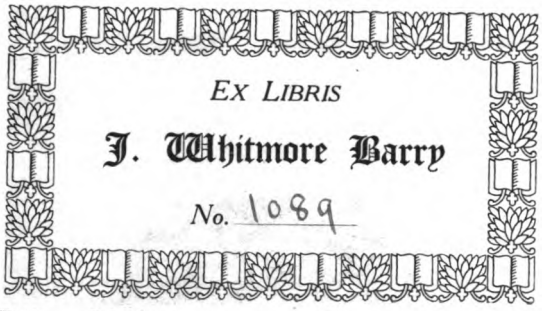

Short Stories



SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

VOLUME V.

FEBRUARY-MARCH, 1891.

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PROCURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE

NEW YORK
THE CURRENT LITERATURE PUBLISHING CO.
52 AND 54 LAFAYETTE PLACE

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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol V. No. 1. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* **FEB. 1891**

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN HEADS

It stands on the Keizersgracht—a gray and gloomy pile of nondescript architecture with seven horrible, fantastic heads carved in its grim, mold-covered, stone facade.

Generations ago it was the property and the residence of a retired East India merchant who had amassed almost fabulous wealth, and who lived in the unostentatious and solid style peculiar to the prosperous bourgeoise of Amsterdam.

It was the custom of this good gentleman to leave his city home early in the season for his country seat in the Haarlemmer Meer, and during his absence the house on the Keizersgracht was left in the charge of an old servant—Anne—who belonged to a class fast dying out in Holland, if not already a feature of its past, and which has no parallel unless in that other extinct type the "Da" of the Louisiana Creole life.

This faithful woman had nursed the master through earliest infancy and, according to the old custom, she remained in his service after his marriage, attending his young wife and caring for his children in turn. When wife and children had passed away, the responsibilities of the household rested entirely on the willing shoulders of the loyal Anne, and she comforted her master in his days of sorrow, guarded his interests—knowing no others—as her own, and devoted her age as she had given her youth to his service.

The other servants came beneath her control, but in the summer she sent them away to the country house, preferring the peace and quiet of the deserted home to their troublesome society, and undertaking the task of the annual September house-cleaning entirely without assistance. She dearly loved every nook and corner of this old house where her master

* From the Dutch of A. Schade Van Westrum : Translated for "Short Stories," by Alice Ballard Macdonald.

and his dear, dead children had first seen the light of the world, and where the poor little ones had one after another closed their eyes upon it forever. She wanted no frivolous maids tripping about among the rooms bothering her under the guise of assistance. It was a labor of love to get everything in readiness for the return of the master and she grudged neither time nor strength in the waxing of the floors until one could easily break one's neck with an unsteady move on the slippery surface—in polishing the old brass until it showed one's face as in a mirror, and in carefully dusting and rearranging the quaint old Delft and Doulton which together with many a heathenish curio from the strange countries to which her master had journeyed, lined the shelves of cabinets and adorned the tops of the presses and chests. Some of these curios represented great wealth, so Anne had heard the master say—were even as valuable and to be guarded as carefully as the treasures of plate and gold and silver which were locked in the metal press in the library, and the hiding place of which was known in the household only to Anne and the master. But she did not think much of the poor grotesque things, in her secret heart—these shabby old weapons crossed here on the wall, for example. Very poor and clumsy things they looked to be. She carefully wiped the scabbard of one long, curving sword and then unsheathed the blade. Dear Heaven! but it was rusty. Only after a vigorous pull could she drag it from the sheath. Why not rub it up a bit? She was very tired and this was really an unnecessary, added exertion. But Anne hated rust almost as much as she hated dust, and it was such a satisfaction to feel that everything, even these ridiculous swords in their scabbards were shining with cleanliness. She set about the task, and in a half hour it was an accomplished fact.

With a sigh of pure satisfaction at the consciousness of duty fulfilled, the old servant gave a glance about the handsome, comfortable room. It was her master's favorite room—his library, and it contained many a treasure of literature and art, beside the yet more substantial treasure locked in the metal bound press in the corner.

"Now I begin to feel the need of a good cup of tea," said Anne to herself, "And I must get my wood up from the cellar for the morning. Oh, yes," she added, "the shutters!

She advanced toward the window and was about to close

the shutters when a furious gust of wind flung them violently in place. A storm had been threatening all the afternoon. The wind was sweeping across the canal, the sky was black, the rain beat down with sudden fierceness and as she closed the last blind at the front of the house, Anne saw the figures of two men huddled against the high stoop apparently seeking shelter from the rising storm.

In the old Dutch houses, the cellar or rather an extension of it is out beneath the high stoop, and receives light from a small, square aperture cut in the stone. This opening also permits a current of air from the windows of the main cellar, which are larger, also square, and cut in the wall a few inches above the street. These windows were protected by light shutters. The opening in the front wall was left unprotected, for the stout door at the head of the cellar steps was provided with bolts and bars and considered a sufficient defense against possible visitors who chose to enter the house by way of the cellar. Anne placed her candle on the steps, closed the shutters to keep out the driving rain and busied herself, first, in collecting the firewood strewn over the floor of the cellar. This led her gradually toward the extension and with a sudden lull in the storm, she distinctly heard the sound of voices in subdued conversation.

Advancing noiselessly she peered through the opening in the wall. The two men who had sought comparative shelter from the storm were still huddled against the porch. Anne could not see their faces—she was too far below them, but what they said was perfectly audible, and while she was puzzling over a certain familiar tone in the voice of one of the men, the import of his words fell with a chilling force which crushed in her every other thought.

"It could be managed without the slightest difficulty," he said. "The old woman is alone in the house, and we can step in here—one after the other."

He indicated the opening near which they stood with a motion of his foot. Anne could have touched it by stretching out her hand. She trembled violently with fear and was obliged to grasp the stone ledge of the window for support.

"All very good," whispered the second voice, "but if, as you say, there is a strong door at the top of the cellar steps, how are we to get into the main house, after all?"

"How?" said the first speaker, "there will be seven of

us in all. We shall have the necessary implements. We shall break through the door."

"And while we are doing all this," whispered the other excitedly, "what is to prevent the old woman from hearing us, from giving the alarm, from handing us into custody? And then what of all this great treasure? For that matter how do you know that anything has been left in the house——"

His companion interrupted him with a contemptuous laugh. "One question at a time, my friend," he began coolly; and again Anne recognized something strangely familiar in the soft, sneering voice. "If, as you say, the old woman hears us at work and cries out; who will hear her on the Keizersgracht, when all Amsterdam will crawl indoor? How long, too, do you think it will take seven men and a strong axe to cut through a few bolts? Bah! One, two taps, and it is done, a third tap for the old woman who will doubtless be standing ready to take it, and so much the better, since dead women—like dead men—tell no tales." Again he laughed disagreeably, "As for the treasure, I know the house and the ways of the people, and you will kindly remember that I do not often bungle in these little affairs. However," he added, carelessly, "if you are timid, there are still six of us and should you leave us in the lurch, you will at least keep our secret, *of that I am quite sure.*

He spoke with a peculiar emphasis. The other rejoined instantly—"Enough! I will be one of you! Now, you wish me to remain here and watch while you go in search of the others. Give me your plan now, it will save time and talk."

Anne clung desperately to the sill, in spite of her shaking limbs which threatened to no longer support her weight. She was dazed—confused by the revelation of this horrible plan of robbery and murder, yes! *her* murder—that was what they were plotting to accomplish. Dear Heaven! What could she do? At least she must not lose a word——

"Do not leave this spot until I return. Should the old servant leave the house, strangle her from behind."

Anne with difficulty repressed a cry of agony.

"I will bring the others as near the house as I dare, and imitate the howl of a dog. If everything is quiet and we can approach, you repeat the sound. If you are silent I shall know that the unexpected has happened. We understand each other thoroughly now? One thing more, as I said

before, this window" tapping the wall behind him again with his foot, "is better than the others; it has no shutters and will necessitate less noise near the street. It is just wide enough to admit a man head-first, and is not more than three feet from the floor; one can feel for the ground with his hands, and so draw in the rest of the body. You had best enter first, I last, so we will keep a watch on the others. Give a low '*Cuckoo*' when you are safely on your feet within I shall tell the others to do the same. So! I go now to the "Roode Leenw" where the others are waiting and we will return as soon as it is possible to do so with safety. Thank God for the black night! We can begin our work early."

He moved away. Anne, intently watching.

"Wait!" called the other softly. A dim shape rose again, close beside the window. "You are sure about the treasure? Come now, there is enough for seven?"

"Aye man," was the reply; "and for eight, we shall need a man without to give an alarm if necessary. I tell you there is not only money but a service of solid gold, and another of silver. In better days I have eaten off both!"

He was gone. Anne, unable longer to stand, sank despairingly to the ground. She was unconscious of the darkness, for the candle end she had brought into the cellar had long ago burned itself out on the stone steps. She covered her face with her hard old hands, and a few heavy tears crept through the knotted fingers. She had lived an honest life. She had served her master faithfully. She had hoped to close her eyes peacefully, at last, in his service. To die to-night, to be murdered, struck down with an axe beneath this very roof where she had spent nearly her whole life! Or *strangled from behind* should she try to escape from the house! Horrible! Horrible! Would the dear God let such a thing be? She had suddenly a stupid sensation of being another than herself. The rain beat fiercely down. The wind sobbed and moaned about the house, then tore madly over the canal, lashing the placid waters to fury. A bell in the town tolled ten strokes, muffled and irregular through the noises of the storm.

Ten o'clock! So late! Anne struggled to her feet. What was she doing here, weeping, inactive, when her life was at stake? Surely, there was some way to prevent this awful, needless crime! This man without, watching, waiting to strangle her, he could not see in all directions at once. They

had not counted on their plan being overheard. They would not expect strategy from her. There were the windows at the back of the house! She could drop from one of them and, by making a long detour, reach a neighbor, or even the watch in the town. There was a chance of her meeting the other wretches, but it was one in twenty. Here in the house, she had no chance at all. Dear Heaven! He was right, the villain! How long would it take seven men and a strong axe to break down a few bolts? She had no time to lose. She crept through the darkness straight to the cellar steps—she knew every inch of the ground—made her way softly to the door above, opening it as cautiously as though a sound might steal through stone walls and wooden shutters to the wicked ears without. In the kitchen she lighted a candle and shading it with her hand as she passed before the windows, she moved quickly toward the dining-room, at the back of the house, and the windows of which were consequently furthest removed from the watcher on the Keizersgracht. At the door of the library she paused. Obeying an irresistible impulse, she entered the room and placing the candle on a small table she looked about her. There was her master's favorite chair drawn before his writing table, his books, his pictures. The pictures of his children and his wife. The curious ornaments on the shelves, in niches on the wall, everything dearest to him was in the room, yes! and everything of most value. Anne's eye fell on the metal bound chest in the corner. Within were the two services of plate, gold and silver, heirlooms in the family and more precious in the eyes of her master than the rolls of bills and sacks of coins and the cases of jewels stored beside them. She wondered, vaguely, in the midst of her strong excitement, how this hiding place as well as the house itself had become so well known to the robber with the strangely familiar voice. Alas! In an hour's time, perhaps in less, all this would have passed into his hands, this dear room almost sacred to her, would be desecrated by the presence of these murderous ruffians, and she, the faithful one, who loved the belongings of her master as she loved him, would be flying along the Keizersgracht, flying for her life. What! She would then be running away? For her life? Yes, to be sure.

A doubt, perplexing, agonizing, crept upon the old servant—slowly at first, assumed strength in her thoughts,

merging at last into the certainty of a forceful conviction. Her place was here—here—to defend what had been given into her charge? How? It mattered not. With her life, if need be. This were better than the abandonment of duty. A certain exaltation following upon this righteous resolve seemed to deprive even the certainty of the terrible death which was fast stealing upon her of all its bitterness. They would find her, here, in this room the dear master and his servants, they would find her dead, *murdered*, beside the press, cut down at her post of duty! The master would shed tears at this affecting sight and he would know that she had been faithful unto death. Yes! She would be faithful—to-night—as through all the past to him and to what was his. She looked again about the room in which she now knew she was to die. Her eyes lingered lovingly on each familiar feature of its furnishings. They rested on the swords she had been cleaning that evening—the last duty she would ever perform in this house which had so long been her charge. No! not the last—one was still to come. She moved slowly toward the weapons and laid her hand on one of them, a great broad sword with a blade as thick as an axe. Moved by some strange influence, Anne unsheathed the weapon, clutched it firmly with both hands, turning it slightly so that the dim light from the candle played on the dazzling steel.

A single dull note sounded from the town bell. Half-past ten. Perhaps even now her fate was creeping upon her, stealthily along the Keizersgracht.

Remembering the signal, she listened intently for the howling of a dog, but no sound came to her save the moaning of the wind and the beating of the rain.

Suppose the cry was lost in the storm and that at this moment, a head was being thrust through the cellar window and a pair of murderous hands reaching for the ground.

Her own hands closed nervously on the weapon in her grasp, and unconsciously she lifted it as if to strike a blow. The action was suggestive—a host of thoughts crowded swiftly upon it, but thoughts so terrifying that the old servant, after abandoning herself to them for one delirious instant, fell suddenly on her knees and prayed God to snatch them from her heart. But they pressed in even upon her prayer, and yet upon her knees with eyes upraised to Heaven, she found herself plotting, planning to foil these cowardly

robbers with their own weapons. How she might with this good sword in her hand station herself by the little window in the cellar; how each man would enter alone, offering his head, as it were, for the blow. The cry was known to her.—

Why was she praying God to help her resist this voice in her heart, since He, Himself must have bidden it speak? Was it not right to defend one's life—"an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." And, strongest conviction of all—in this way alone could she risk her life to some purpose. Should she succeed, the treasure was safe. Here, on the contrary, of what avail the sacrifice of her life, since the robbers would step over her dead body to rifle the safe of its contents!

"My God! Have mercy upon me!" whispered the old servant, struggling to her feet, and seizing the weapon which had fallen to the floor at her side she took the candle in the other hand, placing first a few matches on the edge of the candlestick and closing the library door softly, she swiftly made her way to the cellar steps. Here she extinguished the light and removed her shoes. Descending the steps without haste, she moved toward the extension, listening intently for the howling of a dog above the confusion of the storm.

She had not long to wait. As the instigator of the robbery had said—the elements, wild and wicked, lent their aid to the furtherance of the evil deed.

Anne laid her formidable weapon on the ground convenient to her hand and fell upon her knees. Again the horror of what she was about to do closed in upon her senses.

"*Thou shalt not kill!*"

The words rang in her ears and were graven in flaming letters in the darkness about her. She was intensely, almost superstitiously religious, but perhaps the fanaticism to which her nature was prone found its greatest expression in her idolatry of her master and the fetich-like reverence with which she worshipped even his smallest belongings. The struggle between these two passions of a long, narrow life was sharp and severe. But it was also short.

The words of the simple prayer:—"My God pity me! My God show me what is right!" repeated again and again, died away suddenly in the old servant's throat. The prolonged howl of a dog sounded above wind and rain. In a moment it was answered by another much nearer the house.

With the necessity for immediate action came the requisite

courage. There was no further need of prayer, as there was no further hesitation. Muffled, stealthy footsteps approached the house. Not a word was spoken that could be overheard by the woman, who stood rigid with upraised arms, ready to deal the fatal strokes, with burning eyes fixed upon the shadowy opening in the wall so faintly outlined against the darkness of the night. But her eyes, grown accustomed to the surroundings, saw plainly the rounder, darker outline of the man's head which was thrust cautiously forward through the opening; saw even where the line of hair ended sharply against the back of the neck; saw by some second sense of sight where the shoulders followed the head, and the arms were drawn slowly in, one after another, and were extended downward to reach the ground.

Now! The terrible blade descended swiftly, silently, on that spot below the line of hair. There was a vibrant shock, a slight resistance; then it went on, cleaving through a life. The head fell with a heavy, sickening sound, prolonged by a soft gurgling. And all this with such hideous speed, such appalling silence. The woman's head swam and she staggered as she moved a step or two nearer to seize the headless body by the feet and drag it through the window. Then she must stoop and push it aside—*for the next.*

And the signal! She had almost forgotten. Dear God, where was her voice? She made a fearful effort, but the voice, rough, husky, yet harsh; could it be hers?

"Cuckoo!"

She shivered with anxiety. Would they detect the strangeness of the voice, suspect a trap, fly? Oh! If God would have it so! Suppose, indeed, He did not sanction this awful bloodshed! Was not this murder? And murder deliberately planned, and not one victim but seven! The prayer rose again to Heaven—this time voiceless, but the same poor words went up from the tortured soul.

"My God! Pity me! Show me *what* is right!"

A second head, a second blow to sever it from its body, after a pause as before to gain the same advantage, only this time, an added horror, since the falling head rolled between her feet, and, when afraid to risk a misstep, she stooped to push it aside with her hands, they touched the hair and beard wet and warm with blood. Its sickening odor remained upon them, and shaking as with ague, yet with the heat of fever

in her brain, Anne dragged the second body after the first, and as it was that of a slight man, her strong arm lifted it from the ground and flung it far back into the cellar.

This time she gave the signal in a clearer voice, and as she again took her position to wait for the third victim, she was conscious of a certain lightness, a vague exhilaration which she could not have analyzed had she tried. Her lips still moved in silent prayer, but unconsciously to herself, the words of her supplications had changed, and she entreated only for strength; yes! strength to kill!

The third man came quietly to his fate as had the two before him, but with the fourth it was different. He had followed closely on his companion and Anne had not time to push aside the preceding body before aiming a blow at his neck. His hands, feeling for the floor, came in contact with the gaping throat from which the blood still streamed and passed swiftly over it to the lifeless arms and shoulders.

"What is this?" he muttered. "Where are you?"

Receiving no reply, he tried vainly to wriggle back as he had come, through the narrow opening from which he dangled head downwards. But his struggle was short and his fate differed from that of his companions only in that his upraised head met the descending sword which crashed through his skull, cleaving it and striking only one-half from the body.

There was no indecision, no fear, no remorse in the action of the woman who seized the limp figure and drew it in through the window with one vigorous movement of her steady arm. There was no hesitation in the rough voice which gave the cry to which the fifth robber responded. Into the limbs, stiffened by years of labor, a new strength was creeping. The thin blood of age was leaping and dancing like the hot torrent which courses through the veins of youth, urging it to desperate acts of heroism or of evil. The wrinkled face of the old servant grew flushed and eager; her dim eyes sparkled. The smell of blood was in her nostrils and they quivered like those of a wild beast. Her thin lips parted over the toothless gums in a smile of hideous cruelty.

The lust of murder was upon her.

The sixth head fell with its horrible heavy sound beneath a terrific blow from the avenging sword, and angrily, as one impatient of delay, Anne snatched the body of the man roughly by the belt and flung it violently behind her.

"Cuckoo!" she cried at the window, and her voice was like the growl of an enraged brute.

This time, the head put through the window was instantly withdrawn and a murmur of hushed voices ensued.

The woman within stamped on the ground in her impatience. She thrust her foot forward. It touched some soft, heavy object. The headless body of a man. She kicked it furiously. Then, as the murmuring continued and the delay waxed longer, she became possessed of rage, and fell to hacking with the sword in her hand in all directions—to the right, to the left, wherever she thought a body lay.

Wait! Suppose it might be heard from without. Anne paused in this drunken carnival of blood, sobered by the fear that the seventh victim might escape her. She turned again to the window. The voices had ceased.

A head was thrust through the opening.

"Are you all there?" whispered a cautious voice. "Is everything all right?"

The woman with the uplifted sword feared to answer, thinking her voice, so near him, might betray her. She had grown cunning in even this short madness that had come upon her. She bent forward with incredible swiftness and before the head could be withdrawn she had seized it firmly by the hair. The man uttered a stifled oath and struggled to free himself. He might as well have battled with an avalanche. The crazed creature twisted her hard fingers in and out of his hair, dragging his head down inch by inch and so holding him, as a child might hold a doll with one hand, she swung her weapon high in the air and struck off his head with the other. But the body, overweighted on the outer side of the sill, fell headless into the street.

A shriek of horror rose from the almost paralyzed watcher on the Keizersgracht.

It was answered by a howl of triumph from the frantic and blood-stained woman within.

"Seven! Seven! she screamed. "Seven heads! And they are mine; all of them mine!"

The man fled for his life. The sound of his flying steps came dimly—ceased altogether. The storm had died, and suddenly the moon came out, shone down on the waters of the canal—turgid and troubled—on the dripping trees and the river of mud running along the Keizersgracht, looked in

at the unshuttered windows of the cellar and flooded it with light. There lay a heap of headless bodies, with the blood streaming from their necks and from a dozen gaping wounds, dealt by some weapon and with a terrific force. Seven heads, all with wide-opened eyes, in which a vague presentiment of terror seemed dawning—all save one, and that was but half a head, smitten from its other half, which might be found clinging to the limp neck of a disfigured body. This, too, the moon saw—a little, mad, old woman, laughing, chattering, crying to herself, who stared about her with unseeing eyes when first the moon looked in, and then suddenly seeing all, gave way to frenzy, cast herself on the ground in the midst of the ghastly company, striking at and biting whatever she touched, shrieking with horrible laughter as the heads rolled about beneath her furious blows. And all this was so pitiful to see that after a little while the moon hid her face behind the clouds and the night was black until the gray fingers of the dawn lifted the curtain of the day.

The morning-watch on the Keizersgracht was horrified to find the headless body of a man stretched before the door of one of the wealthiest residents, and while stooping to examine it a peal of hideous laughter rang in his ear. Turning his head swiftly, a grinning, blood-stained face stared at him from the cellar window—the eyes were bright and cunning, the lips parted in an unmeaning smile over toothless gums; With a cry of alarm, the good officer put a safe distance between himself and a wrinkled, bloody paw that was stretched forth to seize him, and with a growl of rage the face at the window disappeared.

The guardian of the peace, greatly puzzled and disturbed, was about to hurry to the town to seek assistance in unraveling the mystery when a heavy traveling carriage rolled into view, and he recognized the equipage of the owner of the house.

He waited its approach, and when it stopped before the door, which covered this unknown tragedy, he advanced quickly to meet its occupant.

With a brief word of explanation, he pointed out the corpse stretched before the house, and at the same moment, attracted by the sound of the wheels, Anne's scarcely recognizable face appeared at the cellar-window.

At the sight of her master, who stared at her with an expression of mingled wonderment and horror, she gave a

bitter, incoherent cry, and great tears forced themselves from her eyes and mingling with the blood which bespattered her face, formed two red and muddy rivulets which ran heavily down the furrows of her cheeks.

"Anne! Great God!" exclaimed the master.

Then suddenly regaining his self-control, he turned angrily to his servants, who had huddled behind him.

"What are you doing standing there? Why do you not open the doors? Come! Get out your keys.

But in spite of his firm and angry tones he shuddered as his gaze fell on the ghastly corpse before his door, and the poor distorted face which looked out above it.

The officer, ashamed to betray hesitation, followed the owner into the house and accompanied him to the cellar. The sickening spectacle unnerved both men.

But when the poor, mad creature came creeping, like a faithful dog, over the blood-stained floor, past the mutilated bodies, to kneel at the feet of her beloved master, the pompous, self-contained old merchant broke into weeping and sobbed like a child.

It was many days before the lucid interval which came just before the death of the old servant, permitted her to tell the whole terrible story. In her fevered ravings, she had betrayed her sufferings little by little, but toward the last the delirium left her, and at the close of one bright fall day, when the rays of the setting sun lay across her bed, she opened her faded eyes, clear at last, of the terrible hallucination which had possessed her mind ever since that awful night.

Her master was summoned and stood beside her with her faithful hands in his, while hurriedly, all-unconscious of her heroism, she told him at what a price she had saved that which he had entrusted to her care. The end came that night.

And so in grateful commemoration the grim stone facade of the house on the Keizersgracht were carved the seven heads of the men who were slain in self-defence and, in the protection of another's property, by the hand of a single woman. Yes! although one of them was the own nephew of the owner of the house, and had many times been made welcome beneath its roof; he, too, with the rest was copied in death, and perpetuated in stone to the memory of a faithful servant. And all Amsterdam knows the story.

ETCHINGS: THE ORDERLY

Stiff as ramrods the sergeant-majors awaited the colonel's coming. Storm was in the atmosphere; a thing without precedent had happened. Dubois, the colonel's orderly, had been thrown into prison by order of the colonel himself.

"Treason" said one; "Drunkenness!" said another.

Only Grandot, captain of the battery, stood his ground.

"A serious case, truly, my colonel! but the papers are ready, and need only your signature to court-martial him."

"Eh? What? Papers ready and waiting? What the devil are you talking about, Grandot? Court-martial whom?"

"Dubois; It was I shut him up, and we thought——"

"You thought——" the colonel roared with laughter.

"I see," said he, "you thought it treason. But I shut him up, Grandot, I shut up the fool to keep him out of mischief, to give the beast time to clear the fog from his brain.

"Stay, judge for yourself the hornet's nest he's got me into."

"Yesterday I said to him: 'Dubois, I'm ill; go to the Comtesse B's, where I'm booked to dine this evening, and beg her to excuse me. Don't forget, coming back, to bring me my dinner; then I shall not have to go out to-night.'

"On his return he served me a soup, a salmon, a pheasant and a series of entrés so delicious that I said to him: 'They must be having a banquet, Dubois, at my boarding house?'

"'Oh no, my colonel,' replied the brute, presenting with a salute a glass of champagne, 'it was the Comtesse herself put up the basket when I told her I was to bring back your dinner, and who desires Mon. le Colonel to drink her health.'

"My feelings imagine! Suddenly an idea struck me."

"'Run, Dubois, run!' I cried, 'to the nearest florist's, select the finest bouquet you can find in the shop and present it to the Comtesse with my compliments.'

"A half hour later Dubois reappeared, waving his arms."

"'It was handsome?' said I; 'fresh and beautiful....

"'Precisely, my colonel, and so beautiful that Madame la Comtesse wanted to give me a franc for my pains; but Madame, 'says I,' 'twas 20 francs the bouquet cost me!' Which she quickly gave me, and here they are, my colonel."

"The result—well, the result—for Dubois—you know!"

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* La Vie Moderne: E. C. W: For Short Stories

AN OLD LADY'S LOVE STORY

I sat spinning at my little wheel, in the sun, for the autumn day was cold, when I heard some one whistling; and, looking up, there was young Squire Turner, with his arms folded on the gate, looking over. When he caught my eye he laughed, I blushed; and I arose and made him a courtesy.

He was a handsome gentleman, the squire, and the hand from which he pulled the glove shimmered in the sun with pearls and diamonds; and he was bonny to look at with his hair like spun gold in the October sunlight.

When I courtesied he bowed, making his curls dance over his shoulders, and, said he, "I've spoiled one pretty picture that I could have looked at all day, but I've made another as pretty, so I'll not grieve. May I come in?"

"And welcome sir," said I; and I set a chair for him, for he was grandfather's landlord; but for all that I felt uncomfortable, for I was not used to fine company.

He talked away, paying me more compliments than I was used to, for grandmother, who brought me up, said, "Handsome is as handsome does," and "Beauty is but skin deep."

Since I'm telling the story I'll tell the truth. I had done wrong about one thing. Neither of the old folks knew that I wore Evan Locke's ring in my bosom, or that we'd taken a vow to each other beside the hawthorn that grew in the church lane. I never meant to deceive, but grannie was old and a little hard, and that love of mine was such a sweet secret. Besides, money seems to outweigh all else when people have struggled all their lives through to turn a penny, and they knew Evan was a poor, struggling young surgeon. I thought I'd wait a while until I could sweeten the news with the fact that he'd begun to make his fortune.

Grannie came in from the dairy five minutes after the Squire was gone, and heard he had been there. I didn't tell her of his fine speeches, but there was a keyhole to the door she came through, and I have a guess she heard them.

That night we had something else to think of. Misfortunes had come upon grandfather; but I didn't foresee that, when the half year's rent should come due, not a penny to pay it with would be found.

*The Gentleman's Magazine.

All this time Evan Locke and I had been as fond as ever of each other, and he came as often as before to talk with grandpa on the winter nights; and still every little while our young landlord, Squire Turner, would drop in and sit in his lazy way watching me knit or spin. One or twice he was flushed with wine and over bold, for he tried to kiss me. But squire or no, I boxed his ears for his pains, and no softer than I could help either.

I could not help his coming, nor help seeing him when he came, and I did not deserve that Evan should be angry with me. But he was. Eh, so high and mighty, and spoke as though one like the Squire could mean no good by coming to so poor a place as the schoolmaster's.

He made me angry, and I spoke up.

"For that matter, the Squire would be glad to have me promise to marry him," said I. "He thinks more of me than—

"May be you like him better!" said Evan.

"I don't say that," replied I. "But bad temper and jealousy scarce make me over fond of another. I pray I may never have a husband who will scold me."

For he had been scolding me. No other name for it.

Well, Evan was wroth with me and I with him—not heart-deep, though, I thought—and I did not see him for more than a week. I was troubled much, though. I knew he would come round again, and mayhap ask my pardon. For before you are wed you can bring your lover to his senses.

So I did not fret after Evan's absence, nor quite snub Squire Turner, who liked me more than ever. But one night grandfather came in and shutting the door, stood between grandmamma and me, looking at me, and so strangely that we both grew frightened. At last he spoke:

"I've been to the Squire's," said he. "For the first time I had to tell him that I could not pay the rent when due."

I opened my lips. Grandmamma's hand covered them. Grandpa drew me to him.

"Thou'rt young, lass," said he, "and they are right who call thee pretty. Child——could'st like the Squire well enough to wed him?"

"Eh?" cried grandma. "Sure, you're not wandering?"

"Squire Turner asked me for this lass of ours to-night. Of all women in the world there is but one he loves as he should his wife, and that is our Agatha."

"I dreamt of golden rings and white roses on Christmas eve," cried grannie. "I knew the lass would be lucky."

But I put my head on grandfather's shoulder and hid my face. The truth must out, I knew.

"Wilt have him, and be a rich lady?" said grandpa.

And when he had waited for an answer, I burst out with "No" and a sob together.

"She's frightened," said grandmamma. "Nay, we must all wed once in our lives, my child."

Then grandpapa talked to me. He told me how poor they had grown, and how kind the squire was, and I had but to marry him to make my grandparents free from debt and poverty their lives through. If I refused and vexed the squire, heaven only knew what might happen.

"She'll never ruin us" sobbed grandmamma.

Ah! it was hard to bear—bitter hard; but now there was no help for it. I took the ring from my bosom and laid it on my palm, and told them it was Evan Locke's, and that I had plighted my troth to him. And grandmamma called me a deceitful wench, and grandfather looked as though his heart would break.

Oh, I would have done anything for them—anything but give up my true love.

That night I kissed his ring and prayed heaven that he might love me always. In the morning it was gone, ribbon and all, from my neck. I looked for it high and low, but found no sign of it. And I began to fear the loss of that dear ring was a sign that I would never marry Evan Locke.

The days passed on, and he never came near me.

"Oh, it was cruel in him," I thought, "to hold such anger for a hasty word he had provoked, when I spoke it that he must know I loved him so."

And grandma would scarcely look at me (I know why now), and grandpa sighed, and moaned, and talked of the work-house. And I thought I should die of grief among them.

One day grandma said to me, "It seems that your sweetheart is not over-fond of you, nor over-anxious to see you."

"Why not?" said I.

"Where has he been this month back?"

"Busy, doubtless," said I, with a smile, though I thought my heart would burst.

"You're going with him, maybe."

"Where?" said I.

She went to the kitchen door and beckoned in a woman who sat there—Dame Coombs, who had come over with eggs.

"I heard you rightly," she said. "You told me Evan Locke and his mother were making ready for a voyage."

"They're going to Canada. My son, a carpenter—and a good one, though I say it—made the doctor a box for his things. The old lady dreads the new country, but she goes for the doctor's sake. There's money to be made there."

"I told you so," said grandmother.

"I don't believe it," said I.

"They've sold the house, and gone to Liverpool to take ship; and you may find the truth for yourself, if you choose to take the trouble," said Dame Coombs. "I'm no chatterbox, to tell falsehoods about my neighbors."

And still I would not believe it until I had walked across the moor and had seen the shutters fast closed and the door barred, and not a sign of life about the place. Then I gave up hope. I went home all pale and trembling, and sat down at grandmamma's knee.

"It's true," said I.

"And for the sake of so false a lad you'll see your grandfather ruined and break his heart, and leave me, that have nursed you from a babe, a widow."

I looked at her as she sobbed, and I found strength to say:

"Give me to whom you will then, since my own love does not want me."

And then I crept up stairs and sat down on my bedside, weak as though I had fainted. I would have thanked heaven for forgetfulness just then, but it wouldn't come.

The next day Squire Turner was in the parlor as my accepted lover. How pleased he was, and how the color came back into grandfather's old face! And grannie grew so proud and kind, and all the house was aglow, and only I sad. But I couldn't forget Evan—Evan whom I had loved so—sailing away from me without a word.

I suppose they all saw I looked sad. The Squire talked of my health, and would make me ride with him over the moors for strength.

The old folk said nothing. They knew what ailed me; only our little Scotch maid seemed to think there was aught wrong. Once she said to me:

"What ails ye, miss? Your eye is dull and your cheek is pale, and your braw grand lover canna make ye smile; ye are na that ill, either."

"No, I am well enough," said I.

She looked at me wistfully.

"Gin ye'd tell me your all, I might tell ye a cure," she said.

But there was no cure for me in this world, and I couldn't open my heart to simple Jennie. So the days rolled by, and I was close on my marriage eve, and grannie and Dorothy Plume were busy with my wedding robes. I wished it were my shroud they were working at, instead.

And one night the pain in my heart grew too great, and I went out among the purple heather on the moor, and there knelt down under the stars and prayed to be taken from the world; "for how can I live without Evan?" I said.

I spoke the words aloud, and then started up in affright, for there at my side was an elfish little figure, and I heard a cry that at first I scarce thought earthly. Yet is was but Scotch Jennie, who had followed me.

"Why do ye call for your true love now?" she said; ye sent him fra ye for sake o' the young Squire."

"How dare you follow and watch me?"

But she caught my sleeve.

"Dinna be vexed," she said. "Just bide a wee, and answer what I speer. It's for love of you, for I've seen ye waste like the snaw wreath in the sun sin the Squire woed ye. Was it your will the lad that loved the ground ye trod on should have his ring again?"

"What do you mean?" said I.

"I'll speak gin I lose my place," said Jennie. "I rode with the mistress to young Doctor Locke's place past the moor, and there she lighted and gave him a ring, and what she said I know not, but it turned him the tint o' death, and said he: 'There's na a drop o' true bluid in a woman 'gin she is false.' And he turned to the wall and covered his eyes, an' your grannie rode home. There, 'tis all I ken—wull it do?"

"Ay, Jennie," said I; "heaven bless you!"

And had I wings on my feet I could not have come to the cottage door sooner.

I stood before my grandmother, trembling and white, and I said: "Oh, don't tell me, grannie, you have cheated me and robbed me of my true love by a lie. Did you steal the

troth ring from my neck and give it back to Evan, as if from me? You I've loved and honored my life long—"

She turned scarlet.

"True love!" said she; "you've but one true love now—Squire Turner."

"You have done it!" I cried. "It's written on your face."

And she looked down at that and fell to weeping.

"My own true love was breaking his heart," she said. "My husband and I had loved for forty years. I did it to save him. Could I let a girl's fancy, worth nothing, stand in my way, and see him a beggar in his old age? Oh, girl, girl!"

And then I fell down at her feet like a stone. I knew nothing for an hour or more; but then, when I was better, and they left me with Jennie, I bade her fetch my hood and cloak and her own, and come with me, and away I went across the moor in the starlight to where the hall windows were ablaze with light, and asked the housekeeper to let me see the Squire.

She stared at me for my boldness—no wonder—but called him. So in a moment he stood before me in his evening dress, with his cheeks flushed and his eyes bright, and led me into a little room and seated me.

"Agatha, my love, I hope no mischance brings you here."

But I stopped him.

"Not your love, Squire Turner," I said. "I thank you for thinking so well of me, but after all that has passed, I—"

I could say no more. He took my hand.

"Have I offended you, Agatha?" he said.

"Not you. The offense—the guilt—oh, I have been sorely cheated!" and all I could do was to sob.

At last strength came to me. I went back to the first and told him all—how we had been plighted to each other, waiting only for better prospects to be wed, and how, when he honored me by an offer of his hand, I angered my grandmother by owning to the truth, and of the ring grannie had stolen from my breast, and the false message that had been sent my promised husband from me.

"And though I never see Evan Locke again," said I, "still I can never be another man's true love, for I am his until I die."

Then, as I looked, all the rich color faded out of the Squire's face, and I saw the sight we seldom see more than once in a lifetime—a strong young man in tears.

At last he arose and came to me.

"My little Agatha never loved me," he said. "Ah, me! The news is bad—I thought she did. This comes of vanity."

"Many a higher and a fairer have hearts to give," I said. "Mine was gone ere you saw me."

And then, kind and gentle, as though I had not grieved him, he gave me his arm and saw me across the moor, and at the gate paused and whispered:

"Be at rest, Agatha. The Golden George has not sailed yet."

I liked him better than I had ever done before that night when I told grannie that I would never wed him.

Eh! but he was fit to be a king—the grandest, kindest, best of living men; who rode away with the break of the morrow and never stopped till he reached Liverpool and found Evan Locke just ready to set foot upon the Golden George, and told him a tale that made his heart light and sent him back to me. Heaven bless him!

And who was it that sent old grandfather the deed of gift that made the cottage his own, and who spoke a kind word to the gentry for young Dr. Locke that helped him into practice? Still no one but Squire Turner, whom we taught our children to pray for every night. For we were married, and in a few years had boys and girls at our knees; and when the eldest was nigh two, the thing I needed to make me quite happy happened—and from far over the sea, where he had been three twelvemonths, came our Squire, with the bonniest lady that ever blushed beside him, and the Hall had a mistress at last—a mistress who loved the Squire as I loved Evan.

Eh! but it's an old story. She that I remembered a girl I saw in her coffin, withered and old. And then they opened the vault where the Squire had slept ten years to put her beside him; and I've nothing left of Evan, my life and my love, but his memory, and it seems as if every hope and dream of joy I ever had were put away under tombstones. And even the Golden George, the great strong ship that would have borne my dear from me, has mouldered away at the bottom of the sea. And I think my wedding ring is like to outlast us all, for I have it yet, and I shall be ninety to-morrow.

Ninety! It's a good old age, and it can't be long now before I meet Evan and the rest in heaven.

ETCHINGS: PASESHCHEYE*

"I was sitting at the open window....in the morning, the early morning of the young May.

"The dawn had not as yet begun to glow; but still warm, still cool, was the dark, mild night.

"The mist had not arisen, the breeze stirred not; all was colorless and calm. But the nearness of the awakening was felt and the thin air was filled with the keen dampness of the dew.

"Suddenly, through my open window, with a musical murmur and rustling, flitted a big bird into my room.

"I was startled, I looked up....But it was not a bird; it was a little woman with wings and clad in a long, close-fitting garment that flowed below her feet.

"She was all gray; the color of mother-of-pearl! But the inner side only of her pinions glowed with a delicate ruby hue shading into rose. A garland of May lilies was pressed upon the struggling curls of her round little head, and, like a butterfly's feelers, two peacock feathers were comically shaking over her lovely, bulging brow.

"Twice she flew around under the ceiling; her sweet little face was wreathed with smiles.

"Her big, black, brilliant eyes also smiled.

"The jocund wantonness of her whimsical flight scattered their diamond rays.

"She held in her hand the long stem of a floweret of the steppe;—the Tsar's sceptre it is called by the Russian people—for, indeed, it is like a sceptre.

"Impetuously winging her flight above me, she touched my head with the flower.

"I sprang toward her;....but she had already darted out of the window, and sped away.

"In the garden, in the thicket of lilac-bushes, a young turtle-dove welcomed her with his first cooing and the milk-white heaven where she vanished, gleamed with a rosy flush.

"I knew the goddess Fancy; thou didst visit me by accident—thou didst fly away to young poets.

"Oh, Poesy! youth! womanly virgin beauty!

For one instant only could you flash before me—in the early morning of early spring!"

* "A Visitation": Turgenief: Nathan Haskell Dole: The Arena

THE PHARISEE OF PIGEON CREEK

Well on in years, an eye severe, a beard of even length, a body not spare, and yet lean enough to uphold the austere face forever sitting on those shoulders, Justice of the Peace, custodian of the township library, retired doctor, with certain drugs for sale at retail, as emergency demanded, deacon, farmer—such was Cyrus Worthy Woodman, the "prominent citizen" of Woodman's Corners, who wanted an orphan to "fetch up." The orphan was to be had. It is wonderful how, on this earth, supply and demand seem to have been created for each other.. So thought the people who were closing out the small boy. It is needless to believe that he would have gone cheaper—that is, if a less portentous personage than Cyrus Worthy Woodman had reached, the small boy would have been handed forth.

This small boy was not a prime article. He was but nine years old, not robust, a secretly egotistical little fellow, with a sad consciousness of the hollowness of the merit upon which he based his self love, yet almost mortally sensitive to the candid remarks of the world. Thus, after the great Cyrus had secured the orphan, and after mention had been elaborately made to him of the advantages of being a boy in Squire Woodman's family, it became necessary to examine the boy critically in order that there might thrive in his heart no vanity or other hateful thing.

There followed, then, the torture of this daily and conscientious exhibit of his lack of personal sightliness, his lack of promising muscle, his lack of a deep religious satisfaction with his lot as an orphan, whereby the Kind Father had exalted him to be even a servant in the housé of Cyrus Worthy. The little fellow said "Yes" to all this with his lips, but he was not an able liar, and the women-folk, with their sharp eyes, soon determined that 'Squire Woodman had a viper in his bosom.

All the infantile triumphs of this unfortunate child withered in the Sahara of human feelings which it was now his fate to cross. His speeches at the Sunday-school festivals were as naught, for there was no Sunday-school. His great geography, with the wee boy seated among grown girls at school,

*John McGovern: Collected Sketches

was a memory which no one else would believe, for there was no school—for orphans. There was nothing for this boy to do but to split wood; to carry it in; and when people asked him if he liked it at Squire Woodman's, to say that he did.

Already has this human being questioned with himself "What is life?" And from the morning prayers of Cyrus Worthy Woodman, of course, has come the admonition that life is a blessing to the good, and a terror to the ungodly.

There is a growing suspicion of ungodliness in the child's heart, for life rapidly terrorizes him.

The spring floods have begun. There is the usual gossip and guessing whether or nót the dam will go out. On each side of the little bridge, built with so much of a township noise—the fête of water waders—there yawns a stretch of swollen stream that must be forded. Beyond this Pigeon Creek is the farm which Cyrus Worthy Woodman owns and rents to Beebee—Beebee, the base; Beebee, the ungodly, to whom life is very properly a terror; and when Cyrus Worthy doth add to this terror, is he not merely an instrument of an all-wise Providence? So ruminates Cyrus Worthy Woodman, and if he say it aloud, so chime in his delightful family, for Cyrus is a great man, in whom they have their pride.

Let us, then, behold the beginning of life in its reality, so far as this boy is concerned. The frugal morning meal has been eaten; the household has gathered in the sitting-room, and before the glass doors of the township library the boy has kneeled and spelled out the titles of all Abbott's biographies, and all the "Beechnut" yarns, and the "Rollo" stories, "Robinson Crusoe," "Fox's Book of Martyrs," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Thaddeus," and "The Children of the Abbey." The prayer closes, and the men-folk go forth to the barn. There, as the morning light grows better, Cyrus Worthy repeats to the lad the hope that he will never whistle again on Sunday, as he had been apprehended in dóing the previous day. The tone a man adopts toward a small boy is always mock-solemn, but with Cyrus this solemnity is a delight.

There is to be built, within the tribute-paying realm of the despised Beebee, a new rail-fence which shall run through a thick growth of timber, and over a morass. To a small boy a rail-fence entering a piece of woods is often the sign of infinity. It shall be the beginning of real life for the small boy to aid in cutting the way for this fence.

The horses are hitched to the wagon-gearing, the lunch is grasped, Cyrus bestrides the reach just forward the rear-axle and, with the small boy before him, sitting between his arms and the lines, they are off for Beebeedom.

"I woo-hoo-hood not live alway, I a-hask not to stay," sings Cyrus as his mind travels over the church meetings of yesterday, and the boy in front of him, filled with the glory and humanity of Cyrus Worthy Woodman in adopting a small orphan boy, filled with the renown of Cyrus Worthy Woodman which so beswells the whole family, concludes that his own home-sickness and his unhappiness, and his thoughts of his poor dead mother, who held even her little boy as a Cyrus Worthy Woodman, a joy in the world—concludes, I say, that these feelings must arise entirely from ungodliness, whereby life becomes a terror, that Providence may hide a shining face!

And as the flood comes upon the vision of the distinguished magistrate, physician, father, landlord, and orphan protector, his hymn rises higher, as though it were Moses, Joshua, Elisha, or John the Baptist going down into the waters.

The hymn, though it may depress the spirits, still sustains the courage of the small boy. It is only the matter of a wetting, for the water sometimes comes over the reach. For all this, to the lad, the whole proceeding is horrible. It is *work*, the Gorgon and Chimera of the world. For that small boy who wades for fun to-day, and goads his mother to despair, would cry loudly out to fate were he dredging in a broken dam, or going on an errand across a swollen creek.

But to the despair of a wee child there happily enters the promptest of reactions. The very bark upon the trees is a study. The bladder upon the neck of the bull frog is a mystery. The plainness of a linnet, or the jaunty dress of a woodpecker, will cheer a child far off beyond the reach of any wagon or the chant of any hypocrite. And in the bottoms of any free little creek, Nature has her playground. There, returning birds and waking frogs arouse the spring. There, sometimes, the national convention of blackbirds meets, spends three days in organizing, and takes fifteen hundred ballots without a nomination!

And with the creek receding comes also the spirit of mastery—for has not Cyrus Worthy Woodman, at last, thinking that the boy had life, spoken fitly of their success in crossing? And this so cheers the Protected that he begins in his mind

to chop trees with his little ax, and already wishes he were at the point of work.

It is a new country in Northern Indiana. The man and the boy pass many clearings. The blows of the ax are heard in many directions. Let us notice this woodchopper, as Cyrus Worthy drives past:

He stands on the log, in his shirtsleeves. He chops for a small chip, which flies out, and the little notch sharpens to a point. Then he spreads his feet still further apart, and applies himself, with terrific blows of his keen ax, to a point perhaps fifteen inches at the right of the deep notch just finished. As he brings down his ax, he gives utterance to a *humh!* that can be heard far into the timber. A few such blows, and such emphatic, half-dumb ejaculation of the body, and the first great chip, or "carving," almost a slab, loosens from the log, and is thrown out of the woodman's way.

The phonographers, as they write their shorthand, have their tees and their dees, their eels, and their lees. If you say *lip*, you use a "labial"; if you say *tooth*, you use a "dental"; if you say *like*, a "lingual"; if you say *ink*, a "nasal"; if you say *Gog*, or *Magog*, a "guttural." Thus the phonographers preach you pedantically of your lips, your teeth, your tongue, your nose, and your throat. And if ever you pass the initial point of their analysis, you must have also their "labio dentals," their "linguo-dentals," and so on. But this woodman's phonetics goes beyond the lore of the shorthand men. His *humh*, his body's inarticulate cry, is from the stomach and through the nose. It must be a "gastro-nasal." It has no name among Americans. But the Scotch, quicker students of human nature than are we, call it "pah-ing."*

And here they are, bright and early, at Beebee's; Cyrus Worthy Woodman, making first the little chip, and then the big one, though on a standing rather than on a fallen tree. Chop—*humh!* Chop—*humh!* Chop—*humh!*

And on the small saplings the little boy strives to imitate his protector. It is the under-stroke the boy cannot get. So all his blows are delivered downward, many within a hair's breadth of each other. And when, at last, the sapling can be bent over and broken off, the stump looks like a splint-broom. It is neither scientific nor rapid. It is simply *work*. That was the object. The boy was learning to *work*. I have

*Pronounced *pah-hing*.

heard, in days gone by, when the New York printers waited for steamers to come in with the news, such as is now cabled, they could either "loaf" or set "bogus." "Bogus" was Bible copy, filled with "superiors," italic, genealogical tables, and very narrow in measure. This "bogus" was corrected with scrupulous care—and then distributed. It was *work*, and *work* only. Well, this boy was chopping "bogus." He felt it, for he was a thinker. The things he loved to chop were the blue birches—long, beautiful withes, without a branch, that could be cut down clean with one blow. They grew ten feet long, slender, erect—fine withes with which to whip oxen. Haw, there!—and an ox would haw! had you one of those magnificent withes to shake over his horns.

"Chop down yon sapling, William," quoth Cyrus, as he examined the edge of his ax.

There arose in the tired boy's mind a countless number of downward hackings. "I can't!" he whined.

It was a sad moment to say "I can't!" The skilled axman was filled with what Napoleon III. would have called *elan*—the blood of Cyrus Worthy was warm with the triumph of flesh over fibre. "O-ho! You can't?" he cried with a merry light in his eye. "I know just how to teach little boys never to say 'I can't!' Now you run over there, and bring me that blue birch—there, that longer one—that's it. That will teach you, I guess. [Singing] 'Jesus died on Calvary's Mountain.' Now stand there till I get the lean of this tree. Now stand behind me."

And then a chop—*humh!*—and the creak, the crackling, the crash and the awful fall, such as you hear in the forest in the midst of the gale, at midnight.

"Now where's the birch? Ah, yes. I'll trim it. You had better stand out there—right there! I never knew a little boy to say 'I can't!' to me but once."

Reader, one world may come close to another world, and know nothing of it. A few years ago, a half-dozen planets went by our Mother Earth, and beyond a sun-spot, or a volcano, or a cyclone, no one of us knew or cared; and no one is sure that either Java or Iowa owed her troubles to the stars.

So, here in this forest, there were two worlds. The mind of Cyrus dwelt, probably, on his greatness among men, the funds of his township, and the unworthiness of Beebee. The affair of the moment was to whip a little boy, as the affair of

the previous moment had been to fell a tough beech-tree. What the little boy might think, could not arise as an inquiry in the judicial mind of Cyrus Worthy Woodman.

But, there before him, like a murderer on the scaffold, tied hand and foot with the terror that only the ungodly have, the wretched little wrong-doer stood. Where *now* was his frog with the bladder, his saucy bluejay, his garter-snake, and his red wintergreen berries? Down goes his feeble pulse. He hears the boys say the church-bell is at the depot. He sees it there. He watches all the operations that hoist it into the belfry. He goes home, and his mother, in poverty and misery, talks to him past midnight of his kind father, and the blindness of the destiny that took away that father. He sleeps late beside his mother, and wakes to find a neighbor in the house shrieking that his mother is dead. He goes into the neighbor's house, and then comes the toll of that same bell—for all the villagers asked when it first swung in the steeple, "Whom will it *toll* for first!"—and it tolled for his OWN MOTHER! And here in the woods, with Cyrus Worthy before him, he hears the tolling of that bell, and in the blue sky he looks, to see the dove descending, or his mother, or something that shall take away the dread of all dying!

But Cyrus Worthy Woodman has no notion of killing *him!* He is merely going to teach him not to say "I can't!" He poses his small victim, who has fairly lost all volition. He flourishes the long withe—a magnificent whip for oxen—and he administers the rebuke of a conscientious teacher of morals and protector of orphans.

There are ten screams of the withe through the air and the adjacent leaves: One—humh; two—humh; three—humph; four—humh; five—humh; six—humh; seven—humh; eight—humh; nine—humh; ten—HUMH!

It is Cyrus Worthy Woodman, pah-ing!

"There! You will never say 'I can't' any more!"

No, no; that demoralized little fellow will never say the dreaded words again. It is a question if he will dare hazard any other form of speech which the sweet-spoken monster may have possibly interdicted. But, oh, the faintness and the awful terror of the moments just passed through! Why had not his mother told him such men could live? He had himself once captured a meadow-lark that throbbed until it died from fright within his hand. Perhaps God has put him in

this man's clutches for his wickedness in wishing to examine the brave little bird that would not leave her nest of speckled eggs in the fallow.

But the memorable day passes without another switching. In fact, the good Cyrus, accepting the office of correction as a sort of Druid ceremonial, an offering in the woods, grows genial and less terrible, though by no means to be trusted. A hundred years could not wipe out of that brain the impression of brutality that a screaming ox-withe and a hideous, gastro-nasal have inflicted upon a soul of terror.

The phenomena of nature confused themselves with the idea of flogging. All beautiful blue birches had a Judas-like look, and prophesied countless corrections. The bullfrog croaked "I can't!" The kill-deer cried "I can't!" The quail taunted him: "O, I can't!" The national convention of blackbirds, in session near by on the bottoms, at once nominated Cyrus Worthy Woodman by acclamation, amidst a scene of indescribable enthusiasm. Alas! it seemed that even Nature had hurled the poor boy from her heart.

But at night—may God be praised!—as they slashed homeward through the swollen flood, a friendly bird, that had no fear of township authority, lamented: "Whip-poor-Will?" "Whip-poor-Will?"

Thus went the spring. On came the summer.

The odor of sanctity hung about the mansion of Cyrus Worthy Woodman. June airs, laden with the bloom of the fruit-trees, and carrying also the dew of an early and delightful day, could not steal joyously into that household that they did not meet the solemn accents of the good man haling forth the imprecations of holy writ upon them that did evil. Night could not close upon the little world, tired with the stern demands of toil, without first listening to the same line of Godly diatribe against all them that persecuted the righteous or held the saintly not select and apart. For the Lord whom Cyrus Worthy Woodman worshiped was a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Verily was it needful that all those who sought that house should walk with circumspection, lest the vengeance of so frightful a Repayer and Smiter should fall upon all that dwelt thereabout!

On the other hand must it be related that, recoiling with dread from the ministration of the chosen servant of an

exacting and suspicious Creator, the lad would climb to the garret of that house, and there, besides his cot, he would study the passage in his mother's Bible, which that mother had marked after the death of her husband. Here was a God of Love. It could not be that the Father of the Fatherless marked in these verses was the same God smiting the Egyptians and upholding Abraham in the cruelest chapter of all history! Oh! how like a stranger this little sojourner indeed felt as he read that the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up; for a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows is God in His holy habitation! Then, kneeling, this little stranger at the gates of Squire Woodman's good hard heart, would pray to his God of Love to be taken away from that hateful abode; and in the sweet other words of that same psalmist would he petition: Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt prepare their heart? Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the men of the earth may no more oppress.

It grows clear to the reader that a secret heresy was hatching under the shingles of that devoted roof,—a heresy more dangerous than the hornet's nest that hangs stoutly to the midway rafters!

Why, then, should we tarry to detail either the march of that summer across the page of an obscure lad's history, or the slow-eating canker of that secret heresy? Error had set her mark upon that wrong-doer.

The mind of the faithful servant of a rebukeful Heaven was often troubled. To whistle on Sunday; to read as a cormorant eats, and of worldly history, when the *Advocates*, and *Exemplars* and *Expositors* offered mines of precious truth; to be infamously homesick; to say he was glad so feebly that the lie shriveled upon his weak lips,—it was all that could be expected of the progeny of Satan! Cyrus began to believe the women-folk; the viper was already stinging him!

With a view of sounding the basest depths of this child's ingratitude, it was with some diplomacy wormed from him that, if Squire Woodman gave him up he would go. There would be no tarrying under difficulties, as your vagrom dog clings to the hope of an asylum in a house where he has attracted enough attention to be kicked.

This state of mind, mildly as the boy had depicted it, made a decided commotion in the household. The daughter who had worked up the case was forced to substantiate her statements. In a horror fortified with a few firm whippings, the good Cyrus visited the relatives who had passed the wretched youth upon him, and announced that the boy must be returned. The relatives, now knowing more of Cyrus than they had once known, accepted his ultimatum in good spirit, and the die was cast.

The boy was stripping sorghum in a field near by. He was called to the house and asked if he still harbored the base discontents which neither mildewed pieplant pie nor black-snake horsewhippings had seemed to eradicate.

In the dawning light of faith in prayer, the boy, with a thousand saving clauses, admitted once more that he might possibly be willing to abide elsewhere.

There came an "I-can't" sparkle in Cyrus Worthy's eye, which nearly brought the boy to beg to stay on any terms, but the demonstration ended in a hymn, and the boy was sent to the garret to pack his little box. He came below again. His cousin was at the gate. The bad child walked down the pathway, and the good family honored him with a scornful glance. Their minds traveled to John Milton's picture:

> As when a prowling wolf,
> Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
> Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
> In huddled cotes, amid the fields secure,
> Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold....
> So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold.

So had *this* prowler also clomb into God's fold. So clomb he now into the wagon of his own sinful generation, and the malediction of the chosen house went with him and all his.

But the boy took naught for granted until he was a mile out of that hamlet. Then, as the four corners were sinking on the horizon, his heart leaped forth in thoughts of indescribable joy.

The God of Orphans had hearkened unto his supplication.

Alas! how was it to go with that blessed home whence he had been ejected all too late? The harm was done. The heresy had hatched along with the hornets. The wrath of the God of the Ishmaelites, of the Egyptians, of Judah's pestilence and of Herod's massacre was gathering over Wood-

man's Corners. Such is the sublime justice of a jealous God. Such is the reaping where the sowing has been the seed of heresy. Let us briefly speak of the storm:

A fire breaking out in the premises, burned the mansion to the ground. In the difficulties and afflictions arising from this disaster, the good wife died and made no sign. This, being interpreted, led to a somewhat unexpected second marriage within nine or ten months, whereby the saintly man took for a helpmeet a vixen of resolute mold. The church would have none of it, and put out the shining light forthwith. Cyrus was churched. The people of the township affirmed the finding and took away his dignities and their library. The second wife was in no way fitted to hold a position so exalted in a household previously so distinguished. The solemn visage, the unctuous dogma, ay, the previously never-failing psalm of Beebee's landlord, refused to do their perfect work; and the wife!—instead of pining into the green and yellow melancholy of complete subjugation, she henpecked Cyrus Worthy Woodman with precision and effect!

A son went to war, to escape in battle the turmoil that was rending his revered father's household.

The daughter was driven out of the house, as Hagar had been driven into Beersheba. The worthy Cyrus was ingloriously forced to allow her to go at work flagbottoming chairs in a neighboring town.

At last it pleased the Power that had reached out for Pharaoh and Herod to thrust the father out of his own homestead. The great disciplinarian fled before an angry woman, and sued for a divorce.

Then all those perverse elements of men that persecute the righteous banded together to espouse the cause of the grass-widow. And Beebee's name led all the rest! At the end of divers ingenious litigations of fabulous cost, there remained but one course for the illustrious subject of this truthful chronicle. That course lay due west.

He who had been magistrate, deacon, township librarian, trustee, farmer, prominent citizen, and protector of orphans, set out one fine morning for Northern Illinois. His worldly possessions had dwindled to a horse and a divorce.

I have heard that the horse died at Valparaiso.

LOCATING THE TRAITOR

One bitterly cold winter's evening, five men were seated together in a small room in a house situated in the Jewish quarter of a busy and largely populated Russian city. The appearance of the room was as wretched as the external aspect of the house itself. The solitary window was totally concealed by a heavy faded curtain, depending from the roof. and as the wind moaned dismally through the broken panes of glass, its sombre folds swayed to and fro. The inmates of this mournful den were seated round the table, smoking their pipes and talking, as if furtively, in whispers. As the feeble rays of the candle fell fitfully upon the company they revealed the youthful faces of four students. The chief spokesman, however, was a much older man, apparently about fifty, with a short pointed beard, shaggy brows, and keen, penetrating eyes of the darkest hue. The others deferentially addressed the speaker as "professor," and such, indeed, he was, at that time, at a well-known school of medicine in Russia.

On the present occasion, however, he was speaking, not of science, but of the terrible doctrine of assassination.

Professor V——was a Nihilist, a reputed Colossus of craft in the dissemination of revolutionary doctrines, and on the particular evening in question he was engaged in advocating, with fiery eloquence, the assassination of a certain colonel who had lately been promoted to the rank of Chief Commissioner of the Secret Police. As the night wore on their whispered conversation was suddenly interrupted by a low knocking at the outer door. In a moment the conspirators sprang noiselessly to their feet, and listened with bated breath. The sound was repeated—a peculiar whistle was heard from without, and the listeners exchanged significant glances and quietly resumed their seats. Presently cautious footsteps were heard in an outer room, the door was opened, and a young man hastily entered. His face was pale, his manner agitated, and as he returned his companions' salutations he regarded them with a fixed and angry stare.

"You have kept us waiting, comrade," exclaimed the professor, puffing calmly at his pipe. "Ugh! we are almost frozen, for the air of this wretched apartment is quite

A. McDougal: Pall Mall Budget.

Siberian. But now to business. We will warm ourselves with talk, and fire our minds with the prospect of revenge."

There was a murmur of approval. It was noticed, however, that the young man who had just appeared upon the scene took his seat in silence, and, resting his elbows upon the table, slowly scrutinized the faces of his comrades.

"My dear professor," he said at length, "we cannot possibly proceed at present with this business."

"Why not?" was unanimously asked.

"Because," replied the latest comer, as he quietly snuffed the candle, "because one of us is a traitor."

"A traitor!" exclaimed the men, starting to their feet.

"Yes, comrades, we are betrayed; and as no one knows of this plot of ours except ourselves, it is plain, I think, that one of us has turned informant."

"You are mad to say so!" hoarsely exclaimed the professor; "but in heaven's name, what has happened? Come, tell us quickly. This is no jesting matter."

"Listen, then. On my way hither, comrades, I entered a Café de Paris to sip a cup of tea and smoke a cigarette. I happened to sit down beside two officers of the Secret Police, and, as one of them was somewhat tipsy, I could distinctly hear his conversation. I found it rather interesting. He told his companion that he was under orders to surround this old deserted house at midnight—it is near eleven now—and to arrest all persons found within. He mentioned, moreover, all our names, and added, with a maudlin laugh, that a certain person, to whom the administration is eternally indebted, would be found in our midst playing the part of conspirator. Now, comrades, I have done. What shall we do?"

The men looked at each other in dismay. A dead silence filled the room, for the mere suspicion of treachery among the men who had solemnly dedicated their lives to the sacred cause of liberty seemed to hold them dumb. Such villainy in their very midst—among men banded together in sacred brotherhood—was a greater crime than the merciless acts of a despot and his minions.

"If this is true," said the professor, in a voice of suppressed rage, "then I will no longer believe in human fidelity, or the future of our cause. But—Death! if the story *is* true. Which of us is the informer?" added the speaker, staring fiercely at the pale faces of his companions.

"Bah! it is useless to ask that, my dear professor," exclaimed Ivan—such was the name of the youth who had brought the strange intelligence—as he advanced to the door of the room, locked it, and placed the key in his pocket. "Every one will assert his innocence—of course. But, comrades, suppose we endeavor to find him out? Let us search each other. The traitor, whoever he may be, must doubtless have in his possession some proof of his guilt. At least, the experiment is worth trying. What say you?"

"Agreed! agreed!" exclaimed the Nihilists, as with one accord they sprang convulsively to their feet. One of the students—a tall, lank youth, with a somewhat foppish appearance—objected, however, to the proposal.

"But why?" hotly demanded the professor, who seemed all eagerness to begin the investigation.

"Because," was the hesitating rejoinder, "because it is unnecessary. Our word of honor ought to be enough. Besides, there is something degrading in the idea of searching one another, as if, indeed, we were a lot of pickpockets. So let us break up the meeting. This excitement is absurd, and renders the discussion of our plot impossible. As for the story told by the drunken soldier in the café, I don't believe a word of it.

These words produced an angry murmur among the excited conspirators. The protest seemed so ridiculous; and as the clamor increased Ivan turned to the speaker and warmly exclaimed, "Very well; we shall abstain from searching you, since you wish it; but remember this, that if we fail to find a clue to the informant among those who willingly submit to the examination we shall then know upon whom to fix our suspicions. Now, comrades, search me first; I am ready."

In a moment the speaker's pockets were emptied of their contents, and even the lining of his clothes was carefully searched; but beyond a few old love letters, some political pamphlets, and an English newspaper with a paragraph obliterated with lamp-black, nothing of an incriminating character was found. A second student readily submitted to the test—if test it was—with similar results. Then a third stepped forward and placed himself in the hands of his companions. But at that moment a curious incident occurred. An invisible hand suddenly extinguished the light of the candle, and in a second the room was plunged in utter darkness.

What did it mean? Who had quenched the light? For a moment the Nihilists remained motionless, as if rooted to the spot. As they listened in alarm, they heard a strange creaking sound in the direction of the curtained window.

Suddenly the voice of Ivan exclaimed in the darkness: "Comrades, this is a trick! Listen? Some one is endeavoring to escape by the window! It is the traitor at last. His attempt to escape betrays his guilt. Stand back! I know how to deal with him!"

In an instant the report of three revolver shots rang through the room, and was followed by an agonizing yell as some one fell heavily upon the floor.

A profound silence then ensued.

It was an awful situation.

At length Ivan spoke to his terrified companions.

"Strike a light now," he said, in a trembling voice, "and let us look upon the face of a traitor. Will no one move? Are you all afraid to gaze upon the dead body of a miscreant who has betrayed us to our enemies? Come, professor, where are the matches? You had them last. But hush! What sound is that? Listen! By heavens, comrades, the police are upon us already. The house is surrounded! Quick! here is a trap-door, known only to myself. It leads to the main sewer, and is our only hope of escape. Follow me."

Groping hand in hand in the dark, the affrighted men followed the speaker's directions, and after some momentary confusion, disappeared into a noisome abyss. None too soon. In another instant the door of the room was battered to pieces, and a company of gendarmes entered. Lights were now flashed in every direction, but it was obvious to all that the conspirators had escaped. The officer in charge swore long and deep, and ordered the men to search the house from top to bottom. Then, advancing toward the window, he stumbled over a human body.

"What's this?" he exclaimed, examining the dead man's features with a lantern. "Ha! so they have caught you at last, my friend, have they? Well, you played the spy long and well, but it always comes to this in the end."

And, tearing down the window curtain, the officer threw it over the rigid body of—the professor.

SOMEBODY'S MORNING GLORY

Once upon a time, somewhere, in Somebody's garden, there grew a Morning Glory vine. Nobody knew how it came there, for no one had planted it, but it was a pretty little thing, with green hearts for leaves and cunning little pale-green curls here and there upon its fuzzy stem.

She wanted to get up off of the ground where she had been all of her short life, so she crept slowly along to find something to take hold of, that she might climb high up into the bright sunlight. She put out her tender tendrils and felt carefully along, for she was blind, poor little thing, and could not see where she was going.

As she reached out she felt something hard. "Ah, perhaps this is something high," thought the Morning Glory, so she crawled up the side quite to the top, but she was not high at all—not much higher than the ground—for it was only a small stone that she had found; so she sadly crept back down the other side, and she lay there quite discouraged.

There was an old man who used to take care of Somebody's garden, and he saw this plant growing there and groping about for a support, so he fastened a string from a peg stuck into the ground up to Somebody's window-sill, and then he quite forgot all about it.

The next morning the Morning Glory felt more cheerful, and she started upon her search again. She had not far to go this time, because the kind old man had fastened the peg very near to where she lay; so she reached about with caution to avoid another stone, and took hold of the string.

The poor, sightless little thing did not know that the old man had put it there for her, but somehow she felt that it would lead her where she so wished to go—up toward the beautiful blue sky and the great golden sun.

So she climbed along the string, slowly at first, then faster each day as she began to know the way, until, like Jack's bean-stalk, she had reached the window-sill.

Now Somebody, the person who owned the garden, was ill; so ill that he had to stay always in his room with an ugly black bandage over his eyes, and the doctors feared that he might never see again.

* Marie Moore Marsh: Chicago Times

He was very unhappy, and was often—oh, so very!—cross; and the servants quite feared him when he spoke to them in a harsh and authoritative voice.

He had no relatives, and he lived quite alone in his great house, with many people to wait upon him and with ever so much money to buy things to make him happy. But the things that one buys do not always make one happy, and he was terribly wretched in his big, fine house.

One morning he groped his way to the open window and put his hand out upon the side of the frame, and he felt a little, sharp nail. Now, if he had been gentle the nail would not have hurt him, for it was a harmless little thing; but he made a rough, impatient movement, and it caught his finger and bruised it a little.

This made Somebody very angry, and he said some very unpleasant things about the person who dared to put a nail outside his window, and he felt about, very cautiously this time, to find the nail once more, that he might tear it out.

So he moved his hand slowly along upon the sill, and the Morning Glory was reaching her little hand about there at the same time, and their two hands met.

One did not look at all like a hand, but it was one just the same, and the little green hand grasped the great white one and they seemed to know and to understand each other at once, for the little green hand said to the large white one very tenderly: "*Oh! so you are blind, too! I am so sorry!*"

The great hand did not try to find the nail after that; it just touched the Morning Glory with a soft caress and two great drops fell upon her leaves. They felt strangely and not at all like the cool rain-drops which sometimes watered the Morning Glory, and something told her that these drops were tears.

Now, after this, these two—Somebody and the Morning Glory—grew to love each other very dearly, and each day they would feel about for one another, and the dainty Morning Glory would nestle against his bearded cheek and Somebody would pet her and stroke her leaves very gently.

And the cheerful hopefulness of the little green plant helped Somebody to be a little bit hopeful, too. You see it was harder for him, for he had not always been blind, while she had never seen, and was so used to it that now she hardly minded it at all.

One morning the Morning Glory brought her friend a surprise. She had kept it a secret all the while, and now she proudly put a great beautiful pink blossom into his hand. He could not see that it was pink, but he felt that it was lovely, and he kissed the pretty flower and murmured, "You little beauty;" and that made the Morning Glory very happy, for all mothers dearly love to have their babies admired, you know.

And the next morning Somebody had a surprise for the Morning Glory. That was a secret, too. No one knew it yet but the doctor, and Somebody drew the little Morning Glory close to his lips and whispered it into her ear. Then the little green hand twined about the great white one and this is what it said: "I am so glad that you are not going to be blind any more." And Somebody understood it, and the Morning Glory again felt two great, warm drops which she knew to be tears; but they were not bitter like the first ones; they were very sweet, because they were tears of joy.

After this Somebody went away and was gone a long time. The weeks passed and he did not return, and the little Morning Glory was very sad; she felt hurt that he had left her so suddenly and with no word of adieu.

Everything was in a state of great bustle and preparation all over the place. Little Morning Glory could hear them hammering and running about, and she felt that something was going to happen. Once she caught the word "bride," and something told her what it all meant, and a little jealous pain went through her heart, for she had once overheard the housemaid telling the cook that all men were fickle, and that when they were away from one they never thought of one at all, and were taken up with whoever was nearest them, and the cook had agreed fully with all that the housemaid had said; and the cook knew men if any one did, she said.

So little Morning Glory hung her leaves in sadness and quite forgot to feel proud of her pretty pink babies—for there were a great many of them now.

Once she felt something tug at her roots and a rough hand grasped her; then a kind voice said, "Don't touch that; master loved the little vine, and it must be left as it is." Oh! how relieved little Morning Glory felt at these words. She reached out and tried to touch the speaker, but the maid hurried away and never saw the little green hands at all.

Soon the nights began to be chilly, and one by one her babies left her and fluttered to the ground, and she herself grew pale and felt very weak and ill, and she feared that she was going to die. How she wished that Somebody would come back; she was afraid that he would be too late.

One morning she heard the window open, and Somebody again stood there; there was some one with him now, a beautiful lady, and he held her in his arms and called her "Sweetheart." In his new happiness he had quite forgotten his little friend; and Morning Glory's heart ached as she remembered what the maid had told the cook.

Just then Somebody looked out and saw poor little Morning Glory with her leaves all faded and brown, and he reproached himself because he had not thought of her before.

"Here, dearest," he said to the lady, "this is the little friend I told you of, and he laid the withered little stem in the lady's delicate hand.

A glad thrill ran through the Morning Glory and she dropped sixty tiny seeds into the soft open palm; then as the wind swept around the corner a sudden shudder seized her, and little Morning Glory was dead.

"See! my pet," said Somebody, pointing to the little black seeds, "that means good luck; it is her gift to the bride."

And the beautiful lady smiled and she put the seeds in a little box, saying, "next year we will have another Morning Glory vine there just like the old one."

"No," said Somebody, "never one quite like that, for that one was like a little friend; it really seemed to understand me. But then I don't need any one to understand me now, for I have you," and again the lady was folded in a loving embrace and Somebody kissed her softly.

ETCHINGS: A FACE IN THE CROWD

A burst of applause greeted the entrance of the favorite.

For a second, she stood motionless, smiling, allowing the magnetism of her presence to be felt, then as the music, a semi-barbaric measure, sounded, the dancer began to move.

The large building was packed with human beings. In one of the lower boxes, a number of clubmen followed each movement with critical satisfaction; presently, one of the group, his impassive face, unusually animated, plucked the flower from his coat, and flung it at the artiste's feet.

The action was eloquent, and the signal for a storm of applause, during which several huge bouquets, and baskets of roses, were handed over the footlights.

But to Narka, the single blossom was more valuable, for it represented the final seal of approval, from the leader of a fastidious clique, hitherto, strictly neutral in attitude.

The knowledge roused her mercurial nature, the blood seemed to run like fire through her veins, as she commenced the encore, so loudly demanded.

The past, its struggles, sorrows, aims, were all obliterated in that moment of rapturous forgetfulness.

Presently, as her eyes wandered slowly over the sea of faces, she started, her gaze arrested.

High up, in the gallery, bending eagerly forward, a shabbily dressed foreigner held on his knee a tiny dark-eyed boy.

The sight of that wondering little face, affected the dancer strangely. She forgot her audience, everything, save the fierce claims of hungry mother love, denied so long. Dark, bitter memories crowded upon her, banishing the present. She saw herself, vain, savagely ignorant, stealing away from the wretched home, and the drunken peasant, she called husband; she heard the faint echo of the boy's frightened sobs, as she left him, hurrying away in the gray of the morning—

"Ivan, duschinka maja."

The caressing words fell from Narka's lips, in a wild, appealing cry, as her white arms stretched themselves yearningly out toward the child.

A moment's expectant silence, then a bell rang, and before the startled audience realized it, the curtain had fallen.

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* Florence Clark: For Short Stories

THE MYSTERIOUS CITY

Some of the irreverent have long felt a suspicion that the ancients knew more about this world of ours than is accredited to them in the 'Classical Atlas.' Greeks and Romans did not publish the log of every ship entering their ports, nor examine the crew of each *oneraria* returned from parts unknown. The silence of pedantic geographers, who evidently took small pains to verify the accounts handed to them, is not to be relied on. Gentlemen of that sort feel more interest in refuting a predecessor, in triumphing over his misstated facts and mangling his theories, than in widening the general knowledge. Nevertheless a man is startled at first when local antiquaries invite him to credit Greek ruins in the Transvaal. They do wisely to put forward unquestionable evidence in support of such a statement. That has been done. Friezes, capitals, and miscellaneous objects, Greek in character beyond any doubt, have been forwarded to Cape Town from the neighborhood of Bloemhof. They are important enough to show—if one may trust the judgment of those who have examined them—that a large city once stood there, and that high civilization reigned therein. As is usual when the spell of oblivion breaks, it is suddenly discovered that the fact was known long ago. The œkist of Cape Colony, Van Riebeck, mentioned incidentally (edition of 1657, London) that far to the north lay a great city, Momotopata, adorned with temples, porticos, and columns. No one appears to have heard of the place from that time till now. Upon this evidence the ruins below Bloemhof have been called by the name Van Riebeck gives;—by the by, he adds that diamonds abound there. Without committing myself to any opinion, I wish to put forward a very curious report I received on the Diamond Fields from a digger, very poor and very eccentric. At that time the idea of a Greek city in South Africa would have been ridiculed without mercy. I myself paid no attention to the tale, but since a Greek city is now admitted, I cannot but remember this man's declaration.

Very poor and very eccentric he was indeed; an Africander of Huguenot blood. He had traded on a large scale up country; but one misfortune after another had broken up his

*Frederick Boyle: Blackwoods Magazine

connection with the Kaffir chiefs, and reduced him to digging on Bultfontein. Compassion would be quite thrown away upon many of his fellows in that state of life, but Vasson was not lucky. In four months of hard work he had found nothing. I was able to put the poor fellow into a small claim I had just purchased, where the usual percentage of half the finds for his labor should make him comfortable, and might give him a fortune. So, the next day, he set to work.

I did not see much of Vasson after that, except on a Saturday, when he brought my diamonds, if any, and balanced accounts. The venture was fairly successful. After a time I moved to New Rush, with a round sum which my particular claim had brought me; and then, though not unlucky upon the whole, I met with an accident which laid me up for several months. It was in that time that I really made acquaintance with Vasson, who was very shy and retiring. Many stories he told me to relieve the horrible tedium of my ilness. Somewhat dull, as are all who have passed their life among savages, and unable by constitution and habit to see the best point of his own stories, he was still my pleasantest companion—in fact, my only one. Many curious hints and details I picked up from him of life "up country," which I now regret to have let pass without a note. But one tale of his—that which I am about to transcribe—was impressed by three repetitions. I am sure I have it correct. After hearing, the reader may decide for himself whether Cape Town antiquaries are right in identifying the ruins below Bloemhof with the ancient Momotopata.

In 1861 Vasson went up toward "the Lakes" with a train of five wagons, carrying about £5,000 worth of goods, cotton, gunpowder, cutlery, and the like. Even at that time the trade was not what it had been. Competition had set in, and, as a necessary consequence, a reckless system of credit. Though the great chiefs still held themselves bound to one or the other trader, they began to cease coercing their inferiors. These, unrestrained by pride, and incapable of balancing the advantages of honesty, did not regard their bargains as sacred. They took what they could get, promised everything, and performed as little as possible. Under sufficient pressing, the kings would still perpetrate horrible tortures upon a swindler; but the ferocity of their justice deterred humane traders from appealing to it, the more especially

since one serious word from his black suzerain would have stopped any chief—which word was not pronounced. In fact, the monopoly was breaking up.

Vasson understood his business, and he foresaw the deadlock which has since come about. He resolved to leave the track, already too much beaten by adventurous carpet-baggers, who, getting their own goods on credit, could afford, in a dishonest sense, to sell them on the same terms. After eighteen months' wandering amongst old customers, he reached the northern limit of the Matabele country. That warlike people claim authority over all bordering tribes; and if the king had known that one of "his traders" had ventured across the frontier, it might have cost that daring man his life. But Vasson was well acquainted with the risk. The Matabele keep a line of desert around them, like the ancient Suevi. Their ferocious bands constantly traverse it, but Vasson trusted to his own vigilance, and the superhuman cunning of his bush-boys. These people to the trader are more than dogs to the sportsman. My friend's oxen and horses were all "salted"—that is, had suffered and survived the attacks of the tzetze-fly; with them he confidently ventured into parts unknown; and upon leaving the trade-route, he followed a course due westward, in about the latitude, as he thinks, of Sofala.

The desert barrier of the Matabele is about thirty miles wide, beyond which, as they tell you, extends a country to which "no man comes nor hath come since the making of the world." That was the question which Vasson proposed to test. A week's journey through lands where his oxen found abundance of forage, showed him that the Matabele, in this respect as in others, are indifferent to the truth. He came upon a district well wooded, full of game, and not uncultivated, though the people remained invisible. They had cause to hide, with such savage neighbors, Vasson scouted assiduously, but failed to discover so much as a farm-hut. He had not yet quite passed the area of *veldt* lands, and with some judgment and risk could take his wagons in a line tolerably straight. Twenty Hottentots and Bastards well armed made his company, besides half-a-dozen teamsters, and as many bush-boys. They had stood by him in worse fights than he was likely to encounter.

Where there is cultivation there must be people, and where

people, trade. For the raw material appeared in plenty, and if these barbarians did not yet know the delight of cotton cloths and rum, business would be only the more profitable. Exciting work it is to push through an unknown country when the population remains obstinately out of sight, but African traders of the old school do not easily take alarm. Nevertheless, when he had marched for three weeks on end through this peopled solitude, passing never a road, seeing no house nor any inhabitant, Vasson began to feel anxious. For his life he entertained no fear at all, but a thousand accidents might wreck his fortune; and his Hottentots, afraid, like all negroes, of the unknown, grew more and more gloomy as they advanced. Game, however, showed in plenty, and thus the men escaped all pretense of hunger, that supreme incitement to insubordination and alarm.

After three weeks' steady journeying they found themselves before a chain of hills which barred their course. The vegetation had become more dense, and each day it grew more difficult to force the wagons on. Vasson announced that if from their tops no satisfactory prospect could be seen, he would turn back, and try districts eastward of the Matabele, which are known, indeed, but rarely visited. Accordingly, he left the wagons there, and climbed the nearest hill with a few trusty Hottentots. A day and a half brought him to the top, and from a clear knoll he looked across the plain below. First to catch his sight was a great river flowing northward, along the foot of the high ground. Its banks, thickly wooded, were patched with clearings of lighter green, which showed more frequent toward the left, where a long space seemed to mark a town. Not less than twenty miles of country lay before Vasson's eye, so far as he could judge, and it was all peopled and cultivated. He took rough bearings of a kloof or pass which seemed likely to be practicable for his wagons, and returned in great contentment. Half-way back he met a couple of the men left in charge, escorting a number of strangers. The latter halted, whilst the Hottentots delivered their message. They brought overtures of friendship from an unknown sovereign. Vasson instantly produced his flask, and opened communication. The ambassadors were much like any other negroes—almost naked, well-shaped, and snub-featured. Their ornaments and clothes showed no signs of intercourse with Europeans, at which view the trader rejoiced.

They wore a smiling and gentle expression, and carried no arms. The one peculiarity which struck Vasson was their mode of arranging the hair—that distinctive mark among negro tribes. These people shaved the crown of the head, and twisted their wool back over a pad from forehead to nape. They spoke Matabele with some difficulty.

The purport of their message was an invitation to the royal kraal. They said that the white man's presence had been reported to their king long ago, to his great satisfaction. He wished no better than to trade, and he would make himself responsible for the white man's stock. In earnest of his good intentions, he had sent these officers to guide the travelers, intrusting them with presents of food. All this is so usual on the part of a negro monarch that Vasson did not feel surprise. Though omitting no precaution, he followed the ambassadors readily. They did not lead him through the kloof which his sagacity had chosen, but guided the wagons by a longer route, perhaps more convenient, but toilsome enough.

It is hard work to gather details from an African trader. A negro is a negro to him, a king is a king, and his palace is sufficiently described by the noun-substantive. All that occurred to Vasson as worth mentioning about this people was, that they seemed more intelligent and better-tempered than the warrior tribes with whom he had hitherto done business. They were fairer, perhaps; but in a negro kraal of the interior every shade of complexion may be noticed, from soot-black to bronze-yellow. Their features, too, were comparatively regular, but scarcely more so than in other cases. No exercise of memory could recall anything more peculiar about king or subjects. His majesty received the guest with usual ceremonies, raised him a large hut, and showed a perfect bewilderment of joy at the presents offered. He had never seen a white man before; and such European manufactures as had hitherto made his choicest spoil had been won from marauding Matabele. The king was young and good-looking. He possessed some hundreds of wives, a little army of *caboceers*, and used such ceremonial as is affected by other negro potentates. Trade proved to be excellent. The people had quantities of ivory, dressed skins, a good deal of gold-dust, and a few ostrich-feathers of high class. Some ancestral stones they valued also, which Vasson recognizes to have been diamonds. For the sake of encouragement he

bought a few from influential personages; but putting no value on them, they were soon lost. The trade could be properly described by no word less emphatic than "roaring." Whole tusks of ivory Vasson bought for a roll of cotton, feathers at six pennyworth of rum, suberb *karosses* at a similar rate. In two months he had sold all his stock remaining, and justly considered himself a capitalist.

During this time he passed through the adventure which struck my imagination. The royal town, as I have said, was clustered on a spur of the mountain, with an arm of the river at its foot. The guides had brought Vasson over a defile many miles to the southward, and so down the river-bank. But when he began to think of returning, he remembered that kloof upon the northern side of the spur, which would certainly cut off many miles of road, if practicable. To his inquiries the answer was unanimous, that a thousand difficulties intervened. But something in the manner of his hosts convinced Vasson that they were telling a falsehood. Having now such a precious cargo, all kinds of fancies and suspicions gathered in his mind. He resolved to explore; and with that object accustomed the people to see him take long walks into the country, with his gun and a bush-boy. Then, having disarmed the jealousy of these simple fellows, he set out one day for the excursion.

Several paths led from the town to farm-lands on the river-bank. Vasson intended to round the hill, but, after walking a couple of miles, he crossed a narrow track that mounted on his right. Without hesitation he followed this short cut. The steep and broken path seemed to have had few travelers of late, but it climbed in a direction such that Vasson began to hope it would take him to the kloof itself. The distance was greater than he had thought; four hours' good walking carried him only to the crest of the descent. He met no soul, but fetishes in abundance, which chilled the very marrow of his bush-boy. Fearsome objects they were indeed,—bits of awful rag tied to sticks, rotten chunks of wood across the road, feathers and strings floating on a branch. These things became more frequent as they went on, and Vasson began to fear that the kloof might be a fetish place, which would account for everything.

The path ended suddenly at a table-rock which stood sheer above the entrance to a defile. Vasson halted in amaze.

Before and above him rose a great propylon garlanded with creepers. Its blocks of huge stone showed scarcely one effacing mark of time. Gods long forgotten held court thereon, accepted tribute of peoples extinct, received the worship of mighty monarchs unrecorded. The cornice harbored flowers and birds in its bold ledge, but the shadow of it fell almost as clean as on the day when ancient colonists raised it—who shall tell how many centuries ago! The great arch stood at right angles to Vasson's place, and spanned nearly half the narrow cleft. Twenty men abreast could have walked through it, and the ground below was level like a causeway, though overgrown with brush. To left, the sheer precipice advanced so suddenly that Vasson could catch but a glimpse of the river; to right, at a hundred yards' distance, the semicircle was completed, shutting out all further view up the pass. A deadly silence reigned. Not a breath stirred the glossy leaves, shining and glittering against the hot blue sky. Whip-like creepers trailed from the cornice without a shiver, and their bright stars of blossoms hung motionless. The sunshine burnt with stilly vehemence upon the pale-red stone, and checkered it with shadows as of sculptured leaves. Such a sight as that never came before to wanderer's eye.

Vasson was seized with curiosity to know what lay beyond.

Right and left the cliff rose like a wall, so cut by human labor. Where he looked down, the vines beneath his feet had been smoothed away, but at a little distance on either side they fell to the very ground. He turned to force a way through the bush, and thus caught sight of his companion, who lay prostrate and shivering with fear, his eyes covered. Thus were the natives used to fall, no doubt, while they supplicated the fetish. Vasson told the half-inanimate creature that he wished to consult the gods in their very home, and left him there. He pushed without difficulty along the escarpment, for such it was—designed, without doubt, for the use of archers in case of attack. A few yards on, he found a creeper suitable, slung his rifle, and dropped down. Thoughtlessly letting go his hold, he fell waist-deep into a morass, hidden by broad-leaved plants and herbage. A cry of despair escaped him, but the bottom of the morass proved to be hard as stone. After great exertions, sounding with his ramrod, he gained the bank, which was faced with slabs of granite. Superhuman in its grandeur the arch appeared as Vasson

stood beneath it and looked through. Upon the side remote from his former station, footholes had been rudely cut, and two strong ropes hung from the top. He guessed a secret now. By this staircase mounted the fetish priests to play their savage tricks upon the simple folk who asked their aid.

Keeping a look-out for magicians and snakes, Vasson walked up the kloof. After two or three turnings, always between those barriers of cliff, which at each corner bore a ruined turret, he saw at length the open space beyond, and once more halted with a thrill. What he had supposed a kloof was a level basin of many hundred acres. Though it was well clothed with trees, he could trace the lay of the land; but no opening appeared save that in which he stood. Lofty hills closed round it like a wall. But other sights absorbed him. The causeway he had followed led to another propylon, and through that to a maze of stately ruins. White as marble in the distance shone the walls of a city, gapped, dismantled, but still superb. Only a glimpse of their circuit could be gained through intervening clumps of wood. Above and under and among the ruins green heads of foliage rose high into the air, with white columns gleaming through. Vasson was but a trader, and not imaginative; but such a sight killed fear. Experience told him that the fetish-men themselves would be very likely to dwell in these haunted ruins; indeed, he marked a few brown huts under a knoll, with people moving to and fro. Heedless of consequences in his excitement, he plunged into the woods upon his left.

Stumbling over broken colums, turned from his course by walls half erect, he struggled on, guided by the hunter's instinct. After two hours' work the bastions of the city gleamed on a sudden through the trees. He had approached within fifty yards before seeing them. Like a hill of masonry the dismounted blocks sloped upward. Trees stood amongst them, bushes sprang in every cleft between huge stones. Ten yards in air hung a big rock, lifted by the crest of a young cotton-tree, hurrying toward the light. Vasson climbed easily over the ruins. Within he found a vigorous jungle reigning, pavements all covered and broken, streets and houses uprooted. A few yards on either side bounded his utmost view, but what he saw convinced him of the luxury once ruling in this savage land. To right and left he made his way, finding only trees and thickets in a

wilderness of rubbish. The tall white columns evidently stood in another quarter of the town. It was time to set back. But just as he made up his mind to turn, Vasson caught a glimpse of more important ruins, and pushed on for a last chance.

Another scramble on walls overthrown brought him to the edge of such a cavity as misdirected experience enabled him to recognize with ease. It was a "pan," says Vasson, fitted with seats half-way round. Those who know South African scenery will perceive how natural was the mistake. What Vasson thought to be a "pan" was doubtless a theatre. It seemed to me strong evidence of truth that the man should intelligibly describe objects so far beyond his knowledge as a propylon and a Greco-Egyptian theatre. The ranges of seats were almost perfect, and the wall of the uposkenion—to use the proper word—could be distinctly followed. Enough of it was left to give half-a-dozen persons a lofty seat. So many, in fact, lounged upon it, basking in the sun. The bright colors of their dress caught Vasson's eye upon the instant. He crouched in superstitious awe, for his nerves had been long on stretch. The skin of these people was white, their costume strange. Instinctively the explorer hid, but not in time. They saw him, and, leaping from the perch, they fled with an eerie clamor. Peering down, Vasson saw them pass between the shattered orchestra and the public seats. All his tremors vanished. The white complexion was yellow and diseased, the white hair sapless, the brilliant dresses fluttering tufts of rag. The creatures who dared to occupy that haunted city were Albino idiots, a class common in negro-land. Of their color the fetish-men made use, when needful, and their foolishness preserved them from the terrors of the place.

Vasson hasted back, though he judged that the Albinos' exaggerated report would be more likely to alarm the priests than to stir them to pursuit. He had marked his track, of course, and followed it with speed. When the brown huts again came in sight, he was not surprised to observe a great animation reigning. The Albinos all were there, fluttering like a small crowd of parrots on the ground. But the fetish men and women had doubtless withdrawn to perform the incantations in which they at least believe, and to construe this portent with awful alarms. Vasson crept from bush to bush across the open, gained the kloof, plunged into the morass where he had sounded it, swarmed the cliff, and found

his bush-boy—still prostrate, still with eyes covered, still praying or sleeping, or—one knows not what to fancy of a creature but half human. At his master's kick he raised himself quietly to follow. Choosing a back way they reached the town before sunset, and Vasson called upon the king at once for his P. P. C. He "grasped the situation," and perceived that the fetishmen would be no long time before discovering that the white stranger had explored their mysteries. The small surplus of his stock Vasson distributed amongst the royal household and the most powerful *caboceers.*

Twenty-four hours after beholding these strange sights he inspanned for the home journey.

Vasson passed safely through the Matabele realm, not without suspicion, however. Judicious bribes saved him. In reaching the colony he found himself a man of fortune. But successful traders in South Africa are the favorite victims of legal knavery. They gain an exaggerated notion of their shrewdness, which is only rectified by disastrous matching with the trained wit of German Hebrews. Vasson, like others, was as good as ruined the day he opened business. Three years after, he was obliged to take the "Kaffir road" once more, and his course was naturally directed toward that rich, retiring, and unsophisticated population, the secret of whose existence he had breathed to no soul living before me. But circumstances had changed. Who shall guess how the Matabele had heard of his illicit explorations, or how rumors wandered across the desert? That question has occupied many minds, but it did not seem *actual* to Vasson when the Matabele seized his wagons, arms, goods, and Hottentots for treason, taking credit for leaving him his life. My poor friend returned with a single horse and a sack of "mealies." The first venture into fairyland made his fortune; the second ruined him beyond hope. After that catastrophe he rubbed along with petty trade, penuriously saving up for another expedition. The ancients were wise. It costs a man his life to see the mysteries of the gods. When I left, Vasson had gathered but a very few hundred pounds toward the thousands needed. I have heard nothing from him since, but the newspapers inform us that Momotopata has been identified in certain Greek ruins below Bloemhof in the Transvaal.

What, then, was Vasson's city?

Were there two Greco-Egyptian colonies?

ETCHINGS: THE NEW WIFE

The old clergyman made them man and wife with a dignity and a solemnity befitting that holy sacrament.

The little company ate the bride's cake and drank the groom's health, and the drive home was safely accomplished.

How alluring the old farm house looked! Every window glowing through the falling snow sent the lights leaping out to welcome them. His mother had prepared the supper; the kettle sang on the kitchen stove and the smell of roast duck filled the rooms. The bare boards of the sitting room floor were scoured till they looked white as milk and polished till they shone like a mirror. The old-fashioned fire-place was filled full of great logs, and the ruddy glow threw a true glamor of enchantment over the plain room. On the high mantel were brass candle-sticks and some quaint, ancient blue plates; and before the fire stood the table, its linen fine and spotless, its solid silver reflecting a score of mimic fires; the china, with its cluster of impossible flowers, so transparent that the flames seemed to leap through and through it, and in the low rocker by the fire the heart and soul and life of all this comfort, the new wife, with her bright, hopeful, downcast eyes, her girlish, escaping curls, beautiful in her trusting youth, her absolutely superb health, the perfect glow of her crimson cheeks, the warm shimmers of light among the folds of her plain, rich, changeable silk gown. She had not seen his house, had not even inquired about it, but was very proud of its honest poverty, and rejoiced that life and delight consist not in the abundance of the things a man possesseth.

James Underhill had taken care of his horse, and now stood by the door, looking through the window at the glow within. He hardly dared enter. He uncovered his head as a sense of his great fortune smote his heart. All this warmth and delight was his own. Thankfully he put his hand to the latch. She rose to meet him as he came, and he took her in his arms.

There, by his own fireside, with the storm raging without, he gave her the first kiss. "Darling, you have brought God's blessing with you," he said. And deeper than she knew, better than she dreamed, surer than she would have dared pray for, through fifty years she was that blessing to him.

*Laura A. Brown: Boston Courier.

THE TWO HOUSEHOLDERS

I will say this—speaking as accurately as a man may so long afterward—that when first I spied the house it put no desire in me but just to give thanks.

For conceive my case. It was near midnight by this; and ever since dusk I had been tracking the naked moors a-foot, in the teeth of as vicious a nor'wester as ever drenched a man to the skin, and then blew the cold home to his marrow. My clothes were sodden; my coat tails flapped with a noise like pistol shots; my boots squeaked as I went. Overhead the October moon was in her fast quarter, and might have been a slice of finger nail for all the light she afforded. Two-thirds of the time the wrack blotted her out altogether; and I, with my stick clipped tight under my armpit, eyes puckered up, and head bent like a butting ram's, but a little aslant, had to keep my wits agog to distinguish the glimmer of the road from the black heath to right and left. For three hours I had met neither man nor man's dwelling, and (for all I knew) was desperately lost. Indeed, at the cross roads, there had been nothing for me but to choose the way that kept the wind on my face, and it gnawed me like a dog.

Mainly to allay the stinging of my eyes I pulled up at last, turned right-about-face, leaned back against the blast with a hand on my hat, and surveyed the blackness I had traversed. It was at this instant that, far away to the left, a point of light caught my notice, faint but steady; and at once I felt sure it burnt in the window of a house. "The house," thought I, "is a good mile off, beside the other road, and the light must have been an inch over my hat-brim for the last half hour," for my head had been sloped that way.

This reflection—that on so wide a moor I had come near missing the information I wanted (and perhaps a supper) sent a strong thrill down my back.

I cut straight across the heather toward the light, risking quags and pitfalls. Nay, so heartening was the chance to hear a fellow creature's voice that I broke into a run, skipping over the stunted gorse that cropped up here and there, and dreading every moment to see the light quenched. "Suppose

* An Extract from the Memoirs of Gabriel Foot—Highwayman—"Q," in the New York Sunday Sun.

it burns in an upper window, and the family is going to bed, as would be likely at this hour"—the apprehension kept my eyes fixed on the bright spot, to the scandal of my legs, that within five minutes were stuck full of gorse prickles.

But the light did not go out, and soon a flicker of moonlight gave me a glimpse of the house's outline. It proved to be a deal more imposing than I looked for—the outline, in fact, of a tall barrack with a cluster of chimneys at either end, like ears, and a high wall, topped by the roofs of some outbuildings, concealing the lower windows. There was no gate in this wall, and presently I guessed the reason. I was approaching the place from behind, and the light came from a back window on the first floor.

The faintness of the light also was explained by this time. It shone behind a drab-colored blind, and in shape resembled the stem of a wine glass, broadening out at the foot, an effect produced by the half-drawn curtains within. I came to a halt, waiting for the next ray of moonlight. At the same moment a rush of wind swept over the chimney-stacks, and on the wind there seemed to ride a human sigh.

On this last point I may err. The gust had passed some seconds before I caught myself detecting this peculiar noise, and trying to disengage it from the natural chords of the storm. From the next gust it was absent. And then, to my dismay, the light faded from the window.

I was half minded to call out, when it appeared again, this time in two windows—those next on the right to that where it had shown before. Almost at once it increased in brilliance, as if the person who carried it from the smaller room to the larger was lighting more candles; and now the illumination was strong enough to make fine gold thread of the rain that fell within its radiance, and fling two shafts of warm yellow over the coping of the back wall into the night. During the minute or more that I stood watching, no shadow fell on either blind.

Between me and the wall ran a ditch, into the black obscurity of which the ground at my feet broke sharply away. Setting my back to the storm again, I followed the lip of this ditch around the wall's angle. Here was shelter, and here the ditch seemed to grow shallower. Not wishing, however, to mistake a bed of nettles or any such pitfall for solid earth, I kept pretty wide as I went on. The house was dark on this

side, and the wall, as before, had no opening. Close beside the next angle grew a moss of thick gorse bushes, and, pushing through these, I found myself suddenly on a sound high road, with the wind tearing at me as furiously as ever.

But here was the front; and I now perceived that the surrounding wall advanced some way before the house, so as to form a narrow courtlage. So much of it, too, as faced the road had been whitewashed, which made it easy to find the gate. But as I laid my hand upon the latch, I had a surprise.

A line of paving stones led from the gate to a heavy porch, and along the wet surface of these fell a streak of light from the front door, which stood ajar.

That a door should remain six inches open on such a night was astonishing enough, until I entered the court and found it as still as a room, owing to the high wall, and doubtless the porch gave additional protection. But looking up and assuring myself that all the rest of the facade was black as ink, I wondered at the inmates—thus careless of their property.

It was here that my professional instincts received the first jog. Abating the sound of my feet on the paving stones, I went up to the door and pushed it softly.

It opened without noise.

I stepped into a fair-sized hall of modern build, paved with red tiles and lit with a small hanging lamp. To right and left were doors leading to the ground floor rooms. Along the wall by my shoulder ran a line of pegs, on which hung half a dozen hats and greatcoats, every one of clerical shape, and full in front of me a broad staircase ran up, with a staring Brussels carpet, the colors and pattern of which I can recall as well as to-day's breakfast. Under this staircase was set a stand full of walking sticks and a table littered with gloves, brushes, a hand bell, a riding crop, one or two dog whistles, and a bedroom candle with tinder box beside it. This, with one notable exception, was all the furniture.

The exception—which turned me cold—was the form of a yellow mastiff dog, curled on a mat beneath the table. The arch of his back was toward me, and one forepaw lay over his nose in a natural posture of sleep. I leaned back on the wainscoating, with my eyes tightly fixed on him and my thoughts flying back, with something of regret, to the storm I had come through.

But a man's habits are not easily denied. At the end of

three minutes the dog had not moved, and I was down on the doormat unlacing my soaked boots. Slipping them off and taking them in my left hand, I stood up and tried to step toward the stairs, with eyes alert for any movement of the mastiff ; but he never stirred.

I was glad enough, however, on reaching the stairs, to find them newly built and the carpet thick. Up I went, with a glance at every step for the table which now hid the brute's form from me, and never a creak did I wake out of that staircase till I was almost at the first landing, when my toe caught a loose stair-rod, and rattled it in a way that stopped my heart and then set it going in double-quick time.

I stood still, with a hand on the rail. My eyes were now on a level with the floor of the landing, out of which branched two passages—one by my right hand, the other to the left—at the foot of the next flight, so placed that I was gazing down the length of it. And almost at the end there fell a parallelogram of light across it from an open door.

A man who has once felt it knows there is only one kind of silence that can be fitly called "dead." This is only to be found in a great house at midnight. For a few seconds after I rattled the stair rod you might have cut the silence with a knife. If the house held a clock it ticked inaudibly.

Upon this silence, at the end of a minute, broke a light sound—the clink, clink of a decanter on the rim of a wine glass. It came from the room where the light was.

Now, perhaps it was the very thought of liquor put warmth into my cold bones. It is certain that all of a sudden I straightened my back, took the remaining stairs at two strides, and walked down the passage as bold as brass, without caring a jot for the noise I made.

In the doorway I halted. The room was long, lined for the most part with books bound in what they call "divinity calf," and littered with papers like a barrister's table on assize day. Before the fireplace where a few coals burned sulkily, was drawn a leathern elbow chair, and beside it, on the corner of a writing table, were set an unlit candle and a pile of manuscripts. At the opposite end of the room a curtained door led (as I guessed) to the chamber that I had first seen illuminated. All this I took in with the tail of my eye, while staring straight in front, where, in the middle of a great square of carpet between me and the window, was a table

with a red cloth upon it. On this cloth were a couple of wax candles lit, in silver stands, a tray, and a decanter of brandy.

And between me and the table stood a man.

He stood sideways, leaning a little back, as if to keep his shadow off the threshold and looked at me over his left shoulder—a bald, grave man, slightly under the common height, with a long clerical coat of preposterous fit hanging loosely from his shoulder, a white cravat, black breeches, and black stockings. His feet were loosely thrust into carpet slippers. I judged his age at 50 or thereabouts; but his face rested in the shadow, and I could only note a pair of eyes, very small and alert, twinkling above a large expanse of cheek.

He was lifting a wine glass from the table at the moment when I appeared, and it trembled now in his right hand. I heard a spilt drop or two fall on the carpet, and this was all the evidence he showed of discomposure.

Setting the glass back, he felt in his breast pocket for a handkerchief, failed to find one, and rubbed his hands together to get the liquor off his fingers.

"You startled me," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, turning his eyes upon me, as he lifted his glass again, and emptied it. "How did you find your way in?"

"By the front door," said I, wondering at his unconcern.

He nodded his head slowly.

"Ah! I forget to lock it. You came to steal, I suppose?"

"I came because I'd lost my way. I've been traveling this God-forsaken moor since dusk——"

"With your boots in your hand," he put in quietly.

"I took them off out of respect to the yellow dog you keep."

"He lies in a natural attitude, eh?"

"You don't tell me he was stuffed!"

The old man's eyes beamed with contemptuous pity.

"You are indifferently sharp, my dear sir, for a housebreaker. Come in. Set down those convicting boots, and don't drip pools of water in the very doorway, of all places. If I must entertain a burglar, I prefer him tidy."

He walked to the fire, picked up a poker, and knocked the the coals into a blaze. This done, he turned round on me, with the poker still in his hand. The serenest gravity sat on his large, hale features.

"Why have I done this?" he asked.

"I suppose to get possession of the poker."

"Quite right. May I inquire your next move?"

"Why?" said I, feeling in my pocket. "I carry a pistol."

"Which I suppose to be damp?"

"By no means. I carry it, as you see, in an oil-cloth case."

He stopped, and laid the poker carefully in the fender.

"That is a stronger card than I possess. I might urge that by pulling the trigger you would certainly alarm the house and the neighborhood, and put a halter round your neck. I say I might urge this, and assume you to be an intelligent auditor. But it strikes me as safer to assume you capable of using a pistol with effect at three paces. With what might happen subsequently I will not pretend to be concerned. It is sufficient that I dislike the notion of being perforated. The fate of your neck——" he waved a hand. "Well, I have known you for just five minutes, and feel but a moderate interest in your neck. As for the inmates of this house, it will refresh you to hear that there are none. I have lived here two years with a butler and female cook, both of whom I dismissed yesterday at a minute's notice for conduct which I will not shock your ears by explicitly naming. Suffice it to say I carried them off yesterday to my parish church two miles away, married them, and dismissed them in the vestry without characters. I wish you had known that butler—but excuse me; with the information I have supplied you ought to find no difficulty in fixing the price you will take to clear out of my house instanter."

"Sir," I answered. "I have held a pistol at one or two heads in my time, but never at one stuffed with nobler indiscretion. Your chivalry does not, indeed, disarm me, but prompts me to desire more of your acquaintance. I have found a gentleman, and must sup with him before I make terms."

The address seemed to please him. He shuffled across the room to a sideboard and produced a plate of biscuits, another of almonds and dried raisins, a glass, and two decanters.

"Sherry and Madeira," he said. "There is also a cold pie in the larder, if you care for it."

"A biscuit will serve," I replied. "To tell the truth I'm more for the bucket than the manger, as the grooms say; and, by your leave, the brandy you were tasting just now is more to my mind than wine."

"There is no water handy."

"There was plenty out of doors to last me with this bottle."

I pulled over a chair, laid my pistol on the table, and held out the glass for him to fill. Having done so, he helped himself to a glass and chair, and sat down facing me.

"I was talking, just now, of my late butler," he began, with a sip at his brandy. "Has it struck you that when confronted with moral delinquency, I am apt to let my indignation get the better of me?"

"Not at all," I answered heartily, refilling my glass.

It appeared that another reply would have pleased him better.

"H'm. I was hoping that, perhaps, I had visited his offence too strongly. As a clergyman, you see, I was bound to be severe; but upon my word, sir, since he went I have felt like a man who has lost a limb."

He drummed with his fingers on the cloth for a few moments, and went on:

"One has a natural disposition to forgive butlers—Pharaoh, for instance, felt it. There hovers around butlers that peculiar atmosphere which Shakespeare noticed as encircling kings, an atmosphere in which common ethics lose their pertinence. But mine was a rare bird—a black swan among butlers. He was more than a butler; he was a quick and brightly gifted man. Of the accuracy of his taste and the unusual scope of his endeavor you will be able to form some opinion when I assure you he modelled himself upon me."

I bowed over my brandy.

"I am a scholar, yet I employed him to read aloud to me, and derived pleasure from his intonation. I talk as a scholar, yet he learned to answer me in language as precise as my own. My cast-off garments fitted him not more irreproachably than did my amenities of manner. Divest him of his tray and you would find his mode of entering a room hardly distinguishable from my own—the same urbanity, the same alertness of carriage, the same superfine deference toward the weaker sex. All—all my idiosyncracies I saw reflected in this my mirror; and can you doubt that I was gratified? He was my *alter ego*, which makes it the more extraordinary that it should have been necessary to marry him to the cook."

"Look here," I broke in, "you want a butler."

"Oh, you really grasp that fact, do you?" he retorted.

"And you wish to get rid of me as soon as may be?"

"I hope there is no impoliteness in complimenting you on your discernment."

"Your two wishes may be reconciled. Let me cease to be your burglar, and let me continue here as your butler."

He leaned back, spreading out his fingers as if the table's edge was a harpsichord, and he stretching octaves upon it.

"Believe me," I went on, "you might do worse. I have been a demy of Magdalen Colege, Oxford, in my time, and retain some Greek and Latin. I'll undertake to read the Fathers with an accent that shall not offend you. My knowledge of wine is none the worse for having been cultivated in other men's cellars. Moreover, you shall engage the ugliest cook in Christendom, so long as I'm your butler. I've taken a liking to you—that's flat—and I apply for the post."

"I give £40 a year," said he.

"And I'm cheap at that price."

He filled up his glass, looking up at me while he did so with the air of one digesting a problem. From first to last his face was grave as a judge's.

"We are too impulsive, I think," was his answer, after a minute's silence, "and your speech smacks of the amateur. You say 'Let me cease to be your burglar and let me be your butler. The mere aspiration is respectable; but a man might as well say, 'Let me cease to write poems, let me paint pictures.' And truly, sir, you impressed me as no expert in your trade, but a journeyman housebreaker, if I may say so."

"On the other hand," I argued, "consider the moderation of my demands. That alone should convince you of my desire to turn over a new leaf. I ask for a month's trial; if, at the end of that time, I don't suit, you shall say so, and I'll march from your door with nothing in my pocket but my month's wages. Be hanged, sir! but when I reflect on the amount you'll have to pay to get me to face to-night's storm again, you seem to be getting off dirt cheap!" cried I, slapping my palm on the table.

"Ah, if you had only known Adolphus!" he exclaimed.

Now, the third glass of clean spirits had always a deplorable effect on me. It turns me from bright to black, from lightness of spirits to extreme sulkiness. I have done more wickedness over this third tumbler than in all the other states of comparative inebriety within my experience. So now I glowered at my companion and rapped out a curse.

"Look here, I don't want to hear any more of Adolphus, and I've a pretty clear notion of the game you're playing. You want to make me drunk, and you're ready to sit prattling there till I drop under the table."

"Do me the favor to remember that you came and are staying at your own invitation. As for the brandy, I would remind you that I suggested a milder drink. Try some Madeira."

He handed me the decanter as he spoke, and I slowly poured out a glass.

"Madeira!" said I, taking a gulp, Ugh! its the commonest Marsala!"

I had no sooner said the words than he rose up and stretched a hand gravely across to me.

"I hope you will shake it," he said, "though as a man who after three glasses of neat spirit can distinguish between Madeira and Marsala, you have every right to refuse me. Two minutes ago you offered to become my butler, and I demurred. I now beg you to repeat that offer. Say the word, and I employ you gladly; you shall even have the second decanter (genuine Madeira) to take to bed with you."

We shook hands on our bargain, and catching up a candlestick, he led the way from the room.

Picking up my boots, I followed him along the passage and down the silent staircase. In the hall he paused to stand on tip-toe, and turn up the lamp which was burning low. As he did so, I found time to fling a glance at my old enemy, the mastiff. He lay as I had first seen him—a stuffed dog, if ever there was one. "Decidedly," thought I, "my wits are to seek, to-night;" and with the same, a sudden suspicion made me turn to my conductor, who had advanced to the left-hand door, and was waiting for me, with hand on the knob.

"One moment," I said; "this is all very pretty, but how am I to know you're not sending me to bed while you fetch in all the countryside to lay me by the heels?"

"I'm afraid," was his answer, "you must be content with my word, as a gentleman, that never, to-night or hereafter, will I breathe a syllable about the circumstances of your visit. However, if you choose, we will return upstairs."

"No; I'll trust you," said I; and he opened the door.

It led into a broad passage, paved with slate, upon which three or four rooms opened. He paused by the second and

ushered me into a sleeping chamber, which, though narrow, was comfortable enough—a vast improvement, at any rate, on the mumper's lodgings I had been used to for the many, many months past.

"You can undress here," he said. "The sheets are aired, and I'll fetch a nightshirt—one of my own."

"Sir, you heap coals of fire on me."

"Believe me that for ninety-nine of your qualities I do not care a tinker's curse ; but as a man who after three tumblers of neat brandy can tell Marsala from Madeira you are to be taken care of."

He shuffled away, but came back in a couple of minutes with the nightshirt.

"Good night," he called, flinging it in at the door ; and without giving me time to return the wish, went his way upstairs.

Now it might be supposed I was only too glad to toss off my clothes and climb into the bed I had so unexpectedly acquired a right to. But as a matter of fact, I did nothing of the kind. Instead, I drew on my boots and sat on the bed's edge, blinking at my candle till it died down in its socket, and afterward at the purple square of window as it slowly changed to gray with the coming of dawn. I was cold to the heart, and my teeth chattered with an ague. Certainly I never suspected my host's word ; but was even occupied in framing good resolutions and shaping out an excellent future when I heard the front door gently pulled to and a man's footsteps moving quietly to the gate.

The treachery knocked me in a heap for the moment. Then leaping up and flinging my door wide I stumbled through the uncertain light of the passage into the front hall.

There was a fan-shaped light over the door, and the place was very still and gray. A quick thought, or rather a sudden, prophetic guess at the truth, made me turn to the figure of the mastiff curled under the hall table.

I laid my hand on the scruff of his neck. He was quite limp, and my fingers sank into the flesh on either side of the vertebræ. Digging them deeper, I dragged him out into the hall and pulled the front door open to see the better.

His throat was gashed from ear to ear.

How many seconds passed after I dropped the senseless lump on the floor, and before I made another movement, it would puzzle me to say. Twice I stirred a foot as if to run

out at the door. Then, changing my mind, I stepped over the mastiff and ran up the staircase.

The light no longer shone out into the left-hand passage; but groping down it I found the study door open, as before, and passed in. A sick light stole through the blinds—enough for me to distinguish the glasses and decanters on the table, and find my way to the curtain that hung before the room where the light had first attracted me.

I pushed the curtain aside, paused for a moment, and listened to the violent beat of my heart, then felt for the door handle and turned it.

All I could see at first was that the chamber was small; next, that the light patch in a line with the window was the white coverlet of a bed, and next that somebody, or something, lay on the bed.

I listened again. There was no sound in the room, no heart beating but my own. I reached out a hand to pull up the blind, and drew it back again—I dared not.

The daylight grew, minute by minute, on the dull parallelogram of the blind, and minute by minute that horrible thing on the bed took something of distinctness.

The strain beat me at last. I fetched a veritable yell to give myself courage, and, reaching for the cord, pulled up the blind as fast as it would go.

The face on the pillow was that of an old man—a face waxen and peaceful, with quiet lines about the mouth and eyes, and long lines of gray hair falling back from the temples. The body was turned a little on one side, and one hand lay outside the bedclothes in a very natural manner. But there were two dark spots on the coverlet.

Then I knew I was face to face with the real householder; and it flashed on me that I had been very indiscreet in taking service as his butler, and that I knew—

The face his ex-butler wore.

And, being by this time awake to the responsibilities of the post, I quitted three steps at a time, not once looking behind.

Outside the house, the storm had died, and white sunlight broke over the sodden moors.

But my bones were cold, and I ran faster and faster.

THE HISTORY OF A HUSTLER

One bright morning a child was born into the world.

"*To* shall he be called," said father and mother, "a good and short name that we shall lose no time pronouncing."

And *To* the child was christened, and placed at once by the parents in the machine for maturing babies, that wonderful invention which in seven months' time made an infant as old, mentally and physically, as a child of seven years—an economy of six whole years and a world of trouble.

"My son," said his father to *To* at the end of the seventh month, "thou hast reached the age to study and begin thine apprenticeship to life. Study, learn! but forget not that time is money, and the future the man's that knows how to utilize every second of his existence.

To obeyed; studied and learned zealously; devoured old books by day and night; ate only condensed foods to lose no time at meals, and applied himself to the task of discovering how to squint—the method of a celebrated savant—in order to arrive at reading two works at one and the same moment.

At five and twenty he was the light of his century....

One morning, whilst he dictated five dispatches simultaneously—Shade of Cæsar, pardon me!—filliped with his right hand the leaves of an atlas; with his left hand the leaves of an annual; listened with an ear at the telephone to a speech in the Chamber and with the other to the song of a nightingale; *To* with his left eye perceived passing in the street the loveliest maiden that he had ever seen.

It was a mental thunderclap to him.

She was young, rich, beautiful. He found her address, presented himself and was admitted to pay his court.

Ah, how their hearts did beat!

"As for me," said the lover, "I am called *To*. "And you?"

"Zi," responded she.

"And my fortune's a million," said he, "and yours?"

"A million and a half," said she.

"Good? I love you, Mademoiselle. And you?"

"I love you," said she.

They were married the next day. And were happy, but had few children,—only a pair of twins,—they had not the time.

*From the French: Mrs. E. C. Waggener: For Short Stories

To, meanwhile, was earning fabulous sums....a bank at Paris, London, Berlin, Constantinople, Bogota, and Heaven knows where else. Even then there was time on his hands; he dug canals, discovered mines, drained seas dry, opened isthmuses, relighted extinct volcanoes and generally confounded his contemporaries with his manifold exploits.

Engaged one night with the transformation of Etna into a vast calorifier, which should warm all Sicilly by means of subterranean conduits radiating from the volcano's bowels, news was brought him of the death of his father.

"Worthy son of a worthy sire," *To* cried aloud in a tone penetrated with tenderness. "I will weep for thee, my father, when I have time—when the days of age come on!"

And opening his note-book, he wrote at the top of a page:

"Due *To*, senior, tears and eternal regrets!"

And then, returning unexpectedly home to break the news to his wife, alas! alas! found the house filled with worshipers.

One man? No, two, three, four—a regiment.

"Pardon! Pardon!" sobbed Zi despairingly, "but to save time, you see, I—I thought—"

"Women should never think, Madame," vociferated *To*, and with a wrathful sweep of the arm he gathered her admirers into the middle of the room and turned upon them the muzzle of the Family Mitrailleuse.

"I have not time to kill you separately," said he, "but am going to avenge my honor wholesale, as it were."

And—he flung himself upon the trigger!

Blood! Brains! Groans! Hysterics!

It was horrible....thirty seconds to kill the crowd, and then, worse than all else, *To's* own teeth began to click and rattle, and all the muscles of his body to twitch convulsively. Nothing stopped it; over-driven by ceaseless work the human puppet had given way.... *To* had St. Vitus's Dance.

Twenty-four hours later he was cold in death....

"Mother," said one of the twins, as *To* lay peacefully in his coffin, "father is dead and gone, and has never had time to once embrace us!"

"True, my son, true," reflected the mother, "nor me, either! Stay! there's time yet!"

And quickly, moved by a common impulse, they approached the dear defunct, and tenderly, respectfully, laid upon the chill lips a posthumous kiss!

ETCHINGS: DIPLOMACY

"So you are happy?"

"Happy?—happiness is a weak word. My dear, I live in ecstasy. And to think you so soon will know the same great happiness! I congratulate you."

Two beautiful women smiled, bowed and parted. One, the bride of a month, stepped in her waiting carriage; the other, a bride-soon-to-be, walked thoughtfully homeward.

"She seems very happy," she murmured, "and—looks it. I cannot comprehend her affection for that common-place, uninteresting husband of hers, and yet he is amiable and devoted. And I used to fancy that she cared for Maurice. I remember how absurdly jealous I was last summer, and to think that she is safely married and Maurice will soon be my husband Ah! I am very happy."

Two days later she waited for Maurice in his outer office.

A desk littered with letters stood wide open, and a scrap of paper fluttered to the floor. Minx, a toy-terrier, whom she had taught to fetch her a paper when she entered, pounced upon it with a yelp and brought it in triumph to her.

The well-known handwriting turned her to stone. She stared at it in a desperate daze, then laughed at her folly. "An invitation to dinner; written during their flirtation last summer. I will not be dishonorable. I will trust them."

But the scrap of paper burned her fingers as she held it—nay, it even coiled about them like a little snake.

She opened it. She read this note, from a happy bride of a month, to her future husband.

"That evening in a crowded drawing-room she approached the happy pair that all the world was dubbing "the turtle doves," and with a radiant smile she said to the husband:

"I found something to-day which belongs to your wife. She was so careless that I do not think it best to entrust it to her again. It will be safer in your keeping," and handed him the note she had found.

* * * * * *

Within a week two stories shook society to its center.

The "turtle doves" had separated.

A fashionable engagement was declared off.

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*Edith Sessions Tupper: For Short Stories

THROUGH OCULATED PROOF

"Photography has revealed many strange and wonderful things during the last twenty years, but few so strange or startling as the existence of natural photographs or optograms, in the eyes of the deceased. The pictured image of the object last seen has thus been made to yield up its secret to the living. The perpetrator of murder has more than once, I believe, been in this way discovered and brought to justice. The only wonder is that the camera is not oftener used in all such cases of doubtful identity. But I know of an even stranger thing about retinal optograms—stranger, that is, from the psychological standpoint, and one which, moreover, came under my own personal observation."

The speaker, a well-known eye and ear physician, here paused a moment to light a fresh cigar.

"The events I refer to," he went on, "took place in the early part of the seventies. I was then practising in the city of Memphis. There came to me, one day, a lady of distinguished bearing and great beauty, followed by a negro nurse girl, with a fine baby boy in her arms. My visitor's errand concerned the child. They had discovered him to be totally blind, and had accordingly brought him to me for consultation. The lady, also, at the same time, introduced herself by name, which I immediately recognized as belonging to one of the oldest and best families in the place. It did not take much professional experience on my part, however, to convince me of the utter hopelessness of the case.

"'Madam,' said I, 'it is my opinion that the child was born blind. In that event——'

"'Is there no hope?' she asked anxiously, as I paused.

"'I grieve to say it,' I returned. 'I will, however, make a closer examination before pronouncing a final opinion.

"She caught eagerly at the suggestion, and the child submitted patiently enough to the adjustment of the lens. But it was even as I had supposed: the tissues were all in a perfectly healthy condition, and, save for the unobservant look peculiar to the blind, one would not easily suspect the little one's infirmity. The loss of sight was then plainly due to nervous trouble—probably pre-natal, for he had never been

* Mark L. Griswold: Pittsburg Dispatch

seriously ill, she assured me, and in that and any case, apparently hopeless. I was, accordingly, about to withdraw the glass, and to give it as my final dictum that nothing could be done, when certain very fine lines on the resting retinal background caught my attention. Without remark, I quietly exchanged my lens for one with higher magnifying power. A startling revelation awaited me; on the dark visual pupil of the eye were the delicately drawn outlines of a miniature face! Too minute, indeed, for observation of detail, there could yet be no mistaking the actuality of the fact. Examination of the other eye revealed the same surprising result. Here, indeed, was something worth investigating! A thousand conjectures passed through my mind. If the child had, as I believed, been born blind, then the image was very likely prenatal also. But how such an impression could have been made upon the eyes of an unborn child passed my understanding. Could it be that the sympathetic relation existing between mother and child was, in this case at least, close enough and strong enough to result in such an extraordinary phenomenon—that the mother had in some way suffered a sufficiently powerful mental shock to produce such sympathetic vibration? But what if, after all, the child had not been born blind? Then the fixed image must be due to some equally severe nervous shock, and one which also very likely deprived him of sight at the same time. Of the two suppositions the latter seemed by far the most natural and probable. And yet my professional conviction was that the child had been blind from birth. In either case, the cause itself must have been of an extraordinary nature in order to produce so startling an effect. But if I could get at the circumstances which had occasioned the loss of sight, I was also convinced that the retinal impression might stand a fair chance of being accounted for. For, it was my opinion, that the causes which produced the one, had the other for result, as a consequence.

"Assuming, first, that the child had not been born blind, and without saying anything as yet of my discovery, I made inquiry if he had ever been subjected to any severe mental shock—ever been badly frightened by any particular person, for instance? The reply was a prompt negative. Mrs. D—— for so I will call her—adding, moreover, that she was absolutely certain on that point, since she had had the care of him from birth. 'I infer, then,' I observed, 'that you yourself

are not his mother? You will pardon the remark, as I am exceedingly anxious to ascertain the cause of his blindness.'

"'You are quite right, his mother was my sister, and died giving him birth.'

"I reflected a moment, and then suggested that the nurse be allowed to take the boy out into the adjacent garden.

"'And now, Madam,' said I, when we were once fairly alone, 'permit me to put you one more question. That I do not ask it in the spirit of idle curiosity, you will presently have abundant proof. Related as you are, you can surely tell me whether or not the child's mother, herself, ever suffered such a shock as I have described?'

"For answer the beautiful face of my visitor suddenly turned so white and drawn that I sprang for a glass of water.

"'Stay!' she murmured faintly; 'it will pass!' and then, presently recovering herself, continued in a low, strained voice: 'My sister's married name was Brainerd—Mrs. Howard Brainerd. You must recognize it and—understand?'

"'Mrs. Howard Brainerd, of White Oaks? I do, indeed, remember it! Pardon me for causing you so much distress!'

"'She was found unconscious by the side of her murdered husband,' she went on, as if I had not spoken, 'and died without a sign, the evening of the same day, after giving premature birth to this child. We cannot doubt that she saw the whole dreadful deed, or that it—the shock—killed her.

I recalled it all, as I sat there for a little, in sympathetic silence. I remembered reading up the entire case, in the daily press, and of being interested in the mystery surrounding it. The parties were high up in the social scale in a neighboring State, belonging to one of its most honored and courted families. Howard Brainerd, the victim, was not known to have a single enemy. On the contrary, he was everywhere liked, and, if report be true, deservedly so. There seemed, therefore, no cause for the dastardly deed—a deed, moreover, which had, so far, gone unpunished. For, in spite of all that wealth and influence could do, no clue to the murderer had ever been discovered. A fearful storm had raged the same night, obliterating all traces. Someone, it was, familiar with the place and its surroundings; someone, who knew the ins and outs of the house. Such a one it must have been, and such a one had come and gone, leaving no clue behind him.

"I recalled all this, I say, and as memory did its work, an

idea flashed through my brain like an arrow of light. I fairly held my breath at the thoughts of the possibilities thereby unfolded. A plan of action speedily evolved itself—a plan by which I might not only prove the scientific value of certain inductions of my own, but by which I might also aid in the meting out of justice. But how to set about it? I ransacked my mind for all the facts and theories that I had ever heard or read of, connected with somewhat similar cases. My mind made up, I turned again and said, as gently as I could, and hoping to change the current of her thoughts:

"'I promise you my final opinion, Madam, as to the boy's eyes. I regret to say that I still deem his case an utterly hopeless one. But there is a peculiarity about the eyes themselves, that leads me to think that we may, through them, be able to render his family an important service.'

"She looked puzzled, but said nothing, listening only with gradually increasing interest and attention as I went on.

"'I will give you good reasons for the hope that is in me, as you shall presently see. You have, I presume, heard of natural photographs—optograms? Well, as you know, upon the retinal membrane of the eye, images of what we see are being constantly reflected as in a mirror, with this difference, that they are in reverse. Like the reflections in a mirror, they are of a transient nature, constantly coming and going—evanescent. But given peculiar circumstances, such, for instance, as would result in permanently "fixing" any one image upon this retinal background, we would then have a natural photograph, or optogram of the object seen. Such circumstances are thought to be present during the last fleeting glance of a dying person, and in fact, several such retinal impressions have already been discovered and made use of. Now, if we photograph this optogram immediately after death, and throw its enlarged copy upon a magic lantern screen, we will of course be able to see, and perhaps recognize, that which was last seen by the person deceased.'

"Mrs. D. here broke in with the exclamation: 'But you forget. My sister has now been dead some three months!' 'Very true!' said I. 'But if you will remember I said that my hopes were based on the child. It is my belief that the sympathetic vibration existing between the mother and her unborn babe was sufficient in this case, at least, to transmit the last retinal impression produced on her eyes to those of

her child. And, so terrible was the shock that caused this vibration and so powerful the vibration itself, it also sufficed to destroy his sight. As a matter of fact, madam, the peculiarity I mentioned is nothing more or less than just such a natural photograph or optogram! But you shall see for yourself.' And without further delay I called the nurse, and adjusted the lens. The lady, now painfully agitated, looked, and with a low cry of astonishment, acknowledged the truth of my remarks. It was a great disappointment, however, that she could not recognize the face. But the fault probably lay in its minuteness. And deeply impressed with the possibilities of the case, Mrs. D. decided on having the retina photographed, and then reproduced enlarged, upon a screen. Meantime, she would telegraph for Judge Brainerd, as the one most interested, and the first throwing of the image should be in his presence. Pending this, she desired the matter kept as private as possible. For, after all, our hope might be in vain, and the miniature face a mere freak of nature, the knowledge of which was best reserved for the family circle. All things being thus arranged, the lady took her departure. In the afternoon the camera did its work, and by noon the next day everything was in readiness.

"In order to better observe privacy, I had fixed up my private office for the occasion, and by way of trial, threw the face on the screen before the arrival of the others.

"A startlingly handsome face it was—handsome as only creoles and Southerners occasionally are. A man's face—in the prime of youth, clear cut, clean shaven, and, in fact, almost feminine in the delicate style of its beauty. There was nothing suggestive of the hardened criminal; nothing hinting at depraved tastes or brutal instincts. But the expression! Startled horror and bewilderment were there blended, dilating the eyes and fixing the parted lips, as if the man had been suddenly transfixed—momentarily paralyzed—by some sudden and unexpected shock or vision! But what struck one the most forcibly was a nameless something in that riveted look, a something, suggestive of blunder. As if there had just flashed through his brain the dread consciousness of having committed some terrible mistake! It fascinated me—that look of startled horror and amaze.

"Promptly at the hour designated, Mrs. D. put in an appearance, accompanied by a stately, gray-haired man, whom

she introduced as Judge Brainerd; and with them came also the nurse and child. The Judge listened with the keenest interest to my theory of the case, and expressed a deep-voiced wish that it might prove true. He had never recovered from the shock of his son's death, and the desire for vengeance on his murderer was naturally strong within him. First satisfying himself with regard to the existence of the optogram in the eyes of the child, he expressed himself impatient for a sight of its enlarged image. Without delay, therefore, we three adjourned to my private office. As we entered the room, I noticed that Mrs. D. seemed strangely agitated and uneasy; she said nothing, however, but afterward told me that she had had, at that moment, an almost overpowering presentiment of coming evil. That the Judge was himself excited I could not doubt, but it was rather the excitement of expectant curiosity, stirred by a lively hope. As for myself, though vaguely conscious of a coming crisis of some sort, my uppermost thought was a question: Would the Judge recognize the face? And somewhere within that inner consciousness of mine there arose the answer—'Yes!'

"The final adjustments made, I slipped in the slide, and the next instant, in bright, bold relief, the beautiful face flashed out upon the white field of canvas—a thing of almost supernatural vividness and power.

"A breathless silence followed the revelation; I heard Mrs. D. catch her breath convulsively; and then from the man beside me, there came a long, low, inarticulate cry, succeeded by a heavy fall and a woman's scream.

"'An apoplectic fit!' the doctor said. And as soon as possible they removed the unfortunate man to his own house. In after days he recovered his general health, indeed, but by some curious half paralysis of the brain his memory of events for the better part of his past life was entirely blotted out, and so it remained till the day of his death. That the judge had recognized the face was only too evident, as witness the fatal results. But Mrs. D. had not, and so for the time the mystery seemed only to deepen.

"By request, I had an enlarged copy of the photograph made later on, and sent it to the family. But now behold the strange evolution of events, the optogram had apparently served its sole and destined end. It was no longer of any use, for, almost simultaneously with the sending of its

photographed image, there appeared in the columns of the daily press a long and sensational account of the murder from beginning to its recently discovered end. The man had been found at last, but found—dead. A dagger in the heart told the manner. And on his person was a paper containing a virtual confession of the deed and of the motives impelling thereto. It ran substantially as follows: An all but white man was he; son of a remarkably beautiful, and, for a slave, unusually refined and intelligent octoroon, who had served at one time as lady's maid to Judge Brainerd's mother. Some domestic trouble occurring in the family, she was, as a direct result, sold to parties resident in a distant State, dying there some years after, and, so her son averred, of a broken heart. The writer further declared, that he had sought the Brainerd mansion with the express intention of killing the Judge in his sleep. Cleverly disguised, and by fraternizing with the servants, he first made himself tolerably familiar with the house plan. Absenting himself then for a time so as to avert suspicion, he returned one dark, stormy night, and made his way unobserved, into what, he supposed, was the Judge's own private apartment. He sees a recumbent form on the bed, and approaches with noiseless steps. The storm is at that moment at its height. The sleeper, roused by the tumult of the elements—or was it some prescience of approaching danger!—stirs uneasily, as if on the point of awakening. With a bound the murderer springs to his side. There is an upward gleam of steel—a swift, downward stroke, followed by a groan. All is over! The man turns to flee—when suddenly there comes a blinding glare of lightning, accompanied by a heavy crash of thunder; and, ah heavens, in that passing flash he sees, by the side of the murdered man the upturned, terror stricken, staring eyes of a woman! and he sees also, that the man he has just slain is not the man he sought.

"It did not need the final proofs adduced by the writer as to his identity. This all but white man, and would-be avenger of his mother's honor, was Judge Brainerd's natural son. And it was, beyond a matter of doubt, a vivid likeness existing between mother and child, that had brought such instant conviction and fatal result to the heart and brain of the unhappy man. The dead had been avenged indeed.

ETCHINGS: THE FLOATING MILL

"The ice! The ice is coming!"

The cry sped from the upper Loire borne by messengers who rode like the wind and waved a flaming torch.

At Meilleraie, the first rider fell exhausted!

Another caught up the torch and bore it on to Nantes.

And ever that awful cry carried terror into the night!

Crews of vessels started from their sleep, bargemen ran to the river. The banks were lined with flashing lights.

The dread vanguard swept in sight and advanced like an army of spectres, shaking their white mantles in the wind.

On came the host of gleaming forms! following each other swiftly, barring the river straight across and plunging, with sullen roars, beneath the arches of the bridge.

A shout burst from the crowd—

"The Mill is going!"

A mountain of ice had parted in twenty places, the masses hurled against the iron cables which supported the floating mill. There came a grating sound—the breaking of iron chains. The building swayed and was swept down the stream.

But a second cry rose from the watchers on the bridge! At the upper window of the doomed mill appeared the pale face of a girl. Her arms were stretched forth but her voice was drowned beneath the roaring of the waters. The mill came on by starts, now hurried, now impeded by the ice. It reached the bridge, bent as if to pass beneath, then stopped. A mass of ice rushed upon it! Slowly the tottering building sank beneath the pressure! Now the girl's agonized cry arose. A hundred hands were stretched out—none could reach her!

The roof of the mill dropped to the level of the arches of the bridge. A man sprang upon the parapet! Sliding along the edge of the buttress, he thrust one arm through an iron ring, clamped into the stone-work, and swung himself down to the window of the mill. With his free arm, he seized the girl and drew her out upon his breast. One instant, this human chain depended from the bridge, then by a mighty effort, he swung his burden upward and laid her safely on the edge of the buttress. A shower of spray dashed over the figures, hiding them from those above, then with a sullen roar, the waters closed over the black roof of the mill.

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* La Lanterne: E. B. S.: For Short Stories

PLATA POR TRIGO

During the short reign of the Mexican Emperor Iturbide, there lived in the town of Zapotlanejo, in the State of Jalisco, a jolly muleteer, Don Jose Marin, whose little house of well whitewashed adobe on the outskirts of the town sheltered Dona Paz Gama de Marin, his wife, and ten children, after the good old Mexican fashion of large families, which has not yet died out, despite railways and French bonnets and corsets!

This numerous brood of brown-skinned youngsters consisted of just five girls and an equal number of boys, the youngest a babe of a few months, the oldest a "muchacha, muy guapa," the pretty, frisky Isabel, with great black eyes, lips like cherries, and the gayest of hearts.

As the children increased the little house had been gradually extended till now its walls inclosed eight comfortable rooms, furnished with the utmost simplicity, the parlor having, in a broad, gilt frame, a colored print of "Our Lady of Guadalupe," a little picture of the Emperor Charles V., and a few lithographs of remarkably ugly saints. In one corner was a tidy altar in which stood, clad in bright raiment, an image of the Blessed Virgin, before whom forever burned a little candle set in a brown earthenware candlestick, the clean, white altar cloth being always, in the morning, strewn with fresh flowers, a duty which Dona Paz or Isabel never neglected. The sweet, domestic side of the Catholic faith is thus almost universally illustrated in Mexican homes, and suits well the gentle character of the people.

Every morning of their lives, Paz and Isabel, and one child after another knelt before the household altar and commended themselves to Heaven and to the protection of the "Mother of God." Nor did Don Jose frown upon this charming manifestation of piety, for, though not a good churchman, he lived uprightly and went to confession at least twice a year, and was on excellent terms of neighborly friendship with Fr. Nicolas, the parish priest of Zapotlanejo, a true servant of God, as are many of the humble priests of the little towns of Mexico to this day.

Nor did Don Jose meddle with politics; by nature he was a moderate man. He had, it is true, a few years ago taken

* "Silver For Wheat": St. Louis Globe-Democrat

part as a cavalry soldier under Gen. Iturbide against the Spanish army, but more from neighborly sentiment than national patriotism. His cronies in the little town, Dionisio Maza, the shoemaker; Carlos Donde, the shopkeeper, with whom traded the poorer classes of townspeople, and Agapito Bravo, the blacksmith, all strong anti-Spanish in their sentiments, had enlisted under Iturbide, and Don Jose thought it a pleasant thing to go off campaigning with them, but, as he said, he did not care the toss up of a *real* which won, the patriots or the Spaniards! It would be all the same whoever won, for wheat would have still to be carried to Guadalajara, and he, as the owner of ten mules, would always find work enough to do. The day he left the town, mounted on a big black horse, with his sabre drawn, the little troop setting out for the wars, Dona Paz hugged him and wept over him, and Isabel kissed his hand over and over again, and then ran back to the house to dry her tears and commend her "querido papa" to the Virgin.

In a few months the war was over. Jose arrived home none the worse for the campaigning, save that a Spanish trooper had skillfully carved off the tip of his right ear with a long sabre. And all his companions came back, too, in high glee at the defeat of the King's troops. It was a matter of warm discussion in the little town when General Iturbide proclaimed himself Emperor, and Jose's fellow-soldiers were divided in their opinion as to the wisdom of having fought to drive out one monarch to set up another, but, as Jose sententiously observed: "If we're to have an emperor, gracias a Dios that he is a Mexican and not a Gachupin. Caramba!"

Jose resumed his vocation of a carrier, or muleteer, and, the war being over, had plenty to do. Every week he tramped behind his mules to Guadalajara, the animals loaded with sacks of grain, and frequently returned from that great city with higher loads of goods for the merchants of Zapotlanejo. One day in August, 1823, while on the road to Guadalajara, the mules well laden with wheat, Jose, in his sandals, white cotton trousers and blouse, trudging behind, he suddenly fell in with a tall dark man, who accosted him with: "Hola! amigo, a donde va?" (Hello, friend! where are you going?) On being informed by Jose that the destination of the little caravan was Guadalajara, the stranger begged to be allowed

to accompany him, as the roads were dangerous, there being "mucha mala gene" (many evil disposed people) about, and he had a bit of money with him and felt insecure traveling alone. Jose took a keen look at the stranger, whom he perceived to be unarmed, save, perhaps, the customary knife under the sash, and, being himself a trifle lonely, acceded cheerfully to the man's request. Despite the rather forbidding look, the stranger turned out to be good company. He had served in the war on the patriot side, he said, and he related with much vivacity many good stories of adventure. Jose, always communicative, spoke freely of himself and of his hope, in a few years, to get money enough to buy a coach with which so start a stage line to Guadalajara, letting his nephew manage the mules till such time as his eldest son, Juan, might be able to attend to the carrying business.

The two friends jogged on together till the domed city of Guadalajara came in view and on entering the town they separated with mutual good wishes. Jose went to his customary meson, where, when in the city, he lodged himself and his mules, first delivering his grain to a local dealer, taking in return a bag of silver pieces for the grain merchant of Zapotlanejo. The next morning, himself refreshed and the mules lightly laden with a few goods destined for Zapotlanejo traders, Jose treated himself to a glass of Catalan and started out of the city, again encountering at the city gate the acquaintance of the previous day, who asked to be permitted to accompany him a short way back. The stranger had purchased a wiry little horse, and, as Jose was now mounted on a mule, they were well matched as to speed, and in condition for a comfortable homeward journey. The stranger was as entertaining as before. He had much to say of the good result of his visit to Guadalajara, and told of his recovering a sum of money of considerable amount from an old debtor, who during the war had been unable to meet his obligation. And, in truth, he could show some very well filled saddle-bags.

Early in the afternoon Jose and the stranger stopped at a roadside meson to refresh themselves and their beasts. They drank several glasses of fiery Catalan, ate heavily and then lay down for a siesta. The place was a familiar one, Jose knew Don Miguel, the landlord, and so felt no uneasiness, for Miguel, from time out of mind, had kept the meson. All

Zapotlanejo knew and trusted Don Miguel. When Jose awoke, the stranger had to be spoken to several times to awaken him, and bidding good-by to Miguel, who had also taken his usual nap, the fellow-travelers set out in right good spirits. After going about three leagues, the stranger bid Jose a cheery adios, thanking him for his confidence and companionship, and the two parted on excellent terms. Later on, perhaps a league away, Jose noted with surprise that one of the money sacks carried by a bonny white mule appeared tied in a manner not his own. Curiosity, more than apprehension, caused him to stop and untie the bag, he thinking all the time that Miguel might have found the cord unloosened and had good naturedly retied it.

"Diantre!" shouted poor Jose. The bag was filled with small stones. He turned pale, felt the blood leave his head, and nearly fell. With nearly all the strength gone out of his body, he opened the three other money sacks. Only stones! Then Jose cursed his folly, and cursed the deceitful stranger.

"May the devil of hell seize his soul, the hound! the lying fox! the accursed robber! And what a simple fool I, to be thus caught in his trap, after fifteen years a carrier and never once losing a medio."

It was a sore loss for Jose, for the money included not only the price of the wheat, but a debt returned by a Guadalajara trader to a man in Zapotlanejo. Not a great sum, in all $1,800, but the loss would ruin poor Jose. He recovered his senses, tethered his mules, and made the best possible speed back over the road in the hope of finding the false stranger, but Jose soon saw that it was useless, and even could he have found the fellow, such rascals go well armed. Then he turned about, bethinking himself that he would call out his friends in the village, and together they would scour the country for the thief. Night came soon, and Jose slept in the open air, under a tree. He had often done the same, and now he felt that there was nothing left to be stolen save his beasts. At noon the next day poor Jose re-entered Zapotlanejo, sad, dejected, tearful. He went directly home, and his sorrowful appearance cast consternation among the little loving household group, who discerned him a long way off up the white, dusty road.

Dona Paz did not weep, but simply said: "My poor husband, we must toil like slaves to return this money, and await

the ways of God, who will punish the unjust." Later in the day Jose went to the alcalde and told the story, and that worthy, a man who dearly loved adventure, summoned all the horsemen in town, and for four days they scoured the roads in quest of the tall stranger. But he was never caught. The alcalde decided that, as Jose had not observed due caution, he was responsible for the loss, but that it would be folly to take his mules from him, as with them he could, possibly, in the course of time, recoup himself, and even Don Gumesindo Valles, the principal loser by the robbery, magnanimously told Jose that he would take half the loss on himself, as a punishment for not having provided Jose with a guard.

For seven years Jose followed his calling. Weekly he went with his beasts to Guadalajara, and every month he turned over his surplus gains to the grain merchant and to Don Gumesindo. The table in the little house of adobe was thinly spread; Dona Paz seldom saw a new gown, much less a rebozo, and the children were almost in rags. In seven years Jose had repaid the lost funds all save $75, but, though he was nearly out of debt, he foresaw clearly that he would never be able to buy his coach for the so long projected diligence line to Guadalajara.

One crisp, cold day in December, 1830 (the Emperor Iturbide had been shot years before at Badilla), and many things had changed in Mexico, except Zapotlanejo, which never changed, or Jose, who still preserved the kindly temper, but was now a wary man, not to be gulled by any sort of road sharper—on that bright, cool December day Jose started with a load of wheat for Guadalajara, with instructions from the grain merchant to sell the wheat immediately on arrival to the highest bidder.

It was curious that on this day, as he jogged along with his little caravan, Jose should have begun to indulge himself in his old dream of a stage line. He reasoned it out in this wise: "I am out of debt, or will be in two months, and for all these years I have been known as an honest man. Someone may be found to lend me money to buy a coach and give me time to pay the loan." Then he began to estimate the number of travelers, and calculated that the convenience of the stage would stimulate travel. Even if the diligence just maintained him, his mules would steadily earn the money needed to repay the loan. Jose imagined himself

snapping his coachman's whip and dashing up to the great inn of Guadalajara in fine coaching fashion, the mozos running out to hold the horses, the landlord treating him as an equal, his coach kept clean and attractive, himself come to be a most important personage. After these pleasant visions the stern common-sense of his mind began to assert itself. "No, no; always would he remain poor Jose Marin, the muleteer, who had allowed himself to be duped by a wily rascal." He recalled shakes of the head among his neighbors in Zapotlanejo, and gibes and jests regarding his tonteria, or folly, these being indications, he thought, of the low estimation in which he was held for business ability at home. Poor Jose! He was suffering as we all do when we begin to realize that it is very difficult to put stone foundations under our air castles. He stopped on the road, this humble man and poor, dropped on his knees in the common dust, and then and there thanked God for his goodness in preserving his life till he could extinguish a just debt, for Heaven's having kept his dear wife and little family all these years in health and happiness, though bread was sometimes scarce.

Rising from his knees, he lifted his eyes to the great blue dome of the sky, and a mighty peace flowed in upon his soul. Jose, the poor muleteer, had spoken to Almighty God, the protector of the humble, and a time of refreshment to his spirit had come. In the great happiness of his honest heart he sung; he bethought himself of his blessings. He had not been striken blind like his old companion in arms, Maza; he had not lost his wife like Bravo; and his Isabel was fair to look upon, a tall, handsome girl, as good as beautiful. It was in this thankful and almost buoyant mood that Jose Marin entered Guadalajara.

Passing through a broad street, lined on either side with the great houses of los ricos (the rich) Jose and his mules were stopped by a servant, who said the master would buy his grain. Entering the great courtyard of a luxurious mansion, the mayor-domo, or steward, quickly made a bargain, paid a round price for the wheat, without once attempting to haggle over the trade, and courteously invited Jose to dine with him in his room. This unexpected courtesy to a poor fellow like himself, a dusty carrier, overcame Jose for a moment, but, with that self-respect and courtesy characteristic of the humblest Mexican, he accepted the invitation and

hugely enjoyed the mayor-domo's fare, a striking contrast to the food served at the meson, where he usually tarried.

After lunch the mayor-domo had for Jose a fresh surprise—"el amo" (the master) must needs speak with him, and would the muleteer ascend to the master's despacho (office)!

Puzzling over this matter, but thinking it possibly meant a fresh order for grain, poor Jose, very much bewildered, went up the broad, easy stairs to the upper landing, where a tall, dark gentleman greeted him with:

"Amigo como lo va?" and a hearty embrace.

In his confusion Jose did not recall the resemblance to the other tall, dark man whom he had most unfortunately met seven years before. But the master of the house drawing Jose into the despacho, made him sit down, and thus addressed the muleteer:

"My friend, seven years ago, I, being tempted of the devil (whose ways and works I have forever renounced) foully deceived and robbed you, inflicting, I fear, a grievous wrong upon you and yours. How often and how bitterly I have mourned that wicked act I cannot say. Long ago I would have made restitution, but that I could not recall your village, having been at the time of the robbery intoxicated and in distress of mind. When I encountered you on the road I was a fugitive from justice, and my evil genius tempted me to play you a dastardly and wicked trick. To-day, sitting on my balcony, I saw you pass by; my heart leaped into my throat. The long awaited opportunity had come. Behold, my friend, that I have caused your bags of wheat to be emptied, and have replaced the grain with silver coin. It is plata por trigo! To carry home the burden I have provided other mules to aid you, and these you must keep. To you I owe my wealth. Fleeing from you, I hid in the hills, and there found the mine which made me a rich man; to-day I found you, and a burden has rolled from me—a burden hard to bear, the memory of a foul and wicked act, the betrayal of a good man's confidence. Hereafter you are my friend; this house is yours whenever you visit Guadalajara, and I shall place soon in your hands lands and houses to the extent of half my wealth."

Conducting the amazed Jose to the courtyard, the rich man pointed out the sacks of silver and the guard of trusted mezos, who were to accompany Jose to his home. A finely

caparisoned horse was given Jose, who, on leaving embraced his benefactor and returned home a rich man.

And Dona Paz, what did the good wife say when her Jose rode up to the door on a great horse, with silver-mounted saddle, escorted by armed men, and with mules well laden with precious silver? Dona Paz embraced her husband, and then silently went into the little parlor and thanked the Blessed Mother that the great wrong had been made right. And Isabel was by her side in that honest and tearful outpouring of praise and gratitude.

The next week came the lawyers from Guadalajara and settled property valued, even in those days, at a quarter of a million dollars on Senor Don Jose Marin, the outright gift of his friend, Senor Don Ganzale Sarrio, and on the pretty Isabel was settled an estate near Guadalajara which made her a no inconsiderable heiress, and where she afterward lived with her husband, who married her, not for her money, for long before good fortune came they had met and loved.

As for Jose, he went to Guadalajara to reside in a great mansion, and with the family went Fr. Nicholas, best of priests and kindest of old friends, one who, during the seven years of poverty in the Casa Marin, never failed to comfort with words of good cheer.

I fancy the reader will not condemn a tale that ends in happy fashion, and the approval of the kindly critic will be assuredly given with great heartiness, when I add that this plain story, devoid of all ornament or accessory of embellishment, is one of the true tales of Mexico.

THE TREMOLO STOP

The old man's smile was the sunniest in Naples.

It began with a merry twinkle in his eyes, and ran down his cheeks in ripples, softening the wrinkles, and irradiating his swart face as apple blossoms light up an orchard.

This sunny smile was an outward expression of a cheery philosophy born of varied fortunes.

In his youth the old man had sung in the chorus of an opera company, and he looked back through the forty intervening years with pleasure to the night when he had been permitted to sing solo. But disease had injured the delicate music-box in his throat, and his hopes of becoming a famous tenor were crushed. Then he enlisted and fought with Garibaldi and left a leg on the battle-field.

On his 60th birthday he stood in the shade of an ilex tree in the city of Naples, the possessor of a long gray beard, a wooden leg, and a barrel organ. The organ was a beautiful instrument, rich in tone, and ornamented with gilding. When the old man pulled aside the red silken curtain which hung on a brass rod in front of the organ, he displayed to the delighted eyes of children a number of quaint little wooden figures, which danced and curtsied with the grace of courtiers. When he turned the handle of the organ out came the miserere song from 'La Trovatore,' followed by the jocund hilarity of 'Rory O'More,' the plaintive sweetness of 'Annie Laurie,' the inspiring strains of the 'Watch on the Rhine,' the warlike measures of 'Rule Britannia,' and, last, that most cosmopolitan of airs, 'Home, Sweet Home.' But the wonderful thing about the organ was the tremolo stop, which was a mechanical contrivance of the old man's invention. It was used only in connection with the song of home, and when he touched this stop it imparted a tremulous, wavering movement to the music. The old man found the tremolo stop to be very profitable, because it made travelers feel homesick, and so the home song brought him more pennies than all the other tunes in his organ. But as the summer wore away and the travelers became few in Naples, the sunlight in his smile faded and left an anxious look in the old man's face. For he had been carefully saving his pennies toward opening a café.

*Ernest Jarrold: Collected Sketches

He reasoned that it would be easy to dish out macaroni when he could no longer carry around a heavy organ. One day two friends of his youth, who had just returned from America with what in his estimation were snug fortunes, met him. These friends were bootblacks. They were attracted by the tremolo stop, and knowing that Americans were always in search of a novelty, they advised the old man to go to America and assured him that he could return within a year with money enough to open a café.

The old man listened eagerly to the advice of his friends, but he hesitated about leaving his native land; besides, he was growing old, and all he desired was rest and comfort. But there was no prospect of realizing his hopes in Italy, and so, after counting his money carefully, and finding that he had a little more than enough to pay for his passage, he resolved to go to America.

Landed at Castle Garden he was disappointed that his service with Garibaldi did not bring him a patriot's welcome among his countryman. His success with his organ, however, was even greater than he had been led to expect. The native dignity of the old man, his infecting smile—into which as his fortunes rose the sunlight had returned—and the tremolo stop, attracted attention, and the pennies came to him as easily as oats run out of a bin. The aptness with which the puppet who held out the little brass plate discriminated between pennies and pieces of coal was marvelous to the children, and their trials of its working were profitable to the old man. He frequented Mulberry street because there were so many children there. Once a tall, handsome man put a big silver dollar on the plate of the mannikin, who was so surprised at the magnitude of the gift that he could neither reject nor dump it into the box. The old man hoarded his money with jealous care, looking forward to the return to his sunny land.

But the autumn passed away, and the weather grew cold. The children were kept indoors now; although he could see their noses flattened against the window panes, he missed their pennies. To buy coal and wood he had to spend the money he had laid away. Besides, the gilding upon the organ had become tarnished, the red silken curtain was faded and torn, the funny little figures refused to dance and curtsey with their old-time ease, and the tremolo stop failed to impart melancholy sweetness to the home song. On bitter

days the cold wind stole through his thin clothing and his teeth chattered. Rough policemen hustled him from the sidewalk, the boys threw snow balls at him, he lost his pennies in the snow, and the bleak winter wind froze his cheery smile into a look of despair. When he climbed the six flights of stairs leading to his room at the top of a big tenement the cisterns of his heart began to leak as he saw the vision of his cherished café fading away. One morning he could not get out of bed. Hunger, and fever, and disappointment had made him delirious. The kindly rays of the sun came in the window and did what they could to cheer him, but the grim fellow was buffeting him, and fever was drinking his blood. He raved in the night about his youth and the solo he had sung at the opera. He saw in his delirium the flaring camp fires of his early days, and raised his feeble hands to catch the gleaming dark lanterns of the fireflies which seemed dancing over his bed. On the evening of the third day the grim fellow relaxed his clutch about the old man's throat; he breathed easier and awoke out of his delirium. Reaching his hand out from under the bedclothes, with trembling fingers he seized the handle of the organ. As he turned it there faltered out, broken and disjointed:

Ah! I have sighed to rest me,
Deep in the quiet grave——

Then the rollicking revelry of 'Rory O'More' seemed to people the room with Irish lovers. His desire to reach the song of home quickened his waning strength as he conjured up the footfa's of 'Annie Laurie.' Again he heard the blare of trumpets and the rattle of drums as he feebly ground out the 'Watch on the Rhine' and 'Rule Britannia.' When he reached the home song his strength was almost gone. The plaintive tremor which had been lent to the tune in olden days by the tremolo stop was now imparted by his shaking hand. Slowly and feebly the song came out, but a shadow of its former self—like the emaciated player—fluttered in failing cadences "through pleasures and palaces," and stopped.

The old man had gone to the sunny land.

The next morning the Coroner came.

Loosening the death clasp, he turned the handle of the organ, and the end of the song came out into the room—

—no place like home."

ETCHINGS: THE FLYING COURIER

At dawn a swift-footed courier stands beside the Western gateway of Yedo Castle patiently waiting for the delivery of the despatches that he is to forward to the next station.

Suddenly a breathless messenger rushes up with a despatch-box for the Commandant of the Kioto *Shiro.*

Swiftly the lithe, bronze colored runner gives his receipt and makes his simple preparations for starting.

Then away goes the box like a hunted deer from station to station; until it reaches the distant mountains. As it is borne deeper into those mighty ranges, its progress becomes much slower, for it finds the streams swollen by the melting snows. But onward speeds the box. At one or two other points on its way through the mountains it is delayed in its course for a few hours, so that the despatch is fully three days behind time when its bearer finally leaps forth from the gorges of Shinano and speeds toward the hill country.

Toward evening a fresh courier seizes the box, and plunges into a ravine among the hills. With bated breath and bowed head he rushes along as if he were some express train behind time. His glistening body gleams through the trees as he speeds by copse and thicket. Now he has reached the base of the range, and is slowly climbing the steep road that winds up through the woods. He has reached the summit, and is starting off on another burst of speed, when suddenly he utters a wild screech of pain and terror, and tumbles down in a heap in the middle of the road,—hamstrung in both legs. The next instant, his head rolls into the dust; and the body, that but a moment before had been bounding along with the grace and the buoyancy of a gazelle, now lies twitching and floundering convulsively on the ground.

The bloody deed was perpetrated by a band of *romins*, who had sprung from a neighboring thicket with the swiftness and the fury of the man-eating tiger.

As they wash their swords in a spring that bubbles along the roadside, they glance up and down the road to make sure that nobody is in sight; drag the body far into the thicket; sprinkle sand over the bloody traces along the road; then seize the despatch-box and bound into the woods.

*Arthur Collins Maclay: In Milo Vashiki: A Tale of Old Japan

BETTINA'S STORY

My little neighbor, Bettina, came in one evening and said imperiously: "Tell me a story."

"Certainly," I said; "sit down and I will begin: 'Once upon a time, a long, long time ago.'"

"I don't like 'a long, long time ago'—that's the way grandma's stories always begin, and you're not as old as grandma and can't know anything about 'a long, long time ago.' Tell me something else."

"Very well," I said submissively, "I know a very pretty story about a little girl who was one day out in the fields gathering flowers, and as she was sauntering along—"

"She met a little old woman, who said to her, 'little girl'—I know all that, the little girl and the little old woman always say the same things, and the little old woman always turns out to be a fairy and the little girl always marries the prince. I don't want to marry a prince; my papa says there isn't a prince living he couldn't buy up three times over—"

"Bettina!" I gasped.

—"And as for fairies, I've been in the fields often, and I've never met any fairies big or little."

"And what's more, Bettina," I said, shaking my head at her sadly, "you never will."

"No, and I don't want to; they always say such foolish things like the stupid old giants. I'm sick of giants! I saw one once in a dime museum, and he didn't eat up anybody or say 'fee, fo, fi, fum' way down in his shoes like the books say; he just stood up there and let people look at him and feel him like a piece of wood. He wasn't worth paying a dime to see. Tell me a story, please."

"But it is so hard to tell you a story; there are so many things you don't like. Let me see—shall I tell you about the man in the moon?"

"There isn't any man in the moon; there's nothing but dried up lakes and rocks there, and all sorts of dead things."

"Oh!"

"And I don't want to hear about Santa Claus, because I know who Santa Claus is, and anyhow he couldn't get down the chimney through the grate, because the grate's too little."

*I, B. F.: New Orleans Picayune

"Well, then, there is the rabbit that comes on Easter—"

Bettina's lip curled scornfully. "Why, I order the dye for the eggs myself!"

"Red Ridinghood—"

"Pooh! Who ever heard a wolf talk! Did you?"

"No," I said, feebly; "but they sometimes bite."

"'Course they do, if anybody's crazy 'nough to go close to them. I guess Red Ridinghood was silly."

"Then," I said, desperately, "suppose you tell me a story."

This idea seemed to please her. She leaned back complacently in her chair and folded her hands in her lap. Her hair fell on her shoulders like yellow silk; her skin was sweet and pink; her eyes blue, and her little form clad in costly clothes, made in the picturesquely simple fashion of long ago. An ideal looking child, aureoled by the setting sun.

"Well," she began, in a quick, monotonous tone, pitching her voice a key higher than usual, "there's a man lives next door to us named Smith—you've seen him?"

"Yes."

"He has a wife and she's named Smith—you've seen her?"

"Yes."

"And they've got five children—Anna Smith, Fannie Smith, Tommy Smith, Georgie Smith—you've seen them?"

"Yes."

"And a baby—you've seen it?"

"Yes."

"But the baby hasn't been christened yet; it's got four teeth—two lower teeth and two upper teeth, and when it cries it goes 'wha-an, wha-an, wha-an,' and it's got blue eyes and no hair; and they've got a dog—you've seen it?"

"No."

—"Named Bruno, and every time the baby goes out the dog goes with it, and they always know when the baby's coming home, because the dog comes in first; and they've got a cow, and a cat that's too old to catch rats, and mamma says she don't know why they keep it because it costs something to feed it, but the children are awful fond of it; and they've got a cook and a house girl, but they haven't got a nurse and they haven't got a carriage 'cause they're too poor to keep one, and mamma says they're not the kind of people she wants to loan ours to. I don't know why—'cause their shoes are clean and their clothes are nice, though they don't

cost as much as mine—and they've got nice hats—Anna's hat's got pink flowers on it, and Fannie's hat's got blue flowers, and Georgie's hat's got red flowers, and the baby's got a lace cap all full of frills, and every one of them, 'cepting the baby, have had the measles, and croup, and mumps, and whooping cough, and earache, and toothache, and scarlet fever; and Tommy's cut his finger often and Fannie once ran a needle in hers, and Georgie fell down and broke a tooth, and Anna hurt her foot so she couldn't walk for a week, and Mrs. Smith has headaches sometimes, and so does Mr. Smith, and this morning the house girl broke a new dish they'd just bought, and Mrs. Smith said she was going to take it out of her wages, and Mr. Smith said she'd better not 'cause maybe she might leave and it's so hard to get good girls, so Mrs. Smith didn't do it, and Anna and Georgie say they're awfully glad 'cause they like the girl. I think she's named Susan, and she's got a sister named Mary, and a brother named Bob. I've never seen them but Anna says so and—but its getting late, I guess I'd better be going."

"But the end of your story, Bettina?"

Bettina opened her eyes very wide and stared at me. "The end!" she exclaimed; "there isn't any end. The Smiths are still next door to us and I guess they're going on living there as long as they pay their rent. Maybe they'll die some day but I guess they won't less they catch the small-pox. There's Venus, the evening star, and Jupiter's the morning—"

"Good night, Bettina," I interposed hastily; "good night."

As I watched her little form vanishing across the lawn I sighed for the children that are no more and for the good old fable that has been swallowed up by fact.

ETCHINGS: ONE MORE ABSINTHE

Every evening when he left his office he went into a filthy little café on the Rue du Tour. He would go and seat himself upon a bench in the back of the room, in the darkest corner, as if ashamed; and would ask in a low tone for his first glass of absinthe.

His first!

Yes, for he drank two—three even.

He drank them in little sips, feeling slowly rise within him the cerebral rapture of the powerful liquor. Let those who are happy blame him if they will! It was there, leaning on the marble table, looking at, without seeing her, through the pyramids of lump sugar and bowls of punch, the lady cashier with her well-oiled hair reflected in the glass behind her—it was there that the inconsolable widower found forgetfulness of his trouble. It was there that for one hour he lived over again his former happiness.

For, by a phenomenon well-known to drinkers of absinthe, he regulated and governed his intoxication, and it gave him the dream that he desired.

* * * * * *

"Boy, a glass of absinthe!"

* * * * * *

And once more he became the young husband who adores his dear Lucile and is adored by her.

It is winter, he is seated in the corner by the fire, and before him, sitting in the light reflected by a green lamp-shade, upon which dark silhouettes of jockey-riders are running at full speed, his wife is busying herself with some embroidery. Every few moments they look at each other and smile, he over his book and she over her work; the lover never tired of admiring Lucile's delicate fingers. She is too pretty! Suddenly he falls at her feet, slips his arm about her waist, and gives her a long kiss; then, overcome with languor, he puts his head upon his beloved's knee, and hears her say to him in a low voice: "That is right! Go to sleep!" and her soft hand lightly strokes his hair.

* * * * * *

"Another glass of absinthe, boy—just one more!"

*French of Francois Coppée

FAMOUS STORIES: THE BLACK CAT

For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad I am not—and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences these events have terrified—have tortured—have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me they have presented little but Horror—to many they will seem less terrible than *barroques.* Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place—some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects.

From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets. With these I spent most of my time, and never was so happy as when feeding and caressing them. This peculiarity of character grew with my growth, and in my manhood, I derived from it one of my principal sources of pleasure. To those who have cherished an affection for a faithful and sagacious dog I need hardly be at the trouble of explaining the nature or the intensity of the gratification thus derivable. There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere *Man.*

I married early, and was pleased to find in my wife a disposition not uncongenial with my own. Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind. We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and—*a cat.*

* By Edgar Allan Poe. A choice selection from the worlds famous Short Stories will be published in each number.

This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree. In speaking of his intelligence, my wife, who at heart was not a little tinctured with superstition made frequent allusion to the ancient popular notion, which regarded all black cats as witches in disguise. Not that she was ever *serious* upon this point—and I mention the matter at all for no better reason than that it happened, just now, to be remembered.

Pluto—this was the cat's name—was my favorite pet and playmate. I alone fed him, and he attended me wherever I went about the house. It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets.

Our friendship lasted, in this mannner, for several years, during which my general temperament and character—through the instrumentality of the Fiend Intemperance—had (I blush to confess it) experienced a radical alteration for the worse. I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence. My pets, of course, were made to feel the change in my disposition. I not only neglected, but ill-used them. For Pluto, however, I still retained sufficient regard to restrain me from maltreating him, as I made no scruple of maltreating the rabbits, the monkey, or even the dog, when by accident, or through affection, they came in my way. But my disease grew upon me—for what disease is like Alcohol!—and at length even Pluto, who was now becoming old, and consequently somewhat peevish—even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper.

One night, returning home much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish malevolence, gin-nurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame. I took from my waistcoat-pocket a penknife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity.

When reason returned with the morning—when I had slept

off the fumes of the night's debauch—I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty; but it was, at best, a feeble and unequivocal feeling, and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess, and drowned in wine all memory of the deed.

In the meantime the cat slowly recovered. The socket of the lost eye presented, it is true, a frightful appearance, but he no longer appeared to suffer any pain. He went about the house as usual, but, as might be expected, fled in extreme terror at my approach. I had so much of my old heart left, as to be at first grieved by this evident dislike on the part of a creature which had once so loved me. But this feeling soon gave place to irritation. And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of PERVERSENESS. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart—one of the invisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should *not?* Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is *Law*, merely because we understand it to be such? This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul *to vex itself*—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for the wrong's sake only—that urged me to continue and finally consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute. One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;—hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart;—hung it *because* I knew it had loved me, and *because* I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it—if such a thing were possible—even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God.

On the night of the day on which this cruel deed was done, I was aroused from sleep by the cry of fire. The curtains of my bed were in flames. The whole house was blazing. It was with great difficulty that my wife, a servant, and myself, made our escape from the conflagration. The destruction was

complete. My entire worldly wealth was swallowed up, and I resigned myself thenceforward to despair.

I am above the weakness of seeking to establish a sequence of cause and effect, between the disaster and the atrocity. But I am detailing a chain of facts—and wish not to leave even a possible link imperfect. On the day succeeding the fire, I visited the ruins. The walls, with one exception, had fallen in. This exception was found in a compartment wall, not very thick, which stood about the middle of the house, and against which had rested the head of my bed. The plastering had here, in great measure, resisted the action of the fire—a fact which I attributed to its having been recently spread. About this wall a dense crowd were collected, and many persons seemed to be examining a particular portion of it with very minute and eager attention. The words "strange!" "singular!" and other similar expressions, excited my curiosity. I approached and saw, as if graven in *bas relief* upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic *cat.* The impression was given with an accuracy truly marvelous. There was a rope about the animal's neck.

When I first beheld this apparition—for I could scarcely regard it as less—my wonder and my terror were extreme. But at length reflection came to my aid. The cat, I remembered, had been hung in a garden adjacent to the house. Upon the alarm of fire, this garden had been immediately filled by the crowd—by some one of whom the animal must have been cut from the tree and thrown, through an open window, into my chamber. This had probably been done with the view of arousing me from my sleep. The falling of other walls had compressed the victim of my cruelty into the substance of the freshly spread plaster; the lime of which, with the flames and the *ammonia* from the carcass, had then accomplished the portraiture as I saw it.

Although I thus readily accounted to my reason, if not altogether to my conscience, for the startling fact just detailed, it did not the less fail to make a deep impression upon my fancy. For months I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat; and, during this period, there came back into my spirit a half-sentiment that seemed, but was not, remorse. I went so far as to regret the loss of the animal, and to look about me, for another pet of the same species, and of somewhat similar appearance, with which to supply its place.

One night as I sat, half stupefied, in a den of more than infamy, my attention was suddenly drawn to some black object, reposing upon the head of one of the immense hogsheads of gin, or of rum, which constituted the chief furniture of the apartment. I had been looking steadily at the top of this hogshead for some minutes, and what now caused me surprise was the fact that I had not sooner perceived the object thereupon. I approached it, and touched it with my hand. It was a black cat—a very large one—fully as large as Pluto, and closely resembling him in every respect but one. Pluto had not a white hair upon any portion of his body; but this cat had a large, although indefinite splotch of white, covering nearly the whole region of the breast.

Upon my touching him, he immediately arose, purred loudly, rubbed against my hand, and appeared delighted with my notice. This, then, was the very creature of which I was in search. I at once offered to purchase it of the landlord; but this person—knew nothing of it—had never seen it before.

I continued my caresses, and when I prepared to go home, the animal evinced a disposition to accompany me. I permitted it to do so, occasionally stopping and patting it as I proceeded. When it reached the house it domesticated itself and became immediately a great favorite with my wife.

For my own part, I soon found a dislike to it arising within me. This was just the reverse of what I had anticipated; but—I know not how or why it was—its evident fondness for myself rather disgusted and annoyed. By slow degrees, these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred. I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and the remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it. I did not, for some weeks, strike or otherwise violently ill use it; but gradually—very gradually—I came to look upon it with unutterable loathing, and to flee from its presence, as from the breath of a pestilence.

What added, no doubt, to my hatred of the beast, was the discovery, on the morning after I brought it home, that, like Pluto, it had also been deprived of one of its eyes. This circumstance, however, only endeared it to my wife, who, as I have already said, possessed, in a high degree, that humanity of feeling which had once been my distinguishing trait, and the source of many of my simplest and purest pleasures.

With my aversion to this cat, however, its partiality for

myself seemed to increase. It followed my footsteps with a pertinacity which it would be difficult to make the reader comprehend. Whenever I sat, it would crouch beneath my chair, or spring upon my knees, covering me with its loathsome caresses. If I arose to walk it would get between my feet and thus nearly throw me down, or, fastening its long and sharp claws in my clothes, clamber, in this manner, to my breast. At such times, although I longed to destroy it with a blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of my former crime, but chiefly by absolute *dread* of the beast.

This dread was not exactly a dread of physical evil—and yet I should be at a loss how otherwise to define it. I am almost ashamed to own—yes, even in this felon's cell, I am almost ashamed to own—that the terror and horror with which the animal inspired me, had been heightened by one of the merest chimeras it would be possible to conceive. My wife had called my attention, more than once, to the character of the mark of white hair of which I have spoken, and which constituted the sole visible difference between the strange beast and the one I had destroyed. The reader will remember that this mark, although large, had been originally very indefinite; but, by slow degrees—degrees nearly imperceptible, and which for a long time my reason struggled to reject as fanciful—it had, at length, assumed a rigorous distinctness of outline. It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster *had I dared*—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLOWS!—oh, mournful and terrible engine of Horror and of Crime—of Agony and of Death!

And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity. And *a brute beast*—whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed—*a brute beast* to work out for *me*—for me a man, fashioned in the image of the High God—so much of insufferable woe! Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of rest any more! During the former the creature left me no moment alone; and, in the latter, I started, hourly, from dreams of unutterable fear, to find the hot breath of *the thing* upon my face, and its vast weight—an incarnate Night-Mare that I had no power to shake off—incumbent eternally upon my *heart!*

Beneath the pressure of torments such as these, the feeble

remnant of the good within me succumbed. Evil thoughts became my sole intimates—the darkest and most evil of thoughts. The moodiness of my usual temper increased to hatred of all things and of all mankind; while, from the sudden, frequent, and ungovernable outbursts of a fury to which I now blindly abandoned myself, my uncomplaining wife, alas! was the most usual and the most patient of sufferers.

One day she accompanied me, upon some household errand, into the cellar of the old building which our poverty compelled us to inhabit. The cat followed me down the steep stairs, and, nearly throwing me headlong, exasperated me to madness. Uplifting an ax, and, forgetting in my wrath the childish dread which had hitherto stayed my hand, I aimed a blow at the animal, which, of course, would have proved instantly fatal had it descended as I wished. But this blow was arrested by the hand of my wife. Goaded, by the interference, into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the ax in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot, without a groan.

This hideous murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire deliberation, to the task of concealing the body. I knew that I could not remove it from the house, either by day or by night, without the risk of being observed by the neighbors. Many projects entered my mind. At one period I thought of cutting the corpse into minute fragments, and destroying them by fire. At another, I resolved to dig a grave for it in the floor of the cellar. Again, I deliberated about casting it in the well in the yard—about packing it in a box, as if merchandise, with the usual arrangements, and to getting a porter to take it from the house. Finally I hit upon what I considered a far better expedient than either of these. I determined to wall it up in the cellar—as the monks of the middle ages are recorded to have walled up their victims.

For a purpose such as this the cellar was well adapted. Its walls were loosely constructed, and had lately been plastered throughout with a rough plaster, which the dampness of the atmosphere had prevented from hardening. Moreover, in one of the walls was a projection, caused by a false chimney, or fire-place, that had been filled up, and made to resemble the rest of the cellar. I made no doubt that I could displace the bricks, insert the corpse, and wall the whole up as before, so that no eye could detect anything suspicious.

And in this calculation I was not deceived. By means of a crow-bar I easily dislodged the bricks, and, having carefully deposited the body against the inner wall, I propped it in that position, while with little trouble I re-laid the whole structure as it originally stood. Having procured mortar, sand, and hair, with every possible precaution, I prepared a plaster which could not be distinguished from the old, and with this I very carefully went over the new brick-work. When I had finished, I felt satisfied that all was right. The wall did not present the slightest appearance of having been disturbed. The rubbish on the floor was picked up with the minutest care. I looked around triumphantly, and said to myself—"Here at least, then, my labor has not been in vain."

My next step was to look for the beast which had been the cause of so much wretchedness; for I had, at length, firmly resolved to put it to death. Had I been able to meet with it at the moment, there could have been no doubt of its fate; it appeared that the crafty animal had been alarmed at the violence of my previous anger, and forebore to present itself in my present mood. It is impossible to describe, or to imagine, the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. It did not make its appearance during the night—and thus for one night at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly slept; aye, *slept* even with the burden of murder upon my soul!

The second and third day passed, and still my tormentor came not. Once again I breathed as a freeman. The monster, in terror, had fled the premises forever! I should behold it no more! My happiness was supreme! The guilt of my dark deed disturbed me but little. Some few inquiries had been made, but these had been readily answered. Even a search had been instituted—but of course nothing was to be discovered. I looked upon my future felicity as secured.

Upon the fourth day of the assassination, a party of the police came, very unexpectedly, into the house, and proceeded again to make rigorous investigation of the premises. Secure, however, in the inscrutability of my place of concealment, I felt no embarrassment whatever. The officers bade me accompany them in their search. They left no nook or corner unexplored. At length, for the third or fourth time, they descended into the cellar. I quivered not in a muscle. My heart beat calmly as that of one who slumbers in

innocence. I walked the cellar from end to end. I folded my arms upon my bosom, and roamed easily to and fro. The police were thoroughly satisfied and prepared to depart. The glee of my heart was too strong to be restrained. I burned to say, if but one word, by way of triumph, and to render doubly sure their assurance of my guiltlessness.

"Gentlemen," I said at last, as the party ascended the steps, "I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health, and a little more courtesy. By the bye, gentlemen, this—this is a very well constructed house." [In the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all.] "I may say an *excellently* well constructed house. These walls—are you going gentlemen?—these walls are solidly put together;" and here, through the mere frenzy of bravado, I rapped heavily, with a cane which I held in my hand, upon that very portion of the brick-work behind which stood the corpse of the wife of my bosom.

But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs of the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb!—by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman —a howl—a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation.

Of my own thoughts it is folly to speak. Swooning, I staggered to the opposite wall. For one instant the party upon the stairs remained motionless, through extremity of terror and of awe. In the next, a dozen stout arms were toiling at the wall. It fell bodily. The corpse, already greatly decayed and clotted with gore, stood erect before the eyes of the spectators. Upon its head, with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman.

I had walled the monster up within the tomb!

THE MOONLIGHT TRYST

The garden-wall, illuminated by the moon, is white amid the dark green shrubbery; the night air, with a savor of dampness, stirs the clusters of white flowers, and the shower of star-shaped blossoms falls silently like perfumed snow.

A curly dark head peeps over the top of the ladder, and a voice that wishes to be firm, betrays a slight tremor, hesitating between the syllables:

"Ma....ria....!"

"I am here....But for heaven's sake, speak low....There is still a light in papa's room....O, dear me, I'm so frightened! I haven't any blood in my veins!"

"Come further this way, don't be afraid; come under the shadow of the branches; so....no, further this way!"

She advanced with little, uncertain, short steps; her slender white figure, still almost that of a child, flies along the gravel of the path; she crouches trembling at the foot of the low wall, among the branches of drooping ivy, and looks up toward the laughing eyes which shine through the leaves.

"Oh, Alfredo....! And if you fall, and hurt yourself?"

"The idea! My poor little dove! You are all like that, you women!....I, instead, difficulties animate me! They spur me onward, they electrify me!....For you, I would be capable of much more....Maria, do you care for me?"

"Yes....speak low; I heard a creaking...."

"It is the wind; do you care for me? Swear it!"

"I swear it! Don't joggle....the ladder....look, oh! the ladder is tottering!"

"I need your love in order to struggle against life!....A mass of blockheads, of scoundrels, of idiots!....But we will triumph over everything; if you will only...."

"What?"

"Be strong and faithful. Be my Muse and my poetry...."

"But I am; only, you know, papa is so strict, he would like to have me play dolls yet....and he says that you...."

"What? Speak! I am prepared for everything....What did he say? I am superior to these trifles....Tell me....!"

"That you....are a naughty boy....that you would do better to be at your lessons....and that if he catches you...."

* Italian of Fulvia: E. Cavazza: For Short Stories

Interruption ; the wind laughs among the trees with a soft little murmur of irony.

"Are you weeping....treasure? I will avenge your tears one by one!...."

"Yes!"

The sweet, musical little voice is lost in a stammer of sobs.

"Your father is a barbarian, a tyrant like mine; but no matter; love is light, is power, it crushes obstacles, levels difficulties....in a few years you will be mine...."

"Yes; but if you do not pass the examination...."

"I shall pass it!....A thing of no account!....The teacher has a dislike to me....imagine, what a beast! Maria, I have brought you something; I have kissed it so much! Promise darling that you will keep it always....you know.... even when it shall be withered....Take it....No, your hands ....no, your apron...."

She holds forth, spread, her ample childish apron, and he throws down, light as a flake, a large, velvety pansy, with thick soft petals, dotted with gold, which seem like the ardent eyes of a living person.

She takes it into her trembling little hands, and places it upon her lips with idolatrous fervor.

"Swear to me that you will not be false to me," insists the fervid lover of fifteen years of age. "By the memory of your mother, promise me that you will not be another's...."

She weeps a little more loudly.

"Poor mamma....

"If she sees me from heaven!

"She will not be pleased with me!

"Indeed, I am doing wrong!

"How dark it is!

"And if papa should suspect!

"And if your...."

"What ideas, Maria! They are sound asleep; at their age one does not know anything of love, any longer—do you understand? They don't remember what it means, to love ....like you and me, without fears, without cowardlinesses, with a fullness of felicity, with that intoxication...."

This phrase, read in a realistic novel, appears unwilling to be recalled with exactitude. And perhaps it is on this account that the moon hides behind the cedar of Lebanon, fringed with silver, its broadly smiling face.

"Alfredo, it is late....let me go...."

"No....not yet....how can you think of anything as commonplace as sleep?....It is a delicious night....I am wide awake, full of daring; there is a wildness in my blood which lashes it onward....I feel myself capable of great, heroic enterprises....What is that?...."

His voice, arisen by degrees to the decided intonations of manhood, is lost in an exclamation of senseless, childish terror.

The ladder creaks, trembles, shakes with a great push from invisible hands.

"Ah! You rascal!

"I've caught you at last!

"Idler, madcap, good for nothing!

"Boy hardly out of the nursery!

"I'll teach you...."

Thump! Thump!

The wind rattles the branches with dry little insulting laughs, while from the other side of the wall resounds a desperate cry....and the great white face of the moon, pityingly veils itself in the mists of night, and mercifully conceals the shame of the place of paternal punishment!

TWO NANCY LEES

In the month of July, 1857, I ran away from a British ship which entered the port of Madras. I was a boy of fourteen, a runaway to sea, and captain and mates had done their very best to take the romance out of me. They had succeeded so well that I slipped ashore, determined to die of starvation before I would return to a life on the deep. No effort was put forth to capture me, and two weeks later, when I sat in the shade of a wall one day, hungry and penniless, and ready to give up, an English woman halted before me and began to question me. She was a small, slim woman, about forty years of age, quick of speech and movement and I got the idea at once that she was a sea captain's wife. I was not far out, as she proved to be a sea captain's widow, and was in command of a brig trading with the east coast of Ceylon. She happened to be in want of another hand, and, after being told what I could do, she made a proposition that I accepted.

I found the brig to be called "The Orient." She was small, but almost new, and a rapid sailer. The crew consisted of an English mate, two Norwegians, a French boy who had run from his ship, and myself. Mrs. Sweet, the captain, stood her watch, and this gave the mate himself, a man and a boy in his watch; while she had a man and a boy only, though the cook had to turn out in her watch if required. The latter was a full-blooded negro, big and powerful, and sailor enough to steer or go aloft. Mrs. Sweet, as all agreed, being able to navigate the brig anywhere, and being thoroughly posted in every detail of the ships work.

I saw on the brig's deck, almost as soon as I set foot aboard, a nine-pounder mounted on a carriage, and later on I ascertained that she carried a supply of small arms; but I gave the matter little thought and asked no questions. We got away next day after I joined, and we had a fine run down the coast to Cape Karikal, from which point we laid our course to the southeast. We had crossed the Gulf of Mancar, which separates the island of Ceylon from the southern end of Hindoostan, when the wind fell to a calm one evening at eight o'clock, and all night long we rolled about without making the least progress. Next morning there was a heavy

*Reminiscences of An Old Mariner: Hartford Courant

mist on the water until after sunrise, and it gradually burned away without bringing the breeze we hoped for. When the horizon was clear we saw a bark-rigged craft of three times our size lying about three miles north of us. She had come down on the last of the wind, probably bound through the straits, and the currents had set to the eastward during the night. Those were suspicious days, but the bark looked to be an honest Englishman, and we gave her no attention until about mid-afternoon. Then the French boy, who was aloft, reported that she had lowered two boats. The glass was sent up to him, and he soon made out that the boats were being manned by armed men, and dark-skinned fellows at that. This looked as if the bark had fallen into piratical hands, for no trader could have any honest purpose in arming his boats.

They took their time about it, and finally headed in our direction. Had there been any wind, they would doubtless have tried to lay us aboard. As soon as it was seen that the boats were headed for us, Mrs. Sweet called us all aft and announced that the stranger was a pirate who meant our capture and destruction. She was a little paler than usual, but spoke in a low and even voice, and did not seem to be a bit frightened. She said it was a case where we must fight for our lives. They would cut our throats if we surrendered, and could do no more if we fought to the last. She seemed to accept it as a matter of course that we would fight, and she was the first to lend a hand to clear away the gun. The two boys of us brought up the muskets, and loaded them, distributed the pikes along the rail, and then passed up shot and cartridge for the big gun. Everything had been made ready for just such an emergency. There were thirty solid nine-pounds shot and twenty-two loaded shell in the magazine, as well as about thirty cartridges containing the proper quantity of powder. As I afterward learned, all had been purchased at the government arsenal in Madras.

We were as ready as we could be before the boats were pulled a mile from the bark. The mate loaded the gun with a shell and placed two others and several stands of grape near at hand. Our brig lay broadside to the north, headed to the east. The boats must, therefore, pull bow on to us until close at hand, even if the plan was to separate and board from different points. This gave us a big advantage, as we could all lay along the port rail. The gun was wheeled over,

the decks cleared of every obstruction and then we were ready. Mrs. Sweet had a doubled-barreled English fowling piece loaded with buckshot. She was nearest the stern. The rest of us had government muskets. I was pretty nervous, knowing what was at stake, and she noticed this, and kindly chided me, saying that I must take good aim, keep cool, and that we should surely beat them off. She called the French boy over and told him the same, but there was no need of speaking to the others. They were as cool as if it were an every-day matter, and I heard the mate say to the cook that he was afraid the fellows would back out.

The boats came on to within half a mile of us and then stopped. Some sort of a signal had been run up on the bark —probably a notification that we were ready for a stout resistance. They could have seen us preparing by aid of the glass. There was a consultation of about five minutes, and then came a cheer as the boats moved forward. Mrs. Sweet looked over at the mate, and he nodded his head, sighted his gun, and after a long movement, applied the port fire. There might have been some luck about it though he was an old gunner, but his shell struck the easternmost boat plumb on the bows, exploded with a loud report, and she was wiped out so completely that we could not even see the fragments. I believe that every man in that boat was killed. This ought to have discouraged the other, but it did not. She was pulled for us as fast as possible, and the stand of grape fired at her went too high. After that discharge we began to blaze away with the muskets, and I hit one of the rowers and almost stopped the boat for a moment. While the mate and negro worked to load the big gun the other five of us banged away, and we hit somebody at almost every shot. The boat came on, however, the wounded cursing and the unharmed cheering, and she was within 150 feet of our side when the nine-pounder roared again. She had fired a shell plump into the boat. It had acted as a solid shot and gone through her, killing and wounding and smashing, and when the smoke blew away only three men were swimming away on the surface. These we ordered aboard and made secure at once. The bark dropped another boat, but after coming half way it returned. About noon she got a riffle of wind which did not reach us, and made off to the west, to be seen no more.

When we came to question the prisoners, who were lusty

looking cut-throats, we found that they belonged to the Maldive Islands, around in the Indian Ocean. They made no bones about admitting that they meant to capture us, and were surly and defiant over their repulse. They would not give us the name of the bark, and even after she was out of sight they boasted that she would return soon to release them. At sundown we got the breeze and stood away on our course. That night, during the mate's watch, the pirates disappeared. All knew where they went, but no one asked any questions. The two boats contained fully two dozen of them, and their loss must have sadly crippled the bark and changed her plans.

About three years later than the date given at the opening of this sketch, I shipped aboard of a British ship called the Swallow, to make a voyage from Bombay up the Persian Gulf and back. She was an old craft and a poor sailer, and her crew of twelve men was made up of four or five nationalities. I remember there were two Kanakas or Sandwich Islanders, one Lascar, a negro or two, and the others were American, English and Dutch. We had scarcely left Bombay when the captain was taken sick with fever. His name was Aldrich, and his wife, who was a woman of thirty, always sailed with him. She now took command in a general way, and this to the satisfaction of both the mates, though both were thorough sailors. I heard one of them say that she could take an observation or work a dead reckoning, and I saw from the orders she gave that she knew all about a ship.

We had good weather and made good progress until after we were above Muscat, in the Bay of Ormuz. Then, one forenoon, we got a squall, which did not last fifteen minutes, but which brought down our fore and man-to' gallant masts and carried away a sail or two. There was only a light breeze after the squall had passed, and we were lying to and hard at work, when an Arabian dhow of about two hundred tons burden came stealing down the coast. We were within four miles of the rocky and mountainous shore, but she was two miles inside of us. She was no sooner made out than the first mate became very anxious, and Mrs. Aldrich was sent for to come on deck. She took a good look at the stranger through the glass, and queried of the mate:

"Can we depend on the crew to fight?"

"I hope so, ma'am," he replied.

"Have them come aft."

All moved aft, and I can remember through all the long years just how she looked and every word she said. She had a worried, anxious look, and no wonder, and there was a trembling in her voice as she said :

"Men, you know that your captain is very sick. Yonder comes a pirate, if there ever was one. If he captures us those who live through the fight will go into the interior as slaves or worse. If we are all agreed to fight we can beat him off. What do you say ? "

"We'll fight to the last ! " shouted one, and the cry was taken up by all.

"Thank God ! " she fervently exclaimed. "Give him a brave fight, and no one can be blamed if we are defeated. Sooner than fall into his hands I will blow the old ship sky-high and all of us with her."

We had no cannon, but we had fifteen muskets, a lot of cavalry sabres, and the captain had not dodged about those waters with his eyes shut. He had, two or three years before, purchased a dozen hand grenades or stink pots, such as are used by the Chinese. These were brought up with the rest and found to be fused and in good condition. They weighed about two pounds apiece, and each was enclosed in a net, so that it could be tossed quite a distance. We loaded our muskets, took our stations, and were as ready as we could be. The captain's wife alternated between the deck and the cabin. He was out of his head, which was the better for him, as she had his revolver for use.

The dhow sneaked along until nearly opposite us. All work had been suspended aloft, and she must have known by this that we were ready for her ; but she came on just the same. And no wonder. One of the men went aloft with the glass, and he made out two guns on her deck and a perfect swarm of men. She was doing a bold thing—run us aboard in daylight. She would not use her guns, fearing they would be heard and bring us assistance ; but if that mob ever gained our decks we were gone. We lay with our head to the northwest, so she would pass our port quarter first. Here two of the strongest men were placed with the grenades, and two of us with muskets were between them. The others were placed to fire over the stern.

Down came the dhow, foot by foot, with never a cheer

from the crowd of cut-throats on her decks. There was a menace in their silence, but it had no effect upon us. We were determined to fight and to fight to the last. I got the first shot, and knocked over a man on her forecastle, and then all began to blaze away. She did not fire in return, but forged up on our quarters, and I could see fifty Arabs each one with a crease, crowding against the rail to be ready to board.

"Now, heave!" yelled one of the sailors with the bombs, and both lighted the fuses and heaved away.

Before we could tell what damage had been done the dhow was alongside. She threw her grapnel, but did not catch, and she rubbed her whole length and went ahead. As we saw her failure we blazed away again with the muskets, and every ball found a man. She sailed like a witch, and before she could be checked was a cable's length ahead. She had just put her helm over when there was an explosion, followed by a great sheet of flame, and we saw that she was hard hit. Confusion reigned from stem to stern in a moment, and we added to it by peppering away at fair range. All ablaze within five minutes, she fell off, headed for shore, and was run on a reef about a mile away.

We saw some save themselves by boats and rafts, being swept into the shore by the tide, but it was afterward learned that upward of forty-five men were killed or drowned, and that the loss of the dhow broke up a bad gang of pirates. Mrs. Aldrich was on deck through it all, emptying the revolver into the crowd as the dhow passed us, and when all was over she went down to her husband with face only a little whiter and mouth more firmly set. She did not betray her womanly weakness until she came to thank us. Then she broke down and cried like a—well, just like a woman.

ETCHINGS: ALONE ON THE PRAIRIE

A vast plain, seemingly illimitable, stretching north, south, east, west, its monotonous expanse relieved only by a few low hills on the distant western horizon—far, far away—and by the little cabin of the pioneer, its two windows, like great eyes, staring toward the sunny Southland—a motherly hen it seems, with its barn and outbuildings clustered about it. Yet, neither within nor without is there sign of human existence. The afternoon sun sheds its fierce rays on a scene of deathlike stillness, broken only occasionally by the chirp of a gopher, or the shrill, rasping note of the grasshopper.

Now a little breeze is wafted over the plain. The drooping golden-rod shakes its tassels at the tops of the parched grass; little creeping things hurry about, and soon the silent prairie resounds with their happy voices. A storm is coming.

The eastern breeze, increasing in speed as it leaps over the broad, level expanse, makes the grass wave and roll like the billows of the sea. The storm god marshals his forces rapidly; little clouds hurry in from the east, and band together; they come in squads, companies, battalions, regiments—and presently, massing together, join the great storm-cloud which has closed in upon the scene. The wind blows a last strong blast—then is quiet. A few great drops of rain fall. All is still.

Look! there, on the side of a slope, lies something still and motionless. It heeds not the gathering storm—it is beyond fearing the fury of the elements. Tales of Indian massacre and outrage are rife—can this be the body of a victim, or has he fallen under the heat of the pitiless sun?

Ah, Lord Middleby, little did you think when you reluctantly parted from your boy—your youngest—that he would find a resting place such as this; little did you think that he, full of life, and hope, and strong self-reliance, anxious to try his hand at ranching in the Western hemisphere, would so soon be lying, pale and still, on the prairies of his adopted country.

The storm bursts—furiously fall the drenching drops—but Cecil Collis does not move. Harder, more fiercely, comes the rain, but the flaxen-haired young Saxon, the pride of his house, stirs not. He only stares vacantly up at the angry sky.

Cecil Collis is too drunk to come in out of the rain.

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* R. L. Ketchum: For Short Stories

THE MIDNIGHT SKATER

Far away, where the mighty Vistula, rolls its turbid waters through widely-extending plains and primeval forests, the shades of which are seldom trodden by the foot of man, and where the wolf and savage bear hold undisturbed sway, was a little island of some four acres in extent, where an ex-trooper of Russian cavalry had pitched his tent, after quitting the service on account of a wound.

Johannes Ipanoff was a tall, powerful man of thirty years of age, whose injury had not been of so serious a nature as to prevent his cultivating the land which lay around his snug log cabin and using his rifle with unerring dexterity against the savage denizens of the forest who roamed at will upon the banks on either side of the stream. When he had amassed a sufficient quantity of skins he would load them upon a hand-sled and proceed to the town of Pettikoff, some forty miles away. After a few days' carouse, he would return with the sled filled with necessaries and a few luxuries to the cottage on the island, where his aged mother, Rizma Ipanoff, was uneasily awaiting the return of her son.

Rizma's head was filled with all the weird legends of the supernatural dwellers in the plains and forests, and she was always in deadly terror lest her son might fall into the power of some of the terrible creatures who haunted the solitary place where he had taken up his residence. She dreaded the fair, green-clad women who were to be met with in the forest glades, who with alluring gestures invited the wayfarer into some sequestered spot and there rent him limb from limb; the hideous creatures, half wolf and half human being; the spectral hunter who scoured the plains at midnight and endeavored to tempt the belated peasant to traffic away his immortal soul for certain advantages in this world, only to be purchased by everlasting perdition in the next. But more than all she dreaded the strange forms which haunted the river, and of whom the superstitious rustics spoke with bated breath, crossing themselves incessantly as they told of the terrible adventures which had befallen many of their relatives who had been unfortunate enough to encounter these weird and unearthly creatures.

From The Russian: "Tales of the Wild and Weird"

Johannes Ipanoff, however during his military career had lost a great deal of the belief in the tales he had imbibed during his boyhood, and to his mother's intense horror would, as he sat smoking his pipe, cast doubts upon the authenticity of those tales which she so implicitly believed in.

One night, as Johannes was cleaning his gun and his mother occupied with her distaff, the old woman ceased her work, and, turning abruptly upon her son, said—

"Johannes, my heart is very sad concerning you."

"And why should it be so, mother?" returned the man, drawing the cleaning-rod out of the barrel of his piece and gazing upon the old woman's excited face with some surprise. "Surely I have done nothing to vex you?"

"Johannes," answered the old woman, "you have changed greatly and have become such a terrible unbeliever that I fear some great evil will come upon you. When you were a child you used to press close to my knee in terror when I told you of the strange unearthly beings who were sometimes to be seen in the forests, and by the river, but now——"

"But now," interrupted her son, I am a man, and do not give full credit to all those silly tales. Are you grieved, mother, that I am no longer a poor, weak child?"

"No good ever came of thinking yourself too clever and wise," answered the old woman, shaking her head sadly. "I really believe that you no longer credit the dead with being able to return again and walk the earth!"

"If you had seen as many dead as I have, returned Johannes, "you would believe like me, that though they may have the power, they have the strongest disinclination to exercise it."

"When you have lived in the world as long as I have, son Johannes," replied the old woman, a little nettled at her son's remark, "you will know better. But it is not about that that I desire to speak to you. I suppose that you will be going to Pettikoff soon? I know well enough why you wish to delay your visit for a little longer."

"And what may that reason be?" asked the man, a deep flush rising to his sunburnt cheek.

"It is because the band of the gypsy Conradin has not yet arrived in the town," replied the old woman, casting a keen glance at her son.

"Why should I want to see Conradin and his gang of thieves?" answered Ipanoff, engaged over his gun.

"No, but you wish to see his daughter, Olga," said his mother, rising from her seat and taking up her position in front of her son. "Johannes, a gypsy sorceress is no fitting mate for an honest man. Do you not know that the wandering Bohemians have no religion, and that the girl Olga deals in all kinds of unholy spells and incantations? You think because I live here all alone in this solitary island that I hear nothing. Johannes Ipanoff, you have been a brave soldier, and have shed your blood for our father the Czar; think you that you ought to bring such a bride to our home? Better consort with one of the green women of the forest; she will but rend you to pieces within the hour, and that will be a more merciful fate than you will meet with at the hands of Olga Conradin."

"Mother, you are blinded by prejudice," answered Johannes, hotly. "I grant you that Olga is wild and wilful, but she does not deal in the dark art you refer to."

"Does she not!" replied the old woman, bitterly. "Have you forgotten young Ivan Ivanovitch, who was drowned last year as he was coming home from a visit to the gypsy fiend?"

"Olga never cared for him," answered Johannes; "besides, Ivan was always too fond of vodki, and it was after a deep carouse with Conradin that he met his fate beneath the waters of the Vistula.

"Be it so; but tell me where the body was found—was it not entangled in the rotting timbers of the wheel of the old mill which stands upon the river's bank, halfway between our home and Pettikoff?"

When a man is thoroughly soaked in vodki he can fall into the river as easily at one spot as at another," returned the young man, carelessly.

"And how about the young Polish gentleman, Paul Ladislas Skyrnecki, who came into these parts to shoot?"

A darker flush than before rose to the young man's face, as he answered—

"Ladislas Skyrnecki was an insolent coxcomb, and taking advantage of Olga's position he persecuted her with unwelcome attentions and odious proposals, in which he was aided and abetted by that old villain Conradin."

"Indeed!" answered his mother, with a sneer. "Then how is it that the girl still wears the rich coral ornaments and the massive Turkish bangles that he gave her?"

"All women are fond of finery," replied Johannes, half apologetically, "and if the young man was fool enough to give her trinkets, she was right to punish him by keeping them and sending him about his business."

"About *his* business," repeated the old woman, "say rather about *hers*. Do you recollect what became of the Pole?"

"He lost his way in the forest, and died from cold and exhaustion," replied Johannes, uneasily.

"But where, son Johannes, where was he found?" exclaimed his mother, throwing up her arms with the air of an inspired Pythoness. "Was it not beneath the walls of the same water-mill, and were not the imprint of long bony fingers visible upon his throat, showing the death that he had died?"

Now you mention it, I believe that there was some such idle report," answered her son, rising from his seat, and placing the gun, which was now quite clean, upon a rack, which was fastened against the walls of the cottage. "But you surely do not think that Olga's delicate fingers could have given him such a grip as that?"

"If not hers, it was her master's," returned the old woman, mysteriously.

"Her master's! Olga has no master," retorted the peasant. "Perhaps you think it was her father that did the deed, and, yet bethink you, others had the same suspicion, but in the inquiry instituted by the Stavosta, it was clearly proved that Conradin was helplessly drunk at the time Paul Ladislas Skyrnecki quitted his house."

"Her master, I repeat," persisted the old woman. "Have you never heard of people who have sold themselves to the powers of evil, and who receive from them all they want upon condition of paying tribute to them of a human soul at fixed seasons. Ivan Ivanovitch and Ladislas Skyrnecki both died in mortal sin, and so Olga kept her faith with the fearful beings with whom she had entered into unhallowed compact."

Johannes Ipanoff burst into a loud laugh.

"I do not see what advantages poor Olga has obtained by the compact which you believe she has entered into," remarked he. "The poor girl who goes wandering about from town to town with her old vagabond father, and his blustering crew of horse dealers and mountebanks, has not met with very liberal treatment at the hands of the Evil One. I had thought that the fiend had been a better paymaster."

"Has she not youth, health, and radiant beauty," replied his mother. "And pray what can woman desire more?"

"There, mother, there," returned Johannes, soothingly; "we have got upon a subject upon which we are never likely to agree, and you are as unreasonable in your prejudices, as I perhaps am in my love for Olga Conradin."

"And you will marry her and bring her back, vile sorceress as she is, to the home of your mother, to the home of a woman who has never yet failed in one of her religious duties. Answer me, son Johannes; is that your present intention?"

"If you insist upon a plain answer to a plain question," replied her son, doggedly. "I am going upon my next journey to Pettikoff to ask Olga to be my wife, and if she consents, I shall bring her home with as little delay as possible."

The old woman staggered back as though the muscular arm of her son had dealt her a heavy blow, then falling upon her knees, she raised her clasped hands to a roughly painted picture of St. Michael, which, with its *nimbus* of gilded copper let clumsily into the canvas, hung upon the otherwise bare whitewashed wall of the hut.

"Hear me, blessed St. Michael," cried she, in accents of fervent entreaty. "My son has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the mother who bore him; he has turned his back upon our holy religion, and given himself over body and soul to the wiles of a Pagan sorceress. Hear me, I entreat, blessed St. Michael; sooner than he should bring this daughter of Satan home, may the red plague smite him, and may the flesh drop from his bones at the very spot where he is standing, defying alike his God and his mother."

"Mother," cried Johannes, horrified at the intensity of his mother's burst of frenzied passion. "Are you beside yourself? What have I ever done to deserve this terrible curse that you have imprecated against me?"

"The curse will only come at your own calling," answered Johannes' mother, who seemed by this time to have partially recovered her calmness.

"Then let it come," exclaimed the man; his fury, which had long been smoldering, breaking forth in its turn. "Nothing shall turn me from my purpose, and, hark you, I want no grumbling mother to make my Olga unhappy. If you can treat my wife as she should be treated, stay here and welcome, but should you refuse to act in a reasonable

manner, there is a hospital at Pettikoff for the old and indigent, and I shall not grudge the expenditure of a few roubles out of my savings to place you out of harm's way."

"Listen! Holy St. Michael," murmured the old woman, making no direct reply to her son, but turning once more to the pictured saint upon the wall. "He renounces his mother, and will pursue his evil course to the end."

For many hours, even until the long winter night had passed away, Johannes Ipanoff sat moodily smoking his pipe before the stove, turning over his resolution in his mind, but at last, with the air of a man who had come to a resolve, he rose to his feet, packed the hand-sled, fastened his skates upon his feet, and, without bidding his mother farewell, went quickly over the frozen snow to the river, and in a few minutes the ring of his skates could be heard as he sped along the waters of the Vistula upon his way to Pettikoff and Olga.

For the first few miles Johannes Ipanoff found his way rather encumbered by a fresh fall of snow, but as he got further away from his island home he found the ice clearer, and then he was enabled to make greater progress. The hand-sled, heavily as it was laden, moved lightly at a touch of his hand; and his skates, having no longer the frozen snow to contend with, glided away with but slight exertion upon his part. Sometimes he could not omit glancing nervously to the right and left as he passed through a thicker and more sombre part of the forest, half expecting to see some gaunt form start out from the leafless solitudes, and attempt to bar his way. Nothing however was to be seen save the occasional form of a half-starved wolf, and Ipanoff knew too well his skill upon the skates to dread the pursuit even of that fierce wanderer in the frozen solitudes.

There was a light breeze blowing, which occasionally rattled the bare branches of the trees one against the other, but beyond that no sound was to be heard, save the rustle of the withered leaf as it was blown across the ice, impelled by the same breeze which so materially assisted Johannes' progress. The heart of the expectant lover grew suddenly chill as he neared a portion of the river which recalled to him the terrible malediction with which his mother had threatened him. There was a small promontory reaching far out into the center of the stream, and upon the extreme point of it

stood a wooden building which was fast falling to decay. The huge logs of which the walls were composed gaped with wide crevices, and were covered with a thick growth of moss and lichens now coated with a crystal covering of frozen snow. Several of the boards of the heavy wheel had rotted away, and the roof had fallen in in many places; but the windows were all securely boarded up, and the door seemed massive enough to resist a battery of artillery. The garden, which had once existed behind the mill, was now nothing but a snow-covered desert, with a few gaunt, leafless shrubs forcing their heads through their white winding-sheet, and waving gently backward and forward in the breeze. A few blackened rotting timbers stood in quaint shapes above the snow, and a flight of shattered wooden steps, now veiled by a patch of fungus of a blood-red hue, led from the front door to the water; and as Johannes gazed he remembered with a shudder that it was upon these very steps that the body of Ladislas Skyrnecki had been found, with the marks of a violent death indelibly imprinted upon his throat.

Johannes could not refrain from casting a look of horror upon the ruined mill, but very soon he put on an extra dash, and the ring of his skates mingled with the refrain of a jovial drinking chorus as he glided away faster and yet faster in the direction of Pettikoff, where he firmly hoped that the woman was to be given to him that would make him the happiest man in the world. The sled, in spite of its load of skins and the forest produce that was piled upon it, moved easily enough, and Johannes Ipanoff felt hardly any fatigue as he came to a halt before the heavy line of piles which protected Pettikoff from the incursions of the Vistula. The commercial part of his business was soon arranged, and, with a small bundle of greasy rouble notes secured in the breast of his coat, Johannes left the main thoroughfare of the town and dived into a maze of narrow, dirty streets with which he seemed to be well acquainted. After about ten minutes' brisk walking he stopped at the door of a low drinking shop, and after exchanging a word or two with the proprietor, a squalid-looking Calmuk, he passed into a courtyard at the back and knocked in a peculiar fashion at a door which faced him. The summons appeared to be understood, for in a few seconds the sound of the withdrawal of bars and bolts was heard, and as the door was thrown open Johannes passed

into the interior of the disreputable looking building, which presented a strange scene.

A long, low-roofed room, rank with the combined odors of *quass*, vodki, and inferior tobacco. A few oil lamps burnt at one end and made the obscurity of the other portion of the chamber more palpable. There was no furniture except one or two rough benches, and heaps of dirty blankets near the great white stove showed where the occupants of this choice abode took their rest; a few rifles were hung from pegs on the discolored walls, and a chintz curtain, which had once been of a gay color and design, but which was now soiled, hung across the end of the room which was lighted by the flickering lamps.

A little dark man with a villainous expression of countenance advanced to greet the new arrival.

"Well, my *busnee chal!*" cried he, extending a dirty hand toward Johannes, "and so you have come to have a talk with your *Romany* friends. They are always glad to see you, especially as you never fail to bring with you the shining pieces that bring enjoyment to all."

"How are you, Conradin," returned Johannes, for it was the leader of the gypsy band who had advanced to greet him, "and how goes business with you?"

"But badly, friend Johannes, but badly," answered the gypsy, with a rapid movement of his hand. "The police are very hard upon us; and if a *gry* is missing from his stable, they come down upon us to look for him; if a porker dies in his stye, they say that we have cast a *drow* upon him; and if an old woman says that her fattest cacklers are missing, they vow that we poor gypsies have been eating nothing but poultry for weeks past. But come, my liberal rover of the forests, shall not the sparkling liquor flow, not sour quass or common vodki, but the brandy that fires the blood and the brain, and makes us forget our cares and troubles for a time?"

"As you like, Conradin," returned the young man, and extracting a ten-rouble note from the bundle in his breast, he handed it to the gypsy.

Conradin snatched the greasy piece of paper, and held it up to one of the lamps, and then with a grin of satisfaction upon his face was about to leave the room, when Johannes placed his hand upon his arm and arrested his progress.

"And Olga," asked he, timidly, "where is she?"

"The girl is right enough," answered the gypsy, impatiently, "but as queer as ever; she might make a heap of money by going out and dancing at the houses of the young nobles as she used to do before; but no, she prefers wandering about, no one knows where. I can guess, however, where she was last night, for she took her skates, and was away for a couple of hours, and when she came back told us of your intended visit. Of course she went to meet you. Johannes, my dear young friend, do you think that if I had not every confidence in you, that I would think of letting you meet my handsome girl."

"But where is she now?" broke in Johannes, impatiently.

"Behind the curtain, prinking herself out for some one, whose name I can guess. Wait here while I go for the elixir of life, and be sure that she will not be long in making her appearance."

He disengaged his arm from the young man's clutch, and darted through the doorway as though his life depended upon procuring the potent fluid with as little delay as possible.

Johannes, left alone in the dimly-lighted room, made an involuntary step toward the curtain, but, as though recollecting himself, stopped abruptly, and whispered softly, "Olga, I am here; will you not speak to me, Olga?"

As if the simple words had contained a magic spell, the curtain was torn violently aside, and a figure appeared which caused the young man to recoil a few paces in wonder and admiration. It was the figure of a girl of two-and-twenty years of age, tall and well formed; the swarthy cheek, white teeth, and glittering eyes were tokens of her gypsy descent, whilst her luxuriant raven hair was plaited in long tresses and adorned with sequins in a strange and fantastic manner. Her arms were bare to the shoulder, and adorned with gold bangles, and a slight cloud rose to Johannes' brow as he fancied that these might be the gifts of the ill-fated Pole, Ladislas Skyrnecki. She was dressed in a strangely-cut tunic of some soft clinging black material, quaintly slashed with crimson; the skirt hardly fell below her knee, and disclosed her shapely limbs clad in hosiery of crimson silk embroidered in gold. A silver chain girdle adorned her waist, and from it depended a cruel-looking carved dagger, evidently worn more for use than for show. This strangely-beautiful apparition stood for a moment motionless, then with a light and

graceful bend caught up a stringed instrument of curious design, and, striking a few chords, began one of those graceful Gitana dances, as remarkable for the grace of their steps as for the air of voluptuous sensuousness which they seem to possess. Backward and forward she swayed, still drawing the same wild witch notes from the instrument, her whole frame quivering and vibrating to the music, and her eyes blazing with a fire that seemed to penetrate to the very soul of Johannes Ipanoff.

All at once she paused as suddenly as she had begun, and dashing the lute upon the ground, exclaimed, in a voice rendered still more melodious by the slight foreign accent: "And has the hunter of the forest no words in which to praise the poor Zingara's dance? Great nobles were not so scant of their plaudits, and have offered her much gold to grace their revels."

"Olga," cried Johannes, recovering himself from his momentary state of bewilderment, "you are always enchanting, but to-day you are beyond everything. Why have you adopted this strange costume, and why do you seek to enthral my senses by these voluptuous movements?"

As he spoke he drew closer to her, and encircling her waist with his arm, endeavored to press his lips to hers.

Without withdrawing herself from his embrace, the girl bent backward and withdrew her ripe, red mouth from the attempted caress.

"Not so fast, not so fast," exclaimed she, with a light laugh. "Talking comes before kissing. You asked me how I knew that you were coming. Why, as I glided upon my skates down the river last night, the whole forest seemed to be whispering, 'He is coming, Johannes Ipanoff is coming.' Do you never hear strange noises in the forest, curious murmurs that seem to tell you what is going to happen. Have you never seen strange sights when you have been waiting for the wild beasts?"

Johannes shuddered, but shaking off a vague feeling of inquietude, he answered:

"And when did you know of my coming, sweet Olga?"

"The fiend of unrest came on me last night," replied the girl, "and so I bound on my skates, and went as far as a favorite spot of mine, the deserted mill on the river bank—"

"Surely you never went alone to that weird and desolate

spot," exclaimed Johannes, a chill pervading his veins, "why, it is—that is, they say——"

"What do they say?" asked the girl, with a flash of her dark eyes, as her lover paused.

"That it is the haunt of the demons of the waste," replied Johannes, "and that fearful sounds are heard to issue from it; besides, it is not a spot that I thought you would have ventured near since—since——"

"Since the body of that hot-headed young Pole was found there," interrupted the gypsy. "I rather think that I ought to be grateful to a spot that had freed me from a persecution that was becoming terribly irksome to me. But yours are but foolish prejudices, and I know from what source you have derived them."

"I do not think you do, Olga," returned the young man.

"I know only too well. They come from the old woman who sits alone all day in the hut on the island, spinning at her wheel, and trying to keep her son away from Pettikoff, from the old woman who knows so much of the evil spirits of the stream and wood, that one might well suppose that she was in constant communication with them. You have heard all these idle tales, Johannes Ipanoff, from your mother."

"Olga," murmured the young man.

"Yes, continued the young girl, with increasing vehemence, as she wrenched herself away from her lover's clasp. "And you have come here to-day to ask me to be your wife, to leave all my amusements and admirers, to quit the life of gaiety and excitement that I have been leading, and to immure myself to a lonely hut with an old witch who hates me so that she would poison me before I had been three weeks under the same roof-tree."

"Olga, you wrong my mother," pleaded Johannes.

"I would do much for the man I loved," continued Olga. "And I would not shrink from a solitary forest life with him, but I will not risk his and my happiness. Listen! listen to me, Johannes! am I not right, did you not come to-day to ask me to be your wife?"

"I did, dearest Olga," answered the forester.

"Then you must choose between your mother and me!" replied the gypsy. "I will not submit to her old-world prejudices, and if you will, why, you can relinquish me; but should you elect to act like a man, and not to be tied all

your life to an old woman's apron strings, are there not hospitals and houses of refuge where old people can end their days, when they have to make way for the younger and fairer of their sex."

Johannes marveled at hearing almost the same suggestion drop from Olga's lips as he had made to his mother in an access of passion.

The idea no longer seemed so horrible, and though the girl gazed keenly upon him, yet she could detect no appearance of repugnance to her proposal upon his face.

"Choose," resumed she; "my father will soon be back again, and we have all our arrangements to make."

"Olga, I cannot live without you!" answered the young man, passionately.

"But how could you get on with me; you have been brought up a member of the Greek Church, whilst I—well, I am of the religion of my race?"

A fatal glamor was swiftly stealing over the young man, and he felt that no sacrifice was too great which would enable him to call the beautiful girl who stood before him his own.

"As a soldier, Olga," replied he, "I had not much time for religion, and as a hunter of beasts still less. We shall not quarrel upon that matter, you may be sure; and as for my mother, well, if she objects, she must go, as you say, to the hospital."

"No, no, Johannes, there must be no ifs. Your mother has done all that she can to injure me, and my gypsy instincts crave revenge. She must be sent about her business, whether she makes submission or not."

His good angel seemed to have deserted him, for Johannes exclaimed: "Be it so, Olga, my mother shall go, and now say that you will be mine."

"One moment more," answered the girl, drawing near and laying her hand upon his shoulder. "I can't bear priests, promise me that you will not tease me about religion."

"I will cast all my faith aside for a kiss from those sweet lips," cried the infatuated young man.

"Take it, then, and remember that now you are mine, body and soul," murmured the Gitana, and flying into his arms, she glued her lips to his in one long, passionate kiss.

"Yes, yours to all eternity, dearest Olga," exclaimed Johannes, almost stifled by the frenzied clasp of her embrace.

"Hush," said the girl, suddenly gliding from his arms with the sinuous grace of a serpent.

"My father is coming.

"I can hear his steps crossing the yard.

"He has other views for me, and he will never consent to our union.

"We must fly.

"Meet me to-night at the ruined mill!"

"At the ruined mill!" cried the young man, startled from his dream of happiness.

"Yes, at the ruined mill!" cried the gypsy, a faint frown corrugating her forehead; "meet me there and I will be thine. We can speed on to the hut on the island and tell the old witch woman that she must make way for a fairer and a younger occupant."

"What, turn out my mother on a night like this?" gasped the astonished Johannes.

"Yes, some of the neighbors will take her in!" answered the girl, carelessly.

"There is not a house within fifteen miles," indignantly returned the forester.

"Do not raise objections," cried Olga, with an angry stamp of her foot, "the dwellers of wood and stream, with whom she is so well acquainted, will take care of her; but if you wish to go back from your word, say so; Olga has no lack of suitors."

"All shall be as you wish, dearest," exclaimed the enraptured lover. "At what time am I to meet you?"

"I will skate up to the mill. Meet me there at midnight, and we will speed onward to our future home," whispered the girl. "One more kiss to seal the bargain, quick, my father's hand is on the latch."

Again pressing her lips upon his with a burning caress of passion, the Gitana glided behind the curtain, and at that instant Conradin entered the chamber, bearing three large flasks of corn brandy, and followed by four other gypsies of as villainous appearance as himself.

"Ha, ha! all alone, my hunter of the forest," cried he; "so the pretty bird has flown away. Never mind, when woman deserts us, drink remains. Sit down! sit down! and, by Satan's horns, we will have a carouse to-night."

The other gypsies uttered a faint cheer, and in a moment

several metal drinking-cups were procured, one of the flasks opened, and drinking began in right down earnest.

Johannes Ipanoff, like a true Russian, could drink long and deeply without the liquor mounting to his brain, but the gypsies sang, screeched, and quarrelled over their liquor, and their excitement caused the potent spirit to do its work the quicker. The revelry was at its height when Johannes felt a slight touch upon his shoulder, and, turning round, perceived the figure of Olga standing behind him. She had thrown a long gray cloak over her strange costume, covered her raven tresses with a tall pointed cap of the same material, and drawn on a pair of fur-lined boots. Her skates were dangling in her right hand, and Johannes felt her warm breath upon his cheek as she whispered, "Follow me in an hour, and then you are mine for ever."

With a warm pressure of the hand she glided away, and the young man, by an involuntary movement, started to his feet as though to follow her, but she restrained him by a waving gesture, and slipped through the door with scarcely a sound. Her father and his boon companions had not noticed Olga's movements, being engaged in a violent discussion regarding the state of the frost.

Conradin at last appealed to Johannes.

"You know all the signs and changes, my brave forester," said he; "how much longer is the ice going to hold?"

"About three weeks, I should think," carelessly answered the young man.

"Three devils," retorted the half-intoxicated gypsy. "I tell you, my lad, that if you do not get back to your hovel on the island by to-night you will have to try some other path than the river one."

"Nonsense! do you mean to say that an unexpected thaw is coming on? There were no signs of it as I glided down the stream," returned Johannes, contemptuously.

"Did you say 'nonsense,' then you mean that I am a liar!" roared the gypsy, with a sudden burst of ferocity, and snatching up a heavy goblet he hurled it at his guest's head. Drink, however, renders the hand unsteady, and the missle struck one of the other gypsies on the forehead, cutting the skin slightly. In an instant all was uproar, knives were drawn, and in the chance *melee* that ensued the lamps were extinguished, and the chamber plunged into total darkness.

Avoiding the inebriate combatants as best he could, Johannes felt for his skates which were hanging upon a peg driven into the wall, and in his search he detached some object which fell with a slight noise upon the floor.

Peace had by this time been restored, one of the lamps was relighted, and the late combatants, one of whom had received slight cuts, were exchanging a tipsy embrace. The light enabled Johannes to discover his skates, but as he moved forward to detach them from the wall, he felt some object beneath his foot, and looking down he saw that the object was a crucifix which he had thrown down, and that he was trampling the image of his Redeemer beneath his feet. At any other moment Johannes would have felt deeply shocked at this unconscious desecration of a sacred emblem, but his thoughts were so firmly fixed on Olga that with a muttered oath he kicked the cross on one side, and, taking down his skates from where they hung, left the room without being noticed by his host or his boon companions.

Directly he emerged into the open air he was sensible that a great change had taken place. The night was sensibly warmer, and he began to think that after all Conradin might be right as to his prophecy regarding a thaw. Going down to the water's edge he strapped on his skates, and was putting up the collar of his heavy coat when his fingers caught in a string round his neck, which he remembered sustained a small cross which had been placed there at his birth. Some feeling which he could not account for seemed to urge him to throw it aside, but thrusting the cross back beneath his shirt, he grasped his iron-shod staff in his hand, and struck out into the center of the stream. As he got further up the river he noticed that there was a good deal of moisture upon the ice, and that here and there small pools of water had formed upon its surface. It was getting on for midnight now, and as he began to leave the open country behind him and draw nearer to the forest land, the thick masses of leafless trees shut out the moon, and threw strange grisly shadows upon the snow-covered ice. There were all kinds of sounds on both banks which he had never heard before, and which he could in no way account for. Low whisperings seemed to be going on behind the trunks of the great trees, and every now and then he fancied that he could detect the sound of the flapping of unseen wings. Once or twice a shrill

cry rang through the stillness of the night, which might have been that of the prowling lynx, but sounded much more like that of a soul in mortal agony. A light breeze had arisen which rasped the bare branches of the trees against each other as though an army of skeletons were in motion, and occasionally Johannes felt so certain that he was being followed that he checked his speed, and turning round, gazed down the river. Nothing, however was to be seen, and striking his staff upon the ice, the ring of his skates rang merrily through the night.

He had not far to go now before he reached the trysting-place where Olga and love awaited him. The wood was now much thicker, and all at once he was sensible of a something that was floating in front of him.

It was the indistinct figure of a man, bloated and swollen, as though it had lain for some time beneath the waters of the stream.

Johannes felt his blood chill and his hair bristle upon his head, for in the discolored features he recognized the man, Ivan Ivanovitch, to whom his mother had referred during their last conversation.

The figure still floated by his side, keeping pace with his every frantic stride, and from it appeared to issue a faint and unearthly voice.

"Go back, go back," it said, "death and destruction are before you."

With a cry that he could not restrain bursting from his lips, Johannes bent forward and exerted his utmost speed to distance the spectre, and in this he succeeded, for in a few seconds the apparition vanished.

The river soon took a bend, and as he swept round it at the top of his speed, he saw the figure of a man standing in his path making frantic gestures to him to turn back.

Unheeding this, Johannes pursued his headlong career until he came within a few yards of the figure, when, to his surprise, he recognized the fair hair and blue eyes of the young Pole, Ladislas Skyrnecki, with his face bleached and distorted by the terrible death he had died.

The spectre uttered no sound, however, but still waved his hands with a motion of entreaty.

With his teeth firmly set, and with a feeling of desperation moving him, the young man dashed onward, and seemed to

pass entirely through the apparition, and turning backward, saw the spectre still there, with its hands raised high above its head with a gesture of mute despair.

A vague feeling of terror shot through the young man's heart, but the thoughts of the beautiful Gitana nerved him, and once again he sped upon his way. He could see the dark mass of the old water-mill looming black against the snow, and knew that a few more minutes' exertion would enable him to reach it. All at once, to his extreme surprise, a host of shining lights seemed to shoot up from between the rafters of the ruined roof, and spread themselves all over the building like a mass of fiery insects. The closed-up windows seemed to glow with a lurid fire, and a strange and confused murmur of many weird voices joining in an incantation, from the words of which he could not make any meaning, rang out in the still night. For a moment he paused at the strange and unexpected sight, and then muttered between his clenched teeth, "If I had to face hell itself, and all its fiends confronted me, I would dare them for Olga's sake."

Again he sped on, and in a few seconds came to the foot of the broken steps, and halted in front of the door. The infernal discord inside was as loud and deafening as ever, and as he glanced fearfully about him, the door flew open, and the figure of Olga appeared upon the threshold.

She was as beautiful as ever, but there was a lurid look in her eyes which he never remembered to have seen there before.

"So you have come, most faithful of lovers," said she; "come to join the happy band that wander over the ice and snow; come to give up your soul to our great master, and your body to the fishes of the Vistula; come to give me another year's health and beauty, and power to enjoy all the pleasures of life. Poor fool, did you think that I would condescend to share the hut of a miserable peasant? But come, you are mine now, for you yielded to temptation, and are lost for ever."

A wild burst of laughter rang out from the interior of the mill, and there was a strange rattling sound, which filled the heart of the forester with dread. With all her earthly beauty gone, and her features changed to those of a demon, Olga sprang down the steps and clutched Johannes by the throat. For a moment the pressure was so intense that he thought he must have fallen to the ground, but with a powerful effort

he wrenched himself away, and wheeling round, darted off with all the speed that he was capable of in the direction of his home on the island. With a cry of disappointed rage, the Gitana started in pursuit, and the ring of the two pair of skates sounded loud and clear above the din and revelry of the old mill. Another strange sound was heard, and Johannes, glancing over his shoulder for an instant, saw a troop of skeletons, with fiery eyes, passing through the doorway and following in pursuit, with a loud rattling of fleshless joints. But horrible as this sight was, there was one yet more terrible, and one which made the young man strain every nerve and sinew to increase his speed; and that sight was the figure of Olga Conradin, her half-closed lips showing the pearly teeth set firmly together, her eyes gleaming with satanic fire, and hands extended with their fingers bent like the talons of a bird of prey, as though eager to grasp their intended victim. She was only about ten paces behind the forester, and was making every effort to gain upon him.

Onward speeds the hideous chase, the hunted man, the girl-fiend, and the grisly troop of skeletons, sweeping along like some terrible phantasmagoria of nightmare.

Suddenly Johannes heard further up the river a loud report like that of a cannon, and his over-strained brain refused to perform its duty, and to tell him the cause of it.

Olga heard it, too.

"I have you now, fool," panted she.

"Did you think to escape me?

"No, you are mine....soul and body, like....Ivanovitch and Skyrnecki."

She redoubled her efforts, and gained two paces from the distance between them, amidst an applauding laugh from the skeleton band of pursuers; but, driven to desperation, Johannes stole one of them back. All at once, he saw a dark black band of some twelve feet in width stretching across the river, and could hear the sound of bubbling water.

In an instant he divined that the ice had begun to break up, and that he was lost.

He felt for the cross that was round his neck, and drawing it out, commended himself to St. Sergius and St. Alexander of Nevskoi in the perilous attempt that he was about to make to leap across the yawning chasm.

Olga saw the movement, and shouted wildly.

"You renounced your religion for me," cried she. "Think not that your musty old saints will help you," and making a sudden and desperate spring forward she managed to place her hand on his shoulder.

The touch of the beautiful fiend thrilled the young man with dread. He almost fell to the ground ; but as if filled with a sudden inspiration, he touched the fingers that clasped him with the little cross, and with a fresh invocation to the saints, sprang across the whirl of waters and broken ice.

When the cross touched her, Olga uttered a yell of terror.

Her hand dropped by her side. She stumbled forward and fell with a great splash into the seething mass of water which filled the yawning chasm.

Johannes' leap was a successful one, though he fell on his hands and knees. As he rose to his feet, he cast one look behind him, and saw Olga struggling in the relentless waters, while the grisly skeletons were hurling huge masses of ice at her, and repulsing her efforts to extricate herself.

Without venturing another glance, Johannes Ipanoff sped onward, and in about an hour arrived at his island home, drenched with perspiration, and with a face white as marble.

"Have you anything to say to me, son Johannes?" asked his mother, advancing to greet him.

"Only to entreat you to pardon me, and to believe that I will be a good son to you for the future," answered the conscience-stricken man.

The only reply his mother made was to kiss him fondly, and taking the holy cross, which he still grasped in his trembling right hand, she fastened it once more securely round his neck with a fresh piece of cord.

SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol V. No. 2. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* **MAR. 1891**

DECEPTIONS: A MATRIMONIAL STUDY

When, before the altar, the priest asked her, "are you content?" it was with all her soul Gemma had responded, "Yes!"

Oh, yes; she was content indeed. Through the cloud of costly lace which enwrapped her in its snowy transparence, she saw the vast church all dotted with lights, resplendent in the dark gleam of mosaics upon golden backgrounds, animated by the slight movement of the very elegant crowd that filled it; lighted by oblique rays descending from the nave, all a glitter of gold, silks and brilliants; and it was her own future that she seemed to see thus—the years of luxury and wealth which her rich marriage was preparing for her. And had it not been the dream for which she sighed? She, the ideal blonde, of eighteen years, with the tall and proud figure; the pure, disdainful profile under heavy curls like those of an archangel; with haughty eyes sparkling like blue gems under the golden fringes of her long eyelashes.

She had been for a long time a poor girl, the daughter of citizens who had seen better days, that marvelous human lily. She had experienced all the petty troubles, all the cruel daily sufferings of misery that conceals itself. The poor and inelegant gowns, painfully remodeled every year; the insolence of creditors; humiliations; continual and tormenting thoughts of money—she had experienced them all, and in her little heart, eager for pleasure and enjoyment, swollen with unsatisfied longings, a dream was arisen little by little, occupying all the room, rendering her insensible to all the rest: the dream of at last becoming rich.

She wanted it, absolutely; she was born for it; she was rich, now. That "yes," which she had just pronounced, had, by its three magic letters, changed her destiny; and she

* Italian of Haydée: Translated for Short Stories by E. Cavazza.

was so content, so happy, that it appeared to her it was all a dream, that her Mechlin veil was a cloud that transported her into the realms of the impossible, across a sidereal heaven, of which the diamond pins thrust among her laces formed the flaming stars; and, in order to return to reality, she must cast her eyes toward her husband, Luigo Marchis, kneeling beside her, in the mystic, velvety shade of the altar, lit by the tremulous brightness of the candles.

Ah, there was nothing ideal about him, poor fellow! In vain he straightened his correct person of an elegant man, with his accurately shaven face, with slender brown moustaches, and a still fresh color that gave him something the look of an actor; he remained none the less old, with his powerful shoulders a little bent, with his eyelids grown heavy, and crow's feet toward his temples, with the gray locks that appeared here and there among his brown hair, with his forty-seven years, of which the weariness was more conspicuous beside that radiant and blonde Spring.

Forty-seven years! How was it possible? He felt his heart so palpitating, full of tears as in youth! And he could not comprehend how so much time had passed, he could not persuade himself of the incredible fact—forty-seven years passed without knowing Gemma.

For they had been acquainted with each other only two months. Marchis, however much he had frequented society, drawn there by his banking connections, had never let himself be talked to of marriage. What! A wife, children, troubles, cares, disappointments....not even by idea!

And at forty-seven years, one evening, present from motives of curiosity at a ball to which the employees of his bank had invited him, he must needs be smitten by the exquisite, vaporous grace of that blonde girl, dressed simply in white, entering on the arm of a funny little man with a baby-face and a big, silvery beard, her father, a modest clerk in the bank, a rather ridiculous little old man who, beside that divine apparition, slender in her robes of snow, made one think of the gnomes of folk-tales, always crouching at the feet of the fairies.

Ah, weakness of hearts growing old! That apparition was enough to shake all the ideas of Luigo Marchis concerning matrimony, and as the old gnome, despite his absolute nullity, was an honest citizen, incapable of resisting the assiduities of

the Director to his pretty daughter, the suitor had been greatly pleased with the consent of that little maiden of eighteen, that beautiful creature, that blonde being, to become his wife. Now he trembled with joy; his eyes were misty with vivid emotion—not perceiving that that too was a sign of old age—and it was a voice choked with joy that to the question of the priest, "Are you content?" replied: "Oh, yes."

Now, it is done. United, forever united. Having arisen to their feet, she with an elegant and light impulse, like a lily, wind-lifted on its stem; he with a little effort and difficulty, wearied by emotion, they go down from the altar arm-in-arm. Now they pass through the church amid the murmurs of compliments which arise amid the shadows of the aisles, among the dull scraping of feet and the rustle of gowns; there on the peristyle, among the white columns, is a living wave of sun and air which comes to meet them, like a recall to real life, outside of the mystic dream of the church, the creaking of the line of carriages that advanced, the slow descent of the steps, with the white train of the bride spreading and dragging upon the stairs, in folds like snow, soft and light; then the carriages depart; they are alone for the first time, in the narrow space of the carriage, which the bridal dress fills with its whiteness, and the bouquet of orange-blossoms with its acute perfume of intoxicating virginity; and it is then that, conquered by the charm of that face, so delicate and proud amid its large pallid curls, by the splendor of those blue eyes, the elderly bridegroom bends over her to kiss her—

"Dear me, dear me...."

And to see the tranquility with which those finely cut, rose-colored lips return the kisses, through the veil, the question arises whether it is the bridegroom that she kisses, or the Mechlin lace, at five hundred the metre.

* * * * * *

Ah! there were adorers around that beautiful signora Marchis, so lovely and so young, married to an old man! It was expected that this fortress would be an easy one to conquer. Precisely on her wedding day, Vico Molise, the most elegant and skeptical of the journalists of Upper Italy, had propounded to his friends this theorem:

"Given a beautiful girl, very poor; given that she marries a rich old man; divide the number of his years by that of the hundreds of thousands of lire of which she becomes

mistress, and you will have the number of months necessary for her to take a lover."

And as soon as he could, he began, with many others, to attempt the demonstration of that theorem.

Well, this time the impeccable psychological diagnosis of Vico Molise had been found to fail. Not only, after some months, the beautiful signora Marchis had no lover, but it appeared also that she never was to have one.

Always dressed with an adorable elegance, with a luxury full of good taste, the beautiful Gemma loved to amuse herself, moving freely in that society new for her, finding herself in her right place as a marvelous plant in a vase of valuable porcelain, developing itself in all its splendor. She went to dances, to the theatre, enjoying the plebiscite of admiration provoked by her beauty, coquetting a little with her adorers, fluttering about the fire in order to make them sparkle, her wings of a golden butterfly; but never letting herself be burned.

In the very moment of a declaration, in the midst of one of those waltzes whose notes seem made on purpose to stifle expiring virtue in their serpentine spirals, she cut short her adorer by turning her angelic head, and saying serenely:

"I don't see my husband....Look a little where my husband is, if you will be so kind."

And it was known that her greatest delight was to relate, precisely to her husband, the declarations which she had received. When she came home with him from a ball, all wrapped in the white silken folds of her *sortie du bal*, with her pure throat, her snowy shoulders that blossomed still more fair from her swansdown boa; when in the evening she met him in the dining-room, still in visiting costume, with her slim waist tightly compressed by an exquisitely elegant gown, with her face animated by the slight excitement which elegant conversation always produces in a young woman, she amused herself immensely in addressing to her husband some of these provoking and roguish phrases:

"You know, I was at Countess Foschis'....Molise was there, you know....Always faithful and always in despair ....And also Comelli, he that has such lugubrious gallantry....He has promised to kill himself for my sake, within a month, we shall see....Ah! Ah!"

And sitting opposite to him, in a rustle of satin and jet, making shine like two stars the brilliants, large as hazelnuts,

which adorned her small ears, she continued to laugh, with her elastic laughter, full of mischief and full of tenderness.

Ah, indeed, old Marchis could call himself a fortunate man!

Fortunate? Yes, he ought to have considered himself so. When he set himself to reason about it, to describe mentally his conjugal situation, he had to conclude that he would have done wrong to complain of his destiny. And yet....

What of the terribly unexpected had he now discovered in the depths of the pure sapphire of Gemma's eyes? Was there arisen in his soul the doubt that that faithfulness against every trial, that coldness toward her admirers was nothing but the wish to preserve intact a position acquired with difficulty, and that precisely to that position was directed all the tenderness shown toward himself! I do not know; but the vivid and impetuous joy of the wedding was no longer in him, although his love remained the same; and a painful doubt thrilled in his voice when he replied to the playful confidence of Gemma, forcing himself to laugh too:

"Take care, now, take care....The vengeance of the tyrant hangs over you...."

Ah, the poor tyrant, how he loved her! How she had known how to bind him with her little hands, white and perfumed as two lilies. For nothing in the world would he have discovered the truth, changed into certainty his fomenting doubt; so, she had only to ask in order to obtain; for now for him that love of which he doubted, had become his life; and he felt a painful stricture at his heart at the mere thought that a day might come when he would be obliged to refuse her something. Yet that day came. Suddenly, by one of those mysterious complications of business his bank, which until then had gone from triumph to triumph, underwent a violent shock. Not a noisy downfall, one of those open, public ruins, which produce great failures; but one of those deep, intimate secret crises, that must be borne without a word, a lament, under penalty of death; that can be overcome only by force of small privations, little hidden savings; it is then that strict economy in the family becomes necessary. The luxury of Gemma, in those moments, became absolutely ruinous for her husband; he ought to have warned her, sought to check her; he dared not; and continued to content her, but very soon came the time when he could do so no more.

It was on the occasion of a great ball to which she was to

go; she had ordered from Paris a marvelous gown that became her to perfection; still she was not satisfied. Some days before, in the showcase of the most fashionable jeweler of the city, a diadem had set in revolution all the feminine imaginations; a superb jewel, of antique style, set in silver gilt, of a starry pallor, where the brilliants seemed drops of flame. Gemma wished to have it and indeed it would be difficult to find a face adapted to the almost religious richness of that jewel, more than her snowy profile of an angel in ecstacy.

Ten thousand francs was the price of that jewel; and Marchis did not have them. Mute, immovable, his heart oppressed, he listened to Gemma's words as she described it to him. How could he tell her, how could he even tell her that he had not the ten thousand francs. It was terrible. To another woman who should have had that caprice, one might have proposed to have her own diamonds reset after that model or perhaps even to have an imitation diadem made; no one would have suspected it; but he felt that the danger lay in confessing his powerlessness. Yet, it must be done....And he made an effort at courage.

Gemma had seated herself beside him, throwing back and bending a little to one side her blonde head, with that irresistible feminine movement which displays the white throat, the pure line descending from the slender neck to the full-bloomed bust down to the round and flexible waist.

"I would like to have it, it seems to me that I should look well....Don't you think so? I have a great wish to be beautiful....If you knew why?"

She laughed, now, deliciously, with the air of her roguish hours. He was silent for a moment; then, fixing a vague look upon the delicate designs of the oriental carpet, paling as if from an inward wound, he murmured:

"The fact is that I do not know....I do not really know whether....whether I shall be able to buy it for you...."

"Why?"

She had quickly raised her head, much surprised, uneasy, looking at him. Such a thing had never happened to her.

Marchis wiped his forehead and resumed his discourse.

"The fact is....you see, in a bank like ours, there are moments that....certain moments in which one cannot.... in which it is impossible."

What was impossible for him, in that moment, was to finish

the phrase. He stopped, and lifted his eyes timidly to her, desolately, as if to beg her to help him. She was very pale, with a sudden hardness in all her features, in her compressed mouth, in her knit brows, in her sparkling eyes.

"Have you not ten thousand francs? Is it possible?"

And her voice was hard as her look....a profound hardness that startled him. But all at once her face changed expression, she recovered her fresh, tuneful laugh, the sweet and limpid ray was rekindled in her blue eyes.

"Come you want to tell me stories, so as not to buy me anything....Deceiver! I that wished to be beautiful in order to drive Vico Molise a little crazy; he has declared to me that he is tired of my perfidy....See, you deserve....Do you know that I am becoming angry with you?"

She really believed that she had hit the truth, with her words. Indeed, he had so well kept up the illusion with her, he had hidden so jealously his embarrassment, that she did not know how to explain this sudden restriction. But meanwhile, every word of hers was a blow to the heart of Marchis; he saw her already at the ball, passing from arm to arm with her step like a flying angel; listening to the insidious compliments of Vico Molise and his kind, and keeping meantime in her heart that leaven of rancor against him because of his refusal; and he saw himself again, as he had seen himself a little while before in the mirror, old, weary, worn, beside her so fresh, young, with eyes sparkling from the cruel scorn of one who has made an unequal bargain.

Suddenly he rose, like one who has taken a decision, passed his hand across his brow, and without replying, went away to go out of the house. She believed that she had conquered, and let him go without moving herself, only with a flash of cunning in her eyes; but when he was on the stairs the door opened, a blonde head appeared between the folding-doors—

"We are agreed, then?"

He did not reply; and she heard his step down the stairway, slow, heavy, weary.

* * * * * *

The evening of the ball, Marchis knocked at the door of his wife's dressing-room. "Come in," and he entered.

In the little dressing-room so illumined as to seem on fire, with the air filled with fragrance from the little unstoppered bottle of perfume, all gleaming white with the disorder of

feminine apparel scattered about, Gemma stood erect before the mirror, between two kneeling maids, ready dressed for the ball. She was truly radiant in her gown of white satin with almond blossoms, with fresh sprays of almond flowers around the neck of the dress, at the waist, among the waving folds of the train, issuing from that covering of delicate, pale, dawn-tinted flowers, she too was fresh as they, with her faintly rosy complexion, as if she were one of those flowers become a person. But under her lashes gleamed anon the flash of cold and cruel rancor.

Her husband had not given her the diadem!

But hearing him enter, she turned, and seeing that he held a casket in his hands, she comprehended everything. With a bound, she was beside him, her arms twined around his neck.

"Oh, how good you are! How good you are! How I love you!" He trembled all over, and was very pale. Gemma did not even perceive it. All at once, with one of her irresistible movements, she loosened her arms from his neck, took with one hand the casket and with the other holding her husband's hand, she led him after her to the mirror. She seated herself and opened the casket. Among puffs of red plush, under the burning light, the diadem sent forth sparks like a flame. She had a new outburst of joy, took the husband's head between her hands, drew it down, and kissed his forehead—oh! the forehead of a corpse, icy and livid; then without looking at his features, his wandering gaze, she offered him the diadem and bent before him her blonde head, which was so well suited to that mystical jewel.

"Come sir, crown me!"

And while he sought to unite with trembling hands the clasp of the gems among those marvelous blonde curls, waving and breaking into ripples of gold at every movement, she, still with bent head, lifted her smiling eyes to meet his look. And he answered with a resigned gentleness to the smile of those perilous blue eyes; he, the poor man who deceived for the sake of desire to be deceived, and who bought for himself a little mock love with....mock diamonds.

ETCHINGS: FROZEN

A bleak afternoon in Dakota....a sledge containing two women and several men is driven rapidly across the prairie.

Alighting at a "shanty," the women and one of the men enter. The rest of the men immediately begin digging, or rather "chopping" a grave in the frozen ground. They work silently and unceasingly, by turns, for the short winter afternoon already shows signs of merging into night.

The three that entered the house are standing, nervously looking on the scene before them. A fireless stove, unmade beds, everything desolate and untidy. In the middle of the room, a table; on it a motionless form, covered with a coarse gray blanket; on the bed a much smaller, shrouded, form.

One of the women advances to the table, and summoning all her fortitude, throws aside the blanket, and looks on the face of the frozen woman....frozen solid as a block of ice, the clenched hands, filled with fine, dry snow, fine as sand, sifted into every tress of hair, into her eyes, her ears, down into her bosom, that lay bare, showing how she had tried to nourish her babe, in the face of that pitiless storm....what availed the warmest mother love, against that relentless cold....frozen with the blood still in her cheeks and lips....no time for the crimson stream of life to leave the face.

Bare and comfortless as their home was, no one knows what tempted them to leave it that terrible day. They were bound for a neighbor's house half a mile distant but had not gone quarter the way when they turned in the wrong direction. They struggled on, husband and wife, carrying the babe less than a year old, until the woman could go no further, and throwing up her hands, fell down. Laying the now stiffening form of the child beside its mother, the bewildered father wandered on, on, until he reached by chance, miles distant, a place to incoherently tell his story and—perish.

The family belonged to the poor "dumb driven cattle" class of Russian Jews. Their own kind had left them to their fate. So the settlers had turned out to give them Christian burial. When the desolate funeral was over the party drove rapidly home again, with the picture before them, of what might be their own fate, if night overtook them on the prairies.

* E. Henderson; For Short Stories.

A DEPUTY GOVERNOR'S WOOING

"Can you receive Madame Blouet, sir?" asked an attendant, as he opened the door of the deputy governor's office.

It was a large, severe-looking apartment, with a very high ceiling, two windows draped with green damask curtains, walls and arm-chairs of the same color, and heavy book-cases of mahogany. The highly waxed floor reflected the cold symmetry of the official furniture, and the mirror over the mantel-piece reproduced with exactness a black marble clock, two bronze lamps and a pair of gilt candlesticks.

Hubert Boinville, the deputy governor, was seated, with his back to the fire-place, at a large mahogany desk which was littered over with deeds and various papers. He raised his grave, melancholy face which was framed in a brown beard, tinged with a few gray hairs, and his black eyes, with tired-looking lids, glanced at the card which the solemn usher handed to him.

On this card was written in a trembling hand, *Veuve Blouet* (widow Blouet), but the name conveyed no information to him and he put it down impatiently.

"It is an old lady, sir," said the attendant, in explanation, "shall I send her away?"

"No, let her come in," replied the deputy governor in a tone of resignation.

The usher straightened himself up in his uniform, bowed, and disappeared, returning the next minute to show in the visitor, who stopped on the threshold and dropped an old-fashioned courtesy.

Hubert Boinville half rose from his chair, and with cold politeness signed her to a seat, which she took, after making another courtesy.

She was a little old lady, dressed in shabby mourning. Her black merino gown had a greenish tinge, and was wrinkled and darned; a limp crape veil, which had evidently served through more than one period of mourning, hung down on each side from an old-fashioned bonnet, and beneath a front of false brown hair was a round, wrinkled face with bright little eyes, a small mouth, and no teeth.

"Sir," she began, in a somewhat breathless voice, "I am

*French of Andre Theuriet: Isabel Smithson: For Short Stories.

the daughter, sister and widow, of men who served their country. I applied some time ago to the Department for help, and I have come to see whether there is any hope."

The deputy governor listened without moving a muscle of his face. He had heard so many supplications of this kind!

"Have you ever received any assistance!" he asked, coldly. "No, sir," she replied. "I have managed to get on until now without asking. I have a small pension."

"Ah!" he interrupted in a dry tone, in that case I am afraid we can do nothing for you. We have a great many applicants who have no pension to rely upon."

"Ah, listen, sir!" she cried despairingly, "I have not explained everything. I had three sons and they are all dead. The last one taught mathematics, and one day during the winter, when he was going from the Pantheon to Chaptal College he caught a violent cold which settled on his lungs and carried him off in two weeks. He had supported me and his child by teaching; the expenses of his illness and death used up all our little savings, and I had to raise money on my pension. Now I am alone in the world with my grandchild, and we have nothing. I am eighty-two years old, sir."

Tears had gathered under her wrinkled eyelids as she spoke, and the deputy governor was listening more attentively than he had done at first. A peculiar singing intonation of the speaker's voice, and the sound of certain provincial expressions seemed to his ears like once familiar music; the old lady's way of speaking had for him a flavor of home which produced a most singular sensation in his mind. He rang his bell and sent for Madame Blouet's "papers," and when the sedate usher had laid a thin package before him, he examined the yellow pages with evident interest.

"You are from Lorraine, I see, Madame," he said at last, turning toward her a face less stern, and on which a faint smile was seen, "I suspected it from your accent."

"Yes, Sir, I am from Argonne," she answered, "and you recognized my accent! I thought I had long since lost it—I have been knocking about France like a flying camp.

The deputy governor looked with increasing compassion at this poor widow whom a harsh wind had torn from her native forest, and cast into Paris like a withered leaf. He felt his official heart growing softer, and smiling again, he said:

"I also am from Argonne. I lived near your village for a

long time, at Clermont," and then he added gaily, "keep up your courage, Madame Blouet, I hope we shall be able to help you. Will you give me your address?"

"Number 12, Rue de la Sante, near the Capuchin convent. Thank you, Sir, for your kindness. I am very glad to have found a fellow countryman," and after repeated courtesies the widow took her departure.

As soon as she was gone M. Boinville rose, and going to the window stood looking down into the garden with his face against the glass. But he was not looking at the tops of the half leafless chestnut trees; his dreamy gaze wandered far off toward the East, beyond the plains and the chalky hills of Champagne, past a large forest, to a valley where a quiet river flowed between two rows of poplar trees, to a little old town with tile-roofed houses. There his early childhood had been passed, and later, his vacations. His father, who was registrar in the office of the Chief Justice, led a narrow, monotonous life, and he himself was early accustomed to hard work and strict discipline. He had left home when in his twenty-first year and had returned only to attend his father's funeral. Possessing a superior intellect and an iron will, and being an indefatigable worker he had risen rapidly on the official ladder, and at thirty-eight years of age was made deputy governor. Austere, punctual, reserved, and coldly polite, he arrived at his office every morning at exactly ten o'clock and remained there until six, taking work with him when he went home. Although he was possessed of keen sensibilities, his bearing was so reserved and undemonstrative that he was thought cold and stern; he saw very little of society, his life being devoted to business, and he had never had enough leisure to think of marrying. His heart indeed, had once asserted itself, before he had left home, but as he then had neither position nor fortune, the girl he loved had refused him in order to marry a rich tradesman. This early disappointment had left in Hubert Boinville a feeling of bitterness which even the other successes of his life could not wholly efface, and there was still a tinge of melancholy in his being. The old lady's voice and accent had recalled the thought of the past, and his quiet was overwhelmed by a flood of recollections. While he stood there motionless, with his forehead pressing against the window-pane, he was stirring, as one would a heap of dead leaves, the long slumbering

memories of his youth, and like a sweet delicate perfume, rose the thoughts of by-gone scenes and days.

Suddenly he returned to his chair, drew Madame Blouet's petition to him, and wrote upon it the words, *very deserving case.* Then he rang his bell, and sent the document to the clerk in charge of the relief fund.

On the day of the official assent to Madame Blouet's petition, Mr. Boinville left his office earlier than usual, for the idea had occurred to him, to announce the good news himself to his aged countrywoman.

Three hundred francs. The sum was but a drop in the enormous reservoir of the ministerial fund, but to the poor widow it would be as a beneficent dew!

Although it was December, the weather was mild, so Hubert Boinville walked all the way to the Rue de la Sante, and by the time he reached his destination, that lonely neighborhood was wrapped in gloom. By the light of a gas lamp near the Capuchin convent, he saw "Number 12" over a half-open door in a rough stone wall, and on entering, found himself in a large market garden. He could just distinguish in the darkness, square plots of vegetables, some groups of rose bushes and here and there the silhouettes of fruit trees. At the other end of the garden, two or three dim lights showed the front of a plain, square building, and to this the deputy governor made his way and had the good luck to run against the gardener, who directed him to the widow Blouet's lodgings upstairs. After twice stumbling on the muddy steps, M. Boinville knocked at a door under which a line of light was to be seen, and great was his surprise when, the door being opened, he saw before him a girl of about twenty years, holding up a lighted lamp and looking at him with astonished eyes. She was dressed in black, and had a fair, fresh face, and the lamp light was shining on her wavy chestnut hair, round dimpled cheeks, smiling mouth, and limpid blue eyes.

"Is this where Madame Blouet lives?" asked M. Boinville after a moment's hesitation, and the girl replied, "Yes, sir. Be kind enough to walk in. Grandmother, here is a gentleman who wants to see you."

"I am coming," cried a thin, piping voice from the next room, and the next minute the old lady came trotting out, with her false front all awry under her black cap, and trying to untie the strings of a blue apron which she wore.

"Holy mother!" she cried in amazement on recognizing the deputy governor, "is it possible, sir? Excuse my appearance, I was not expecting the honor of a visit from you. Claudette, give M. Boinville a chair. This is my grandchild, sir. She is all I have in the world."

The gentleman seated himself in an antique arm-chair covered with Utrecht velvet, and cast a rapid glance round the room, which evidently served as both parlor and dining-room. It contained very little furniture; a small stove of white delft-ware, next to which stood an old-fashioned oaken clothes-press; a round table covered with oil-cloth and some rush-bottom chairs, while on the wall hung two old colored lithographs. Everything was very neat, and the place had an old-time air of comfort and rusticity. M. Boinville explained the object of his visit in a few words, and the widow exclaimed:

"Oh, thank you, sir! How good you are. It is quite true that pleasant surprises never come singly; my grandchild has passed an examination in telegraphy, and while she is waiting for a position she is doing a little painting for one and another. Only to-day she has been paid for a large order, and so we made up our minds," said the grandmother, "to celebrate the event by having only old home dishes for dinner. The gardener down stairs gave us a cabbage, some turnips and potatoes to make a *potée;* we bought a Lorraine sausage, and when you came in I had just made a *tôt-fait.*"

"Oh, a *tôt-fait*!" cried Boinville. "That is a sort of cake made of eggs, milk and farina; it is twenty years since I heard its name and more than that since I tasted it."

His face became strangely animated, and the young girl, who was watching him curiously, saw a look of actual greediness in his brown eyes. While he was lost in a reverie of the *tôt-fait,* Claudette and her grandmother turned away and began discussing, and at last the girl whispered:

"I am afraid it would not do."

"Why not?" returned the old lady, "I think it would please him." And then, seeing that he was looking at them wonderingly, she went toward him, saying:

"M. Boinville, you have already been so kind to us that I am going to ask of you another favor. It is late, and you have a long way to go—we should be so glad if you would stay here and taste our *tôt-fait*—should we not, Claudette?"

"Certainly," said the girl, "but M. Boinville will have a plain dinner, and besides, he is, no doubt, expected at home."

"No one is waiting for me," answered the gentleman, thinking of his usual dull, solitary meals in the restaurant. "I have no engagement, but—" he hesitated, looked at Claudette's smiling eyes, and suddenly exclaimed :—

"I accept, with pleasure."

"That is right!" said the old lady, briskly. "What did I tell you, Claudette? Quick, my pet, set the table and run for the wine, while I go back to my *tôt-fait.*"

The girl had already opened the press and taken out a striped table-cloth and three napkins, and in the twinkling of an eye the table was ready. Then she lighted a candle and went down stairs to fetch the wine, while the old dame sat down with her lap full of chestnuts, which she proceeded to crack and place upon the stove.

"Is not that a bright, lively girl?" she said, "she is my consolation; she cheers me like a linnet on an old roof."

Here the speaker rattled the chestnuts on the stove, and then Claudette reappeared, a little flushed and out of breath, and the old woman went and brought in the *potée*, and set it steaming and fragrant on the table.

Seated between the cheery octogenarian and the artless, smiling girl, and in the midst of half-rural surroundings which constantly recalled the memory of his youth, Hubert Boinville, the deputy governor, did honor to the *potée*. His grave, cold manner thawed out rapidly and he conversed familiarly with his new friends, returning the gay sallies of Claudette and shouting with merriment at the sound of the *patois* words and phrases which the old lady used.

From time to time the widow would rise and go to attend to her cookery, and at last she returned triumphant, bringing in an iron baking-dish in which rose the gently swelling golden-brown *tôt-fait*, smelling of orange-flower water.

Then came the roasted chestnuts in their brown, crisped shells, and the old lady brought from her press a bottle of *fignolette*, a liquor made of brandy and sweet wine.

When Claudette had cleared the table, the grandmother took up her knitting mechanically and sat near the stove, chatting gaily at first, but she now yielded to the combined effects of the warmth and the *fignolette* and fell asleep. Claudette put the lamp on the table, and she and the visitor

were left to entertain each other. The girl, sprightly and light-hearted, did nearly all the talking. She had been brought up at Argonne, and described the neighborhood with such exactness that Boinville seemed to be carried back to his native place; as the room was warm Claudette had opened a window, and the fresh air came in laden with the odors of the market-garden, and the gurgling sound of a fountain, while farther off was heard the bell of the Capuchin convent.

Hubert Boinville had an hallucination, for which the *fignolette*, and the blue eyes of his young countrywoman were responsible. It seemed as if twenty years had rolled backward and that he was still in his native village. The wind in the fruit trees was the rustling of the Argonne forest, the soft murmur of running water was the caressing voice of the river Aire. His youth, which for twenty years had been buried under old papers and deeds was now revived, and before him were the blue laughing eyes of Claudette, looking at him so artlessly that his long torpid heart awoke suddenly and beat a delightful pit-a-pat against his breast.

Suddenly the old lady awoke with a start and stammered an apology. M. Boinville rose, for it was time to go, and after thanking the widow warmly for her hospitality and promising to come again, he extended his hand to Claudette. Their eyes met, and the deputy governor's glance was so earnest that the young girl's eyelids drooped suddenly. She accompanied him down stairs, and when they reached the house door he clasped her hand again, but without knowing what to say to her. And yet his heart was full.

Hubert Boinville continued to give, as is said in official language, "active and brilliant impulse to the Department." The ministerial machine went on heaping up on his desk the daily grist of reports and papers, and the sittings of the Council, audiences, commissions and other official duties kept him so busy that he could not find a spare hour in which to go to the humble lodgings near the Capuchin convent. In the midst of his work, however, his thoughts often wandered back to the humble little dinner, and several times his attention was distracted from an official document by a vision of Claudette's bright azure eyes, which seemed to flutter about on the paper like a pair of blue butterflies. When he returned to his gloomy bachelor apartment, those eyes went before

him, and seemed to laugh merrily as he stirred his dull fire, and then he thought again of the dinner in the cheerful room, of the fire blazing up gaily in the delft stove, and of the young girl's merry prattle, which had temporarily resuscitated the sensation of his twenty-first year. More than once he went to his mirror and looked gloomily at his gray-streaked beard, thought of his loveless youth, and of his increasing years, and said with La Fontaine :

"Have I passed the time for loving?"

Then he would be seized with a sort of tender homesickness which filled him with dismay, and made him regret that he had never married.

One cloudy afternoon toward the end of December, the solemn usher opened the door and announced :

"Madame Blouet, sir."

Boinville rose eagerly to greet his visitor, and inquired, with a slight blush, for her granddaughter.

"She is very well, sir," was the answer, "and your visit brought her luck ; she received an appointment yesterday in a telegraph office. I could not think of leaving Paris without again thanking you, sir, for your kindness to us."

Boinville's heart sank.

"You are to leave Paris; is this position in the provinces?"

"Yes, in the Vosges. Of course I shall go with Claudette; I am eighty years old, and cannot have much longer to live ; we shall never part, in this world."

"Do you go soon?"

"In January. Good-bye, sir ; you have been very kind to us, and Claudette begged me to thank you in her name."

The deputy governor was thunderstruck, and answered only in monosyllables, and when the good woman had left him he sat motionless for a long time with his head in his hands.

That night he slept badly, and the next day was very taciturn with his employes.

Toward three o'clock he brushed his hat, left the office, and jumped into a cab that was passing, and half an hour later he hurried through the market garden of Number 12, Rue de la Santé, and knocked tremblingly at Madame Blouet's door. Claudette answered the knock, and on seeing the deputy governor, she started and blushed.

"Grandmother is out," she said, "but she will soon be home and will be so glad to see you."

"I have come to see, not your grandmother, but yourself, Mademoiselle Claudette," he returned.

"Me?" she exclaimed anxiously, and he repeated, "Yes, you," in an abrupt tone, and then his throat seemed to close and he could hardly speak.

"You are going away next month?" he asked at last.

The girl nodded assent.

"Are you not sorry to leave Paris?"

"Yes indeed I am. It grieves me to think of it, but then, this position is a fortune to us, and grandmother will be able to live in peace for the rest of her days."

"Suppose I should offer you the means of remaining in Paris, at the same time assuring comfort to Madame Blouet?"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed the young girl, her face brightening.

"It is rather a violent remedy," he said, hesitating again. "perhaps you would think it too great an effort."

"Oh no, I am very resolute—only tell me what it is."

He took a long breath, and then said quietly, almost harshly,

"Will you marry me?"

"Heaven!" she gasped, in a voice of deep emotion; but although her face expressed the deepest surprise, there was no sign of repugnance or alarm. Her bosom heaved, her lips parted, and her eyes became moist with tender brightness.

Boinville dared not look at her, lest he should read refusal in her face, but at last, alarmed by her long silence, he raised his head, saying, "You think me too old—you are frightened—"

"Not frightened," she answered, simply, "but surprised, and—glad. It is too good. I can hardly believe it."

"My darling!" he cried, taking both her hands "you must believe it. I am the one to be glad, for I love you."

She was silent, but there was no mistaking the tenderness and gratitude that were shining in her eyes, and Hubert Boinville must have read them aright, for he drew her closely to him, and meeting with no resistance, raised her hands to his lips and kissed them with youthful fervor.

"Holy Mother!" cried the old lady, appearing on the scene at that instant, and the others turned round, he a little confused; the girl blushing, but radiant.

"Do not be shocked, Madame Blouet," said the deputy governor. "The evening that I dined here I found a wife; the ceremony will take place next month—with your permission."

ETCHINGS: THE SAD HOUR

A florist-shop in the city of Philadelphia.

A lady, apparently about thirty years of age, dressed somberly in black, enters, and approaching the proprietor, who is behind the counter, demurely asks:

"Does anyone ever use those floral pieces that I see in the window, as wedding presents?"—at the same time indicating by a gesture that she referred to mementoes of immortelles there conspicuously displayed.

"Well," answered the florist, somewhat astonished, "that is a use to which I have never before heard of their being put; still I know of no reason why they could not be so used, if one desired to give such an emblem as a token of esteem at such a time. What design would you think of using?" setting on the counter such emblems as Gates Ajar, a harp, and a lyre.

"I hardly know," continued the lady, "still, I think possibly this one might answer," picking up the lyre.

"What inscription would you wish on it?" asked the florist.

"The sad hour."

"Is not that rather sombre for such a joyous occasion?"

"Well, it might be ordinarily, but the fact is simply this: the gentleman to whom I wish to send it and myself were engaged to be married, and he is now about to marry another lady; so if you think the immortelles that you put in it will last a long time, I will take this lyre, and have the motto—

THE SAD HOUR

—just as large and prominent as ever you can make it."

To this the polite florist replies that he had no doubt but that the immortelles would last as long as could be desired.

The lady left, composed and satisfied.

The emblem was finished in strict accordance with the order and promptly delivered to the address given.

* * * * * *

What the recipient said may be recorded in heaven, but is not known on earth, and the florist and his customer still live.

* H. A. Grace: For Short Stories.

ABRUM, CA'LINE AND ASPHALT

Upon the church, the negro denizens of Crippletown focused their opinions. They were about equally divided between the Methodist and Baptist denominations, and no matter how much sociability existed among the men as they went to work together, or among the women as they chatted or sang over their wash-tubs, when Sunday came with its suggestive clangor of church bells, friendliness drew itself into its shell of finery, and only protruded its head to cast depreciative glances at members of any church save its own.

Squads of people bound for the Baptist church, passed squads of people bound for the Methodist church without exchanging even nods of greeting. Extreme reserve and solemnity characterized the general religious bearing.

It is Sunday evening in the cottage of Abraham Wilson, a most devout Methodist of the blackest physical type. He had talked Methodism to his young wife until her brain and tongue were in a tangle. He made it the theme of his evening and morning discourses, and threw in foot-notes at all possible opportunities. He, as well as his neighbors, were curious to know which denomination Caroline would finally join, especially as it had been whispered for some time that she was "on the fence" owing to the fact that her parents had been Baptists and her husband a Methodist.

Few doubted that Abraham's powers of argument would in time bring her wavering mind to his views. But it seemed that Caroline's besetting sin, vanity, and love of display, linked with the persuasive powers of the Baptist minister, who called on her often through the day while Abraham was away, were to bulwark the latter's earnest endeavors.

She had ever looked with charmed eyes on the baptismal ceremonies, which usually took place in a neighboring creek, and her heart had suffered frequent pangs at thinking that she was hindered from being the cynosure of the thousands that sung and shouted on the shore as the dripping candidates were led from the stream. From childhood up she had looked forward to immersion with as much anticipation as she had to marriage. Regardless of this she had married a Methodist, because she had loved him.

*W. N. Harben: The Round Table.

"Abrum," said she, after listening to him in silence for an hour, "Abrum, I know you think you is right, en ev'y-body kin hat der own way er thinkin' 'bout chu'ches, but ez fur me, I know I's hat my min' set on 'mersion in runnin' water ev'y since I know my min'. I's been puttin' it off frum summer ter summer, en now you gwine to disagree wid me."

Abraham's surprise rendered him almost speechless. He had felt intuitively that Caroline did not agree with him for a long time, but had nursed the belief that his arguments would wear away her objections ere she gave them voice.

"You ever let me yer er you gwine wadin' in 'at creek en I swear 'fo' God I'll trash you ev'y step frum deh home."

"Huh!" his wife grunted defiantly. "Shuh, Abrum Wilson! you ain't man enough; your feared to tech me. I don't want none er yo' ol' 'ligion. 'Sides anything 'at's good 'nough for Jesus Christ certney is good 'nough fer me. De bible seh He went down into de water; now, Abrum, I can't go down into de water en hat de preacher des sprinkle my haid out'n er gravy bowl, same as I does w'en I's ironin'. Now w't's de use in talkin' dat way. Why n't Christ des ax um fer er lil in er goa'd dipper? Seem lak dat enough 'cordin' ter yo all's way."

Abraham had exhausted every argument in his brain already, so he could formulate no reply, but inflated almost to explosion with turbulent spleen, he resumed his seat in the door, while she, momentarily triumphant, bustled round the cottage to put their only child, little Asphalt, to bed. The latter two-year old innocent owed its name to the fact that he happened to be born one day while Abram was employed in laying asphalt pavement in the city. He was struck with the high-sounding name and told Caroline that the mixture had "des enough pitch in it fer er nigger child's name."

When she had put Asphalt to bed, Caroline timidly drew her chair near to his. He did not look at her.

"Now, Abrum," said she, pacifically, "you is hat yo' way, en I hain't seh nothin' ergin it all 'long sence we is married." She waited a moment for him to speak, but as he was stubbornly silent she went on with growing firmness, as she slily eyed him askance: "I 'low ter jine de Baptist chu'ch, de Lawd willin', en git my 'mersion 'long wid Sallie en Lindy. Brer Brown was here yistiddy en I done give 'im my promise; an he give me lessons w'en ter hol' my bref ter keep from stranglin'."

Abraham turned upon her with such suddenness that she shrank back into her chair as if smitten.

"You seh you is hehn? You seh you is?" he growled. "Well, we gwine see. You seh you is gwine wade out in dat creek lak er crippled duck. Le' me des see it en I'll git er divo'ce sho en never put my foot in dis house ergin.

"You go git yo' divo'ce," she said sullenly, "I's got er right ter my side same ez you."

"Look yer, Ca'line!" he snapped out, rising clumsily to his feet, "you des seh ernurr word en I'll pick up dat plank deh en 'fo' God I'll split it over yo' haid. Huh!"

He waited a moment for the silenced woman to speak, but she did not answer him in words. She angered him more than ever by stealthily regarding him from the corner of her eye and humming, with as much gusto as her caution would allow, a hymn that was usually sung by the Baptists during their baptismal ceremonies.

To this Abraham had no reply, save to look at the offender as if he would thus scorch her with the volcanic heat of his supreme contempt, and walked away into the darkness.

Caroline's song dwindled into a murmur as he vanished. She went to the door and peered after him as he receded in the misty moonlight, with a look of deep concern upon her.

Abraham went on until he came to the cottage of his widowed sister, Martha Todd. Here he took a seat on the doorstep. A woman came out of the unlighted room.

"Dat you, Abrum?" she grunted in surprise. "Well, well; I do know you skeered me, sho, kase I ain't 'spectin' you. What kin er happen ter tek you off frum home dis time er night; I des fixin' ter go ter baid?"

"Marfy," said the visitor, in a deeply pained voice, "de storm has riz in my own home at las'. I reckon me en Ca'line done bust up fer good."

"Why, Abrum; whut's de matter? How come you seh dat? My!"

"Sister Marfy, you know Ca'line. You know how she is w'en she set 'er haid. She is sho' nough set on 'mersion en de Baptist chu'ch. You know how I is on dat subjec'."

"Brer Abrum, dis done come on us at las'." The woman seemed to filter her tones through a mixture of resignation and satisfaction. "I been hat my eye open fer er long time. I ain't seh nothin' kase it no business er mine, en I 'low it bes'

ter wait. Ev'y day while you hard at wuk de Baptist preacher is been er buzzin' in Ca'line's ear. I don't see no way out'n it. It sholly is too bad; Asphy is so young; you is sech er big Mephodis' an' er deacon, too. I do know how you feel."

"Marfy," said the ebon devotee, sternly, as he evoked a dull thud from his knee onto which his broad hand descended; "Marfy, me en Ca'line gwine be divo'ced, 'at's de end."

"Too bad she tuk dat way," sighed Martha Todd, more deeply than she was given to over her own misfortunes.

The truth was that nothing could have pleased the widowed and childless woman more than to have her brother, who was such a prominent Methodist, and a steady laborer, a member of her own household, which would be, she knew, in case of a separation between the couple.

"Women is er caution, sho, brer," she went on, "I do know Ca'line is haid-strong. Mighty bad fer bofe, dis disagreement. 'Tain't 'cordin' ter scriptur'."

Silence fell upon the pair, save for the sound of Martha's breath as it contended with the nicotine in her uncleanly pipe-stem. The hours passed until the clock within struck twelve jingling strokes. Abraham rose stiffly, lingered, stretched himself, for he felt that he needed to apologize for going back.

"Yer gwine back ter 'er, brer?" Martha Todd asked significantly. "May de Lo'd be 'long wid you den."

"I wouldn't go er step, but I hatter git my clothes frum 'er'," said he sheepishly. "You reckon I gwine 'low dat gal ter keep my clothes? Huh! Marfy, w'at you rekon I is?"

"Once you git back she gwine 'suade you ter let 'er be 'mersed. Who knows, we may see Deacon Abrum wid wet clothes on, too. Some women is too sly——"

"You go 'long, sister, I tell you too much is done pass twixt me en Ca'line. I des gwine atter my things, den I'll come live wid you—I'll be yer in de mornin'."

Thus speaking, Abraham turned slowly homeward. Late as it was he found Caroline sitting in the door smoking her pipe. She had a sulky mien on her bent, portly form. She drew her feet under her chair as her liege lord passed wordless into the cottage. He turned up the wick of the low-burning lamp, and as its feeble rays struggled through the room his glance fell on the features of sleeping Asphalt, and a lump rose in his throat.

A crude wardrobe stood against the wall. Through its

open door he caught a glimpse of his clothing crowded into the piece of furniture with Caroline's finery. Therein was his long-tailed broadcloth coat, his bell-shaped silk hat, his shining doeskin trousers, and an overcoat.

He had magnanimously made up his mind that he would demand nothing of the domestic wreck except his own clothing. The furniture of the cottage, all other belongings of him and his wife, should remain with her, even little Asphalt.

While he was looking under the child's bed for his best boots, which he remembered casting off there a few hours previous, Caroline, with a meaning smile playing round her lips, as if she had divined his plans, rose automatically, walked with a well-assumed air of sleepiness to the wardrobe, and locking it, put the key in her pocket. Then, as if unaware that his startled orbs were on her, she went to the clock on the mantelpiece and began to wind it, singing the while a little air which she often sung when wholly at ease with herself and all the rest of the world.

Abraham stood behind her rigid form, boots in hand, in silence. Something in Caroline's prompt flank movement gave him a thrill of vague pleasure, while it aroused his aggressiveness. She had thwarted him, it was true, but in doing so had of her own will raised a hindrance to his quitting the place. Abraham had a struggle with himself. Somehow the room seemed to be more cozy than ever before, while Martha Todd's house rose bleak and dreary before his mental sight. How amicably all might be arranged if Caroline would only relinquish her dream of "runnin' water."

Then it occurred to him that, in justice to his usual sternness of manner, he must say something hard to her, must force the key of the wardrobe from her, and secure his clothing, but he could not do it; he was softened by her quiet mein as she stood in the door and looked out at the night. But if he did not take his clothing to his sister in the morning what excuse could he offer for having failed so ignominiously? He decided that he would wait until the next day and see what could be done; so he went into the adjoining room, the "guest-room," and retired.

He lay in bed with his eyes open, reflecting over the ridiculous position Caroline had placed him in before his fellow churchmen, and smarting over the knowledge that the Baptists were enjoying his discomfiture.

After a while the lamp was extinguished in Caroline's room, and by her snoring he knew that she was sound asleep. He knew that it would be an easy matter for him to steal into her room and take the wardrobe key from her gown pocket and get possession of his guarded property, but he shrank from hastening matters in any such way. After a while he slept and snored in harmony with his estranged wife.

When he awoke in the morning a most tempting breakfast was waiting him on the table, and Caroline and little Asphalt were looking neat and interesting. He took his accustomed seat glumly and ate his breakfast with a good relish. His pride prevented him from speaking to the woman from whom he was to be divorced, though it did not in any wise interfere with his partaking of the food she had cooked before he was awake. By his wounded taciturnity he would have her comprehend that his day in the cottage was over, that he only delayed to get a chance to lessen the overpacked wardrobe.

So far, it was true, he had made little headway, but then Rome was not built in a day, and he could afford to abide his time, especially as the immersion season had not yet arrived. But he remembered, with a chill, that on his way to work that morning he would be obliged to pass Martha Todd's house. She would be expecting him to bring along an armful of clothing. What could he do to excuse his delay? He bethought himself all at once of his Sunday boots and the blacking and blacking-brush, still under Asphalt's little bed. With them he could pay an installment on his sister's hopes and also shield himself from the appearance of defeat.

Rising from the table, he reached under the bed, and securing the articles in question he tucked them under his arm and sailed forth without looking at Caroline or Asphalt.

Martha Todd was on the lookout, pacing up and down her front yard. She vanquished a rather open look of curiosity as he sauntered down the sidewalk, and gave her face an expression of absolute vacancy of thought.

"Good mornin', Abrum?" said she.

"Good-mornin', sister," he replied, in a sigh, as he passed her into the cottage, "kin I ax yer ter save dese yer boots en blackin'-bresh fer me. It's all my things I kin git my han's on now. Ca'line is de beatenes' woman in dis wull I do know. She's locked um all up in de wa'drobe en hid de key som'rs. But I gwine back ter night en watch my chances.

She 'low she mighty sharp, but you gwine see. You gwine hear supin drap; now min' whut I seh. She hatter git up 'fo' day to haid me off. De minute I git my han's on any er my things I gwine fetch um right ter you, en w'en I got um all frum 'er she kin des go, now you min' whut I seh. She kin des go 'long en wade en swim tell she tek er tail lak er tadpole fer all I keer. All I want is whut b'longs ter me. I gwine hat um, too, en not many words be passed nurr."

Discerning Martha began to place a small value on her prospect of gaining her point, but in the sweet delight of being a partner in a family disagreement she did not make her fears known, and pretended to think that he was in the right to a final separation from Caroline.

That day Abraham's companions wondered at his moods. He was very absent-minded, and seemed extremely nervous and ill at ease. As the hour for dinner arrived he remembered that he would be obliged to go home for a small piece of plug tobacco which he had forgotten.

"My lord, Abrum!" exclaimed a dusky companion in surprise, "whyn't you step er crost ter de sto' en buy a piece. It's er mile, en'll push you lak smoke ter git back."

"No use," said Abraham, taking his luncheon in his hands and eating it as he started off. "No use; I des got ter hat it. It's my sweet navy, en deh ain't non er dat kin' in dat sto'. I cay'nt do er lick dis evenin' less'n I got it."

He found it necessary to avoid passing in view of Martha Todd's house, so his distance was a trifle longer than usual.

He stood in the door in surprise. Caroline and Asphalt were seated at the dining table, and on it for that midday repast was only some bread and water. His heart smote him suddenly as he remembered what a delightful luncheon she had always put up in his pail of mornings. But he must not weaken. He remembered that the desired piece of tobacco was in the pocket of a pair of trousers now locked in the wardrobe. Notwithstanding this knowledge, he went to the mantelpiece, looked in the clock, turned over papers, and ran his hands over the covering of Asphalt's bed.

Then feeling that some explanation was due Caroline, who was regarding him surreptitiously, he said to Asphalt, whose lack of comprehension was as positive as his blackness:

"Asphy, honey, has you seed yo' papa's piece er terbaccer? Seem lak I lef' it in my blue check pants."

Caroline, however, as if taking the remark to herself, without deigning to look at him, went to the wardrobe, unlocked it, and threw the pair of trousers referred to on the bed, and placidly resumed her work over the fire-place.

With marked eagerness Abraham ran his hand into a pocket of the garment, and finding the tobacco, he forthwith partook of a quid, as if he were unable to stay his desire for another moment. Then he stood and gazed at his wife steadily for a minute with a mingled look of embarrassment and resentment.

But she took not the slightest notice of him. She did not move save to reach over and fan the flies from Asphalt's face.

Abraham was in hasty argument with himself in regard to the disposal of the trousers lying before him. He did not like to take them away, for he would be obliged to go to Martha Todd's house to leave them in her care. If the trousers had been his best he might have thought differently, but as fate would have it they were of the very least value of any of his clothes. They were adorned with vari-colored patches, and fringed badly at the knees.

On the other hand, Caroline, he feared, would consider his failing to take them as an evidence that he was weakening from the rigorous course he was pursuing toward a divorce. He decided upon an exhibition of contempt for the trousers, and again brought his child into diplomatic service.

"Asphy," said he ruefully, holding the trousers out at arm's length, while the child was most desperately chewing his cheek to dislocate the colony of flies from the Oklahoma below a wildly rolling orb, "Asphy, yo' papa has certney got all de use out'n dese yer pants. Some tramp kin hat um. 'Sides I mus' git er lots er new things ter wear in Texas." With those words, the last of which caused Caroline to start, he threw the trousers into a corner and left the cottage.

As night after night passed the breach seemed to be widening between the couple. Morning after morning Abraham emerged from his house bearing some article of clothing he had managed to secure. He took them to Martha Todd. She smiled, and shed some crocodile tears over the coat, vest, or trousers, as the case might be, cast depreciating looks at certain grease spots or rents, with a sigh that too plainly suggested her opinion of Caroline's domestic negligence.

One night while Abraham was sedulously searching under the beds, behind trunks, and everywhere for something

belonging to him, he was deeply surprised to detect a loud grunt, indicating a burthen of both defiance and disgust, in the bosom of his hitherto wordless wife. He was even more surprised to see her go with a hasty shuffle to the wardrobe and show him that it had not been locked by throwing the door of it wide open.

With another most contemptuous grunt she resumed her seat and began to pat her foot on the floor vigorously, as if to vent her boiling spleen.

Abraham felt cold to his very marrow. She was then willing to remove every hinderance to his leaving, had, indeed, made an opening by which he could hasten his departure.

He approached the wardrobe slowly, casting helpless glances at Caroline's heaving back. There among her gowns hung naught he could call his own save a soiled linen duster and his overcoat. With trembling fingers he took the duster from its hook, and stalked out into the night. Slowly he glided with bowed head toward his sister's house. She sat in the doorway behind a cloud of tobacco smoke.

"Well," said he almost in a whisper, "well, Marfy, dis trouble is mos' over wid now. 'Twon't be long 'fo' I'll come, now. I think I got de las' thing 'cep' er overcoat. Wid good luck I think I kin git dat ter-morrer night. Ter-night I hope you'll 'low me ter sleep in yo' company-room. I want ter let Ca'line en Asphy git use'n ter stayin' in dat house alone."

Martha rose and moved into the adjoining room to arrange his bed. Her movements betrayed high elation. Things had taken a shape at last that she had hardly hoped for. She lay awake until past midnight listening to Abraham's creaking bedstead and gloating over the prospective triumph over her heretical sister-in-law.

The next morning Abraham ate his breakfast at Martha's and went to work without going home. He thought that an additional twelve hours to Caroline's suspense would do much toward showing her how desirable it was to have a man around the house. The ensuing day, be it said, was a long one to him, and he suffered more than he thought she did.

When he slouched into his cottage at dusk that day, he was shocked to see the inevitable wardrobe open. Indeed the door of that receptacle was frowningly held ajar by means of a stick of stovewood.

Abraham, however, had arranged a grand *coup d' etat* for

this last visit to his home. It remained to be seen how the enemy would receive the movement.

It was Saturday. He had his entire earnings of the week —twelve silver dollars—in his pocket. He wondered whether twenty-four halves or twelve whole dollars would make the biggest display, and had finally decided on the latter.

Drawing his hand from his pocket to scratch his head he contrived to evoke quite a merry jingle of coin as he stepped across the room to a small table. Caroline's face flushed and she followed his movements with a mien of deep interest. Not since their marriage had he failed to divide his week's wages with her. He did not, as she feared, hand it to her on this momentous occasion. Instead, he sat down at the table, after he had dusted and carefully rolled up his overcoat in a newspaper and began to arrange his money in divers piles and positions by the light of a small piece of candle which he had taken from his pocket and lighted to show Caroline that he was not obliged to call for the lamp, which shone on the supper table.

Then he drew forth a soiled piece of writing paper, a small stub of a pencil, and seemed to be engrossed in a deep calculation, as he scratched down some strange hieroglyphics and lines, as if they marked out his course in the future.

"Asphy," said he, dreamily, the better to assume utter unconsciousness of the fact that the child was asleep on its bed. "Asphy, honey, you ain't never yer anybody seh how fur 't is ter Texas, has you? De boss 'low it's er long way off frum Atlanta, but I reckon I kin git deh—de train starts at twelve ter-night."

Caroline was so excited that her trembling hands made the dishes in the cupboard rattle as she was putting away the supper, which he had refused to touch, although she had kept it waiting for his arrival. She took a seat in the doorway and turned her dusky face out toward the night in order that he might not see her tear-dimmed eyes.

At the table he sat over his coin chessmen and figures until the far-away strokes of a clock-bell rang the hour of ten out to them from the heart of the sleeping city. As if to answer the bell came a rasping, labored cough from slumbering Asphalt, a disconnected jargon murmured as from a breast of pain, half subdued by sleep.

Two pairs of eyes were raised suddenly; one from the

coin-strewn table, the other from the long rows of lights which mark out a street on the blackness far away, between long lines of tall buildings. Two hearts quickened their beatings simultaneously. Two minds were focused on one idea.

The mother rose quickly and with a cat-like tread went to the child and bent over him. Abraham all at once had eyes for aught besides his gains. His mouth relaxed from its drawn sternness and fell open as he watched Caroline's anxious posture at the bed. He went to her side.

They looked like a pair of ebony statues. The light of the lamp and candle seemed to be struggling to produce shadows of the couple on the wall, but the rays of one lessened the power of the other, so that four dim contortions in shade took the place of two. The mother's hand was on the brow of the sleeper; her breath was held in suspense.

"Ca'line," more in a rasping gasp was the name pronounced than in Abraham's usual tones; "Ca'line, dat child has got 'is feet wet somewhar'. Dis typhoid fever is all roun' dis settlement en pow'ful bad wid chillun. You look atter him honey; I gwine fur er doctor. I'll be back ez soon ez I kin git yer." He left his money on the table, without giving it a thought or glance, and darted hurriedly from the room.

Day after day the troubled pair watched over their sick child, hoping and praying for its life to be spared to them.

"Ef it had en' er been fur dis yer divo'ce we hat up 'twix us, Ca'line, it wouldn't er come, I know," said Abraham, in sackcloth and ashes one night. "It's mighty bad ter tamper wid whut de Lo'd have done jined tergerr, en all 'bout His Own Son, too; better not hat no chu'ches en dat. Sister done gwine sen' me my things back."

Caroline was husky of voice when she replied, dampening a towel to cool Asphalt's hot brow: "Abrum, I'm willin', en only too willin' ter go wid you in yo' chu'ch. I don't know no diffunce 'twix de two; I des hat my min' sot on foolish showin' off. En if God will only spar dis one child, I'll never open my mouf ergin. Who knows but er gwine in der water wid wet clothes might er been my regular death? Mebby dis spell er Asphy's is er warnin' ergin it."

Slowly Asphalt passed the dread climax, and began to grow better, and to-day Crippletown does not contain a more happy couple than Abraham and Caroline.

ETCHINGS: AFTERWARD

It is deep winter. A fierce storm shakes the windows in their casement. Melting flakes were in his beard when he entered.

Within is no light save from the fire; a dull, steady glow that bathes the room in soft rose. There are lordly furnishings; about the floor great cushions; skins of the leopard and lion.

There is a screen.

My God, do not let me look behind that screen!

Hush! Where was I? Yes, on the furs before the fire, my head, with loosened hair, pillowed on the rug at his feet.

It was pleasant to listen to the raging of the wind.

He had come to tell me of his approaching marriage—a marriage of love, he said, and laughed.

It was then all the room seemed to burst into a firelight of blood; all the the sounds of hell rang in my ears; and my wrist had the sudden strength of ten men to drive the blade in his breast. His great muscles and firm flesh gave momentary resistance to the point, and then, what joy to feel them yield, and the steel slip deftly in!

The wet crimson poured over my fingers into the creases of the palms he had kissed, and the dimples he had counted.

He rolled, so much clay, onto the white furs, and see, I have drawn the screen in front of him....for he is still laughing....the happy bridegroom.

I wish the bride might see that smile!

There is a dark stream crawling through the fur, meandering and choosing its crooked way like a little brook in the summer grasses, and it creeps on and on lazily toward the polished hearth. It will run on until the flames drink it.... and when it reaches them I must get some snow at the window and wash my hands....but just now I can think of nothing but how long it will be by the tick of the carved clock against the wall before it reaches its goal....of nothing but that, and how, when the fire sinks and crumbles to ashes the waiting shadows will steal from the corners where they hide and gather closer around me....and I shall have to sit motionless until the dawn, lest by chance I should set my foot in that black little brook....it is quiet....but those shadows are only waiting....waiting in the corners!

*Annie Reeve Aldrich: For Short Stories.

THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS FOUND

M. Scipion Desruelles kept a small shop in the Rue de Seine, Paris. He had a wife, but no children.

He was a small tradesman, and his wife a large, coarse-looking woman, quite capable of taking care of shop and Scipion.

Scipion's past life had been singularly uneventful.

One single circumstance had ruffled it, and that he used often to relate to his gossips, in proof that a hero was spoiled in the making when Scipion became a shopkeeper.

One night, ten years before the time of his introduction to the reader, Scipion had gone to the theatre, and after the performance had taken Madame to a restaurant and treated her to a little supper. Returning home, after he was in bed Scipion heard a noise in the shop. He armed himself with a bootjack, went down, and, with the assistance of the hastily summoned police, captured a burglar.

The man, who said he was an Italian, named Vedova, disclaimed earnestly all felonious intentions, but could give no good account of himself. Scipion prosecuted him vigorously, and he was convicted and sent to Brest.

Two years later Scipion met Vedova in a café and had him arrested as an escaped convict.

In the early part of 1852 Scipion received official notification from Martinique that a bachelor cousin of his on the island, whose name was Pache, was dead and had left him heir to all his property which was large, and included a valuable sugar plantation. Desruelles was further informed by the notary at St. Jean, that it would be necessary for him to come out in person and administer on the estate in order to save himself great loss and inconvenience and many delays.

The bourgeois of Paris is not a traveling character, but neither is he willing to lose money if he can help it. Scipion bought himself a trunk, committed the little boutique in the Rue de Seine to Madame's charge—she was quite as competent to take care of it as he—made a deed of all his property in Paris to Madame as a preventive of accidents, and then bidding her the most tender adieu, sailed for Martinique, via., Bourdeaux, in a brig which took out a cargo of claret and oil for the French islands and New Orleans.

* Edmond Spencer : Parisian Police Archives.

When Desreulles reached Martinique and went to St. Jean, he was simply struck dumb to find his cousin alive and well, and all the notarial papers he had received forgeries!

There was nothing for him to do but go back again.

The brig was to sail in a day for New Orleans, and Scipion determined to go thither in her, take the cars to New York and the steamer thence to Havre, in order to get home again as speedily as possible. He was burning to send the police in search of the rascals who had hoaxed him and made him spend his money and suffer sea-sickness in a wild-goose chase. He was armed with all the preliminary depositions and statements necessary to open the case, duplicates of which were to be forwarded by the authorities from Martinique.

Arrived in New Orleans, Scipion determined to spend a day or two in the city before taking the cars for New York. He put up at a boarding house in the French quarter, and devoted himself to sight-seeing with great assiduity.

While at breakfast the second morning after his arrival he was warmly greeted by a stranger, who took his hand and said: "I am truly delighted to see you, Monsieur Quentineau! When did you arrive?"

Scipion gently informed the man that he was not Quentineau, but Scipion Desruelles.

The stranger with great violence said that the dodge wouldn't go down there! Next thing he'd want to repudiate that bill of $725 he owed Marais & Hughes.

Scipion said he had only been in the city a day, had never seen the stranger before, nor knew he who or what Marais & Hughes were—consequently could not possibly owe them or anybody else anything.

An hour hour later Scipion was arrested on a warrant taken out by Marais & Hughes, liquor dealers in Canal street, against Pierre Quentineau, an absconding debtor.

Scipion Desruelles, alias Quentineau, was cast into prison. He found a lawyer, and with great difficulty, and at the cost of half his money, proved that he was not Quentineau, but Scipion Desruelles, a passenger aboard the brig Braganza, of Bordeaux. But for the captain he would have been convicted, for several witnesses swore that he was Quentineau.

As soon as Scipion was released he went to the levee and embarked on a steamer for Memphis, intending to make his way thence by rail to New York.

At Memphis he was misdirected, enticed into a low groggery under the bluffs and robbed of every cent he had left. Scipion found his way to the mayor of the city, who promised to write to the French Consul at New Orleans about it and to send the police in search of the thieves.

Scipion meantime wrote to Paris to Madame for a remittance, and went about in search of a situation. A cotton broker gave him some correspondence with Louisiana Creole planters to look after, and he was thus enabled to earn enough to eat. But no answer nor remittance came from Madame, and our poor exile could not make money enough to take him home. At last he wrote to his cousin in Martinique, stating his circumstances, and received shortly after in reply a draft for 2,500 francs.

Scipion immediately bought himself some clothes and necessaries, took the cars and started for New York.

Here, while waiting for the sailing of the Havre steamer, he was again arrested as being Pierre Ouentineau a fugitive from justice and a bond-forger.

By the merest good luck the cotton-broker in whose employ he had been in Memphis happened to be in the city, and Scipion was able to establish an alibi. His passport was stolen from him on the Memphis steamer, and he had to get another one in New York, being thus delayed a week.

Finally, to his intense joy, he was outside Sandy Hook on his return voyage.

Arrived at Havre, he was accosted on the quay by a customs officer with, "Eh bien! Monsieur Quentineau! What have you to declare at *this* time?"

"Sacre bete de Quentineau!" cried the exasperated boutiquier; "I am Scipion Desruelles, marchand, numero 79 *bis* rue de Seine."

"Then, sir, you must be detained," said the officer.

While he was waiting in the customs office a man came behind him, slipped something in his hand, and whispered: "Don't be afraid, Quentineau! They have nothing whatever against you! Here's what I owe you!

Desruelles turned quickly, but the man who had spoken to him was already lost in the crowd, and Scipion found eight gold Napoleons in his hand. Mechanically he put the money in his pocket, cursing this Quentineau whom everybody persisted in mistaking him for.

His baggage proving all right, and his passport not objectionable, Scipion was after some delay permitted to start for Paris, but still under the suspicion of the authorities that he was not Desruelles, but Quentineau. At Rouen, in the railroad restaurant, he changed a Napoleon to buy a bottle of wine and half a chicken. As soon as he reached Paris he took a fiacre and drove to numero 79 Rue de Seine. His modest sign was no longer there, but instead of it one of :

"Lamballe, coiffeur et parfumeur."

Astounded, he rushed into the little shop; "Madame Desruelles," he said, "where is she?"

The attendant answered, "In America. It is four months since she went—at the summons of her husband!"

"At the summons of me!" cried Scipion, sitting down abruptly. "This is all a dream!"

Before he could say another word, a sergeant de ville entered the shop and laid hands upon him. "You are wanted, Quentineau."

"I am not Quentineau—I am Desruelles!" shouted the unhappy man, but the officer of the law was incredulous, and bore Scipion off to prison.

He was examined on a charge of coining and of passing counterfeit Napoleons upon the *dame du comptoir* of the railroad restaurant at Rouen, and fully committed for trial as Quentineau, alias Desruelles, *faussaire*."

Desruelles employed an able advocate, and laid all the facts before him. "It is a mere question of mistaken identity," said the lawyer, "and of course there will be no difficulty in proving who you really are—a boutiquier of the Rue de Seine, of twenty years' standing."

But the advocate reckoned rather too hastily. One of the most interesting trials that ever came off in Paris, now ensued. The advocate employed by Desruelles was thoroughly persuaded of his client's innocence and good character, but the *Procureur Imperial* was of a different opinion. The case was sent before the Court d'Assises, and was tried by the president. A great number of witnesses were called, and the whole question turned upon the identity of the prisoner, by the mutual agreement of parties, for the reason that if the accused were Desruelles his account of how he received the gold Napoleons (admitted to be counterfeit) was probable ; but if he were Quentineau, no defense was possible.

Quentineau was established to be a desperate character, who had been several times convicted of minor offenses, such as smuggling, and was more than suspected of being a criminal of much deeper dye—a counterfeiter and forger.

The testimony of the customs officers at Havre and of the *dame du comptoir* at Rouen was first taken, and then a mass of police testimony to prove that Desruelles was unquestionably Quentineau. This was chiefly from the provinces, Quentineau having apparently operated very little in the capital. At the outset the defense experienced an unexpected difficulty. There were some hundreds of witnesses willing to swear that they knew Desruelles perfectly well, but not nearly so many who were satisfied that the prisoner was that person. His hardships, his voyages, his poverty had told upon Desruelles. He was deeply sunburnt, his hair was grizzled, his hand was hard, his manner nervous and excited —as little like as possible to the placid shopkeeper of the Rue de Seine. Unquestionably the accused resembled Desruelles remarkably, and knew as much about that person's antecedents as if he were really himself, but then—. In short, Desruelles' neighbors were exceedingly conscientious, and the police exceedingly positive, and the unfortunate shop keeper was convicted of being not himself at all, but Pierre Quentineau, *faussaire et faux monnayeur*.

The rebutting testimony adduced by the advocate general not only convinced the jury but overwhelmed Desruelles. It was a letter which one of his neighbors, a woman, testified she had received from Desruelles' wife, from New York, that she and her Scipion were happily accommodated with a shop and a thriving custom in Broadway in that great city ! Desruelles admitted that the handwriting was his wife's, but the statement impossible, for the reason that he was in the Palais de Justice, and consequently could not be in New York.

Pierre Quentineau, calling himself Scipion Desruelles was sentenced to ten years' close imprisonment.

The unhappy convict was moved by his sense of injustice to carry himself with unexpected dignity. He shed no tears, but said he felt certain that time would remove the evils that now bore upon him so heavily. He was sent to Brest, and set to learn the trade of shoe-making. He was one of the most tractable prisoners ever confined at the *bagnes*.

When Scipion had served out three years of his sentence,

an unexpected episode occurred in his history. Visitors were announced to Quentineau. He went to the office of the prison and found his Martinique cousin, Pache, and— his wife! He attempted to throw himself into the arms of the latter, but was repulsed with severe dignity.

"We know you are not Quentineau, but Desruelles," she said; "but there are crimes charged against Desruelles."

Scipion demanded an explanation and his release, but Madame was inexorable.

M. Pache then told him to wait. Through influence, and the facts presented by the Martinique cousin, the Court of Cassation had consented to re-examine the question as to his identity. "Of course you are Desruelles," said M. Pache, confidently, "and I mean to prove it, if it costs me a million." After you are shown to be not Quentineau but Desruelles, it will be time enough to go into Madame's grievances.

Desruelles was now brought back to Paris, and M. Pache set to work to establish his cousin's identity.

The notary he employed suggested that M. Jules Favre be retained as advocate and that eminent lawyer consented to take the case, but two days later sent a note declining to serve on account of the pressure of uncontrollable circumstances. M. Plongoulm, was consequently retained.

After various delays, the case of Desruelles or Quentineau was again called up, this time not before a jury, but before the first President of the Court of Cassation. The array of witnesses was formidable, and the testimony of the most conflicting character. For the Procureur's side a great number of witnesses were brought who positively identified Desruelles as Quentineau. In addition to this, substantial proof was brought to the fact that Desruelles himself was dead. One of the sailors of the brig Braganza was produced, who had made the Martinique voyage with Desruelles. This man testified that after cargo was discharged at New Orleans the brig took on cotton and was towed down the river on her return voyage. Off Chandeleur Bay the brig was boarded by a tug from Lake Bargne, and Desruelles came aboard from her. Three days out Desruelles was taken with yellow fever, and died just as the brig dropped anchor in the harbor of Basse Terre, Gaudeloupe. He was buried on the extreme eastern point of the island after a considerable difficulty with the authorities, who deeply resented the brig's anchoring at

the island with such a fatal disease aboard. The log of the Braganza and the burial record from Guadeloupe were presented in court in corroboration of the sailor's testimony, which made a deep impression.

For the side of the defense Mme. Desruelles positively identified her husband, naming marks and peculiarities upon his person which were found to be singularly identical with those on the prisoner's person. An amusing colloquy between her and the prisoner was permitted, in which both were seen to be mutually so intimate with all the details of a domestic life together of twenty year's standing that nothing short of a miracle could suppose the privity of a third party. The books of the shop were produced and the two went over them together, witnesses being called to corroborate these minutiæ whenever they concerned a third party, and it was thus shown by a mass of particulars that if the prisoner were really Quentineau, he must likewise be Desruelles. Having gone so far, the ingenious advocate proved, by an accumulation of circumstances that Desruelles could not be Quentineau.

The President of the Court, who seemed to take a great interest in the problem on trial before him, questioned Mme. Desruelles as to the cause of her sudden trip to New York.

She pointed to Desruelles with a scornful finger. "*Ca!*" she cried, "he had a mistress; he wished to abandon me; he called me Cosaque! He appointed to meet her in New York after settling up his cousin's estate. I determined to make his amours uncomfortable. I pursued the woman to New York. I pulled her hair; I boxed her ears; I made her flee in dismay to California; then, my mission performed, I returned to Paris."

The unhappy Scipion, in utter prostration of astonished protest, lifted his helpless hands and denied the mistress, the assignation—everything.

His wife turned away with an incredulous, scornful shrug.

"I have your letters, Monsieur. I compelled the creature to surrender them to me."

The President ordered Mme. Desruelles to produce the letters, and while the huissier was gone examined M. Pache.

The latter gentleman testified as to the facts of Desruelles' visit to Martinique, the false will, etc., and positively identified Desruelles.

"Have you ever seen that will?" asked the President.

"No," said Pache.

"I have it here," said the President. "It is duly authenticated, signed and sealed—look at it!"

"Mon Dieu! that is my own signature, and that notarial signature I would swear to as Alphonse Domairon's!"

At this moment the huissier came into court with the package of letters, which he handed to the president. That officer looked over them, with Pache still upon the stand.

"M. Pache," said the president, handing a letter to the witness, "do you identify that handwriting?"

"I do; it is undoubtedly Desruelles'."

"Be kind enough to read that letter aloud to the Court."

M. Pache, adjusting his eye glasses, read, "Ma Mignon: The will is all perfect. The Cosaque totally deceived. I sail for Martinique to-morrow, and *ma poudre de succession* will make short work of my stumbling-block of a cousin!"

He turned severely upon Desruelles: "Atrocious wretch! You plotted to poison me, then! I abandon the case."

Desruelles fell back fainting. Mme. Desruelles eagerly came forward. "I swear, Judge, that letter was not in the parcel I received from Mlle. Tolly! I never saw it before!"

The president turned from her coldly. "The handwriting is precisely the same."

The prisoner, reviving, stared around him with a ghastly face, and the president looked down upon him gloomily.

"The Court," he said, "is not able to determine with satisfaction whether the prisoner is Desruelles or Quentineau. The evidence preponderates in favor of Desruelles. But, so far as the ends of justice are concerned, it does not matter. Quentineau was a bad man, but Desruelles is evidently a man much worse. The prisoner is remanded to serve out his sentence, and at the expiration of his full term is doomed to transportation to New Caledonia for fifteen years."

Desruelles fainted once more and was removed. That afternoon, waiting wearily in the *salle des gardes*, a man came and stood before him, looking at him fixedly, then turning away. Everybody paid him the utmost respect. Desruelles asked the sergeant by his side who that personage was.

"It is M. M——, chief of the secret police."

"Good God!" cried Desruelles—"Vedova!"

He fell in an apoplectic fit, and before morning brought the question of his identity to the tribunal of a higher court.

ETCHINGS: THE OLD VIOLINIST

The chorus has just ended and the conductor has acknowledged the plaudits of an enthusiastic audience.

Waiting in the side wings is a little bent old man, his silvery hair lying across his violin as he murmurs to it loving words.

At last! at last he will be heard in solo!

What matter all the weary years without recognition? He will be heard! What matter that it is only a charity concert and he has proffered his services? He will be heard! and the appreciation of the audience will testify to his genius.

But hark!

There has been some mistake!

That should have been *his* number, not the tenor solo!

Never mind, it is all right! What matters a few moments more or less, when one is about to reach one's soul's desire?

So he sits and listens, his heart beating loudly with suppressed but consuming excitement.

At last! At last!

But what is that?

The audience is leaving!

Why he hasn't played yet!

He looks around in a dazed way. Moritz will explain it, he tells himself wearily, Moritz always understands everything, and he lays his head down on the table beside him.

* * * * * *

A young man hastens from among the orchestra players, his face pale and his teeth set, as he thinks of the disappointed old man behind the scenes. He thinks his father is weeping over his disappointment. "Father," he cries, a sob in his voice, "it is all right, it *shall* be all right! There were so many encores, you see there was not time for all. The manager didn't know and he left out the wrong thing. But you are to play to-morrow night, father, so it will be all right, you see," and he smiles as he raises the dear old face, as he would have done that of a child. Upon the furrowed cheeks there are no tears, but on the face, chiseled by the stern hand of death....a look of pained surprise....bewildered disappointment....the old man's heart is broken.

*Emma Churchman Hewitt: For Short Stories.

THE DEVILS IN HEAVEN

It is usually thought that when good children die they go to heaven and become angels. But if anyone imagines that they live there with nothing to do but fly around, and play hide-and-seek in the clouds, he is very much mistaken.

The angel children have to go to school every day like the boys and girls on earth, three hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon. They write with gold pencils on silver slates, and instead of the A B C books, they have story books with all sorts of gay-colored pictures. They do not study geography, for a knowledge of the earth would be of no use in heaven, neither do they learn the long and terrible multiplication table, because they live in Eternity.

The school teacher is Doctor Faust. He was a magistrate on earth, but on account of certain affairs that caused him a good deal of trouble and were very much talked about, he was required to teach school for three thousand years before he can have a vacation. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoon there is no school, and the children are permitted to play by themselves in the Milky Way ; but on Sunday, which is the grand holiday, they can go outside of heaven and play in the big meadow. There they enjoy themselves more than all the rest of the week put together.

The meadow is not green but blue, and thousands and tens of thousands of silver and golden flowers are all aglow with light and men call them stars.

In the afternoon of the great holiday, St. Peter takes care of the children, while Dr. Faust rests and recuperates from his labors during school-hours. St. Peter, who is always on guard at the gate of heaven, sees that there is no boisterous playing, and no running away or flying off too far; if he discovers any straying or wandering, he at once blows on his golden whistle the call to "come back."

One Wednesday afternoon it was very warm in heaven and St. Peter fell asleep, tired out with watching. The children noticed this and took advantage of it to steal by the old man and spread themselves over the entire meadow. The most

*A legend of the Origin of the Daisy: German of Rudolf Baumbach : Translated for Short Stories by Albert Gleaves.

enterprising ventured out to explore the extent of their playground, and discovered that it was abruptly ended by a high board fence. This they examined carefully for cracks to look through, but finding none flew to the top of the fence and commenced shouting across the space beyond.

Now hell was on the other side of the fence, and a multitude of little devils had just been driven out of the door. They were coal-black, with horns on their heads and long tails behind. Soon they looked up and saw the angels above them fluttering around the top of the fence, and at once they began to beg that they might be allowed to come up into heaven, promising faithfully to behave, if only the angels could let them in for "just a little while."

Moved with pity, the innocent angels decided to get the Jacobs' ladder out of the garret and let the little imps come up. Fortunately St. Peter was still asleep and they managed to drag the ladder out without disturbing him. After a good many efforts they succeeded in raising it up against the fence and then lowering it into hell. It scarcely touched the ground before the long-tailed little varlets were swarming up the rounds like monkeys.

When they got near the top the angels took them by the hand and helped them over the fence.

This is how the devils got into heaven.

At first they behaved very well, tiptoeing here and there, and carrying their tails under their arms like a lady's trail, as they had often seen the big devil grandmothers do. But this didn't last long, and in a few minutes they began to let themselves out and give full vent to their feelings. They turned hand-springs and somersaults, and growled and yelled like veritable imps. They mocked the good and happy people who were dreamily looking out of the windows of heaven; they stuck out their tongues and made faces at them.

Finally they began to tear up the flowers and throw them down on the earth.

In the meantime the little angels had become very much frightened and bitterly they repented their rashness in letting such unmannerly guests into heaven. In vain they pleaded with the rascals to be quiet and go back to hell, but the devils only laughed at them.

At last, in despair, they awakened St. Peter and tearfully told him what they had done.

He clasped his hands over his head, as he always did when angry, and thundered, "Come in."

And the little angels went sneaking through the gates, very crestfallen, with wings drooping and trailing on the floor. Then St. Peter called for the sleeping angel policemen, and when all the devils were caught, they were hand-cuffed and taken back where they belonged.

But this was not the end of the matter. For two consecutive Sundays the angels were not allowed to leave heaven, and when they were permitted to play they had to take off their wings and halo; this was the severest of all punishments for it is considered a great shame for an angel to be seen without his wings or his nimbus.

It is an ill-wind that blows no good. The flowers that the devils threw out of heaven, took root in the earth and grew from year to year. To be sure these star-flowers have lost much of their heavenly brightness, but they are still lovely to look at with their great hearts of gold and silver glory.

And because of this heavenly birth they do indeed possess a hidden power of their own.

When a maiden with doubt in her soul plucks off the white petals of the flower one by one, singing at the same time a certain song, she knows by the token of the last little petal the answer to the question of her heart.

THE RACES ON THE NEVA

It is the morning of the Epiphany.

The intense cold of the night has moderated, but the barometer still marks fifteen degrees below zero. From the tall steeples of innumerable churches the bells of St. Petersburg ring in the sacred feast. In an exquisitely appointed room of a palace, where tender lights filter through the golden shadows of silken hangings, sits a woman. Her attitude is one of repose, deep, unruffled. From the crown of her little flame colored head, to the tip of her dainty shoe, she is a perfect bit of dame Nature's art. If she were standing we should call her tall, but she sits crouching in her chair with all the abandon of a dozing tigress. She gives a little yawn.

"Ah! late as usual," she says aloud.

As she speaks the door opens and a servant enters.

"Captain Repine," he announces.

He follows quickly on the man's heels, short, thickset, with a dull Cossack face and kindly smile, wearing the uniform of an officer of the Imperial body-guard.

"Pardon, my dear Elisaveta. Have I made you wait?"

She gives her shapely shoulders a slight shrug, but watches him with contemplative eyes as he rattles on.

"Imagine, my beloved, I thought that I should not be able to take you to the races. I was so rushed at the last moment. Oh! but they will be superb! Never has the track been more perfect; hard as a rock and not a flake of snow."

"Indeed," says the lady languidly. Putting out a lazy, be-ringed hand she draws back the curtain that hides her window. "It is superb," she assents.

"You know how difficult it is to accomplish that," continues the young officer, "with this cursed wind drifting the Ladoga snow. Still I must tell you that five hundred men have worked all night at it. Brave fellows!

"The journals say something of a three-horse-race."

"Yes; the event of the day. But come—"

"We have still an hour," she answers, and motions him to a seat beside her.

"No, no, at your feet, always at your feet, Princess Veta," says the young man gayly, flinging his head back to better

* French of Iola Dorian: Nita Fitch: New York Saturday Review.

look into the opal-tinted eyes above him. Keeping time with a heavy finger, he sings in a not unmusical baritone, two lines from a French love song:

"Quand tu seras ma femme
M'obeiras—tu mieux?"

But the fair Elisaveta is oblivious to the importance of his melody's burthen. With her little pointed chin against the rose of her palm she sits lost in a world of reverie.

"Do you remember Sergius Hotzka?" she asks suddenly.

He shrugs his shoulders, accustomed to the willful wanderings of the great city's petted belle.

"How could I ever forget him," he says in turn. "Was there ever a man who left more ineffaceable traces behind him? He was an original madman."

"Original!" echoes Elisaveta. "Ah! what a cowardly word. Original?" she repeats, as though interrogating her own thought. The young man frowns slightly, but she goes on with calm retrospection. "Only three years ago," she said, "and he appeared among us like some brilliant meteor; fabulously rich; astonishing the world with his eccentric prodigalities. Then all those clod rooting swine, they deserted him when he was no longer wealthy."

Her lover's white teeth are like a wolfish danger signal as he turns to look at her.

"My dear," he says coldly, "you can't expect the world to be faithful to a proscript."

"Proscript?"

"Exactly. They say that political complications were his ruin. At any rate he is banished from St. Petersburg."

"Then he is in Siberia?"

With all a soldier's diplomacy he says indifferently: "I believe not. The peasants tell a story of a hermit of the Steppes, who mends kettles, and plows for the farmers. Many believe it to be Hotzka with the remains of his own famous stud."

"Farmers,—Kettles," echoes Elisaveta, absently.

Suddenly she turns on her moody swain.

"Come, Alexander," she cries; "I can see the crowds gather from here. Quick—we must hurry."

It is scarcely a half-hour later and the race course presents a brilliant spectacle. The river Neva is now only a colossal roadway, between two walls of splendid rose granite that line its quays. It is a mirror of polished steel. Stands, richly

decorated with flags, occupy at least a quarter of the inclosure, and over a hundred thousand spectators surround the arena. In the center of everything, a great pavilion draped in purple and gold shows that royalty is expected to take part in the city's festival. A huge figure in a white uniform shows itself. The impassiveness of this countenance, with its eagle profile and small glittering eyes, is unmistakable.

'Tis he, the Autocrat—the Emperor of all the Russias.

From the human hive mounts and swells a growing noise; cries, oaths, calls from the *Kras* senders, all blend themselves in a formidable roar: "Long live the Tzar!"

At this moment a rosewood sled, drawn by white horses, stops in front of the box nearest the royal pavilion; the president of the jury precipitates himself at the horses feet and aids a young woman to descend. The tall figure, with its long, loose wrap of priceless blue fox and its aureole of wonderful red hair, is well-known in St. Petersburg. She is the Princess Elisaveta Palorna, the beauty of three seasons. Repine follows her. Under her little fur cap, with its jeweled fez, Veta's eyes look out, serene, impenetrable. A bell sounds and silence falls on the waiting multitude. From open gates stream a dozen or more horses harnessed to light sleds of gilded osier. They are pure blooded Arabians, thickset mustangs from the Steppes, and highly bred Orloffs with sweeping manes white and shiny as spun glass.

The people watch these preliminaries apathetically. They are waiting for the *piece de resistance*, the three-horse-race with princes as drivers. Already four races have been run, the track is cleared and the five hundred workers take up their task of sweeping away the powdered ice beaten up by the iron hoofs. Once more the gates open and three splendid bays appear with the same sled of gilded osier, but larger and more elegant; they are followed by three black Finlanders, with shaggy coats and tails that sweep the ground. The last comers are Orloff stallions, white and dazzling as the snow itself. Their short hair glistens as though oiled, and silver reflections shadow their smooth flanks and elegant necks; their mouths are black and their nostrils immense, quivering and rose-lined; their eyes, tender, yet prominent and full of fire, are circled by a sooty ring like those of the Asiatic women. They are the pets of the hour. There they stand, the nine superb creatures, controlled by a splendid discipline

that does not permit the most timid pawing of their impatient hoofs, and with over two hundred thousand eyes admiring their matchless perfection.

Three sorry horses, emaciated and sad, splashed with mud, and covered with a ragged harness, half string, half leather, advance slowly into the arena; behind them trails a clumsy vehicle, made from the bark of the Russian fir tree, and shaped like the Laplander's hunting sled. With drooping heads and dragging limbs the weary beasts come forward and place themselves beside their aristocratic predecessors. A cry of horror rises up from the crowd. Leaning back in her box, Veta watches the late arrivals with fixed intentness.

The bell rings noisily. The race commences.

The bays lead by several lengths. The middle horse, an old favorite, lifts his feet with all the alluring charm of a star of the nation's hippodrome; his companions, brothers from the Don, thin and ardent, run without effort. After them come the Finlanders tearing furiously on the reins. Sufficiently in the rear to astonish their backers, are the Orloff stallions veritable wonders of beauty and breed.

Finally, following at a long distance behind their royal leaders, are the three strange beasts with their Laplandish sled. They run irregularly, and their little thin bells give out a melancholy sound. It is in this order that the sleds pass for the first time in front of the judges' stand.

Half way on the second round the Finlanders fling out their sturdy heels with such velocity that they look like the half circle of a bounding hoop. They pass the bays. A quick swelling of their massive chests and they forge ahead.

"Hurrah!" shriek the people, ravished with the success of their favorites. At this moment the unknown peasant straightens up his giant frame. Pushing back the heavy hat drawn down to his eyes, he grips the reins with an iron hand and gives a curious prolonged whistle. His skeleton horses are strangely metamorphosed. As though in answer to some superhuman command, they give one gigantic leap and fairly fly. For a moment they run beside the white stallions.

"The Orloffs lead!" screams the multitude, then shudders.

Beyond the shapely heads of the city's favorites stretch six dark, pointed ears, to be followed by three heads with glaring eyes, and foaming, blood-flecked jaws.

With her body stretched half out of her box, Veta watches

them with fascinated eyes. Her chest heaves, her limbs tremble, and her face takes on the anguish of the laboring brutes.

"Don't worry," whispers Repine. "They will lose."

"They will *win!*" she answers hoarsely. "I know them."

"The Orloffs gain," says somebody in the next box.

"Ah!" groans Veta and bites her lip to the blood.

Once more the peasant's whistle startles the still air, and with a prodigious effort his horses leave the others behind. Transfigured by the waking of their unknown blood, carried away by a secret ecstacy, with floating manes and sonorous breath, they rush on toward the expected goal.

They reach it—victorious—winners by three lengths.

For one long moment the people rest mute with stupefaction, literally incapable of applause. They stare open-mouthed at the sordid beasts that have beaten the noblest blood of the land, then like one man they dash forward to look at them, to ask their race, and the name of their uncouth driver.

As the victors pass Veta leans out to look at them. "I must see them," she says aloud.

At the sound of that voice, the peasant starts. Lifting his head their eyes meet. She pales but that is all.

Months have passed, and the extraordinary event that astonished the Peterbourgeois is no more than ancient history. Nobody has learned the identity of the mysterious peasant. Many believed him a sorcerer. Others thought him a great doctor of some unknown science, whose powerful potion had galvanized the exhausted beasts. But it is all only a memory now. A new sensation is on the *tapis*.

All St. Petersburg is talking of the marriage of Prince Alexander Repine to Princess Elisaveta Palorna.

It is evening, and Veta stands for the first time in her husband's home. She is alone, on a great veranda that half circles the palace. She still wears her wedding dress, and the stones of a diamond tiara sparkle in her hair.

"Mistress," says a voice behind her. She turns to confront her husband's faithful old servant. "Mistress, a present awaits you at the palace gate. Shall I lead you thither?"

"Yes."

She follows him down the steps with all the lazy insolence of a fine lady who grants a favor; her long gown sweeps the dew off the grass, and the moonlight mirrors itself in the soft curves of her naked arms and shoulders.

Presently she stops, stricken by a mysterious influence.

A moment more and a strange sight meets her view.

They are the winners of the Neva.

With a wave from her hand, Ivan goes.

The horses whinny softly at the sound of her voice, and nose her hair and face with dog-like gentleness.

"Why are you here?" she whispers, a sudden catch in her throat that she stifles against the emaciated cheek nearest her.

From out of the deep shadow comes a trembling voice. "Why do you weep, Princess?" it says.

She sees him now for the first time, still in his peasant's garb and with head uncovered, low before her. It is a noble head, with splendid lines and a beautiful mouth, but worn and shadowed as those of the famished beasts beside him.

"Why are they like this, Sergius? The best racers in the kingdom could have brought their price; there certainly was no need to starve them."

"We have starved together, Princess," he answers gently.

"Then the story that the people tell is true?"

"Quite true."

With the skeleton creatures between them they are silent a wavering moment. Then with a mute caress of their unkempt necks he says: "Be kind to Sergius Hotzka's only friends. Good-night, Elizaveta Repine."

"Repine!" she had forgotten that.

"Is it farewell?" she asks him blindly.

"Farewell!" he repeats.

The horses whinny piteously as the gates close behind him; then turn with dumb, questioning eyes to the pallid woman beside them.

Brutes that they are they tremble at the sight of that countenance, quivering and terrible.

"Wait," is her husky whisper.

With her face pressed tight to the iron bars, she watches him turn an angle in the roadway; his footsteps die away in the distance; he is gone.

Flinging the gates wide open she says one word:

"Go."

A sudden rush, and they are swallowed up in the night.

The next day the newspapers contain a sensation.

Three wild horses have killed a prince's bride.

ETCHINGS: THE FERRYMAN

I followed, as nearly as possible, the roads I had pursued upon coming into the country, and reached the ferry where the peculiar old fellow had asked me to pray with him.

He still wore an expression of dejection, but, as we were crossing, a mischievous light of recognition shone in his eyes.

"Wall, parson," said he, "I have had a mighty tough time sence you was along here—have had a powerful fight."

"Whom did you fight?"

"A feller knowed in this here neighborhood as Satan."

"Did you whip him?"

"Wall, kain't say that I did. Choked him putty well one time, thought I had him foul, but he riz with me and used me powerful rough. I tried agin the next day, but he jumped straddle uv me, hooked his fingers in my mouth, socked his spurs in my flanks 'an rid me all over the cermunity."

"You have decided, I suppose, not to fight him again?"

"Wall, I ain't lookin' for him. Ef he comes my way an' tromps' on me I'll hit him, but I ain't goin' out on narry nuther still hunt atter him. Have you drawed many folks inter the church sence you went by here?"

"Not many."

"Don't reckon they are ripe enough ter be shuck offen the trees down whar you was."

"Hardly."

"Tell you what you mout do. You might pray with me a little jest fur luck."

"No, I'm still in a hurry."

"You won't git another chance ter pray with as lively a man as I am."

"I suppose not."

"Ain't you got a bottle in that kyarpet-bag?"

"No."

"Look an' see."

"I know I haven't."

"Wall" (with a disappointed sigh, as we touched the other side), "here we air. I oughter charge you double price."

"Why so?"

"Becaze you ain't got no fun in you. Good-by."

* Opie Read: "The Kentucky Colonel."

THE PLAYERS AT THE CHESS

King Solomon ben David, the Wise, on whom be peace, was a mighty player at the chess before the Lord. And he sent unto Vaphres, King of Egypt, and Nabonassar, King of Babylon, and Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, and unto others of the Kings round about, whether they were friends or whether they were enemies; Hadad, King of Edom; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Reson, King of Damascus, who alone of the princes of Syria refused to bend the knee to the King of Israel, saying: "Greeting from my lord Solomon, King of Israel, who desireth to play with thee at the chess. And whosoever among ye is minded to play with me at the chess, either I will come unto him, or otherwise, if he will, he shall come to me at the House of Millo, in Jerusalem; and if he win of me a game he shall have ten of the cities of Israel of them that are nighest his own borders; but an if he lose, he shall forfeit me ten cities of those of his own country that are nighest the land of Israel." And King Vaphres, which is Pharaoh, and the other Kings played with King Solomon, and the Lord gave King Solomon the upperhand of them all, so that he gat fifty walled cities beyond the borders of Israel, and made broad the borders of Israel from the River Euphrates unto the land of Egypt, so that he ruled all the kingdoms, as it is written, even from Tiphsah unto Uzzah.

And it came to pass after a time that there was no man so bold that he durst adventure to play King Solomon at the chess unless he should give him the advantage, as three of the foot soldiers, or an elephant, or a camel of the right hand and a knight of the left, or the like. And all of his viziers and all the poets and musicians of the Temple he made a-weary of their lives because of disappointment. For he would say, "O, such an one, do thou play me at the chess, and I will give thee three or four, as it might be, of my fighting men; and if thou win the game of me I will give thee a garment of broidered work of Hind worth a thousand pieces of gold, or a sword of the steel of Cathay with a hilt wrought of a single emerald, such as no King hath in his treasury, or a charger of the colts of the dams of Arabia by the steeds of the sea. So they played at the chess with the King, and when he had

won the game of any of them, then would he laugh and say: "Behold, I leave thee thy robe, for it is not meet for a King to take aught of his servants," and he bade them fill him wine that he might forget the bitterness of his heart.

But after a time it came to pass that the King was weary of playing with his viziers and the poets and musicians of the Temple, and his Judges, and the Captains of his guard, and would fain find out others, whose manner of play he knew not, to play against him at the chess. But the dread of the King was sore in the hearts of them that he called to play against him, and he said, "Behold, they are all daunted by the terror of my wisdom, and I have no glory of all my skill; for though the gazelle be fleeter of foot than the leopard, yet ever the leopard leapeth on to the neck of the gazelle. Now therefore will I disguise me and they that play against me shall not know that they play against King Solomon."

So he called unto him his chief vizier, Zabud ben Na, the King's friend, and at eventide they stained their faces and put on garments as they had been merchants from Ophir, and went forth into the streets of the city. And at the corner of the King's-avenue, which is before the House of Millo, they met a stranger clad in a rich garment of Baalbek, walking slowly as one perplexed, not lifting his eyes from the ground. And Solomon said, "Peace be upon thee, O brother."

And the stranger answered, "Peace be upon thee, O brother, from the Lord of Peace, the One, the Merciful."

And Solomon said, "Who art thou, and whither goest thou, for meseemeth thou art a stranger in the city?"

And the stranger said, "Men call me Jareb ben Othniel, and Vaphres, King of Egypt, this long time hath entertained me in his palace as one of his boon companions, for I am a poet and musician after his own heart; and even now am I come into Jerusalem as a messenger unto Jehoshaphat ben Abiud, King Solomon's remembrancer, with whom I must needs be before midnight."

Then said Solomon, "It wanteth yet some hours of midnight; come with us in the meanwhile to our lodging, and let us pass the time with wine and music."

"I will well," said Jareb. And when they came into the lodging King Solomon had prepared, Zabud let call for wine, and they made merry.

Then said King Solomon, "Let bring the tables, that thou

and I may play a bout at the chess, and then shalt thou sing us a song of them that delight the heart of King Pharaoh."

Then Jareb said, "Sweet is the song that closeth the eyes in sleep and giveth ease to the sick man who crieth aloud for the soreness of his pain. When he heareth my voice, the slave remembereth not his chain nor the outcast his poverty; the toiler layeth aside his work and the angry man his wrath. But as for playing at the chess at this time, I pray thee hold thy servant excused, for the One Merciful, to whom be glory, hath laid a burden on thy servant, so that he cannot lose a game at the chess even if he so would, and haply if he win a game of thee thou wilt be an-angered, and he should seem ungrateful in thine eyes for this grace thou has shown him."

Then Solomon laughed, and spake within himself, "This minstrel is of the children of Eblis, the braggart, and the Lord hath given him into my hands that I may put his boasting to shame. Surely I shall win a game of him and pull his robe over his head, and then shall be given him a lute wherewith to comfort the sadness of his spirit."

But the King's lips spake otherwise than the thought that was in his heart, and he said, "Blessed be thou, Jareb ben Othniel! I would fain lose a game unto thee, and behold, I give thee this cloak of mine own in earnest of thy victory."

And therewithal he set upon him his cloak, which was of stuff of Tyre, with lynx's fur, worth a hundred pieces of gold.

Then Zabud let call for tables, and King Solomon played at the chess with Jareb ben Othniel; and King Solomon's men were of the white and Jareb's of the black. And Jareb played without thought, as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both his elephants and a knight and a camel, besides four of his foot soldiers, while Jareb had taken but one foot soldier of King Solomon.

And Solomon said within himself, "There is no glory in playing with a foolish lutanist such as this. Shall leviathan put forth his strength against the gadfly? I will contrive a combination and make an end of him." So he made a combination and took his captain.

Then Jareb rose up and made as though he would go. And Solomon said unto him, "Whither away? for the game is not yet played out."

Then Jareb said, "O, my lord King Solomon, when thou

walkest abroad the herbs of the field, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, find themselves a tongue to tell thee of their several virtues, yet hast thou not heard the voice of these chess men. See now and behold if thy servant should move yonder foot soldier on to the next square, where would my lord the King be then?"

And Solomon looked at the tables, and behold if his adversary should play his foot soldier on to the next square the King was checkmated without redress.

And when he understood that his name was known of Jareb and that he was defeated, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon, and the world was straitened upon him. And the blackness of the tempest was in his forehead, and his voice was as the thunder in the hills. And he drew his sword and smote off the head of Jareb as he stood.

Then said he to Zabud, "Cast me this dog's carrion into the ditch without the city, that the fowls of uncleanness may feast themselves therewithal."

But behold there was no dead body, neither any blood; and Zabud said, "May God, to whom be glory, preserve my lord the King. Verily this man was a sorcerer."

"Nay," said King Solomon, "he was no sorcerer, for always the jewel of my girdle warneth me so often as one who useth witchcraft cometh into my presence; yet as at this time it spake not. But said he not that he was bound unto the house of Jehoshaphat, our remembrancer? Haste thee thither and bring tidings whether thou hear of him."

So Zabud went to the house of Jehoshaphat, and asked at the gate whether such an one had been there. And the master of the gate made answer and said, "O my lord, of a truth such an one hath been here but even now, and he went in unto my lord, and even as he bowed his head to salute him my lord groaned thrice and gave up the ghost."

So Zabud returned to King Solomon and told him all the tidings. And King Solomon rent his garments for the death of Jehoshaphat and said, "See now, this dog hath told me I know less than naught, yet knew he less than naught himself, otherwise would he never have thought to bear a message to a dead man. May God not have mercy on his soul."

Now, it was about a seven years' space, and King Solomon again disguised his countenance and went forth with his chief vizier to seek one to play at chess with the King. And as

they walked along the covered way of the Thousand Fountains that leadeth to the House of Lebanon, at the corner of the street called Yellow there met them a damsel, as it were a moon, and her countenance was as a treasure house of the beauty of the elements. Her hair was golden as the flames in the circle of fire that is the uttermost girdle of the world; her eyebrows were as rainbows and her eyes as the stars of the air; her nose and cheeks were as flowers of the earth, white and red as roses in the rose gardens of Sharon, and the mole thereon of the color of the soil of Eden; her lips were as the coral of the Seven Seas, and her teeth as pearls of the waters of El Kerker; her garments were as the Milky Way for the glitter of jewels, and as the nest of the Phœnix for sweet smell of musk and myrrh and frankincense; and the swaying of her body as she walked was as the bending of the willow withes on the banks of Jordan when the wind of sundown reveals the inward whiteness of their leaves.

And King Solomon's eyes waxed swollen for gladness to look upon her, and he said, "Peace be unto thee, O daughter of mine uncle." And she answered, "Peace be unto thee, O my lord, and the mercy of the One Merciful."

And Solomon said, "O, damsel, who art thou and whither goest thou?" And she said, "Thy servant is a slave girl of the household of Ahimaaz, to whom thy lord and mine, King Solomon, on whom be peace, hath given his daughter Basmath in marriage; and even now am I bound to the house of Ben Abinadab, to whom our lord King Solomon hath given his daughter Taphath in marriage, for there is a feast there toward this night, and thy slave hath been sent for to sing. And men call me Admatha, the daughter of Adaiah."

And the King said, "What songs canst thou sing?" And she said, "O my lord, thy slave girl hath but little skill, and her voice to the many soundeth harsh and untuneable; yet the lover, when he swooneth in the extremity of his passion, is fain to hearken unto me, and my song is blessed of the wise man to whom the vanity of all things hath been revealed."

And Solomon said, "O Admatha, it is not yet the hour of the feast; come with us awhile to our lodging that we have prepared, and let us pass the time with wine and music until it behoveth thee to depart." And she answered, "Peace be upon ye; I will well." So they came into the lodging, and Zabud let call for wine and they made merry.

Then King Solomon said, "Let bring tables, that thou and I may play a bout at the chess, and then shalt thou sing us a song to the lover in the torment of his passion."

But Admatha said, "O my Lord, as for playing at the chess at this time, I pray thee hold thy slave excused."

"Wherefore so?" exclaimed King Solomon; "for my heart is set to play with thee at the chess."

Then said Admatha, "O my lord, the One Merciful, to whom be all glory, hath laid a burden on thy slave, forasmuch as she may in no wise lose a game at the chess, strive she never so sore; and if she play with thee and win her game, thou wilt haply be an-angered with her, and she should seem ungrateful to thee for this grace that thou hast shown her."

And Solomon said within himself, "I have held converse with this damsel aforetime, for of a surety I do remember this word she hath spoken that none may have the upper hand of her at the chess." And he looked upon her straitly for a long time, yet could he call nothing to mind as of her face or favor. And he said within himself, "Behold, that which is, that which hath been, and that which shall be, shall be even as that which is. Belike it was one of them I have defeated of old who boasted himself thus."

But he spake with his lips and said, "O Admatha, even to lose a game at thy hands were sweeter than to overcome the King of Damascus, and, behold, I give thee this cloak in earnest of thy victory."

Then Zabud let call for tables, and Solomon the King played at the chess with Admatha the slave girl; and Solomon's men were of the white and Admatha's men of the black. And Admatha played without thought, as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both her elephants and a knight of the right hand and a camel of the left, besides four of her foot soldiers, while Admatha had taken but one foot soldier of King Solomon. And Solomon said within himself, "What glory is it unto me to win at the chess of this music girl? Shall I lift a cimeter of the steel of Cathay to crop a flower of the balsam? I will contrive a combination and make an end of her." So he made a combination and took her captain.

Then Admatha rose up and made as though she would go. But Solomon said, "Whither away, O Admatha? for the game is not yet played out."

Then Admatha turned about and said, "O my lord King Solomon, when it listeth thee to sit on thy carpet the winds become thy chariot, and all the beasts of the field fare under thee to subdue thine enemies; and the fowls of the air fly overhead to shield thee from the sun; yet these chess men, that are but of ebony wood and the tusk of behemoth, refuse to obey thee. See now and behold; if thy slave should move yonder foot soldier on to the next square, where would my lord the King be then? As for playing at chess, thy slave girl knoweth naught, yet knoweth she more withal than my lord King Solomon."

And when Solomon looked at the tables, behold if his adversary should move the foot soldier on to the next square the King was checkmated without redress.

And when he understood that he was known of Admatha and that he was defeated, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon, and the world was straitened upon him; the vein of fury stood out between his eyebrows, and the fire flashed from his eyes as the blaze leaps from a burning mountain, and the darkness which gathered on his brow was as the smoke thereof, and his words rolled forth even as the molten stone from the mouth of the caldrons of Eblis in the hills of Sikkel. And he drew his sword and smote off the head of Admatha as she stood.

And he cried aloud to Zabud, "Cast me this swine's carcas into the ditch without the city, that the fowls of uncleanness may feast themselves therewithal."

But, behold, there was no dead body, neither was there any blood; and Zabud said, "God preserve my lord the King! this damsel was a sorceress."

"Nay," said King Solomon, "for my ring spake no word of warning. But said she not that she was bound to the feast at the house of Ben Abinadab? Now, therefore, go straightway thither and bring me tidings."

And as Zabud went toward the house he met a great company of men and women weeping and wailing and rending their garments; and when they saw Zabud they cried: "O my lord, mayst thou survive my lord Ben Abinadab! for, behold, as we all were feasting and making merry a certain slave girl came into the company whom my lord bade sing to her lute. And when she had tuned her lute she began to sing, and before ever she had sung two words my lord turned

his face to the wall and died. Now, therefore, bear the tidings to King Solomon with haste, for our lady Taphath, the widow of Ben Abinadab, is a daughter of my lord the King."

Then Solomon was sore troubled, and rent his garments and cast ashes upon his head, and the days were darkened upon him. And he said: "Who is this slave girl? for of a surety I do remember all these things of aforetime." Howbeit he remembered not Jareb ben Othniel, and he said: "I am as one that resteth on his oar when the image of his oar is bent awry by reason of the water that is over it, so that he seeth not aright that which he seemeth to see. O! the waters! the waters! They have covered the whole world, so that no man seeth truly the things that have been for the waters that are above them."

And about a space of one-and-twenty years, yet once more King Solomon and his chief vizier disguised themselves and went forth into the city, if haply they might find one to play at the chess with the King. And as they came nigh unto the Water Gate of the Temple, behold there stood at the bottom of the steps an old man, as it were a sheikh of the Sons of the Desert, and his hair was white as the water courses of the hills in winter, and his beard flowed down to his knees, as it were icicles of stone in the caverns of Hermon, and his eyebrows were as the snow on the branches of the cedars of the forest, and his eyes as the torches of them that seek for Thammuz on Lebanon.

And Solomon said unto him, "Peace be unto thee, O mine uncle." And the old man answered, "Peace be unto thee and mercy from the One Merciful." And Solomon said, "By what name shall I speak to my father's brother, and whitherward shall we bear him company?"

And the old man said, "I am Habakkuk ben Methusael, the chief of the Benou Methusael, children of the Great Desert, and I have come hither to Jerusalem that I may play a game at the chess with my lord King Solomon."

And Solomon said, "O Habakkuk, is there any of the Sons of the Desert who is the equal of my lord King Solomon?"

And Habakkuk said, "Nay, my son, there is none among the Kings of the earth who may be compared with my lord King Solomon in riches, or in majesty, or in wisdom; yet haply in this matter of playing at the chess, the Lord, to whom be all the glory, hath been minded not to lay up the

whole of his treasure in a single treasure house; for thy servant hath played with men of understanding as well as with others these two hundred years and more, yet hath he never lost a game to any of the children of men."

And Solomon said within himself, "Now will I win a game of this patriarch of the Desert, and afterward we will bring him to the palace, and when he seeth that it was none other than King Solomon himself who hath defeated him his shame shall be the less."

So he spake to the old man and said, "Behold, as at this time my lord King Solomon hath gone to sup with the daughter of Pharoah, in the House of Lebanon, and of a surety he will not return till after midnight, for thy servants but even now met the bearers returning with his litter. Wherefore do thou come with us to our lodging, and if it irk thee not, win a game at the chess of thy servant."

And Habakkuk said, "I will well."

So they came into the lodging, and Zabud let call for wine and they made merry; howbeit Habakkuk excused himself as for drinking of the wine for that he was of kindred with Hammath of the tribe of Rechab.

And Zabud let call for tables, and Solomon the King played at the chess with Habakkuk the Son of the Desert, and Solomon's men were of the white and Habakkuk's of the black. And Habakkuk played without thought as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both his elephants and a knight of the right hand and a camel of the left, besides four of his foot soldiers, while Habakkuk had taken but one foot soldier of King Solomon. And Solomon said within himself, "What glory is it to win at the chess of a dog of the desert such as this? Doth the lightning make boast of slaying the frog that croaketh in the marsh? I will contrive a combination and make an end of him." So he made a combination and took his captain.

Then Habakkuk laid hold on one of his ebony foot soldiers, and said: "O, my lord King Solomon, the One Merciful hath given thee dominion over all ghouls and afrits and jina and marids of the jinn, them that inhabit the houses of the fire and them that walk on the earth or creep within its bowels, them that dwell within the deep waters and them that fly upon the wings of the air; yea, all them that durst

disobey thy behests, hast thou imprisoned against the Day of Judgment in vessels of copper, sealed in lead with thine own seal, and hast cast them into the sea of El Kerker. Yet hath not the One Merciful, to whom be glory, given thee lordship over these bits of ebony and ivory that they should do thy will; for lo, when I shall set down this foot soldier on yonder next square, where will my lord the King be then?"

And Solomon looked at the tables, and behold when his adversary should set down the foot soldier he was checkmated without redress. And when he understood that he was known of the Son of the Desert and had been defeated by him, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon and the world was straitened upon him; and his forehead waxed dark as the Night of Retribution, and his eyes flashed thereunder as it were the burning of the two Cities of the Plain, and his voice was as the roaring of the fire wherewith they were consumed. And he leapt to his feet and would have drawn his sword to smite off the head of Habakkuk. But Habakkuk abode still and lifted up the ebony foot soldier in his right hand, and the King was as one striken with a sudden palsy; and there came upon him a great whiteness and trembling, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and the sword dropped from his right hand.

And Habakkuk said unto him, "O my lord King Solomon, where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee beyond all others of the sons of men? Behold now these three times hast thou gone about to slay the servant of the living God. How is it that thou hast not known me?"

And as Solomon looked straitly at Habakkuk the snow of his hair and his beard was melted away, and the manner of his garments were changed, and even while Solomon was yet marveling at the change, behold it was the slave girl, Admatha, who held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And the waters of forgetfulness were rolled back from the King's memory, and he said: "Verily I should have remembered and repented, for lo this game is the very game, move for move, that I played with thee, O, Admatha, what time thou wert sent for to sing in the house of Ben Abinadab my son."

And Admatha said, "O my lord King Solomon, of a truth this is even so, but where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee beyond all others of the children of men? How is it thou hast not known me?"

And as Solomon looked straitly at Admatha her countenance and the manner of her garments were changed, and even while the King was yet marveling at the change behold it was Jareb ben Othniel who held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And the things which had been were lifted above the waters of forgetfulness, and Solomon saw them even as they were. And he said, "Verily I should have remembered and repented, for lo these two games are the very same, move for move, and combination for combination, with the game I played aforetime with thee, O Jareb ben Othniel, when thou didst bear a message to Jehoshaphat my remembrancer."

And Jareb said, "Oh, my lord King Solomon, of a truth this is even so, but where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee above all thy fellows? How is it that thou hast not known me?"

And as Solomon looked straitly at Jareb his countenance and the manner of his garments were changed, and even while the King was yet marveling at the change a glory as of the unspoken Name lighted his face, and his hair was as the rays of the sun at noonday, and his raiment was as a flame of fire, and from his shoulders came forth wings, whereof every feather was as a rainbow after the storm.

And the Angel said, "O, King Solomon, where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee above thy brethern? Even yet hast thou not known me." And the Angel still held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And Solomon said, "Verily long since should I have known thee and repented, O Azrael, angel of death, for none save the brother of the Four who uphold the throne of God, to whom be glory, could have played this game at the chess that thou hast played against me, lo these three times."

And Azrael said, "Oh King Solomon, may the One Merciful have much mercy upon thee, for thou needest much!"

And he set down the ebony foot soldier,

And King Solomon was dead.

ETCHINGS: GO LEAD THE HORSE IN!

Once upon a time there was a carter; he married, and took to wife a pretty girl. The wedding over, and the newly married pair alone, the carter turned and said to the bride:

"See, Rusidda (says he) now we are husband and wife. What happiness! Now I will buy me a horse, I will make me a cart, and so I will go with loads and we shall get bread. But there is this about it: When I come home, I will not work any more. Then, see, my little Rusidda, from now henceforth when I come home, you take the horse, unharness him from the cart, lead him in and water him; in short, care for him, for I am tired." The girl began to shrug her shoulders and says, "I won't do it!" "What do you mean? Then who is to lead the horse in, I?" "I don't know how to do such things." "Well," says the young man, "I will teach you." "No, I am not used to such things. At my home I was not taught in that way." "Well, I will teach you now, little by little." "No, I won't lead the horse in!" "But what is to be done if you must lead him in?" "And I won't lead him and I won't lead him in!" "And I tell you, either you will lead him or you will come out badly." "No, no; neither now or ever!" At this the young man arose in a rage, and unbuckled his leather belt. "Now I tell you either you lead the horse in, or I will set on you with my hands....Go lead the horse in!" "No, I will not lead him in!"—"Ah, what is that?....Go lead the horse in "....and he took her with a great blow of the strap on her shoulders. What would you expect of the girl? She began to scream like one burnt. "Alas, I'm dying....I won't lead the horse in! I won't lead him in!" "Go, lead the horse in, I told you!....and here blows with the strap that took off the skin. And "Go, lead the horse in," and "I won't lead him in!" The neighbors came running. "Children, children, what is it? You are just married and begin the quarrels! What is it? About the horse? Come off, we will lead him in....Where is the horse?" "But," says the young man, "It was talk....we have yet to buy the horse." "An apoplexy take you! For a talk, you make all this disturbance!" And the whole village fell upon them.

*From the Silician Folk Lore Dialect: E. C.: For Short Stories.

TWO AFTERNOONS

A hot day. The sun directly overhead, glowing with a fire that made the air in the shadeless canyon quiver as if heated in an oven. Not a tree in sight, not a bush—everything brown and barren. Everywhere boulders of lava immense in size and sometimes split in twain, as if in rapid cooling from the intense heat which gave them birth. Here and there between the gray-green of the giant cacti, raising their thorny forms fifty and sixty feet in the air, assuming with their strangely formed limbs the shapes of immense crosses or trunks of trees from which all leaves and smaller branches have been torn. Between the black and brown of the sunburnt lava an occasional tuft of tall, almost colorless grass. Over all a stillness that to one unaccustomed to the land would seem strange and oppressive. Not a bird to break it with its song. Even the lizards sought out what shade they could, making with their green, red and variegated coats, almost the only dash of color to relieve the monotony of the all-prevailing brown and black lava that each moment grew more oppressive to look at under the glow of the fierce heat.

Save these not a living thing was in sight except where off to the west a buzzard floated high in the air, and two men, with a burro lazily following, passing down the canyon.

Prospectors and their outfit.

Opened shirts, showing red, hairy breasts, while their loosely buckled belts, heavy with long, bright cartridges, whose tarnished surfaces, made doubly bright from the rays of the hot sun, seemed strangely out of place in such quietude.

Neither spoke. Each walked along as if alone, looking for the "float" that might indicate the presence of some mineral ledge higher up, more from habit than from hope, as the "formation" gave but little indication of treasure.

How hot the sun. The burro, patient-eyed, forgot his old trick of nipping the tops of the long gaete grass, and contented himself with keeping closely in the trail of the two men, whose worldly possessions of blankets, cooking utensils and tools, capped with an enormous canteen of water, he so patiently bore. Not a breath of air stirring. Only the quivering heat that made the eyes burn and ache. The men shifted

* Buckey O'Neill: San Francisco Chronicle.

their rifles constantly from one hand to another, as if to avoid getting blisters from the places where they touched the highly heated metalic parts of their guns.

Crack! crack! crack!

Not fifty yards ahead from behind a dozen boulders leap out as many jets of fire, while the snowy white puffs of smoke float up a few feet and disappear in the quivering air.

One of the men stops for an almost imperceptible instant, as if to brace himself. His hands rise to the level of his chest as if to bring his rifle to his shoulder and then—down he falls headlong to the ground in a limp mass. Dead! Shot through the head. Not a quiver; not a motion; without a sound, were it not for that made by his falling rifle.

As he falls his companion staggers back a pace or two, catches himself, and then, half crouching, half falling, drops behind one of the many boulders. "Hit!" he thinks to himself, "but, thank God! not fatally; only a scratch." Life seems a new thing; to live, a new joy.

Only a scratch. "Where?" He hardly has time to think as he places his gun across the boulder and fires at a figure, naked, dark, clothed only in a breech clout and with a red scarf wound around the head. He notes almost unconsciously how pronounced its color is against the dark face and darker hair of its wearer. "A miss!" he mentally remarks, as the figure disappears. "But better luck next time," he thinks, as he pushes down the lever of his gun and throws out the empty shell, replacing it with a cartridge. "Short range;" he should have hit. It can't be that he was losing his old cunning; that his aim was bad. "No;" he fired in haste and was "rattled." "Another shot and he will show them" are the thoughts that flash through his mind as he peers cautiously ahead to discover his enemies.

None in sight.

For the first time he feels pain. Half numbness, half fire; how it tears as he raises his shirt and looks at a little blue hole hardly larger than a pea near the right side in the short ribs. "Only a scratch or it would bleed worse. Did it go through?" he asks himself, as he passes his hand up his back to find if there be an orifice of exit. "No." "That is bad, for there is no surgeon to be had to cut the missile out. Pshaw, what matters it? Other men have lived with bullets in them—why could not he? Night would soon

come and then with darkness he would go. He was not losing blood sufficient to weaken him much, and by morning he would be far away. After all, it would only be a close call, something to tell about. But poor Tom ! he was gone," and as he looked at the lifeless form of his partner he could hardly keep back the tears.

Crack ! crack ! go a couple of shots off to his left, and he sees the dust flying up from near his feet. He tries to draw his limbs up to get them in a safer position. Tries again, and the cold sweat breaks from him. He cannot move them !

They are dead—paralyzed !

Something like a sob breaks from him. It is all over. In the first flush of possible escape he had not thought of the spine being injured. He knew it now. The game was played. A few hours longer at the best. To-morrow and the next day, and the days and the years to come would find him there. The end was only a question of a short time. Yet he had only thought it a scratch.

With his arms he drags himself into a safer position. This done, he unbuckles his belt, and as he lays it before him to have it handier he thinks of the time away back on the Platte when he had first put one on. How proud he then felt, as a stripling boy, of the outfit. How bright the future had looked, and now it was all to end. After all, life with him had been a hard one. It had brought to him few of the treasures for which he had longed. For an instant he thought "why not take the sixshooter and end it all ?"

"Suicide ?"

"No," he would die fighting.

He would take some of them with him. Yet, why kill at all. They were but savages—Apaches. Their deaths would mean nothing, would gain nothing. Better to kill himself and keep from them the satisfaction of doing it. No ; relief might come. Some of the many scouting parties of cavalry always in the field, or, perhaps, a party of prospectors might hear the firing, and then with a good doctor all would yet be well. He could find one at any of the military posts.

All these thoughts and a thousand others crowded through his brain while he was placing himself in a better position for defense. Cautiously raising himself he glanced over the boulder in the direction from whence the last shots came. Crack ! crack ! crack ! the bullets whiz surlily around him.

Bang! bang! bang! goes the rifle.

A new feeling takes possession of him. His nerves tighten like steel, and he pumps empty shells out of the rifle's chamber and cartridges in with a fierce speed. Kill! kill! let him take one of those howling murderers with him, and he doesn't care how soon after death comes. But what is the matter with his aim? He has not yet killed one, not even wounded one that he knows of. He refills the magazine of his rifle in nervous, feverish haste, and then peeps through the crevices of the boulders to see if there is an enemy in sight. None. They are there, though. They are waiting and he is dying. How hot it is! He is burning up with thirst and heat. How "it" hurts. He has got so that he thinks of his wound only as "it," as if it were some terrible monster that he could not escape. The blood—small as the quantity—that flows from his wound has formed a pool, clotted and coagulated. It adds to his discomfort by its stickiness. He thinks, how strange that one's own blood should annoy one so, and then wonders where so many flies could have come from, as he raises a swarm by the movement of his body. He looks across to where the burro has fallen with the canteen and sees that the vessel has been jammed by coming in contact with the boulder, and that the precious fluid has nearly all run out. How much he would give to have what little water remains! He feels almost tempted to try to reach it, but no; that would mean throwing his life away without a chance for revenge. Revenge. He will have it. Thirst is nothing; death is nothing now if he can only kill, kill!

If he could only kill them all, how happy he would die!

He looks over the boulder. Nothing in sight but boulders, lava, cacti, sand and gaete grass. "They are there, though." He almost laughs in sarcasm as he catches himself scanning the horizon to see if any relief were in sight. Relief? For days he and the man that laid dead there had traveled without finding a trail made by a shod horse—without finding a trail of any kind. How childish to expect any help. Better brace up and die like a man.

He looked at the body of the dead man. How hideous the face looked with its swollen lips, open mouth, staring eyes. How black it had grown. What a vast quantity of blood had come from the wound in the head. His eye catches a movement in the tuft of grass to his left. Bang! bang!

goes his rifle. "Nothing there," he thinks, as he crouches closer to the ground to escape the shots that come in return.

So the hours go, but he hardly marks their flight. The sun is getting lower in the west, and the white heat of day gives way to the yellowish-purple haze that in Apache land is always the forerunner of night. How when he was first hit he had longed for night; how little he cared for it now. He could feel himself growing weaker. His Winchester was heavier than any he had ever before lifted. Even "it," that terrible thing that chained him there, pained him less, but the thirst grew horrible. Anyhow night would give him a chance to reach the canteen. At times he felt almost drowsy, but fought off the feeling. He was merely waiting for the end. He thought it strange that he could face it so complacently. He hardly cared now how soon it came. Would he shoot all his cartridges away before it reached him? He would not waste them though. If he could only reach Tom's gun and revolver and destroy them it would make those that killed him angry. It was for these things, worth perhaps $50, that he and Tom had been murdered. He was beginning to think of himself as already dead. At least how easy to ruin Tom's rifle. It was only two or three paces away. He took his revolver and fired at it, aiming to hit it just in front and below the hammer, its most vulnerable part. Instead, the bullet hits the ground and richocheting enters the breast of the dead man. He shudders as the body stirs from the force of the shot, although he knows that life has been gone for hours. Everything is plain to him now why his other shots had not taken effect. He was unnerved. How could a man with a hole through his body hope to hit anything. He had heard of men shot through the heart killing their assailants, and had often wondered if he could do it. Could Tom have done it? How far off and yet how short seemed the years that he and Tom had been together. How little there had been in them that seemed worth now recalling. Crack! a single shot off to the right, and he fires where he sees the smoke curling upward. Fires again. Nothing. He counts his cartridges and is astonished that he has fired so many. He must have lost some. No, there are the empty shells.

Another shot off to the right. One to the front. He fires at both. He feels that he is growing nervous, and brings all his remaining powers into play to secure better control of

himself. He will put away the idea of death, of his wound, of everything but revenge. Only one and he will be satisfied, and for the first time in years he prays, prays without words though, that he may kill but one.

The sun is sinking lower, it has almost reached the far off western mountain tops. It would soon be night, and then what would "they" do? Steal up under cover of the darkness and shoot him from behind some boulder before he would be aware of it. He would keep a close lookout, and perhaps he might after all "get" one of them.

Crack! crack! to the right and left, and he glances in both directions, firing at each; and then right over him takes place a terrible explosion, and he feels as if something heavy and blunt had struck him in the back. He half raises himself, just enough to turn his face upward. Another explosion, another heavy, blunt blow, and through the smoke from a revolver he sees a dark young face, with black, glittering eyes, white teeth, across which the lips are tightly drawn. The face and the form of one almost a boy, and then he falls back while a dark hand and arm snatches his gun from his half-clinging clasp. He hears wild shouting and through his glazing eyes sees dark forms scrambling for his arms, for Tom's. They are even quarreling in their eagerness to tear the pack from the dead burro, and then instinctively he sees one raise something in the air. . . . and when it falls there is no longer anything human in the face or the head of the man who has spent the afternoon in fight. Nothing but a bloody pulp of skull, hair, brains, broken teeth, crushed into a misshapen mass by the boulder cast upon it by an Apache.

Another afternoon, years after, a tall sergeant and his detail of cavalry escorting through the canyon a party locating a road, looks down on the whitened bones of two men and a burro scattered by coyotes and bleached by the winds and rains, and as he, with the toe of his boot, pushes to one side the ribs of one of the skeletons, his eyes mark the many empty cartridge shells. He looks up and sees that his comrades have already noted them, while some one remarks:

"By ——, he stayed with them while he lasted."

FOLLOWING THE SEA

At the time of "the great earthquake of '68," said Mr. Swiddler—William Swiddler; of Calaveras—I was at Arica, Peru. I have not a map by me, and am not certain that Arica is not in Chili, but it can't make much difference; there was earthquake all along there.

Sam Baxter was with us; I think he had gone from San Francisco to make a railway, or something. On the morning of the 'quake, Sam and I had gone down to the beach to bathe. We had shed our boots, and begun to moult, when there was a slight tremor of the earth, as if the elephant who supports it was pushing upward, or lying down and getting up again. Next, the surges, which were flattening themselves upon the sand and dragging away such small trifles as they could lay hold of, began racing out seaward, as if they had received a dispatch that somebody was not expected to live. This was needless, for *we* did not expect to live.

When the sea had receded entirely out of sight, we started after it; for, it will be remembered, we had come to bathe; and bathing without some kind of water is not refreshing in a hot climate.

For the first four or five miles the walking was very difficult, although the grade was tolerably steep. The ground was soft, there were tangled forests of sea-weed, old rotten ships, rusty anchors, human skeletons, and a multitude of things to impede the pedestrian. The floundering sharks bit our legs as we toiled past them, and we were constantly slipping down upon the flat fish strewn about like orange peel on a sidewalk. Sam, too, had stuffed his shirt front with such a weight of doubloons from the wreck of an old galleon, that I had to help him across all the worst places. It was very dispiriting.

Presently, away on the western horizon, I saw the sea coming back. It occurred to me then that I did not wish it to come back. A tidal wave is nearly always wet, and I was now a good way from home, with no means of making a fire.

The same was true of Sam, but he did not appear to think of it in that way. He stood quite still a moment with his eyes fixed on the advancing line of water; then turned to me, saying, very earnestly:

*Ambrose Bierce: Collected Sketches.

"Tell you what, William; I never wanted a ship so bad from the cradle to the grave! I would give m-o-r-e for a ship!—More than for all the railways and turnpikes you could scare up! I'd give more than a hundred, thousand, million dollars! I would—I'd give all I'm worth, for—just —one—little—ship!"

To show how lightly he could part with his wealth, he lifted his shirt out of his trousers, unbosoming himself of his doubloons, which tumbled about his feet, a golden storm.

By this time the tidal wave was close upon us. Call *that* a wave! It was one solid green wall of water, higher than Niagara Falls, stretching as far as we could see to right and left, without a break in its towering front! It was by no means clear what we ought to do. The moving wall showed no projections by means of which the most daring climber could hope to reach the top. There was no ivy; there were no window-ledges. Stay!—there was the lightning rod! No, there wasn't any lightning rod. Of course, not!

Looking despairingly upward, I made a tolerably good beginning at thinking of all the mean actions I had wrought in the flesh, when I saw projecting beyond the crest of the wave a ship's bowsprit, with a man sitting on it reading a newspaper! Thank fortune, we were saved!

Falling upon our knees with tearful gratitude, we got up again and ran—ran as fast as we could, I suspect; for now the whole fore-part of the ship budged through the water just above our heads, and might lose its balance any moment. If we had only brought along our umbrellas!

I shouted to the man on the bowsprit to drop us a line. He merely replied that his correspondence was already very onerous, and he hadn't any pen and ink.

Then I told him I wanted to get aboard. He said I would find one on the beach, about three leagues to the south'ard, where the "Nancy Tucker" went ashore.

At these replies I was disheartened. It was not so much that the man withheld assistance, as that he made puns. Presently, however, he folded his newspaper, put it carefully away in his pocket, went and got a line, and let it down to us just as we were about to give up the race. Sam made a lunge at it, and got it. I laid hold of his legs, the end of the rope was passed about the capstan, and as soon as the men on board had had a little grog, we were hauled up. I can

assure you that it was no fine experience to go up in that way, close to the smooth, vertical front of water, with the whales tumbling out all round and above us, and the sword-fishes nosing us pointedly with vulgar curiosity.

We had no sooner set foot on deck, and got Sam disengaged from the hook, than the purser stepped up with book and pencil—"Tickets, gentlemen."

We told him we hadn't any tickets, and he ordered us to be set ashore in a boat. It was represented to him that this was quite impossible under the circumstances; but he replied that he had nothing to do with circumstances—did not know anything about circumstances. Nothing would move him till the captain, who was really a kind-hearted man, came on deck and knocked him overboard. We were now stripped of our clothing, chafed all over with stiff brushes, rolled on our stomachs, wrapped in flannels, laid before a hot stove in the saloon, and strangled with scalding brandy. We had not been wet, nor had we swallowed any sea-water, but the surgeon said this was the proper treatment. It is uncertain what he might have done to us if the tender-hearted captain had not thrashed him into his cabin, and told us to go on deck.

By this time the ship was passing the town of Arica, and we were about to go astern and fish a little, when she grounded on a hill-top. The captain hove out all the anchors he had about him; and when the water went swirling back to its legal level, taking the town along for company, there we were, in the midst of a charming agricultural country, but at some distance from any seaport.

At sunrise next morning we were all on deck. Sam sauntered aft to the binnacle, cast his eye carelessly upon the compass, and uttered an ejaculation of astonishment.

"Tell *you*, captain," he called out, "this has been a direr convulsion of nature than you have any idea. Everythin's been screwed right round. Needle points due south!"

"Why, you lubber!" growled the skipper, taking a look, "it p'ints d'rectly to labbard, an' there's the sun, dead ahead!"

Sam turned and confronted him, with a steady gaze of ineffable contempt.

"Now, who said it wasn't dead ahead?—tell me *that*. Shows how much *you* know about earthquakes. 'Course, I didn't mean just this continent, nor just this earth: I tell you, the *whole thing's* turned!"

ETCHINGS: JEANNETTE

Every day there came down to the long stone wharf a smiling fair-haired girl of seven, followed by an old, old man.

The child carried a spy-glass, hugging it in her arms as if it were a doll, and she skipped along gaily till she reached the end of the pier. Then she handed the long glass to her companion, and resting her chubby little hands on the cold stone coping, looked wistfully out to sea.

With the soft breeze blowing her hair about her shoulders, and her eyes fixed searchingly on the horizon she stood perfectly silent until a tiny white speck appeared in the far distance where sea and sky seemed to mingle.

"A sail, a sail!" she cried, and the old man sat down and laid the spy-glass upon his arm.

Breathless and eager, the child grasped the brass tube with both hands and peered through it without speaking. After a few minutes, however, she said with a sigh of disappointment: "Not yet, grandpa," and returning patiently to her post resumed the watch until another sail appeared.

This was kept up hour after hour, and when the sun, a golden ball, had slipped behind the rising billows, and a soft mist rose from the sea, the child turned round, her little face saddened, and walked away slowly at the old man's side.

One day I spoke to an old sailor and asked about the child.

"That is Jeannette," he said, taking his short clay pipe out of his mouth, "her father was killed eighteen months ago; the mast of his boat fell on him, and since the day his body was carried home, she has never been the same. She does not think that he is dead, and every afternoon her grandfather has to bring her down here to watch for him."

He tapped his head expressively, and, as a merry laugh sounded, a smile of tenderness softened his rugged features.

I looked up and saw Jeannette coming as usual, carrying the telescope, and skipping gleefully before the old man.

"How sad, how sad!" I murmured with a sigh, but the old sailor shook his head; putting his pipe into his mouth hastily he puffed out a cloud of smoke to hide the tears that had gathered in his eyes, and answered softly—"God is good. She will never know, and so she will never cease to hope."

* French of George Le Faure: I. S: For Short Stories.

IN THE HOUSE OF SUDDHOO

A stone's throw out on either hand
From that well-ordered road we tread,
And all the world is wild and strange;
Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite
Shall bear us company to-night,
Wherein the Powers of Darkness range,
—From the Dusk to the Dawn.

The house of Suddhoo, near the Taksali Gate, is two-storied, with four carved windows of old, brown wood, and a flat roof. You may recognize it by five red handprints arranged like the Five of Diamonds on the whitewash between the upper windows. Bhagwan Dass, the bunnia, and a man who says he gets his living by seal-cutting, live in the lower story with a troop of wives, servants, friends, and retainers. The two upper rooms used to be occupied by Janoo and Azizun and a little black-and-tan terrier that was stolen from an Englishman's house and given to Janoo by a soldier. To-day, only Janoo lives in the upper rooms. Suddhoo sleeps on the roof generally, except when he sleeps in the street. He used to go to Peshawar in the cold weather to visit his son, who sells curosities near the Edwards' Gate, and then he slept under a real mud roof. Suddhoo is a great friend of mine, because his cousin had a son who secured, thanks to my recommendation, the post of head messenger to a big firm in the Station. Suddhoo says that God will make me a Lieutenant-Governor one of these days. I daresay his prophecy will come true. He is very, very old, with white hair and no teeth worth showing, and he has outlived his wits—outlived nearly everything except his fondness for his son at Peshawar. Janoo and Azizun are Kashmiris, Ladies of the City, and theirs was an ancient and more or less honorable profession; but Azizun has since married a medical student from the Northwest and has settled down to a most respectable life somewhere near Bareilly. Bhagwan Dass is an extortionate and an adulterator. He is very rich. The man who is supposed to get his living by seal-cutting pretends to be very poor. This lets you know as much as is necessary of the four principal tenants in the house of Suddhoo. Then there is Me, of course; but I am only the chorus that comes in at the end to explain things. So I do not count.

* Rudyard Kipling: Collected Sketches.

Suddhoo was not clever. The man who pretended to cut seals was the cleverest of them all—Bhagwan Dass only knew how to lie—except Janoo. She was also beautiful, but that was her own affair.

Suddhoo's son at Peshawar was attacked by pleurisy, and old Suddhoo was troubled. The seal-cutter man heard of Suddhoo's anxiety and made capital out of it. He was abreast of the times. He got a friend in Peshawar to telegraph daily accounts of the son's health. And here the story begins.

Suddhoo's cousin's son told me, one evening, that Suddhoo wanted to see me; that he was too old and feeble to come personally, and that I should be conferring an everlasting honor on the House of Suddhoo if I went to him. I went; but I think, seeing how well-off Suddhoo was then, that he might have sent something better than an ekka, which jolted fearfully, to haul out a future Lieutenant-Governor to the City on a muggy April evening. The ekka did not run quickly. It was full dark when we pulled up opposite the door of Ranjit Singh's Tomb near the main gate of the Fort. Here was Suddhoo and he said that, by reason of my condescension, it was absolutely certain that I should become a Lieutenant-Governor while my hair was yet black. Then we talked about the weather, and the state of my health, for fifteen minutes, in the Huzuri Bagh, under the stars.

Suddhoo came to the point at last. He said that Janoo had told him that there was an order of the Sirkar against magic, because it was feared that magic might one day kill the Empress of India. I didn't know anything about the state of the law; but I fancied that something interesting was going to happen. I said that so far from magic being discouraged by the Government, it was highly commended. The greatest officials of the State practised it themselves. (If the Financial Statement isn't magic, I don't know what is.) Then, to encourage him further, I said that, if there was any jadoo afoot, I had not the least objection to giving it my countenance and sanction, and to seeing that it was clean jadoo—white magic, as distinguished from the unclean jadoo which kills folk. It took a long time before Suddhoo admitted that this was just what he had asked me to come for. Then he told me, in jerks and quavers, that the man who said he cut seals was a sorcerer of the cleanest kind; that every day he gave Suddhoo news of the sick son in Peshawar more quickly

than the lightning could fly, and that this news was always corroborated by the letters. Further, that he had told Suddhoo how a great danger was threatening his son, which could be removed by clean jadoo; and, of course, heavy payment. I began to see exactly how the land lay, and told Suddhoo that I also understood a little jadoo in the Western line, and would go to his house to see that everything was done decently and in order. We set off together; and on the way Suddhoo told me that he had paid the seal-cutter between one hundred and two hundred rupees already; and the jadoo of that night would cost two hundred more, which was cheap, he said, considering the greatness of his son's danger; but I do not think he meant it.

The lights were all cloaked in the front of the house when we arrived. I could hear awful noises from behind the seal-cutter's shop-front, as if some one were groaning his soul out. Suddhoo shook all over, and while we groped our way up stairs told me that the jadoo had begun. Janoo and Azizun met us at the stair-head, and told us that the jadoo-work was coming off in their rooms, because there was more space there. Janoo is a lady of a freethinking turn of mind. She whispered that the jadoo was an invention to get money out of Suddhoo, and that the seal-cutter would go to a hot place when he died. Suddhoo was nearly crying with fear and old age. He kept walking up and down the room in the half light, repeating his son's name over and over again, and asking Azizun if the seal-cutter ought not to make a reduction in the case of his own landlord. Janoo pulled me over to the shadow in the recess of the bow-windows. The boards were up, and the rooms were only lit by one tiny oil-lamp. There was no chance of my being seen if I stayed still.

Presently, the groans below ceased, and we heard steps on the staircase. That was the seal-cutter. He stopped outside the door as the terrier barked and Azizun fumbled at the chain, and he told Suddhoo to blow out the lamp. This left the place in jet darkness, except for the red glow from the two huqas that belonged to Janoo and Azizun. The seal-cutter came in, and I heard Suddhoo throw himself down on the floor and groan. Azizun caught her breath, and Janoo backed on to one of the beds with a shudder. There was a clink of something metallic, and then shot up a pale, blue-green flame near the ground. The light was just enough to

show Azizun, pressed against one corner of the room with the terrier between her knees; Janoo, with her hands clasped, leaning forward as she sat on the bed; Suddhoo, face down, quivering—and the seal-cutter?

I hope I may never see another man like that seal-cutter. He was stripped to the waist, with a wreath of white jasmine as thick as my wrist around his forehead, a salmon colored loin-cloth round his middle, and a steel bangle on each ankle. This was not awe-inspiring. It was the face of the man that turned me cold. It was blue-gray in the first place. In the second, the eyes were rolled back till you could only see the whites of them; and, in the third, the face was the face of a demon—a ghoul—anything you please except of the sleek, oily old ruffian who sat in the day time over his turning lathe downstairs. He was lying on his stomach with his arms turned and crossed behind him, as if he had been thrown down pinioned. His head and neck were the only parts of him off the floor. They were nearly at right angles to the body, like the head of a cobra at spring. It was ghastly. In the center of the room, on the bare earth floor, stood a big, deep, brass basin, with a pale blue-green light floating in the center like a night light. Round that basin the man on the floor wriggled himself three times. How he did it I do not know. I could see the muscles ripple along his spine and fall smooth again; but I could not see any other motion. The head seemed the only thing alive about him, except that slow curl and uncurl of the laboring back muscles. Janoo from the bed was breathing seventy to the minute; Azizun held her hands before her eyes; and old Suddhoo, fingering at the dirt that had got into his white beard, was crying to himself. The horror of it was that the creeping, crawly thing made no sound—only crawled; and, remember, this lasted for ten minutes, while the terrier whined, and Azizun shuddered, and Janoo gasped, and Suddhoo cried.

I felt the hair lift at the back of my head, and my heart thump like a thermantidote paddle. Luckily, the seal-cutter betrayed himself by his most impressive trick and made me calm again. After he had finished that unspeakable crawl, he stretched his head away from the floor as high as he could, and sent out a jet of fire from his nostrils. Now I know how fire-spouting is done—I can do it myself—so I felt at ease. The business was a fraud. If he had only kept to that crawl

without trying to raise the effect, goodness knows what I might not have thought. Both the girls shrieked at the jet of fire and the head dropped, chin down on the floor, with a thud; the whole body lying then like a corpse with its arms trussed. There was a pause of five full minutes after this, and the blue-green flame died down. Janoo stooped to settle one of her anklets, while Azizun turned her face to the wall and took the terrier in her arms. Suddhoo put out an arm mechanically to Janoo's huqa, and she slid it across the floor with her foot. Directly above the body and on the wall, were a couple of flaming portraits, in stamped paper frames, of the Queen and the Prince of Wales. They looked down on the performance, and, to my thinking, seemed to heighten the grotesqueness of it all.

Just when the silence was getting unendurable, the body turned over and rolled away from the basin to the side of the room, where it lay stomach up. There was a faint "plop" from the basin—exactly like the noise a fish makes when it takes a fly—and the green light in the center revived.

I looked at the basin, and saw, bobbing in the water the dried, shrivelled, black head of a native baby—open eyes, open mouth and shaved scalp. It was worse, being so very sudden, than the crawling exhibition. We had no time to say anything before it began to speak.

Read Poe's account of the voice that came from the mesmerized dying man, and you will realize less than one-half the horror of that head's voice.

There was an interval of a second or two between each word, and a sort of "ring, ring, ring," in the note of the voice like the timbre of a bell. It pealed slowly, as if talking to itself, for several minutes before I got rid of my cold sweat. Then the blessed solution struck me. I looked at the body lying near the doorway, and saw, just where the hollow of the throat joins on the shoulders, a muscle that had nothing to do with any man's regular breathing, twitching away steadily. The whole thing was a careful reproduction of the Egyptian teraphim that one reads about sometimes; and the voice was as clever and as appalling a piece of ventriloquism as one could wish to hear. All this time the head was "lip-lip-lapping" against the side of the basin, and speaking. It told Suddhoo, on his face again whining, of his son's illness, and of the state of the illness up to the

evening of that very night. I always shall respect the seal-cutter for keeping so faithfully to the time of the Peshawar telegrams. It went on to say that skilled doctors were night and day watching over the man's life, and that he would eventually recover if the fee to the potent sorcerer, whose servant was the head in the basin, was doubled.

Here the mistake from the artistic point of view came in. To ask for twice your stipulated fee in a voice that Lazarus might have used when he rose from the dead, is absurd. Janoo, who is really a woman of masculine intellect, saw this as quickly as I did. I heard her say "Asli nahin! Fareib!" scornfully under her breath; and just as she said so, the light in the basin died out, the head stopped talking, and we heard the room door creak on its hinges. Then Janoo struck a match, lit the lamp, and we saw that head, basin and seal-cutter were gone. Suddhoo was wringing his hands and explaining to anyone who cared to listen, that if his chances of eternal salvation depended on it, he could not raise another 200 rupees. Azizun was nearly in hysterics in the corner; while Janoo sat down on one of the beds to discuss the probabilities of the whole thing being a bunao, or "make-up."

I explained as much as I knew of the seal-cutter's way of jadoo; but her argument was much more simple: "The magic that is always demanding gifts is no true magic," said she. "My mother told me that the only potent love-spells are those which are told you for love. This seal-cutter man is a liar and a devil. I dare not tell, do anything or get anything done, because I am in debt to Bhagwan Dass, the bunnia, for two gold rings and a heavy anklet. I must get my food from his shop. The seal-cutter is the friend of Bhagwan Dass, and he would poison my food. A fool's jadoo has been going on for ten days, and has cost Suddhoo many rupees each night. The seal-cutter used black hens and lemons and mantras before. He never showed us anything like this till to-night. Azizun is a fool, and will be a purdahnashin soon. Suddhoo has lost his strength and his wits. See now! I had hoped to get from Suddhoo many rupees while he lived, and many more after his death; and behold, he is spending everything on that offspring of a devil and a she-ass, the seal-cutter!"

Here I said: "But what induced Suddhoo to drag me into the business? Of course I can speak to the seal-cutter,

and he shall refund. The whole thing is child's talk—shameful—senseless."

"Suddhoo is an old child," said Janoo. "He has lived on the roofs these seventy years and is as senseless as a milch-goat. He brought you here to assure himself that he was not breaking any law of Sirkar, whose salt he ate many years ago. He worships the dust off the feet of the seal-cutter, and that cow-devourer has forbidden him to go and see his son. What does Suddhoo know of your laws or the lightning-post? I have to watch his money going day by day to that lying beast below."

Janoo stamped her foot and nearly cried with vexation; while Suddhoo was whimpering under a blanket, and Azizun was trying to guide the pipe-stem to his foolish old mouth.

* * * * * *

Now the case stands thus. Unthinkingly, I have laid myself open to the charge of aiding and abetting the seal-cutter in obtaining money under false pretenses, which is forbidden by Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. I am helpless in the matter for these reasons. I cannot inform the police. What witnesses would support my statement? Janoo refuses flatly, and Azizun is a veiled woman somewhere near Bareilly—lost in this big India of ours. I dare not again take the law into my own hands, and speak to the seal-cutter; for certain am I that not only would Suddhoo disbelieve me, but this step would end in the poisoning of Janoo, who is bound hand and foot by her debt to the bunnia. Suddhoo is an old dotard; and whenever we meet mumbles my idiotic joke that the Sirkar rather patronizes the Black Art than otherwise. His son is well now; but Suddhoo is completely under the influence of the seal-cutter, by whose advice he regulates the affairs of his life. Janoo watches daily the money that she hoped to weedle out of Suddhoo taken by the seal-cutter, and becomes daily more furious and sullen.

She will never tell, because she dare not; but I am afraid—unless something happens to prevent her—that the seal-cutter will die of cholera—the white arsenic kind—about the middle of May. And thus I shall have to be privy to a murder in the House of Suddhoo.

ETCHINGS: THE HUSKING BEE

The great farm-house is ablaze with lights twinkling from every room. Long tables groan beneath the loads of good things the busy housewife has been days preparing.

From the barn come merry voices; joyous laughter.

Let us stand, unobserved, in the open door.

What a happy, merry lot of young folks—stalwart, handsome young men and healthy maidens!

They are ranged around the walls with rapidly-diminishing piles of corn before them, which they husk and throw upon the golden heap which is growing up rapidly in the center.

Ah! That young man has found a red ear in his pile! He leaps to his feet and dashes at one of the prettiest girls! A short chase—a struggle—a resounding smack—and it is over. He has kissed her—maybe on her collar, or her back hair; but that doesn't matter; she counts it all the same.

How happy they all seem.

But no. Over there in a dark corner sits a tall, powerful, handsome young fellow all alone. He speaks to nobody unless addressed, and then his answers are short and sullen.

Ever and anon he casts a piercing glance at a young man of about his own age who sits at the end of the row opposite, chatting with a pretty young girl. His face darkens. There is murder in his eye. He is in love, perhaps, and jealous.

The bell rings for supper just as the husking is done, and the huskers jump up and scamper pell-mell toward the house, but the tall, handsome young man remains seated and drops his face in his hands with something that sounds like a sob.

For a long time he sits thus alone, then a light, hurried step is heard and a sweet-voiced girl asks:

"Joe, what's the matter? Had trouble with Mary? You haven't spoken to her to-night, hardly. Sick? Better come into supper. It will do you good, maybe."

"No, Sis, it ain't that."

"Tell me, Joe," says his sister kindly.

"Well," he answers, "I've got on my thin pants....I rid Dobbin over....thar wuz a nail or a chafe in th' saddle....

And the stalwart young hayseed Adonis broke down and shed a drenching shower of salt and bitter tears.

*R. L. Ketchum: For Short Stories.

MY BABOON BEDFELLOW

It has been said by the wise man of old that "there is no new thing under the sun." If this means that the adventure I am about to relate was only a repetition of something that occurred to some other hapless damsel in the pre-historic ages, I herewith accord her my sincerest sympathies.

The intelligent reader must be kind enough to understand, as a preliminary, that I am impulsive, and apt to embrace opinions with a degree of enthusiasm and a total disregard of all adverse arguments, however weighty, that is truly feminine. When, therefore, shortly after leaving school, I, as my brother says, "took up" evolution, and read various abstruse treatises upon the "development of species" and the "descent of man," it was in no half-hearted manner that I rode my hobby, but so thoroughly that I became a thorn in the flesh to most of my relations and friends, and my schoolboy brothers, denouncing the theory laconically, but forcibly, as "awful bosh," bestowed upon me the contemptuous appellation of the "baboon," and made unkind allusions to my frequent visits to the Regent's Park Gardens as being paid to "next of kin."

Certainly I did resort often, almost every day, to the monkey house to study the attributes of its interesting occupants. Perhaps some lingering, infatuated idea possessed me that it might be my brilliant mission to discover the "missing link;" at any rate, my note-book of that period contains many finely worded desires to "watch the agile monkey in its native habitat, and to "trace the simian likeness to the human amid the primeval forests of another hemisphere."

At length I was enabled to partially fulfill my dreams.

Having received a warm invitation from an old school friend to spend some weeks with her at her home in the West of Ireland, I started, with my maid as escort, for Ballynaghader. My friend, Marian Edwards, had married three years before, an Irish gentleman of some property, and I had never seen either her husband or herself since her marriage; so that it was with delightful anticipations of renewing an old friendship, and forming a new one, that I set out on my journey. My brothers accompanied me to the station, and sped me on my way with a unanimous wish that I might meet

*Belgravia.

a gorilla or a chimpanze while taking my walks abroad in what they persisted in calling the "wilds."

My maid, Hannah, was an estimable woman, very much privileged by reason of her long and faithful service; and as we neared our destination after a long and fatiguing journey, the details of which would be as tiresome as unnecessary, became overwhelmed with dismay, falling into tears, alleging between her sobs that P. C. B. 192 had told her the day before we started that Ireland was a country where nobody cared for the police. This was, in my worthy Hannah's eyes, the climax of barbarism; and when she proceeded to state from "information received"—presumably from the same reliable source—"that being murdered in one's bed" was considered in Ireland quite an ordinary and peaceful way of departing this life, I felt that it behooved me to assert myself, and, finding all soothing arguments of no avail, I administered a sharp scolding, which had the desired effect, and induced my abigail to dry her eyes, while she "hoped" with an incredulous snort and desponding shake of her head, "that things would turn out better than she expected."

The prospective pleasure of my visit was largely enhanced by the discovery that Mr. Ardagh, whom I liked directly I saw him, was a great lover and student of zoölogy, and had quite a menagerie of tame and wild animals, to which he was constantly adding interesting specimens. I promised myself great pleasure in inspecting the animals and cultivating their acquaintance on the morrow, but was recalled from my pleasurable anticipations to devote all my attention to an account Marian was giving me of the mysterious loss of a very handsome and much-valued bracelet which had occurred that very day. Some hours before my arrival her maid had informed her that this bracelet, which had been recently under repair and had been returned that morning from the jeweler, was missing. It had been laid carelessly on the dressing-table when it arrived, and had disappeared. Search had been made in every likely and unlikely spot, servants had been questioned, and, as usual, under such circumstances, had all indignantly, and some tearfully, denied any knowledge of the missing trinket, which, apart from its intrinsic value, was dear to Marian from associations connected with it. I could suggest no steps for its recovery beyond the ordinary English alternative of communicating with the police. This, I found,

had been already done, though evidently my friends had small hope of any good results following upon the exertions of that estimable force, of whom, according to Hannah, no one in Ireland stood in awe. Altogether it was an uncomfortable state of things; and although we discussed the subject in all its bearings, entering into the most minute details of any burglaries we had previously heard of or read about, we only succeeded in making ourselves distinctly uneasy, and had to decide at last, as at first, that it was most mysterious.

Directly after dinner I begged that I might be allowed to retire for the night, as my journey had thoroughly tired me. Marian took me to my room, and, wishing me a good night's rest, left me to the ministrations of Hannah, whose equanimity was thoroughly restored, and who was in a state of discursive contentment, very trying to the patience of one whose eyes were closing fast under the soothing process of hair brushing, and whose sole idea was "bed," and that speedily. But at last I got rid of my talkative attendant; and having as a last precaution looked under my bed (my constant practice, though if for one moment I had supposed there could be anything there, nothing would have induced me to look), I retired to rest, and was soon wrapped in dreamless slumber.

After, I suppose, some hours, I was awakened by a loud noise close to my bed, as of some heavy body falling on the floor from a height; but being only partially roused, I drowsily conjectured it was fancy on my part, and turned over on my side, preparatory to again composing myself to sleep. This movement brought my face opposite the window, the blind of which I had desired Hannah to draw up the last thing at night, that I might enjoy the sight of the sunrise, if by some untoward and unusual event I should not sleep as late as usual. The room was flooded with bright moonlight, and I had an uneasy feeling as I gazed at the white expanse of toilet-cover on the dressing-table before the window that there was something wrong about its appearance. Suddenly I remembered that I had certainly placed my watch and chain on the corner of the table after winding it up the night before. It was no longer there. Trying to persuade myself that I was mistaken, I raised myself on my elbow to look more carefully after my missing watch, when I distinctly felt the bed-clothes, which my movement had a little displaced, tugged toward the foot of the bed. Instinctively I clutched

my retreating coverings, and in spite of some unseen opposing agency, succeeded in restoring them to their former position, only to feel them again slowly drawn away. Three times this agitating phenomenon occurred. At last I determined to abandon some portion of the bed-clothes, retaining only the sheet, in which I wrapped myself tightly, and watched the blankets, etc., pulled to the floor and slowly dragged under the bed. Motionless with terror, I lay scarcely daring to breathe, while numerous and dire possibilities occurred to my distracted imagination. Was my unseen visitor a moonlighter? Was this a preliminary measure to the "murdering in one's bed," so graphically quoted by Hannah from the P. C. —. 192, the well informed? Certainly I was not in favor of home rule. Could the Land League be about to make an example of so insignificant a unit as myself.

After a space which seemed to me interminable, although it could have been only of a few minutes' duration, my nocturnal visitant, who had been emitting sundry very terrifying snorts and suppressed demoniacal cackles, put out a hairy hand, and grasped the edge of the bedstead furthest from me, slowly drawing to its full height the body of a large baboon, clad in a species of loose tunic. Round its neck was suspended my chain; while the watch, still attached to the chain, was held in its hand. I gazed horror-stricken upon this fearful sight, recalling in a kind of agony all the stories I had heard and read of the extreme ferocity of the baboon, remembering, too, that my door was locked, and that I was entirely at the mercy of a brute almost as large as, and infinitely more powerful than myself.

It was not in this way that I had so ardently desired to study the fascinating ways of the *Simiæ;* and as I thought of my brothers' laughing wishes at parting with me. I was struck with a sense of the grim humor of the situation. But the humorous aspect did not appeal to me for long, as I watched with fascinating eagerness the movements of my terrible visitor. With uncouth, shambling steps the creature walked to the window, and by the light of the moon examined my unfortunate watch. Its glittering case evidently delighted the baboon, as it stroked it repeatedly with one finger; but the ticking, of which it could not discover the cause or the whereabouts, appeared to exasperate it, and it tossed the watch contemptuously aside, though it remained dangling

from its chain down the animal's back. Once I made a slight sound; but my undesirable visitor resented it by so savage a spring in my direction that I feigned profound slumber, and only ventured to open my eyes after several minutes of strained expectation that I was about to receive practical illustration of that which I had so often carelessly spoken about—the extraordinary physical force in the fore limbs of the *Quadrumana*. When I did dare to look again, I saw that the baboon had seated itself before the toilet glass, and, by the aid of my brushes and combs, was attempting to reduce its bushy locks to some order. Finding this task a fruitless one, it proceeded to ransack my jewel-case, which Hannah had carelessly left open, and one by one examined various articles it contained. Rings and brooches and bracelets the creature appeared to approve of, but a jewel comb for the hair and a diamond star it evidently did not at all appreciate, flinging them down and snarling at them savagely.

I dared not attract the creature's attention to myself by making any sound, and had to watch in silent agony this rifling and appropriation of my most cherished possessions by an unappreciative baboon! At last it turned away from the window, and came in a leisurely manner toward the bed, eyeing me stealthily while it advanced; and having reached the bedside, stooped down and proceeded to draw out from under the bed the blankets of which it had despoiled me at a very early stage of the operations. Upon these blankets it tried to find a comfortable resting-place, but after turning and twisting uneasily for some minutes, emitting short grunts of ill-temper and dissatisfaction, it got up and, to my horror lay down on the bed across my feet! The discomfort and pain were almost unbearable; but fortunately after a short time the baboon rolled further down the bed, and lay at the very foot with its face turned in my direction. Its regular breathing soon showed it was asleep; but I remained in an agony of fear least some movement of mine should awaken the brute.

How the remaining hours of the night wore away I knew not—to me they seemed interminable. But when the sounds of the awakened household made themselves heard my terror increased, for I feared that the baboon would certainly be roused and attack me. Still it slept, and still I lay and watched it, until Hannah's knock at my door awakened me to the consciousness that this could not go on forever.

In a very low voice I bade my maid call Mrs. Ardagh; and when Marian's voice was heard outside demanding anxiously what had happened, I hurriedly explained the dreadful situation. To my surprise she exclaimed in what sounded almost a tone of relief, "Why, that must be Molly! Oh, how pleased Tom will be! Please lie quite still until I fetch him." My feelings, while I lay and awaited the end of this most unpleasant adventure, may be better imagined than described, but at last Mr. Ardagh's voice was heard outside the door calling in tones of authority, "Molly, Molly, come here!" The baboon sprang to her feet, gave a startled glance round the room, and, rushing to the fireplace, made its exit, as it had made its entrance, by the chimney. When the extreme tension was relaxed my nerves gave way and I fainted. Mrs. Ardagh and Hannah, having forced the lock off my door, applied restoratives, and, after some time, I regained consciousness, and was able to hear a detailed account of the capture of the baboon, which Mr. Ardagh accomplished with much difficulty. Her escape had not been discovered until late on the night of my arrival, and the idea of her being in the house had never occurred to him, as all the doors and windows were carefully fastened, and the chimney never suggested itself to him as a mode of ingress, though it had evidently appeared to the fancy of Molly.

Many of my possessions which had been appropriated by this kleptomaniac baboon were restored to me; but my watch was hopelessly damaged in Molly's ascent of the chimney. In the pocket of her tunic was discovered with my trinkets Marian's bracelet, which had so mysteriously disappeared, proving, beyond a doubt, that Molly had made her escape much earlier than was at first supposed.

I stayed at Ballynaghader only long enough to recruit my strength sufficiently to travel, and then started for home, accompanied by Marian. For a long while my nerves did not recover from the shock they had sustained. Every one was very considerate about it; even my brothers did not chaff me as I had dreaded they would, and made very few remarks anent my want of "philoprogenitiveness" when I begged to be excused from accompanying them to the Zoo.

PROFESSOR JOVANNY'S FUNERAL

Unaffected was the regret in Yellow Bear City, Storey County, Nevada, when, upon a certain January evening in the year 187—, the news spread that Professor Jovanny was dead. Professor Jovanny had been a long time (as time runs in communities like Yellow Bear City) piano-player in ordinary to the "Cosmopolitan Hotel and Dancing Pavilion—Ladies Free." Yellow Bear was yet something uncultivated. It was true that its small population found advantage in pursuing the study of geology, after the methods advocated by Mr. Squeers, and that tons of gold-hiding quartz were daily crushed through their energies; but, in spite of a weekly newspaper, thirteen saloons (where discussion upon our national policy not unfrequently led to—lead), an unfinished Methodist mission chapel and six dance-houses (including the Cosmopolitan), the advances of art and sentiment within Yellow Bear's straggling limits had been coy. The dint of pity was quite a different matter. It was genuinely felt now. All was excitement at "Cosmopolitan End," where a notice, nailed above the bar of the popular resort, apprised patrons, first, of the sad event, and, second, of the omission of the usual evening dance, which Professor Jovanny's untimely taking-off rendered impracticable. The street-corner next the Cosmopolitan, just around which stood the house of mourning, was the rallying-spot for groups of sympathizing Yellow Bear citizens. "Poor old One-Two-Three!"—"Handlin' a golden harp, mebbe, by this, think?" and many other more potent and entirely unquotable remarks and testimonials to the virtuoso's virtues were plentiful and loud. The old and cracked piano itself, at the upper end of the long dance-room, was already draped with sundry torn strips of bombazine and white cambric. A yellow and scarcely relevant engraving of Abraham Lincoln, which the Yellow Bear flies seemed to have visited with cruel pertinacity, had been propped upright upon its cover. Its legend, "We Mourn our Loss," struck the barkeeper as an appropriate and delicate expression of personal grief, under the circumstances. San Monito street was unanimous in confessing that Yellow Bear could well have spared a better man; thereby signifying a man who

* Edward Iraneus Stephenson: The Manhattan.

could drink deep, swing a pick long and shoot informally—in none of which accomplishments the dead musician had been versed. The editor of the Weekly Intelligencer was, during the last moments of the waning twilight, correcting in proof an obituary headed in his heaviest-faced capitals, "Muses in the Mud. Death of our Talented Fellow-Citizen, Professor Jovanny." In short, as Rioba Jack expressed it to the crowd of choice spirits hanging about the Cosmopolitan bar, Professor Jovanny's decease was "a suc—cess."

And as to this dead Nevada Orpheus who lay white and rigid around the corner, and whose name, when pronounced nearer to the Atlantic, must have been Giovanni something, or something Giovanni, what was now to him the petty bustle of Yellow Bear City—or what the scarcely more important bustle that the whole round earth makes as it spins. Six months back the "Professor" had landed in this rude mining-town of the Sierras. Gaunt, middle-aged, travel-stained and timid was this waif and stray of art, blown by some ironical wind hither. Under one arm was a music portfolio; hanging to the other, a daughter. Nevertheless, Professor Jovanny made his advent in a smiling hour for his fortunes. Between Dennison, proprietor of the Cosmopolitan, and the newcomer an out-of-hand bargain was struck in very Western English and very badly mangled Italian ditto that was satisfactory to both parties. Professor Jovanny abode in Yellow Bear and won reputation. Whether he had ever tried his hand at other music than the festive waltz, jig and walk-around is open to doubt. But certain it was that he played everything of that stamp with such irresistible vigor and spirit that the Cosmopolitan outrivaled all its compeers apace, and the mirth and fun of its nightly revels (termed upon Sundays, out of deference to religious scruples, "grand sacred concerts") waxed nightly more fast and furious. As for the daughter, one single relic of her father's early refinement asserted itself on her behalf, namely, that not one of the Yellow Bear species-male could truly say that he knew her. Rioba Jack, Dennison of the Cosmopolitan, "Mister" (whose sobriquet was the derisive contraction of one lone visiting card unfortunately discovered among the effects of Mr. James Thornborough Harrington, formerly of the State of Maine), nor any of their fraternity, had been able to get the advantage of this mortifying dilemma. The girl was hardly ever seen

upon the street, so jealous was her father's watchfulness. In time Rioba Jack and the rest of them came to respect this position. That is, they ceased to combat it actively. "After all," remarked some one, during a discussion of the topic, "it ain't a bad idea to *have* one real woman in this here town." There happened to be a considerable female contingent already in Yellow Bear society, so the remark last quoted evinced a good deal of nice discrimination on the speaker's part.

It was not until evening that, with the session of the wonted parliament around the Cosmopolitan bar, the proposition to inter Professor Jovanny with civic honors took shape. The full quorum was present in that hospitable retreat. Distilled liquors flowed, albeit no dance was forthcoming. Rioba Jack rose to address the company. "It appears to me," said that gentleman, covering both his awkwardness as orator and his mouth with a tumbler, when desirable—"it appears to me that we had ought—that in view of his position in Yellow Bear—that we had ought to give Professor Jovanny his funeral." "My sentiments," interrupted an approving voice, promptly. Rioba Jack continued: "He hain't left nothin' worth chattering about, except the gal, and all gals ain't cash. Jovanny was a artist way above tide-level—there ain't no mistake about that. Talk about your celluloid-clawyers! Talk about your Dumb Toms! Talk of your—of your scales," the Rioba concluded hastily, suddenly realizing that he was drifting among breakers in any rash employment of technical terms, "unless a man had heerd Jovanny rattlin' 'Where was Moses,' in this here hotel, he hadn't never heerd no genuine tunin' up at all. I say, we had ought to give Jovanny a big time."

The chorus of approval came *fortissimo.*

"I move that Rioba Jack be app'inted a committee of one to wait on deceased and ask his gal if the notion jumps with her feelin's, like as it were." This suggestion from a distant quarter, however mixed, was to the point. It was carried. Every man present felt equal to himself undertaking this preliminary; but this was no time for permitting personal interests to dam the current of popular feeling. Rioba Jack strode from the barroom. Applause and suggestion swelled behind his back. "Make it a square out-and-out show." "Borry the Methodist's gospel stamp." "Pay an entrance fee for the benefit of the gal." "Embalm the corpse!" and the like, were distinguishable among these. High over all the

tumult broke the stentorian voice of Dennison of the Cosmopolitan, commanding order and enforcing the same by the handle of his knife applied vigorously to a tumbler. Finally some settled plan of action crystalized. A "square funeral" Professor Jovanny should have. His body should "lay in state" for the whole of the ensuing day—on the piano in the adjoining dance-room—that piano which had so often been shaken to its center beneath the defunct's nimble fingers. "Mister's" proposal of an admission fee—for gentlemen only—was accepted. The entire male population of Yellow Bear City was to be duly invited to appear and "view the remains" for the modest sum of one dollar, during any hour of the morrow's daylight most suited to individual convenience. A brass band had not yet been organized in Yellow Bear, or it would unquestionably have been provided. A free bar was—of course. At nightfall Professor Jovanny should be buried with all the mortuary pomp practicable.

Rioba Jack was greeted eagerly upon his return. "It's all right," responded that worthy, composedly resuming his seat. "Go ahead, all hands! I didn't see the gal, but Big Jinny and Pearl Kate are settin' round with her, and they give her the message. Jinny says its all right. We can go ahead."

The Rioba was fully posted on the progress of affairs during his absence. The idea of Professor Jovanny's "laying in state" upon the old piano alone drew forth his contempt in round terms; which, although they betrayed surprising acquaintance with scriptural phraseology, were by no means pious. "D—— any such half-way style as that," he ended, explosively; "What *I* say is, buy the old tune-box from Dennison and bury Jovanny *in* it!" The uproar that greeted this novel proposal, like Prospero's tale, might have cured deafness. Naturally, each person present promptly claimed to have thought of it himself—and rejected it unuttered. Dennison announced his entire willingness to dispose of the widowed instrument at a reasonable figure. There was a unanimous rush into the long dance-room adjoining. Away flew the emblems of grief dangling about the object of special inspection. Its cover was laid off, bodily, in a twinkling. Its length, its depth, its available breadth and strength of bottom were excitedly ascertained. It was bought within ten minutes by a lavish collection, Dennison mentioning a price that certainly showed him to be an astute man in recognizing

a commercial opportunity. Thereupon did the whole roomful resolve itself into a committee on destruction. Alas! what soft-hearted story-teller can dwell upon the unholy hammering and cleaving, the ruthless hacking and smashing which ended in making visible for weeks thereafter in the back yard of the Cosmopolitan a hideous wreck of tangled steel wire, white and black keys and splinters of sounding-board—in a word, the entrails of the murdered piano?

By ten o'clock the work was fairly done. The crowd had departed, and only Dennison, Rioba Jack and "Mister" now remained in the long dance-room. Dennison was smoking, as he leaned against one end of his late piece of property. "Mister," with bared arms, diligently rubbed oil over sundry scratches upon its case. Rioba Jack was strengthening with hammer and nails some weak spot beneath. The flaring light from a couple of oil lamps on the side of the wall brought out strong shadows on the three dark, heavily-mustached faces. Neither of the trio broke the silence for a few moments. Presently the Rioba emerged from his close quarters and began hammering at the end opposite to Dennison. He looked up. "What's goin' to become of the gal?" he queried, abruptly; "Yellow Bear ain't no place for a decent one like her, 'specially if she's left alone in it."

"Oh, I've fixed that," replied Dennison, leisurely, "Mother Sal's a-goin' to take keer of her till she can do for herself."

The Rioba dropped his lathe-nail and stopped his pounding. "Mother Sal," he repeated—"Mother Sal around on San Monito street?"

"Yes! who else?"

Rioba Jack quietly turned and slipped on his coat.

"Dennison," he said, with an unwonted accent of expostulation lurking in his voice, "don't do this thing. Keep your hand out of deviltry for once—leastways such deviltry as this. I don't know Jovanny's gal. I hain't hardly ever seen her. 'Taint for myself I'm askin' it—but just you let her alone. Won't you?"

Dennison had removed his pipe from his mouth for good now. He stood staring angrily at the Rioba, whose clear, dark eyes under their bushy brows were fixed with unwonted brilliancy upon his own. The proprietor of the Cosmopolitan burst into a rude laugh. "What's the matter with the man?" he ejaculated. Then returning the Rioba's steadfast gaze

with an equally pertinacious and meaning one, he answered with much deliberateness, "Look-a-here, Rioba, I suppose I *can* take a hint if I *must*—especially when it's rammed down into my skull as this one appears to be. You and me has got along without trouble for ever since we come to Yellow Bear. I should be sorry, very sorry, to be obleeged to have any unpleasantness between us now. I always feel bound *to* have unpleasantness with any man, partner or stranger, who interferes with my own partic'ler concerns. Do you take?"

The Rioba made no direct reply. He stood with his eyes bent upon the floor abstractedly. Nevertheless he "took." "Good-night, Dennison—good-night, 'Mister,'" he suddenly said, and turning abruptly upon his heel he quitted the Cosmopolitan without another syllable.

The gray Nevada dawn was beginning to filter between the sharp Sierra peaks. Yellow Bear looked like a sketch in India-ink on gray paper. Around the corner of the Cosmopolitan came a little procession not irreverently conveying upon a shutter something over which a sheet had been loosely spread. The air was raw and cold. "Careful—that's it—steady now," cautioned Dennison in a low voice as they mounted the Cosmopolitan doorstep. "Mister," Rioba Jack, Big Jinny, and Pearl Kate set down their burden at the upper end of the dance-room. "Come gals, fly round," exhorted Dennison, "there's all the bar to be set up across there—them windows has got to be darkened up—there ain't no time to waste. 'Mister' and me 'll tend to our share of the performance." "I say, Jinny," questioned the Rioba *sotto voce* to that Paphian nymph a moment later, when Dennison and "Mister" were engaged at a distance, "you left her asleep, eh?" (There had, by the way, been no allusion from either party concerned as to the embryo "unpleasantness" of the preceding night—again to "Mister's" secret regret). "Sound, Jack—just like she was dead drunk," responded Big Jinny, cheerfully, pounding away with her hammer at the window-sash. Her interrogator frowned. The answer somehow gritted against his dormant sense of the fitting. Big Jinny drove another tack and began to whistle.

A little later a magnificent eastern flare of pink and gold fell through the one window yet undarkened upon the face of Professor Jovanny, peacefully upturned from his last pillow—a roll of his own thumbed dance-music wrapped about with a

white bar napkin. A moth-eaten knitted lap-robe was thrown across his feet. Dressed in his one threadbare black suit—a pile of his own music beneath the forlorn gray head—truly here went one to the grave with all that he possessed—except a daughter.

Dennison, the Rioba, "Mister" and the women stood for a moment motionless beside the body—their tasks completed.

"A becomin' caskit, altogither," exclaimed the proprietor of the Cosmopolitan, eyeing it critically.

"There's somethin' wantin', all the same," quoth "Mister," after the continued pause had grown oppressive.

"Wantin'," retorted Dennison; "I'd like to know what it is. Look at them there flags over the windows! Look at that there bar, where all that a man's got to do is to walk up, after he's paid his dollar, and help himself or let Pearl and Jinny here help him! Look at this here coffin—solid rosewood, round corners, carved legs and ag-graffe treble," he went on, with a grin at his own wit. "Come, now, 'Mister,' what more could Jovanny or anybody else want?"

But "Mister" was paying no attention to this sally or the mirth it had provoked. "Flowers—flowers and fruit—fruit and flowers," he was muttering to himself, apparently confounding a conventional Eastern attention from the friends of an afflicted family with the catalogue of some Maine county-fair. "Must come to the same thing—of course," he exclaimed, conclusively, striding away from the *de facto* coffin and his companions. He disappeared within the barroom. "I've made free with them new stores of yourn, Dennison," he called out presently, staggering down the room toward the expectant party, weighted with an awkward load—two stems of bananas and four spiky pineapples. "It won't hurt their sellin'," he apologized, as with a dexterous balancing and tying he disposed of the two first-named decorations upright, one upon either side of poor Professor Jovanny's perpendicular feet—vegetable obelisks. A pineapple stood upon each one of the "round corners." Dennison and the rest were hearty in commendations of their friend's thoughtfulness and taste. "That just fixes her off too slick!" exclaimed Big Jinny, in high delight.

The sun mounted; the barkeeper appeared in the adjoining room. First stragglers, curious to learn the truth of any rumors concerning the day's novelties at the Cosmopolitan,

strolled across the threshold. Dennison put "Mister" and a table on which was deposited a loaded revolver and an empty biscuit-tin, with a slit in its cover, over against the door; Big Jinny and the Pearl, he posted at the special bar for the day, which he had by no means ungenerously furnished forth; himself, he stationed in an arm-chair, without the dance-room, to advertise the obsequies, urge entrance into the penetralia of the dance-room, as a matter of duty and pleasure, and act as master of ceremonies generally.

It will be remarked that, designedly or accidentally, Rioba Jack was appointed unto no prominent function in these festivities of grief, so he dropped an eagle into "Mister's" resonant receptacle and walked out of the Cosmopolitan. The street was sparsely peopled at that early hour. He turned the corner of the hotel and halted abruptly to avoid collision with a figure—a girl standing motionless, and leaning against the wall, as if summoning up the courage to advance further. What told the Rioba instantly that it was Professor Jovanny's daughter, was not difficult to appreciate. The set young face, tear-stained and pallid, but independent of a pair of dark, mournful eyes for its beauty, the slender form not ungracefully draped by the scanty, black-stuff dress; the head bared to the sharp morning wind—it was a vignette of young grief, passive, despairing, solitary, that the Rioba gazed at pityingly.

"Good—good-day," he said, awkwardly. "You're—his gal, I take it. Can I—might I help you, Miss?" The last word in respectful salute to the unmarried, weaker sex, had been a stranger to the Rioba's lips for a dozen years.

"I am going to my father," the girl replied, in a curiously abstracted fashion of speech; one wherein lay just a shadow of foreign accent. She looked away from the Rioba's clear gaze, and continued, as if partly speaking to herself, "I wish to see where they have put my father. I must sit by him. He will need me."

"But," began the Rioba, in distressed perplexity, as she wrapped her shawl closer about her exposed throat (it was a beautiful throat), and made a motion to pass him, "yer father's dead, Miss. Poor, old Jovanny's dead. He's layin' in state in his pianny—coffin, I mean—round to the Cosmopolitan here. You wouldn't like to be a sittin' alone there all day 'side the coffin, and everybody starin' at you. 'Twouldn't do."

"I want to sit by my father," the girl answered more decidedly. "Take me to him."

The Rioba was mute. He saw that his new *protégée* (for such he instinctively recognized her), was in that state of mind that the eyes of all the universe were as naught to her. Extremity of sorrow had taken hold upon her, and to reason with her would be like reasoning with the clouded mind. He looked again down upon her white, pathetic face. Its innocence awoke a new emotion in the Rioba's heart.

"Come along," he ejaculated, not unkindly. He turned and led the way to the Cosmopolitan. His companion followed mutely with bowed head. The gathering crowd in the dance-room stared as the two entered. The girl heeded the whispers not a whit. She uttered a low exclamation and walked quickly across to the "caskit." "He is here, you see," she said slowly, half turning to the Rioba with a recognizing smile whose transforming effect upon her wan face, utterly obliterated from his mind any further sense of the awkwardness of his position. Some one pushed a chair forward. She seated herself beside the coffin and fixed her eyes upon the marble face within it—a statue gazing upon a statue. The room was hushed. Suddenly some human vermin, audibly of the feminine gender, laughed from a far corner. The girl raised her head and looked fixedly whence the sound had proceeded. A troubled expression came over her countenance. But at the same moment she caught sight of the Rioba standing not distant, his face flushed with wrath at the insult, his eyes brimming with compassion encountering her own. Some shadowy, tardy sense of her utterly unprotected situation must have tinged that brief look of hers with an unconscious appeal. The effect upon the Rioba was electric. Leisurely drawing his pistol from its belt, the stalwart cavalier of the Sierras, whose education in chivalry had been intuitive, stepped quietly toward the coffin of Professor Jovanny, against the edge of which that loneliest of mourners had rested her forehead. The Rioba laid his hand gently upon her shoulder, and drew himself up. "Friends and feller-citizens," he said, running his eye comprehensively round the room as he spoke, "this here young woman and this here corpse is under *my* protection. Look at that there comb in Big Jinny's head!" Before any one in the room had discovered the gaudy ornament in question it was smashed to

atoms by the bullet from the revolver discharged by the Rioba as a period to his sentence. Big Jinny uttered one single staccato screech (to which luxury she was certainly entitled), not much relishing being made a target of; and then became in common with the entire company, significantly silent.

Dennison's startled face appeared at the door outside; he had listened to speech and shot. The Rioba caught his eye and smiled. It was a smile of wholesale defiance!

The morning wore on—noon came—afternoon. Professor Jovanny's "laying in state" had been, in the language of "Mister," "a big go." Within its allotted limits of time, wellnigh the entire male and female population of Yellow Bear City had one by one entered the door of the Cosmopolitan dance-room, contributed (so far as concerned the male proportion), inspected, imbibed at discretion, departed. The "heft" of "Mister's" biscuit-tin was something to excite the dormant cupidity of anyone. All day long that ill-sorted pathetic tableau in the center of the place had remained changeless—the voiceless, motionless watcher; the tranquil tenant of that uncouth coffin; the Rioba standing beside both, erect, attentive, grave. The room was scarcely entirely still; even the Rioba had not expected that. There was some shuffling of feet, subdued commenting and query. Big Jinny and the Pearl exchanged pleasantries of a more or less Doric character with passing acquaintances. Glasses clinked and coin jingled. But no word, no ejaculation was let fall that could reflect upon or annoy her who sat in the midst of the staring, sluggishly revolving whirlpool. Big Jinny had stuck sundry disconnected fragments of her unlucky adornment in her ropy locks—a laconic hint. More than once did some acquaintance offer to relieve the Rioba on guard; but that gentleman only smiled and said, in an off-hand fashion, "I guess I'll finish."

Darkness had set in as the funeral procession took order before the Cosmopolitan door. The majority of the sterner sex in Yellow Bear seemed disposed to swell it. "Mister's" mule-cart preceded, whereon, amputated as to its legs and with its cover nailed fast, was placed the coffin. Dennison and "Mister" drove the hearse slowly. Immediately in its rear walked, bareheaded still, and as walks the somnambulist, Professor Jovanny's daughter. The instant that the Rioba had said, "You shall go with it," she had not offered

to interfere with the shutting up, at last, from view of her dead father's body, or the removal of the dismembered piano itself to the cart. The Rioba himself walked a pace to the right, very much with the air of a young man who was dimly aware that he was moving toward an emergency. A miscellaneous crowd lengthened out in the rear. The pitchy flame of the pine-wood torches filled the evening air and played strange tricks with the tree shadows. Professor Jovanny's funeral *cortège* began to get straggling and unsteady. In fact the liberty of outside locomotion and potations of strong waters had begun to battle against further decorum. Fragments of ribald songs, unseemly pranks and hilarities broke out behind intermittently. At one stage of the progress a good part of the procession seceded to witness (and assist at) the settlement of a "melancholy dispute for precedence between two of Yellow Bear's foremost citizens"—as their obituaries in the next *Intelligencer* recorded. Nevertheless, the cavernous hole dug for the reception of poor Professor Jovanny, or, rather for his bulky sarcophagus, yawned at last down a little declivity under a clump of firs.

"Dig her big enough for a hoss," had been Dennison's prudential injunction to the "committee" of grave-diggers. In their zeal they had excavated a pit that was fearful. The crowd gathered about, holding up the torches. Dennison and "Mister" superintended carefully the lowering of the coffin, a feat accomplished not without difficulty. Yellow Bear was, by this time, too weary of affliction, and, it is only veracious to add, too inebriated to think of carrying out any of the *quasi* religious or municipal ceremonies discussed. The first shovels of clay were discharged into the black depth. Then all at once, with this most merciless of earthly sounds suddenly breaking the stillness, the desolate mourner's soul awoke from its long lethargy to active grief. The girl uttered an exceedingly bitter cry. "My father!—O God, my father!" came from her white lips again and again, interrupted by a tempest of sobs and tears under which she bowed, crouching down upon the earth in an agony of loss and loneliness. The Rioba stood with his head bent suspiciously near to her side. Dennison stood opposite.

The crowd had dispersed before the work of "filling in" was ended. The girl would not be moved until all was over. Rioba Jack did not shift from his own station. At last,

however, the shovels were thrown aside and the few men left, beside the Rioba and Dennison, began relieving each other of the torches, or collecting the tools.

"Come, my gal," said the Rioba, with unconscious but wondrous tenderness. The sound of his voice seemed to give the kneeling one strength. She nodded her bowed head, checked her sobs piteously and presently rose. Still keeping her wet eyes averted from the flaring lights, she half-turned toward him and—put out her hand.

The Rioba took it as if it had been an angel's. Suddenly Dennison, who had been the most attentive of spectators, approached. The Rioba looked and discerned at his back, holding a torch, the swart, greasy face of Mother Sal, whom the other man had selected as consignee of the orphan.

"Look-a-here, Rioba," exclaimed the proprietor of the Cosmopolitan, abruptly, and standing squarely a couple of yards in front of him, "it strikes me as its about time now for you and me to turn over Jovanny's gal here to one of her own *sect.* She needs a mother's care now—a mother's, not a father's, except her own; nor yit a—a brother's."

The Rioba quite understood the situation. He changed his position, looked Dennison squarely in the eye, and with great coolness drew the young girl's arm through his own—He had settled upon this course of action while walking with the procession. He baulked not. Pointing straight at Mother Sal's puffy, oily countenance, he ejaculated, "A mother!" with ineffable scorn—and then added concisely: "Dennison, I p'rpose to be responsible henceforth for this here young woman. You are a liar—a thief—and—"

With a face whereon flashed out in a second all his pent-up wrath Dennison brought his pistol from behind his back and fired, but passion made his aim less true than that of the unscathed Rioba; who, entirely on his guard to meet what he had designedly provoked, fired almost simultaneously, and laid Dennison dead at his feet.

ETCHINGS: THAT DOOR

More nervous than drunk, he closed and locked the door, and by the light of a taper went to bed. Profound silence! Then, on his ear-drums tinkled a sound, crystalline, swelling to a vibration, like the notes of a hautboy interspersed with trumpet calls. The pillow, too, rose and fell under his head, sucking the brain like an exhauster, to eject it like a pump.

He opened his eyes. The light hushed the symphony; constrained the pillow to immobility. The taper flickered and leaped. Then, in the aureole of light, something black appeared, big, sprawling, with great antennæ. Ugh! he hated beasts! A beast? No. His arm hung from the bed; it was the shadow of his hand he saw, thrown by the taper. He turned on his back, seeing and not seeing; a misty film stretching across the sclerotic like the nyctoloptic membrane of birds. Fiery atoms danced in the darkness; his palate like a stopper closed his throat and gummed it with saliva. Then, in that obscurity, he was conscious of a slow gliding. It was the door, which he had locked, opening with wing-like sweeps, uncovering a hole long, narrow, always broader, never longer, showing black and always blacker.

He stared, lips puffed, parched and parted. But from that hole, that abyss of nothingness, nothing issued. He waited; a locked door would never thus open without something coming! He waited; still nothing; more and more feebly the taper danced; soon it would fall, splutter, drown in oil. He quickly decided. That something that did not come *should not come!* Doubling like a serpent he slipped to the floor, threw himself forward, seized, slammed the door, braced it with one hand, turned the key with the other. It was done! Breathless, panting, he returned to bed; not to sleep. His hot skin pricked and stung him; that devilish symphony, with the roar of a torrent, had recommenced. And that door, which a second time he had closed, was a second time reopening, swinging itself back like a vertical sepulchre. The wing-like sweeps began anew; the black hole widened, blacker always blacker, then—the taper fell, flashed, died to ember....

He was dead when they found him. The door? Both locked and bolted; but neither lock nor bolt had caught the socket.

*French of Lermina; E. C. Waggener: For Short Stories.

AMONG THE AOULÂD NAÎEL

For two wearisome days I had been journeying back and forth in the country of the Aoulâd Naîel. I was still far from my tent when I threw myself prone upon the sands, worn out with fatigue. On the previous afternoon, my guide and I had made a little excursion to a neighboring *douar*, and I could still hear echoes of the singular greetings showered upon me by my entertainers:

"Our father! Thy tent is blessed! Thy spurs are strong!"

Suddenly, as I lay there, the clouds seemed to lower above my head; they grew strangely dense and shone like brass. The manes and tails of our horses bristled with apprehension. I felt a prolonged shiver pass over me. A powerful hand seemed to press its weight upon my temples. Now the frozen sky was streaked with white; now it settled into oppressive darkness again; and with no living thing in sight upon the dry and barren plain, we felt utterly alone and at the mercy of some awful power. Presently a veil seemed to be thrown over our heads, and night came upon us as suddenly as when a lamp is extinguished in an otherwise unlighted room.

My guide shouted. We leaped upon our horses who galloped away with winged feet, trembling with fear, away into the fathomless shadows. In vain I tried to check this mad pace. I felt like throwing myself face downward upon the ground, for I thought death awaited us in the saddle; but my guide spurred on, quite oblivious of me, murmuring:

"There is no God! but God!"

A moment more and the clouds were cleft in twain with an awful crash. The sky was spread with a sheet of darting flame, and the earth became so bright that I saw quite plainly the gray lizards crawling in a tuft of *chih*. Our horses wheeled about, but we used our spurs, and, giving them the rein, we fled on, not knowing whither we went. We were quite beside ourselves; we no longer knew what danger it was that lashed us on. My guide urged on my horse with a hempen whip; I shouted to his. Again and again lurid flashes of lightning diffused about as dazzling circles which we traversed with a bound only to enter again into the terrible

* Algerian Sketches: Emile Masqueray: Le Figaro: Translated for Short Stories by Eleanor Moore Hiestand.

darkness. How long had we been flying? How many times had we barely escaped those awful thunderbolts? I knew only that we sped like bullets till we struck suddenly against a black cone which loomed up in our course.

Human cries rent the air, mingled with the howls of dogs. We were trampling down somebody's tent.

"Have a care, friend!" cried a voice from the darkness. "Thou art welcome. I would that thy countenance were known—that thou hadst come while it was yet day, but praised be God who sent thee to thy servants to herald the rain."

We leaped from our saddles and sprang under cover just in time to escape a cascade from the clouds that would have drenched our very bones.

* * * * * *

My host told me in the morning that he was about setting out in company with all the men of the *douar* to meet a distinguished *hadj* who had just made his third pilgrimage to the Kaaba and Medina, one of the Brotherhood of Lidi-Abd-el-Kader-el-Djilani, who was now regarded as almost a saint.

Upon their return, there was to be a festival. In the afternoon, a banquet of cuckoos, several roast sheep and honey-cakes would be served; this would be followed by target-practice and dancing—that is, there would be dancing-girls to entertain us. The tent occupied by these girls was in the remotest part of the semi-circle which the *douar* described. I could see it at a distance; the borders were drawn up and something red showed from beneath.

I was talking to a youth who asked me in good faith whether I believed in God and whether it were true that the Europeans married their sisters. He was evidently studying me as a kind of savage beyond the reach of Mohammed. Several young women passed by us, bending beneath the weight of black leathern bottles. The water glued their thin robes to their skin. They wore no undergarments, and the wind which tossed their torn clothing, revealed their whole figures in clear profile. Some were bearing on their heads bundles of briars which they steadied with their hands. Their arms were long and well shaped; their throats had no voluptuous fullness; their figures were almost straight up and down. They looked to me like primitive caryatids of Asia.

My host had a daughter who was barely sixteen; his niece was about twenty. These girls were eyeing me from afar

and could not resist their curiosity to see and speak to the *Roumi*, who was evidently bored by the youth talking to him. Under the pretext of bringing me some water, they came up, one behind the other. They looked very pretty with their abundant hair intertwined with coral and their smooth cheeks mingling the hues of amber and rose. The *Roumi* took the bowl and drank with his eyes on his pretty servitors. As the eldest seemed surprised at this impertinence, he apologized for daring to drink in her presence, and, the ice being broken, they chatted freely. They sank their dark eyes into the depths of mine, and smiled till their beautiful teeth dazzled me.

"Why do you not cut off your moustache up to your lip? Why don't you shave half of your head? you look like a monkey with all that hair falling over your face! Of what kind of cloth are your clothes made? Let us see, please, how it is sewed together. Did your wife make it? Tell us now—won't you?—if your wives look like us?"

The elder who plied all these questions was half reclining in the sand, resting her body on her right hand and leaning forward so as to gain my ear. I answered her with the first lines of a song:

> "Thy eyes are black without kohol,
> Thy cheeks are red without fard!"

She completed the stanza:

> "'Tis thou who hast given me the fever,
> Thou who hast hurled me upon the mountain!"

Then she turned her face toward the furthest tent, through whose lifted borders something red shone, and said, abruptly:

"Dost thou know Khamissa?"

"What Khamissa?"

"The dancer."

"No!"

"Then give us something right away, because, as soon as thou hast seen her, thy heart will burn itself out, and then wilt thou have nothing to do with us!"

I had in my pocket a little mirror which I gave her. The younger girl took my silk handkerchief and begged also for a red girdle I wore. So they plundered me outright—the little savages—and I was obliged to smile.

Fortunately for me, some shots were heard; sharp you-yous echoed along the line of the tents. The *hadj* was approaching from the depth of a ravine. There were at least

thirty cavaliers attending him, all mounted on spirited horses which galloped over the brow of the hill, their tails flying. More than one of these horsemen wore only a shirt, a shabby sort of a burnous over his shoulders, a rag twisted around his head, and was mounted on a wooden saddle with no covering, and only two ends of rope for a bridle! I cannot describe the effect as they came riding over the hill, their bronzed legs pressing the flanks of their steeds. What a superb poverty it was! What wonderful bandits these men were!

The holy pilgrim permitted himself to be borne on a mule's back. His eyes were half closed, his cheeks looked pale beneath a large turban of white muslin. He trembled a little as he set foot upon the ground, and still more when he seated himself in the midst of a group of young people, who looked at him with profound awe. I suggested giving him some quinine, but I was informed that it was the fear of God which caused him to tremble; the *hadj* thanked me with a glance which said I was only a pagan, or else I was a terrible blunderer! The women of the *douar* had hidden themselves. They dared not appear before this holy man, perhaps for fear his sanctity should suffer. Angels have fallen for love of women.

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Powder was flashing from noonday till sunset. The women emerged from their tents, clad in their best. They wore long veils, white or flowered, which fell from the summit of their lofty head-dresses to the ground. Their faces were uncovered and quite brilliant with ochre and vermillion. The horses went prancing by them, and the cavaliers, in their honor, rode so close that the flaming wads from their guns burned the women's red robes. They were intoxicated by the acid odor of smoke, they cried out like birds of prey, but kept waving handkerchiefs in the air. A cavalier seized one and galloped away with it. Several shots were fired after him across the plain. He wheeled about and rode back to his elected mistress. We grew excited. A breath of anger and combat blew over us, but, at a sign from the senior cavalier, every gun was discharged at once, and the noise of this fusillade rose to the very skies. It was not long ere we were gathered around the roast sheep, whose savory flanks were decorated with gold, white cuckoos surmounted by pats of butter and bathed in red sauce. We praised God and their was no one who complained of being slighted. The holy

pilgrim was not with us. The wife of my host had served him apart with a young lamb, a huge bowl of sour milk, a fine cake of dates and semoule. Several piles of shining pieces were also given him in a kerchief and he was now reciting his litanies in honor of God and of his patron, dead to all the world but living in celestial councils, Sidi-Aba-el-Kader-el-Ghilâni-el-Baghdâdi. Khamissa had not yet shown herself. Only her two companions, Fatma and Zeineb appeared. They wore blue robes and golden diadems. They said that Khamissa must be either ill or praying.

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At last the moon rose and in the open space in the center of the *douar*, I saw some tapers placed in parallel lines forming a sort of avenue of light. On either side the women scooped out little holes in the sand, and executed a few dancing steps. The men squatted alongside of the rows of tapers, but the women stood in the background, looking like dark phantoms. I sat with my host and some persons of distinction at the end and in the middle of the road. Opposite us sat Fatma and Zeineb, half-reclining in a group of halfa; beyond them a royal profile was visible. It was she! The words I had heard in the morning rang in my ears: "Thy heart will be burnt out!" Already the fires kindled as I looked at her. The flutes discoursed a tender strain. Zenieb and Fatma were whirling about each other, blue as the sky, shining with golden stars. Only in the shadow could I see her form outlined softly beneath the folds of a great piece of white silk which enveloped her.

What said the flutes now? The space was empty. The crackling briars shot flames up higher than the tents. The flutes called with imperious vibrating accents, in sad supplications, in wild outbursts, while the dull thud of the drums in the interval seemed to fire the soul with a holy enthusiasm.

Khamissa lifted her arms, tossed aside the haïk which enveloped her and slowly rose. She took several steps and then paused, her elbows pressed to her sides, her two hands folded against her cheeks, her head inclining somewhat to the left, her eyes half-closed—it was the attitude of prayer. She sparkled from head to foot, and, in her attitude of absolute repose, she looked like a splendid idol.

Her robes were of red, silver and gold. The scarlet drapery, cunningly drawn about her in thick folds, reached

all the way to the ground. A belt of embossed silver, high under the breasts but low at the sides, encompassed her like a piece of armor. Upon her bosom lay numerous golden chains dependant from both sides of her head, which was crowned by a lofty headdress. This coiffure was made of a black silk turban and tresses of wool, over which were worn two diadems of gold with pendants that twinkled upon her forehead. A long white veil parted at her temples and fell backward over her shoulders to the ground. Neither her hair nor her ears nor her neck were visible. The perfect oval of her face, her beautiful cheeks and her long eyes were framed in gold. Her lips were painted red, her cheeks were touched with saffron and with rose, her eyelids were colored blue. It was only when she held out her arms that I saw the velvet whiteness of her flesh, and yet these arms were laden to the elbows with huge bracelets of silver that bristled with points.

Was it Pallas-Athene? Was it a Byzantine madonna? Was it a painted statue from the Acropolis? Who was this coming toward us with slow steps that glided softly over the sand keeping time with the thunder of the gongs and the wild flutes that rent the air? She swayed gently and turned her hands reddened with henna, now holding her head to the right while her wide-open eyes shone like stars. Her tall and supple body was invisible, but its movements communicated a divine grace and harmony to the garments she wore. She swayed to and fro by an insensible movement. To the young men who gazed upon her, she seemed a goddess! She advanced in this way till she stood within a few steps of my fascinated eyes; then she paused and fell back into her first attitude, the pose of a Virgin in a cathedral window. I watched her deliberately. The pendant of her diadems were golden fish, the symbols of Jesus Christ, our Saviour; in the center of her forehead hung the Christian cross; on her chin which was sculptured out of purest marble, the cross of Buddha lay; on her blood-colored hands were the seven darts of Solomon's candlestick; around her thumbs were two blue threads, the Egyptian symbol of eternal life. This marvelous creature was unconsciously consecrated to all religions of the world.

She turned about to retire as slowly as she had advanced. Her long white veil trailed on the ground. Then she came back with a new rhythm in her movements, yet still gliding

quickly, softly, subtly like a ray of sunlight. Her steps were longer now. Her lips parted in a charming smile; her head was half-turned to one side; now the right, now the left arm was extended to give a playful little tap to some lover or adorer as she advanced in the midst of beseeching shadows. Again she paused before the group of which I was a part, turned with suspended motion and then retreated. As yet not an Arab had stirred. They were squatting there with their knees pressed against their chins, half-hidden by their barnous. When she advanced for the third time, the scene changed. Then she was truly superb!

"O, Heaven! Wonderful! May God bless thy mother! God keep misery from all who belong to thee!"

Thus the men exclaimed as they pressed each other for a better view, and the women stifled the *you-yous* in their throats, pressing their hands to their eyes.

With a backward motion, she drew off her veil; a quick movement unfastened the first row of chains from her breast. She turned her head, spread her arms in a semi-circle, bent her round bust upon her body, and, as though inspired by the beating of the drums, she tapped the earth with her naked feet. She came forward with a simple movement, with no seductive oscillation of the body, yet perfectly intoxicating! Her eyes shot sparks which fell to her very ankles where circlets of gold were flashing. It would not have surprised me, had some one of the young brigands who watched her, snatched her up in his iron grasp, swung her into his saddle and galloped away. But they seemed content simply to foreswear and ruin themselves for her. They tossed under her feet every bit of silver the holy pilgrim had left them; the sand shone with coins—five franc pieces, the *boudjous* of Tunis, and old Spanish *douros*. Now and then, she would pause and start anew, smiling more radiantly each time she threw out her arms. I shut my eyes for a moment; I felt she was before me. I saw her kneeling, her breast swelling beneath the golden chains, raising her blue eyelids, showing her white teeth set in coral. I leaned toward her; I felt her warm breath fan my cheek. I laid three gold pieces on her brow and one on either cheek.

"Khamissa!" I murmured. "Lovely one! Leave me not!"

She smiled her alluring smile. The flutes burst forth in a passionate appeal. I held out my arms, but she was gone!

ETCHINGS: COMFORT

She was not a pretty sight. . . . an old woman tottering under sixty years of poverty. . . . and now was the worst poverty of all. Her hand, which gathered a grimy plaid shawl at her throat, trembled ceaselessly from privation, and the vile liquor privation had brought. She was hungry; it seemed to her that she had never eaten. She was cold; it seemed to her that she had never known warmth.

She crept into a little hallway on the water front. The breeze from the river was not a strong one; but to her it was a hurricane. The drizzling rain hurt her. The minor tones of a bell from a ship at the near-by docks told that it was midnight. With inarticulate moans she crouched down in a corner, closing the door to keep out the wind and rain.

Something was in the corner, she felt it with her benumbed hands. It was soft and warm to her touch. A plaintive mew followed. The something was a cat. At first she rather resented its presence. Then she gathered it up in her arms and pressed it against the bosom of her ragged old dress. Here was a creature as miserable as she. It was only a cat, but she felt less lonely with it in her arms. When she had been a little girl she had had a pet kitten.

Each was cold—the cat and the woman—but each found some warmth in the other. The cat stopped mewing and the woman stopped moaning. The wind had shifted and the rain had ceased. The door swung open again and the moon hanging calmly beautiful among the clouds, shone through the tangle of masts and cordage and into the hallway.

The woman, crouched in the corner, held the cat as she would have held a child. By-and-by she began to rock slowly to and fro. The clouds drifted away, and the stars joined the moon in peeping through the door.

The woman's eyes were closed and she was crooning an old-fashioned lullaby. The cat was very faintly purring and one of its paws rested on her bare neck. The moon sank slowly out of sight and new clouds obscured the stars.

When the policeman peered in the hallway just before daybreak, the woman and the cat were asleep.

And they are still sleeping.

Edward Marshall: For Short Stories.

TIMMY MULLIGAN'S RALLY

Little Timmy Mulligan was very sick. Some of his chums said in an awed whisper: "He is dyin' dis time, sure pop."

No more would his 9-year-old war-whoop resound around the corner. No more would the lake front know Timmy, his bare feet, and his stone bruises. Never again would he occupy the pitcher's box and captain the "Red Hots, de champeens uv all de 9-year-olds on de wes'-side"—a nine which, through Capt. Timmy's masterly inshoots, had attained proud preëminence. Never again would Timmy refresh his jaded spirits by throwing rocks at the Italian on the corner, who had incurred his enmity by once refusing him a banana.

Timmy was as sturdy a youngster as ever the west side turned out; he was as manly and self-reliant as the average Chicago 9-year-old. He was the cock of the walk among all his companions—the best swimmer, the best fighter, and the best pitcher in the ward. The neighborhood was lonesome without Timmy. People could not imagine "what was on the boy," once so hearty and vigorous, to keep to his bed.

The little invalid lay stretched out on his couch as flat and as pallid as a pancake, in the front room away up in Sylvester Mulligan's ten-story flat building. The neighbors were coming in droves to cheer up the ailing youngster.

"You're not goan to lave me, yer poor ould mither, are ye, Timmy asthore?" wailed his mother, rocking from side to side in her frenzy of grief, like a ship in a storm, her voice choked with grief, her eyes drowned in tears.

"Ye were allus a dutiful child to me, Timmy alanna, and ye wud not be afther lavin' yer poor old mither to fight the wurld alone, now wud ye? You're the only boy I have left, Timmy, and ye'll not lave me now afther raisin' ye as long as I have. Sphake to him, Father Murphy; plase do, yer Rivirince—he'll moind you; he wuz allus a good-hearted boy, though a thrifle wild. Rayson wid him, father; the fayver has rached his brain, and he turns his face to the wall from me. He won't sphake to me. Oh, it's heart-scalded I am!"

"What's this I hear, Timmy, about your talking of dying," cheerfully sung out the good Father Murphy, approaching the bedside of the little sufferer, and taking the boy's wasted

* James E. Kinsella: Chicago News.

hand in his own. "Why, your worth a dozen dead men, yet. I could never spare you in the world. Who could I put in your place as monitor in the school; who else could I get to run my errands and to bring me my Evening News, eh? Why, Timmy, my boy, you are indispensable to the parish—you're a little pillar of the church—all by yourself. You're only pretending to be sick—you who were always so strong and hearty, with the rosiest cheeks and the brightest eye of all the lads for squares around. Brace up, and leave all thoughts of dying to old folks like your mother and myself. Do you hear, Tim?"

Tim did hear, nodding his head feverishly upon his clammy pillow. His eyes burned with an unnatural fire. They had the appealing glance of a wounded deer; it would melt your heart but to look at them.

The little invalid tossed uneasily upon the bed; his curling hair, damp with perspiration and pain, strayed uneasily o'er the pillow; his thin hands beat the coverlid with the petulance of a sturdy youngster unused to such close confinement. Yet he spoke not a word.

"Haven't you a word for your old teacher, Tim, my boy?" asked Father Murphy, softly.

"Where's Corkey O'Neill?" yelled out Timmy, suddenly, heedless of the worthy priest's entreaty. "I wanter see Corkey; bring 'im up 'ere immejiate."

Corkey was instantly produced, shuffling shamefacedly across the room to the bedside of his stricken comrade. Tim's brow was knitted in meditation. His fingers played a tattoo on the blanket. He had a load on his mind he wanted to dump. Turning restlessly, he unburdened himself thus:

"I done ye up two weeks ter day, Corkey."

Corkey admitted the "doing up."

"But I fout ye fair, Corkey; I didn't use brass knuckles?"

Corkey was forced to declare that brass knuckles took no active part in the youthful encounter.

"Ye sed I wuz a 'snide,' Corkey, didn't ye?"

It appeared that Corkey had said so.

"I t'umped ye pretty hard. I blacked both o' yer eyes—or wuz it ony one?"

It was "ony one," for Corkey still bore the echo of it on his tinted left optic.

"Well, wot I wanter say, Corkey, is I'm sorry I bunged

you up so bad. I don't believe I could whip you the way I am here, but ef you want satisfaction ye can take it out o' me now—if you bear enny hard feelings."

"I wouldn't hit a dying kid, not fur de hull west side," cried out Corkey, sobbing as if his heart would break, "ye only guv me wot I deserved, Timmy ; I had no right roastin' you de way I did."

"Who duz the Red Hots play a Sunday ?"

"We wuz a goan to play de Hard Times, Timmy, but now dat you're sick an' can't pitch we've declared the match off—we'd git skunked."

"Wot did ye do dat for ?" savagely exclaimed Timmy. "I've a good mind to black yer other eye for ye."

"Well, we all made up we wudn't play till ye got well, Tim; it's no use going out on de dimund unless you're pitchin'."

Mr. Mulligan appeared to see matters in the proper light.

"Well, I guess you're about right, Corkey," he was moved to admit. "I guess I'll hav ter get well. I wanter skunk dat crowd of Hard Times wid me in-shoots and me new snake curve that I've been studying out here the last two weeks while I've been rastlin' wid de blankets. Wot duz de gang say about me, Corkey, layin' here in me bed on the flat o' me back, like an old granny—me who wuz never sick before ?"

"Say, Tim, dey're orful sorry ; they'd cum up here themselves to see ye, ony yer ole 'ooman wudn't let 'em."

"Stick yer hed out uv the windy and yell for 'em to come up," commanded the prostrate pitcher.

Corkey thrust his Bulwer Lytton brow out of the window emitting a yell that caused all the members of the Red Hots to file into the room on tiptoe, wiping their mouths with their coat sleeves, and hanging their heads.

"Hello, fellers !"

"Hello, Tim!"

"Wot's de matter wid ye, Philly Burke? Wot are ye snivellin' for ? Didn't ye ever see a sick kid before ? An' you, too, Patsy Carroll—why, I nivir see sich weakeners as you kids before in all me life. You're a nice gang to let yourself be bluffed by them Hard Times crowd. Ye have no more sand in yer craw than a chicken. I've a good notion to sick me poodle on de hull gang o' ye. Cum up yere, Danger !"

The little black-and-tan that had retreated under the bureau, where he kept up growling and showing his teeth at

the crowd of strange visitors, jumped up on the bed and began licking his youthful master's hand. Then, turning round, he glared fiercely at the roomful of sympathizers, his tail lashing the bed, his little black nose uplifted defiantly. He showed his teeth in a subdued and dangerous snarl, as if looking out for the shins of the undertaker. All through little Tim's sickness the dog had hung around his master's room in a subdued and listless manner. When not squatting on the sick boy's pillow, licking Tim's hot and feverish hand, and vigilantly guarding his restless slumber, the dog would slink away under the bed, as if the boy's illness had affected him, also, and had cowed his honest bark and native pluck into a cowardly snarling and showing of his vicious teeth.

"If that dood of a doctor comes a-monkeying around here enny more a-pizening me with the medicines he makes me swaller, we'll giv him hydrophoby—won't we, Danger?"

Danger showed his red gums in fierce assent.

"Where's me ould woman?"

"Here I am, Timmy asthore; what is it?"

"Sind out the kittle for a quart o' beer. I wanter do the right thing and treat de gang as has called on me. I guess it'll be about square. Whin ye go over with the growler to Danny Shay's, Corkey, mind ye scoop in all the free lunch as ye can crib. I guess I could go a little cheese sandwich meself. Be sure you tell Danny Shay to pack the growler as tight as he can, Corkey," was the latter part of the languid yet hospitable injunction of the stricken Timmy, as he turned over on his side for a refreshing slumber, the vigilant Danger snugly perched on his fifth rib.

Mr. Mulligan, I am pleased to state, recovered in time to give the Hard Times the worst skunking they ever got.

In that match, digging his toenails in the pitcher's box, his cap cocked rakishly over his left eye, and Danger coaching "on de side" and howling like a demon when his master struck out any of the opposing batsmen, Timmy ladled out to the demoralized Hard Times those justly celebrated curves of his, reinforced with the famous snake shoot which he had acquired while tossing oranges on a feverish bed.

Timmy was carried home to the 19th ward in triumph, Danger bringing up the rear, leaving in his trail the vibrating air churned to a white heat by his wagging tail.

THE GOBLIN BARBER*

Famous Stories—The Old-time Favorites

The castle lay hard by the hamlet, on a steep rock, right opposite the inn, from which it was divided merely by the highway and a little gurgling brook. The situation being so agreeable, the edifice was still kept in repair, and well provided with all sorts of house-gear; for it served the owner as a hunting-lodge, where he frequently caroused all day; and so soon as the stars began to twinkle in the sky, retired with his whole retinue, to escape the mischief of the ghost, who rioted about in it the whole night over, but by day gave no disturbance. Unpleasant as the owner felt this spoiling of his mansion by a bugbear, the nocturnal sprite was not without advantages, for the great security it gave from thieves. The count could have appointed no trustier or more watchful keeper over the castle than this same spectre, for the rashest troop of robbers never ventured to approach this old tower in the hamlet of Rummelsburg, near Rheinberg.

The sunshine had sunk, the dark night was coming heavily on, when Franz, with a lantern in his hand, proceeded to the castle-gate, under the guidance of mine host, who carried in his hand a basket of victuals, with a flask of wine, which he said should not be marked against him. He had also taken along with him a pair of candlesticks and two wax-lights; for in the whole castle there was neither lamp nor taper, as no one ever stayed in it after twilight. On the way, Franz noticed the creaking, heavy-laden basket, and the wax-lights, which he thought he should not need, and yet must pay for. Therefore he said: "What is this superfluity and waste, as at a banquet? The light in the lantern is enough to see with till I go to bed; and when I awake the sun will be high enough, for I am tired, and shall sleep with both eyes."

"I will not hide from you," replied the landlord, "that a

* By Johann Musäus. This writer, little known save to scholars, enjoyed a great reputation during his life—1733 to 1787—as a collector of his native folk lore. The Goblin Barber is founded on an old German legend. Franz Melcherson, a good-for-nothing, squanders a fortune; becomes beggared; falls in love with his landlady's daughter, Meta; tramps to Antwerp to recover money due him; fails to collect, and on his way back asks shelter at an inn; is refused; curses the landlord, who, to be revenged, calls him back and lodges him in the haunted castle where the incidents of this story befall him.

story runs of there being mischief in the castle, and a goblin that frequents it. You, however, need not let the thing disturb you; we are near enough, you see, for you to call us; should you meet with aught unnatural I and my folks will be at your hand in a twinkling to assist you. Down in the house there we keep astir all night through, some one is always moving. I have lived here these thirty years, yet I cannot say that I have ever seen aught. If there be now and then a little hurly-burlying at nights, it is nothing but cats and martens rummaging about the granary. As a precaution I have provided you with candles; the night is no friend of man; and the tapers are consecrated, so that sprites, if there be such in the castle, will avoid their shine."

It was no lying in mine host to say that he had never seen anything of spectres in the castle; for by night he had taken special care not once to set foot in it; and by day, the goblin did not come to sight. In the present case, too, the traitor would not risk himself across the border. After opening the door he handed Franz the basket, directed him what way to go, and wished him good-night. Franz entered the lobby without anxiety or fear, believing the ghost story to be empty tattle, or a tradition of some real occurrence in the place, which idle fancy had shaped into an unnatural adventure. He had laid it down as a rule deduced from experiences, when he heard any rumor, to believe exactly the reverse, and left the grain of truth which, in the opinion of the wise knight, always lies in such reports, entirely out of sight.

Pursuant to mine host's direction, he ascended the winding stone stair; and reached a bolted door, which he opened with his key. A long, dark gallery, where his footsteps resounded, led him into a large hall, and from this, a side-door, into a suite of apartments, richly provided with all furniture for decoration or convenience. Out of these he chose the room which had the friendliest aspect, where he found a well-pillowed bed, and from the window could look right down upon the inn, and catch every loud word that was spoken there. He lit his wax-tapers, furnished his table, and feasted with the commodiousness and relish of an Otaheitean noble. The big-bellied flask was an antidote to thirst. So long as his teeth were in full occupation, he had no time to think of the reported devilry in the castle. If aught now and then made a stir in the distance, and Fear called to him, "Hark! hark!

There comes the goblin;" Courage answered: "Stuff! it is cats and martens bickering and caterwauling." But in the digestive half-hour after meat, when the sixth sense, that of hunger and thirst, no longer occupied the soul, she directed her attention from the other five exclusively upon the sense of hearing; and already Fear was whispering three timid thoughts into the listener's ear, before Courage had time to answer once.

As the first resource, he locked the door, bolted it, and made his retreat to the walled seat in the vault of the window. He opened this, and to dissipate his thoughts a little, looked out on the spangled sky, gazed at the corroded moon, and counted how often the stars snuffed themselves. On the road beneath him all was void; and in spite of the pretended nightly bustle in the inn, the doors were shut, the lights out, and everything as still as in a sepulchre. On the other hand, the watchman blew his horn, making his "List, gentlemen!" sound over all the hamlet; and for the composure of the timorous astronomer, who still kept feasting his eyes on the splendor of the stars, uplifted a rusty evening hymn right under his window; so that Franz might easily have carried on a conversation with him, which, for the sake of company, he would willingly have done, had he in the least expected that the watchman would make answer to him.

In a populous city, in the middle of a numerous household, where there is a hubbub equal to that of a bee-hive, it may form a pleasant entertainment for the thinker to philosophize on solitude, to decorate her as the loveliest playmate of the human spirit, to view her under all her advantageous aspects, and long for her enjoyment as for hidden treasure. But in scenes where she is no exotic, in the isle of Juan Fernandez, where a solitary eremite, escaped from shipwreck, lives with her through long years; or in the dreary nighttime, in a deep wood, or in an old uninhabited castle, where empty walls and vaults awaken horror, and nothing breathes of life but the moping owl in the ruinous turret; there, in good sooth, she is not the most agreeable companion for the timid anchorite that has to pass his time in her abode, especially if he is every moment looking for the entrance of a spectre to augment the party. In such a case it may easily chance that a window conversation with the watchman shall afford a richer entertainment for the spirit and the heart, than a reading of

the most attractive eulogy on solitude. If Ritter Zimmerman had been in Franz's place, in the castle of Rummelsburg, on the Westphalian marches, he would doubtless in this position have struck out the fundamental topics of as interesting a treatise on *Society*, as, inspired to all appearances by the irksomeness of some ceremonious assembly, he has poured out from the fullness of his heart in praise of *Solitude*.

Midnight is the hour at which the world of spirits acquires activity and life, when hebetated animal nature lies entombed in deep slumber. Franz inclined getting through this critical hour in sleep rather than awake; so he closed his window, went the round of his rooms once more, spying every nook and crevice, to see whether all was safe and earthly; snuffed the lights to make them burn clearer; and without undressing or delaying, threw himself upon his bed, with which his wearied person felt unusual satisfaction. Yet he could not get asleep so fast as he wished. A slight palpitation at the heart, which he ascribed to a tumult in the blood, arising from the sultriness of the day, kept him waking for a while; and he failed not to employ this respite in offering up such a pithy prayer as he had not prayed for many years. This produced the usual effect, and he softly fell asleep while saying it.

After about an hour, as he supposed, he started up with a sudden terror; a thing not at all surprising when there is tumult in the blood. He was broad awake; he listened whether all was quiet, and heard nothing but the clock strike twelve; a piece of news which the watchman forthwith communicated to the hamlet in doleful recitative. Franz listened for a while, turned on the other side, and was again about to sleep, when he caught, as it were, the sound of a door grating in the distance, and immediately it shut with a stifled bang. "Alack! alack!" bawled Fright into his ear; "this is the ghost in very deed!" "'Tis nothing but the wind," said Courage manfully. But quickly it came nearer, nearer, like the sound of heavy footsteps. Clink here, clink there, as if a criminal were rattling his irons, or as if the porter were walking about the castle with his bunch of keys. Alas, here was no wind business! Courage held his peace; and quaking Fear drove all the blood to the heart, and made it thump like a smith's forehammer.

The thing was now beyond jesting. If Fear would still have let Courage get a word, the latter would have put the

terror-struck watcher in mind of his subsidiary treaty with mine host, and incited him to claim the stipulated assistance loudly from the window; but for this there was a want of proper resolution. The quaking Franz had recourse to the bedclothes, the last fortress of the timorous, and drew them close over his ears, as bird-ostrich sticks his head in the grass when he can no longer escape the huntsman. Outside it came along, door up, door to, with hideous uproar; and at last it reached the bedroom. It jerked sharply at the lock, tried several keys till it found the right one; yet the bar still held the door, till a bounce like a thunderclap made bolt and rivet start, and threw it wide open. Now stalked in a long, lean man, with a black beard, in ancient garb, and with a gloomy countenance, his eyebrows hanging down in deep earnestness from his brow. Over his right shoulder he had a scarlet cloak, and on his head he wore a peaked hat. With a heavy step he walked thrice in silence up and down the chamber; looked at the consecrated tapers, and snuffed them that they might burn brighter. Then he drew aside his cloak, girded on a scissor pouch which he had under it, produced a set of shaving tackle, and immediately began to whet a sharp razor on the broad strap which he wore at his girdle.

Franz perspired in mortal agony under his coverlet; recommended himself to the keeping of the Virgin; and anxiously speculated on the object of this manœuvre, not knowing whether it was meant for his throat or his beard. To his comfort, the goblin poured some water from a silver flask into a basin of silver, and with his skinny hand lathered the soap into a light foam; then set a chair, and beckoned with a solemn look to the quaking looker-on to come forth from among the quivering bedclothes.

Against so pertinent a sign remonstrance was as bootless as against the rigorous commands of the Grand Turk when he transmits an exiled vizier to the angel of death, the Capichi Bashi with the silken cord, to take delivery of his head. The most rational procedure that can be adopted in this critical case is to comply with necessity, put a good face on a bad business, and with stoical composure let one's throat be noosed. Franz honored the spectre's order; the coverlet began to move, he sprang sharply from his couch, and took the place pointed out to him. However strange this quick transition from the uttermost terror to the boldest resolution

may appear, I doubt not but Moritz in his *Psychological Journal* could explain the matter till it seemed quite natural.

Immediately the goblin barber tied the towel about the shivering customer, seized the comb and scissors, and clipped off his hair and beard. Then he soaped him scientifically; first the beard, next the eyebrows, at last the temples and the hind-head; and shaved him from throat to nape, as smooth and bald as a death's-head. This operation finished, he washed his head, dried it clean, made his bow, and buttoned up his scissor pouch, wrapped himself in his scarlet mantle, and made for departing. The consecrated tapers had burned with an exquisite brightness through the whole transaction; and Franz, by the light of them, perceived in the mirror that the shaver had changed him into a Chinese pagoda. In secret he heartily deplored the loss of his fair brown locks; yet took fresh breath as he observed that with this sacrifice the account was settled, and the ghost had no more power over him.

So it was in fact; Redcloak went toward the door, silently as he had entered, without salutation or good-bye, and seemed entirely the contrast of his talkative guild-brethern. But scarcely was he gone three steps when he paused, looked round with a mournful expression at his well-served customer, and stroked the flat of his hand over his black, bushy beard. He did the same a second time, and again just as he was in the act of stepping out at the door. A thought struck Franz that the spectre wanted something, and a rapid combination of ideas suggested that perhaps he was expecting the very service he himself had just performed.

As the ghost, notwithstanding his rueful look, seemed more disposed for banter than for seriousness, and had played his guest a scurvy trick—not done him any real injury, the panic of the latter had now almost subsided. So he ventured the experiment, and beckoned to the ghost to take the seat from which he had himself just risen. The goblin instantly obeyed, threw off his coat, laid his barber tackle on the table, and placed himself in the chair, in the posture of a man that wishes to be shaved. Franz carefully observed the same procedure which the spectre had observed to him; clipped his beard with the scissors, cropped away his hair, lathered his whole scalp, and the ghost all the while sat steady as a wig-block. The awkward journeyman came ill at handling the razor; he had never had another in his hand, and he shore the beard right

against the grain, whereat the goblin made as strange grimaces as Erasmus's ape when imitating its master's shaving. Nor was the unpracticed bungler himself well at ease, and he thought more than once of the sage aphorism, "What is not thy trade make not thy business;" yet he struggled through the task the best way he could, and scraped the ghost as bald as he himself had been scraped.

Hitherto the scene between the spectre and the traveler had been played pantomimically; the action now became dramatic. "Stranger," said the ghost, "accept my thanks for the service thou hast done me. By thee I am delivered from the long imprisonment which has chained me for three hundred years within these walls, to which my departed soul was doomed, till a mortal hand should consent to retaliate on me what I practiced on others in my lifetime.

"Know that of old a reckless scorner dwelt within this tower, who took his sport on priests as well as laics. Count Hardman, such his name, was no philanthropist, acknowledged no superior, and no law, but practiced vain caprice and waggery, regarding not the sacredness of hospitable rights; the wanderer who came beneath his roof, the needy man who asked a charitable alms of him, he never sent away unvisited by wicked joke. I was his castle barber, still a willing instrument, and did whatever pleased him. Many a pious pilgrim, journeying past us, I allured with friendly speeches to the hall; prepared the bath for him, and when he thought to take good comfort, shaved him smooth and bald, and packed him out of doors. Then would Count Hardman, looking from the window, see with pleasure how the foxes' whelps of children gathered from the hamlet to assail the outcast, and to cry, as once their fellows to Elijah:

'Baldhead! Baldhead!'

"In this the scoffer took pleasure, laughing with a devilish joy till he would hold his pot-paunch, and his eyes ran down with water.

"Once came a saintly man from foreign lands; he carried, like a penitent, a heavy cross upon his shoulder, and had stamped five nail marks on his hands and feet and side; upon his head there was a ring of hair like to the crown of thorns. He called upon us here, requested water for his feet and a small crust of bread. Immediately I took him to the bath to serve him in my common way; respected not the sacred ring,

but shore it clean from off him. Then the pious pilgrim spoke a heavy malison upon me: 'Know, accursed man, that when thou diest, heaven, and hell, and purgatory's iron gate are shut against thy soul. As goblin it shall rage within these walls, till unrequired, unbid, a traveler come and exercise retaliation on thee.'

"That hour I sickened, and the marrow in my bones dried up; I faded like a shadow. My spirit left the wasted carcass, and was exiled to this castle, as the saint had doomed it. In vain I struggled for deliverance from the torturing bonds that fettered me to earth; for thou must know that when the soul forsakes her clay she panteth for her place of rest, and this sick longing spins her years to aeons, while in foreign elements she languishes for home. Now self-tormenting, I pursued the mournful occupation I had followed in my lifetime. Alas! my uproar soon made desolate this house. But seldom came a pilgrim here to lodge. And though I treated all like thee, no one would understand me, and perform, as thou, the service which has freed my soul from bondage. Henceforth shall no hobgoblin wander in this castle; I return to my long-wished-for rest. And now, young stranger, once again my thanks that thou hast loosed me! Were I keeper of deep-hidden treasures, they were thine; but wealth in life was not my lot, nor in this castle lies there any cash entombed. Yet mark my counsel. Tarry here till beard and locks again shall cover chin and scalp; then turn thee homeward to thy native town; and on the Weser-bridge of Bremen, at the time when day and night in autumn are alike, wait for a friend who there will meet thee, who will tell thee what to do, that it be well with thee on earth. If from the golden horn of plenty blessing and abundance flow to thee, then think of me; and ever as the day thou freedst me from the curse comes round, cause for my soul's repose three masses to be said. Now fare thee well. I go, no more returning."

With these words the ghost, having by his copiousness of talk satisfactorily attested his former existence as court-barber in the castle of Rummelsburg, vanished into air, and left his deliverer full of wonder at the strange adventure. He stood for a long while motionless, in doubt whether the whole matter had actually happened, or an unquiet dream had deluded his senses; but his bald head convinced him that

there had been a real occurrence. He returned to bed, and slept, after the fright he had undergone, till the hour of noon. The treacherous landlord had been watching since morning, when the traveler with the scalp was to come forth, that he might receive him with jibing speeches under pretext of astonishment at his nocturnal adventure. But as the stranger loitered too long, and midday was approaching, the affair became serious; and mine host began to dread that the goblin might have treated his guest a little harshly, have beaten him to a jelly perhaps, or so frightened him that he had died of terror; and to carry his wanton revenge to such a length as this had not been his intention. He therefore rung his people together, hastened out with man and maid to the tower, and reached the door of the apartment where he had observed the light on the previous evening. He found an unknown key in the lock; but the door was barred within, for after the disappearance of the goblin, Franz had again secured it. He knocked with a perturbed violence, till the Seven Sleepers themselves would have awoke at the din. Franz started up, and thought in his first confusion that the ghost was again standing at the door to favor him with another call. But hearing mine host's voice, who required nothing more but that his guest would give some sign of life, he gathered himself up and opened the door.

With seeming horror at the sight of him, mine host, striking his hands together, exclaimed, "By heaven and all the saints! Redcloak" (by this name the ghost was known among them) "*has* been here, and has shaved you bald as a block! Now, it is clear as day that the old story is no fable. But tell me, how looked the goblin; what did he say to you? what did he do?"

Franz, who had now seen through the questioner, made answer: "The goblin looked like a man in a red cloak; what he did is not hidden from you, and what he said I well remember: 'Stranger,' said he, 'trust no innkeeper who is a Turk in grain. What would befall thee here he knew. Be wise and happy. I withdraw from this my ancient dwelling, for my time is run. Henceforth no goblin riots here; I now become a silent incubus to plague the landlord; nip him, tweak him, harrass him, unless the Turk do expiate his sin; do freely give thee food and lodging till brown locks again shall cluster round thy head.'"

The landlord shuddered at these words, cut a large cross in the air before him, vowed by the Holy Virgin to give the traveler free board so long as he liked to continue, led him over to his house and treated him with the best. By this adventure Franz had well-nigh got the reputation of a conjurer, as the spirit thenceforth never once showed face. He often passed the night in the tower; and a desperado of the village once kept him company, without having beard or scalp disturbed. The owner of the place, having learned that Redcloak no longer walked in Rummelsburg, was delighted at the news, and ordered that the stranger, who, as he supposed, had laid him, should be well taken care of.

By the time when the clusters were beginning to be colored on the vine, and the advancing autumn reddened the apples, Franz's brown locks were again curling over his temples, and he girded up his knapsack; for all thoughts and meditations were turned upon the Weser-bridge, to seek the friend, who, at the behest of the goblin barber, was to direct him how to make his fortune. When about taking leave of mine host, that charitable person led from his stable a horse well saddled and equipped, which the owner of the castle had presented to the stranger, for having made his house again habitable; nor had the count forgot to send a sufficient purse along with it to bear his traveling charges; and so Franz came riding back into his native city, brisk and light of heart. He sought out his old quarters, but kept himself quite retired, only inquiring underhand how matters stood with the fair Meta, whether she was still alive and unwedded. To this inquiry he received a satisfactory answer, and contented himself with it in the meanwhile; for, till his fate was decided, he would not risk appearing in her sight, or making known to her his arrival in Bremen.

With unspeakable longing he waited the equinox; his impatience made every intervening day a year. At last the long-wished-for term appeared. The night before he could not close an eye for thinking of the wonders that were coming. The blood was whirling and beating in his arteries, as it had done at the Castle of Rummelsburg, when he lay in expectation of his spectre visitant. To be sure of not missing his expected friend, he rose by daybreak, and proceeded with the earliest dawn to the Weser-bridge, which as yet stood empty, and untrod by passengers. He walked along it several

times in solitude, with that presentiment of coming gladness which includes in it the real enjoyment of all terrestrial felicity; for it is not the attainment of our wishes, but the undoubted hope of attaining them, which offers to the human soul the full measure of highest and most heartfelt satisfaction. He formed many projects as to how he should present himself to his beloved Meta, when his looked-for happiness should have arrived; whether it would be better to appear before her in full splendor, or to mount from his former darkness with the first gleam of morning radiance, and discover to her by degrees the change in his condition. Curiosity, moreover, put a thousand questions to Reason in regard to the adventure. Who can the friend be that is to meet me on the Weser-bridge? Will it be one of my old acquaintances, by whom, since my ruin, I have been entirely forgotten? How will he pave the way to me for happiness? And will this way be short or long, easy or toilsome? To the whole of which Reason, in spite of her thinking, answered not a word.

In about an hour the bridge began to get awake; there was riding, driving, walking to and fro on it, and much commercial ware passing this way and that. The usual dayguard of beggars and importunate persons also by degrees took up this post, so favorable for their trade, to levy contributions on the public benevolence; for of poorhouses and workhouses the wisdom of legislators had as yet formed no scheme. The first of the tattered cohort that applied for alms to the jovial promenader, from whose eyes gay hope laughed forth, was a discharged soldier, provided with the military badge of a timber leg, which had been lent him, seeing he had fought so stoutly in former days for his native country, as the recompense of his valor, with the privilege of begging where he pleased; and who now, in the capacity of physiognomist, pursued the study of man upon the Weser-bridge, with such success, that he very seldom failed in his attempts for charity. Nor did his exploratory glance mislead him in the present instance; for Franz, in the joy of his heart, threw a white engelgroshen into the cripple's hat.

During the morning hours, when none but the laborious artisan is busy, and the more exalted townsmen still lie in sluggish rest, he scarcely looked for his promised friend; he expected him in the higher classes, and took little notice of the present passengers. About the council-hour, however,

when the proceres of Bremen were driving past to the hall, in their gorgeous robes of office, and about exchange time, he was all eye and ear; he spied the passengers from afar, and when a right man came along the bridge his blood began to flutter, and he thought here was the creator of his fortune. Meanwhile hour after hour passed on; the sun rose high; ere long the noontide brought a pause in business; the rushing crowd faded away, and still the expected friend appeared not. Franz now walked up and down the bridge quite alone; had no society in view but the beggars, who were serving out their cold collations without moving from the place. He made no scruple to do the same; purchased some fruit, and took his dinner *inter ambulandum.*

The whole club that was dining on the Weser-bridge had remarked the young man watching here from early morning till noon, without addressing any one or doing any sort of business. They held him to be a lounger; and though all of them had tasted his bounty, he did not escape their critical remarks. In jest they had named him the bridge-bailiff. The physiognomist with the timber-toe, however, noticed that his countenance was not now so gay as in the morning; he appeared to be reflecting earnestly on something; he had drawn his hat close over his face; his movement was slow and thoughtful; he had nibbled at an apple rind for some time, without seeming to be conscious that he was doing so. From this appearance of affairs the man-spier thought he might extract some profit; therefore he put his wooden and his living leg in motion, and stilted off to the other end of the bridge, and lay in wait for the thinker, that he might assail him, under the appearance of a new arrival, for a fresh alms. This invention prospered to the full; the musing philosopher gave no heed to the mendicant, put his hand into his pocket mechanically, and threw a six-groat piece into the fellow's hat, to be rid of him.

In the afternoon a thousand new faces once more came abroad. The watcher was now tired of his unknown friend's delaying, yet hope still kept his attention on the stretch. He stepped into the view of every passenger, hoped that one of them would clasp him in his arms; but all proceeded coldly on their way, the most did not observe him at all, and few returned his salute with a slight nod. The sun was already verging to decline, the shadows were becoming longer, the

crowd upon the bridge diminished; and the beggar-brigade by degrees drew back into their barracks in the Mattenburg. A deep sadness sank upon the hopeless Franz when he saw his expectation mocked, and the lordly prospect which had lain before him in the morning vanish from his eyes at evening. He fell into a sort of sulky desperation; was on the point of springing over the parapet, and dashing himself down from the bridge into the river. But the thought of Meta kept him back, and induced him to postpone his purpose till he had seen her yet once more. He resolved to watch her next day when she should go to church, for the last time to drink delight from her looks, and then forthwith to still his warm love forever in the cold stream of the Weser.

While about to leave the bridge he was met by the invalided pikeman with the wooden leg, who, for pastime, had been making many speculations as to what could be the young man's object, that had made him watch upon the bridge from dawn to darkness. He himself had lingered beyond his usual time, that he might wait him out; but as the matter hung too long upon the pegs, curiosity incited him to turn to the youth himself, and question him respecting it.

"No offence, young gentlemen," said he, "allow me to ask you a question."

Franz, who was not in a talking humor, and was meeting, from the mouth of a cripple, the address which he had looked for with such longing from a friend, answered rather testily, "Well, then, what is it? Speak, old graybeard."

"We two," said the other, "were the first upon the bridge to-day, and now, you see, we are the last. As to me and others of my kidney, it is our vocation brings us hither, our trade of alms-gathering; but for you, in sooth you are not of our guild; yet you have watched here the whole blessed day. Now I pray you, tell me, if it is not a secret, what is it that brings you hither, or what stone is lying on your heart."

"What good were it to thee, old blade," said Franz, bitterly, "to know where the shoe pinches me, or what concern is lying on my heart? It will give thee small care."

"Sir, I have a kind wish toward you, because you opened your hand and gave me alms; but your countenance at night is not so cheerful as in the morning, and that grieves my heart."

The kindly sympathy of this old warrior pleased the misanthrope, so that he willingly pursued the conversation.

"Why, then," answered he, "if thou wouldst know what has made me battle here all day with tedium, thou must understand that I was waiting for a friend, who appointed me hither, and now leaves me to expect in vain."

"Under favor," answered Timbertoe, "if I might speak my mind, this friend of yours, be he who he like, is little better than a rogue, to lead you such a dance. If he treated *me* so, by my faith, his crown should get acquainted with my crutch next time we met. If he could not keep his word he should have let you know, and not thus bamboozle you as if you were a child."

"Yet I cannot altogether blame this friend," said Franz, "for being absent; he did not promise; it was but a dream that told me I should meet him here."

The goblin tale was too long for him to tell, so he veiled it under cover of a dream.

"Ah! that is another story," said the beggar; "if you build on dreams it is little wonder that your hope deceives you. I myself have dreamed much foolish stuff in my time, but I was never such a madman as to heed it. Had I all the treasures that have been allotted to me in dreams, I might buy the city of Bremen, were it sold by auction. But I never credited a jot of them, or stirred hand or foot to prove their worth or worthlessness. I knew well it would be lost. Ha! I must really laugh in your face, to think that, on the order of an empty dream, you have squandered a fair day of your life, which you might have spent better at a merry banquet."

"The issue shows that thou art right, old man, and that dreams many times deceive. But," continued Franz, defensively, "I dreamed so vividly and circumstantially, above three months ago, that on this very day, in this very place, I should meet a friend, who would tell me things of the deepest importance, that it was well worth while to come and see if it would come to pass."

"O, as for vividness," said Timbertoe, "no man can dream more vividly than I. There is one dream I had, which I shall never in my life forget. I dreamed, who knows how many years ago, that my guardian angel stood before my bed in the figure of a youth, with golden hair, and two silver wings on his back, and said to me: 'Berthold, listen to the words of my mouth, that none of them be lost from thy heart. There is a treasure appointed thee which thou shalt dig, to

comfort thy heart withal for the remaining days of thy life. To-morrow, about evening, when the sun is going down, take spade and shovel upon thy shoulder; go forth from the Mattenburg on the right, across the Tieber, by the Balkenbrücke, past the cloister of St. John's, and on to the Great Roland. Then take thy way over the court of the cathedral, through the Schüsselkorb, till thou arrive without the city at a garden, which has this mark, that a stair of three stone steps leads down from the highway to its gate. Wait by a side, in secret, till the sickle of the moon shall shine on thee, then push with the strength of a man against the weak-barred gate, which will resist thee little. Enter boldly into the garden, and turn thee to the vine trellises which overhang the covered walk; behind this, on the left, a tall apple tree overtops the lowly shrubs. Go to the trunk of this tree, thy face turned right against the moon; look three ells before thee on the ground, thou shalt see two cinnamon rose bushes; there strike in and dig three spans deep, till thou find a stone plate; under this lies the treasure, buried in an iron chest, full of money and money's worth. Though the chest be heavy and clumsy, avoid not the labor of lifting it from its bed; it will reward thy trouble well, if thou seek the key which lies hid beneath it.'"

In astonishment at what he heard, Franz stared and gazed upon the dreamer, and could not have concealed his amazement had not the dusk of night been on his side. By every mark in the description he had recognized his own garden, left him by his father, and which in the days of his extravagance, he had sold for an old song.

To Franz the pikeman had at once become extremely interesting, as he perceived that this was the very friend to whom the goblin in the castle of Rummelsburg had consigned him. Gladly could he have embraced the veteran, and in the first rapture called him friend and father; but he restrained himself, and found it more advisable to keep his thoughts about this piece of news to himself. So he said, "Well, this is what I call a circumstantial dream. But what didst thou do, old master, in the morning, on awakening? Didst thou not follow whither thy guardian angel beckoned thee?"

"Pooh," said the dreamer, "why should I toil, and have my labor for my pain? It was nothing, after all, but a mere dream. My guardian angel takes little charge of me, I think,

else I should not, to his shame, be going hitching about here on a wooden leg."

Franz took out the last piece of silver he had on him: "There," said he, "old father, take this other gift from me, to get thee a pint of wine for evening-cup; thy talk has driven away my ill humor. Neglect not diligently to frequent this bridge; we shall see each other here, I hope, again."

The lame old man had not gathered so rich a stock of alms for many a day as he was now possessed off; he blessed his benefactor for his kindness, hopped away into a drinking shop to do himself a good turn; while Franz, enlivened with new hope, hastened off to his lodging in the alley.

Next day he got in readiness everything that is required for treasure-digging. The unessential equipments, conjurations, magic formulas, magic girdles, hieroglyphic characters, and such like, were entirely wanting; but these are not indispensable, provided there be no failure in the three main requisites—shovel, spade, and, before all, a treasure underground. The necessary implements he carried to the place a little before sunset, and hid them for the meanwhile in a hedge; and as to the treasure itself, he had the firm conviction that the goblin in the castle and the friend on the bridge would prove no liars to him. With longing impatience he expected the rising of the moon, and no sooner did she stretch her silver horns over the bushes than he briskly set to work, observing exactly everything the old man had taught him; and happily raised the treasure without meeting any adventure in the process, without any black dog having frightened him, or any bluish flame having lighted him to the spot.

Father Melchior, in burying this penny for a rainy day, had nowise meant that his son should be deprived of so considerable part of his inheritance. The mistake lay in this, that death had escorted the testator out of the world in another way than said testator had expected. He had been completely convinced that he should take his journey, old and full of days, after regulating his temporal concerns with all the formalities of an ordinary sick-bed; for so it had been prophesied to him in his youth. In consequence he purposed, when, according to the usage of the church, extreme unction should have been dispensed to him, to call his beloved son to his bedside, having previously dismissed all bystanders, there to give him the paternal blessing, and by way of farewell

memorial direct him to this treasure buried in the garden. All this, too, would have happened in just order, if the light of the old man had departed like that of a wick whose oil is done ; but as death had privily snuffed him out at a feast, he undesignedly took along with him his secret to the grave.

With immeasurable joy the treasure-digger took possession of the shapeless Spanish pieces, which, with a vast multitude of other finer coins the old chest had faithfully preserved. When the first intoxication of delight had in some degree evaporated, he bethought him how the treasure was to be transported, safe and unobserved into the narrow alley. The burden was too heavy to be carried without help ; thus, with the possession of riches, all the cares attendant on them were awakened. The new Crœsus found no better plan than to intrust his capital to the hollow trunk of a tree that stood behind the garden, in a meadow ; the empty chest he again buried under the rose-bush, and smoothed the place as well as possible. In the space of three days the treasure had been faithfully transmitted by instalments from the hollow tree into the narrow alley ; and now the owner of it thought he might with honor lay aside his strict incognito. He dressed himself with the finest ; had his prayer displaced from the church, and required, instead of it, " A Christian thanksgiving for a traveler on returning to his native town, after happily arranging his affairs." He hid himself in a corner of the church, where he could observe the fair Meta, without himself being seen ; he turned not his eye from the maiden, and drank from her looks the actual rapture which in foretaste had restrained him from suicide on the bridge of the Weser. When the thanksgiving came in hand, a glad sympathy shone from all her features and the cheeks of the virgin glowed with joy.

Franz now appeared once more on the Exchange ; began a branch of trade which in a few weeks extended to a great scale ; and as his wealth became daily more apparent, Neighbor Grudge, the scandal-chewer, was obliged to conclude, that in the cashing of his old debts he must have had more luck than sense. He hired a large house, fronting the Roland, in the market-place ; engaged clerks and warehousemen ; carried on his trade unweariedly ; married Meta ; provided for old Timbertoe ; lived happily with his wife ; and found the most tolerable mother-in-law that has ever been discovered.