him. The next step—the belief that he was deceiving *her* as he was *them*—would be comparatively easy.

Nor should she show him the ring. The stranger had certainly never said anything about that! It was a heavy ring, with a helmeted head carved on its red cornelian stone, and what looked like strange letters around it. It fitted her third finger perfectly; but *his* fingers were small, and he had taken it from his little finger. She should keep it herself. Of course, if it had been money, she would have given it to Zephas; but the stranger knew that she wouldn't take money. How firmly he

had said that "I don't." She felt the warm blood fly to her fresh young face at the thought of it. He had understood her. She might be living in a poor cabin, doing all the housework herself, and her husband only a fisherman; but he had treated her like a lady.

And so the afternoon passed. The outlying fog began to roll in at the Golden Gate, obliterating the headland and stretching a fleecy bar across the channel as if shutting out from vulgar eyes the way that he had gone. Night fell, but Zephas had not yet come. This was unusual, for he was generally as regular as the afternoon "trades" which blew him there. There was nothing to detain him in this weather and at this season. She began to be vaguely uneasy; then a little angry at this new development of his incompatibility. Then it occurred to her, for the first time in her wifehood, to think what she would do if he were lost. Yet, in spite of some pain, terror, and perplexity at the possibility, her dominant thought was that she would be a free woman to order her life as she liked.

It was after ten before his lateen sail flapped in the little cove. She was waiting to receive him on the shore. His good-humoured hirsute face was slightly apologetic in expression, but flushed and disturbed with some new excitement to which an extra glass or two of spirits had apparently added intensity. The contrast between his evident indulgence and the previous abstemiousness of her late guest struck her unpleasantly. "Well—I declare," she said indignantly, "so *that's* what kept you!"

"No," he said quickly—"there's been awful times over in 'Frisco! Everybody just wild, and the Vigilance Committee in session. Jo Henderson's killed! Shot by Wynyard Marion in a duel! He'll be lynched, sure as a gun, if they ketch him."

"But I thought men who fought duels always went free."

"Yes, but this aint no common duel; they say the whole thing was planned beforehand by them Southern fire-eaters to get rid o' Henderson because he's a Northern man and Anti-Slavery, and that they picked out Colonel Marion to do it because he was a dead shot. They got him to insult



Henderson, so he was bound to challenge Marion, and that giv' Marion the chyce of weppings. It was a reg'lar put up job to kill him."

"And what's all this to do with you?" she asked, with irritation.

"Hold on, won't you! and I'll tell you. I was pickin' up nets off Sancelito about noon, when I was hailed by one of them Vigilance tugs, and they set me to stand off and on the shore and watch that Marion didn't get away, while they were scoutin' inland. Ye see *the duel took place just over the bluff there—behind ye*—and they allowed that Marion had struck away North for Mendocino to take ship there. For after overhaulin' his second's boat, they found out that they had come away from Sancelito *alone*. But they sent a tug around by sea to Mendocino to head him off there, while they're closin' in around him inland. They're bound to catch him sooner or later. But you aint listenin', Molly?"

She was—in every fibre—but with her head turned towards the window, and the invisible Golden Gate through which the fugitive had escaped.

For she saw it all now—that glorious vision—her high-bred, handsome guest and Wynyard Marion were one and the same person. And this rough, common-place man before her—her own husband—had been basely set to capture him!



(TO BE CONTINUED)



Robert Barr
grieved that
there is no
making of new
books and
magazines in
these days.

THEN there was another thing. It was felt that the time had come when a new monthly magazine ought really to be published. Whether the founders of our present system of education realised the possibility or not, the working of the scheme has resulted in a large increase to the number of people who can read. You would imagine that the demand would have created a supply. But look at our bookstalls to-day! Almost nothing on them. Here is a great reading population crying out for printed matter, and yet nobody seems to pay any attention to the appeal. Think what an opportunity the recent festive holiday season might have supplied to an enterprising publisher, yet no one seems to have thought of bringing out a Christmas number! It could easily have been done. All that would have been needed would have been a few stories by somebody on any subject except that of Christmas; and, if the publisher had wanted to indulge in a special freak of originality, he might have given away a coloured plate—something startling and new, as, for instance, a picture of a child and a dog. It is deplorable that none of these things were thought of; but,

never mind, you wait. We'll get out a Christmas number ourselves at the end of this year, just to show the possibilities of the idea.

Furthermore, we hope to be the means of bringing before the public youthful talent. We have an eye for the discovery of youthful talent. Why, take this very first number of ours. Who do you find in it? Mark Twain, Bret Harte, James Payn, and Andrew Lang. *He desireth to encourage the young men.* You say these men are unknown. Maybe. But it will not be for long. I tell you we mean to make those names famous wherever the English language is spoken—even brokenly. I predict—and am not like some prophets who reserve their predictions until after the event—that all these writers will leave their mark upon the literature of the day—especially Twain. I have real hopes of Twain. I met him awhile ago, and he talked so entertainingly that I took him aside and asked him why he didn't try to write something funny. He seemed staggered by the boldness of the idea, but finally consented to try. The result will be found in the first pages of *The Idler*. It was the same way with young Harte. He sat and told us his adventures. They were many and marvellous. I thought it a pity such a talent for fiction should be wasted, so I drew him into a corner and whispered to him, "Why don't you try to write a story?" He, too, was surprised at the suggestion. He said he didn't like. But I persuaded him. So it was with the others. I goaded them on to write; and I am convinced they will never regret it.

I have one or two proposals which I wish to make. I believe that if they were carried out, they would benefit humanity; and I should like to be written as one who loved his fellow-men. I have decided to make these proposals in *The Idler*, because previous to the publication of this number, I have found absolutely nothing in *The Idler* to which I have been able to take objection. It can look back upon its past without a blush. I am speaking in a perfectly disinterested spirit, and with a full determination to be paid for this conversation. *Barry Payn wisheth to propose.*

His first proposal. My first proposal is aimed at the further improvement of amateur theatricals. We all know how amateur theatricals tend to brighten the home. They are especially common at Christmas-time, the season of peace and goodwill, when the amateurs all fight like cats to get the fattest parts. One of the commonest objections to the amateur actor is that he either cannot or will not remember his lines. A suggestion might be taken from "*L'Enfant Prodigue*," were it not for another very common objection to the amateur actor, that he cannot act. My proposal is that amateur performances shall take place in dumb show and also in the dark; it disposes of the objections which I have mentioned; it does away with the cost of scenery and dresses; it is cheaper and less dangerous than the common practice of chloroforming the audience. If the operation is performed under these two conditions—in dumb show and in the dark—it is quite safe and practically painless. Turn out the gas and leave the rest to the imagination of the audience. I may add that any amateur company, wishing to perform in this way, can do so without the payment of any fee. I trust entirely to spontaneous thank-offerings from the prompter and the audience.

Zangwill speaketh of things humorous. I agree with you that to start anything exclusively funny is a serious mistake. This was why poor Henry J. Byron's *Mirth* was so short-lived. It died of laughing. A friend of mine, with a hopeless passion for psychological analysis, says that the reason people do not laugh over comic papers is that the element of the unexpected is wanting. This, he claims, is the essence of the comic. You laugh over a humorous remark in the middle of a serious essay, over a witty epigram flashed upon a grave conversation, over the slipping into the gutter of a ponderous gentleman—it is the shock of contrast, the flash of surprise, that tickles. Now this explanation of why people do not laugh over comic papers is obviously wrong, because you *are* surprised when you see a joke in a comic paper; at the same time, it contains an element of truth. The books which gain a reputation for brilliance are those which are witty at wide intervals; the writer who scintillates steadily

stands in his own light. Hobbes, in his theory of the cause or laughter, overlooked this element of contrast and incongruity, and I never laughed so much in my life as when I asked for his works at the Museum, and received a treatise on locks (no pun intended) by another writer of the same name. It, however, brought me in a guinea by enabling me to do a *Globe* turnover on "How locks are picked," and so Hobbes is one of the few philosophers to whom I feel indebted. A last advantage of not labelling things "comic" is that if you fail to be funny you have a chance of being taken seriously.

My second proposal is to establish a club for millionaires. We see suffering all around us, and it is useless to close our eyes to it. There are millionaires in our midst; and, whether we like it or not, they are our brothers and sisters. Putting it on grounds which will appeal to everyone—I mean the lowest possible grounds—we cannot afford to miss an opportunity of making a little out of them. If we explore the region of the docks, we find separate homes there for sailors of every nationality; there is even a home for lost dogs. But nowhere do we find a home for millionaires. I propose to establish a proprietary club for them, a little room with a sanded floor, where they will find that absence of luxury which they must miss so much. They will be able to get a chop or steak there; wine will not be served, but a boy will fetch them beer if they feel that they don't want it; a large cup of cocoa will be one penny, and a small one will be half-a-crown. I have forgotten my reason for that last regulation, but I remember that it was logical. One of the cheaper evening papers will be taken, and members of the club can have it in turn; or, if they prefer it, they can do without it. I have no wish to limit their liberty more than is absolutely necessary for their own discomfort. Everything that can be done to make the place nasty will be done. I intend, for the protection of the general public, to make the club exclusive. Only millionaires will be eligible. There will be an entrance fee of a thousand guineas and an annual subscription of one hundred. The subscriptions, together with a statement of the place of their birth, if any, must be forwarded in advance to the proprietor. I shall be the proprietor myself.

Barry Dagn
sympathiseth
with the
millionaires.

I have other proposals to make, but these are enough
 he threateneth. for the present. I may have occasion to refer to the
 subject again, but I make no threats.

**Zangwill
 distinguisheth
 between
 men of deeds
 and men of
 works.**

Has anybody read Mrs. Grimwood's book? Several of you have reviewed it, I know. Delightful as it is, it will only encourage women of action to usurp the functions of men of letters. The literary market is inundated with people who have no right to a stall. Aristocrats are badgered for books merely because they have the titles; and to have achieved success in any other profession than literature is the surest recommendation to the favour of the publishers. If I had to start my literary career over again, I should commence by hopping on one leg through the Pyrenees, or figuring in a big divorce case; anything short of assassination, which makes one's success too posthumous. It is most unfair, this doubling of the parts of doing and writing. Our modern heroes and heroines are quite too self-conscious; amid all their deeds of derring-do they have their eye on Mudie's. The old way was better. Even before the Pyramids were reared, when books were pictures and letters were cuneiform, heroes had their poets and kings their laureates. You can no more imagine Agamemnon, after the fall of Troy, rushing off to write an account of it for Bentley's than you can imagine Helen certifying that she found Pears' soap matchless for the complexion. It was better for the heroes as well as for the writers. Æneas would never have dared to draw such constant attention to his "piety" as Virgil does; and even Louis Quatorze would have hesitated to describe the taking of Namur in the language of Boileau—

Et vous, vents, faites silence :

Je vais parler de Louis.

The true hero nowadays is the man who conquers himself and does not write books.

**Robert Barr
 explaineth
 things to the
 rejected
 contributor.**

Oh, by-the-bye, if anybody gets his MSS. sent back from this magazine, he must understand that it is the Sub-editor's doing. So far as Jerome and myself are concerned, we are always ready to take anything we can lay our hands on. Indeed, that has been the principle that has guided us from childhood. But our Sub is a cold, calculating villain, without a spark of kindly feeling in him. As for his taste in literature, it is simply beneath contempt.

He invariably rejects the most brilliant stories and articles that are sent into the office; and passes on to us only that rubbish that his experience tells him the British public will care for. He knows the British public, and that is why we have chosen him. We—the Editors—could never run a popular magazine by ourselves. We are too cultured. If we had our way we should fill this magazine with Elizabethan poetry, and essays on Homer. Literature is poured in upon us that we ourselves would be delighted to publish. But that miserable Sub of ours returns it with insincere compliments. It is no use our talking to him. Some strong and active literary lady or gentleman ought really to call up and speak to him about it. He is generally in between eleven and two—Saturdays eleven till one. He is a very poor fighter, and all his friends live in the country. Don't make a mistake, however, his is the back office.

Yes, I do think that the height of imagination possible to man in these small hours of the nineteenth century has been attained in the legend "Venice in London." One cannot but admire the energy of the devoted spirits who in the thick of a London winter apply themselves to realising this dream. One imagines them, in an atmosphere of the temperature and density of a half-melted penny ice, fumbling with fragments of an imitation Bridge of Sighs, or solemnly erecting a *simulacrum* of the Rialto against a sky of the colour of an unwashed office floor. Ah, if they could have brought over the essentials!—the blue of the sky, the blue of the lagoons, and the blue of the distant mainland, to mitigate the internal blues of the Londoner! In the atmosphere of the genuine Venice, take the word of one who has tried it, it is next to impossible to take life seriously.

I remember how an ingenious person, with whom I had entrusted the task of sending me a remittance to Venice when my funds came to an end, forwarded it in the form of a draft on a Florentine bank which was absolutely useless to me, and had to be returned. Applying to my travelling companion for assistance, I found, to my great amusement, that his remittances had, somehow,

Kennedy
dreameth
Venice.

He eructeth
in his
frivolity.

gone wrong too; and that he was relying on me to finance him through the next few days. Our mirth became excessive when, on reckoning up our joint resources, we found they amounted to less than one penny sterling. (I'm not exaggerating, really.) I had a watch, however, and we promptly set out to deposit it at the Mount of Piety (as one's Venetian *uncle* is poetically called). We were confronted with a difficulty at starting, for we dwelt on what I may call the "Surrey side" of the Grand Canal, and the "leaving shop" was situated on the farther shore. Ferries cost a halfpenny and were out of the question, and there was a toll on our usual bridge of two-thirds of a penny per head. Only one of us could have gone over, and we did not wish to be parted. However, after wanderings complex and many, we managed to strike the Rialto, where there is free transit, and presently we emerged from the precincts of the Monte di Pietà minus a timepiece, and plus a comfortable sum of money. And how much better you get on at Venice without a watch than with one! *Bang* goes a gun from the Island of Saint George at mid-day, which gives you an idea of how things are going; and, for the rest, you get up when you wake, eat when you are hungry, go to bed when you are sleepy, and generally "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world."

Zangwill There can be no question that a magazine coming
agreeth that out in January must be dated February at the very
we must least. We "go ahead" nowadays in an Irish-American
take time by sense, and cannot endure not to be in advance of our
the forelock. age. We live entirely in the future, and are too busy
 to live just at present. Christmas falls late in October
 and extends to the end of November, the period being
 marked by heavy showers of Christmas numbers. The Jews
 begin all their festivals the day before, and Christmas is by far the
 most Jewish of our holidays. Our evening papers come out in
 the morning, though this will right itself in time, for they are
 getting earlier and earlier, and will ultimately come out the evening
 before. Dr. Johnson's line about Shakespeare, "And panting
 Time toils after him in vain," is truer of the man of to-day.
 What's that you say? All this has been said before? Naturally.

By-the-bye, talking of Christmas, have you noticed how, of late years, the custom of sending valentines to those we love, and to those we are supposed to love, has steadily declined? Why, when I was a young man, the shop windows were full of nothing but valentines for weeks before the fourteenth of February; and the Post Office authorities used to send round circulars, begging the public to post them early in January so as to lessen the strain of delivery. Valentines were, then, quite an item in one's annual expenditure. I remember buying two dozen once, and getting a discount; and four men I knew used always to club together and buy a gross between them. You can get them at wholesale price if you take a gross.

*Jerome
remembereth
the
valentine days
of his youth.*

Nearly every other shop, then, sold valentines. Whenever a tradesman found an article lying about his premises that he did not know how else to get rid of, he put it in a fancy box, and called it a "useful valentine." If it was too big to go into a box, he tied a bit of coloured ribbon round it instead. Braces and "suspenders" (whatever they may be) were especially popular, but handkerchiefs and stockings ran them very close. Then, boots and hats and muffs were also regarded as goods peculiarly suggestive of affection. Indeed, a girl of simple tastes might have clothed herself in nothing else but valentines, and have looked very nice, and have been warm and comfortable.

But the most useful thing of all to send to your beloved was considered to be soap. The more a man or woman was idolised, the more soap they got. One year, my brother-in-law had four separate boxes sent him, each one accompanied by loving and encouraging words. He was quite hurt about it.

*He discourseth
of the useful
valentine.*

During the height of this craze for combining utility with sentiment, I saw in a greengrocer's window a large bunch of carrots labelled "useful valentine." But whether the intention was satire or enterprise I cannot say.

In those days, a fellow was supposed to send valentines to all his sisters, cousins, and aunts; and to their babies, if they had any. He could also send them to other fellows' sisters and cousins and aunts, but that was his own affair. He could do so or not as he chose, and nobody said anything to him if he didn't. In the former case, people did. Now, there is neither giving nor

receiving of valentines, to any extent worth speaking of, except, of course, among professional lovers. With them, so I am instructed, the fashion still maintains, but I have very little doubt that even they would be glad to see the end of it.

Another failure at taking things seriously in Venice occurred to me in connection with my first early morning bathe in the lagoons. I had had a pleasant swim, and was returning to my gondola, and meditating on the fact that it is much easier to get into the water from any kind of boat than to reverse the process, when my gondolier informed me (humorous dog not to mention it until then!) that he had just been giving his vessel a fresh coat of tar. There was a strip of carpet in the gondola, and I suggested that he should hang this over the side and give me a hand, which he did. As soon as he left the oar the boat began to drift before the wind, and, as I was hanging on to the lee side, it began to drift over me. It struck me that the simplest thing to do would be to dive underneath it, and come up on the other side. But, at the moment that I attempted this manœuvre, we were drifting on to a sand bank, and I found myself suddenly sandwiched between the bank and the flat bottom of the gondola. And there I stuck, struggling for a space of time that seemed quite considerable to me, and I don't think I ever felt so ridiculous in the whole course of my life. And you should have seen the anxious countenance of the crew when I finally emerged, adorned with tar and sea-weed! It was too amusing for anything. I fancy he had given up all hope of seeing me again, except in the form of a "demd damp, moist, unpleasant body."

Well, as I was going to say, talking about valentines, a young man may adore a young woman to distraction, but he does not relish having to purchase and post to her a printed and published exposition of the fact. It requires a good deal of nerve to walk into a crowded shop and purchase a valentine. I used to have to do it myself once upon a time, and a most unenjoyable proceeding it was. I would go in very red, and ask in a husky

voice to see some. After looking over great traysful of what, in the language of the trade, are, I believe, termed "four-penny," "sixpenny," or "shilling sentimentals," and failing to find thereon any adequate expression of my thoughts, I would blushing observe to the saleswoman that I rather fancied there was one in the window something like what I wanted, and I would endeavour to describe its position. But she never seemed able to understand me, and, after taking down every one on the shelf but the right one, she would be sure to say :

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind just stepping into the street, and pointing it out, sir."

Then I would creep out of the door, feeling hot all over ; and, elbowing my way through the mob assembled about the window, would point the finger of desire towards the shameless, flaunting thing. The crowd, intensely interested, would hustle round and read out the poetry aloud to each other, and the woman inside would smile and nod, and unhesitatingly take down and wrap up the wrong one ; and I, returning, would pay for it and put it in my pocket, and slink hurriedly away, hoping that St. Valentine's martyrdom had been an extra painful one.

Once I thought I would get out of the difficulty by pretending it was for a child—a niece or a god-daughter —that I wanted my valentine. A married friend of mine always used to send valentines to his children, and would walk into the shop and ask for them as bold as brass. *He telleth of the ways of the married man.*

"I want 'em very affectionate, if you please," he would say to the young lady ; "something with poetry." And he would pick out the most outrageously spooney ones that he could find—ones that I should have blushed to the roots of my hair to be seen looking at—and coolly lay them aside, with "Yes, that will do for Johnny ;" and, "Ah, here's a good one for Nelly— young fellow, kneeling, and offering his heart and a velvet cushion to a girl ;" or, "This is the one baby will like —man shot dead by a child with a bow and arrow. I'll take these three, my dear." (He used to call all girls "My dear." I know other married men who do the same. They go on anyhow, some of them.)

He adopteth the methods of the married man. Well, this seemed a simple and pleasant method of getting over the business. There was nothing to be ashamed about in sending a valentine to a child. It would be a kindly, thoughtful action. The girls in the shop would respect a man for it, instead of giggling at him.

I determined to adopt the plan.

Accordingly, when the time came, I assumed an easy family-man sort of manner (as easy and family-man sort of manner, that is, as a gentleman of seventeen can), and, marching into a busy shop, airily asked to see a few valentines.

"I want something to send to a child," I added—"something respectful, and, at the same time, sincere; something suitable for a baby, you know."

She was an addle-headed girl. She said:

"Yes, sir, what sort of a baby?"

It annoyed me very much, that question. I had been to a good deal of trouble that morning, and some expense, in acquiring a sufficient amount of nerve to carry me through this valentine transaction with comfort and credit. I had calculated to a nicety the quantity I should require. I had stocked myself with just sufficient to enable me to go into the shop, ask for and select my valentine, agree to what was said about the weather, and make an original observation of my own upon the subject, and come out.

The maiden of the counter questioneth him. But that was all. I had enough nerve to do that, everything went smoothly, but there was none to spare. I felt that if I had to stand there, and go into complicated explanations with a young lady about babies, my supply would not last out.

Besides, it was such a silly question. Anyone might as well ask, "What sort of a split pea!" or, "What sort of a periwinkle!" as "What sort of a baby!" Why their own mothers cannot tell them apart without their clothes. They think they can, but they can't.

I was very much put out, and I answered somewhat sharply, "Oh, a two-legged baby, clean shaven, and its hair parted in the middle."

And then, in response to the girl's look of astonishment, I added, "You ought to know what a baby is like."

What I intended to convey was that a young woman of her age must surely have seen plenty of babies and ought to know what they were like, without asking. I was incapable of any other meaning.

The girl, however, not knowing my character, jumped to the idea that I had intended to insult her; and, casting on me a look of indignation that will probably last me to my dying day, left me, and went and explained matters in a clear voice to the head saleswoman.

*His plan
worketh not
well.*

Everybody in the shop thereupon regarded me as the perpetrator of an unmanly outrage upon a defenceless girl, and, leaving off their own business, stared at me with looks of dislike, tempered by curiosity. The head saleswoman approached me with slow and measured tread, and when she was near enough requested me to kindly inform her what it was that I required.

I replied, with an attempt—a painfully unsuccessful attempt—at hauteur, that I wanted a valentine to send to a baby. And, to prevent any further discussion on the point, I added, “To the usual sort of baby.”

The lady went, and returned in silence with a trayload of valentines, labelled “Novelties for Children.” They were chiefly pictures of old ladies and gentlemen possessed of exceptionally fine heads. You pulled a string, and the eyes wobbled. One represented an old man in bed, and *he* swallowed rats. But that was an expensive one.

I thought of Henrietta, the proud beauty that I worshipped at that date, and said that I fancied the baby would prefer something a little older.

The shopwoman thereupon asked me how old the child was. I replied I did not know. She then asked me whether it was a boy or girl. I said I was not sure.

She suggested that, perhaps, I might find something more suitable to the child among their ordinary stock, and I agreed, and we had down the eighteenpenny sentimentals, and I selected one with a needle-case, and a verse from Tennyson.

*A good dame
hath sweet
pity on him.*

Touched apparently by the palpable misery I had been, and was still, suffering, and, taking it to be a sign of remorse, the

assistant relented sufficiently towards me while tying up the parcel to observe, in a not unkindly undertone, that they were a very superior class of young lady in that shop, and were not accustomed to young men's little jokes.

"But it's quite a mistake. I didn't mean anything at all," I exclaimed, somewhat feebly.

"No, I'm sure you didn't," replied the woman soothingly. "We won't say anything more about it."

And I had the sense to follow her excellent advice, and to take my packet, and my leave.

But I resolved that, next year, if I wanted a valentine (alas! when next year came I didn't), I would say it was for my sweetheart, and have done with it.

Or moralizeth.

Yes, it is always the best policy to speak the truth—
unless, of course, you are an exceptionally good liar.

