"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A CHARMING FELLOW.

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CHAPTER XVI.

ARRIVED in London, with an influential patron ready to receive him, and twenty pounds in his pocket, over and above the sum his mother had contrived to spare out of her quarter's income, Algernon Errington considered himself to be a very lucky fellow. He had good health, good spirits, good looks, and a disposition to make the most of them, untrammelled by shyness or scruples.

He did feel a little nervous as he drove, the day after his arrival in town, to Lord Seely's house, but by no means painfully so. He was undeniably anxious to make a good impression. But his experience, so far, led him to assume, almost with certainty, that he should succeed in doing so.

The hackney-coach stopped at the door of a grimy-looking mansion in Mayfair, but it was a stately mansion withal. In reply to Algernon's inquiry whether Lord Seely was at home, a solemn servant said that his lordship was at home, but was usually engaged at that hour. "Will you carry in my card to him?" said Algernon. "Mr. Ancram Errington."

Algy felt that he had made a false move in coming without any previous announcement, and in dismissing his cab, when he was shown into a little closet off the hall, lined with dingy books, and containing only two hard horsehair chairs, to await the servant's return. There was something a little flat and ignominious in this his first appearance in the Seely house, waiting like a dun or an errand-boy, with the possibility of having to walk out again, without having been admitted to the light of my lord's countenance. However, within a reasonable time, the solemn footman returned, and asked him to walk upstairs, as my lady would receive him, although my lord was for the present engaged.

Algernon followed the man up a softly-carpeted staircase, and through one or two handsome drawing-rooms — a little dim from the narrowness of the street and the heaviness of the curtains — into a small cosy boudoir. There was a good fire on the hearth, and in an easy-chair on one side of it sat a fat lady, with a fat lap-dog on her knees. The lady, as soon as she saw Algernon, waved a jewelled hand to keep him off, and said, in a mellow, pleasant voice, which reminded him of his mother's, "How d'ye do? Don't shake hands, nor come too near, because Fido don't like it, and he bites strangers if he sees them touch me. Sit down."

Algernon had made a very agile backward movement on the announcement of Fido's infirmity of temper; but he bowed, smiled, and seated himself at a respectful distance opposite to my lady. Lady Seely's appearance certainly justified Mrs. Errington's frequent assertion that there was a strong family likeness throughout all branches of the Ancram stock, for she bore a considerable resemblance to Mrs. Errington herself, and a still stronger resemblance to a miniature of Mrs. Errington's grandfather, which Algy had often seen. My lady was some ten years older than Mrs. Errington. She wore a blonde wig, and was rouged. But her wig and her rouge belonged to the

candid and ingenuous species of embellishment. Each proclaimed aloud, as it were, "I am wig!" "I am paint!" with scarcely an attempt at deception.

"So you've come to town," said my lady, fumbling for her eye-glass with one hand, while with the other she patted and soothed the growling Fido. Having found the eye-glass, she looked steadily through it at Algernon, who bore the scrutiny with a good-humoured smile and a little blush, which became him very well.

"You're very nice-looking, indeed," said my lady.

Algy could not find a suitable reply to this speech, so he only smiled still more, and made a half-jesting little bow.

"Let me see," pursued Lady Seely, still holding her glass to her eyes, "what is our exact relationship? You are a relation of mine, you know."

"I am glad to say I have that honour."

"I don't suppose you know much of the family genealogy," said my lady, who prided herself on her own accurate knowledge of such matters. "My grandfather and your mother's grandfather were brothers. Your mother's grandfather was the elder brother. He had a very pretty estate in Warwickshire, and squandered it all in less than twelve years. I don't suppose your mother's father had a penny to bless himself with when he came of age."

"I daresay not, ma'am."

"My grandfather did better. He went to India when he was seventeen, and came back when he was seventy, with a pot of money. Ah, if my father hadn't been the youngest of five brothers, I should have been a rich woman!"

"Your ladyship's grandfather was General Cloudesley Ancram, who distinguished himself at the siege of Khallaka," said Algernon.

Lady Seely nodded approvingly. "Ah, your mother has taught you that, has she?" she said. "And what was your father? Wasn't he an apothecary?"

Algernon's face showed no trace of annoyance, except a little increase of colour in his blooming young cheeks, as he answered, "The fact is, Lady Seely, that my poor father was an enthusiast about science. He would study medicine, instead of going into the Church and availing himself of the family interest. The consequence was, that he died a poor M.D. instead of a rich D.D.—or even, who knows? a bishop!"

"La!" said my lady, shortly. Then, after a minute's pause, she added, "Then, I suppose, you're not very rich, hey?"

"I am as poor, ma'am, as my grandfather Montagu Ancram, of whom your ladyship was saying just now that he had not a penny to bless himself with when he came of age," returned Algernon, laughing.

"Well, you seem to take it very easy," said my lady. And once more she looked at him through her eye-glass. "And what made you come to town, all the way from what-d'ye-call-it? Have you got anything to do?"

"N—nothing definite, exactly," said Algernon.

"H'm! Quiet, Fido!"

"I ventured to hope that Lord Seely—that perhaps my lord—might——"

"Oh, dear, you mustn't run away with that idea!" exclaimed her ladyship. "There ain't the least chance of my lord being able to do anything for you. He's torn to pieces by people wanting places, and all sorts of things."

"I was about to say that I ventured to hope that my lord would kindly give me some advice," said Algernon. As he said it, his heart was like lead. He had not, of course, expected to be at once made secretary of state, or even to pop immediately into a clerkship at the Foreign Office. He had put the matter very soberly and moderately before his own mind, as he thought. He had told himself that a word of encouragement from his high and mighty cousin should be thankfully received, and that he would neither be pushing nor impatient, accepting a very small beginning cheerfully. But it had never occurred to him to prepare himself for an absolute flat refusal of all assistance. My lady's tone was one of complete decision. And it was in vain he reflected that my lady might be speaking more harshly and decisively than she had any warrant for doing, being led to that course by the necessity of protecting herself and her husband against importunity. None the less was his heart very heavy within him. And he really deserved some credit for gallantry in bearing up against the blow.

"Advice!" said my lady, echoing his word. "Oh, well, that ain't so difficult. What are you fit for?"

"Perhaps I'm scarcely the best judge of that, am I?" returned Algernon, with that childlike raising of the eyebrows which gave so winning an expression to his face.

"Perhaps not; but what do you think?"

"Well, I—I believe I could fill the post of secretary, or—— What I should like," he went on, in a sudden burst of candour, and looking deprecatingly at Lady Seely, like a child asking for sugar-plums, "would be to get attached to one of our foreign legations."

"I daresay! But that's easier said than done. And as to being a secretary, it's precious hard work, I can tell you, if you're paid for it; and, of course, no post would suit you that didn't pay."

"I shouldn't mind hard work."

"You wouldn't be much of an Ancram if you liked it; I can tell you I know that much! Well, and how long do you mean to stay in town?"

"That is quite uncertain."

"You must come and see me again before you go, and be introduced to Lord Seely."

"Oh, indeed, I hope so."

Come and see her again before he went! What would his mother say, what would his Whitford friends say, if they could hear that speech? Nevertheless, he answered very cheerfully:

"Oh, indeed, I hope so!" And, interpreting my lady's words as a dismissal, rose to go.

"You're really uncommonly nice-looking," said Lady Seely, observing his straight, slight figure, and his neatly-shod feet as he stood before her. "Oh, you needn't look shame-faced about it. It's no merit of yours; but it is a great thing, let me tell you, for a young fellow without a penny to have an agreeable appearance. How old are you?"

"Twenty," said Algernon, anticipating his birthday by two months.

"Do you know, I think Fido will like you!" said my lady, who observed the fact that her favourite had neither barked nor growled when Algernon rose from his chair. "I'm sure I hope he will; he is so unpleasant when he takes a dislike to people."

Algernon thought so too; but he merely said, "Oh, we shall be great friends, I daresay; I always get on with dogs."

"Ah, but Fido is peculiar. You can't coax him; and he gets so much to eat that you can't bribe him. If he likes you, he likes you—voilà tout! By-the-way, do you understand French?"

"Yes; pretty fairly. I like it."

"Do you? But, as to your accent—I'm afraid that cannot be much to boast of. English provincial French is always so very dreadful."

"Well, I don't know," said Algernon, with perfect good humour, for he believed himself to be on safe ground here; "but the old Duc de Villegagnon, an émigré, who was my master, used to say that I did not pronounce the words of my little French songs so badly."

"Bless the boy! Can you sing French songs? Do sit down, then, at the piano, and let me hear one! Never mind Fido." (Her ladyship had set her favourite on the floor, and he was sniffing at Algernon's legs.) "He don't dislike music, except a brass band. Sit down, now!"

Algernon obeyed, seated himself at the pianoforte, and began to run his fingers over the keys. He found the instrument a good deal out of tune; but began, after a minute's pause, a forgotten chansonette, from Le Petit Chaperon Rouge. He sang with taste and spirit, though little voice; and his French accent proved to be so surprisingly good, as to elicit unqualified approbation from Lady Seely.

"Why, I declare that's charming!" she cried, clapping her hands. "How on earth did you pick up all that in—what's-its-name? Do look here, my lord, here's young Ancram come up from that place in the West of England, and he can play the piano and sing French songs delightfully!"

Algernon jumped up in a little flurry, and, turning round, found himself face to face with his magnificent relative, Lord Seely.

Now it must be owned that "magnificent" was not quite the epithet that could justly be applied to Lord Seely's personal appearance. He was a small, delicately-made man, with a small, delicately-featured face, and sharp, restless dark eyes. His grey hair stood up in two tufts, one above each ear, and the top of his head was bald, shining, and yellowish, like old ivory. "Eh?" said he. "Oh! Mr.—a—a, how d'ye do?" Then he shook hands with Algernon, and courteously motioning him to resume his seat, threw himself into a chair by the hearth, opposite to his wife. He stretched out his short legs to their utmost possible length before him, and leant his head back wearily.

"Tired, my lord?" asked his wife.

"Why, yes, a little. Dictating letters is a fatiguing business, Mr.—a—a—"

"Errington, my lord; Ancram Errington."

"Oh, to be sure! I'm very glad to see you; very glad indeed. Yes, yes; Mr. Errington. You are a cousin of my lady's? Of course. Very glad."

And Lord Seely got up and shook hands once more with Algernon, whose identity he had evidently only just recognised. But, although tardy, the peer's greeting was more than civil, it was kind; and Algernon's gratitude was in direct proportion to the chill disappointment he had felt at Lady Seely's discouraging words.

"Thank you, sir," he said, pressing the small thin white hand that was proffered to him. And Algy's way of saying "Thank you, sir," was admirable, and would have made the fortune of a young actor on the stage; for, in saying it, he had sufficient real emotion to make the simulated emotion quite touching—as an actor should have.

My lord sat down again, wearily. "Bush has been with me again, about that emigration scheme of his," he said to his wife. "Upon my honour, I don't know a more trying person than Bush." When he had thus spoken, he cast his eyes once more upon Algernon, who said, in the most artless, impulsive way in the world, "It's a poor-spirited kind of thing, no doubt; but, really, when one sees what a hard time of it statesmen have, one can't help feeling sometimes that it is pleasant to be nobody."

Now the word "statesman" applied to Lord Seely was scarcely more correct than the word "magnificent" applied to his outer man. The fact was, that Lord Seely had been, from his youth upward, ambitious of political distinction, and had, indeed, filled a subordinate post in the cabinet some twenty years previous to the day on which Algernon first made his acquaintance. But he had been a mere cypher there; and the worst of it was, that he had been conscious of being a cypher. He had not strength of character or ability to dominate other men, and he had too much intelligence to flatter himself that he succeeded, where success had eluded his pursuit. Stupider men had done better for themselves in the world than Valentine Sackville Strong, Lord Seely, and had gained more solid slices of success than he. Perhaps there is nothing more detrimental to the achievement of ascendancy over others than that intermittent kind of intellect, which is easily blown into a flame by vanity, but is as easily cooled down again by the chilly suggestions of common sense. The vanity which should be able to maintain itself always at white heat would be a triumphant thing. The common sense which never flared up to an enthusiastic temperature would be a safe thing. But the alternation of the two was felt to be uncomfortable and disconcerting by all who had much to do with Lord Seely. He continued, however, to keep up a semblance of political life. He had many personal friends in the present ministry, and there were one or two men who were rather specially hostile to him among the opposition; of which latter he was very proud, liking to speak of his "enemies" in the House. He spoke pretty frequently from his place among the peers, but nobody paid him any particular attention. And he wrote and printed, at his own expense, a considerable number of political pamphlets; but nobody read them. That, however, may have been due to the combination against his lordship which existed among the writers for the public press, who never, he complained, reported his speeches in extenso, and, with few exceptions, ignored his pamphlets altogether.

Howbeit, the word "statesman" struck pleasantly upon the little nobleman's ear, and he bestowed a more attentive glance on Algernon than he had hitherto honoured him with, and asked, in his abrupt tones, like a series of muffled barks, "Going to be long in town, Mr. Ancram?"

"I've just been asking him," interposed my lady. "He don't know for certain. But——" And here she whispered in her husband's ear.

"Oh, I hope so," said the latter aloud. "My lady and I hope that you will do us the favour to dine with us to-morrow—eh? Oh, I beg your pardon, Belinda, I thought you said to-morrow!—on Thursday next. We shall probably be alone, but I hope you will not mind that?"

"I shall take it as a great favour, my lord," said Algernon, whose spirits had been steadily rising, ever since the successful performance of his French song.

"You know Mr. Ancram—I mean Mr. Errington—is a cousin of mine, my lord; so he won't expect to be treated with ceremony."

Algernon felt as if he could have flown downstairs when, after this most gracious speech, he took leave of his august relatives. But he walked very soberly instead, down the staircase and past the solemn servants in the hall, with as much nonchalance as if he had been accustomed to

the service of powdered lackeys from his babyhood.

"He seems an intelligent, gentlemanlike young fellow," said my lord to my lady.

"Oh, he's as sharp as a weasel, and uncommonly nice-looking. And he sings French songs ever so much better than that theatre man that the Duchess made such a fuss about. He has the trick of drawing the long bow, which all the Warwickshire Ancrams were famous for. Oh, there's no doubt about his belonging to the real breed! He told me a cock-and-a-bull story about his father's devotion to science. I believe his father was a little apothecary in Birmingham. But I don't know that that much matters," said my lady to my lord.

PLAYGOERS.

The man who, having witnessed and enjoyed the earliest performance of Thespis and his company, followed the travelling theatre of that primæval actor and manager, and attended a second and a third histrionic exhibition, has good claim to be accounted the first playgoer. For recurrence is involved in playgoing, until something of a habit is constituted. And usually, we may note, the playgoer is youthful. An old playgoer is almost a contradiction in terms. He is merely a young playgoer who has grown old. He talks of the plays and players of his youth, but he does not, in truth, visit the theatre much in his age; and, invariably, he condemns the present, and applauds the past. Things have much degenerated and decayed, he finds; himself among them, but of that fact he is not fully conscious. There are no such actors now as once there were, nor such actresses. The drama has declined into a state almost past praying for. This is, of course, a very old story. "Palmy days" have always been yesterdays. Our imaginary friend, mentioned above, who was present at the earliest of stage exhibitions, probably deemed the second and third to be less excellent than the first; at any rate, he assuredly informed his friends and neighbours, who had been absent from that performance, that they had missed very much indeed, and had by no means seen Thespis at his best. Even nowadays, middle-aged playgoers, old enough to remember the late Mr. Macready, are trumped, as it were, by older playgoers, boastful of their memories of Kemble and the elder Kean. And these players, in their day and in their turn, underwent disparagement at the hands of veterans who had seen Garrick. Pope, much as he admired Garrick, yet held fast to his old faith in Betterton. From a boy he had been acquainted with Betterton. He maintained Betterton to be the best actor he had ever seen. "But I ought to tell you at the same time," he candidly admitted, "that in Betterton's time the older sort of people talked of Hart's being his superior, just as we do of Betterton's being superior to those now." So in that old-world tract, called Historia Histrionica—a dialogue upon the condition of the early stage, first published in 1699—Trueman, the veteran Cavalier playgoer, in reply to Lovewit, who had decided that the actors of his time were far inferior to Hart, Mohun, Burt, Lacy, Clun, and Shatterel, ventures to observe: "If my fancy and memory are not partial (for men of age are apt to be over-indulgent to the thoughts of their youthful days), I dare assure you that the actors I have seen before the war—Lowin, Taylor, Pollard, and some others—were almost as far beyond Hart and his company as those were beyond these now in being." In truth, age brings with it to the playhouse recollections, regrets, and palled appetite; middle life is too much prone to criticism, too little inclined to enthusiasm, for the securing of unmixed satisfaction; but youth is endowed with the faculty of admiring exceedingly, with hopefulness and a keen sense of enjoyment, and, above all, with very complete power of self-deception. It is the youthful playgoers who are ever the best friends of the players.

As a rule, a boy will do anything, or almost anything, to go to a theatre. His delight in the drama is extreme—it possesses and absorbs him completely. Mr. Pepys has left on record Tom Killigrew's "way of getting to see plays when he was a boy." "He would go to the Red Bull (at the upper end of St. John-street, Clerkenwell), and when the man cried to the boys—'Who will go and be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?' then would he go in and be a devil upon the stage, and so get to see plays." How many boys there are who would be willing, even eager, to obtain theatrical entertainment upon like terms! In one of his most delightful papers, Charles Lamb has described his first visit to a theatre. He "was not past six years old, and the play

was Artaxerxes! I had dabbled a little in the universal history—the ancient part of it—and here was the Court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import, but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams." Returning to the theatre after an interval of some years, he vainly looked for the same feelings to recur with the same occasion. He was disappointed. "At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—'was nourished I could not tell how.' I had left the temple a devotee and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone! The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages to present a 'royal ghost,'—but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell—which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice; no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelvemonths—had wrought in me." Presently, however, Lamb recovered tone, so to speak, as a playgoer. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene, and the theatre became to him, "upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations."

Audiences have always been miscellaneous. Among them, not only youth and age, but rich and poor, wise and ignorant, good and bad, virtuous and vicious, have alike found representation. The gallery and the groundlings have been catered for not less than the spectators of the boxes and private rooms; yet, upon the whole, the stage, from its earliest period, has always provided entertainment of a reputable and wholesome kind. Even in its least commendable condition—and this, so far as England is concerned, we may judge to have been during the reign of King Charles the Second—it yet possessed redeeming elements. It was never wholly bad, though it might now and then come to very near seeming so. And, what it was, the audience had made it. It reflected their sentiments and opinions; it accorded with their moods and humours; it was their creature; its performers were their most faithful and zealous servants.

Playgoers, it appears, were not wont to ride to the theatre in coaches, until late in the reign of James the First. Taylor, the water-poet, in his invection against coaches, 1623, dedicated to all grieved "with the world running on wheels," writes: "Within our memories our nobility and gentry could ride well mounted, and sometimes walk on foot, gallantly attended with fourscore brave fellows in blue coats, which was a glory to our nation, far greater than forty of these leathern timbrels! Then, the name of coach was heathen Greek. Who ever saw, but upon extraordinary occasions, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Francis Drake ride in a coach? They made small use of coaches; there were but few in those times; and they were deadly foes to sloth and effeminacy. It is in the memory of many when, in the whole kingdom, there was not one! It is a doubtful question whether the devil brought tobacco into England in a coach, for both appeared at the same time." According to Stow, coaches were introduced here in 1564, by Guilliam Boonen, who afterwards became coachman to the queen. The first he ever made was for the Earl of Rutland; but the demand rapidly increased, until there ensued a great trade in coach-making, insomuch that a bill was brought into Parliament, in 1601, to restrain the excessive use of such vehicles. Between the coachmen and the watermen there was no very cordial understanding, as the above quotation from Taylor sufficiently demonstrates. In 1613 the Thames watermen petitioned the king, that the players should not be permitted to have a theatre in London, or Middlesex, within four miles of the Thames, in order that the inhabitants might be induced, as formerly, to make use of boats in their visits to the

playhouses in Southwark. Not long afterwards, sedans came into fashion, still further to the prejudice of the watermen. In the Induction to Ben Jonson's Cynthia's Revels, performed in 1600, mention is made of "coaches, hobby-horses, and foot-cloth nags," as in ordinary use. In 1631 the churchwardens and constables, on behalf of the inhabitants of Blackfriars, in a petition to Laud, then Bishop of London, prayed for the removal of the playhouse from their parish, on the score of the many inconveniences they endured as shopkeepers, "being hindered by the great recourse to the playes, especially of coaches, from selling their commodities, and having their wares many times broken and beaten off their stalls." Further, they alleged that, owing to the great "recourse of coaches," and the narrowness of the streets, the inhabitants could not, in an afternoon, "take in any provision of beere, coales, wood, or hay;" the passage through Ludgate was many times stopped up, people "in their ordinary going" much endangered, quarrels and bloodshed occasioned, and disorderly people, towards night, gathered together, under pretence of waiting for those at the plays. Christenings and burials were many times disturbed; persons of honour and quality dwelling in the parish were restrained, by the number of coaches, from going out or coming home in seasonable time, to "the prejudice of their occasions;" and it was suggested that, "if there should happen any misfortune of fire," it was not likely that any order could possibly be taken, since, owing to the number of the coaches, no speedy passage could be made for quenching the fire, to the endangering both of the parish and of the city. It does not appear that any action on the part of Laud or the Privy Council followed this curious petition.

It seems clear that the Elizabethan audiences were rather an unruly congregation. There was much cracking of nuts and consuming of pippins in the old playhouses; ale and wine were on sale, and tobacco was freely smoked by the upper class of spectators, for it was hardly yet common to all conditions. Previous to the performance, and during its pauses, the visitors read pamphlets or copies of plays bought at the playhouse-doors, and, as they drank and smoked, played at cards. In his Gull's Horn Book, 1609, Dekker tells his hero, "before the play begins, fall to cards;" and, winning or losing, he is bidden to tear some of the cards and to throw them about, just before the entrance of the prologue. The ladies were treated to apples, and sometimes applied their lips to a tobacco-pipe. Prynne, in his Histriomastix, 1633, states that, even in his time, ladies were occasionally "offered the tobacco-pipe" at plays. Then, as now, new plays attracted larger audiences than ordinary. Dekker observes, in his News from Hell, 1606, "It was a comedy to see what a crowding, as if it had been at a new play, there was upon the Acherontic strand." How the spectators comported themselves upon these occasions, Ben Jonson, "the Mirror of Manners," as Mr. Collier well surnames him, has described in his Case is Altered, acted at Blackfriars about 1599. "But the sport is, at a new play, to observe the sway and variety of opinion that passeth it. A man shall have such a confused mixture of judgment poured out in the throng there, as ridiculous as laughter itself. One says he likes not the writing; another likes not the plot; another, not the playing; and sometimes a fellow that comes not there past once in five years, at a Parliament time or so, will be as deep-mired in censuring as the best, and swear, by God's foot, he would never stir his foot to see a hundred such as that is!" The conduct of the gallants, among whom were included those who deemed themselves critics and wits, appears to have usually been of a very unseemly and offensive kind. They sat upon the stage, paying sixpence or a shilling for the hire of a stool, or reclined upon the rushes with which the boards were strewn. Their pages were in attendance to fill their pipes; and they were noted for the capriciousness and severity of their criticisms. "They have taken such a habit of dislike in all things," says Valentine, in The Case is Altered, "that they will approve nothing, be it ever so conceited or elaborate; but sit dispersed, making faces and spitting, wagging their upright ears, and cry, 'Filthy, filthy!'" Ben Jonson had suffered much from the censure of his audiences. In The Devil is an Ass, he describes the demeanour of a gallant occupying a seat upon the stage. Fitzdottrell says:

> To-day I go to the Blackfriars playhouse,
> Sit in the view, salute all my acquaintance;
> Rise up between the acts, let fall my cloak;
> Publish a handsome man and a rich suit—
> And that's a special end why we go thither.

Of the cutpurses, rogues, and evil characters of both sexes who frequented the old

theatres, abundant mention is made by the poets and satirists of the past. In this respect there can be no question that the censure which was so liberally awarded was also richly merited. Mr. Collier quotes from Edmund Gayton, an author who avowedly "wrote trite things merely to get bread to sustain him and his wife," and who published, in 1654, Festivous Notes on the History of the renowned Don Quixote, a curious account of the behaviour of our early audiences at certain of the public theatres. "Men," it is observed, "come not to study at a playhouse, but love such expressions and passages which with ease insinuate themselves into their capacities .... On holidays, when sailors, watermen, shoemakers, butchers, and apprentices are at leisure, then it is good policy to amaze those violent spirits with some tearing tragedy full of fights and skirmishes .... the spectators frequently mounting the stage, and making a more bloody catastrophe among themselves than the players did." Occasionally, it appears, the audience compelled the actors to perform, not the drama their programmes had announced, but some other, such as "the major part of the company had a mind to: sometimes Tamerlane; sometimes Jugurth; sometimes the Jew of Malta; and, sometimes, parts of all these; and, at last, none of the three taking, they were forced to undress and put off their tragic habits, and conclude the day with The Merry Milkmaids." If it so chanced that the players were refractory, then "the benches, the tiles, the lathes, the stones, oranges, apples, nuts, flew about most liberally; and as there were mechanics of all professions, everyone fell to his own trade, and dissolved a house on the instant, and made a ruin of a stately fabric. It was not then the most mimical nor fighting man could pacify; prologues nor epilogues would prevail; the devil and the fool [evidently two popular characters at this time] were quite out of favour; nothing but noise and tumult fills the house," &c. &c.

Concerning the dramatist of the time, upon the occasion of the first performance of his play, his anxiety, irascibility, and peculiarities generally, Ben Jonson provides sufficient information. "We are not so officiously befriended by him," says one of the characters, in the Induction to Cynthia's Revels, "as to have his presence in the tiring-house, to prompt us aloud, stamp at the bookholder [or, prompter], swear at our properties, curse the poor tireman, rail the musick out of tune, and sweat for every venial trespass we commit as some author would." While, in the Induction to his Staple of News, Jonson has clearly portrayed himself. "Yonder he is," says Mirth, in reply to some remark touching the poet of the performance, "within—I was in the tiring-house awhile, to see the actors dressed—rolling himself up and down like a tun in the midst of them .... never did vessel, or wort, or wine, work so .... a stewed poet! .... he doth sit like an unbraced drum, with one of his heads beaten out," &c. The dramatic poets, it may be noted, were admitted gratis to the theatres, and duly took their places among the spectators. Not a few of them were also actors. Dekker, in his Satiro-mastix, accuses Jonson of sitting in the gallery during the performance of his own plays, distorting his countenance at every line, "to make gentlemen have an eye on him, and to make players afraid" to act their parts. A further charge is thus worded:—"Besides, you must forswear to venture on the stage, when your play is ended, and exchange courtesies and compliments with the gallants in the lord's rooms (or boxes), to make all the house rise up in arms, and cry—'That's Horace! that's he! that's he! that's he that purges humours and diseases!'"

Jonson makes frequent complaint of the growing fastidiousness of his audience, and nearly fifty years later, the same charge against the public is repeated by Davenant, in the Prologue to his Unfortunate Lovers. He tells the spectators that they expect to have in two hours ten times more wit than was allowed their silly ancestors in twenty years, who

> to the theatre would come,
> Ere they had dined, to take up the best room;
> There sit on benches not adorned with mats,
> And graciously did vail their high-crowned hats
> To every half-dressed player, as he still
> Through the hangings peeped to see how the house did fill.
> Good easy judging souls! with what delight
> They would expect a jig or target fight;
> A furious tale of Troy, which they ne'er thought
> Was weakly written so 'twere strongly fought.

As to the playgoers of the Restoration we have abundant information from the poet Dryden, and the diarist Pepys. For some eighteen years the theatres had been absolutely closed, and during that interval very great changes had occurred. England, under Charles the Second, seemed as a new and different country to the Eng-

land of preceding monarchs. The restored king and his courtiers brought with them from their exile in France strange manners, and customs, and tastes. The theatre they favoured was scarcely the theatre that had flourished in England before the Civil War. Dryden reminds the spectators, in one of his prologues—

You now have habits, dances, scenes, and rhymes,
High language often, aye, and sense sometimes.

There was an end of dramatic poetry, as it was understood, under Elizabeth. Blank verse had expired or swooned away, never again to be wholly reanimated. Fantastic tragedies in rhyme, after the French pattern, became the vogue; and absolute translations from the French and Spanish for the first time occupied the English stage. Shakespeare and his colleagues had converted existing materials to dramatic uses, but not as did the playwrights of the Restoration. In the Epilogue to the comedy of An Evening's Love; or, The Mock Astrologer, borrowed from Le Feint Astrologue of the younger Corneille, Dryden, the adapter of the play, makes jesting defence of the system of adaptation. The critics are described as conferring together in the pit on the subject of the performance:

They kept a fearful stir
In whispering that he stole the astrologer;
And said, betwixt a French and English plot,
He eased his half-tired muse on pace and trot.
Up starts a Monsieur, new come o'er, and warm
In the French stoop and pull-back of the arm,
"Morbleu," dit-il, and cocks, "I am a rogue,
But he has quite spoiled the Feigned Astrologue!"

The poet is supposed to make excuse:

He neither swore, nor stormed, as poets do,
But, most unlike an author, vowed 'twas true;
Yet said he used the French like enemies,
And did not steal their plots but made them prize.

Dryden concludes with a sort of apology for his own productiveness, and the necessity of borrowing that it involved:

He still must write, and, banquier-like, each day
Accept new bills, and he must break or pay.
When through his hands such sums must yearly run,
You cannot think the stock is all his own.

Pepys, who, born in 1633, must have had experiences of youthful playgoing before the great Civil War, finds evidence "afterwards of the vanity and prodigality of the age" in the nightly company of citizens, prentices, and others attending the theatre, and finds it a grievance that there should be so many "mean people" in the pit at two shillings and sixpence apiece. For several years, he mentions, he had gone no higher than the twelvepenny, and then the eighteenpenny places. Oftentimes, however, the king and his court, the Duke and Duchess of York, and the young Duke of Monmouth, were to be seen in the boxes. In 1662 Charles's consort, Catherine, was first exhibited to the English public at the cockpit theatre in Drury-lane, when Shirley's Cardinal was represented. Then there are accounts of scandals and indecorums in the theatre. Evelyn reprovingly speaks of the public theatres being abused to an "atheistical liberty." Nell Gwynne is in front of the curtain prattling with the fops, lounging across and leaning over them, and conducting herself saucily and impudently enough. Moll Davies is in one box, and my Lady Castlemaine, with the king, in another. Moll makes eyes at the king, and he at her. My Lady Castlemaine detects the interchange of glances, and "when she saw Moll Davies she looked like fire, which troubled me," said Mr. Pepys, who, to do him justice, was often needlessly troubled about matters with which, in truth, he had very little concern. There were brawls in the theatre, and tipsiness and much license generally. In 1682 two gentlemen, disagreeing in the pit, drew their swords and climbed to the stage. There they fought furiously until a sudden sword-thrust stretched one of the combatants upon the boards. The wound was not mortal, however, and the duellists, after a brief confinement, by order of the authorities, were duly set at liberty.

The fop of the Restoration was a different creature to the Elizabethan gallant. Etherege satirised him in his Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter, Dryden supplying the comedy with an epilogue, in which he fully described certain of the prevailing follies of the time in regard to dress and manners. The audience are informed that

None Sir Fopling him or him can call,
He's knight of the shire and represents you all!
From each he meets he culls whate'er he can;
Legion's his name, a people in a man.
* * * * *
His various modes from various fathers follow;
One taught the toss, and one the new French wallow;
His sword-knot this, his cravat that designed;
And this the yard-long snake he twirls behind.
From one the sacred periwig he gained,
Which wind ne'er blew nor touch of hat profaned.
Another's diving bow he did adore,
Which, with a shog, casts all the hair before,
Till he with full decorum brings it back,
And rises with a water-spaniel shake.

Upon another occasion the poet writes:

But only fools, and they of vast estate,
The extremity of modes will imitate,
The dangling knee-fringe and the bib-cravat.

While the fops were thus equipped, the

ladies wore vizard-masks, and upon the appearance of one of these in the pit—

Straight every man who thinks himself a wit,
Perks up, and managing his comb with grace,
With his white wig sets off his nut-brown face.

For it was the fashion of the gentlemen to toy with their soaring, large-curled periwigs, smoothing them with a comb. Between the fops and the ladies goodwill did not always prevail. The former were, no doubt, addicted to gross impertinence in their conversation.

Fop corner now is free from civil war,
White wig and vizard-mask no longer jar,
France and the fleet have swept the town so clear.

So Dryden "prologuised" in 1672, attributing the absence of "all our braves and all our wits" to the war which England, in conjunction with France, had undertaken against the Dutch.

Queen Anne, in 1704, expressly ordered that "no woman should be allowed, or presume to wear, a vizard-mask in either of the theatres." At the same time it was commanded that no person, of what quality soever, should presume to go behind the scenes, or come upon the stage, either before or during the acting of any play; and that no person should come into either house, without paying the price established for their respective places. And the disobedient were publicly warned that they would be proceeded against, as "contemners of our royal authority and disturbers of the public peace."

These royal commands were not very implicitly obeyed. Vizard-masks may have been discarded promptly, but there was much crowding behind the scenes, and upon the stage, of persons of quality, for many years after. Garrick, in 1762, once, and for ever, succeeded in clearing the boards of the unruly mob of spectators, and secured room to move upon the scene for himself and his company. But it was only by enlarging his theatre, and in such wise increasing the number of seats available for spectators in the auditory of the house, that he was enabled to effect this reform. From that date the playgoers of the past grew more and more like the playgoers of the present, until the flight of time rendered distinction between them no longer possible, and merged yesterday in to-day. There must have been a very important change in the aspect of the house, however, when hair powder went out of fashion, in 1795; when swords ceased to be worn—for, of course, then there could be no more rising of the pit to slash the curtain and scenery, to prick the performers, and to lunge at the mirrors and decorations; when gold and silver lace vanished from coats and waistcoats, silks and velvets gave place to broadcloth and pantaloons; and when, afterwards, trousers covered those nether limbs which had before been, and for so long a period, exhibited in silk stockings. Yet these alterations were accomplished gradually, no doubt. All was not done in a single night. Fashion makes first one convert, and then another, and so on, until all are numbered among her followers and wear the livery she has prescribed. Garrick's opinion of those playgoers of his time, whom he at last banished from his stage, may be gathered from the dialogue between Æsop and the Fine Gentleman, in his farce of Lethe. Æsop inquires, "How do you spend your evening, sir?" "I dress in the evening," says the Fine Gentleman, "and go generally behind the scenes of both playhouses; not, you may imagine, to be diverted with the play, but to intrigue and show myself. I stand upon the stage, talk loud, and stare about, which confounds the actors and disturbs the audience. Upon which the galleries, who hate the appearance of one of us, begin to hiss, and cry, 'Off, off;' while I, undaunted, stamp my foot so; loll with my shoulder thus; take snuff with my right hand, and smile scornfully, thus. This exasperates the savages, and they attack us with volleys of sucked oranges and half-eaten pippins." "And you retire?" "Without doubt, if I am sober; for orange will stain silk, and an orange disfigures a feature."

HELIOTROPE.

How strong they are, those subtle spells
That lurk in leaves and flower-bells,
  Rising from faint perfumes;
Or mingling with some olden strain,
Strike through the music shafts of pain,
  And people empty rooms.

They come upon us unaware,
In crowded halls and open air,
  And in our chambers still:
A song, an odour, or a bird,
Evokes the spell, and strikes the chord,
  And all our pulses thrill.

I loitered but an hour ago,
With lagging footsteps tired and slow,
  Along the garden walk:
The summer twilight wrapped me round
Through open windows came the sound,
  Of song and pleasant talk.

The odour-stealing dews lay wet
And heavy on the mignonette
That crept about my feet:
Upon the folded mossy vest
That clothed the ruby rose's breast,
It fell in droppings sweet.

It fell on beds of purple bloom,
From whence arose the rare perfume
Of dainty heliotrope;
Which smote my heart with sudden power,
My favourite scent, my favourite flower,
In olden days of hope!

Ah, me! the years have come and gone,
Each with its melody or moan,
Since that sunshiny hour,
When, for the sake of hands that brought,
And for the lesson sweet it taught,
I chose it for my flower.

Faint-scented blossoms! long ago
Your purple clusters came to show
My life had wider scope;
They spoke of love that day—to-night
I stand apart from love's delight,
And wear no heliotrope.

Between to-night and that far day,
Lie life's bright noon and twilight grey,
But I have lived through both:
And if before my paling face
The midnight shadows fall apace,
I see them, nothing loth.

Only to-night that faint perfume
Reminds me of the lonely gloom
Of life outliving hope:
I wish I had been far to-night,
What time the dew fell, silver-white
Upon the heliotrope!

PICCOLO.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

"I HAD been trying to get out of Paris on a secret mission for some time," continued Piccolo, in the same low trembling tone, "before I made the acquaintance of Thal, Denner, and yourself; but I had reason to known that I had been watched by one of the spies who have been infesting our city and our homes, and doing their devil's work among us for years. We caught him and we shot him; but I could not find out whether he had had time to betray me to the Prussians, before his fate overtook him. The only thing to be done was to change my plan, and, while leaving them to suppose—if, indeed, they were in possession of the facts—that I was about to leave Paris as before arranged, in the disguise of an English servant in attendance on an invalid lady, detained by inability to travel sooner—this part was to be played by my wife—to look out for a party to join, which should offer the strongest contrast to these conditions. I was powerfully aided, as you will readily believe, when I tell you what my real purpose is, and I was introduced quite naturally to you and your companions. The chief precaution to be taken was to ascertain that you and they did not speak Italian, as I am hardly at all acquainted with that language; and it was decided that I should pass for a man of that nationality, because those educated savages, the Prussians, know less of Italy and the Italians than of any other European nation. You know the rest; and——"

"Yes, yes—no need to recapitulate that. Tell me at once who you really are, and what there is to be discovered by these people in whose hands we are."

He raised himself on his elbow, and looked into my face with an expression of profound misery which I shall never forget, as he replied:

"I am Pierre Olivier Potin." (I need hardly say I do not, even now, and here, give the real name of my unfortunate travelling companion; if I did so, I should create a good deal of astonishment even among those who believe themselves, and with good reason, most thoroughly acquainted with all the details of the disastrous epoch in the history of France to which my simple story belongs.) "Ah, no wonder you start! I am bound to England on a mission to procure a large number of guns for the government of the National Defence. I have a false passport; poor Piccolo, the real holder, who was all I profess to be, died ten days ago at Passy. I have his papers; they were read yesterday at our interrogation, and his signalement is sufficiently like my own to pass without detection. But I have been obliged to take other papers with me; the instructions for the purchase and the specification of the guns, and an order on a well-known English banking firm for a very large sum of money, together with a letter of credentials to a political colleague of M. Gambetta, who is at present in London. Two of these documents, the letter of credentials and the order on the bankers, comprise my name and address — Pierre Olivier Potin, 147, Rue de Vinette, Paris, in full. These, in the most circumscribed form possible, I was obliged to carry with me."

"Of course. But are they safe? Nothing transpired yesterday."

"They *were* safe. I had the small packet hidden away within the lining of my hat, a very loose fit, and, as I held it in my hand whenever it was not on my head, it was quite safe until last night."

"Until last night," I repeated. "What has happened to it since? That is your hat, is it not, which hangs on the rack, beside my wideawake? I hung it there

myself, if I am not mistaken, last night; and there it is now." I half rose as I spoke, with the intention of taking the hat down; but he put his hand out eagerly, and stopped me.

"No, no!" he said; "pray don't go near it; pray don't even look near it! The sentry is watching us closely, and the only chance for any of you is to be able to feign total ignorance. Besides, it is useless; my papers are in the hands of the Prussians."

"Impossible."

"Hush! hush! That word is easily recognised in any language. Listen to me. Last night—you had all fallen asleep, but I lay awake, full of foreboding—it must have been after one o'clock, when the door opened without any noise, and a man, whom I had not seen among those in the Prefecture yesterday, came in to the room. He held a small lantern in his hand, and he stepped cautiously across the floor, in the direction of the corner in which Thal lay. He stooped down, turned the light of the lantern upon his face, and looked at him very attentively. I raised my head noiselessly, and peered at the intruder. He wore the uniform of an officer in the Prussian infantry, and though a big man, he had a singularly gentle tread; his footstep made no sound at all. Presently he approached the fireplace, and turned on the gas in the jet close by the mirror, lighted it, and extinguished his lantern, after which he again crossed the room, and was thus on a line with me, but, owing to the inclination of the mirror—you see how it slopes forward—I could observe his movements by their reflection in it, without making the least stir which could attract his attention. He inspected you minutely, turned over your clothes, emptied your pockets, and examined their contents, especially some photographs, which he carried to the gas-jet that he might admire them more at his ease."

Mentally confounding the impudence of the unscrupulous Prussian, I put my hand hurriedly into my breast-pocket. The photographs were all safe. I comforted myself with a hasty glance at one which was especially precious—and whose original is now my wife—and begged M. Pierre Olivier Potin to continue.

"He lingered a very short time beside Denner, and did not stoop over him, or touch his clothes; but came on towards my bed. I can feign sleep pretty well, and I did it, not making the mistake of lying perfectly still, which is enough to betray one to a quick observer, but stirring slightly, with the restlessness which is always imparted to real sleep by the presence of an unexpected or unwelcome person; but the ordeal was severe. He scanned my features closely, moved to each extremity of my bed, and studied me attentively from both; he even gently fingered my hair, at the back of my head, suspecting, I suppose, that it was a wig. My pockets were turned out next; they contained a purse, a handkerchief, a pair of gloves, and a pocket flask. These things were replaced, and then the officer approached the rack; took down the coats and hats hanging there, inspected and replaced them—all but the last hat, mine. Conceive what I felt when he held it up to the light, gazed into it, fingered the lining carefully all round, and then, standing so that his movements were reflected in the mirror, skilfully ripped the lining open with his pocket-knife and drew out the precious packet of papers, whose discovery implies my ruin and death, and, I fear—I fear—these Prussians are so merciless—serious danger to all of you."

This revelation filled me with dismay. I did not feel much of the indignation which the unfortunate emissary of a desperate cause anticipated. He had made use of us, to be sure, and the "fix" was an exceedingly awkward one. But to a man who has seen so much of the world as I have, the proverbial saying, "À la guerre comme à la guerre," acquires a wide and liberal signification. Besides, there really was no time to think of anything but the position; and as for the man, he was too ill to be an object of anger and reproach.

The inaction of our captors puzzled me very much. The morning was advancing, and nothing whatever had occurred to indicate that any violent measures were intended towards us. The interrogation of the afternoon might mean something serious, but I was surprised, with such perilous stuff in their possession, that the Prussians should wait until the afternoon, and I endeavoured to persuade Potin and myself that the delay was a favourable symptom. I found him, however, quite unpersuadable; the mercurial French temperament displayed the defect of its quality, and he ran down under apprehension and suspense to a pitiable state of prostration. I could not

persuade him to hope that he might not be shot; on that point his conviction was fixed, the inspiring of a hope that his rash attempt would not produce fatal results to us all was as much as I could accomplish. All this time it was evident to me that his bodily illness was gaining ground; that the touch of fever was strengthening itself; and I entreated him to be calm, in the interest of possibilities. Supposing the result of the interrogation to be the restoration of our freedom, he would be unable to move. The mere suggestion acted on him effectively. He insisted on rising at once, and I assisted him to dress. Then he began to pace restlessly to and fro, ever watching narrowly for the periodical appearance of the sentry's face behind the grating in the door; and there was silence between us for an interval, which was occupied in very painful reflections on my part. At length, Pierre Olivier Potin asked me to join him, and to allow him to lean on my arm.

"I must move about," he said, "and I must not lose this, which may be my last opportunity of speaking to you alone. I accept what you say—that to yourself, Thal, and Denner this will be only a temporary difficulty. You will get safely to England, and you will stay there till all this misery shall be overpast; until the German army shall have been destroyed around Paris, by disease, by the winter, and by the sorties of our brave troops, and driven off the sacred soil of France by the levée en masse of our outraged and indignant population. Then you will return to see Paris, in the glory of her political and social resurrection, and you will carry out, like the brave Englishman that you are, the last wishes of an unfortunate comrade."

He was ill; he was in despair; he was much more than serious; but he was dramatic. The situation demanded it, for the situation was dramatic; and Pierre Olivier Potin was not the man to fail the situation. I repressed him by a warning squeeze of his arm, and declared my fidelity to his wishes. He proceeded to give me a number of details respecting his family circumstances, which have no bearing on my narrative, and to charge me with his last words for the wife and the brother, whom he felt convinced he should never again behold. I listened attentively, and promised that every direction which he gave should be faithfully carried out, and had hardly given him this promise when Thal and Denner re-entered our prison chamber, accompanied by an officer in the uniform of a Prussian infantry corps, whom I had not previously seen. Potin and I had turned at the far end of the room, and were exactly facing the door as they entered. He started as he looked at the infantry officer, dropped his right hand from my arm, then raised it and pointed at the Prussian, swayed slightly from side to side, and, without a word, fell on the floor in a dead faint.

"This gentleman is evidently very ill," said the officer; "the doctor must see him," and he bustled out of the room, while we lifted Piccolo—who looked as if he had got his quietus without the aid of a Prussian platoon—on to the mattress, and endeavoured to restore him to consciousness. Presently the officer returned with the doctor—the same who had seen Piccolo in the morning—and the proper remedies were administered to our unfortunate travelling companion. I am bound to acknowledge that the sick man was well treated by our captors, though for us others little consideration was evinced. The doctor attached no serious importance to the patient's state, which he treated merely as an "attack of nerves," characteristic of the impatient and excitable French temperament. The business of the officer was to make a formal inspection of our prison chamber and of ourselves, which duty he fulfilled civilly enough, and then he withdrew; all our efforts to obtain from him an explanation of the causes of our detention, or the probable length of its duration, having proved useless.

We dined as coarsely as we had supped and breakfasted, and we awaited, silently watching the lethargic sleep of Piccolo, produced by a calming medicine, the interrogatory which we had been ordered to expect. The nature of my reflections differed widely from that of the reflections of my companions, who were sulky and annoyed to the last extent, but not alarmed. At the appointed hour we were conducted to the same salle of the Prefecture of Police in which we had undergone the examination of the preceding day, and there we underwent a second edition of it, which had a precisely identical result. We had told the truth before; we now told it all over again, and, to my unspeakable astonishment, none but the most formal questions were put to us respecting Piccolo. It appeared to me that he was regarded as the least im-

portant individual of the party; the one to whose identity no suspicion was attached. I thought I could perceive that our questioners had relaxed their conviction of our insincerity; certain symptoms, which one cannot define, but which one feels in every nerve, made me pretty confident that we three were safe. But about Piccolo? Had their discoveries in reference to him led them to the perception that we were entirely innocent of, and unconcerned in, the deception he had practised; and would they let us free and detain him, to be dealt with when his physical state should admit of his being called up before them?

We were marched back again and locked up. Piccolo was still sleeping; and we had to pass the long, dreary winter evening and night without any other solace than the fire—an indulgence which I regarded with surprise, but which, no doubt, we owed to the fact that we were not tenants of a common prison. My companions lighted their respective cigars and betook themselves to the uppermost end of the room, whither I followed them, and, having given them a preliminary caution to avoid any show of surprise or peculiar interest, I disclosed to them the extraordinary story which I had heard from our travelling companion, and the complication of our already troublesome affair which resulted from it. They behaved exceedingly well. The ever-recurrent sentry could not have discovered that we were discussing anything more interesting than the quality of the tobacco, which, doubtless, assisted their passivity; and it was some moments after I had concluded my story before either Denner or Thal said anything. When they did speak, it was not too charitably of poor Piccolo; but it was in confirmation of my own notion that no ill would result to us. Concerning his chances, they were of his own way of thinking. So soon as he should be sufficiently recovered to be "interrogated," he would most certainly be shot. The evening closed in very miserably; Piccolo was in a wretched, exhausted, light-headed condition, which taxed my trifling store of knowledge and experience of the art of nursing the sick severely, and we retired to such a modicum of rest as each of us respectively was likely to find, feeling as if we were passing the night with a criminal in a condemned cell. I had had sufficient forethought, during the second visit of the doctor, to request that he would apply for permission for us to keep the gas alight all night, on account of his patient's condition, and he had done so. I turned the light down to a mere glimmer before I lay down on my mattress, which I had dragged near to that on which Piccolo lay.

The night was bitterly cold, and though the fire was permitted to smoulder, the supply of fuel was so limited that the strictest economy in the use of it was necessary. A short time after I lay down to rest, and when I was fully realising the dreariness of the position and its accessories, a murmured complaint from Piccolo aroused me. He was "so cold," he said. Only one unappropriated article of clothing was within my reach; it was a top coat, which I had hung on the barrack-room rack with our hats. I got up, and stepped cautiously in the direction of the rack. Instantly a light streamed through the grating of the door, and I became aware that the vigilance of the sentry knew no relaxation. I took down the coat (the ray from the lantern at the grating playing about my legs as I did so), and as I gave it an awkward tug to get it off its peg, down came the four hats which hung just under its skirts, and rolled merrily off on their edges. I picked up Denner's, Thal's, and my own, but Piccolo's had rolled farther away, into the tail of the long ray cast by the sentry's lantern; and lay on its side, with its white silk lining, brand-new, and totally uninjured, distinctly visible. Actuated by an impulse as quick as thought, I lowered the coat in my hand so as to sweep the hat along in the direction of my mattress, and then, having placed the additional covering over the sick man's shoulders, I returned to my bed, and lay perfectly still until the light from the other side of the grating was removed. I allowed fully a quarter of an hour to elapse before I put out my hand and felt gently for the hat. It was close by, and between it and the light from the door, if it should be again turned on, stood a clumsy chair, on which I had placed my waistcoat and trousers; the former hanging over the seat, and nearly touching the ground. The feeble glimmer of the gas-jet was but of small service to me, but I contrived to make it of some use, and, without sitting up, to satisfy myself that the lining of M. Pierre Olivier Potin's hat had never been cut with a knife, or subjected to any rough usage whatever! What did this mean? I felt the lining and the crown of the hat

with the minutest care, thinking it just possible that the whole story might be a delusion, the first hallucination-passage of the fever which was evidently fastening on our fellow prisoner; felt it once, without result; again, and satisfied myself that there was a suspicious thickness in one spot. I slid my hand along the floor until it touched my waistcoat, and gently drew a pen-knife out of the pocket. Then I again waited, allowing several minutes to pass before I drew the hat under the sheltering bedclothes, and began to cut the lining open, with the utmost caution, at the spot where I had detected the thickness. The result of my experiment was that I found a fold of the silk skilfully turned under, and hidden in it a flat packet of paper about two inches square. To describe the suspense, the bewilderment in which I passed the hours of that night, during which Piccolo did not call me, or require any tending which would have given me a safe excuse for demanding more light, is beyond my power. When the morning dawned the fire was extinct, he and the others were sleeping quietly, and I was able, unobserved—by timing my peeps at the packet which I had held tightly in my hand all night, to the withdrawal of the sentry's face from the grating—to ascertain that it consisted of the identical papers which M. Pierre Olivier Potin had described, and which were more than enough to have procured for him a speedy death, and no shrift at all, from the powers which then were at Versailles.

I rose, put on my trousers and waistcoat, slipped the packet into my breast, dexterously tripped up the chair, and in picking it up contrived to strike the hat so that it was set spinning into a corner. I then approached the grating in the door. Instantly the sentry's face appeared on the other side.

"The Signor Piccolo is worse," I said; "he is shivering, and there is no fire. The Herr Doctor ordered that he should have warmth. Can I have any fire?"

"Yes, you can, it's the Herr Doctor's orders," said a gruff voice. "You can light it yourself."

"I have nothing to light it with."

"Your friends have not used all the wax lights they have for their good cigars," was the satisfactory reply, in an envious growl; "and you're surely not travelling without a love-letter or two."

Delicious insolence! far beyond the most refined civility. A few moments more saw me down upon my knees before the open fireplace, coaxing the ash-covered logs to ignite by a lavish expenditure of "Vestas," assisted by the combustion of the packet, which might have been equivalent to a sentence of death. I was conscious the whole time of the sulky satisfaction with which the sentry watched my clumsy efforts to light the fire, which were, however, effectual at length.

In two days from that time we were set free. A brief intimation that we might depart—the authorities having apparently satisfied themselves that we were really the persons whom we had represented ourselves to be, and not those whose arrival their spies had prepared them to expect—unaccompanied by any explanation or apology, was made to us. In the meantime we had been again interrogated, and were more than ever closely watched. Poor Piccolo (for so Denner, Thal, and myself always called him) continued very ill, and when the order for our release came we did not exactly know what to do with him. It was evident we could not leave him at Versailles, so we determined to take him with us at any risk, short of killing him, which the doctor said we should not incur; he would pull through. He did pull through, and so did we, but he had been nearly a month in England, and had put the balance of his fever, as Denner called it, comfortably over him there, before his troubled wits cleared themselves. Then he was brought to understand that it was I who had found and destroyed the papers, which might have been fatal; and that the circumstantial story he had told me, which had guided me to their discovery, was only the merciful and mysterious warning of a dream.

UNDER THE HAMMER.

TATTERSALL'S.

THE CORNER.

Nearly opposite to that well-known tavern, the Hercules Pillars, which then occupied the site of Apsley House, stood, a century and a quarter ago, a heavy, ugly-looking building, which once housed Pope's "Sober Lanesborough dancing with the gout," and which has since become the hospital known as St. George's. At this period Belgravia consisted of open fields, running pleasantly down to the river, and the hospital enjoyed the isolation peculiarly desirable in such institu-

tions. Thirty years later, in 1780, it acquired a remarkable neighbour — the establishment now known, wherever the English tongue is spoken, as Tattersall's. The situation then was exceptionally lonely—famous for nightingales and footpads—so that Tattersall's was, perhaps, not unwilling to grow up even under the shadow of an hospital—as houses, in the old feudal times, snuggled closely up under the lee of a fortalice. For a long while afterwards the famous "Corner" was almost in the country, albeit situated between the Parks; and just previous to the outcrop of bricks and mortar, which converted the "Five-fields" into a centre of fashion, the said fields were the favourite Sunday morning resort of dog-fighters and cock-fighters; and, on more than one occasion, a "turn-up," as an impromptu prize-fight was then called, "came off" where Belgrave-square now stands.

The Tattersall family and "the Corner" itself were founded by Mr. Richard Tattersall, whose portrait is yet extant—a hearty, ruddy, healthy English yeoman, looking thoughtfully out from a red waistcoat of ample proportions, and a blue coat of sporting cut, adorned with brass buttons. This original Tattersall was a noteworthy man, of the solid, English, quiet order of beings — a man evidently not of words, but of deeds; the most unlikely man, at first sight, to prosper as an auctioneer. Special knowledge, however, he most unquestionably had, having been training-groom to the second and last Duke of Kingston, husband of "the Chudleigh" of doubtful immortality. When the poor duke, who, says Leigh Hunt, "appears never to have outgrown the teens of his understanding," escaped "the Chudleigh" by dying, Mr. Tattersall renounced the idea of further service, and, sometime between 1773 and 1780, organised a business of his own. He appears to have been possessed of considerable capital, for in 1779 he bought of Lord Bolingbroke the famous horse "High-flyer," for "two thousand five hundred pounds of lawful money of Great Britain." He became so much attached to this celebrated racer, by whom he made his fortune, that he gave the name of "High-flyer Hall" to a house he built in the Isle of Ely. This English worthy died in 1795, at the ripe age of seventy-two, and was succeeded by his son, Mr. Edmund Tattersall, who, dying suddenly, left the charge of "the Corner" to his son, Richard the second—the celebrated "Dick" Tattersall, of whom so many good stories are told. This gentleman, who died in 1858, at Dover, of exhaustion, brought on by the heat, preserved to his dying hour that family horror of dodging and roguery of every kind, which has been the corner-stone of Tattersall's. Strange to relate, Mr. Tattersall entertained a most intense dislike to professional betting, and nothing pleased him so much as keeping young men from becoming members of the Rooms. When written to by juvenile aspirants anxious to become members of Tattersall's, he was very apt to write a line in reply, setting forth the evils of betting and the risk of ruin, and advising the writer to keep his two guineas in his pocket. Still, as the Rooms were to be carried on somehow, and Mr. Tattersall's scruples gave offence in certain quarters, he found it best to hand over the management of them to a committee. For very many years Mr. Richard Tattersall's house was the London head-quarters of the Jockey Club, who had a regular cook and coffee-room there, so that racing and betting were too intimately connected with the institution to be cast off readily. The disastrous partnership between Mr. "Dick's" father and the Prince Regent, during which they were cast in damages for five thousand pounds, was only one incident of the long friendship existing between the Royal and Tattersall families. King George the Fourth, whose bust, at the age of seventeen, in a queer cocked hat and tie wig, still surmounts the pump cupola, made Mr. Tattersall his almoner when any of his old sporting friends became really out at elbows. At the word of the almoner, cheques for all amounts—from one hundred to five hundred pounds—were dispensed to the dilapidated bloods who had once upon a time played Poins to the wild prince. Like many more sturdy haters of gambling, Mr. Tattersall was an enthusiastic rider across country, and feared not at all to take long lonely rides by night through the Midlands. He was said to be "free of the road," as no highwayman would molest him, and even a pickpocket returned his handkerchief "with compliments, taken quite by mistake." Burglars, however, were less scrupulous; a "monkey" was once purloined from the office, and one "Slender Billy," a great purveyor of sport to the "Corinthians," was strongly suspected of the sacrilegious outrage. This renowned character carried on various

professions, and achieved glory in them all. The combination of an illicit still with a knacker's yard had, it was said, once brought a gauger down upon the Slender one, who was openly accused of having popped his enemy into the flesh copper. He was, moreover, implicated in a little affair about the communion-plate at St. Paul's, and had defended his crib at Willow-walk, Tothill-fields, against the Bow-street runners, by letting loose his bears upon them. Billy had always on hand a choice collection of bears, cocks, badgers, terriers, and rats, and would knock up a bull-bait or a rat-hunt at a moment's notice. Billy was also a clever hand at getting back property for a suitable reward "and no questions asked;" but, led away by ambition, he at last attempted too high a flight, and came under the operation of the Forgery Act. It was proved that he could neither read nor write; but that availed him little, and he was sentenced to be hanged. Mr. Tattersall visited Billy in the condemned cell, and urged him to make a clean breast of it and confess his associates, and received the following memorable reply: "No, master, they'll never say that Slender Billy split on his pals; if every hair on my head was alive, and had to be hung separate, I wouldn't." Die he did, and "game," as was remarked by Mr. Dan Dawson, destined himself to wear the fatal nightcap on Cambridge gaol not long afterwards.

Fond of hunting, Mr. Tattersall loved the road almost as much as the field, but confessed his inferiority in coaching work and coaching language to his great friend, John Warde. Dogs he loved greatly, and got the best one he ever had through his hasty kindness. Observing the more than half-starved creature that had wandered into his yard, he told the groom to "give the poor wretch something to eat." The man kept it for two months, when, having been tried at badgers, the animal became the cherished pet of Mr. Tattersall, and would allow no one else to touch it. One day it was challenged by its old master in Piccadilly, but the sagacious animal repudiated the connection, and the challenger did not accept the offer to "take him if you can."

Before his father's death, Mr. Tattersall commenced the famous Monday feasts, at which the Doncaster Cup, with the two horse-handles, won by Crookshanks in 1781, always held the punch; and a silver fox-head, which held nearly a pint, was presented brimming with port to each guest, who was required to drain it to the health of John Warde and the noble science—and no heel-taps. The Derby dinner, held late in the week before Epsom, was a more important ceremonial, graced with venison from Goodwood, and prime Rhenish, presented to the host by his foreign friends. After dinner the Derby lottery, of two sovereigns each, was solemnly drawn, the elder Mathews often acting as Mr. Tattersall's deputy, in the performance of this important ceremony. Charles Young was another welcome guest, as were "Plenipo" Batson, Ormsby Gore, Captain Meynell, Jack Masters, the Duke of Holstein, the Hon. Fitzroy Stanhope, and others famous on race-course and hunting-field, who, like old Tattersall's itself, have passed away from the busy London world.

At old Tattersall's a narrow passage led to the yard and the subscription-rooms. The court-yard was adorned by a pump, covered by a domed structure of classical outline. Over the dome was the bust of George the Fourth, previously alluded to, and beneath its shelter the genius loci—the fox. As Troy had its statue of Pallas, Ephesus its Diana of olive-wood, and old Rome its lightning-scared wolf, so has Tattersall's its fox, duly enshrined and treated with all fitting reverence. An experienced fox, this familiar spirit of "the Corner." On many generations of horses and dogs, of men and books, has Vulpes peered sharply. Under that scrutinising glance of his have passed terribly high-bred cattle, and, for that matter, terribly high-bred men, now flushed with youth, health, and success, and anon about to send their stud to the hammer, to parry an "awful settling-day." Under his sharp nose have dawdled and chatted, sauntered and lingered, great nobles; expectant heirs; statesmen of world-wide renown; soldiers and sailors, whose names are written in big letters in English history; sturdy squires; smart younger brothers; successful butchers; sporting publicans; and bluff bettors round, who would lay my lord the odds to lose twenty, nay, forty thousand on the Derby; and, what is more, pay if they lost—the indispensable condition of remaining a member of the room. Granted this important condition of solvency, no sixteen quarterings are demanded of candidates for membership; and in one of the most aristocratic countries in the world may

be seen a perfectly democratic community, constructed on the principle, laid down by one whose own pride of birth was unequalled—"All equal on the turf and under the turf."

Let us stroll leisurely for half an hour about the old "Corner," harking back a little more than a decade, to Blair Athol's year. The Derby has been run and won, and the Oaks to boot. On the last day of the week the demand for stamped paper has been excessive, and the coffers of Israel have been greatly relieved of their plethora, for to-day is Black Monday, the "settling-day" after Epsom Summer Meeting. There is a crowd in the old narrow yard. Profane bettors, not admitted to the subscription-rooms, are lying in wait to pounce on members, as they issue from the sacred portals, and "draw" their winnings of them. A certain uneasiness is felt by the outer vulgar, for we are in the midst of the "plunging" era, and the Derby victory of a comparative outsider has sorely discomfited the general public. A bad settling is anticipated, and the croakers are as loud as usual with their dismal prophecies. Pushing through the expectant crowd we make our way into the queer old room with the circular desk, crowded with busy bookmakers, struggling hard to get through their accounts. It is dusty and hot in this temple of Plutus, and we find it pleasanter to breathe the sweet summer air on the lawn, a cheerful patch of emblematic turf, adorned with a solitary tree, under which many rich farms and fat vales, wild stretches of purple moorland and brawling trout streams, have changed hands. An iron railing keeps the tag-rag and bobtail off this pretty bit of verdure, so refreshing to eyes weary with poring over the odds. Considering what they have gone through last week, the "plungers" look remarkably well, and excite the admiration of "'Arry," who, clinging on to the railing, is giving his country cousin a treat of "gapeseed" at the magnates of the Turf. "'Arry," born within sound of Bow Bells, clad in a very horsey coat—all pockets, and flaps, and great seams—curiously adhesive "pants," blue bird's-eye scarf with a snaffle pin, ample waistcoat, ditto gold chain with horse's hoof dangling therefrom, and a "five to two" hat, is quite competent to explain to the young man from the country "who is who," even if the countryman mayhap knows better "what is what." "'Arry" is in his own circle a great authority on turf matters. He—lucky dog—gets that peculiar "tip" said to be "straight." He is not to be caught with chaff—not he. He insists on knowing whether the "stable-money" is "right," before "dashing down" his investments. He is cautious, our friend 'Arry. He finds out about the private trials, and speaks contemptuously of racing prophets. Moreover, he stands in a bit with a waiter who makes a "hundred-pound book," and is the actual capitalist at the back of poor little Tongsley, the barber, who never refuses money, and will bet an errand-boy a hundred to three in sixpences. 'Arry knows the lords and the layers excellently well "by sight," and is much impressed by the attitude of those whom he calls the "real swells;" but his hearty enthusiasm is reserved for another manner of man, or, as they say at Jerome Park, "another breed o' cats." His heart—such as it is—bounds with noble ambition as he points out to his companion the hero of the day, that tall, strapping Yorkshireman, broad of shoulder and loud of tongue, who proclaims his wish to bet on the St. Leger. Last year he laid eleven thousand to one thousand against Lord Clifden for the St. Leger, and he has just won forty thousand on Blair Athol. He is John Jackson—Jock o' Fairfield, the "Leviathan" of the Ring, vice Davis, retired, and a man of mark indeed in the eyes of 'Arry and his like.

Business goes briskly on, heavy sums are exchanged, and no defaulters are yet hinted at. After all the croaking, the "settling" is a good one. People overburdened with money are heard to complain of the unreasonable shortness of banking hours, and there is great buttoning up of breastpockets as the crowd disperses from the last Derby settling ever held at old Tattersall's, and 'Arry walks off his country cousin to settle up with little Tongsley, who has "made his book" for the winner, and is a happy man.

NEW TATTERSALL'S.

Between the canonisation of Blair Athol and that of Gladiateur in the following year, Messrs. Richard and Edmund Tattersall the younger removed their business to Knightsbridge. Great care and much money were expended in making the new establishment perfectly commodious. Through a broad archway; past our old friend the pump, carefully removed and set up again; pig-tailed George; tutelar

fox, and all, we reach a large covered building, admirably lighted and furnished with ample stabling, a spacious gallery for carriages, and a handsome rostrum with a sounding board. At the old "Corner," bidders and bettors entered at one passage; but in the new institution the sheep are at once separated from the goats. On the right of the visitor are the offices in which is conducted the business of Messrs., or, rather, of Mr. Edmund Tattersall—Mr. Richard, third of that name, being now no more. On the left is a building like in outward appearance to that on the right, but approached by a narrow way jealously guarded, for this is the new subscription-room. A very handsome room it is, tastefully decorated and provided with convenient seats and desks; so that a man, having drawn some thousands from his bankers in the morning, has only to sit down and pay away his money as merrily as he may. The opening of this elegant room was celebrated by the members with a dinner to the Messrs. Tattersall, to express the gratitude of the sporting world for its fine new lodgings. I remember me well of that famous banquet; of the hundreds of massive race cups, lent by their owners to grace the dinner-table; of the mighty pyramids of flowers, set between the great gold and silver groups and vases, to lighten the general effect; of the asparagus and early strawberries; of the chairman and his hearty manner; of Mr. George Payne's witty oration in proposing the health of "The Ring;" and of the reply thereto by bluff "Stevey," soon to come to a sad end, poor fellow! I remember me also of a "mauvais plaisant," my neighbour, who hinted that the gathering offered a fine chance for a modern Guy Fawkes, and proposed, as an inscription to be placed over the door of the new room, Gray's line—

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

and I also distinctly recollect avenging myself on that untimeous joker by taking of him the odds against Gladiateur for the Derby. It was a cheery meeting this, of "layers" and "backers," the lion and the lamb for once lying down together. Under the ruins of that banquet we buried old Tattersall's, and poured forth plentiful libations to its memory.

As the new room came into use, the lawn of the old one was terribly regretted, and continually sighed for; and, moreover, with the perversity of mankind, who generally throw over things just as they are made perfect, members at once showed a disposition to get through the bulk of their business elsewhere. For a long time had been growing the practice of employing commissioners, both to bet and to settle accounts, at the various turf clubs; and so swiftly did this increase after the move of Tattersall's westward, that the dealings there soon came to be considered merely supplementary to the more serious business of the morning. Tattersall's has thus become rather a fashionable than an important betting centre. The great moves are made in the morning farther east, and are only slightly checked or accelerated by the doings at Knightsbridge. Nevertheless, a crowd assembles round the gate of the Rooms on Mondays, and "outside men" find it convenient to settle hard by Knightsbridge-green. In the room itself many changes have taken place. Jackson and poor "Stevey" are gathered to their fathers, and the modern Leviathans are a much more easy-going folk. Time, too, has made sad havoc among the "upper ten." Death has claimed the unlucky prince of plungers, and the pace has told severely on many more heroes of his time. The colours, "red and white hoops," of the triple-coroneted owner of Lady Elizabeth are now the property of one of the shrewdest and most popular of the new Leviathans; an excellent omen, for did not Mr. Snewing's Caractacus win the Derby in the "sky blue and white cap," which Lord George himself, the previous possessor, could never get first past the post for that race? The famous "cherry and black cap" are, at the moment of writing, vacant, by the death of their accomplished owner; but Sir Joseph's commissioner, who knows what it is to have horses in training, will possibly consider them as his legitimate inheritance.

The strict enforcement of the various Acts against ready-money betting has cleared out many "commission agents," and France has drawn heavily on the ranks of the "professionals." Many of the frequenters of old Tattersall's are established comfortably in Paris, and make their appearance at Knightsbridge only at infrequent intervals.

It is dull work looking in vain for well-known faces, so let us take a turn on the "legitimate" side and see Mr. Tattersall knocking down successive lots, brought out one by one, and exposed to the critical

eyes of vendors. Swiftly come and swiftly go—mostly "without reserve"—goodly hunters and hacks, up to all sorts of weights; winners of flat races, hurdle races, and steeplechases; thorough-breds with illustrious pedigrees, and "useful" animals without any; descendants of Derby winners and of sires who, in their day, "were sure to win," but, by some fatality, "walked in with the crowd;" clever cobs; barouche horses; and those wonderful animals equal to either fortune, who are quiet in single and double harness, are good hacks, and have carried a lady. The horses themselves display a jaunty air, and evidently feel themselves the heroes of the hour; vastly unlike the poor dogs at Leadenhall-market, who look imploringly at the passers-by, and bark to each other Jack Johnson's aspiration—

I wish to God that somebody would buy us.

Not only on his own premises does Mr. Tattersall wield the hammer, but presides over many great sales of blood stock, where lucky and rich turfites compete eagerly for promising yearlings—too often only "promising." His name, in fact, is bound up with the most glorious associations of English horseflesh, and adorned by the traditions of a family whose dealings have ever been scrupulously honourable. So great is the renown of the house of Tattersall for extreme nicety in all its transactions, that it would seem to have been specially created to disprove the thesis of those who insist that contact with horseflesh tends to the relaxation of the moral sense.

As I stroll out of new Tattersall's, revolving many things—chariots and horses, books and men—I am accosted by a seedy young man, who evidently knows me. It is astonishing what a memory shabby people have. Older, by twenty years, judging from appearances, it is indeed no other than our ingenious friend "'Arry," whom we left rejoicing over his winnings and determined to become a Leviathan. For a while after he prospered, and was always pestering me to "patronise his little book," but I had ultimately lost sight of him. Turf mushrooms often spring up in a night, and wither again, like the prophet's pumpkin. They then disappear into utter darkness, and, like the lost Pleiad, are seen no more. 'Arry's "little book" had not, so he said, turned out a success. He wanted "the nerve," I think he called it, to "lay agin' certainties," and hence his present plight. I prepared to bid him farewell, when he asked the loan of a "dollar," not for such base requirements as meat and drink, but to back an absolute "certainty" for the Derby at a long price. I believe the infatuated creature duly invested that dollar on I know not what animal, and I sincerely hope he may win.

A SILENT WITNESS.

BY EDMUND YATES.

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "CASTAWAY," "THE YELLOW FLAG," &c. &c.

BOOK III. CHAPTER XI. THE LAST SACRIFICE.

THERE is little need to tell that Anne Studley, when she gave up the charge of the poor maimed woman, whose revelation had made such a difference in her life, at the same time abandoned her assumed name of Gaynor, and took up her abode at the Hermitage with Grace Middleham, "to remain there for life," Grace said, as she welcomed her long-lost friend; but Anne smiled quietly, and shook her head. She said nothing, but she had her own notions that an alteration in the domestic affairs might possibly be made soon, when a re-arrangement of the household would be necessary.

And before she had been an inmate of the Hermitage for a month, that which had been a shrewd suspicion grew to be an undoubted certainty. Anne Studley saw that the measure of her sorrow was not yet full, and that there was still another sacrifice which it was necessary for her to make. When, in the depth of her despair, she had abandoned the quiet family in the little German town, where, up to that time, what had been the most peaceful, if not the happiest portion of her existence, had been passed; and arriving solitary and friendless in London, had determined upon pursuing the avocation of a hospital nurse, as the one which, by entirely engrossing her time, would give her no scope for reflection or recollection, she found she had miscalculated her powers of endurance, and but for one circumstance would have retired from her newly-elected occupation in disgust. The chance meeting with Clement Burton, brought about in the mutual discharge of their professional duties, induced her to persevere in her original idea. The intelligent young surgeon not merely recognised that Anne's clear head and practical sense would be of great value in the calling

she had chosen, but, reading between the lines, he was enabled to perceive the necessity for her immersion in some daily routine which should prevent her thoughts from dwelling on her past career. With much gentle skill and judgment, and without the least appearance of busying himself with her affairs, he contrived to let her see the importance he attached to her assistance, and gradually won her to regard her duties with interest. That interest was not limited to her occupation, but extended to him who had been the means of procuring it for her. Meeting daily as they did, Anne had every opportunity of observing Clement Burton's noble qualities—his kindness of heart, his patience, his devotion to the humblest of those who were brought under his care. It had never previously been her lot to meet with such a man, and it was not difficult to guess the result. Her early appreciation of his goodness deepened by degrees into a stronger feeling, and long before, at his suggestion, she had gone in attendance on Lydia Walton, she knew that her heart, which had refused to listen to the honest pleadings of Franz Eckhardt, and had never before been touched, was hers no longer. She loved Clement Burton with a silent, deep, but entirely hopeless love; hopeless, not merely on account of the barrier erected between them by her previous marriage, but from the fact, which she did not attempt to disguise from herself, that of her passion there was, on Clement's part, no return. He appreciated her, respected her, liked her—she knew that; no brother could have treated her with greater regard; but the feelings by which he was actuated were plainly different to hers, and never could become the same.

She acknowledged all this before she knew of Clement's acquaintance with Grace Middleham; but from the time that she first saw them together, she knew that whatever little remnant of hope had remained concealed in her bosom must be given up, and that her fate was fixed. The barrier of her marriage had been broken down by Lydia Walton's disclosure, but one quite as impassable reared itself in the vacant place. Her clear eyes saw in an instant that Clement loved Grace, and that his love was returned, and a very little study of the case showed her exactly how matters stood between them; her lengthened intercourse with the young man had given her a keen insight into his character. He had often talked freely with her of himself and his affairs; she knew his firm sense of honour, and was certain that he had never so much as hinted to Grace the state of his feelings towards her. Had the woman he loved been in a different position, it was probable, Anne thought, that Clement would long since have asked her to share his lot; but the fact that Grace was an heiress had kept him silent. He was in a good practice and position now, and could well afford to maintain a wife out of his professional earnings; but he was a proud man, and keenly sensitive, and would shrink from the idea that even the merest gossip of the world should accuse him of having paid court to the heiress from interested motives.

All that Anne surmised was true; true now to a greater extent than she suspected. The regard which Clement Burton felt for Miss Middleham on their first acquaintance had grown with their daily intercourse, and had at last attained such proportions as rendered it necessary for him to take some decisive step. What that step should be, required in his mind but short consideration.

The feelings with which Anne had accredited him existed even more vividly than she had imagined, and though he would have given all that he possessed to call Grace his wife, he feared to declare himself to her, lest his motives should be misunderstood. In the course of his experience he had frequently heard stories of doctors perverting the confidence which had been placed in them professionally to their own private ends, and the mere idea, that such an accusation should be brought against him, filled him with horror and dismay. Better trample out the fire which was consuming him and go away, leaving no sign. It was time the present condition of affairs should cease; and he set himself to work to bring about the end.

When Mr. Burton's mind was once made up, he was prompt in action, and three days after his determination he presented himself at the Hermitage. The friends were in the drawing-room—Miss Middleham at work, while Anne was reading to her. After the ordinary commonplaces, Clement said, in as gay a tone as he could assume, "I have come to make a little revelation, which, I think, will surprise, and which I am selfish enough to hope may grieve you."

Both the girls looked up instantly;

Grace in astonishment, Annie with an odd prescience of what was coming.

Anne was the first to speak. "Something which will grieve us?" she repeated.

"I hope so," said Clement. "Odd though it may sound, I hope that the interest you both take in me is sufficient for you to be sorry to hear that I am going to leave you."

The usual colour fled from Grace's cheeks as she said, "To leave us, Mr. Burton; you don't mean for long, I suppose?"

"For long? Certainly," he replied; "possibly for life."

Anne was silent; but Grace said, in a faint low tone, "What can you mean? Surely this is very sudden?"

"The decision is sudden," Clement said, "though I have had the idea for some time in my mind. The fact is, that I find this kind of work telling upon me, and I have long been desirous for a change. I think I explained to you, Miss Middleham, that my own inclination did not lead me to my profession, and that I only took to it from necessity. I have nothing to complain of my success in it, and it has made me many kind friends; but I rather pine for freedom, and now there is a chance of obtaining it."

A dead silence ensued, to break which Anne said, "You are not going then to pursue your profession abroad, Mr. Burton?"

"No," he said, as though suddenly recalling himself from a dream. "The fact is, that a patient of mine, and a kind friend as well, has received the appointment as governor to one of the West India islands. He takes me out with him as his secretary, and promises me that my work shall be nominal, and that I shall have plenty of time for any literary or scientific pursuits which I may choose to indulge in."

Still Grace was silent; but Anne said, in a hard voice, "The temptation is a great one—when do you go?"

"My friend thinks of sailing in about ten days' time, but nothing is as yet decided. He only made me the offer last night, and you are the first to whom I have communicated it."

"We ought to be greatly obliged to Mr. Burton for his selection of us to share his confidence, ought we not, Grace?" said Anne. "Come, dear, you have promised me a drive to Richmond this morning, and the best of the sunshine will be lost if we delay." Then Grace, managing to regain her self-possession, said a few words, and Mr. Burton took his leave.

That was a silent drive to Richmond, for each of the ladies was too much immersed in her own thoughts to speak. The shock which Miss Middleham had received at the announcement of Clement Burton's intended departure, and the consequent alteration in her whole life; the loss of something which she looked forward to from day to day, the breaking up of that delightful communing which she regarded as the principal solace of her life, had been almost too much for her. Whatever dreams she had indulged in seemed now to be hopelessly shattered. He could never have cared for her, or he would not have allowed himself to be carried away on so comparatively slight a pretext. All the kindness and attention, then, which he had paid her, had been prompted by friendship—nothing more; and, imputing no blame to him, Grace owned she had cruelly deceived herself. From everyone, even from Anne, she tried to hide any expression of her feelings, but this was beyond her control; and as she lay back in the carriage, recalling the pleasures of the past, and mourning over the flight of the happiness which she had anticipated in the future, tears of disappointment, scarcely hidden by her veil, rolled down her cheeks.

Her companion was equally silent, equally preoccupied, and if her eyes were dry, her mind, at least, was as much disturbed. The story which she had heard Clement Burton tell that morning, and the scene which she had witnessed, were, to her, ample confirmation of what she had long suspected. She now was certain that the young surgeon had found himself unable any longer to go quietly through the ordinary routine of life, and be constantly in the presence of his idol, without declaring himself. To avow his passion and ask her hand would be, according to his supersensitiveness, an act of meanness and disloyalty, and he had, therefore, sought for this appointment as a means of escape from the dilemma. His heart was breaking at the idea of separating from Grace, but it was, in his opinion, the voice of honour which bade him go, and he hesitated not. Nor had Anne any longer any doubt, if such had ever possessed her mind, that her friend returned Clement Burton's affection. The sudden change in her appearance when Clement announced his departure; her altered demeanour ever since; the half-hysterical state in which, though she strove to disguise it, she then

was—all showed that she was passing through no ordinary trial.

And, above all, Anne felt herself called upon to make the crowning sacrifice of her life, by stifling for ever the deep attachment she had silently nourished, and solving the difficulty which existed between those two. It could be done, she thought—the misunderstanding could be at once removed—if she only had the courage to efface herself, and to act as interpreter between them. If Clement could be persuaded that Grace was really attached to him, and that in demanding her hand he would be behaving honourably, his motive being beyond question, he would only too gladly obey the suggestion. As for Grace, to bring her lover to her feet would be recalling her to life. Here was a way, then, Anne thought, of repaying all the friendship which she had received at Grace's hands; and when she remembered the devotion existent from their school-days, and, even at that present moment, manifest in each of Grace's words and acts towards her, she felt that, though her own immolation was a part of the scheme, she could yield herself up without a murmur.

That night Anne Studley wrote to Mr. Burton a note, requesting him to call and see her the next morning, as she wished particularly to consult him. He was not to mention having received the note, and, if he saw Miss Middleham, was to make it appear to her that his visit was an ordinary one. Just before the time when she expected the young surgeon, Anne Studley took Grace with her into the morning-room, out of which, through heavy velvet portières, opened a pretty little conservatory filled with exotics, and with a fountain plashing in its midst. As they were sitting idly talking, the conversation being mostly carried on by Anne—for Grace was meditative and preoccupied—Mr. Burton was announced.

"Stay, Jennings," said Anne to the servant, quickly, "one minute before you let him in. Grace, dear, I have a particular desire you should not see Mr. Burton this morning; at all events, until I have spoken to him upon some very important business of my own."

The blush was on Grace's face in an instant. "What can I do?" she said. "If I go out I shall meet him in the hall."

"Step into the conservatory," said Anne; "you can pass through and go out by the other door. Now, Jennings, show Mr. Burton in."

But when Grace tried the outer door of the conservatory, she found it locked on the outside, and as Mr. Burton was already in the room, she was compelled to remain in hiding.

"You see I have obeyed your commands, Miss Studley," was Clement's salutation, "and I am here."

"It was very good of you to come," said Anne, quietly; "but I think, before our interview is ended, you will see the necessity for my somewhat apparently brusque summons. You used to say," she added, with a slight colour rising, but fading as suddenly as it came, "in the old days, when I was Mrs. Gaynor—you used to say that one of my chief merits was frankness."

"I never knew you to be otherwise than thoroughly frank and thoroughly trustworthy," he said.

"And you will find, I hope, that those qualities have not deserted me. In all I am going to say to you now I shall be thoroughly frank—too frank for politeness, perhaps, but not for truth; certainly not too frank, considering how very nearly the happiness of one so dear to me is concerned."

He started, and looked at her keenly. "I am afraid I do not comprehend you, Miss Studley," he said.

"I think you do," she replied, quietly; "or, at all events, have some glimmering of what I mean. Mr. Burton, you love my friend, Grace Middleham!"

He started, and cried, in an excited tone, "What makes you think that?"

"My own observation; my own intuitive knowledge," she said.

"I am not answerable for your own observation, nor for your intuitive knowledge, Miss Studley. I can only say that such knowledge could never have been derived from anything which I have ever said—or done."

"You may have your words and actions under command, Mr. Burton," she replied, "and yet involuntarily have given me reason to suspect what I have just averred. You love Grace Middleham, I repeat!"

"And what if I do?" he cried, suddenly. "It is not a confession which I should have voluntarily made; and yet, inexplicable as my hesitation may seem to you, it is one in which I glory."

"And yet, for the sake of improving your position, you would readily forsake her?"

"For the sake of improving my position!" he cried.

"Is it not so?" said Anne, scornfully. "You pretend to yourself that you love this girl, and yet, when the opportunity offers for you to get rid of the profession which you never liked, and of which you are thoroughly wearied—when you see a chance of easily obtaining change of scene, and of leading a more congenial life, you do not hesitate to accept it and to throw your fine feelings to the winds."

"You scarcely know what you are saying, Miss Studley," said Clement, quietly.

"Do I not?" said Anne; "I think I do. I think anyone before whom the circumstances were brought would not hesitate to decide with me that, however much you may imagine yourself to be in love, in the course which you propose to take you are selfishly preferring your own ease and comfort, and the improvement of your position, to the love which you profess to feel."

Clement Burton rose from his chair and stood before her, hat in hand. "You told me that you would be frank, Miss Studley, and I expected plain speaking from you; but I was, I confess, but little prepared for the turn which your observations have taken. This is the first, and it must be the last, time on which this subject shall ever be mentioned between us. My frankness, therefore, shall be as great as your own, and I hope it will have the effect of leaving a different impression on you. You have guessed rightly that I love Miss Middleham, but how deeply I love her you will never know. For that love I am prepared—nay, I am about to sacrifice what is to me the whole pleasure of existence—being with her, the seeing and hearing her, the breathing the air she breathes, the knowledge that this delight is to be renewed from day to day—for that love I am giving up the practice, to secure which I have toiled early and late, and the prospects which are opening before me; and I do this, I keep silence before her, and leave her presence for ever without having breathed one word of my hopes, because I will not have it said that I, the poor surgeon, made use of my professional opportunities to gain the confidence of the wealthy heiress for my own purposes. If Miss Middleham had herself been poor, I should, months ago, have put to her the question with which my heart had been so long troubled, and asked her to become my wife."

He spoke with trembling lips and pallid cheeks. When he had come to an end he made a bow, and was turning away, but Anne caught him by the arm.

"Don't you think it fair?" she said, "that Miss Middleham should know the state of your feelings—should have an opportunity of answering that question?"

"She shall never have it from me," said Clement, with a sigh.

"But suppose she has had it already," said Anne, drawing aside the curtain, and pointing to where Grace stood, her blushing face covered with her hands. "Suppose I have given her the chance of hearing and answering, don't you think it will be worth while to get her reply from her own lips?"

Clement Burton did not take up his appointment as secretary to the West India governor, but remained in London, where you have perhaps seen him very often, for he is one of our most eminent surgeons, and his practice is enormous. His wife, who is very pretty and much admired, wants him to retire, but he seems to be too much interested in his work. Mr. and Mrs. Burton are the active and generous patrons of a prosperous institution for training hospital nurses, at the head of which is Anne Studley, who devotes all her time to the institution. She lives in the house, and personally superintends an imbecile woman with a useless right arm, who sings very sweetly, and is happy in her mindless way, looking to Anne for everything, as a dog looks to its master.

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