"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. 110. NEW SERIES. | SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 1871. | PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVI. ONE CONSPIRATOR BAFFLED.

THE very next morning, almost before he had done shaving, the sound of wheels was heard, and Lord Shipton's old carriage was at the gate. Out jumped my lord, in an ancient white hat, with "a rag of crape" round it, meant as mourning for some one —or possibly to hide stains or damages.

"Down comes *his* bunting," cried the Doctor, flourishing the razor. "You scurvy old haberdasher, I'll have it out of you yet!"

He kept his lordship waiting a long time, then came out. His lordship ran up and caught at the Doctor's hand. "My dear Findlater, I have not lost a moment. You have set yourself right before me, at least, by the bold, manly, open stand you have taken. I said to them all: 'That's convincing; it's conscious innocence!'"

Our friend looked at him with a half-contemptuous, half-amused air.

"Ah," he said, "you don't cut a handsome figure, my Lord Shipton. You're now more in keeping with that old hood of yours outside. But, however, the matter is out of my jurisdiction; it's all O'Reardon's. I've given him the cart blanch. Oh, you'd better write him a note about it in black and white."

"My dear Fin, between friends——"

"It's *not* between friends," said the Doctor, fiercely, "and my dear Fin isn't for you. I've my back to the wall, my Lord Shipton, and mean to strike out at such mean curs as Ridley and his gang. As for you, you've not disappointed me, nor have I been taken back at your behaviour. It's neither more nor less than what was expected of you."

"Time will set me right with you, I have no doubt."

"Some of the party will be set right with me, my dear lord, never fear. My friend O'Reardon will look after that. But now isn't it a pity you're such a Paddy-go-over-the-bridge?"

"Ah, ah! very droll. Always humourous. But how?"

"Why, when it was giving way under him, he couldn't make up his mind to go back or forward, and so it broke in two, and he went down—a sort of little par'ble, or a-polly-ogue."

Lord Shipton could take nothing by his visit. In vain he came at last to apologising abjectly; he had such terror of losing any money at law. He disowned his associates. He had been drawn into it, &c. All the Doctor would reply was: "Commit your thoughts to paper, if you have any wish to communicate further."

With a very rueful and yellow face, the stingy lord climbed up into his old vehicle, and drove away. He was terribly afraid of the Doctor and his schemes. Besides, the man had no sense of restraint, and would stick at nothing. But, on the other hand, Ridley was always hurrying everything on in such a way, and dragging other people after him! And as soon as he got home he sat down and wrote a letter to Doctor Findlater, which that gentleman might well call "almost too satisfactory."

MY DEAR FINDLATER,—Through a misconception my name has been mentioned to you as associated with certain proceedings set on foot by the Honourable Mr. Ridley. I am particularly anxious that you should not imagine that I have any part in this

matter, nor do I believe any of the absurd rumours that have been going about. Your character, my dear Findlater, is too well established to be affected by such things, and has no greater admirer than myself.

Yours,

SHIPTON.

The Doctor laughed as he read, and then with a light heart went up to see how matters were going on at Leadersfort.

Here was the owner of Leadersfort, newly promoted to wealth and power, and likely to receive the honours of title, lying like some poor pauper, prostrate, miserable, and virtually abandoned, with the consciousness of this cruel struggle going on about his sick-bed. Greedy, interested faces, fussing and suggesting; and under the conventional phrases of affection, "Now dear," "Don't excite yourself, love!" he felt there were concealed ruder and rougher ends, and an eager, interested longing for him to do some act which would suit his tormentors. The richest and most powerful find themselves in this dismal press-room, waiting for the great executioner to come to do his office, and so the unhappy lord of Leadersfort found himself laid there suffering great pain and cloudiness of sense. Nor was he allowed peace or rest from importunities. This morning entered suddenly his wife and her brother, with the news of the Doctor's coming disgrace. Of his wife's brother Mr. Leader had always a sort of awe and alarm; that cold voice and colder gaze making him cower and shrink. Now, when he was shaken and helpless, it had double the effect on him.

"It's only right that you should know it," said Mr. Morrison. "It is what sister and I have said all along. As it is, our family will be disgraced for ever." Then he proceeded to relate all that had been made public, with a chilling minuteness, certainly not softening it, while the patient listened half scared.

"It's bad enough as it is," said Mrs. Leader; "but it would be terrible if this wretch acquired a footing here, and, after being driven out of decent society, found a refuge in this house, and made that unfortunate Cecil his victim."

"But she—she has done nothing. Why should that poor girl be punished? I can't be expected to treat her in that way."

Mrs. Leader laughed scornfully. "Done nothing? Isn't she devoted to him—bound up with him in everything? Was she not engaged to a fellow of her own standing, and didn't she give him up for what seemed a far better venture? No, no; they are all the same. They would strip you as you lie sick there, and as they have stripped others; and, were we not here, would reduce you to a poor, helpless, impoverished creature."

So the pair continued. Alone with her husband, Mrs. Leader continued to harp on the same string. "The result of this investigation may actually bring in the police on us; a terrible disgrace for a good family like ours. Will nothing," she added, impatiently, "rouse you from this infatuation, and let us not all be made the prey of this scheming family, who are now to be exposed at last?"

At this moment entered Katey, who heard these last words.

"Scheming family to be exposed!" she exclaimed, in a low, deeply-wounded voice. "Always that cry. For shame! Not even at this bedside can I restrain you."

"Ah! But it is true this time. It cannot be glossed over now. This is no rumour. It has all been discovered—your, and your father's, disreputable life. With such crimes against you how dare you introduce yourself into an honest family!"

Katey was aghast. Though she believed heartily in her father, and though the worst she could have accepted about him was indiscretion, or some wild freak, still there was something so exulting and so distinct about this charge that she trembled. The clouded eyes of Mr. Leader were turned to her.

"I can trust no one," he said, querulously. "You and yours have brought disgrace upon our family."

"What have I—what have we done?"

"You will know by-and-bye," said Mrs. Leader, exulting. "The people of the place have taken it up. They have tracked that man from place to place; all his frauds have been discovered; and they have the proofs here. Yes; you may well turn pale! The time has come when even Mr. Leader gives you up."

"If this be true!" said he. "Oh, it was shameful to have deceived us, to have forced yourself into our family, and to disgrace it. Go away. Don't speak to me; you worry me!"

"But it will be cleared up; I know it will. All his life we have been exposed to accusations of this sort, and they have been triumphantly refuted—always."

"If these can be disposed of you will all be very clever indeed. This time you

will hardly clear him. There is chapter and verse for everything."

"I can see," said Katey, with a trembling voice; "this is a new attempt. I know whence it comes, and implore of you, dear sir, not to listen; to wait, at least, until we know of what we are accused."

"Take her away; don't let her harass me. You are all worrying me to death with your disputes and bickerings. Take her away, and let me rest."

"You hear?" said Mrs. Leader.

Katey drew herself up, and, looking at her steadily, left the room. She had long had a presentiment that some such crash as this would arrive; for she suspected that the ways of her father had not always been across smooth, well-mown lawns. But that he had done anything criminal, or even unworthy of "the blood of the Findlaters," was an idea that never even occurred to her.

Her father now arrived, jubilant, triumphant, after his successful "sortie," as he called it, and was first met by Katey, all in tears, and yet with a scornful, defiant expression on her lips.

"Oh, Peter, Peter! they have been slandering us again"—she was too delicate to say you—"and they have persuaded him of the truth of these stories."

"Oh! is that all?" said the Doctor, smiling. "Oh, we'll soon set that to rights. No duck's back had ever the same capacity that Peter's has, in letting calumnies slide off it. Where's the great lady?"

The great lady was coming down; the rustle of her dress was heard, and she stood before him.

"You still show yourself here, I see. I think you ought in delicacy to stay away, with those charges hanging over your head. It is hard that our house should be the one exposed to this intrusion while all the others are shut against you."

"Oh! how cruel; how base!" cried Katey, "to insult my father in this way."

"Hush, Katey; let the lady finish. All in good time."

"Oh, understand me," went on Mrs. Leader, calmly. "I don't wish to raise any discussion, or to make any opposition to your proceedings. You have forced your way in here, and have made good your ground. I was speaking of what might be expected from a person of ordinary feeling. You are at liberty to go up and see how Mr. Leader will receive you."

The Doctor made no reply, and Mrs. Leader swept from the room. The Doctor smiled comically.

"She says what is true, Peter," said his daughter, earnestly. "He is turned against us too, and, I know, will not see or speak to you."

"Ah, poor old man! We'll see about that." And presently Doctor Findlater went up leisurely, with his daughter.

Mrs. Leader met him at the door. "You can go in," she said, "if you like."

The Doctor entered. He found no difficulty now with the obsequious Macfarlane.

"You had better not, I think," said the latter. "He has taken a strange turn against you; he says you have disgraced his family."

The Doctor, however, entered placidly with Katey.

"Don't come in here!" cried the sick man, impetuously. "I won't see you, or speak to you. Go away. Some one turn them away. I am harassed and worn to death with every one."

"My dear sir," began the Doctor, "I am innocent of all."

"I don't blame you or her. But I must have peace. Go away."

The Doctor retired. "My dear Katey," he said, in a grave and altered voice, "the poor fellow is going. He can't last long. I know that look in his face. I have seen it many and many a time. Where's this Macfarlane—— ?"

He went to consult with his brother professional, who agreed with him in his view, and urged that the London doctor should be sent for. This was told to Mrs. Leader, who, in great flutter and alarm, issued the necessary orders, and then went to confer with her brother. The Doctor then took his way home; and, as soon as he had cleared the precincts, his face changed, and sank inwards with a sort of gnawing dejection. "We're too near the wall," he said. "I declare my heart's broke with this up-and-down work. Woolsack o' th' Immortals! What will we do if the man dies; and there *is* death in his face!"

When the doctor arrived from town, and, after seeing his patient, came down to give his opinion, it was waited for with a nervous breathlessness that was truly genuine. Yet he would not travel out of his conventional phrases and forms. "We are not doing so well to-day. There is rather a change for the worse."

"But no danger?" said Katey; "no immediate danger?"

"No physician can decide those things off hand. Mrs. Leader, would you come into the study for a moment?"

There was something very impressive in his manner, which awed even that cold, selfish woman.

"Will you let me ask you, has Mr. Leader arranged his affairs?"

"N—no; far from it," said Mrs. Leader, in a low voice. "Why, do you think——?" And she stopped.

"That very soon the opportunity may pass by? Yes. There is really no time to be lost. He should be informed of his state at once."

"But," said she, almost faltering, "he is still collected, and able to——"

"Perfectly collected, but in another twenty-four hours he may be wandering. He is quite equal to arrange things now; but, as I say, another day, and the humours will mount to his brain. It is a pity that important matters should be left over to such a time, but it is always the way."

The doctor was leaving the room, when Mrs. Leader, who had remained overwhelmed by this news, called him back.

"He must be told this: who is to do it?"

"You, his wife; his clergyman; Mrs. Cecil perhaps best of all."

"Perhaps worst of all," said the lady, angrily. "We can't take such duties on us, nor can we be expected to do so. It is too painful and difficult a duty."

"Then ask that Doctor you have here. He is the very man."

This physician spoke to her with unconcern; as he afterwards said, he never met so cold and business-like "a second wife."

"Doctor Findlater—that low buffooning creature! You can't be serious, Doctor Speed. No, I would ask you to go up and break it to him. It is really your duty."

"Certainly. Our whole life is made up of duties nearly as painful."

He went up-stairs. Mrs. Leader followed softly, and hovered on the landing, not with any purpose of listening, but drawn to the spot by a sort of agitation and restlessness she could not master. The doctor entered quietly and stood beside the bedside. The sick man was tossing and groaning, as if in an uneasy dream. His face was literally of a bright mustard colour.

"You do not feel yourself better, then, my dear sir?"

"Oh, no! I don't think I shall ever get better."

"It is a very serious malady, or complication of maladies, from which you are suffering. It requires the strongest constitution to get through such a thing. Yours, my dear sir," added the doctor, slowly and meaningly, "is *not* strong."

The other raised himself, and looked fixedly at the physician.

"You don't mean——? But I shall be better when this crisis is over. You're not telling me there is danger?"

"As I said the other day, there is danger in a cold. But, my dear friend, it would be only the act of a prudent man to arrange your affairs."

"Yes, that is the cry I have been hearing all this time. I get no peace. Oh! it is cruel all this. If they had left me in my old position, I should have been healthy and strong now. I have had no peace or pleasure since I came into this wealth. And between them all I am reduced to this pass."

"My dear sir, don't worry yourself. These sort of maladies take all kinds of turns. I am only advising you to a measure of prudence, just to settle your affairs: it will not take five minutes, and it is surprising how much will be off your mind. I declare I advise thus for your good."

Mr. Leader looked at him wistfully. "I believe you, indeed," he said. "But, five minutes! You don't know what confusion and worry this will lead to. One set wanting me to leave my estate this way, another that——"

"If I might say anything——"

"Yes, do," said the sick man, eagerly.

"It would seem a very simple and ordinary course. Your wife to have a provision, the estate to pass to your son and that amiable girl, his wife."

"They have disgraced me—displeased, defied me. I will not be made a cipher of."

The doctor unconsciously repeated the words, as he looked at the figure before him, lying sick almost to death. The other saw the look. Then came a sudden revulsion.

"I would wish to do what is right. God knows I would! But they will take advantage of my weakness. I will not be let to follow my conscience, and do what is right. I feel no such animosity to these people. It is the worry and struggle that is killing me, and they don't care."

The doctor soothed him. "There shall be no worry or harassing of you. Would you take my advice, send for your clergyman—purely as a matter of business——"

"Oh! I am not so bad as that," said the patient, relapsing into peevishness. "I shall send for the clergyman when there is need."

"At all events, do what you think right, and be afraid of no one."

Thus had Katey's strange sweetness and fascination gained her even this new friend.

CHAPTER XXVII. POLLY REBELS.

WHEN the Doctor returned home that day, and went "down the town," as he called it, to have a "chat at the club," he met Captain Montague, between whom and the family a sort of coldness had set in. This gentleman saluted the Doctor in a very grave and even distant manner, which the Doctor, then very sensitive, at once set down to the effect of th' reports. "I must give this Jack a set down, and straighten his curled-up nose for him." He was saved, however, this painful operation, by the ready confidence of the officer, who turned back with him.

"I wanted to tell you," he said, "if you cared to know, that I have had nothing to do with these late attempts to injure you. You might like to know who are your friends, and who are not, so I wished to tell you that I don't believe a word of them."

The Doctor was a little touched by this testimony from so cold a man, and wrung his hand warmly. "Thanks for that speech," he said. "It's all jealousy. But to-morrow or next day it will be all cleared up; when I slap an action for libel at the parties concerned. But all in good time. By the way, I'm sorry we don't see so much of you of late. I am afraid Polly has been prancing too much with her tongue. I tell her she ought to have a severe bit between her pretty teeth."

"By the way, it was about Miss Polly I wished to speak to you—if you wouldn't be offended," said the captain, gravely.

The Doctor felt his heart "shoot up like a spring mattress" at these words. "Polly's turn at last," he said to himself, and through his brain rushed a number of conflicting thoughts: he must show his papers: make all clear: not good enough for the girl: yet it might be better to take the ball at the hop, instead of waiting. But he was presently set right.

"It is my duty to tell you that the matter has begun to be seriously remarked. Molyneux is a man of notorious character—a dangerous man, whom no young girl should be seen with. I would really recommend you to take care. I know you will take my caution in good part."

"'Deed, then, I will not, Captain Montague," the Doctor said, firing up, and irritated at the disappointment. "I think it's free—uncommon free. Why, it's reflecting on my child and her bringing up. God bless me, sir! what d'ye mean, sir?"

"Oh, if you take it that way, I shan't say a word more."

"But I do take it that way, and every way too! Slur'ing the char'cter of my daughter! I declare, sir—why, what d'ye go on—I call on you, sir, distinctly, for support of your insinuations."

Captain Montague was still very grave, and not in the least put off his balance by the Doctor's bluster.

"I have too great an interest in your family to let myself be offended by any expressions of yours. I merely tell you this: the man boasts of his influence, and hints at walks and appointments which I know are mere inventions. However, I have given my hint, and shall say no more."

There was another change in this volatile Doctor.

"Ah, my dear Montague, not one of us is up to Polly and her tricks. She's the most sportive, funnisome thing that ever stepped. I own I am not up to her yet. But we're behind the scenes, at home. She's just making a hare of the man. My dear Montague I take it as very friendly of your telling me, and if I was a little short with you——"

"Oh, you can be long or short, as you please," said the other, coldly; "of course within limits. And I dare say your view is the right one. Good-bye."

The Doctor "smiled him off," then grew grave and angry, and hurried home. "This is a pretty how d'ye do! The foolish, ridiculous chit! to be wasting her time and my capital on such a fellow. She hasn't just two grains of Katey's sense. I'll give her a good, sound blowing up. Why, she's no better than a slip of a foolish school-girl, and never thinks of the serious business of life. Never."

Poor Polly was not so accountable for that; she had had "no schooling," and it may be questioned whether the Doctor's instructions would have helped her to the knowledge of the serious business of life. The general reign of D.D., and the unrestricted "run of the house" for officers and gentlemen, the daily appearance at the band, the little visits to the barracks, in short, a restless and never flagging "setting one's cap" at every suitable object, without the least disguise—if this were the serious business of life, she was indeed accomplished. Alas, for poor Polly! She had the finest nature, full of a generous

spirit, but "no ballast." A strong, cold, severe, but just and affectionate soldier, would have been the man to educate her as a wife. "A cruel snaffle," as the Doctor would say, but only for a time. By-and-bye, when the Du Barrys shall have seen fresh quarters all over the kingdom, and the conversation at mess shall turn, as it often does, on the class of young ladies disrespectfully known as "hacks," that name will suggest our Polly's, and traits and stories, more false than true, will run up and down the table.

Entering the house, the Doctor shouted up-stairs for Polly to come down to him, but no one answered. This put him out, and getting his hat, he set off to look for her. A sort of presentiment struck him. He never returned from his visits to Leadersfort till late: perhaps the girl had reckoned on his being absent. Heaven knows! He went in next door, and asked for Captain Molyneux. He was out also; they said that he had gone up for a walk in the park. The Doctor set off in pursuit, taking long strides, and breathing hard.

There was a shady row of trees near a brook, and our Doctor, having ascended to the top of a gentle hill, which commanded a great range of view, very soon made out two figures standing under the trees, at the edge of the little stream. Doctor Findlater crept round, and, in skirmishing fashion, kept under shelter. As he drew nearer he saw indeed that it was his daughter Polly and the insidious Molyneux, who seemed to be saying things of deep interest or compliment. In a moment Doctor Findlater was beside them. Both started, and Polly gave a half-scream.

"This looks nice!" said the unexpected intruder. "'Pon my word it does." Then with sudden sternness: "Get home at once, girl; you're wanted there, and it's where you should be. Go!"

Polly flew away like a roe, whom the hunter's first barrel has barely missed. The Doctor watched her till she was out of hearing, then folding his arms across his chest, said:

"Now, sir!"

"Well, Doctor, what do you look so wicked for? It was only about a ball. You've scared that poor child out of her wits."

"I have just heard," said the Doctor, speaking very deliberately, "some anecdotes about you, sir; how you've been amusing your friends with boasts about my child. If true, it was a scandalous, ungentlemanly act. But I can hardly credit it. If I found the shadow of a stick of a shintilla of evidence to that effect, I'd make —*any* man rue the day he was born!" said the Doctor, making his conclusion general.

"Quite proper; but don't gesticulate so violently," said the other, laughing; "people will think we are going to fight a duel in this pretty meadow."

"To be sure, then. Just take a warning from me, Captain Molyneux. You've come to the wrong inn this time, d'ye mind. Your patronage won't be admitted. In plainer English, we're not going to furnish food for gossip for you. So now you're served with notice: and give me and mine a very wide berth in future."

"What big tragedy words you use," said the other, insolently. "No doubt they have gossip enough in this place to engross them at present."

"Yes. But you may not have heard that I am dealing with the gossipers; so take care I don't make you a party. But this is trifling—you've got a gentlemanly warning—and I never give a gentlemanly warning twice. Don't come across the path of the Findlaters again. The signalman has shown the red light; so it's your own fault if you're found on the line again. Good-bye!"

The Doctor retired "off," as he would on the stage, with the most good-humoured and engaging smile in the world, as "if he had been asking the man to dinner;" then strode away home, swearing to himself, as his custom was. In his own house again, he roared for Polly; and when she did not answer, drummed at her door. As he threatened to break it in, it was opened suddenly, and there stood the proud coquettish beauty, her cheeks reddened with mortification and anger, and her lips pouting, and warranting Sir Anthony Absolute's rapturous description of Miss Languish.

"You hussy!" said the Doctor, furiously; "how dare you disgrace me, and waste the precious time, *finnaking* with a fellow of that sort? I am ashamed of you —so I am!"

"And how dare you insult me before a gentleman of his sort? I *shall* go to the ball! I'm no child, I can tell you! It's I that have been disgraced!"

"Don't speak to me in that style! Your poor foolish brain is about as soft as the jam in that cupboard there. There's an imbecility about your movements. I'm ashamed of you! Look at Katey, what she has done!"

"Look at Katey! poor lost Katey! a fine spectacle to encourage me. I won't be sold into a fine family that, as Captain Molyneux says, despises us all. I'd sooner far have a *gentleman*—one that really loved and esteemed me——"

"Hold your tongue, you brazen thing! It's immor'l to hear you! I tell you what, let me catch you speaking a word to any blackguard like that again, and I'll have you locked in your room for a week!"

"I dare you, Peter! I dare you!" said the young girl, in great excitement; "use any of your brutality to me, and I'll find those that will protect me."

"Brutality! Why you're mad, or idiotic! How dare you attempt to 'bird' me in that way? By all the living busbies——"

"Yes, you're good at your low oaths, Peter; but they don't intimidate me."

"Just get in there till you're cool, or till I send some one with a pail of water to dash over your head," said he, dragging the key out of the inside of the lock, violently slamming, and then locking the door. "What in the name of all that's holy is this new devilry that's got into her!" He had not time to investigate this rather nice inquiry—a reflection which his own rough knowledge of the world would have helped. According to a phrase often used by him, that "running helter-skelter among the officers" was never known to improve a young woman. "What ball is she talking of?" he thought. But presently came a matter of serious importance. Colonel Bouchier cantered up on his great horse, and entered with enthusiasm.

"I have news for you, Fin, my boy—I saw the old woman this morning, and worked hard for you. Egad, sir, I made love to her for you. But I talked her over, and gave her something—which you will pay me, Fin, when you come into the Banshee—and she's off home again delighted."

"My dear colonel," said the Doctor, much moved, "I don't deserve this—indeed I don't. You are the truest and warmest friend; indeed——"

"Not at all. You'd do as much for me."

"No," said the Doctor, sadly, "I couldn't, unfortunately. I wish I could, from my soul. *I* haven't the mammon of iniquity."

"Hush! you would. And the best was, just as I went away, an attorney sort of fellow came in; and I suspect he was sent away."

"With a fine specimen of entomology in his ear," said the Doctor, smiling. "Well, Heaven be praised for giving me such good friends!"

"You're a good fellow yourself, Fin, and deserve luck."

BISMARCK.

Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck Schœnhausen (the man of "blood and iron," as he is usually called by his unappeasable enemies the German Liberals, from a certain defiant speech of his in which he spoke of the proper way of dealing with the opponents of Prussia) was born on the 1st of April, 1815, at the place in Saxon Prussia from which his family derives its name. The Bismarck race, originally from the March of Brandenburg, in the heart of Prussia, has produced soldiers for centuries, and is probably a family of longer standing in Prussia than even that of the present king, the Hohenzollern being in the eyes of the prouder "Junkers" mere transplanted and parvenu "burgraves" of Nuremberg.

In Prussia, beyond any other part of Germany, feudalism still flourishes, and to render this bygone institution still more galling, there has been grafted upon it the military arrogance encouraged by Frederick the Great. Combine with these two causes of aggressive pride the uneasy self-assertion of a new nation, and you have, as the product, the modern Prussian nobleman in his officer's dress, with his insolent contempt for all who do not wear swords, or boast twenty quarterings on their coat-of-arms. Of this pride of class, profession, and nation, Count Bismarck is the very incarnation. It remains a problem for the future how far united Germany can become free under such a rule, or how civilisation and true progress can prosper and advance under such a minister.

Although the son of a chef-d'escadron, Count Bismarck's early ambitions were not towards the profession of his race. He served, however, as a matter of course, his obligatory year in the army, and having studied at Göttingen, Berlin, and Greifswald (where he fought, as his son says, some fifty duels), he became a lieutenant in the Landwehr; just sufficient training to enable him to comprehend in a general way most military operations. Aiming at an administrative career, Count Bismarck studied civil law. In 1841, as an avowed aristocrat of the extremest and most overbear-

ing and aggressive type, he became a member of the Diet of the province of Saxony, and, in 1847, of the General Diet, where he at once came to the front and defied the party of progress. An enemy to all change and freedom, Count Bismarck, at thirty-two, preached blind obedience, deference, and submission to the kaiser. His speeches were always antagonistic to the spirit of the age, and opposed any relaxation of the old fetters of absolute power. Thus, in 1847, he argued that all great cities should be swept from the face of the earth, because they were the centres of democracy, and what was called constitutionalism. He also told the Diet that the sacrifices of the war of 1815 had not given the Prussian people the right to claim a constitution, the monarchs of Prussia reigning not by the consent of the people, but by the grace of God, and that all the king chose to accord would be an act of spontaneous liberality. A political writer, not unfriendly to the man, has thus described his career of Conservative agitation from 1847 to 1851:

"He was the leader of the Conservative party, using that word in its most absolute and anti-sympathetic sense, the chief of the Extreme Right, the champion of all the privileges, interests, and pretensions of the feudal party, the defender of seignorial jurisdiction, the most obstinate antagonist of democracy and parliamentarism, the most zealous apologist of divine right and aristocratic immunities."

In a speech delivered in 1850, Count Bismarck declared boldly that the mission of Prussia was to subordinate herself to Austria, in order to fight by her side against German democracy; and, in the same speech, in his usual reckless and challenging way, he called the occupation of Schleswig-Holstein, "a stupid adventure," into which the miserable policy of 1848 (the revolutionary year) had drawn Prussia. He concluded by denying that Austria had ceased to be a German power because she happened to have the good fortune to have Sclavonians subject to her. "On the contrary altogether," he said, "I respect Austria as the representative of an ancient German power."

In 1848, during that fierce outbreak of oppressed and deceived men, when the insurgents of Berlin carried the dead bodies of their murdered brethren by torchlight past the king's balcony, Bismarck turned away in scorn and anger from politics; but he reappeared in 1849, and led the last charge on the defeated patriots of the national party, who still generously, but foolishly, trusted in the Prussian king and his respect for constitutional rights. Austria and Prussia had, after a sham quarrel, just contrived to help the Elector of Hesse against his oppressed subjects. Baron Manteuffel, the Prussian prime minister at Olmütz, made his nation pay an almost abject submission to Austria. At the Diet of Frankfort, Prussia, the rising rival of Austria, played the part of vassal. Count Bismarck was just the man for Manteuffel, and followed out to the letter his principles of subservience to the Hapsburgs. His convictions were known to be vehement, his mind was recognised as prompt, unflinching, and vigorous. The government wanted a partisan so clever, so unfaltering, so careless of money, no struggler for position, and his intellect once acknowledged, he soon took his diplomatic degree. In May, 1851, Bismarck was sent to the restored Diet of Frankfort, as first secretary of legation; and three months later was promoted to the rank of ambassador, in the place of Herr von Rochow. This post the count occupied for eight years, till the spring of 1859. During this time he sloughed off his old opinions, and suddenly turned an anti-Austrian of the extremest school. With the Austrian ambassador, afterwards the Austrian prime minister, Herr von Rechberg, Bismarck had ceaseless diplomatic contentions, which even culminated on one occasion, so the rumour went, in a physical collision, the result of which history however has not recorded.

The causes of this change are not known. Bismarck himself always attributes them to what he saw and heard of Austrian policy during a visit to that most mischievous friend of tyrants and despots, Prince Metternich, at his seat at Johannisberg. Perhaps, after all, we may honestly take the noblest and justest view of this change from Count Bismarck's own words, which are well worth quoting:

"Sixteen years ago," he says, "I was living as a country gentleman, when the king appointed me the envoy of Prussia at the Frankfort Diet. I had been brought up to admire—I might almost say to worship—Austrian policy. Much time, however, was not needed to dispel my youthful illusions in regard to Austria, and I became her declared opponent. The humiliation of my country, Germany sacrificed to the interests of a foreign nation, a crafty and perfidious tone of policy—

these were not things calculated to give me satisfaction. I did not know that the future would call upon me to take any important part in public affairs; but from that period I conceived the idea which, at the present day, I am still working out—the idea of withdrawing Germany from Austrian pressure; at any rate, that part of Germany whose tone of thought, religion, manners, and interests identify her destinies with those of Prussia. I speak of Northern Germany."

The real fact is, to use plainer language than Bismarck, even at his frankest, dare adopt, the young diplomatist, with his vigorous sagacity and fast-developing ambition, saw that the time had at last come to wrench the empire from Austria, whose policy had grown utterly effete and mistaken.

As Frederick the Great first saw that Prussia was strong enough to enlarge her frontiers and assert her power, so Bismarck was the first Prussian to see that the time had come for the Hohenzollern to displace the worn-out Hapsburgs. His Prussian ambition soon got the better of the ideal imperialism of his youth. Austrian arrogance, fresh from the triumph of Olmütz, roused the gall of the proud Prussian. Prince Schwartzenberg had been rash enough to say openly, in the drawing-room of the palace: "Il faut avaler la Prusse d'abord, pour ensuite la démolir." The lesser German princes derided "the smallest of the great powers," as Prussia was called, while Bismarck bit his lips, and revolved grim projects in his big turbulent brain, projects with bitter results to the mocking dukelings and princelings of the petty German states. The humiliation at Olmütz is said to have killed Count Brandenburg, the minister who carried the Berlin coup d'état in 1848; but it only roused the stronger nature of Bismarck, armed him, and made him inexorable in the inevitable conflict. Stirred by a new ambition, and seeing his opportunity, this daring and strong-willed man addressed himself to the task of raising Prussia, and depressing Austria for ever. In 1856, he stood up for the duchies against the empire. In 1858, he wrote against the Zollverein as far too republican, and advocated a customs parliament, in which Prussia might be more absolute.

At the commencement of the Italian war, German sentiment and old clanship all but dragged Prussia into an alliance with Austria. The prince regent (the present king) alarmed at the victory of Magenta, began to fear an invasion of French republican doctrine into his feudal dominion. He even went so far as to mobilise six corps d'armée (two hundred and fifty thousand men). Yet still, with his old ambition, he proposed to the Diet to place two other corps d'armée under his command. Austria, dreading Prussia's aggrandisement even more than French successes, instantly forbade this, told Prussia her duty was to take the field at Austria's side, and declared that she would not surrender even a Lombard village. This pride was crushed at Solferino, and the hasty treaty of Villafranca followed from Austria's fear of her home rival. An Austrian journal, indeed, publicly confessed that Austria would rather lose three Lombardies than afford Prussia an opportunity of extending her power in Germany. All this time Bismarck was away as ambassador at St. Petersburg. From that city he was constantly urging on Herr von Scheinitz, the minister of foreign affairs at Berlin, the necessity of breaking with the Diet, where all the wishes or wants of Prussia were stifled by the Austrian majority. He says in one letter, "The word on our flag should be Prussian not German. I should desire to see the former word on our flag, only when we have become united to our German fellow-countrymen in a closer and more effectual bond." He expressed much alarm at the meeting of the Austrian and Prussian sovereigns at Töplitz, when it was supposed Prussia had guaranteed her assistance if Venetia were attacked. He wanted proof of Austria's friendly disposition, and said in his rough, picturesque way: "One hand washes another; and when we have since seen the lather of the Austrian soap we will willingly return the service."

A year after this Bismarck met the king at Baden-Baden, explained his views, and at the king's wish set them down on paper. In his scheme the daring innovator boldly asserted the necessity of a firmer consolidation of the means of defence, more pliable customs, and a national representation which might be thoroughly Conservative, and yet win thanks from the Liberals. In October, 1861 (a month later), Bismarck again saw the king, and by the time of the subsequent coronation, when the Prussian king put the crown on his own head in child-like belief of the obsolete doctrine called divine right, the untiring statesman had elaborated his scheme of reform.

The new chambers were not tractable. They looked on the project for reorganising

the army as a mere step to the suppression of the Landwehr, and as only a means of increasing posts of honour and emolument for the sons of the nobility. The new army was, they thought, to be a nursery for more of those intolerable junkers. The budget was rejected, but the king, dismissing the ministers, replaced them with still more servile tools. At this crisis the king bethought him of Bismarck, his unflinching adviser, and invited him to enter the ministry; but the time was not ripe for the great Mephistopheles of modern Germany. He had once, in earlier days, lingered in Paris till a snubbing from his superiors, and an ominous whisper of "pas trop de zèle, monsieur," had hurried him back to his office in Russia; but the roads were all open now to the favoured man, who believed, or loudly pretended to believe, in divine right, and Bismarck chose the Paris embassy for himself. One summer he stayed in the French capital, a constant intimate of the emperor, as he was, later in the year, in still greater privacy and closeness at Biarritz, and even when in the autumn of that year (September, 1862) he was called to Berlin to conduct the ministry, he returned for a short time to Paris to take formal leave.

During the next three years and a half, this strong-willed man trod down the Liberal opposition, with arrogance and contempt. He dared not tell them his real reasons for maintaining a great army, and chafed by their resistance to his schemes, he did not trouble himself to conciliate them. He saw the king must either conquer or fall, and Bismarck resolved he should be victorious. The Liberals, not understanding his great views for Prussia, saw in him only a friend of the hero of the coup d'état, and a partisan of feudalism and large standing armies. The chambers were twice dissolved, a third time the deputies were contemptuously sent home, and Bismarck and his colleague, Herr von Roon, the minister of war, treating them with open scorn and defiance. On one occasion, when a speaker moved that the ministers should attend the sittings in order to hear the grave complaints that had been raised against them, Count Bismarck coolly stepped forth from an adjoining room, and said that the ministers' attendance was quite unnecessary, as what had been going on among the gentlemen could be heard well enough in the room where he had been sitting. Another time he told the deputies plainly that when ministers thought it necessary to make war they would do so with or without the deputies' consent. The minister of war also denied that he was amenable to the president's interruptions. Then came severe laws against the press, and a persecution of all resisting officials. Even the Crown Prince, objecting to the restrictions on the press, was obliged to remain from court, and deputies were prosecuted for attacking ministers in parliament. Bismarck was supreme. In fact, it was Charles the First and Strafford over again; but this time the plotting pair kept their heads firmly on, and won the game. There were provocations enough in what they did for a hundred revolutions.

Internal opposition being thus crushed out, Bismarck began to seek causes of quarrel with Austria. To Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin, he boldly proclaimed his aspirations for Prussia. He complained that Austria refused her a proper position in the Bund, and planned coalitions against her. Austria seemed always to act, he said, as if Prussia could not resist attacks from without, unless aided by Austria. The audacious minister now, indeed, began to boldly claim for Prussia a right to preponderate in the internal affairs of Germany, and finally had the irritating audacity to put before the aghast Count Karolyi the alternative of Austria either transporting her political centre to Ofen, or of seeing Prussia in the ranks of her enemies, on the occasion of the first European war. Events were fast coming to a crisis, when, in November, 1863, the King of Denmark suddenly died, and matters took a new turn.

The war of Schleswig-Holstein furnished Bismarck with fresh opportunities to first fool, then humble, Austria. He first persuaded Austria to defy the Diet, oust the pretender, the Prince of Augustenburg, and occupy the duchies. The second campaign, ending with the invasion of Jutland, placed the duchies at the disposal of Austria and Prussia, the latter power eventually cuckooing its fellow-robber out of the whole. War between Prussia and Austria naturally followed. Bismarck loudly accused Austria of cherishing warlike designs against Prussia—a shameless accusation, which no one believed. He had already, in 1865, with deep instinct, said to the Bavarian minister: "One single encounter, one decisive battle, and Prussia will have it in her power to dictate conditions." At first it was thought impossible that Prussia would venture on such a fratricidal war. Gradually the Liberals

learnt to bear tranquilly the humiliation of the old empire, and to learn that here, at last, was a step towards a real and lasting German unity. The result was that short campaign ending in the crowning victory of Sadowa, and the proved superiority of Prussia. Bismarck, with his usual dexterous frankness, then appealed to the Liberals to withdraw their opposition for a time, and to think of German unity, and victory over Austria, alone. He could not do, he said, with less than five hundred thousand bayonets. He pleaded the difficulty of convincing a king opposed to modern ideas, and surrounded by ultra-aristocratic influences. The king could not forget the dangers and humiliations of 1848. He had been cruel against the Baden insurgents in 1849. Moreover, the king was averse to war with Austria. "I pass my life," said Bismarck, "acting as a buffer between the king and the Liberals." In 1867, the differences of Bismarck and his less progressive colleagues were proved by the dismissal of the minister of justice, for his unwise prosecutions of parliamentary speakers.

And now a word or two about Count Bismarck's personal characteristics. Newspaper correspondents have photographed him for us often enough, with his characteristic bluff, jovial manner, and his white cuirassier cap with the yellow band. His dress, like his policy, is somewhat defiant and reckless. A contempt for appearances is shown even in his hat and necktie. "Something about him," says M. Bamberger, one of his keenest French critics, "reminds one of that mixture of insolence and good humour—the German student—with his bumptious, pugnacious, jovial, and yet in the inmost recesses of his soul, somewhat sentimental nature." There is a good deal of crafty shrewdness and prompt dexterity in Count Bismarck's looks. A gleam of the sardonic and malign mars an apparent frankness. The features are strongly marked with good-nature and with firmness. The pouches under his eyes tell of a stormy youth, and of the Teutonic potations for which the astute minister was once renowned at students' feasts. That fair bald man with the bunchy moustache has the air of a nobleman and courtier, but there are still in him traces of that temper that galls his opponents, and which, in 1849, led the count to challenge the editor of the Kladderadatsch (the Berlin Punch), a paper to which he was afterwards supposed to contribute skits on the Austrian diplomates. Count Bismarck is no orator; but he rules his audience by the vigour of his thoughts. One of his admirers described him, in 1866, as having a clear and audible, but a dry, unsympathetic, and monotonous voice. He stops frequently and interrupts himself, sometimes even he stutters in his struggles for words to match his thoughts. His attitudes and gestures are awkward and uneasy. But as he warms he conquers one by one all these defects, attains greater lucidity and precision, and often rises to a well-delivered, vigorous—sometimes too vigorous—peroration. Latterly, power and success have given him confidence; his words still come fitfully and reluctantly, but there is a certain charm to the listener, in, as it were, seeing the forging of the speaker's thoughts; his slowness and earnestness give a greater weight to his speeches than rapid fluency could secure. "Sometimes," says M. Bamberger, "he presents his subject in sharp, happy touches, pressing into his service similes from real life with wonderful audacity, and in a cool, unprejudiced kind of way, overthrowing tenderly revered traditions by reference to stern realities. It should be added that his style, although very quiet, is not deficient in imagery. His bright and clear intellect does not despise colouring, any more than his strong constitution is free from nervous irritability." He talks like an ancient Roman, with infinite vigour and verve, and with epigrammatic picturesqueness. What could be more terrible, yet strong, than his avowed resolve to "let Paris stew in her own gravy?" How cleverly he retorted on Jules Favre, who had called Strasbourg "the key of the house," with the question, "Which house?" What could be more delicious than the quiet irony with which he described his conversation with the same gentleman? "We began by reviewing the characteristics of past ages." Here, for once, is a German bitterly practical. Bismarck's favourite boast that he has "set Germany on the saddle," is met by the bitter but natural question of a clever English Liberal, apropos of the infamous arrest of Dr. Jacoby, "but has he taught her to ride?" A remark attributed the other day by a correspondent to the count's secretary, evidently owes its origin to the astute chancellor of the German Confederation: "Whatever happens," he said, "we shall at least treat Paris with a bouquet or two of shells." Even in the Metz intrigue, a characteristic sentence at one of the back-stair interviews is attributed to Bismarck: "The empress remaining in

England, and showing no signs of life." What a leader-writer Bismarck would have been! Perhaps some day, a fugitive from *free* Germany, he may turn his hand to a fresh profession. One card this wily Machiavelian always carries ready, and that is "frankness." He has, by his own account, no secrets, no mental reservations. He will explain to you the circumstances which have made him seem a reactionist; he will tell you why he was so long unable to explain to the Liberals his motives for keeping a standing army. Still, somehow, this obtrusive frankness always reminds us of that empty drawer upon which the professional juggler always so insists, and in which he is never tired of rattling his wand.

To see Bismarck to perfection, they say, you should see him in parliamentary committees. There he is alternately winning and genial, reckless and defiant. He rattles on brilliantly and rapidly, sprinkling his conversation with many foreign words. He has infinite tact under the air of levity. Once, while ambassador at Frankfort, his special enemy, Herr von Rechberg, called a council of the members of the Diet at his house, and insolently received them in his dressing-gown. To pay him off in his own coin, Count Bismarck immediately drew his cigar-case out of his pocket, took a cigar, offered a second to his neighbour, and lighting his own, said with playful nonchalance: "You have no objection, dear count?"

This was the most complete and perfect rebuke he could have given. One day he drew an olive leaf from his cigar-case (he is a great smoker), and said to a member of the Liberal party:

"I picked that at Avignon to offer to the Opposition, but the moment has not yet come: I shall keep it for some future time."

He is always making these indirect overtures to the Liberals, either from sincerity, or because he dreads a reaction. At times he has uttered regrets. After Sadowa he told a friend, that the sight of the ghastly battle-field had robbed him for some days of all enjoyment of the triumph. Writing about the constant suspicions of his enemies, he once said: "The inquisitor is most stern to those on his own side, friends who have long drunk from the same cup are more unjust than enemies. . . . . and I pine for my house on the Quai Anglais (St. Petersburg), with its quieting outlook on the ice of the Neva." His impatience of all opposition has made Bismarck confess that he does not feel any aptitude for internal affairs, his reckless strength being unable to adapt itself to the restrictions of law and individual interests in a highly civilised community. Surely there is no other living statesman who dare tell his country, as Bismarck has cynically done, that it was perhaps too advanced to bear a constitution.

But Providence is stronger than Bismarck. France is struck down, but the love of liberty no sword can reach. Only the good this strong man has done will live. The march the half-million of Teutons has made, will only be to carry back to Germany a desire for wider liberty, and a hatred of dead feudalism. Bismarck may crush Paris, but he cannot stop the sun, or freeze the illimitable ocean. Great thoughts will spread in wider and wider circles till they inundate the old world, and as they rise those irresistible waters will some day make little of Count Bismarck and Frederick William, though they be girt with twice five hundred thousand bayonets.

The most interesting exposition of Count Bismarck's political creed was that published by M. Vibort, in the Siècle, in June, 1866. It was published, it is supposed, with the count's own permission, and no doubt paints him with reasonable fidelity: certainly as he then wished to appear to the French people, whose jealousy the victories of that wonderful Sadowa campaign soon began to rouse. Bismarck's alarming frankness overflowed in the whole interview. M. Vibort had been told that the Prussian minister was inaccessible, living retired in the recesses of his study, shut in with doubly-locked doors, only going out to see the king, and secluded even from his most intimate friends. Not many weeks before, Ferdinand Blind, a fanatical young Republican student, had fired five barrels of a revolver at him within a few paces, yet the minister's study-door was not even bolted. Bismarck instantly, with finished politeness, took M. Vibort's hand, led him to an arm-chair, and offered him a cigar. M. Vibort began boldly by expressing the French sympathy with the expulsion of Austria from Italy, and the establishment of united Germany; but he asked how Bismarck, while upholding the regenerative virtues of a national parliament, reconciled that doctrine with the despotic way in which he had treated the second chamber at Berlin. "France did not admit the possibility," said the interviewer, "of any intimate union between absolutism and democracy."

"A la bonne heure!" replied the frank statesman, "you go at once to the root of things. In France I know I am as un-

popular as in Germany. Everywhere I am considered responsible for a state of things that I have not created, but which has been forced upon me as upon every one else. I am the scapegoat of public opinion, but that does not much trouble me. I pursue the course which I believe to be beneficial to my country, and to Germany, with a perfectly easy conscience. As to the means, I have used those which were within my reach, in default of better. Germany is given up to the spirit of individualism. The sentiment of individualism, and the necessity for contradiction, are developed to an inconceivable degree in the German. Show him an open door, and rather than go through it, he will obstinately determine to force a passage through the wall at its side. No government, whatever it may do, will ever be popular in Prussia. People shouted at the victories of Frederick the Great, but they also rubbed their hands together at the thought of being delivered from their tyrant. Nevertheless, with all this antagonism, there coexists a deep attachment to the royal house. They all cry from the depth of their hearts, 'God save the King,' and they obey when the king commands."

M. Vibort suggested that discontent might one day grow into rebellion.

"The government," said the "interviewed" minister, "does not believe this is to be feared, and does not fear it. Our revolutionists are not formidable. They exhaust their hostility and invectives by attacking me. . . . . I have never acted otherwise, simply because I could not; with Austria opposed to us an army was imperatively necessary, and all the influences of birth and education led me to the side of the king, who clung to the idea of military organisation as firmly as to the crown, because he was convinced, heart and soul, of its indispensable necessity. No one could make him yield or vacillate. . . . . I entirely agree with his views. I am still working out the idea of withdrawing Germany from Austrian pressure . . . . . devoting myself heart and soul to the idea of a Northern Germany under the ægis of Prussia. To attain this end, I would brave all dangers, exile—the scaffold itself. I said to the Crown Prince, whose education and natural tendencies incline him to the side of parliamentary government, 'What matter if they hang me, provided the rope by which I am hung bind this new Germany firmly to your throne?' In the conflict, I have remained by the king—my veneration for him, all my antecedents, all the traditions of my family, made this course my duty. But that I am either by nature or from principle an adversary of national representation—a born enemy of parliamentary governments—is a perfectly gratuitous supposition. . . . . Should the day come," concluded this remarkable man, "when, my task being accomplished, I shall find it impossible to reconcile my duties to the king with my duties to my country, I shall know how to blot myself out of political existence without denying the work I have done."

A correspondent of the Gaulois, who recently had a long interview with Bismarck, who was very confidential, but afterwards imprisoned his visitor at Mayence, has described the chancellor's lodgings at Versailles as mean—empty bottles served for candlesticks, and the table was covered with beer jugs and wine decanters. The wine, Bismarck was anxious to testify, was "all *paid* for."

THE SWING.

It stands, no beauty on the lawn,
Though beautiful to me,
The rugged, crooked, gnarled, stunted,
Blossoming apple-tree.
I love to see it rich with blooms
Or white with feathery snow,
Ripening thoughts as well as apples,
Out of the Long-Ago.

Twelve summers up the stream of Time;
It seems but yesterday;
I made a swing from its sturdiest bough,
In a morn of merry May.
And from it swung my love, my life,
In the flush of her sunny youth;
And I wooed her shyly, won her bravely,
With all her love and truth.

And now I swing another as fair,
She's nine years old, or ten,
And she laughs, and sings, and shouts, "Papa!
Swing me again! again!"
And I swing her again and kiss her.
"Don't kick at the stars!" I cry,
And she crackles with laughter, and says "I will,
If you'll swing me up as high!"

Gnarly, crooked, rugged, stunted,
Blossoming apple-bough!
I do not know in the wide, wide world
Another as fair as thou!
Three loves, three lives, three spirits of Hope,
Amid thy leaves are hidden,
And thy fruit is a fruit of Paradise,
Pleasant and unforbidden.

FOREIGN INVADERS.

If we have anything to be grateful for in this island home of ours, for the present at least, it is our freedom from foreign invasion. To us the desolating tramp of an inpouring, ruthless host is unknown, and we pass the years untremblingly, confident (over-confident it may be) in our security

from external attack. When we take up our Times at the breakfast-table, the last item of intelligence we expect to find is the news that the enemy has effected a landing, turned the heights of Dover, and strongly intrenched himself, preparatory to an advance on Canterbury. And, in addition, that two other corps have been equally successful in eluding our Channel fleet, and have secured a base of operations, the one in Mount's Bay and the other close by Harwich. We can watch the corn waving in rivulets of gold, as the gentle breeze sweeps over it, without a thought that alien requisitions will deprive us of the growing loaf. We have no fears of half a dozen Uhlans riding clatteringly to our porches, with a peremptory demand for quarters,and an intimation that a thousand or two will dine with us on the morrow. The October brewing in our cellars may sleep itself into invigorating strength, with no risk of Bavarian swillers to tap it into wakening. Even the cart-horses of the farm deport themselves sedately, with no dread of being yoked by foreign hands to a twelve-pounder or a mitrailleuse, or of being eaten by hungry warriors.

Pass through our smiling country; look at our manses and our villages, mingle with the peace-reared, ruddy population, and think of stern war striding in those homely tracks. Think of fields of corn, and twining hop-gardens, being ridden down and trampled by thousands of invading soldiery. Think of orchards scathed and seared by the burning breath of cruel, relentless batteries; think of outcast families, driven into the wide world—with no hope, no future, but that of charity—and thank Heaven that we have been so long spared these miseries.

But with all this the invader is among us: our ancient foe is upon us. By Dover and Folkestone, by Newhaven and Southampton, come the invading hosts. "Leicesstarrre-squarrre" resounds with the tramp of soles of foreign make, Soho has been given up to the occupation of the enemy, and Regent-street trembles with the step of the boots of France. Our towns and villages are besieged, our houses occupied, and our larders ravaged. We are invaded, and by a host that would shame the Norman Conquest, and yet we lie idly by, and never heed.

Do you know, good readers, that this foreign inroad means penury and starvation? Do you know that this happy land of ours is the enforced resting-place for thousands of indigent guests? Do you know that now is the time to bury the historical hatchet, and let it sprout into a carving-knife to cut wholesome rations?

Never has there been seen so swift a stroke of misery as that which has fallen upon France. But a few months ago, an irresponsible peasantry watched the growing undulating crops; the quiet routine of the calm summer country life was unbroken; and now, the plough furrows its way through the graves of dead kindred, and the stern hand of a triumphant foe gives blood-red seed to the sower. Villages have been obliterated, and their former sites are only traceable by heaps of charred and blackened bricks. Field and hedgerow, the farmer's landmarks of his estate, have disappeared, and the spots where vine or corn have grown are lost in a trackless waste. From the ruined homesteads comes a clamouring crowd, needy and hungry, to our shores—their roof shelter has gone, and from many even the means of procuring the commonest necessaries of life. We must comfort and care for them. For too many troubled years we were enemies—we now know the blessed advantages of being friends. We must show them that the housekeeper's room, and the British purse-holder's strength, are fortresses that will bear a great deal of sapping. We islanders may stand a siege of kindness that will mock any of those that have brought our neighbours to these straits.

Stroll with me to the Latin quarter of Soho, where in nearly every house the invaders have effected a lodgment, from the ground floor to the attics. The blanchisseuses de fin are starching, ironing, crimping, and plaiting from early morn till late at night, for our neighbours have come to us, many of them, with but a scanty supply of linen, and the shirt and jupon of yesterday must be renovated for the duties of to-morrow. Brisk marketing goes on during the early hours of the day. Surely we might be in the neighbourhood of the Halles Centrales. See those women with baskets on their arms and nothing on their heads but the plain white cap, with the tiniest of fluted borders. Watch them as they go into the boulangerie française and come out again with a loaf a yard in length, follow them to the charcutier's, and hear them clamour for boudin, and cotelettes froides aux cornichons. Look at them, how they peer into the slenderly furnished purse, and hesitate over the price of a coveted luxury, a luxury perhaps that

may be purchased for almost the smallest coin. Ah! poor women, many of them have husbands fighting and starving in beleaguered fortresses, or, worse still, eating black bread in some German prison camp. The "maudite monnaie," which puzzles them so in bartering, must be carefully economised, for where is more to come from when that is gone? The luxury is left untouched, and a spare meal, made up with but little meat, suffices the craving of the day.

Soho, amongst others of its French peculiarities, abounds in restaurants and estaminets; not grand halls of white and gold, with marble tables and crimson velvet cushions, but modest little retreats where the shop has been turned into a salle à manger or café. In one of these I have taken my dinner for days past, and so well am I known that I have a numbered ring, napkin, and pigeon-hole all to myself. This is a great advantage, as my napkin has had time to dry, and I escape the peril, as I spread it across my knees, of an attack of rheumatism, which the damp cloth, distributed to chance customers, makes imminent.

My restaurant is perhaps one of the least pretentious of the many humble dining-rooms in its vicinity. The expenditure of half a crown would elevate the reckless spendthrift to the rank of a millionaire, and I believe if any one were to go as far as three shillings, the dame de comptoir and the garçon would lose themselves utterly with excitement. I like my restaurant, and am on the very best of terms with all its staff, even to the chef, who, after all the dinners have been cooked, has occasionally joined me in a petit verre. This is how I came to frequent it.

Rambling one afternoon between Leicester-square and Oxford-street, I came, towards nightfall, on a well-lit, muslin-curtained window. In yellow paint, upon the glass, I read the announcement, "Café Restaurant," "à la carte ou à prix fixe." Here was just what I wanted. I was fasting, and it being the dinner-hour, I should not fail to meet numbers of the refugees of whom I was in search, at dinner. The room was crowded, and that peculiar odour which pervades the French cuisine, greeted me as I entered. But one vacant place remained, at a table where already were seated three persons, two ladies and a very, very old gentleman. My dinner ordered, I turned to look about me. One step from a London thoroughfare, and I was in the midst of France—I might have been in the Rue de Pologne, instead of in the street of the Greeks, in the district of Soho. Well, I dined modestly as became me, having in mind the companionship in which I found myself, and altogether was well served for a very small sum. Certainly, I might reasonably have taken exception to the soup, which was a thin yellowish liquid, very tasteless and very hot, but, with the assistance of a great deal of pepper and ketchup, I tried to convince myself that the consommé had a flavour after all. Besides, the two ladies at my table—mother and daughter, as I afterwards discovered—daintily sipped at the scalding fluid as if they were satisfied, why then should not I be content? The elder lady did the honours of the simple repast, which, instead of being ordered for three, was served for two only, and the way in which she presided, made me feel, that though not of the party, I was dining in excellent company. And we had wines, too, or I should say wine, on our table, and I, gourmand that I was, drank greedily an entire bottle, while they simply coloured the water in their tumblers from a modest pint shared between the three. When the garçon brought madame the note, the confession of poverty was made; the cost of their dinner, for three people, did not exceed the sum I paid for the very modest meal I had been content with.

Let me endeavour to describe my table companions, and then judge if the growing interest I felt in them was remarkable. The old gentleman I took to be somewhere about seventy. He had a long, drooping, white moustache, and his grey hair, still thick, was cut close to the head. Eyes full of fire scintillated from the deep shadow cast by a massive brow. The features were handsome, and sharply cut, and taking from his face the furrows of time, one might see in it the reflex of madame, and, in a lesser degree, of her daughter. The stooping shoulders took somewhat from his height, which, in his younger days, must have been that of a life-guardsman; the rosette of the Legion of Honour decorated his closely buttoned coat. I was ready to wager he had been a soldier. Madame, his daughter, might have been forty, but there was an expression of trouble and sorrow in the countenance that, perhaps, added a year or two to her appearance. She was very dark, and a very handsome likeness of her father. The girl, who, strange to say, was extremely fair, bore a striking resemblance to both

in feature. My knowledge of the relationship which bound them grew from the conversation at table. That they were of good—perhaps gentle—birth was unmistakable; that they were struggling to live and pinching themselves from necessity was also apparent. After the coffee, taken without cognac, the two ladies rose, and with them the old gentleman. Instinctively I felt that I should rise also, and bow as they retired. Bow I certainly did, and both mother and daughter made me a salutation as they withdrew. Monsieur, after conducting them to the door, returned and resumed his seat, and was presently joined by a ruddy, good-humoured-looking person, who might have been some ten years his junior. The new comer, who wore spectacles and a black velvet skull-cap, was a totally different sort of individual to my ancient chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He had all the characteristics of the bon bourgeois type, and, to tell the truth, I inwardly resented the intrusion, which seemed to mar the picture I had created in my mind—it was a bit of vulgar colour which destroyed the harmony of the composition.

"Would monsieur permit the cloth to be removed?" This was to me from my chevalier, and in French.

"Undoubtedly; it is what I should myself desire."

"Monsieur est Français?"

"No; I have not that honour." And then I felt immediately that, in my desire to be unusually polite, I had said something awkward.

"I congratulate monsieur; it is no great honour now."

And the two settled down to dominoes and cigarettes, and I to studying the different groups.

Presently came in a vendor of French journals, which were eagerly purchased by those who could spare the somewhat prohibitory sum demanded. Others contented themselves with the "Situation" and "l'International," published in London for the use of the Gallic colony. Now the room was filled with smoke and eager voices, arguing, disputing, and canvassing the scraps of intelligence, and loudest above the clamour could be heard the passionate exclamations of a knot of young fellows who might, it seemed to me, have been better employed in shouldering a musket with the army of the Loire. And so evidently thought my chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

"Hearest thou, mon ami, the vacarme que font ces brigands là?" asked he of his companion, "for me, I would rather have to do with Prussians;" and with a good round old-soldierly adjective at "ces criards fainéants," he continued the game.

I kept my place so long as my friend of the red ribbon kept his; when he left I followed soon, for to me the room had lost its interest with his departure. Another evening, and another, I found myself seated at the same table and in the same companionship. Madame and mademoiselle had now a pleasant smile for me, and a "Bon soir, monsieur!" as I took my accustomed place. As for the chevalier, he and I were getting on famously, and had gone so far as to clink together our glasses of the thin red wine. I longed to coax the old gentleman into a modest debauch, to supplement the vin ordinaire with a bottle of something more generous; but madame's bearing, though charming, forbade such an experiment. At length arrived my opportunity. The ladies, as usual, had left after coffee had been served, and no velvet skull-cap came to take the vacant place. The old chevalier rolled cigarette after cigarette, and lit and tossed them aside with impatience. Now for it. I would establish closer relations with Monsieur.

"Monsieur will perhaps permit me to be of his parti this evening?"

"Ah! but you are too good, ça pourrait vous ennuyer."

"On the contrary, I am quite at monsieur's service."

Jules brought the dominoes. I whispered him as the chevalier rattled the numbers, and Jules positively remained for an instant speechless with astonishment. I had asked for a bottle of Pomard. A consultation followed with the dame de comptoir, and then Jules tucked up his apron, and rushed from the house. Surely he had not gone to fetch the police? No. Just as we had finished our first game, Jules reappeared with the coveted wine. The cellar of my restaurant is not rich in Burgundy, and so my Pomard had been sought and obtained at some neighbouring restaurant of greater pretensions.

It required some pressing to induce my friend to join me, il avait prit son café—and Pomard was a vin capiteux; but, finally, the ruddy Rubicon was passed, and the old chevalier sipped at his glass with much contentment. Very soon we dropped our game, and got to good, honest talk. I was right. Monsieur de B. had

served "when French soldiers did not dishonour the flag." Monsieur had reached the grade of colonel before accepting his retraite: "Ah, il y a vingt ans depuis ça." He had campaigned in Africa with Changarnier, Lamoricière, and, ma foi! le Duc d'Aumale. Monsieur de B. was not an ardent Imperialist, though his gendre, madame's husband, had been decorated, after Magenta, by the emperor. Yes, his son-in-law had taken part in the present disastrous war, and had been one of the earliest victims. Le pauvre garçon fell wounded and a prisoner into the hands of the Prussians at Mars-la-Tour; they had since heard that his left arm had been amputated; he was chef de bataillon de chasseurs à pied. "Monsieur, je suis honteux, that I find myself here; I am still vigorous, and could take a musket with the Mobiles, or at least I might assist to drill them. But, que voulez vous, I must have a care for mes enfants, for we have no home now." And here the old soldier faltered, and a tear trickled down a furrow in his cheek.

"Ah mais quel misère, monsieur, we who have never wanted, we who had a charming property on the banks of the Moselle. Our harvest has all been requisitioned, the grapes have either rotted or been gathered by the Prussian soldiers, whose officers occupy the home we have fled from. But, à la guerre comme à la guerre, nous autres might have done the same, beyond the Rhine. Ah, monsieur, my daughter and her child suffer horribly; they have been used to luxury, and see how they feed in this place. It is terrible, I who say it to you, monsieur; they are always hungry, but we dare not eat our means at once. For me it is nothing; I am an old soldier, et je ne doit pas me plaindre. Why should I, is not mon gendre a prisoner, là bas en Allemagne? And badly wounded too. Do you know, monsieur, that we live in two rooms, bien mesquin et bien bon marché, for we must send to Alphonse a portion of the little we have brought away with us. Le Seigneur alone knows when we shall get more. Monsieur, j'ai le cœur gros, I can drink no more wine, I must go to my daughter and her child." And hastily the ancient chevalier, as though fearing some exhibition of weakness, saluted me and left. I have not seen him since—Poverty may have closed even that humble restaurant against him. And in this Latin quarter are many whose penurious condition keeps them from the café doors, and who starve and suffer in the wretched holes to which their misfortunes have driven them.

It was but the other day, that walking down Tottenham-court-road, I fell in with a group that could not but in the first instance excite my attention, and afterwards my compassion. A young Frenchwoman, neatly but poorly clad, with spotless white cap upon her head, gave her arm to help the shambling gait of an old man, whom I heard her call, "Mon père." Clutching her dress on the disengaged side was a tiny, toddling figure, almost identically costumed with the mother—une petite femme, every inch of her, with nothing infantine about her, but the great wondering black eyes, set in the dimpled baby face. Their way seemed mine, and I lingered on the track. At every greengrocer's, at every butcher's, the group halted; the grandfather and his daughter eyeing with indecision the tempting vegetables that might daintily season the scanty pot au feu, or debating the cost of the piece of beef which should furnish the soup for which they hungered.

"Mais mon père," said the woman, after a minute examination of a well-stocked front of meat. "Mais mon père, je n'y comprends rien, qu'est ce que ça veut dire, le chiffre neuf, et la lettre d?"

"Démandez donc ma fille," touchily replied the old man. "Démandez donc, il ne s'agit pas de nous promener tout la journée, sans rien manger; moi je créve de faim."

Here was my opportunity. With a salutation, such as I had once learned to make use of in my old Parisian days, I begged they would let me help them in their difficulty. The figure nine and letter d, the meaning of which to them was as unknown as Coptic or Parsee, I explained, and for the first time in my life, I found myself cheapening beef. Ah, well! Though theirs was but a slender purse, the butcher was a kind-hearted man, and these three invading mouths found some employment that day. Madame told me that her father, herself, and little one were from Bougival, "Ou se trouve actuellement ces méchants Prussiens," that "Mon Dieu!" they had been driven from their home, "en emportant absolument rien," not even the most simple of necessaries, not even "de quoire faire un paquet," not even "that," and madame forcibly illustrated her meaning, by making the nail of her thumb crack between some very white teeth. Her husband was a Mobile in Paris, and she and "vieux papa, avec la petite,"

had gathered what little money they could and had come to seek a relation in London, whom they could not find. He was gone, no one knew where, and their means were rapidly following him. "Ah! monsieur, ce n'est que le bon Dieu maintenant, qui peut nous venir en aide," and madame cried and crossed herself, drawing "la petite" nearer to her side, and, with many thanks for the slight service I had been able to render them, they went on their sorrowful way.

We are told that France has brought all this suffering upon herself, and that, as she has sown, so must she reap. But is an entire population to be made accountable for the ambition of a governing few? Are women and children fit victims for the bloody Moloch of war? Are the old, the weak, and the helpless always to suffer for the sins of emperors and marshals? Must the innocent always be whelmed in the ruin of the guilty? Alas! In France, at least, it must be so for many weeks, and months, and even weary years to come. What gigantic misery must reign in the desolated fields and towns of that most unhappy country—misery that ready and most generous help from without will scarcely be able even to mitigate—can be known only to Him, who, for reasons wise, though inscrutable to us, permits such things to be. But here, in this rich and peaceful country, we can do something—much even—to help these poor fugitives in our midst. Let it be remembered that help, to be useful, must be promptly rendered, and let our help be given at once.

USELESS WARNINGS.

Izaak Walton tells us in his discourse on perch, that "if there be twenty or forty in a hole, they may be at one standing all catched one after another, they being like the wicked of the world not afraid though their fellows and companions perish in their sight."

The inapitude to take a hint on a matter literally of vital importance, which is here attributed to the perch genus, is not by any means confined to that rash and foolhardy tribe. Certain specimens of a race the members of which ought to know better—the genus homo—are also liable to be taken in in the same manner, one after another, to an extent which is simply amazing. It appears positively to no purpose whatever, that the invariably unfavourable issue of certain proceedings is set plainly before a particular section of mankind. The trap, which they have been told, over and over again, will snap down upon them if they venture into it, is still not set in vain; the hook, which it has been carefully explained to them lies concealed inside the dangling bait, is ignored and set at nought, till it is suddenly found to be firmly embedded in their jaws.

Foremost amongst the examples of this curious incapability of taking warning I should place that extraordinary readiness which a great many men evince, to fall into the clutches of those knights of industry, who practise what may be called, for want of a better designation, the "ready-money swindle." This particular form of imposture—the shallowness of which is only exceeded by that of the mental capacity of its victims—is worked something in the following way.

A couple of gentlemen, endowed by nature with a greater capacity for spending money than for earning it honestly, appear in some public place—a carriage belonging to the Metropolitan Railway Company, or a river steamer, or where not—and engage in a conversation which invariably takes sooner or later what may be called a financial turn. One of the confederates — he who is best provided with conversational powers—generally begins to tell his companion a long story varying with "the taste and fancy" of the narrator, but always coming to the same point in the end. The narrator has just inherited a very large property from an eccentric relative, or a commercial scheme in which he had long been engaged has suddenly developed into an enormous success, or he has just returned from the colonies, gold-diggings, diamond-fields, or other wealth-producing regions with a huge amount of ready money in his possession. This last is the one point in the narrative which never varies. The teller of the story is always the most fortunate of men, and the best provided with ready money. Another unvarying element in the transaction is, that some third person who happens to be by, and who is a total stranger to the other two, is always appealed to, or in some way or other brought into the conversation; and the most extraordinary part of it all is, that this stranger always does fall into the conversation, and yields himself up as an implicit believer in the teller of the story, whether that gentleman describe himself as a diamond-finder, or a gold-digger, or a residuary legatee, or whatever else his imagination may suggest.

The attention of the unfortunate gull once secured, all goes as merrily as marriage bells. Gull is invited by the rich gentleman to adjourn with himself and friend to some tavern, where they can partake of a friendly glass. There is something—the rich gentleman says—about Gull that he likes; he wishes for Gull's better acquaintance, and thinks that he can put him in the way of a pecuniary transaction which will turn out an exceedingly profitable one. Gull at once agrees to the proposal of the "friendly glass," and the three repair to a public-house. Here the rich gentleman, to prove what a very rich gentleman he is, and that the story which he has told of his recent good fortune is all true, pulls out a quantity of sovereigns and bank-notes, which he duly displays before the dazzled eyes of Gull, and which he then hands over to his friend, begging him to take the same to that "party" he knows of who controls the funds of a certain investment, to have shares in which is to insure the acquirement of a large fortune. During his friend's absence the rich gentleman enlarges on the splendid nature of the investment, and frankly and cordially advises Gull, if he has any money about him, to do as he—the rich gentleman—has just done, adding, in answer to some inquiries concerning his friend's trustworthiness, which Gull—who goes in for being particularly shrewd and wide-awake—has thought it necessary to urge, that his friend is a man who may be trusted with untold gold, and that he has entire confidence in him, which he begs Gull to observe he has just proved by intrusting so large a sum of money to his friend's keeping.

The friend now comes back in high glee. He has seen the "party" and made the investment. It was lucky he went when he did, though, as the subscription-list was just closing, and after to-day it would not be possible to get "on" at any price; on hearing all which the rich gentleman expresses delight and gratitude, and once more urges Gull to invest, liberally proposing, if Gull will put down all he has about him, to lend him what may be necessary to make up a certain sum, less than which it would not be worth while to invest. To this proposal Gull, after a little hesitation, attributable to his profoundly cautious nature—on which the other congratulates him—consents, and hands over his money (supplemented by a small loan from the rich gentleman) to the obliging emissary, who acts in this case as a kind of benevolent go-between, and who goes off in a hurry with the money which he has just received, expressing great fear lest he may not be in time. After this worthy has taken his departure, the crisis is not long delayed. The rich gentleman very soon begins to express anxiety at his friend's not reappearing, and volunteers to go off in search of him, bidding Gull remain where he is till he returns. Of course neither he nor his confederate ever do return, and the ingenuous Mr. Gull sees neither his newly gained friends nor his newly lost money any more. This is an instance of only one of the forms in which this particular swindle is worked. It has many other developments. Sometimes the rich gentleman proposes a game of skittles for a large amount; sometimes he asserts that he can show a larger sum of money than anybody else, and dares our friend Gull to enter into competition with him. The result, however, is in every case the same.

Now does it not seem almost incredible that any human being, not absolutely an idiot, can be duped by such a shallow trick as any one of these, even on the very first occasion of its being tried? But when one comes to think that now, after the dodge has been worked over and over again, and over and over again exposed, people are still constantly taken in by it, one certainly does get at last to take a very hopeless view indeed of the intellectual condition of a large portion of the human race.

Another instance of this same inability, on the part of certain individuals, to profit by the experience of others, is furnished by the curious case with which a cheat of an altogether different order, whom we will call a shop-swindler, manages to cheat the proprietors of some of our large City and West-end businesses out of their property. A case illustrative of the proceedings of one of these "professors," and one which is sufficiently typical to merit quotation, occurred the other day. The professor—a lady in this case—walked into the place of business of an eminent jeweller and watchmaker in the City at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and asked to see several articles of jewellery. Her request was granted, and after a display of not more than the usual amount of indecision, a gold watch and chain, and a diamond locket—the whole worth about one hundred and fifty pounds—were selected for purchase. So far all seems straightforward enough. It is after this point that the proceedings assume a circuitous character. The lady begins by

requesting that a shopman may be sent with her to her residence to receive payment for the articles chosen, a proposal which the subordinates shrink from consenting to on their own responsibility, and which is referred to the decision of the proprietor of the business. Upon this individual our professor at once begins to practise all sorts of cajolery and mystification, showing him the card of a clergyman of his acquaintance to whom she professes to be related, and making out as well that she is well acquainted with a certain neighbour, with whom the head of the firm is on intimate terms. This gentleman—concerning whom it is narrated that "he was completely taken off his guard by the artless and simple manners" of his visitor—is at last induced to comply with her request, and in due time she drives off in a cab with the valuable property in her possession, but accompanied, as she herself had wished, by one of the shopmen. Not a very difficult undertaking this, hitherto, nor requiring any very special gifts for carrying it out. The crucial moment is, however, to come. Passing by one of those large haberdashery and linen-drapery establishments, of which there are several in different parts of London, and which is provided with two entrances, one in a main thoroughfare and the other in an adjacent side street, the lady with the "artless manner" stops her cab, and informing the young man who accompanies her from the jeweller's that she has a purchase to make inside, tells him that she will not keep him waiting in the cab many minutes, and then prefers the modest request that she may be allowed to take the case containing the valuables with her into the shop. On what pretext she bases this last demand does not appear in the published accounts of this most remarkable case; perhaps she represented that she was about to select a dress to be worn with the jewels, and wished to see them together; perhaps she professed herself to have become so much attached to her new purchase as not to be able to bear it out of her sight for a moment; but, whatever she alleged, the astounding fact remains on record that her demand was complied with, and that she was allowed to get out of the cab and enter the establishment with the two entrances, with the case containing the valuables in her hand.

The sequel need not be recorded. Of course, the artless one did not re-appear. Of course, she made her escape—jewel-case in hand—by the side entrance; and, of course, the young man, after waiting for a certain length of time in sanguine expectation of the lady's return, became alarmed, and found out his mistake, and returned to his proprietor with the mournful intelligence that he had been most elaborately "done." "This is not the first occasion," the report of the case concludes, "on which Mr. —— has been similarly robbed."

Nor have other tradesmen in a large way of business, as a rule, fared better. There is hardly any large and prosperous establishment in this metropolis which has not more than one such instance of successful cajolery recorded on its annals. The way in which the cajolery is effected varies, no doubt. Sometimes the devoted goods are sent to a house where the gentleman who occupies the drawing-rooms, after demanding permission from the messenger, "to show them to the sick lady in the next room," passes gracefully through the folding-doors into the back room, which has a door giving on the staircase, and is seen no more. Sometimes the goods are actually paid for, but with a cheque which, when the time comes for turning it into hard cash, proves to be wanting in some element essential to the right constitution of such a document. Sometimes the swindle is effected in one way, sometimes in another. In three respects only are its characteristics always identical. First. There is always some unusual request made. Second. The maker of such request is always especially conciliatory in his manner. Third. There is always some story narrated of that intricate and elaborate kind, to which we give the familiar title of "rigmarole."

Of course, the fear of offending important customers by injurious suspicions, must make the responsibility of deciding whom to trust a sufficiently onerous one; still, one cannot help thinking that the proprietors of these great business establishments might easily exercise a greater amount of caution than they do, and profit to a much greater extent by an attentive perusal of the metropolitan police reports. One other illustration of the uselessness of warning in particular cases is required to make our list complete. The accidents which are so continually reported in the newspapers, as resulting from an insane propensity which some people show to point guns at their fellow-creatures, furnish such an illustration only too readily. The stories of disasters resulting from this most inexcusable and idiotic notion of a

joke are appallingly numerous, and so uniform in their character, that it almost seems as if a certain number of them might be kept ready-written at the offices of our different newspapers, waiting for the inevitable moment when they are sure to be wanted.

About these stories, as about those others with which we have just been occupied, there is—as has been said—a dire uniformity. Some young fellow, gifted, probably, with what the phrenologists call a small cranial capacity, walks into a room—oftenest a kitchen—in which the young woman with whom he keeps company is sitting at work, and seeing a gun propped against a wall in the corner, takes it up, points it at his mistress in fun, and, in fun still, and, of course, "knowing that it isn't loaded," pulls the trigger. Then, when the poor girl, "to whom he was to have been married next week," falls over on the floor, mortally wounded, he finds out that the gun was loaded, and, in the fulness of his dismay and misery, is ready to charge it once more and send the contents into his own foolish brains then and there.

This miserable tale, like the rest, has its slight variations. Sometimes it is at a friend of his own sex, and not at his sweetheart, that this foolish creature points the gun; sometimes he does not point it at all, but, playing with it, and pulling it about in an imbecile manner, "knowing," of course, "that it is not loaded," it goes off, and some one, who happens to be within range, is killed, or else maimed for life.

How many such dismal narratives as these has not every one who takes in a newspaper read and marvelled over, and with how much of mingled indignation and wonder? Indeed, these two feelings are called forth by each and every one of the instances of insensibility to warning which we have been considering. We wonder, and are angry, when we read about any of them, and say to ourselves, or to those about us, "Good Heavens! How is it that people are such fools?"

Such outbreaks of wrath are, however, of little worth, and it would be to much more purpose if we could manage to extract, from the mass of such records as those which have been quoted above, some one or two conclusions which might turn out to be useful, instead of useless, warnings, and be of service to that large section of society which comprises the easily-duped, the rash, and the fool-hardy. To all such, and to all others whom it may concern, the following safe rules are strongly recommended:

Always be shy of talkative strangers, and quite determined to decline any proposals of a social nature which they may make.

Always mistrust long narratives and intricate explanations, when they tend to bring about the transfer of property of any kind from yourself to the narrator.

Always regard every gun with which you come in contact, as loaded, and highly dangerous.

A PERTURBED SPIRIT.

THERE have been many goblins much more awful than the one which incessantly tormented a series of worthy pastors in the village of Gröben, but there never were any so intensely and so persistently disagreeable. The goblin in question did not aspire to the performance of any grand and terrible feat. Of such aspiration his paltry soul—if he had a soul—was incapable. He was a lubber fiend, in the strictest sense of the word; as stupid as he was malignant—a Puck of the worst sort; a Robin Goodfellow who had degenerated into a Robin Bad-fellow. It was his ambition to be handed down to posterity as the greatest supernatural nuisance that ever afflicted the sub-lunar world, and his ignoble hopes were realised. Of the situation of Gröben some of our readers may possibly be ignorant. We therefore state that it is not very distant from Jena, and that the duty of its pastor is to administer spiritual instruction to a congregation of simple peasants, resident at the western extremity of the Thuringian Forest.

Dull boys are sometimes distinguished by a power of application which greatly counterbalances their dulness, and enables them, in the long run, to surpass their more precocious comrades. In like manner, the goblin of Gröben, not naturally or supernaturally bright, was wonderful for his perseverance, and it was by slow, not to say painful steps, that he ascended the summit of that bad eminence, which he afterwards occupied to his own eternal infamy. He believed, like Mr. Wordsworth, that a star looks brightest when there is only one in the sky; so, although he was doubtless as old as the Germans of the time of Tacitus, he did not care to risk his notoriety by rushing upon mankind too soon. Had he manifested himself in the age of Faust and Mephistopheles, or in those immediately preceding, he would have been lost in a crowd of fiends and spirits, all

much brighter than himself; so, in spite of a burning desire for mischief, he repressed his longings, and bided his time. He seems first to have revealed his existence shortly before the close of the Thirty Years' War —that is to say, about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the old superstitious beliefs of mediæval Europe were on the decline; but even then he cautiously felt his way, and refrained from displaying his full power. It was not till the eighteenth century, the age of Voltaire, that he put forth his strength in bad earnest. He then so distinguished himself from ordinary village goblins, that he became the subject of a learned book.

We will begin with him at the beginning, that is to say, in the year 1646, when the then pastor of Gröben, Johannes Rodigast, was greatly annoyed by the visits of a mysterious grey monk, who somehow or other contrived to enter his study without noise, and seated himself cosily before the fire. The monk neither talked himself nor listened to the talk of his unwilling host, who found that his hints on the propriety of a speedy retirement were utterly disregarded. Weary of the intrusion, Johannes Rodigast at last boldly asked the monk who he was, whence he had come, and what he wanted, adding some words of solemn exhortation. These words were so far efficient that the monk vanished, but unfortunately his figure was not to be erased from the memory of the pastor, who took to moping, and after moping for upwards of thirty years, put a violent end to his own existence.

Weighing the case with impartiality, we find that we can scarcely hold the monk responsible for this terrible calamity. He went away, when exhorted with a due measure of force, and if the pastor fretted himself for more than thirty years afterwards, it is hard to see a close connexion between the alleged cause and the alleged effect.

The goblin, who of course is identical with the monk, kept himself quiet during the long remainder of poor Rodigast's life, but he was only preparing for more showy exploits. Probably he was amazed at the success of his first paltry feat. To dress himself like a grey monk, and to sit down sulkily by a fire, was no great achievement after all.

The immediate successor of Rodigast in his sacred office was Adam Dimler, one of those prudent men who meet a difficulty with a compromise. He in his time was honoured by the grey monk with a visit, but, instead of having recourse to exhortations, he simply moved his books and his desk into another room, and allowed his visitor to retain the chosen apartment. He was thus in no worse predicament than many a scion of an ancient race, whose ancestral residence is said to be haunted. The door of the suspected room remains shut, and the inhabitants of the mansion are probably comfortable, till some unlucky visitor arrives, and cannot be accommodated save in the Blue Chamber, where he meets some horror, which he describes to his host at breakfast, and is at once delicately warned that he had better keep his information to himself.

Heinrich Stemler, the immediate successor to Simler, was subjected to sundry annoyances, but their precise nature does not seem to have been recorded. For the next pastor, Jeremias Heinisch, the goblin had reserved his main force. The miserable stratagem of donning a monk's habit was not to be tried again. It had partially failed already, when practised upon Adam Simler, and Jeremias Heinisch was a man who, though an orthodox Lutheran minister, boasted of his utter disbelief in spiritual manifestations. Jeremias Heinisch would have set down the grey monk as an optical illusion, and have gone on preparing his sermon for Sunday as composedly as if he had been alone in his study. If Jeremias Heinisch was to be hit, more practical means were required.

The new pastor had built himself a new cattle-shed in his court-yard, and on the roof of this edifice stones were thrown, by an unseen hand, for five successive days in the June of 1718. The stones were not large, but they came down with a prodigious rattle, and it was a singular circumstance that they were always thrown in the daytime, never at night. The thrower loved notoriety, for whenever a crowd of persons surrounded the house to witness the performance the shower was continued with redoubled vigour.

All this annoyance was set down to the account of some naughty boy by the strong-minded pastor, who laughed at the superstitious fears of his flock, and thus the only man in the district who did not believe in the ghost was precisely the man whose house was haunted. He had two enemies to contend against—the human thrower of stones, whoever he might be, and the crass ignorance of the peasantry, who had not forgotten the sad fate of Johannes Rodigast.

To secure the former he set a strict watch about his premises, himself being the principal watchman; to convince the latter, he caused some of his own people to throw stones on the cow-shed from a place of concealment, intending, at the end of the performance, to come forward and explain to the appalled spectators the natural means by which the apparently supernatural phenomenon had been produced. Both plans failed. On the one hand nobody was caught, on the other hand the stones thrown by the pastor's order were seen during their passage through the air, whereas the other stones did not become visible till they had actually touched the roof. The pastor, however, held his ground, and, still convinced that some mischief-makers of the village were at the bottom of the nuisance, spread a report that he was about to commence a strict judicial inquiry, and that the offenders, if discovered, would be subjected to severe punishment.

This last stroke of policy seemed to be successful. The stone-throwing left off, and for five weeks not a rattle was heard on the roof of the shed. The pastor was naturally in high glee. The mischief-makers had been rendered harmless, and the voice of superstition had been hushed. One afternoon, towards the end of July, he walked complacently through his fields, chatted with his reapers about his own superior enlightenment, and hinted that they should feel proud of a pastor who had kept so completely aloof from vulgar error. Ah, for some time to come that was the last bright day for poor Jeremias Heinisch. As he approached his homestead his servants came rushing towards him with the sad intelligence that at three o'clock—the very hour of his discourse with the reapers—the rattle on the roof of the shed had recommenced.

Had the goblin been annoyed by the vaunts of Jeremias Heinisch, and would the goblin have remained quiet if Jeremias Heinisch had held his tongue? We cannot say. Certain it is, that he seemed resolved to make up for lost time. Nevertheless, the gallant pastor still held his own. On Sunday, the 31st of the month, he preached in the afternoon a sermon on a topic of great local interest. Some of his parishioners had expressed the opinion that, as a punishment for self-destruction, poor Johannes Rodigast was not allowed to repose in his grave, and that the irrepressible stone-thrower was no other than the restless spirit of that unfortunate man. This was just the sort of doctrine that Jeremias Heinisch loved to attack; and, in his eloquent discourse, he convinced himself, if not his congregation, that his ill-starred predecessor had no hand in the revived nuisance. Having returned home from church, satisfied that he had well done his duty, he looked out of the window of his upper room upon the spacious court-yard below, complacently reflecting on the theme of his sermon, and the masterly manner in which it had been handled, when the course of his meditation was interrupted by a most astounding phenomenon. A stone lifted itself out of the pavement of the court-yard, and visibly flung itself upon the roof of the shed. The pastor tried to persuade himself that the stone was in reality a bird, and went to bed affectionately nursing that opinion, but, on the following morning, when the throwing commenced early, his stubborn incredulity began to give way. Many stones now rose from the pavement, others flew out of the walls of the house, describing curves beyond the power of any projectile thrown by human means, and, what was more curious, they did not leave so much as a chink behind them. Convinced at last that he had to deal with a spiritual foe, Jeremias boldly addressed his persecutor in a tone of solemn exhortation, which, we grieve to say, caused the stones to rattle down with greater violence than ever. One missile, larger than the rest, directed itself towards the pastor's face, but dropped midway. The person of Jeremias was evidently sacred.

Hitherto all the stones had been thrown on the roof of the cow-shed, but early in August this limit was passed, and the parsonage itself was invaded; the moment when the pastor had just taken his seat at the dinner-table being selected for especial demonstrations of violence. As before, however, the throwing always ceased at nightfall, to be renewed at break of day.

Unable to endure the annoyance any longer, Jeremias, on the 4th of August, set out for Jena to lay his case before the celebrated professor of theology, Dr. Buddeus, commending the parsonage to the care of his wife and household. During his absence the bombardment was carried on with even increased vigour, and as he approached his home, after his consultation with the learned doctor, he had the pleasure of witnessing the demolition of the window-panes in his lower room. The work of destruction was as methodical as

it was incessant. If any one went close to the window the pane was indeed smashed, but the stone fell outside the house; whereas if the observer receded from the window, the stone flew far into the room. It should be added, that one party of spirits seemed to be besieging another, which offered a stout resistance, since not only did stones fly from the yard into the room, but others flew from the room into the yard, a heap raised in each place recording the multiplicity of the shots.

Before dawn, on the 5th of August, the pastor's wife gave birth to a son, who was christened by his father on the afternoon of the same day. The good man stood on the very spot in his room where a missile of extraordinary size had fallen; and the holy rite of baptism apparently so awed the enemy, that for three days the house was tranquil. Jeremias began to hope that the nuisance was at an end for ever, but soon found that the peace he had supposed lasting was merely a brief armistice. On the 9th the invincible stone-throwers returned to their work like giants refreshed, and continuing the old system till the 23rd, began in the evening of that day to overstep the limit they had previously respected, and pelted throughout the night, while the rattle of stones and pieces of lead was disagreeably accompanied by scratchings at all the doors and cupboards. On the following day an alarming activity was manifest in the crockery, plates and pots smashing themselves to pieces in the most reckless manner. A cheese, too, was tossed from the pantry into one of the rooms, though the door between them was locked; and this cheese, when examined, looked as if it had been clawed by a dog.

The stout heart of Jeremias now sank within him. His servants vowed they could remain with him no longer; his wife was sinking under the weight of the annoyance; and the counsels tendered by the learned and pious men, whom he consulted, were most conflicting; some advising him to resist the Evil One to the last, others exhorting him to leave a house so filled with abomination. No wonder that occasionally, in fancy, he saw the haggard figure of Johannes Rodigast, and feared that he might end his life like that wretched man.

On the 25th, following the advice of an eminent physician, he removed his wife and child, with a few of the more valuable articles of furniture, to another dwelling, he himself remaining at the parsonage, under the protection of a body-guard, composed of villagers. On the 7th of September—the annoyances having continued till that date—burning coals flew out of the stove, through the windows, and were scattered about the yard. Then the persecutors seemed to be weary of persecution. Only one stone was thrown on the 8th, and that was—the last. Trusting that peace was now attained, the pastor brought back his wife to the parsonage, which remained undisturbed till the year 1835, when it was pulled down, and a new one was built in its stead.

In 1719 an anonymous work appeared, in which the facts we have recorded were grossly exaggerated, and used to prove that the laws against witchcraft should not have been abolished. In another book, written by one Gottfried Wahrlieb, the wonders were treated in an opposite spirit, the whole affair being regarded as a gross imposition. Displeased with both these publications, Jeremias Heinisch thought that the time had arrived when he might properly address the world on a subject with which he was more familiar than any one else, and he accordingly, in 1723, produced a neat little volume on the Kobold of Gröben, which is now extremely scarce, but a copy of which is to be found in the library of the University of Jena. To a description of the contents of this book, written by the German antiquary, Herr Kurt Gress, we are indebted for our knowledge of the marvels above narrated.

And how are those marvels explained? They are not explained at all.

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