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

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 108. NEW SERIES. | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1870. | PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXII. THE DOCTOR SCORES.

WITH the morning that battle would begin.

The patient was a little better, but still in acute agony. His eyes again sought Katey, and his hand closed on hers; and when the figure of Mrs. Leader appeared at the other side, an air of trouble came into them. All that day he groaned and gasped, and occasionally dozed. Mrs. Leader was perpetually coming in — always on the watch. The Doctor's deputy—for so she considered Katey—could not be disturbed from her position out of consideration for the sick man. There was a twinkle of triumph in the Doctor's eyes as he looked towards Mrs. Leader, reminding her of what he had said last night, that he and his daughter should stay or go together.

At night, with a dull lamp burning, Katey still kept her watch. Mrs. Leader had insisted on relieving her; but the sick man grew troubled, and once more she had to send for the poor girl and restore her to her post. This fretted the lady of the house, and she again determined that the moment her husband was at all better, ejectment should take place; already, feeling her inferiority in numbers and perhaps strength, she had written to her brother to come back with all speed. The fashionable friends were still there, but had fixed a day for their departure. The Doctor had already not only softened Lady Seaman towards himself by his own agreeable gifts, but in her presence had given a warning speech to her son.

"While I'm here, my lord, the little homestead is as shut up as a prison. No admission except on business. We're the most particular family in the parish; so mind, if you want to offend me, you'll go on paying visits there." This was said in a very stern and decided way, and the young man understood perfectly by that time that the Doctor was not a man to be trifled with. Lady Seaman, therefore, credited him with sincerity, and was his friend.

Now arrived Doctor Speed again; who inspected, felt, reflected; said "no doubt" many times, and declined to give any opinion till he was down in the drawing-room, when he announced that "the malady was taking its course." He could say nothing decisive. Meanwhile he had brought down Mr. Macfarlane, a short, keen-eyed, wiry Scot, with an elderly head on young shoulders, who was all "in his (Doctor Speed's) mind," and who would see that everything was carried out as he directed.

"Then," said Mrs. Leader, eagerly, "I suppose Doctor Findlater need not remain *now?*"

"Not unless you wish it," said the doctor, dryly.

"Quite so," said Peter; "then I resign all responsibility over to the new physician. Well and good! Well and good!"

"Quite so," said Doctor Speed, whose face seemed to say, "Well and better."

He was to remain as usual till about five or six o'clock. There was certainly an improvement in the patient: he could speak with less pain. Our Doctor went in to him.

"My dear sir," he said, "you're not to talk, but to listen—mind now. I've come to tell you, Mrs. Leader has got a brand-new doctor for you, vice myself, resigned—and who'll take care of you far better, though he is only half my age. Her brother, too, Mr. Randall, will be here to-night, so you'll have none but friends about you."

Mr. Leader put up his jaundiced face, and, in a husky whisper, said: "But she's not to leave me—Katey?"

"Oh, all in good time—by-and-bye. I fear I couldn't leave her in this house. She goes with me."

A strange look of pain and worry came into his face, and he whispered, anxiously:

"Don't, oh don't let her leave me!"

"Now don't distress yourself. The new doctors say you're not to." And having thus "sown the good seed," the Doctor went down-stairs. He met Mrs. Leader, who was just coming up, a little uneasy.

"You see I'm going. But if you want me back again you must come for me."

She turned scornfully from him.

"And I'm taking my child with me. I'll not leave her to the cruel mercies of certain parties, now that her sole friend and protector in the house is laid low," added the Doctor. "I wish you good morning, ma'am."

Mrs. Leader was a good deal disturbed at this too ready compliance. She knew there must be "schemes" behind it. But still the delight at getting rid of Katey overpowered all other considerations.

But when the London doctor went up to the patient, about three o'clock, he found him worse, much flushed and agitated. His quick eye soon discerned that something had gone wrong. He bent his head to listen to the patient, who was saying:

"She must not go. Don't let them send her away."

"Certainly not. Some servant no doubt. What is her name?"

"Katey, to be sure. Don't let her leave me."

The doctor ascertained who Katey was. He sought her, and said to her gravely that he hoped she was not going away.

"I have to go. My father requires it. He has been offended at the treatment he receives here."

"Well, he may go: but there is no reason that you should. No matter; I'll speak to Mrs. Leader."

He walked boldly into that lady's boudoir.

"We must not let this lady leave," he said; "it is essential that she should stay—mind, essential."

"But she will go; her father insists on it. I am sure I don't want her to do so——"

"Mr. Leader will fret himself into a relapse. It must be done, that's all about it. I am astonished that any difficulty can be made. You have had some family differences, I suppose?"

"It is not I, indeed. Her father insists on her following him."

"Yes, I see; to spite the family—I understand. Well, you must get him back, that's all about it."

"Never!" said the lady. "He is a low, ignorant fellow."

"Oh, nonsense! I tell you he must be got back, or I give up the case, and your husband will die in twenty-four hours."

Mary Leader was at the moment in the doorway, and entered impetuously:

"Of course it shall be done. If Katey will not stay without her father—and I hardly wonder at it after the treatment he has received—he must be sent for. Shall I order the carriage at once?"

Mrs. Leader was quite borne down by this vehemence.

"Of course," she said, "Doctor Speed, whatever is necessary for his state—though I can hardly believe that it turns on a man, whom you have such a poor opinion of, being in the house."

"My good madam, this is a plain matter of common sense: we are only wasting time. Order the horses at once."

Mary sat down without a word and wrote, sending the brougham with the letter. In due time it returned.

"There," said Doctor Speed, who had been soothing his patient, "she is not to go. For here is her father back again."

But no, it was only a reply to the note.

DOCTOR FINDLATER presents his compliments to Miss Leader, and begs that she will remind Mrs. Leader of what he said, on leaving Leadersfort, as to the sole terms on which he can consent to return.

N.B. He is expecting his daughter, Mrs. Cecil Leader. He hopes that she will not be detained.

Mary handed it to the physician. "I don't understand it," she said.

"Perhaps I do, Miss Leader," he said. "I hardly wonder at the man's standing back. What does all this mean, Mrs. Leader?"

She read impatiently. "Some more of his impertinence! It is unbearable. I'll not submit to it. Let her go, then!"

He shook his head. "Oh, we can't trifle with these cases. Now please do whatever is necessary."

"What! go myself and fetch him? Never!"

The doctor smiled. "Well, that *is* a little too much. But if he won't come otherwise—suppose you go, Miss Leader."

Without a word that young lady went down to the carriage, and drove away.

When Peter, looking round the edge of his curtain, saw the "petticoat," he danced a regular jig, or even war-dance, but was much taken back when Mary entered.

"Now, Doctor Findlater," she said, "I want you to be good-natured and reasonable, and to do something for *me*. You are too sensible to think of pushing your advantage further. Come back with me, won't you, as a favour?"

The Doctor looked at her with a comic smile. "I see," he said. "Well, here goes." And he went down with her, got into the carriage, and then drove away. The Doctor was really good-natured and sensible, and, if thus appealed to, was not likely to press his advantage too far. But he reserved a little stroke, in petto, for the time he should meet Mrs. Leader.

CHAPTER XXIII. BY THE BEDSIDE.

Up drove the brougham. The Doctor descended triumphantly, and was preceded in by his captor. There, in the dining-room, were Doctor Speed and all the august party assembled at a very late lunch, or early dinner. It was intensely gratifying to his "amoor proper."

"I declare I am as good as a noble Roman," he said, as the servants prepared a seat for him, and he unfolded his napkin. "No one can call me a Shylock after this, or say I was insisting on my bond." And he looked straight at Mrs. Leader. That lady took no notice. He went on: "I declare! To think that *I* should be prescribed, as a prescription at my time of life. Why, it beats the Encumbered Estates Court."

The London doctor listened quite amused. He was coming round to like this Doctor Findlater, who, notwithstanding all the dismal circumstances, was exceedingly entertaining, and told some of his best stories. Mrs. Leader listened, silent and cold. She was looking forward, in thought, and in troubled thought, to what was to come of all this.

At last the London doctor went up to have another look at his patient, whom he pronounced to be neither advancing nor going back—to the family; but to his confrères, Mr. Macfarlane and Doctor Findlater, he repeated his old verdict: "I doubt if the man can hold on. It will spread to the heart, and then the liver complication—however, go on with the treatment." He then departed, crumpling up a little slip of paper, which Mrs. Leader presented to him, and which was his second cheque for one hundred pounds.

Now the reserved, canny Mr. Macfarlane came into office; a man that economised his words and thoughts as he did his shillings; and thought before he spoke whether you were worth expending so much "pheezical exartion" upon. The Doctor, on that night, painfully studied him, to see how he could be approached, but could make nothing of him—a "dried-up, flaky, unsympathetic chip." But from that hour the Doctor did not flag, and laid himself out, with a patient and untiring energy, to discover the weak place. Determined, however, as he said, to give "a handsome quid" in return for the quo extended to him in the shape of house-room and entertainment, the Doctor exerted himself energetically, and, with all his powers of entertainment, rendered himself quite a popular character with the guests, and Lady Seaman smiled languidly, but approvingly, at his quips, stories, and repartees. The young lord was dull and sulky; he did not understand the Doctor's altered manner, who seemed to be half sneering, half laughing at him.

It would be disagreeable to dwell much on the stages of that long sickness. In truth, Doctor Speed had tolerably correctly summed up the matter. "The man can't last." But all through he seemed to cling to Katey, and he was never easy or tranquil but when she was near him, reading to him. Mrs. Leader said nothing all that evening, and seemed to accept the situation. But she was expecting relief; and next morning Mr. Randall Morrison was found, by those who came down late, seated at the breakfast-table. The Doctor gave a little start, and Mr. Randall looked at him with a smiling nod, as who should say, "We are now going to change matters."

On the ladies going away, this gentleman spoke to the Doctor, and others that remained, in a quiet, confidential, but assured fashion. "You see, with so many people in the house, all about this poor invalid, we must really establish some order, and regularity, and subordination. Now, we have thought it best, Mrs. Leader and I, that as you and Mr. Macfarlane are the physicians, you should have control-in-chief, and decide on Mr. Leader's state—whether he is fit to see people, or whether he is likely to be tired of seeing people, and other matters of that sort. There must, of

course, be no disputing what you decide. I am sure you see the propriety of that, Doctor Findlater."

"Oh, I never undertake to decide what is or what is not propriety. There are such contradictory opinions. But I warn you not to be crossing the grain of the sick man, or fretting him. Mr. Macfarlane can tell you what happened yesterday. And then Doctor Speed laid down a different principle altogether. But that's neither here nor there, of course."

Mr. Morrison stared at him. "You are hardly right," he said. "We have to do with what is here; nothing, of course, with what is *there*. However, this is the determination we have arrived at, and I am sure every one here will co-operate with me in carrying it out."

The dry Scotch doctor was allotted a little room off Mr. Leader's, which became a sort of sentry-box, where he kept guard over the patient. Katey alone was allowed the entrée, and could come and go as she pleased without challenge.

It was late one night, towards eleven o'clock, after the patient had had a restless, uneasy day, when Mrs. Leader had passed in and out a good deal. Katey had been reading and talking to him all the greater part of the day, and had come on duty again at ten o'clock, after a hasty rush into the town, to look after things there. Mr. Leader, "grown as yellow as an Australian sovereign," stupefied with violent jaundice, had been dozing and dreaming, while Katey watched.

How many things had she to think of in that lonely vigil—the secret, desperate schemes that she knew were being hatched against her and her husband, the responsibility of duty towards her father, whose next extravagance she began to be doubtful about, to say nothing of the strange rumours that were spreading through Tilston of discoveries, and of strange stories, to be revealed by-and-bye. Then, there was her sister Polly—a bright, but foolish child; and she recalled her light manner, and how often in her visits she had found her sitting with that dangerous Captain Molyneux, and whom she longed to see married to some steady man, and placed out of harm's way. Never were so many cares on so young a head.

As she thought and thought she heard the sick man groan, and, looking round, became conscious that his eyes were fixed upon her. He caught her by the wrist.

"That is you, my dearest Katey. Where have you been? Why did you not come before?"

"I have been here, dear Mr. Leader, for the last two hours."

"Then don't leave me again! I wish to do what is right. God knows I do. But I cannot stand their persecution longer. They wear me to death."

"Who, dear Mr. Leader?"

"Oh, you know—he and she. They intimidate me. All this weary day they have been at me. Why don't you save me from them? They want to destroy me here and hereafter, and, oh Katey, I fear they will make me do it!"

"Don't distress yourself. Now, you promised me you would not," said the amiable Katey, who never even thought of indulging her curiosity, and asking what it was they were to make him do.

"If I have only strength left me," he went on, "they shall never prevail on me to do what is wrong. Never. But I am so weak and shaken; and there is the danger."

"Don't think of it any more to-night," she said, soothing him.

"But they will come again to-morrow, arguing and imploring of me to do this. I cannot stand it. As it is, my soul is tortured for what I have done."

At last Katey said: "But what is this thing that is so dreadful?"

"You know very well. Surely there is no danger of my life—the doctors don't say so. I have suffered a great deal, and it would be very hard——I will *not* do it," he said, vehemently. "I will not damn my soul, and leave an injustice after me by leaving my own son a beggar."

"Poor Cecil!" said Katey. "He has done nothing to deserve this persecution."

"But I want—I want," said the sick man, raising himself, and beating his pillow passionately, "I want to be saved for the future. Who can keep them from me? They will come again and again, I know they will. I want to undo the mischief I have done, and you must stand by and help me, Katey. But they are all too strong for me."

"Indeed, no," said Katey. "You are only agitating yourself. Never think of us to-night, at least. To-morrow papa will do something."

"But if they persuade me. I am so weak now. If they begin it again. I cannot be always struggling. They are too many for me. Suppose," he added, with a sort of piteous earnestness, "suppose they

should force me to this, would you think me the most wretched, basest creature? But be indulgent—what *can* I do?"

"Do!" said Katey; "do what your own conscience tells you is right, and nothing against that. It is hard for me to speak on such a subject; but if you ask me, I might say that there has been enough done in the way of severity to poor Cecil."

"But not more than he deserved. You don't say that I have acted wickedly or unfairly? You know that he went against me, defied my authority. I should mark it to him in some way."

"But it was a heavy punishment for the offence, if such it was. Disinherited, disgraced, beggared! And all this—forgive me, dear sir, if I say this—I know, *not* from your own heart, or on account of any anger you might have, but because it was urged, cruelly urged, upon you."

He turned away his face restlessly.

"Yes," she went on, growing more excited; "your heart was too good, too generous, to feel any bitterness, or to magnify *that* into an injury. Nor do I so much accuse others, but only consider this—she was not his mother, and could not have a parent's feelings. Such a one, and her friends, would naturally look to their own interest, and take a far harsher view than a father would."

"Well done, my little pleader," would her father have exclaimed had he been listening; and even the manner, sweet and earnest, was more irresistible than the matter. Her little speech, after all no more than a remonstrance, had a vast effect.

"Don't think too hardly of me," he said; "when I recover I shall repair all. As it is, Cecil is taken care of. And they shall get me to do nothing more—never. Only if I had some support. But I shall make up for the past."

After that he at last got to rest, while Katey continued her watch, half excited, half fearful of her own boldness, and thinking that she had spoken too much, and gone too far.

Mr. Randall Morrison brought about a great change in the tone of the house. He introduced a steady resolution, and quite took the command. The Doctor he seemed to be always confronting, with "a cold eye," and a hostile watchfulness; and it was curious to see how completely Doctor Findlater dropped his jovial bantering in the presence of this enemy: feeling clearly that it was of no use, and superfluous. Mr. Morrison seemed to establish a sort of understanding that it was by his permission, or at least approbation, that all access to Mr. Leader's room was tolerated. And he even seemed to require an account of the business that brought any one there.

Doctor Findlater secretly resented this behaviour, and often said to himself. "Bide your time, Fin! bide your time, my boy!" A very efficient ally in this "police work," as the Doctor would call it, was the Scotch Doctor Macfarlane, who seemed to grow every hour more close and impenetrable. The Doctor tried him in every conceivable way, with good stories, jokes, deferential asking of an opinion; still more deferential adopting of an opinion; but all in vain — a grim smile was the highest result. Yet, with a buoyant effrontery, the Doctor never would accept these rebuffs; but under shelter of his daughter, would enter the sick-room, and sit there cheering the patient. The unhappy Mr. Leader remained, for a time at least, without getting better, or at least without getting much worse. Sometimes he was dull and stupefied, as the heavy humours of his illness mounted to his head, sometimes cross and peevish to a degree—sometimes troubled as to the state of his soul. The Doctor tried to cheer him; but after he had been with him about two or three minutes the Scotch "superintendent" entered and feared that "they were fatiguing the patient," and grew imperative, and the Doctor had to go out. Nothing would soften that cold, thorny nature.

A STRING OF GHOST STORIES.

The writer has, in common with many others, great curiosity in all matters connected with the supernatural.

Without desiring to prove logically that it is often more difficult to doubt than to believe, the writer cultivates a mind in abeyance, ready to believe what is supernatural, on the same proofs, and with the same faith, as what is natural.

Direct ocular evidence, or the strongest circumstantial evidence, being the rule in courts of law, nothing is hereafter stated on the warrant of the writer that would not be considered good legal evidence. The facts come direct from the witnesses themselves, and were by them related to the writer.

Sir W. S. was a general officer, well known in the Indian service. He died

lately at Florence. His widow is alive, and she related what follows:

They had been living for many years in India, with a sister, to whom Lady S. was tenderly attached. Both had arranged to return to England about the same time, but Lady S. left first, much against her wish. Her sister was to follow as soon as possible. On reaching England, Lady S. anxiously looked for letters with news of her sister's plans. In this state of anxiety she dreamt one night that her sister appeared before her, in long white trailing clothes, dripping with wet, her face ghastly pale, her fair hair, which was remarkably long and beautiful, falling around her, save on the right side of her head, which was closely cut.

The dream was so shocking, and so distinct, that Lady S. became greatly alarmed. She carefully noted the date of its occurrence. Her anxiety to receive letters increased. They came at last. Her sister had embarked shortly after her, and died at sea. By her own request a portion of her beautiful hair was cut off before she died, to be sent to Lady S. She was buried at sea at the precise hour of Lady S.'s dream.

Captain Campbell, of S., is well known as a spirited writer on Indian field sports. He and his wife were staying with me in the Highlands of Argyleshire, when he related the following circumstances:

S. Castle, his family place, stands on the coast of Kintyre, that wildest part of Argyleshire facing the sea. It is a regular feudal stronghold, small, square-turreted, placed on a pile of rocks, lapped by the sea. Behind rise barren hills in long monotonous lines, broken below into grass-fields, divided by walls, or dykes, as they are called in Scotland. There are no trees, nothing but the clouds, the hills, and the sea. Under the old castle, along the shore, nestle a few grey hovels. These, with the grey castle above, form the village of S.; a place that, even in summer, chills one with its suggestive look of wintry blasts and roaring sea storms.

One special autumn morning Captain Campbell started to shoot grouse on the moors far away beyond the hills. His path lay along the shore by a little pier and a low wall raised as a barrier to the waves. Under this wall lay moored the fishing-boats of his tenants, who, on the borders of Loch Fyne, look to the famous herrings of those waters for their support.

As he passed this low wall he saw four men, well known to him, preparing their nets for a start. The day was boisterous, the wind moaned along the shore, and the white-crested waves rode in, angrily striking against the wall. Captain Campbell halted for a few moments to speak to the men and to wish them a good haul.

All day he was out on the moors, inland. The wind had risen, and stormy gusts of rain swept over the water and the land. As he returned he again took the coast road, although it was further round. He felt, he said, a strange necessity to do so, he could not explain to himself at the time. The sea was now very rough and lashing furiously against the low wall; the sun was setting in a bank of lurid clouds opposite. Leaning against the wall, as if resting, the sickly sunshine lighting up distinctly their forms and faces, which he fully recognised, he saw the same four men with whom he had spoken in the morning. Being late, he did not stop, but merely bade them good-night in passing, and scarcely noticed that they neither raised their caps, nor replied to him.

As he entered the enclosed court of the castle, his wife ran out to meet him, exclaiming, "Oh, Campbell, how thankful I am you are returned! The most dreadful accident has happened. The boat, with So-and-so on board (naming the four men he had just seen), has capsized in a sudden squall near the shore, lower down; they are all drowned, and their poor wives are almost mad with grief!"

"Impossible, my dear!" replied Captain Campbell; "I have this instant seen those very men by the low wall at the jetty."

"Seen them!" cried she. "It is but an hour ago their bodies began to drift on the beach, and one still is missing, but the morning tide is expected to bring it in! As the boat capsized in the bay it was all distinctly seen by the watchers."

Then Captain Campbell understood that the forms he had seen were the wraiths of the drowned men, standing there to bid good-bye to the laird, and he went down to the village to comfort the widows.

At Walton-on-Thames, close to the river, was a villa, long the property of the T. family. It was the favourite residence of a certain eccentric countess of that house, known as "the bad countess," who was so fond of the place that, being of a violent and strange temper, she declared that she would, after her death, haunt the house should any

one dare to destroy or alter it, specially should they meddle with her own private room. In the course of years the villa was sold to wealthy people, who entirely disapproved of its small size and gloomy rooms, and, unmindful or ignorant of the threats of Lady T., pulled down most of the old house, and built a very fine modern mansion in its place. This family, immensely rich, whom we will call S. R., were happy, merry people, with many sons and daughters, happy and merry also. Visitors always filled the house; the rooms were large and spacious, the furniture new and showy; in fact, it was the very last place in the world to be connected with the supernatural. Yet, very soon after the new villa was built, Mrs. S. R., the mistress of the house, came to be aware that a particular bedroom, forming part of the old house, was haunted by the countess on one special day of the year. Year after year the same appearance of a little old woman, strangely dressed, occurred to different visitors occupying this room, until Mrs. S. R. could not doubt the fact. The room was, of course, used as little as possible, but, one day, some American friends landing unexpectedly, and making a sudden visit to Walton, were, for want of space, placed in it. In the night, before the fire had gone out, the husband and wife were aroused by the door opening, and an old woman appearing, dressed in an antique costume. She crossed the room, stood for some time looking at the bed, and then disappeared before either of them could follow her. Not in the least prepared for a ghostly visitor, the Americans got up, and tried to trace the figure, but quite in vain. The next morning they asked Mrs. S. R. who could possibly have entered their room in the middle of the night, describing the strange dress and appearance of the visitor. Mrs. S. R. started and turned pale. She remembered that very night was the date of the yearly appearance of Lady T., which, in the sudden arrival of her friends, she had forgotten.

The following incident occurred in Rutlandshire about twenty years ago, and was related to the writer by the wife of one of our bishops:

Mr. and Mrs. E. were then young people, and the future episcopus was glad to accept a country curacy near his father's residence. A small house was taken in the parish on a four years' lease. After six months' residence, Mrs. E. one Sunday morning accidentally remained at home during church hours, and was sitting in her bedroom. All the household had gone to church save the cook, who was in a distant part of the house, cooking. Under Mrs. E.'s bedroom was a drawing-room, which was only partially furnished, and therefore rarely used. It was at that time locked up, the windows fastened, the shutters shut, and the blinds drawn down. Suddenly Mrs. E. was disturbed by hearing a confusion of noises in the room below; the door slammed repeatedly, the windows thrown up and down, the blinds noisily pulled, the furniture drawn about the room, in fact, every evidence of the presence of a large and noisy party. Mrs. E. at once rang the bell, which was duly answered by the cook.

"Who on earth is in the room below? Who has unlocked the door?" she inquired.

"No one, ma'am," replied the cook; "no one is in the house but myself, and I am busy in the kitchen."

"Impossible, go down and see; there is a large party in the drawing-room."

The cook went and returned.

"The door, ma'am, was locked; I unfastened it; the windows and shutters are shut, the blinds down, the furniture unmoved."

Mrs. E. dismissed the cook, and pondered.

Some time after this she sat more in the drawing-room, the season being summer. When alone there she heard the same noises in the room overhead, that is, in her bedroom; chairs were dragged about, the fire (when there were no coals in the grate) violently poked, and the sound of feet were plainly audible walking in and about the room. Mrs. E. had not the courage to investigate these noises as the cook had done, but when she did go to her room everything was in its accustomed place.

At first these noises were of rare occurrence; as time went on hardly a week elapsed without their occurrence, and Mrs. E., though by no means a nervous woman, felt really uncomfortable. Noises, too, came to be heard in other parts of the house, and the servants became alarmed. There was a small room, intended for a schoolroom, near the offices, where the servants sat; at one end was a window and on the left side a door; along the window side of the wall a curtain, drawn at night, covered both window and wall. The servants were sitting in this room one evening by candlelight, when the curtain rustled in a manner to draw their attention, and as they looked,

behind it was distinctly seen by all the impress of a form, passing between the curtain and the wall, and holding off the curtain by the left arm. As this unseen form passed the opening of the curtains a hand appeared for an instant on the dark stuff, and a moment after all those present were conscious that a something which rustled in moving had passed out of the room by the door from the curtain, and that the room on that side become intensely cold. The servants all saw and heard this visitation. The lease of the house being nearly ended, the E.'s left it. Mrs. E. says that nothing would have induced her to remain there any longer, for that both her husband and herself believed that the house was haunted.

The writer cannot of course guarantee what the servants saw; but, as forming a sequel to Mrs. E.'s story, it has been related.

What follows is given in the words of the lady herself, Miss Jones, now Mrs. Harford, of Stapleton Manor-house, near Bristol.

"I live in a large, rambling, old house in the country, built some time in the fourteenth century, according to a date found on an old beam in the roof some years ago by a workman who was employed to repair it. The two lower floors are wainscoted, and a blow on the walls causes a hollow sound, suggestive of places of concealment, which doubtless would be discovered if the panels were removed. The house has the character of being haunted. Indeed, strange and unaccountable noises are at times heard in various parts of it. Singular lights have also been seen, not only by the domestics, but by visitors. I shall, however, confine myself to one instance, of which I was a spectator. The bedroom, which I still occupy, where this circumstance took place, is on the third floor. It is a large room with bow windows, and at that time contained two beds. An invalid sister and I shared the larger, and another sister occupied the smaller bed. We always burned a night-light in the room. At the end of October, in the year 1854, I was one night awakened suddenly by some noise, and being perfectly awake, I saw a female figure pass slowly across the foot of the bed, going towards the windows. It moved so deliberately, that I had time to consider who it could be, while it was before my eyes. A slight figure, and a fair sad face, dressed in a white cap, and apparently a white night-dress. It was sufficiently like the sister in my bed to make me think it was she, as I had no idea of its being anything supernatural; and I only thought she was taken ill. But I checked the intention I felt at first to speak to her, as she had a great dislike to being watched, and turned round, not to have the appearance of doing so, when to my surprise and alarm I saw her calmly sleeping by my side. I then got immediately out of bed, and carefully searched the room. The door was bolted, and I looked behind the curtains. This room is papered, and there was no place of concealment where any one could hide. I then saw that my other sister also was quietly sleeping. I did not like to wake my sisters, fearing to alarm the invalid, but I mentioned the circumstance the next day, though, of course, no one could offer any suggestion on the subject, as none but myself had seen the figure. Some years afterwards I again saw the same apparition standing by my bed, and apparently gazing at me. I was then alone, and immediately started up, when it disappeared.

"I afterwards heard that a new servant, who had arrived at the house only the previous night, had seen a similar figure, and I believe on that morning. She had risen a little after five o'clock to get through her work, when she heard a door open near to which she was passing, and saw a female figure dressed in white come out of the door, and pass along the passage leading to my bedroom. It was about five o'clock that I saw the apparition by my bed, but being in February, the morning was still dark. When the housekeeper heard the girl relate the circumstance, she tried to persuade her that she had seen one of the servants coming out of the room; but she persistently declared it did not resemble any one in the house. I have not heard of the same apparition having been seen by any person since that time, though noises still continue to disturb at times the members of our household."

C. Abbey, in Cheshire, the ancestral seat of the C. Family, is the next scene to which the writer will invite the reader's attention.

The old part of this fine old mansion has been made into bedrooms and offices, not being in keeping with the splendour of modern requirements. Thus, what used to be called the "coved saloon" was first degraded into a nursery, and is now used as a bedroom. When the late Lord C. grew old, this room, in which he had played as a

child, was occupied by his niece, Miss P., who before her marriage resided in the house. Lady C.'s dressing-room was only divided from the "coved saloon" by a short corridor.

One evening Miss P. was alone dressing for a very late dinner, and as she rose from her toilet-glass to get some article of dress, she saw standing near her bed—a little iron one, placed out in the room away from the wall—the figure of a child dressed in a very quaint frock, with an odd little ruff round its neck. For some moments Miss P. stood and stared, wondering how this strange little creature could have entered her room. The full glare of the candles was upon its face and figure. As she stood looking at it, the child began to run round and round the bed in a wild distressed way, with a look of suffering in its little face.

Miss P., still more and more surprised, walked up to the bed and stretched out her hand, when the child suddenly vanished, how, or where, she did not see, but, apparently, into the floor. She went at once to Lady C.'s room and inquired of her to whom the little girl could belong she had just seen in her room, expressing her belief that it was supernatural, and describing her odd dress and troubled face.

The ladies went down to dinner, for many guests were staying in the house. Lady C. thought and thought over this strange appearance. At last she remembered that Lord C. had told her that one of his earliest recollections was the grief he felt at the sudden death of a little sister of whom he was very fond, fourteen years old. The two children had been playing together in the nursery—the same "coved saloon," running round and round the bed—overnight. In the morning when he woke he was told she had died in the night, and he was taken by one of the nursery-maids to see her laid out on her little bed in the "coved saloon." The sheet placed over her was removed to show him her face. The horror he had felt at the first sight of death made so vivid an impression on him, that in extreme old age he still recalled it. The dress and face of the child, as described by Miss P., agreed precisely with his remembrance of his sister. Both Lady C. and Miss P. related this to the writer.

Dr. Gason, a physician resident at Rome, a very old and esteemed friend, told the writer what follows:

"I was called to attend an English girl in Rome, Miss P., living with her aunt, Mrs. Evans. From the first I saw it was a case that must end fatally. I became greatly interested in my patient, and attended her more as a friend, at last, than as a doctor. When she became worse my wife and I took turns to sit up during part of the night, so as to allow Mrs. Evans to have some hours' rest.

"I was sitting, about two in the morning, in the salon of the apartments occupied by these ladies. Like many small apartments abroad, the bedrooms opened from this central room. On my left was Mrs. Evans's room, where she then lay asleep. On the right was my poor patient's room. Both doors were open to enable me to hear the one, and to call the other. I was sitting in the furthest part of the salon, which was lighted by a lamp. I was as wide awake as I am now. I had just turned up the lamp, thinking that it grew dim, when I saw a figure dressed in white pass out from Mrs. Evans's door into Miss P.'s room. As it slowly moved along the other end of the salon from where I sat, I did not distinctly see the face or features, but the unusual dress, and a shadowy look about the figure, which glided rather than walked, surprised me. I concluded, however, as I sat looking at it in the somewhat dim light, that it must be Mrs. Evans who had gone to look at her poor niece, dressed in some bedroom toilet new to me.

"But, as she did not return, I rose and looked into her door. Mrs. Evans was fast asleep in her bed. I then went into Miss P.'s room, who lay in a troubled doze.

"I was shocked at the sudden change in her appearance since I saw her an hour before. Death was in her face, which had from white turned now to an ashy grey colour. About five o'clock I called up her aunt to take my place.

"On retiring about ten o'clock in the morning, I could not help questioning Mrs. Evans as to whether she had gone late into her niece's room. 'It was not I,' she replied. 'I never moved from the time I lay down until you called me.'

"When I went into Miss P.'s room, she was sinking rapidly. She clasped my hand with all her remaining strength, and began speaking quickly, but very indistinctly. I understood her to say, 'Oh, Dr. Gason, I am so glad you are come—I can die now—I have something to tell you—a white figure in the night—the figure of—— Oh, do try and understand me—the white figure——' These words were repeated

many times; but the poor girl spoke so low, and she breathed with such difficulty, that it was impossible for me to catch her meaning. Most painful was the struggle to tell me what was on her mind. To the last she held my hand, and her lips moved, but no sound came from them, and in half an hour she was dead."

Mrs. P. is a family connexion. She was living with her husband at their country place during the autumn of a certain year. She was in good health, as was her husband; no trouble or agitation harassed her mind; she lived in luxurious ease, rich, quiet, and contented. She is, moreover, rather of a reserved and silent temper, not in the least sensitive, or imaginative, or outward.

Mr. P., a complete country gentleman (and a very affectionate husband, be it said), was in the full enjoyment of the sporting season; he hunted, shot, and fished, and farmed, and gardened; he was, indeed, as jovial as heart could desire.

One memorable day Mr. P. went out early to shoot with two friends. They went to a distant cover, and were not expected back until late, so that Mrs. P. dressed herself for dinner, and sat in the drawing-room, opening from the hall, ready to receive them. There was sufficient light not to require candles before dinner. The gentlemen entered the house by the stables and offices, so that Mrs. P. neither saw nor spoke with her husband until he came down dressed for dinner with his two friends. Mr. P. introduced them to his wife, and they made suitable apologies for being late. While they were sitting round the fire talking, Mrs. P. remembered that she had left her pocket-handkerchief on the toilet-table in her room, and went out to fetch it. The drawing-room led into the hall, and in the hall, opposite the entrance-door, was the principal staircase, large and broad, with a spacious landing half-way up, lighted by high windows. On this staircase Mrs. P. saw a gentleman ascending; his back was towards her. He was dressed in a velvet suit of such a peculiar form and pattern that Mrs. P.'s attention was specially attracted. He slowly mounted the stairs. She paused in the hall to observe him, wondering who he was, and why he was so dressed. As she stood, the gentleman passed into a small dressing-room on the landing, to the right of the large windows, called "the yellow dressing-room." Mrs. P. followed him up-stairs, got her handkerchief, concluded that he was another guest picked up out of doors, and returned to the drawing-room. Mr. P. turned to her, and said, as she entered, "My dear, are we never to have dinner? We are very hungry. Will you not ring the bell?"

"Had you not better," said she, "wait so as to give your other friend a little time to dress? I have just seen him go up-stairs into the yellow dressing-room. He wore such a curious dress. I want you to tell me who he is."

Mr. P. turned very pale, and looked strangely moved. At first he did not reply; then he turned to her, and said, in a sharp angry manner, very unusual with him, "You must be out of your senses. What are you talking about? Pray ring for dinner at once. Let me hear no more of this stuff about the gentleman in the yellow dressing-room. My two friends here are our only guests."

Mrs. P. began, in a low voice, asseverating that she had seen some one, who was then in the yellow dressing-room, begging Mr. P. to go up at once, and convince himself. But he checked her by so stern and strange a look that she dropped the subject, and they went to dinner.

At night, after the two guests were gone, Mrs. P. said, "My dear, why were you so savage before dinner? I really did see most distinctly that strangely dressed gentleman on the stairs. I so particularly noticed his velvet dress—a kind of plum-colour, with steel buttons, and such an odd cut."

Her husband again looked agitated and angry. "I beg you earnestly," said he, "not to revert to this subject; it is a delusion—you must see I do not like it."

Mrs. P. felt there was some mystery she could not fathom. Her husband's manner was rough and unusual, he looked pale, and was silent and dull. The subject dropped. She went into the yellow dressing-room, however, found everything untouched, and heard through her maid no one had been there.

A couple of days after, Mrs. P. drove to a rather distant part of the county, to visit some relations of Mr. P.'s. She had often been there before; but now, as she sat in the dining-room at lunch, she became at once conscious that among some family pictures hanging on the walls there was one of a gentleman in a plum-coloured velvet suit of antique cut, precisely similar to the figure she had seen on the stairs. Turning to her hostess, "Whom," said she, "does that picture represent?"

"A common ancestor," was the reply. "The picture, indeed, ought to be in your house, as your husband is the head of the family, but it got into our branch by marriage; and, perhaps, on the whole, it is better that it should be here."

"I ask you," said Mrs. P., "because two days since I saw a gentleman in our house exactly resembling it, with that odd coat, and no one saw him but me; and I cannot understand what became of him."

"Pray," whispered the cousin, "say nothing about it. I thought you must have known that there is a tradition that whenever the head of our family is to die, that figure is said to appear; but, indeed, I don't believe it (seeing Mrs. P. turn very pale), "I have no faith in such things. Thank God, we are all well. I wish I had not told you. Do not mention it, however, to Mr. P., for it is a painful subject with him, I believe."

Mrs. P., not being, as I said, imaginative, was not (as she told me) as much alarmed as might have been expected. She thought it strange, specially in connexion with her husband's irritated, angry manner. On her return home she found Mr. P. in his usual health; but that very night he was taken suddenly ill, and in a week from the time she had seen the figure on the stairs, he died.

Mrs. Brook related to me the following particulars, in presence of her daughter:

She and her family were living at Southampton, in a small house, somewhat out of the town. Her establishment consisted of a butler and two maid-servants. Whenever she spent the evening out, she took the house-key with her, and desired the butler to place on a table in the hall a candle and some matches, and to go to bed, so that her return might not disturb the rest of the family.

One evening some friends accompanied Mrs. Brook to the door, and having seen her safe inside, took leave, and left her. The moon was shining, and it was a fine night.

While Mrs. Brook was holding the matches in her hand, and in the act of lighting the candle, she saw a man come down the staircase into the hall, opposite to where she stood, still busy lighting the candle.

Thinking it was the butler who had awaited her return, she said: "Oh! how can you be so foolish as to sit up, when you know I have ordered you to go to bed, and do not wish it? Why did you do so?"

As she spoke the figure slowly moved along the hall, and began to descend the kitchen stairs.

Not receiving any answer, and the candle being now well alight, she looked up more attentively, and wondered to herself why the butler did not speak, and why he wore a cut-away coat and brass buttons; for, from the dimness of the candle and the uncertain moonlight, she noticed nothing otherwise singular in his appearance. As it was late, she went up at once to bed, leaving her door open in order to hear the butler return up-stairs to his room. She undressed and went into her daughter's room, who was awake. "I cannot conceive," said she to her, "why James should have sat up for me to-night against my express orders, and now he is staying the most unaccountable time in the kitchen. I must go and wake Jane" (the maid), "and make her go and see what he is about. It is very odd."

The maid was called and asked to go down and look after James. "James, ma'am!" said she; "he is in bed up-stairs, and I am sure he has not moved, or I should have heard him over-head and on the stairs, I am such a light sleeper." Miss Brook had heard nothing either. Mrs. Brook was aghast.

"There was a man in the house, then, for he passed close to me in the hall; I did not look at his face, for I was lighting my candle, but I took it for granted it was James. And the odd coat, too. There is a man concealed below, and we must make James get up at once."

James was found fast asleep in his bed; he had never stirred. He got up and went down-stairs, followed by Mrs. Brook and the maid. The doors were all barred and locked, the windows fastened. Every hole and corner was searched, no one was found, not a chair even had been moved. Mrs. Brook began to feel uncomfortable; the singular dress struck her, and something strange in the motion of the figure, which in the hurry of the moment she had not remembered.

At last, tired out and very much frightened, they all went to bed. Next morning a policeman was sent for, and Mrs. B. described the whole occurrence and the appearance of the figure. "Oh," replied the policeman, "that was the ghost—many have seen that ghost in this house before. He walks down those stairs from the top

of the house. Years ago his master murdered him below, at the foot of the stairs near the kitchen, and his body was found there. If you take up the matting you will see the stains of blood in the flooring, which no washing will remove." Mrs. Brook did see some dark marks on the spot indicated. She left the house almost immediately.

THE SORTIE FROM NAUMBURG.

TRANSLATED FROM UHLAND'S BALLAD, "THE HUSSITES BEFORE NAUMBURG."

THE Hussites came down on Naumburg,
Jena way and by Kamburg;
On the Vogelwies with fear,
We saw nought but sword and spear,
Near a hundred thousand.

And as they round poor Naumburg spread,
Our women cried aloud for bread.
Hunger pinched us and thirst too.
For a pinch of coffee you
Paid your sixteen pfennings.

Just as want of all bereft us,
And each hope had long since left us,
The master of a little school
Had a thought (he was no fool),
"Let's try," he said, "the children."

"Children," said he, "you are young,
Pure, and sinless, free from wrong,
You shall to the Hussite camp,
Bad they are, yet not one scamp
Will dare lift a sabre."

Grimly all the Hussites smiled,
Cherries gave to every child;
Then Procopius drew his sword.
"Face about," he spread the word;
"Right about from Naumburg."

That blessed day to celebrate,
We still hold our yearly fête,
And the cherries laughing bring
To the tents where we all sing,
"Freedom and Victoria."

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WE did not sit round a yule log and tell each other Christmas stories, because the punkah was flapping in our faces and the thermometer stood at eighty-seven degrees. The scene has changed from the Holy Land to the Straits of Babel Mandeb, at the bottom of the Red Sea—a name and a vicinity which speak queerly of Ali Baba and the Arabian Nights. The good friends and pleasant companions who journeyed with me in Palestine have gone their several ways: Edward to cheer a dear invalid's last Christmas Day by dining with him at Nice; the sheik to visit relatives; and George to hurry back post-haste for England to consume that plum-pudding, in the bosom of his family, which we had jestingly declared to lay heavy on his soul all the time he was away. In point of fact, George spent the festival in a railway carriage on Mont Cenis, where he was snowed-up, an unsatisfactory termination to much telegraphing beforehand, and to unceasing studies of the various routes home; but he has said since that his dry biscuits, washed down with cognac and snow-water, had quite a Christmasy flavour, and that the French bagman and the Italian officer who shared his compartment, proved excellent company. All this I learn later. For myself, I have hurried away from Jaffa, leaving the Austrian Lloyd's boat, which brought me off, at Port Saïd; have come up the Suez Canal for the twentieth time as far as Ismailia, and, after spending a day and night at Cairo, have sailed from Suez for Bombay. We, a goodly company of the outward bound, are about to spend Christmas together on board one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers; are to arrive at Aden on Christmas Eve, and, after staying there the night while the ship takes in coals, are to resume our voyage early on Christmas morning. Fresh from the land and the sites which gave Christmas and its sacred associations to the world, I feel as if I had been now thrown into the midst of an extraordinary conjunction of places, people, and seasons. Arabia, Nubia, Abyssinia, Jiddah, Mocha, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean — these be strange names for a Londoner to hereafter associate with the festival to which he has looked forward annually in England, for as long as he can remember. It seems as if I were called upon to take part in some fantastic vision, in which all the stories I have read of Oriental travel, and of out-of-the-way Christmas gatherings, were to be combined.

By an excellent prevision, and one for which I hereby tender my thanks to the directors of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, everybody on board is to be made to feel that Christmas is a festival. It is all very well for refined philanthropists to preach about the wickedness of associating our enjoyments brutally with food, but what else can the motley crew who work our steamer have in common with us or with each other? Quashee, the half-naked Seedeeboy stoker, who lives on curry prepared by one of his brethren, and whose chief delight is to lie basking in the sun from which we shrink, his head uncovered to its fierce rays, and his shiny black carcase grilling on the heated metal work about the engine-room—Quashee rejoices in having a double quantity, or three pounds,

of rice served out to him. After consuming the whole of it, he and his numerous fellows steal and hide each other's grimy skull-caps, or give or take sly blows such as would fell a bullock, and chase round and round the iron bars forming the open space about the funnel—their favourite playground—and jabber and show their white teeth as if the P. and O. notions of Christmas reminded them of the hospitalities of their native kraal, and as if the large monkey-house in the Regent's Park had served them as a model for a gymnasium. Ching Rung and the other cleanly Chinamen, in snow-white pinafores and trousers, who man the captain's gig, look askance at the greasy Seedeeboys, and squat, models of neatness, on the forecastle deck, while they mend and darn their linen with scrupulous care, and tell stories of the small-footed beauties of Hong Kong. There are with us, too, several sets of native seamen from Bombay (each set working under its own "tindal," or ganger), whose lean legs, cased in tight cotton pantaloons, look like sticks of sealing-wax, so thin and brittle are they; an Arab pilot, who spends his life on B. and O. steamers, and who tells you quite calmly that he has a wife at Suez and another at Aden, and that he likes the Aden one best, because she of Suez is growing old; natives in smart uniform of blue and white, whose special business it is to stand "at attention" on the deck until they hear the cry of "Sepoy!" when they hasten to the passenger who calls, with a light for his cigar; and English quarter-masters, who are dressed like the model seamen of the British stage, who are rarely called upon for hard work, that being left to the native seamen aforesaid, and who look so smart and active, that you long to set them to a course of hornpipes. All these, thanks to the genial traditions of the great company, keep Christmas in their several ways, and are taught to think of it as a season for rejoicing. The saloon critics—severe men for the most part, but honourably just—comment on these things approvingly, as inspiring a higher conception of directorial human nature than is commonly entertained; and as we glide by the jagged and desolate mountains of Arabia, and approach Aden's volcanic peaks, it is agreed that the company's venial errors in the selection of sherries and clarets will be forgiven it, in consideration of the hospitable homage it renders to the time. The ship's bells toll out the half-hours shrilly, and are the chimes which herald our Christmas Eve; the gorgeous tropical sun sinks behind the opal sky in a flood of glory, "leaving," as has been beautifully said, "a rosy path, as if the Sacred tread were fresh upon the water;" then the firmament grows radiant as orb after orb glitters forth, and night is upon us, and Christmas has begun.

It is now that we drop anchor off Steamer Point, Aden, and welcome the pleasant portly figure of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's agent on board. I look out eagerly for the friend with whom I have promised to spend the evening at the military cantonments three miles off, and learn, alas! that he is smitten with fever. He and a brother officer went out shooting on the mainland of Arabia a few days before, taking with them a couple of servants. All four succumbed to sunstroke, one of the party had died, and my friend lay seriously if not dangerously ill. A sad greeting for Christmas Eve, I muttered to myself, as I made silently for my cabin—I was standing, travelling-bag in hand, at the top of the companion-ladder, and ready to descend it joyously when I heard this distressing news—but the hospitable gentleman at whose house my friend was laid up insisted upon my coming on shore to sleep. Thus it was that I spent my Christmas Eve in an Anglo-Indian bungalow—the first I had seen—with a drawing-room seventy feet wide by ninety feet long, and sleeping chambers with fixed venetian blinds instead of windows, through which the boisterous wind rattled the night long. The spacious bareness of this establishment, the strange look of hall-doors and windows left wide open through the night; the numerous dusky, white-robed figures lounging about the vast corridors and antechambers; and the unceasing clatter of the heavy sun-blinds against the balconies outside, made a combination of sights and sounds which impressed me greatly.

An affecting visit to the sick-chamber—a distant apartment, selected thoughtfully as being far from the hum of the household; some exquisite ballad-singing in the drawing-room, during which eyes fill with foolish tears, and some one I know experiences a strange nipping sensation about the heart, for it is Christmas Eve, and these same ballads had been heard from dear lips at home; some temperate conviviality; a quiet but hearty interchange of good wishes, and we retire, thankful for the agreeable change implied in sleeping on shore.

There is an early service next morning

at the little church in the arid hollow below the rock on which our friend's bungalow is perched; and we read from tablets on that church's walls of gallant fellows who have died at Aden, and whose comrades and friends have erected these memorials to their masonic and other virtues. We wonder how these dead and gone brethren spent their last Christmas Day on earth, and whether they looked forward to future anniversaries to be kept with those they loved, as ardently as we are doing now. There are some attempts at Christmas decoration in the choir and nave, and the building differs from an ordinary English church only in the addition of punkahs; while the elegantly dressed congregation, the sublime language of the familiar service, and the half-dozen carriages outside, which include a private hansom—the only one in Aden—all speak eloquently of home.

We hear bitter complaints of the horrors of "coaling" and the impossibility of sleeping through it, and receive rueful congratulations on our absence when we rejoin our friends on board the steamer, and pass the compliments of the season to one set of laggards after another as they come up on deck. Dusky native youths swim round the ship regardless of sharks, diving for the coins thrown to them, and looking like overgrown newts in some giant aquarium. The mail steamer from Calcutta came in two hours ago, and these lads swim from our ship's side to it and back again, delivering notes and Christmas messages, until our anchor is lifted and we steam out of Aden harbour, with eyes fixed wistfully on the homeward bound.

The day has begun well, despite a freshening wind and a tumbling sea, which plays havoc among the ladies. The professional diver who came with us from Suez, and who could not be left at Shadwan, whither he was bound for purposes connected with the lost Carnatic, by reason of our passing that island at night, is sent off in a boat to the steamer for Suez, and hopes audibly that the blundering ill luck which has made him miss trains, put himself on board the wrong ships, and drop his money, clothes, implements, and credentials, at intervals during his journey from England, will be exorcised by the hearty wishes for a merry Christmas which are shouted—for much diving has made him deaf—as he leaves us. The painful question connected with the friendless Levantine clerk was virtually settled by a subscription in the saloon yesterday; but the formal announcement has been reserved until this morning, when it is proclaimed on the quarter-deck as a welcome bit of Christmas news. This wretched "stowaway" was discovered somewhere in the recesses of the hold when we had been two days at sea, his only excuse being that he was starving in Egypt through the termination of the canal works; and that he had friends and the prospect of regular employment at Bombay. His case was adjudicated on by the captain, with the purser as public prosecutor, and the man who discovered the culprit as chief witness, and the stern sentence provided for such cases had been duly passed. The stowaway had acknowledged his guilt, pleading extenuating circumstances, and crying for mercy. But the court had no power. The man had come on board, knowing that he had not a stiver wherewith to pay his passage-money, and placidly resolved that the company should be at the cost of keeping him; so he was to be sent back to Suez in the first steamer leaving Aden, and to be handed over to the authorities and punished for his fraud. But happily for him Christmas intervened; and the saloon passengers, headed by a benevolent colonel, determined to pay his passage and to give him his chance in India. I am afraid we helped a scamp. But the claims of the season carried all before them, and the sleek and supple Greek—he was an educated man, who spoke four languages, had a plausible manner, and what is known in Old Bailey circles as "the embezzling face,"—profited accordingly. He became a full-blown passenger, and rather patronised such of us as questioned him afterwards. Whenever the kind-hearted colonel addressed him it seemed as if the stowaway became possessed with a gentle melancholy as one saddened by the out-of-jointedness of the world; though I often heard him leading the laughter on the forecastle deck, and the quality of his attentions to Mrs. Shekarry's pretty English maid made one long to kick him—hard. Still, we all made a point of believing in him, excepting the captain and the purser, who took a professional view, and old gentlemen asked quite tenderly if he were well cared for now, whether he had as much pudding as he could eat, and if there were anything else he wanted to make him happy on the voyage. In short, he became the most popular man in the class to which he was relegated, for that was composed of mere commonplace, honest people, who had paid

their passage, and who were under no obligation to us.

The Shekarrys were newly married. He had obtained leave from his regiment in India a few months before, and had been over to England for his bride; a vivacious, pretty little lady, who had her own clique at the saloon-table, and who would, I promise you, be an acquisition to the balls, picnics, and junketings of the Anglo-Indian station which was to be her new home. Shekarry—known as Jumping Tom in his regiment—was a model for an athlete, and, besides being a mighty hunter, was up to many a pretty trick in which hardness of muscle and suppleness of limb were requisites. He performed for us sometimes, and when night came on, and the oppressive heat of the day had yielded to the fresh southerly wind, lamps were slung to the poop bulwarks, and the ladies sat in a row, while Shekarry and other strong young men twisted themselves into strange attitudes, and writhed, and tumbled, and tied each other into double knots on the deck. But the shooting of wild animals was Shekarry's speciality. There were a couple of young guardsmen on board who were going to remain twelve months in India for the sake of the sport to be found in its jungles and forests, and it was really pitiable, according to Shekarry, to find how ignorant they were of all it was essential to know. *They* do any good! *They* bring home tiger or bear skins! *They* hunt the elephant! Well, they might of course, everything was possible; but in Shekarry's opinion they were far more likely to be swindled by the natives they hired, to be led an unprofitable dance over the country, and to return home soured, and declaring sport in India to be a delusion. "To do any good, sir," Shekarry assured me confidentially, and quite as if *I* meant to throw myself voluntarily in the way of wild beasts, "to do any real good, you must sleep in the jungle without a tent, and deny yourself a fire at night, for the smoke scares animals. Your servant must carry with you suits of clothes as nearly the colour of the shrubs and underwood you are among as possible; and your beaters must be practised hands, who know that you fully understand their business, and will punish them if they shirk it or endeavour to impose upon you. Even when you've taken care of all these things, it's not always easy to get a chance at a tiger. Game's getting scarcer and scarcer in India" (with great pathos this); "and places which I remember as a safe find for tigers, bears, and antelopes, are now not worth the cigar I'm smoking. You have to go several days' journey from them before you come upon a trace of big game, which is, alas! getting more and more difficult every year!" By "big game" Shekarry meant the savage and powerful brutes we see in menageries; and while I admired timidly, and at an immense moral distance, the prowess in the field which entitled him to speak thus airily, I wondered a little at his selection of an auditor, and that he did not see the dread with which the mere thought of such terrible wild fowl inspired me. But our Christmas dinner is waiting, and if you accompany me to the saloon you will see that it has burst into blossom in honour of the day.

Festoons of fresh green leaves decorate its bright satin-wood and mahogany walls, recalling far-away English country-houses, family parties, and Sir Roger de Coverley. The clock over the sideboard, by the captain's chair, ticks from behind a handsome framework of foliage and fruit; apples, oranges, and bananas hang from branches with which they have no botanical affinity; a "Merry Christmas," and "Speed the Good Ship," are inscribed in leafy letters of gigantic size over the cabin-doors; and glistening berries, rosy tomatoes, and gay artificial flowers, are interspersed so artfully with natural leaves as to make the floating hall a very bower of Christmas festivity. The chief steward, genial man, has done it all, but how? The combinations we could understand as being within the reach of decorative science; but we had been simmering in the Red Sea for a week; the whole of the dreary cinder called Aden did not hold shrubs or trees enough to furnish forth such a display as this, so we asked by what miracle the scorched timbers of our ship had been made to bud and bring forth Christmas fruit. The sudden change made us young again. We were no longer world-worn travellers, each carrying his or her weary burden to the hot shores of Hindostan, but joyous playfellows who belonged to that remote period in history, not the less real because it pertains to the world of Fancy, when Christmas was an omnipotent, glee-compelling potentate, whose snow and holly were unfailing harbingers of gentleness and loving-kindness among the children of men. A more wondrous feat than this timely blossoming was never performed by magician, and we asked each other blankly, but delightedly, how the

thing was done. There was fine fun, I promise you, in the theories hazarded and the guesses made. One old Anglo-Indian, who plumed himself on his experience, told the wildest "crams" in the driest way. A garden was kept up by the P. and O. Company on the main-top, in order that we outward-bound passengers might enjoy Christmas sights on Christmas Day. Our good friend, the captain, had a green-house in that snug mid-deck cabin of his, in which his faithful Bombay servant dug and delved the year round, under an oath of secrecy; there was a plantation in the hold, and a tropical garden under the engine-rooms; every steward was a florist by profession, and compelled by the terms of his engagement to grow plants in a hat-box in his berth, which hat-box was filled with rich mould by "niggers" at the company's expense: such were the stories that wicked Colonel Simkin whispered to pretty Miss Gigells, who had never been "out" before, and was now going to keep house for her rich bachelor uncle, a civilian "high up" in Madras. Speculation ran wild until the captain told the secret. He was too gallant to resist the importunities of some fair querists who implored him to enable them to decide a wager of gloves, and gave "Moses's Wells" as the place from which the verdure came. A few miles down the Gulf of Suez, and on the opposite coast to the port, is a spring in the desert, round which flourishes an oasis of trees and shrubs. The ship's steward had sent over here slyly the day before our steamer left Suez, and a boatful of thickly-covered branches, and clusters of leaves, had been brought back before the passengers from England had joined her. These were kept in ice all the way down the Red Sea, and when brought out to mingle with the fruit, as we have seen, looked as fresh as if they had been gathered the day before.

The steward's efforts in honour of Christmas were ably supported by the confectioner and the cook. The confectioner, indeed, fairly took us by storm. He surrounded us with kindly wishes, expressed in the sweetest way. Graceful devices in sugar adjured us to make merry; a prosperous voyage was invoked in elecampane; absent friends and their happiness were prayed for through the medium of sponge-cake and sugar-plums; home and its treasures formed the foundation of an imposing superstructure of mince-pie; while the compliments of the season, and wishes for a speedy return to England, were ingeniously conveyed through the medium of transparent jellies and shapes of gorgeously-coloured cream. There never was such a symbolical repast. The dinner-table was one huge incentive to keep Christmas jovially; and what with Egyptian turkeys, both roast and boiled, Abyssinian geese and chickens, English mutton, and Scotch beef, the fare was as appropriate to the day as if it had been served in Belgravia or Yorkshire, and this long before the introduction of the cook's masterpiece, the massive puddings, round and hard as cannon-balls, and wreathed in spirituous flames of blue. The talk grew brisk, and there was something touching in the resolute avoidance of all subjects calculated to damp the common joy; for though we all knew we were "making believe" very much, it was a point of honour with us to each keep our skeleton in his or her own closet, and to smile and chat as if the past had left no sorrowful traditions, and the future were one of assured joy. Yet I venture to say there was a handsome cargo of anxiety on board. Remember that we were outward bound. Many of us were leaving children at ages when, above all others, they need a parent's care; some were returning to duty, after sick leave, and were doubtful whether the stock of health they had accumulated would not be speedily shattered by the climate which had already laid them prostrate; the deep mourning of some showed them to have been recently bereaved; and others, like little Mrs. Shekarry, were spending Christmas from home for the first time, and felt that however delightful the new life might prove, a complete severance from the old happy associations was not to be thought of without a pang. There were with us, too, one or two men who looked back upon a vista of frustrated hopes, and who were about to begin the world anew; as well as dried-up humorists, who took the buffets of fortune in a comic spirit, and told endless stories of the regimental and official injustice they had suffered from.

"I hate Europe, sir," said one of these, as if he were speaking of some petty village; "a beastly place. Never want to see it again. Not fit for a gentleman to live in, and they dock you of your allowances, too, directly you land there; and besides that, nobody knows you! Why have I gone to the expense and trouble of spending my leave at home if I dislike it so? I'll tell you. To be fitted with a new set of teeth! Couldn't get suited in India.

Paid away, from first to last, I don't know how many hundred rupees, and felt as if my mouth were a dice-box, the teeth I'd bought were so loose, and rattled so. That's the business which took me to England, or else I'd never have gone until my regiment was ordered home—never! Yes, I'm capitally suited now, and have as good a set of artificial grinders down in my cabin as any man on board. Why don't I wear 'em? Not here, sir" (with immense expression), "thank you! The meals are served too briskly for that, and I should be nowhere in the race. You can't eat quickly with new teeth, and the young fellows would have me at a disadvantage; so I shall just keep them locked up till I join my station up country, and can practise privately!"

Other figures troop up as I recal this, to me, strange Christmas Day. That ship's officer, with whom I quaffed moselle, grizzled a little, and on the border-land between young manhood and middle age; does he suppose I did not read his secret? Pooh, pooh! men don't hang up those pretty specimens of accomplished female handiwork in their cabins, and relieve the tedium of uninteresting talk by gazing sentimentally at home-made works of art, unless there's something in it. I furnished the uninteresting talk, so I ought to know. "Tremble not, sister, I too have erred!" said the Scotch baillie to a weeping penitent; and the pleasantest of companions confided his honest love to me, without knowing it, before our friendship was many hours old. That other officer, whose aquiline features were swarthy as a Spaniard's, and whose gleaming teeth and bright hazel eyes always played in unison when a joke was in the wind, how thorough was his good-natured wonder at the flightiness of the landsman who stood by him on deck, wrapped in amazement and awe at the glories of an Indian sunrise! The old trader who had announced publicly, on approaching Alexandria, that he should "have a scrub" on shore, and of whom it was currently reported he thought it unnecessary to wash at sea; the married couple who were overheard indulging in ferocious quarrelling, and the baser half of which had been remonstrated with by the Indian officer who occupied the next cabin; the poor lady who gave way and became abjectly lackadaisical in sea-sickness, and who, mistaking the yachting jacket with gilt buttons worn by a waggish passenger for the doctor's uniform, asked for a fresh prescription for the hundredth time, and swallowed obediently three quart bottles of stout before breakfast, to have her flushed face pointed out by the cruel practical joker as a physiological curiosity for the following twenty-four hours; the curiously exclusive pair, of which the gentleman was querulous and an apparent invalid, and the lady buxom, blooming, and strong; the pair who were ridiculous in the ship's eyes by reason of their playing the game of turtle-dove in public, and of its being known that they had each petitioned privately that they might be relegated to different cabins; the two gentle, soft-voiced ladies who were going to their husbands at far-away stations, and who were divided between grief for the children they had left and joy at the prospect of re-joining their lords; the highly objectionable young man who would obtrude his conversation where it was wanted least, and who boasted to a hostile damsel in perfect good faith, "If you knew my father's position, and how rich he is, you'd be glad to talk to me;" the military officer who was gallantry incarnate, and a philanderer from his youth up, who always looked the swell of the period let him dress how he would; the brave, kindly gentleman with the frank eyes, who was returning with his wife to complete his term of service before claiming his pension, and who, when on duty, exercised a beneficent sway over a district as large as Ireland; the insignificant little man who rose suddenly into celebrity by singing sentimental ballads with unexpected sweetness; the lank and haughty civilian with the "Dowb" name, who had distinct theories as to his own importance, but who was without any other definite ideas; the pale and wizened old-young married lady who wore her mature hair in well-oiled ringlets, monopolised the piano, warbled infantile sentiment, and made and exhibited sketches on the faintest provocation, wherein the "water" was stronger than the "colours;" the young nobleman bound for Calcutta as aide-de-camp to Lord Serang, whose features and expression were in themselves a patent of nobility, and who was a modest and inoffensive lad enough, in spite of the terrific toadying he endured—the toady-in-chief known among us pleasantly as the "Flunky," a brawny person with staring eyes and a strident voice; the fat, inert, and sallow military doctor, who looked the incarnation of liver-complaint, and whose favourite occupation was sprawling on his back on his private couch of wickerwork; the bright young Bombay merchant with the delicate wife,

who supplied all comers with amusing books and choice cheroots; the rank and file of passengers, men and women in whom it was difficult to discern the qualifications for inspiring interest, but who were as precious to their own circles, believe me, as your worship is to yours; the moody dreamer who, when we were playing a Christmas game, in which questions and answers had to be put and given, in quotations from well-known English authors, startled us all by replying to a merry query in a gloomy voice, and apparently with personal application: "I am he, neglected in my youth, and miserably poor, who strove and suffered, and still strove and suffered, until I hewed out knowledge from the mine where it was buried, and made rugged steps thereof for my worn feet to rest and rise on" — such were some of the party which sat under the punkah that Christmas eventide. Of the actual palpable lovers who were with us in the flesh I say nothing. We knew them. Not a squeeze of the hand under the shawl it was pretending to arrange; not a sympathetic interchange of glances; not a timid, furtive, conscious look at the bystanders, but was noted instinctively. So, when the quarter-deck was lit up, and the violin and other instruments were ranged in file—the P. and O. Company used to support a band on each large ship, but this has been put down in the interests of the shareholders, and we had to be satisfied with impromptu music—there were certain couples who were not expected to dance apart, and who fulfilled the popular anticipations to a nicety. The captain (a bachelor) danced twice and sang once, winning all hearts, but thinking secretly, as wayward fancy whispered, of some Christmas of the future in which a bright English home, with closed curtains and a blazing hearth, to say nothing of one gentle loving face, stood out so vividly as to exclude the noisy quarter-deck, and convert the surrounding Arabian sea into a familiar village green. As for the younger ship's officers, and the officers belonging to other ships who were with us as passengers, their uniform buttons glittered through the dark night like clouds of fire-flies, so ubiquitous were they in their agile gallantry. The colonels, the captains, the collectors, the commissioners, the magistrates, the merchants, the lawyers, the speculators, the lord, and the competition wallahs, were almost as enthusiastic. The latter, who studied cabalistic black letter volumes all day, and who were currently reported to be perfecting their knowledge of Hindostanee slang, looked more delicate, and less like "lasting" than many of the bluff people who had been "out" half a lifetime, and were naturally less demonstrative than the rest of us, because they were more hampered with dignity. But even they unbent for all that, and long before the mysterious whisper went round that some of the largest soup tureens ever constructed were to be seen in the saloon as curiosities, and that the inquisitive in such matters declared them to be filled strangely with a compound of lemon, spirits, sugar, and hot water, and ready for all comers, the success of our Christmas party was assured. There had been talk some days before of amateur theatricals and charades, but the project fell through for want of a leader with knowledge of the stage, and we agreed complacently that it was better as it was. We had tried story-telling, too, but after exhuming a couple of "Old Joes," who had been long and deservedly mess-room favourites, this form of amusement was given up. There had been, in short, little organisation, and no programme, but as that stalwart ornament to the Dubbabad Irregulars, the gallant Pugree, remarked breathlessly, mopping his heated forehead meanwhile with his handkerchief, when hearts are in the right place it is not difficult to make impromptu amusements go well.

The strongest and most devoted merry-makers, however, tire in time, so the quarter-deck gradually thins, and a comparative silence falls upon the ship. Then, as the solemn orbs shine out more brightly, as if to mutely remind us of the Star of Bethlehem; as the sea rises, and the welcome wind whistles its lullaby through the cordage, and the timbers creak and wail, so does our Christmas fade away, to take its place side by side with those ghosts of past anniversaries which each man treasures in his heart. Among the few who linger on deck are two figures in deep mourning, who are leaving the bones of their only son in an English churchyard; and their attitude makes one speculate as to the reflections of the rest of us around.

The Silent Land and the well-loved figures which wait for, or will meet us there; a shaded chamber, and a face sweet, yet awful in its changeless serenity and beauty; the little baby who was laid in the stable of an inn, and the unfailing Love and Mercy given to the world; a future in which men shall recover their dead youth, dead hopes, and dead innocence, and become as little children—such things as these were

perhaps spoken of by the voices of the night, and stilled all other talk. I know that when the latter was resumed after a long interval of quiet musing, it was in a cheerful, albeit chastened spirit, not unsuited to the season. What seemed utterly impossible was that any one of us should hint aloud of the uncertainties of life, of the perils of climate, of trials hidden in the future, or suggest that it was not a delightful situation, and one to be greatly coveted by the non-travelling world, to have panted for air at sea and in the tropics on Christmas Day.

WINTER SHOOTING IN PRUSSIA.

I HAD hardly been residing a month in Coblentz before Herr D., a gentleman of the town whose acquaintance I had made, called on me (knowing my fondness for field sports), to inform me that the members of the St. Hubert's Society in that town were going to open the season on the ensuing Wednesday, the 4th of November, and to beg me to do them the honour of accompanying them. Herr D. was enthusiastic about the game that would, no doubt, be found in the forest—enormous wild boars, he protested, splendid red deer, agile roes, crafty foxes, swift hares, dodging rabbits, and, if snow only fell at the right time, probably a stray wolf or two. He was to call for me in his carriage at seven A.M. on the morning fixed, and drive me out to an old robber castle, the place of rendezvous; finally, with many injunctions to be punctual, he took his leave.

Now I ought to premise that in Germany the right of shooting belongs, not to the owner or occupier of the land, but to the town or village to which the district appertains, and to the parish authorities. The St. Hubert Society of Coblentz had only been in existence for two years. The shooting had previously been in the hands of a club composed principally of officers who, when their lease had nearly expired, finding that there was but a small chance of its being renewed, shot down everything they could find. By this means they had so reduced the stock of deer that in the new lease, which was for nine years, a clause had been inserted to the effect that for every doe killed during the first five years, the society should pay a fine of ten thalers (about thirty shillings of our money), and as the average cost of a deer in the market is only about seven thalers, the fine was intended, of course, to protect the does, and prevent the extermination of the breed. Herr D.'s talk roused my imagination; but as in my frequent rambles through the forest I had seen but few traces of game, I resolved not to overburden myself with many cartridges, but only to carry ten for hare, ten for deer, and three (loaded with ball) for wild boar, which, indeed, proved to be quite enough.

The morning came, clear and bright. I was delighted to see the daylight, as my night had been rather a restless one (something after the fashion of one on the eve of a memorable 31st of August, some years ago, when I had just taken out my first certificate). I was roused from a delightful dream, in which I had killed a buck (royal), and a wild boar, right and left, to find the servant knocking at my door, and my watch pointing to six o'clock. Up I tumbled, lost no time, and was soon ready for breakfast, which was ordered for half-past six. Captain S., of the Eighty-first Hussars, having chanced to be passing through Coblentz, I had obtained an invitation for him, and persuaded him the night before to stop and accept it, and promise to come and breakfast with me. He was punctual, as most military men are, but complained bitterly of being obliged to get up so early. A good breakfast, however, soon put the gallant officer in better cue, and, having stored a good supply of provisions in our pockets for luncheon, we lit our cigars, and stood at the window to look out for the expected carriage, which, from the repeated injunctions I had received on the subject of punctuality, I expected every moment. Presently the clock struck seven, and hearing the sound of wheels in the street, we seized our hats and guns preparatory to rushing out, not to keep Herr D. waiting. The noise increased, and presently, to our intense disgust, lo! and behold an early milk-cart, drawn by three large dogs, with the urchin in charge perched on the top of the big tin cans, dashed past the window. After that, we waited very patiently for a long time, enlivening the moments with talk of various countries and their sports, for Captain S., although rather inclined to be languid, is yet as ardent a Nimrod as may be found in a long day's march, and had many a story to tell of his sport in India, tiger-shooting, pig-sticking, &c. He was especially indignant at the idea of shooting a boar.

"Bay Jove, old boy," he said, "if a fellah was to do such a thing as to shoot a pig in any part of India where it's possible to ride 'em, he'd be cut by the whole station; yes, bay Jove!"

But all things must have an end, and so had our waits, but not before we were well into cigar number two. Just as the clock was on the point of striking eight, up drove Herr D.'s break, containing himself and a party of six other (sportsmen I cannot call them, so I will give them their German title) jägers. Their get-up was inimitable. Let me try to describe that of Herr D., the gentleman seated opposite me in the break. He was a huge puffy man, about six feet and a half high, and nearly as much in circumference, with rings not only on his enormous fingers, but also on his podgy thumbs. To begin at the top. He proudly wore a theatrical, green Tyrolese hat, garnished with a large cockade of ribbon, the said cockade being ornamented with a plume of woodcock's or some other bird's feathers; the plume was supplemented with a tuft of deer's fur, implying that the wearer had been fortunate enough to kill one of those animals; under this green tower appeared about half of a fat, jolly, red, clean-shaved face, the rest being hidden by the united aid of the hat-brim and a huge woollen comforter, which, wound several times round the throat, so encroached upon the red face, as only to allow, as if by a favour, room for a big German pipe to obtain access to the mouth. The coat seemed to be some sort of uniform, dark grey with green facings. Every one of the party, also, wore an overcoat of dark green or blue, to assimilate with the colour of the woods, dark trousers, with either long boots reaching high above the knee, or, as in the case of my fat friend, woollen gaiters buttoning up to the thigh. But this was merely the foundation for the proud superstructure of game-bag, gun-sling, cartridge-pouch, various straps, and, shade of Nimrod! a muff—yes, actually a muff!—not one made like those English girls use to keep their dear little white hands warm, but a huge, misshapen affair, constructed of fox or hare skin, with pockets in it for brandy-flask, &c., and slung round the neck by a "braw" green cord, with large tassels.

The game-bags, also, were wonderful works of art, consisting of huge leather receptacles for foxes, into which poor Reynard was to be poked head first, with his brush hanging out in front, then other partitions, I suppose for hares, and outside these large fringed nets, containing various parcels, among which tobacco, and sausages of various hues, from white through many shades of brown to black, were everywhere predominant; outside these came broad flaps to keep off the wet, while the upper edges were supplied with rows of loops, intended probably by the sanguine jägers to be strung with birds; under the flaps, and over the nets, were rows of tubes for cartridges, or, as I noticed in the case of one man, for short sections of cane with a partition in the middle like the old-fashioned charger, having powder at one end and shot at the other; one gentleman, who was armed with an old-fashioned brass-mounted gun, wore a powder-case of cow's horn slung by a green cord. Very careful were these brave jägers of their personal comfort, for each man had a walking-stick which, by a clever adaptation of the carpenter's art, became a seat at the owner's pleasure. Their guns were all doubles, many of them breechloaders, and, in Herr D.'s case, having one barrel smooth and the other rifled. Of course we English were deeply impressed by all these preparations, and also by the loud talk of the number of head these worshippers of St. Hubert expected to kill that season, interspersed with anecdotes of what they had done and not done since last year.

When we reached the rendezvous, we found a party of twenty-two guns assembled, and, being fresh hands, we were much patronised; in fact, Captain S. thought rather offensively patronised, for he was actually told how to carry his gun, an indignity that he felt deeply, ejaculating, "Confound their impudence! Bay Jove, I've carried a gun a thousand times to their once, and now they tell me how to manage it, bay Jove!" I, too, came in for advice in another direction, for one aged individual expostulated with me for having my cartridges loose in my pocket, but I shut him up most completely by informing him that I had carried them so for the last twenty years without having met with an accident, and at the same time I pointed out to him that his own gun, loaded and cocked, had both barrels looking most inquisitively at my ribs, and that if it was to go off nothing but a miracle could prevent my being the recipient of its contents. Upon this he retired, and I saw him no more, except once, when he missed a hare with both barrels, and I offered, much to his disgust, to go into the wood to bring the dead animal out for him.

There were also at the rendezvous about a dozen beaters, with as many dogs, of all kinds, from the German Dachs, which might be sold by the yard, they are so long in the back, yet so short in the legs, to a good-looking but evil-doing pointer, reputed to be English, and for which his owner told me

he had lately given eighty thalers (twelve pounds). Of course I praised the beast's looks, which pleased his owner very much, but, at the same time, I could not help thinking that the brute would have been dear at eight thalers if one were obliged to keep him.

We made but a short stay at the rendezvous, but soon started off for the forest; at its very entrance the old gentleman who acted as the captain turned his face to a rock and called out a number as we filed passed him. This, I thought, was a very fair way of allotting us our various places, as he did not know who was passing, and did not call the numbers consecutively; this ceremony being repeated at each division of the forest, all of us had the same chance of the best places.

My station in the first beat was, as they all told me, the best in the place for roe-deer, so I prepared accordingly. It was a lovely spot; the paths winding round the face of the hill, with a well-wooded bank in front of me; behind rose almost a precipice with a noisy little stream at its foot; on the other side spread a small meadow, surrounded by high and thickly-wooded hills, while in the distance, beyond the course of the stream, I could see the Rhine, that, swollen by the recent rains, rolled foaming and eddying along, under a bright November sun. The head and shoulders of a green-hatted burly jäger, who stood preparing for doughty deeds against the savage denizens of the forest, made a fine foreground. There was a short pause, occupied by our captain in placing his men, and by my neighbour in filling and lighting an enormous pipe; then came a shrill whistle, which was answered from a distance by the most diabolical row I ever heard. The beaters had commenced their advance, and as each of them carried a large clapper, the noise they made, mingled with the shouts of the men, and the yells of an unfortunate dog, who was being "warmed" by a good thrashing, was enough to startle any ordinarily constituted mind. But, in spite of all the noise, nothing came near me; my neighbour, however, was more fortunate; he was an old retired major, who prided himself on his knowledge of the French and English languages, and lost no opportunity of showing them off. He thus described what had happened to him:

"I was to load my pipe, and have my gun not ready, when crash, pouf! a great roe shump into the road, pouf! and he shump out again. Shusht so, pouf, pouf! and he gone."

"But why did you not shoot after him, Herr Major?" was my not unnatural question.

"Ai, ai. He go too quick, mein lieber freund; he go like de Blitz! Ja so!"

Just at this moment up came the captain, much excited. The beaters had seen a very fine roe, which they declared to be the finest ever known in the forest. "Had the Herr Englander seen it?" No, he had not, but the Herr Major had, and he at once proceeded to tell his story over again, with such variations as his fancy dictated, as he pointed to the tracks in the road as proof of his story. The captain, however, in a rather surly tone, said that he would much rather have seen the dead deer than his tracks, and, cursing the major and his pipe, led the way to another beat, where we were to find lots of wild boar, or ought to, as, according to the major, there were more wild boars than hares in the forest. Finding that the major was inclined to be communicative, I presently entered into conversation with him, and he told me the following anecdote of a wild boar.

"I was living some years ago in the south of France. A wild boar, having done great damage to the crops, a large hunting-party was got up to kill him, and I was invited to form one of the company. The woodmen, or charcoal burners, or somebody, had left a great gap open in the wall that divided two hunting-grounds, and it was through this gap that the boar used to come. Near this spot I, as the guest, was placed, it being expected that the boar would make for it directly he was roused, and in order to make it safe, it had been blocked up with some new, inch-thick, strong elm plank. As I listened to the noise of the beaters the boar made his appearance, going at a good pace for the gap. I did not fire, as I expected that when he saw the obstacle he would halt, and give me a fair shot. But to my surprise, instead of moderating his pace, potztausend! he increased it, and dashed right through the planks like a cannon-ball, smashing two of them, and going off into the woods on the other side as if there were nothing unusual the matter, but that he had been accustomed to smash planks from his youth."

I thanked the slow-firing major for his story, and asked him if the German boars were savage, but he told me that, unless wounded, they would run away, and that they were so swift that they were seldom brought to bay by the hounds.

The next beat was blank, and the one

after that, but in the fourth, as I was standing motionless at my post on the side of a hill in a fine open forest, I saw a hare come hopping very unconcernedly along at about ten yards' distance from me; but as there were two jägers in full view below me, and the hare was going straight towards them, I thought I would not shoot, but would see what they would do, and so let her pass. Number one, as soon as he saw her, sprang up from his walking-stick seat; on this number two, also seeing the hare, gave a yell, dropped his pipe, and blazed away both his barrels at the hare, which so frightened, or rather astonished her, that she actually sat up and looked at him. Such an opportunity was not to be lost, so number two blazed away both barrels in his turn, the first of which made her squat, and, after the second, she quietly jumped up and went off at that peculiar trotting pace hares sometimes assume. Both then rushed to the spot, each swearing that he had hit her, but finding no marks of fur or blood, they began mutual recriminations, number one abusing number two for the yell, which, he said, caused the hare to stop, and made him miss her, as he, thinking she was still moving, had fired where she ought to have been, while number two abused number one for jumping about and distracting his attention while he was in the act of shooting. In short, words ran so high that at last number two, who was a woodman, strode home, and was seen no more that day.

Soon after this my fat friend the major arrived in a great state of heat, mentally and bodily.

"Never were such a set of stupid fellows; never was such bad luck. He had been told to go ever forwards, but there was no one near him, and he saw eleven roes cross the very spot he wanted to stop at, yet no one was there. Never was such a set of stupid fellows!" &c.

Words rose high, then all joined in abusing the unfortunate woodman, who, fortunately for himself, had decamped, or perhaps he might have come off but badly amongst them all. Our last beat recompensed us, however, for all our previous bad fortune, a fine roebuck and an enormous hare being the victims. The roe, however, was hit in a most unfortunate place, for the jäger, not being able to see the head, had fired at the tail, and distributed a double charge of buck shot, with the utmost impartiality, on each side of that ornament, bringing down the buck, but spoiling the haunches. This consideration, however, did not detract from the exultation with which he placed a tuft of the fur in his hat, nor from the evident pride with which he looked on us as we crowded round the fallen animal, and alternately praised the jäger's skill and envied his luck. No other game helped to swell our bag, except a kind of grouse, which some one shot in a tree. So, as night was coming on, we now all repaired to a small inn on the borders of the forest, and sat down to some excellent coffee and bread-and-butter. The game was sold by auction, the deer fetching seven thalers, and the hare one thaler, which money went to the funds of the society. On counting my cartridges when I reached home, I found I had brought back the whole twenty-three, but if I did not fire a shot, I still had had a most enjoyable day, and cannot speak in too high terms of the kindness of the members of the St. Hubert's Society, who had treated me as one of themselves, and given me as good a chance of seeing and shooting the game as they had had themselves.

My next day's shooting was in severer weather, and was crowned with a nobler result.

I had been out in the morning to Oberwerth, for the purpose of determining the degree of cold, on which subject I had had a conversation the evening before with Herr Wehmar, the engineer to the Rhine Navigation Company, who told me that he had been sent to make some observations below Coblentz on the road to Andemath, and had been driven home by the cold, so I took my thermometer and determined to find out for myself the degree of Fahrenheit. I went on to the ice, for the branch of the Rhine between Oberwerth and the left bank of the river was frozen so hard that, at the sides, the ice rested upon the bed of the stream, and the English chaplain, who lived on the island, was having a lot of coal brought over from the main land in waggons; Herman, the civil old ferryman, looked like a frozen-out Charon, his occupation being gone, his punt fixed hard and fast into four feet of ice, and himself reduced to acting as a tout to an enterprising individual who had started an establishment on the ice to let skates and chairs, and provide hot coffee. I had a chat with him while my thermometer was making up its mind as to the degree of cold, which it at last did, by marking twenty degrees, when I found it would not go any lower; I started off for the town, and walked along, wondering whether I should ever have the luck to shoot anything in Prussia. I was roused out of my

brown study by meeting Herr Stahlehr, the captain of the hunt, accompanied by his inevitable dog, Waldman, which animal, by-the-bye, was also known by the name of Master Stahlehr, as the old bachelor loved it like a child, and literally gave it a share of his bed and his board. His face — Herr Stahlehr's I mean, not Master Stahlehr's—reminded me forcibly of a half-peeled walnut, the dark green hood answering to the rind, while his face was as brown and wrinkled as any walnut that ever was grown in Prussia. I could see at once, both by the sparkle of his eye and the way in which he was puffing out the smoke of his huge pipe in short quick jerks, that there was something up, and he soon told me what it was, for his first words after the usual "Morgen, Morgen," were, "I have been sending everywhere for you, Herr Englander. There are two boars marked down on the Ganz-Kopf; make haste and come on with Herr H., he has promised to call for you as he passed. We rendezvous at the Foresters at two."

Herr H. came in due time, and, hurrying up the street, we overtook and joined company with the main body of jägers at the gate. Great was the change that had taken place since I last passed that road, less than an hour before. Then I was moody and cross, the shouts and laugh of the people flitting about on the ice, on their ringing skates, seemed to mock me, and, as the Americans say, "I felt bad;" but now all was changed; the same sun shone, the same ice glittered, the same lads and lasses glided about, or formed in groups on the ice; but their laughter now awoke an echo in my heart, and I shouted out the burden of the old German hunting-song, Wass treibt den Waldman nach den Wald, with lusty lungs and a happy heart, and the ice-rangers stilled their merriment for a moment to listen to the loud chorus, swelled by the voices of twenty jolly jägers.

We soon reached the turn into the hills, and I was astonished at the intense force of the frost. A spring that in summer had purled and babbled by the side of the upward footpath, being frozen out of its wonted channel, had flowed over the track, and formed a perfect sheet of ice at a very acute angle, we were therefore obliged to sling our guns and haul ourselves up hand over hand by the help of the small bushes which grew out of the crevices of the rocks at the side, for owing to the path being at the bottom of a deep gorge there was no climbing out. Most of the party had passed in safety, when it came to my turn. I got on very well till I was nearly at the top, when my feet suddenly slipped from under me, and the bush to which I was clinging giving way, I slid rapidly down the hill, amid the uproarious laughter of the whole party, until I was stopped by an under-forester at the foot of the glacier, about thirty feet down. "Never mind," I shouted, as I scrambled up, and rubbed my knees and head, for I had received a tidy blow on the latter from my own gun, "never mind; we say in England that it is lucky to tumble up hill. Mark me, I shall kill a boar to-day." The laughter broke out fresh at this, but all took a schnaps to the fulfilment of my prophecy, and I, making a second and more cautious attempt, at last succeeded in surmounting the glacier.

As we drew near the forester's house, our voices, which had been raised in many hunting and other songs, were hushed, as the wild boar has very quick ears, and we were now not more than a mile from the Ganz-Kopf.

We had not long to wait at the house, for soon after our entrance the captain, punctual as usual, looked at his watch, and, after showing it to the party to prove that time was up, gave the word "Vorwärts!" and led the way in solemn silence.

Our places were portioned as usual, and I did not at all like the look of mine. I was posted on the extreme right of the line, under a large oak-tree. In front of me was a small open space, beyond which rose the hill covered with thick brushwood; behind me was a deep ravine, at the bottom of which a noisy little brook was wont to flow, which now, however, was transformed into a thick sheet of ice, strong enough to bear a waggon. This ravine was too wide for me to jump, and too precipitous for me to hurry down without tumbling; and as a steep hill rose beyond it, and the oak-tree was too large for me to climb, I had a very poor chance of escape should the boars take it into their heads to act on the offensive; but I had not much time to think over probabilities, for I had no sooner taken in the capabilities of the locality for attack and retreat, than I heard Herr Stahlehr's horn give the signal for the advance, and then arose the horrible row incidental to all German shooting parties. It had not begun long, and the chain of beaters could not have advanced more than one hundred yards, when there was a fearful yell from one of the component links of "Schwein! Schwein!" and the uproar was doubled. The poor pig tried to break the

left of our line, but was there confronted by Herr Tinkler, who had already this season shot at (and missed) thirteen boars; Herr T. saluted him with a double shot, which had only the effect of causing him to change his direction, and hurry along the line rather faster than he had before tried to break it. I soon heard him crashing through the bushes like a charge of cavalry, and to my delight he made his appearance in the little clearing in front of me, coming straight to my tree as if to pass it and take refuge in the ravine; but when he saw me he changed his mind, and with a savage grunt turned his head again to the right. But as he turned, being then about five yards from me, I made him a present of two ounce bullets of lead, and knew by his squeak and the unsteady gait with which he went off, that he had received one at least. Soon after I saw my friend leaning against a tree half way up the hill beyond the ravine, and knowing that he was hard hit, I dashed off after him; but the brute seemed to have as many lives as a cat, for I tracked him nearly two miles, and instead of growing faint with the loss of blood, it seemed to do him good. His footprints still showed that he was going at a great pace, so that when I met a forester, who told me that my boar was picked up and carried into Waldish, I was glad to hear it, and at once left the trail and followed him to the village, where I found a boar indeed, but not mine. Another of the party had also been successful and had killed his pig. I began to grumble and accuse the forester of deceiving me, declaring that had he not called me off the trail I should have found my boar dead; but he soon quieted me by saying "Er kommt gleich," so I was comforted and went with the rest of the party into a roadside inn for our accustomed coffee and bread-and-butter. While we were there a jäger, who had himself missed boar number two, and was rather jealous of me, took it into his head to doubt the fact of my boar being hit at all, or if it were, that I had done it. But I had many a champion, and Herr Stahlehr himself actually took the pipe out of his mouth to ejaculate "Ach Gott in Himmel, if the boar passed so close to the Herr Englander, he is but a dead pig, for the Herr can shoot straight," and my foe was completely extinguished by the sound of a noisy procession up the road, and the entrance of the head-forester with the news. "The other boar, Herr Stahlehr." So we turned out into the cold to see it; and there lay my boar on the snow, with the mark of two balls, one close behind the shoulder, and the other further back, and from the size of the holes it was decided that no other gun than mine could have made them; yet such was his tenacity of life, that though both balls had gone through him, he had run nearly four miles before he fell dead. I had my tape with me, and at once measured him. He was six feet one inch from the tip of his snout to the end of the tuft that decorated his tail; three feet four and a half inches from the tip of his toe to the top of his shoulder; four feet seven inches round the chest, and his tusks stood three inches out of his jaw. I heard afterwards that he weighed two hundred and twenty-three pounds. We had to wait a short time till a hand-truck was procured to carry the game back to Coblentz, and while waiting we fortified ourselves for our nine-mile walk home with a huge pot of warm wine mixed with sugar and spice, for which I and the other successful Nimrod had the pleasure of paying. At last the truck, or rather sledge, arrived, and the boars being placed on it, and half a dozen villagers having harnessed themselves to it, we started homeward.

This was the last day I had with the St. Hubert Verein; for a sportsman and a lover of nature, nothing can be more enjoyable than a winter's shooting in the German forests. The Germans are kind, friendly, and quick to show little kindnesses, and though sometimes they have a rough outside and a cold manner, they have large hearts, and will never give you good words instead of good deeds.

Published at the Office, 26, Wellington St Strand. Printed by C. WHITING, Beaufort House, Duke St., Lincoln's Inn Fields.