"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. 125. NEW SERIES. | SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 1871. | PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXXIV. MR. TINTERN HAS SOMETHING TO SAY.

MR. TINTERN arrived next day, and was fortunate enough to find Lady Vernon alone in the drawing-room.

He had some county business to tell her of, and some gossip to report; but there was still something palpably on his mind which he did not very well know how to express.

He stood up, and she thought he was going to take his leave; it was time he should; but he went to the window instead, and talked of the two gigantic chestnut-trees that overshadow the balustrade of the court, in a sentimental and affectionate vein, as remembering them from the earliest time he could remember anything; and he spoke of her father with great regard, affection, and veneration. And then he spoke of the friendship that had always existed between the Grange and Roydon Hall, and then he mentioned that most interesting family memorial, the "shield-room," with the quarterings of the Rose and the Key; of his right to quarter which, proving the early connexion of his family with the Vernons, he was prouder than of any other incident in their history. And having ended all this, he seemed to have still something more to say.

The lady's large grey eyes lighted on him with a cold inquiry. She was growing impatient. If he had anything to say, why did he not say it? Her look disconcerted him, and his light eyes went down before her dark gaze, as with an effort he said:

"I'm going to take my leave, Lady Vernon, and I don't know whether you will, by-and-bye, be vexed with me for having gone without mentioning a circumstance, which, however, I believe to be of absolutely no importance. But, you see, you have so often told me that you like, on all occasions, to be put in possession of facts, and that you insist so much on candour and frankness as the primary conditions of all friendship, and you have honoured me, more than once, with so large a measure of confidence, which has extremely flattered me, that even at a risk of appearing very impertinent, I had almost made up my mind to tell you what I have ascertained to be a general—very general—topic of—of interest among neighbours and people down here; but, on the whole, I should rather not, unless, indeed, you would command me, which I rather hope you will not."

"I shan't command you, certainly. I have no right even to press you; but if it concerns me, I should be very much obliged if you would let me know what it is."

"I'm sure you will forgive me, but feeling how much, in a matter of so much more delicacy, you have already honoured me with your confidence, I felt myself, you will understand, in a little difficulty."

"You need have none, Mr. Tintern, in speaking perfectly frankly to me. Pray say what it is."

"As you say so, I shall, of course."

And then, with all the tact and delicacy, and polite and oblique refinement, on which he piqued himself, Mr. Tintern did at length distinctly inform Lady Vernon that it was said that she meant to honour Captain Vivian with her hand.

"If people had some useful occupation of their own they would have less time to spare in settling other people's affairs. I shan't take the slightest notice of any such rumours. They don't amount even to that.

They are not rumours, but the mere speculations of two or three idle brains. I am forty-two"—she was really forty-three, but even for the force of her argument she would not forego that little inaccuracy—"and I have not married since my husband's death, twenty years ago nearly. It is a little odd, that one can't have a guest in one's house, without being made a topic for the coarse gossip of low people. I only wish I knew to whom I am obliged for taking this very gross liberty with my name. They should never enter the doors of Roydon again."

Mr. Tintern was a little frightened at the effect of his own temerity, for he had never seen Lady Vernon so angry before, and a quarrel with her was the last thing he would have provoked.

"I shall certainly contradict it," he hastened to say. "I shall take every occasion to do so."

"You may, or you may not. I shan't prevent you, and I shan't authorise you. I don't want it circulated or contradicted. I am totally indifferent about it."

"Of course—entirely; you must be—entirely indifferent. But you understand, although I didn't believe it, yet, as I was supposed to be a not unlikely person to hear anything so interesting, I thought you might not choose, as my sitting by and not being in a position to contradict it appeared to some people very like countenancing the—the gossip——"

"Pray understand me, Mr. Tintern. I don't the least care whether it is countenanced or contradicted. It does not interest me. I shan't, either directly or indirectly, take the smallest notice of it. I look on it simply as an impertinence."

"I hope, Lady Vernon, you don't suppose for a moment that I viewed it otherwise than as an impertinence. That was my real difficulty, and I felt it so much that I really doubted whether I should mention it. But, on the other hand, I think you will say that I should have been wanting in loyalty to the house of Vernon, if I had not given you the option of hearing, or of not hearing, as you might determine."

"I think, Mr. Tintern, you did no more than was friendly in the matter," said Lady Vernon, extending her hand, "and I am extremely obliged to you. As to the thing itself, we shan't talk of it any more."

Lady Vernon took an unusually cordial leave of that near neighbour and distant kinsman, who departed in good spirits, and well pleased with himself.

As he rode homeward, however, and conned over the conversation, he began to perceive with more distinctness that upon the main question Lady Vernon had left him quite as much in the dark as ever.

"But she could not express all that contempt and indignation if there was anything in the report, and she certainly would not have been so much obliged to me for repeating it to her."

But this reasoning did not so entirely reassure him as he fancied it ought.

Six words would have denied it, and set the matter at rest, and that short sentence had not been spoken.

He began to grow very uncomfortable.

If he had known what was occurring at that moment in the library at Roydon Hall, it would not have allayed his uneasiness.

In that room there is a very pretty buhl cabinet, with ormolu Cupids gambolling and flitting over its rich cornice. You would not suppose that this elegant shell contained within it a grimy iron safe. But on unlocking and throwing open the florid and many-coloured doors, the homely front of the black safe appears, proof against fire and burglars.

Lady Vernon unlocks a small bronze casket over the chimney-piece, and from it takes the big many-warded key of the safe. She applies it, and the doors swing open.

A treasury of parchment deeds discloses itself. She knows exactly where to place her hand on the one she wants. The organ of neatness and order is strong in her. She selects it from a sheaf of exactly similar ones. No ancient deeds, yellow and rusty with years. This is a milk-white parchment. Its blue stamp and silver foil look quite pretty in the corner. A short square deed, with scrivenry that looks black and fresh as if the ink were hardly dry upon it, and there are blanks left for names and dates. It is a deed as yet unexecuted. She takes it out, and lays it with its face downward on her desk, locks the safe and the cabinet, and restores the key to its casket over the mantelpiece.

The angry colour is still in Lady Vernon's cheeks as she slowly reads this deed, filling in, with careful penmanship, all the dates, and writing, in no less than four blank places at full length, the words, "Alexander Wyke Tintern, of the Grange, in the county of ——, Esquire."

Was Lady Vernon rewarding friendly Mr. Tintern, then and there, by a deed of appointment—for these have been prepared,

at her desire, by Mr. Coke—securing his succession, in certain contingencies, to a share in a princely reversion?

No. Alas! for the aspirations of the Grange, these little deeds, quite sufficient and irrevocable, are for the eternal cutting-off of the condemned.

All being ready now, Lady Vernon touches the bell, sends for her secretary, and having doubled back the deed so that the signing place only is disclosed, seals, signs, and delivers it in presence of her secretary, who little dreams that these few magical symbols are taking off the head of a neighbour, and laying his airy castle in the dust.

And now he has duly "witnessed" it, and Lady Vernon despatches it that evening, registered, with a letter enjoining the strictest secrecy, to Mr. Coke in London.

So good Mr. Tintern, if he knew but all, need trouble himself no further whether Lady Vernon or Maud marry, or pine and die singly; for go where it may, not one shilling of the great reversion can, by any chance or change, ever become his.

CHAPTER XXXV. CINDERELLA.

Captain Vivian was now very much better; he has lost the languor of an invalid, and is rapidly recovering the strength and tints of health, and with them the air and looks of youth return.

The uneasiness of Mr. Tintern grew apace, for he heard authentic reports of the long walks which the handsome young captain used daily to take about the romantic grounds of Roydon with the beautiful lady of that ancient manor.

"The idea," he said to Mrs. Tintern, "of that old woman—she's forty-six, if she's an hour—marrying that military adventurer, not five-and-twenty, by Jove! Such infatuation!"

Old Tintern saw the captain one day fishing his trout-stream diligently, and pretending not to know him at that distance, he shouted, in arrogant tones, to the keeper: "Holloa! I say, Drattles, go down there, will you, quick, and see who the devil that is fishing my brook!"

The gamekeeper touched his hat, and ran down, and Mr. Tintern, from his point of observation, strode at a more leisurely pace, in a converging line, towards the offender.

He found Captain Vivian in parley with the keeper.

"Oh, Captain Vivian!" he exclaimed very naturally, "I had not an idea. I'm so glad to see you able to take a rod in your hand."

"Lady Vernon told me you were so good——"

"My dear sir, don't say a word. I begged of Lady Vernon to send you here, if you cared for trout fishing, and indeed all Roydon guests are welcome. I hope you have had some sport. You must come up and take luncheon with us. I ought not, indeed, to say I'm glad to see you so well, for I am afraid it is a sign we are to lose you very soon. You'll be joining your regiment, I suppose. Those big-wigs are so churlish about holidays. They forget they ever were young fellows themselves. Do come and have some luncheon."

This invitation, however, Captain Vivian very politely declined.

"You are going to the ball to-night—Wymering—eh?" inquired Mr. Tintern.

"Yes, I intend going; and your party are going, I suppose?" said the young man.

"Oh, yes, we always show there; and Lady Vernon, is she going?" pursued Mr. Tintern.

"No, Lady Vernon don't feel quite up to it."

"Sending him," thought Mr. Tintern, "to put people off their guard. Perhaps she doesn't wish them to criticise her looks and demeanour in presence of the aspiring captain."

"Dear me, I'm so sorry: she complains sometimes of a headache," said Mr. Tintern, affectionately. "By-the-bye, there's about a mile of very good pike fishing at the other side. The men are busy cleaning the ponds just now; but if you are here in three weeks' time——"

"No, I'm afraid I shan't, thank you very much."

"Well, we must make an effort, and say a fortnight; will that do?"

"A thousand thanks, but I'm afraid I have little more than a week."

"Oh! nonsense. I won't believe it," exclaimed Mr. Tintern very cheerfully.

"I'm awfully sorry," said Captain Vivian; "it is such a beautiful country, and so charming in every way. I could live here all my life with pleasure."

"I'm so glad to hear it has made so agreeable an impression. We may look to see you here again, I dare say, before long."

"You are very kind. I don't know anything yet with certainty about my movements; they depend upon so many things.

I've a note, by-the-bye, which I promised to leave at the Grange."

"As you won't come to the house, I'll take charge of it," said Mr. Tintern. "I see it is for my wife. I dare say about the ball. She's out; she'll not be home for some hours. I think I may venture to open it." He did, and glanced through it.

"Oh, yes, pray tell Miss Vernon, my wife will be only too delighted to meet her and Miss Medwyn in the cloak-room. We shall be there at exactly half-past ten. I hope that will answer Miss Vernon. My wife would write, but she has gone to Dallerton; but you will be so kind as to say Miss Vernon may look on it as quite settled."

So they parted very pleasantly; for Mr. Tintern, who was a shrewd man, had heard two or three things that cheered his heart in this little talk with Captain Vivian. He felt, indeed, in better spirits about Roydon and the probable continuance of Lady Vernon's widowhood than he had enjoyed for nearly a fortnight.

He had had losses lately. It would be too bad if everything were to go wrong.

If we could sum up the amount of the sins and sorrows of the human race, purely mental and unexpressed, for the most part, that result from contingent remainders, destructible reversions, and possible godsends and windfalls, the total would be possibly rather shocking.

The little old-fashioned town of Wymering is in a wonderful fuss this night. It is its great anniversary—its night of dissipation and glory. It is not only for the town a crisis and an event, but the country all round, with Wymering for a centre, feels the radiation and pulse of the excitement. For ten miles round almost every good county house sends in its carriage and horses and liveries, and for fifteen—ay, even twenty miles round—roll in occasional carriages with post-horses; and traps besides, of all sorts, come rattling into the High-street with young fellows in hilarious spirits, thinking of nothing but dances and flirtation; and sometimes of some one's pretty face, without which the ball would be dark, and the music lifeless.

The clock of the town-hall has struck nine, and the Roydon carriage and liveries stop at the door of the Old Hall Inn. Miss Max and Miss Vernon get down, and their two maids also.

Captain Vivian, with Captain Bamme, who has begged a seat to Wymering, are coming on later.

The ladies have run up-stairs to their rooms; the maids and boxes follow.

Miss Max cowers over the little bit of fire, that smoulders in the grate of the large room. Miss Vernon is looking from the window to the lights of the town-hall over the way, and up and down the High-street, in a glow of excitement, which, to a town young lady, after a season or two, would have been incomprehensible and amusing.

"Max, will you touch that bell? We must see Mr. Lomax."

The host of the Old Hall appears forthwith, in answer to the summons of his Roydon guests.

"Mr. Lomax," says Maud, as soon as he appears at the stair head, "you must give me an order for Miss Medwyn and her maid to go to the gallery of the town-hall. She wishes to see how the room looks."

Mr. Lomax makes his bow, and in the lobby writes the order, and gives it to Miss Vernon's maid.

A few minutes later Jones was spreading, with light and careful fingers upon the wide coverlet of the bed, the dress which had arrived only that morning from London.

In very marked contrast with this, and the splendours which Jones was preparing, including the diamond stars which were to flash from her dark brown hair, and were now strewn on the dressing-table, was the present costume of pretty Miss Vernon.

Before the glass she stood in the identical dark serge dress and little black hat, and the very boots and gloves, which she wore at Cardyllion. The beautiful face that looks out of the glass, smiled darkly in hers.

"Come, dear Max, here is the order. It is only a step across the street."

Jones and Maximilla's maid were fussing over gloves and satin boots, and fifty things, in the dressing-room.

"Didn't you say a quarter past nine in the gallery of the town-hall?" said Maud, looking still at her own pretty face in the glass.

"Yes, dear, and mind, Maud, this is the very last piece of masquerading I'll ever be led into; I don't care how you coax and flatter me. What an old fool I have been!"

With this protest, Miss Max shook her head with a smile, and lifting her hands she said:

"With this act I take leave of my follies for ever, remember. I really don't know

how it is you make such a fool of me, whenever you please; I don't understand how it is you have got such an unaccountable influence over me; I only know that there doesn't exist a person on earth for whom I would have perpetrated so many absurdities, and told so many fibs, and I say, once for all, that this is the very last time I'll ever be a Jack-pudding for any one, while I live."

Miss Maud was before the cheval-glass, so Maximilla had to betake herself to a mirror of more moderate dimensions, before which she made a few slight adjustments of her staid brown silk, and her bonnet, and her velvet cloak, and then turning to Maud, she exclaimed:

"Oh, my dear, are you really coming in that serge? You are such a figure."

"Now come, you say this is to be the last appearance of Cinderella in her work-a-day costume, and you must not interfere. You shall change all with a touch of your wand when the hour comes. But, in the mean time, I'm to be as shabby and threadbare as I please. Come, it's ten minutes past nine; I should like to be in the gallery before he comes. You told him not to be there a moment before the hour?"

"To be sure I did, poor fellow; and I don't know which, he or I, is the greater fool."

With these words Maximilla Medwyn led the way down the broad staircase, and the two ladies, side by side, tripped swiftly across the village street. Miss Max handed her order from Mr. Lomax to the woman who already kept guard at the door, through which they reached the flight of narrow stairs which communicated with the gallery.

They mounted quickly, and entered the gallery. At the opposite end of this really handsome room is a corresponding gallery allotted to the musicians, half a dozen of whom were already on the benches, in high chat, pulling about their music, and uncasing their instruments. A quart pot, from the Old Hall, and a frothy tumbler, stood in the ledge, showing that they were already disposed to make merry. The gas candelabra were but imperfectly lighted; workmen were walking up and down the long room, with light tread, in tenderness to the waxed floor, completing arrangements, while their employers bawled their orders from one end of the room to the other; one steward was already present, garrulous and fussy, whom Maud, with some alarm, recognised as young Mr. Hexton, of Hexton Hall. Devoutly she hoped he might not take it into his head to visit the galleries.

They were quite to themselves, she and Maximilla, except for a little knot of Wymering womankind, who were leaning over, at the other end of the gallery, far too much engrossed by their own conversation to take any notice of them.

As the moment approached, the question, "Will he come? will he come?" was repeating itself strangely at Maud's heart. The noise in the lower part of the building had subsided, having moved away to the refreshment and cloak-rooms, from which its hum was but faintly heard, and the confidential murmur of the party at the other end of the gallery, who were discussing dresses, which they have, no doubt, been making for this great occasion, was rather reassuring.

"I think I'm fast," said Miss Max, holding her watch to her ear. "I wish we had not told him not to come before the time; we should have found him waiting."

At that moment the bells from the old church steeple, scarcely a hundred yards away, chimed the quarter, and, like a spirit evoked by the summons, Mr. Marston opened the door of the gallery and came in.

Smiling, to cover his real agitation, he came quickly to Miss Max, who rose with a very kind alacrity to greet him.

"Was ever mortal more punctual? It is quite a virtue, now-a-days, being in time to meet a friend," she said, approvingly, as she gave him her hand.

"It is only too easy not to be late," he said, extending his hand in turn to the young lady in the dark serge, with glowing eyes, and a smile. "The difficulty is not to be too soon."

He came next Miss Maud, and seating himself beside her, took her hand again very gently, and said, very low, looking in her eyes, "It is so like a dream!"

A DESIRABLE TENANT.

A GENTEEL house in a neighbourhood as genteel, though not pretentious, furnished in a style suited to a gentleman's family—that was the modest end of my ambition. Every one said, "Nothing easier." I could suit myself to a hair—to a T—to a nicety. Go to Smallsheet and Adams, the most civil, obliging people in the world. Go to Philpot and Sneyd, "my own men, just mention my name, and they'll do anything

for you." I knew pretty well the translation of this selfish "just mention my name," which often accompanies the apparently disinterested recommendation of a tradesman's merits. But, still, I tried all these officials, beginning with Smallsheet and Adams, passing on to Philpot and Sneyd, and working steadily through Bolger and Co., and all the rest of them.

Has it ever been remarked what a peculiar decorum attends these officials; how beautifully clean and shining are their properties, furniture, &c.; how almost elegant their raiment, and cheerful their bearing? They are nearly always young men. They receive us with a friendly alacrity. I suspect they cultivate address and manner more than any other profession. One was quite "guardsmanlike" in his dress and bearing, and welcomed his friends in a sort of boudoir, after they had waited their turn. He seemed a sort of Vathek, and would propose dazzling properties, costly messuages situated in Grosvenor-gardens, and such places, though again and again reminded that the means of the desirable tenant could not compass such residences. In desperation he descended to a sort of hovel near St. John's Wood, only thirty pounds a year—might be made a nice thing of, with a little outlay. He seemed to know no medium between such extremes. He was scented, had a dark eye and glossy moustache, and an air as though he had countesses for clients. His system, however, did not seem to succeed, for when the desirable tenant came by in a month, the elegant agent had closed his office.

The D. T. was next assured that all he had to do was to put himself into the hands of Blather, and the thing was done. Was it possible that I (the D. T.) had not done so already? Blather was like an eminent counsel in enormous practice. The countesses' carriages waited at his door. As you stayed an hour or so in the outer office, waiting your turn—"far better," he said, "make an appointment"—you saw him come out and see to the door gentlemen, whom he addressed as "My lord!" From that luxurious apartment—the inner adytum or shrine—you heard his voice in rounded periods, were occasionally made aware of his political sentiments. You caught the words, "Gladstone," "Mundella," "Forster's bill," "Whig dodge," and the like, which seemed to convey either that those eminent persons were seeking desirable tenants, or had imported the tricks of political life into their dealings with him. However, when the desirable tenant's turn came, he was undeceived on this point, the conversation being really agreeable, and referring to all the promiscuous topics of the day, to the marked exclusion of business. I enjoyed the privilege of being favoured with a private view of the autograph signatures, monograms, coronets, &c., of various titled persons of the realm, communications which had arrived that morning. It is rarely that one finds a gentleman of such fluent powers. We ranged, as I have said, over innumerable topics, carefully avoiding the degrading subject for which I had come, and for which Mr. Blather had his raison d'être. The only way in which the subject was at all suffered to be introduced was subject to the distinguished patrons before alluded to, in whose movements in the house-taking direction this gentleman seemed to have an extraordinary interest. On this footing the desirable tenant could not of course intrude his own vulgar concerns, and more than satisfied with a vague declaration of Mr. Blather's that he would keep the matter before his mind, the D. T. departed.

Many curious studies of human character might be made in this department; some of these agents were careless, some cold, some warm, some eager. However, all filled up numbers of elaborate documents, which had quite the air of cheques. Well furnished with a whole sheaf of these documents, the desirable tenant set out as if into the bush country to seek houses.

Perhaps there is no task so dispiriting, as this of house-hunting. In hunting for other things there is a stimulating eagerness and excitement; but here there is nothing but a sense of utter blankness and hopelessness. Walking through the task is bad enough; but to proceed, attended by a crowded family, in a vehicle, jogging solemnly from street to street, according to the "list," the inspecting deputation mistaking sometimes, and always coming out to the detachment left in the carriage with faces on which is written plainly, "Won't do: of course not"—is really a useful discipline for the soul. When the desirable tenant and party are in the hall, crowding it while the order to view is taken in by a maid, and whispers are heard from within, a fresh and dismal blankness settles on the heart. We know that the crafty old schemers are hurriedly laying out details of deception; they have been taken by surprise, and it is a little embarrassing. We are harpies—the would-be tenants. As the proprietress comes out, we exchange

with her glances of distrust, and even of defiance. We are taken up-stairs, and go through the inspection sadly, and without hope. Somehow it appears that we know, that every house thus inspected will not do. If it be specially inviting and attractive, the furniture clean and bright, and we feel our heart yearning to it, it is certain that the rent demanded will make us stagger. On the other hand, with a noisome cave opening before us, dark cellars on the drawing-room floor, gloomy casemates for sleeping in, with curious dinnery vapours pervading all the mansion, we are seduced into hiring by some trifling rent. The freebooters who are in charge of these dens are, in themselves, alarming; they have a truculent manner, as who should say that the desirable tenant had committed himself so far, and, by giving so much trouble, was half pledged, as it were, to the transaction. I have no doubt tenements of this description are often thus let by intimidation.

Some of the scenes witnessed during this investigation were dramatic in their way. There was the eminently desirable investment near Wilton-crescent — everything in the house-taking or house-letting direction is "desirable"—which was "dirt cheap" at one thousand pounds premium, and one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. The locality was aristocratic, and letters could be directed "handsomely" to "P. D. Tenant, Esq., So-and-So, Wilton-crescent." Still, for such an outlay, there was an air of "squeeze." The hall was as a little tunnel. But, subject to these narrow conditions, there was an elegant air about the tenement, even in spite of the stair, which was like a ladder leading to a loft. A distinguished-looking menial, powdered, led the way. He assumed that the desirable tenant was a visitor, at least he would not see him in the other light. He threw open the drawing-room door, announced him by his name, and threw the rest of the degrading office on those whom it most concerned. He made some remark about "a pusson," and retired. This was what I saw as I entered. A richly dressed lady, good-looking, and with two or three children about her, was at the fire, busy, I think, with some department of their toilet. A maid aide-de-camp was in attendance. The room seemed handsome, with a great deal of velvet and gilt "nobbing." I never shall forget the haughty and angry stare she gave me.

"What do you want?" she said. "What is this?"

The D. T. faltered out some gentle explanation, at the same time tendering the order which Mr. Blather, or some one else, had drawn in his favour.

"Oh, this is Mr. Wilkinson's doings," the haughty lady said, turning to her attendant, her eyes flashing and her cheeks flushing. "It is intolerable. The house, sir, is *not* to be let. I shall not give my consent to it. It's quite a mistake—I shall not stir out of it."

Rather bewildered, the desirable tenant, seeing himself quite undesirable, protested he would not wish to be the cause of such discordant views between the two persons most concerned, and withdrew hurriedly, the lady rustling her stiff silk, fuming, and darting fierce looks at an imaginary Mr. Wilkinson. There was a whole story behind that significant little episode.

Some of the most curious features in these visits was the surprise, as the servant rashly showed you into the midst of some highly domestic scene; an entire family at lunch, for instance, a very fat leg of mutton steaming on the board, black bottles, sentry-wise scattered up and down the table. The resentful looks at being thus surprised were indescribable; the family indignation, strange to say, passing entirely over their own menial, whose fault it was, and settling on the D. T. I recal another awkward intrusion, where a pale sickly lady was discovered, with a bearded man on his knees before her, who rose and asked angrily "What I wanted there?" To enter into explanation that "you came to see the house," appeared too absurd—the best thing to do was to withdraw abruptly. A good-natured but untidy maid-of-all-work explained confidentially "that it was Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn, who had at last come together, and Miss Mew had put them in the front parlour for the day." I felt that a mansion hallowed by such a sacred reconciliation was not to be lightly profaned, so I took my way hurriedly from the place.

"What would you say," said an agent, confidentially, "to a house in Grosvenor-square, at one hundred and twenty pounds a year and no premium?" I could only reply that in such a case speech would be silvern, but that securing it on the spot would be golden. But was there no mistake? An order to view was immediately drawn, and I drove up to No. 00 A, a really palatial building at the corner, with innumerable stories, portico, &c. Received with some loftiness by two menials, I said it must be a mistake, when one of them remembered

that there was something of the kind floating in the mind of the family. It was down the street though, round the corner. This dashed all my hopes, the truth being that the tenement to be let was a sort of annexe to the greater one. Still it looked desirable and imposing in its way, and it was legally No. 00 A; letters could be addressed there. But, on entering, the arrangement seemed the oddest in the world. There was no "back," and the whole establishment was lit by what is called "borrowed" light. Through the area rails there appeared to be a noble kitchen, with a vast range, but this proved to belong to the greater mansion, the kitchen proper being a little cupboard, off another little cupboard, known as the hall. Living in Grosvenor-square, or rather having the name of living there, seemed to be too dearly purchased on such conditions.

My last adventure was in this wise. With infinite perseverance, what suited in all points seemed at last to have been found—a real "beejew 'ouse," as one called it, or "b'jew" according to another, cheap, elegant, in the choice grounds of Mayfair. There was a stable and public-house opposite, but in Mayfair such things do not go for much. It was just the thing. But as the D. T., suspicious on all occasions, hurriedly opened the door leading to the lower regions, there issued from that darksome pit a gale of so awful a character—one on which you could have hung not only your hat but your great-coat, filling hall, stairs, the whole house—that the D. T. turned and fled.

THE CHEESE.

Once upon a time there was a cheese made in England, if not "larger than the largest size," at least of vast magnitude; it was a magnum. There is more than mere size in such an achievement. A coat for Daniel Lambert contained more cloth and more stitches than one for General Tom Thumb, but the same kind of skill was required in both. Not so in regard to cheese, a peculiarly capricious article of manufacture. To this day it is not clearly known, why the cheese made in Cheshire differs so much from that made in other counties; the Cheshire folks are glad that it does so, because a good price is thereby always obtainable; but dairy-farmers do not agree in their explanation of the causes. The milk, we are told, has the curd separated from the whey by means of rennet; the curd is repeatedly broken and strained; the cheeses are much pressed, and are placed in wooden boxes which have numerous holes bored in them; through these holes sharp skewers are stuck into the cheese in every direction, so as to drain out every particle of whey. Unless the whole cheese becomes a solid mass without any admixture of whey, it will never earn the name and fame of "prime Cheshire." This is one reason why cheeses of exceptionally large dimensions are so difficult to make; the trouble of getting out the whey is almost insurmountable, while its presence is obnoxious. The dairy-maids must be healthy and tidy as well as expert; for until all the modifications of milk into cream, curd, and whey are completed, very slight changes in the atmosphere and condition of the dairy, may bring about important and injurious results. It is known that Cheshire dairy-maids are sought for in other districts, in a belief that the excellence of the cheese depends much upon them. Fuller, in his Worthies, adverts to this, at the same time qualifying it with a proviso: "Cheshire doth afforde the best cheese for quantitie and qualitie; and yet the cows are not, as in other shires, housed in the winter. Some essaied in vaine to make the like in other places, thoughe they fetched their kine and dairie-maides: it seems they shoulde have fetched their grounde too, wherein is surelie some occult excellencie in this kind, or else so goode cheese will not be made." All good rich cheese contains some cream; insomuch that if the whole of the cream be removed from the milk before the making begins, a hard, dry, whey cheese is the result. In Suffolk, for example, where beautiful butter is made, the dairy-farmers like to appropriate nearly all their cream to this purpose: hence the cheese of that county has become a standing joke for hardness, toughness, and poor quality. We are told that Suffolk cheese will "turn the edge" of a hatchet or cleaver; and a man who had an extraordinary taste for eating stones, glass, and broken crockery is said to have declared that the only time he suffered indigestion was after he had eaten a bit of Suffolk cheese. Even the gentle Bloomfield made merry about the skim-milk and its produce:

Its name derision and reproach pursue,
And strangers tell of "three times skimm'd sky blue."
To cheese converted, what can be its boast?
What, but the common virtues of a post!
If drought o'ertake it faster than the knife,
Most fair it bids for stubborn length of life;

And, like the oaken shelf whereon 'tis laid,
Mocks the weak efforts of the bending blade;
Or in the hog-trough rests in perfect spite,
Too big to swallow, and too hard to bite.

Besides the English giant, presently to be noticed, there was a leviathan, a mighty one, made in America in the early part of the present century. A most memorable and national cheese. Its story has been told by Elihu Burritt, with all the enthusiasm naturally associated with patriotic feeling; but the plain facts are nearly as follows. There are several towns named Cheshire in the United States, two of which, in Massachusetts and Connecticut respectively, imitate the Cheshire of the old country by making cheese. Quite early in the century, there was a struggle in the United States as to the form which the government should permanently assume, John Adams advocating one variety of Federalism, Thomas Jefferson another. John Leland, a Puritan elder of Cheshire town, in Massachusetts, threw himself heart and soul into the controversy; in sermons and speeches and conversations he took Jefferson's side in the question, and brought over the whole of the townsmen to his way of thinking. When Jefferson was elected to the presidency, Leland proposed that they should celebrate the event by making and presenting to him a cheese such as the world never before saw. He advised, that, on a certain day, all the curd from one day's milk of all the cows in Cheshire township should be brought, as a patriotic contribution to the object in view. The inhabitants entered joyously into the scheme. All, men and women, boys and girls, who had the ownership or keeping of cows, brought their quota of milk or curd to a particular spot. A large cider-press had been thoroughly cleaned out, a new false-bottom provided, and a monster hoop laid down on it, corresponding in dimensions with the thickness and diameter of the intended cheese. When the accumulated gifts of curd were thrown in, skilled dairy-matrons mixed, flavoured, and tinted it. Then came the pressing; immense work, seeing that so thick a cheese could not possibly be of good quality throughout unless the pressure on the curd were much beyond the usual degree. Sturdy men, with arms bare and muscles well braced, turned the screw press until it would not yield another fraction of an inch. Then, Leland standing in the centre, and the people being grouped around him, all sang a hymn, and dedicated the cheese to Thomas Jefferson, the new President of the Great Republic. After a due period for settling and drying, arrangements were made for carrying the mighty cheese to Washington, the Federal capital; and as the distance was not less than five hundred miles, the enterprise was certainly a formidable one. The weight—some say fourteen hundred and fifty pounds, some sixteen hundred pounds (twenty times that of a full-sized English Cheshire cheese)—could not safely be trusted upon wheels, with such roads as America then possessed. A snowy season was selected, a sledge was provided, the cheese was launched, and Master John Leland piloted it all the way to Washington. He was three weeks on the journey, and, wherever he rested at night, received quite an ovation, for the nature of his errand had become rumoured about. Arrived at Washington, he went to the White House, where, on an appointed day, he was received by President Jefferson and all the officials, with a goodly number of ambassadors and other folks. Leland presented the cheese to Jefferson in the name of the whole of the inhabitants of Cheshire; every family and every cow had contributed towards it. The president of course said what was proper on so remarkable an occasion. He caused a great wedge to be cut from the cheese and conveyed back to Cheshire, that the townsmen might have the pleasure of tasting the result of their labours; while all the guests at the White House, there and then, partook of the gift. The interior of the cheese was found of a beautiful colour, richly tinted with anatto; it was a little variegated in appearance, owing to so many dairies having contributed the milk or curd, but the flavour was pronounced to be the best ever tasted at Washington.

And now for the English cheese, big in its bigness, although its Transatlantic precursor was bigger. Moreover, the English magnate had humiliating scenes to pass through, enough to fret the curd of any cheese. Those readers who have at hand the whole series of the present periodical, will find full details of the history of this cheese in one of the early volumes;* to those who are not so provided, a brief summary may be acceptable. Early in the present Queen's reign, the farmers and yeomanry of West Pennard, near Glastonbury, resolved to present Her Majesty with a cheese such as England had never before seen. West Pennard is in or near the famous Vale of Cheddar; and the

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, vol. iii., p. 19.

Somersetshire cows could be relied upon for supplying milk of proper quality. On a given day the dairy-maids collected the milk of seven hundred and thirty-seven cows, "one meal's milking," as it is called in those parts, from each cow. All the cows in the parish contributed, the aggregate quantity being upwards of twenty hogsheads. About fifty wives and daughters of the dairy-farmers gladly took part in the work. Everything had previously been got ready—pails, tubs, vat, mould, press, cloths, &c., at the house of one of the farmers; and, although not without many difficulties, the cheese was made. Unlike most other specimens of this art, it was octagonal in shape; the diameter was about thirty-six inches, the circumference a little more than nine feet, the depth twenty-two inches, the weight eleven hundredweight. Twenty hogsheads may seem an enormous quantity to form this size and weight, but we must remember that the hogsheads represented the whole of the milk, whey and all; whereas the cheese was made of curd and cream only. The interior of the mahogany mould was so far carved as to give ornamental devices to the cheese. The upper surface displayed the royal arms, surrounded with a wreath of oak-leaves, and graced with the rose, thistle, and shamrock. The cheese, of course, required a long time to solidify properly; and during a portion of this time it was exhibited to strangers at a shilling a head. After many months (though, as it appeared, not months enough) the cheese was duly conveyed to London by a deputation of four West Pennard men. The Queen and Prince Albert received them very graciously; but as the cheese was evidently too new to cut, Her Majesty proposed that the villagers should take it back again, and keep it till it ripened, at which happy time she would present a hundred guineas to the poor of the parish. But jealousy sprang up at West Pennard; the farmers felt certain that knighthood, or some other great honour, would be conferred on those who finally presented the cheese. The cheese was actually besieged, and was defended with an iron cage and strong window bars. The belligerents on one side made a plaster cast of the cheese, and sent it up to London for exhibition; the belligerents on the other side obtained Her Majesty's permission to exhibit the real cheese itself at the Egyptian Hall; and the Court of Chancery had to settle the matter. The cheese was next exhibited in various parts of Somerset, but under such circumstances, that both the cheese party, and the plaster-of-paris party, lost a good deal of money by it. The Queen never again saw the cheese. It passed from one custodian to another; and at length it was cut, tasted, and found to be a very poor affair, more fitted for pigs than for royalty.

Let us flavour our big cheeses with a bit of folk-lore. In the rural districts there are many odd old customs and sayings relating to cheese, the real origin of which it would be no easy matter to ferret out. In regard to butter, the wise saws and sayings are still more numerous, partly owing to the fact, that the proper turning of milk into butter is a still more delicate affair than the proper coagulation of curd and cream into cheese. If the cow is bewitched, or the milkpail, or the churn, or the dairymaid, woe be to the butter; and in the days when witchcraft was more believed in than it is at present, such dark doings at the dairy were the burden of many a strange story. Some curious examples were given in a former sheet of this work,* tending to show that the belief in witchcraft, even in this nineteenth century, has not yet disappeared, and that some of its strangest freaks—or rather freaks springing out of a belief in it—have had relation to dairy operations. Among old customs relating to cheese, one must have originated from some cause which it would now be impossible to trace. A cheese is made when a new inhabitant of the village is expected shortly to come into the world. The birth being safely over, if the new comer be a boy, the cheese is cut up and distributed to all the males in the village; if a girl, to all the inhabitants of both sexes.

One of the most remarkable bits of folklore, dependent partly on etymology for its solution, has been rather fully discussed in that excellent periodical, Notes and Queries. It relates not to cheese per se, but to a street saying, a bit of slang. The talker does not talk about cheese itself, yet he brings in the name of that comestible. A few years ago, a correspondent of the periodical above mentioned propounded a question as to the origin of a saying which was not much known in quiet households, but was tolerably familiar in places where "men do mostly congregate," especially young men. The saying or phrase is, "That's the cheese!" Some bright geniuses, anxious to advance a stage beyond their fellows,

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. ii., p. 541.

vary the form to, "That's the Cheshire!" or, "That's the Stilton!" but with the caseous basis understood. Now it would not be a very wild supposition that, on some particular occasion, a cheese of exceptional goodness was made, and became a sort of type, symbol, synonym, or representative of excellence generally, in non-cheesy as well as in cheesy matters. But this would not do for those who love to dip and dive into the origin of things; the word "cheese" was analysed in all sorts of ways, and was made to bear relation to things which no Cheshire farmer, no tidy dairy-maid, no retailer of slang sayings, ever for a moment dreamed of. The answers obtained to the query are really worthy of notice; for, whether they are right or wrong, or half right and half wrong, or wrong with a little bit of right interposed, they mostly came from men of education and knowledge of languages. One respondent points to the fact that the word "choice" was formerly written "chose" and "chese." In the Vision of Piers Plowman, a satirical poem, written by a secular priest, named Robert Longlande, more than five hundred years ago, occur the lines:

Now thou might chese
How thou covetist to cal me,
Now thou knowest al mi names!

And it is urged that "That's the chese," "That's the sort of thing I would choose," would have been considered by Robert Longlande as very good Saxon English. Another informant states that Ireland is the birthplace of the phrase. There was one David Rees, a comedian at Dublin, a very smart fellow at bon-mot and repartee, who, when playing in a piece called the Evil Eye, used the words "That's the cheese," which he repeated more than once. The audience, struck with the oddity of the phrase, relished it as the piece went on, and it became quite in favour as a comical bit of innocent slang—used when a person wanted to impress on another that something important had been said or done in reference to something in hand. Rees, at a subsequent period, was asked how he came to invent or devise the phrase. He replied that on one occasion a half-witted boy ate a piece of soap, and then told his grandmother what a nice piece of cheese he had devoured. "It was soap!" said the old lady. "Oh, no," replied he, "that's the cheese!" A third correspondent also names Ireland as the land of the invention, and only slightly changes the dramatis personæ and the circumstances. In the north of Ireland lived an old woman with a grandson about eight years old, who had a very undiscriminating appetite. The grandmother one day purchased a piece of yellow soap, and placed it on the window-ledge. Some hours afterwards, when about to commence washing, she said, "Paddy, where's the soap?" "What soap?" asked the boy. "Why, the soap that was in the window." "Oh, granny," he replied, "that was the cheese!" He had eaten it. The story was made a standing joke against Paddy for years afterwards; and it grew into use, as applied to anything which suited the taste of the person making use of the expression. A fourth contributor to the process of elucidation will not adopt either England or Ireland as the birthplace of the saying, but seeks for it in France. "C'est la chose," "That's the thing," seems to him quite natural enough as the beginning; not less so than "C'est l'etiquette" as the origin of "That's the ticket."

But the Hindoo parentage of the phrase is the most curious of all that have been suggested—the one which has the greatest number of defenders. A gentleman, lately returned from India, starts the subject by referring to a word pronounced "chiz," very commonly used in Bengalee, spoken in Calcutta, in the sense of "thing." A phrase, "That's the chiz," would be exactly equivalent to "That's the thing," "That's the thing for me." "It is easy to see how, in its transit to this country by means of the P. and O. Company, 'chiz' became 'cheese;' and hence our slang phrase." This statement has been confirmed by others, except that some call "chiz" a Hindoostanee, and others a Bengalee word; but this is merely a difference of provincial dialect. Attention has been called to a passage in Stray Leaves from the Diary of an Indian Officer, in which he says: "Few who use the word 'cheez' are aware of its exact meaning. It is simply the Hindoostanee word for 'thing.' In my young days we used to say that so-and-so was 'just the thing,' whereas we now say that it is 'just the cheez.'" One conjecture is, that the gipsies, who seem to have had some mysterious connexion with India in past ages, have brought the word from that remote country to England, and that it forms part of their lingo; while another conjecture would rest satisfied with the transplanting of the phrase, from the East to the West, by Anglo-Indians and military on their return home.

We cannot pretend to decide, but this Hindoo theory strikes us as being the best of all. If it is the right one, so much the more dignity to our cheese.

CHASTENED.

My soul was stricken on a summer day
With sudden sickness in her bloom and pride,
And through the length of all that year she lay,
Feeble, sore-smitten, trusting to have died.
She rose not up to see the reapers pass,
To lay their sickles in the yellow wheat;
Nor did she move when winter trod the grass
And flowers, to nothingness with icy feet.
But when the spring-time ruled the land again,
Mysterious yearnings in my spirit woke,
New energies endowed her heart and brain,
And she essayed to break her sorrow's yoke,
And said to it, "Thy rule is my disgrace,
I have been blind, now will I see thy face."

Then rose the grief that long had ruled my soul,
And these two struggled for the mastery;
But God had made my spirit's vision whole,
While grief was veiled, and might not plainly see.
Then sprang my spirit conquering and free,
To draw the veil from off the dreaded face,
And lo! the face was marvellous to see,
Divine: an angel's; full of awful grace.
"God sent me," said the angel, "unto thee,
A chastening rod, for loving kindness sake,
And if thou choose to hold me, I will be
A staff for leaning when all others break."
"I take thee," said my soul. "Of no true worth
Is life without thee. Walk with me henceforth."

SIEGES OF LONDON.

According to Fitzstephen, a chronicler of the twelfth century (Henry the Second), London was then girt by a high and thick wall, having seven double gates, and at intervals, on the north side, many towers. These seven gates were, it is conjectured, Aldgate, Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Cripplegate, Bishopsgate, and a postern near the Tower. The southern walls and towers were undermined by the river. In 1707, Dr. Woodward, a learned professor of Gresham College, examined the foundation of part of the old Roman wall, at the Bishopsgate end of Camomile-street. It was built of alternate layers of broad, flat bricks and ragstone, nine feet thick. The rampart had originally been twenty-seven feet high. In Maitland's time (1753) there were still traces of fifteen towers of the old London wall. Woodward describes one of these towers, twenty-six feet high, nearly opposite Gravel-lane, Houndsditch. It was still inhabited, but rent from the top to the bottom. In a street called the Vineyard, behind the Minories, there was the basis of another, the top of which had fallen in in 1651. There was also a considerable portion of the old Roman wall visible on both sides of Moorgate; and Mr. Craik, in Knight's London, says that much of this remained till the pulling down of old Bethlehem in 1818. The line of circumvallation can still be traced here and there. Postern-row, near the Tower, marks the site of the old Postern Gate, which Bishop Longchamp, in Richard the First's reign, detached from part of the old wall, and which fell in the reign of Henry the Sixth.

In 1841, Mr. Craik describes seeing a bit of the old wall between the north side of George-street and Trinity-square. This fragment was forty feet long and some twenty-five feet high. There was another bit at the back of a hemp warehouse near the north-east angle of Trinity-square. Another part of the old Roman foundation was discovered behind the south-west corner of America-square in extending the Blackwall Railway. From there, says the same antiquary, to Aldgate High-street, it ran between Houndsditch and Duke-street, Bevis Marks, and Camomile-street, to Bishopsgate-street. By Wormwood-street it passed to London-Wall by Sion College. The old wall forms the southern boundary of Cripplegate churchyard. It then turned south at the back of Barber's Hall, across Aldersgate, behind Bull and Mouth-street. It went behind Christ's Hospital, and struck down upon Newgate-street, which it crossed "a little to the east of its present termination at the Old Bailey." Ludgate stood immediately to the west of St. Martin's Church. It then turned west by St. Martin's-court till it reached the bank of the Fleet. Till 1276, the wall went straight from Newgate to the river, but part of it being pulled down to make room for the new house of the Black Friars, Edward the First ordered the City to build a new wall, running further west, to take in the whole precinct of the Black Friars. The first Roman wall probably ended east of St. Paul's, leaving that churchyard outside the City, as was the Roman custom.

In Alfred's reign the Norsemen occupied London. After nine pitched battles in one year, Alfred delivered Wessex for a time, and the Danes retreated to London; and in 861, Alfred, getting nearer and nearer to the pirates, soon regained London, which, says Mr. Freeman, "became henceforth one of the firmest strongholds of English freedom, and one of the most efficient bulwarks of the realm." In the reign of Ethelred, Olaf, King of the Norwegians, and Sweyn, King of the Danes, sailed up the Thames with ninety-four ships, and besieged Lon-

don. The chronicler says, "The mother of God, of her mild-heartedness," saved London that day from the fair-haired barbarians. They assailed the wall and the Tower of Alfred, and tried to burn the City, but were defeated with slaughter, and the two kings dropped down the river sullenly, not liking the reception we gave them, then spread, burning and murdering through Kent, and Essex, and Sussex, and at Southampton were bought off for sixteen thousand pounds. Soon after, the Danes, under Thurkill, again threatened London, but were repeatedly beaten off by the brave citizens. The rough visitors, then in a rage, crossed the Chiltern Hills, burnt Oxford, and then plundered both sides of the Thames.

In 994, Sweyn, another of these hungry Norsemen, attacked London; but this time Thurkill defended the City for King Ethelred, and Sweyn, who afterwards conquered nearly all England, was repulsed, losing many of his men in the Thames. But London's great siege was in May, 1016, when Canute beleaguered it. Sailing up from Greenwich, London Bridge stopped his progress, upon which patient and crafty Canute dug a deep canal to the south of the river, and got round to the west of the City. He then dug another canal round that part of the City which was not washed by the Thames, so that London was again hemmed in on all sides. But Canute had to raise the siege to give battle to King Edmund in Somersetshire. Finally, Edmund defeated the Danes at Brentford, and saved London. Three times Canute and the Danes unsuccessfully besieged the brave City.

After that terrible battle on the hill at Senlac, as Mr. Freeman persists in calling Hastings, William, insatiable for conquest, after a month's rest near Canterbury, marched on London. The great battle was fought on October the 14th. On December the 1st, William, then master of Dover, Canterbury, and Winchester, set out along the Old Kent-road, ravaging, burning, slaughtering, and requisitioning as he went. One chronicler says he occupied Westminster, and planted his catapults ready for the siege close to St. Peter's Minster. But this was not so. He, however, sent before his vanguard five hundred knights to reconnoitre in Southwark. The citizens sallied forth, and were beaten back within their walls, and Southwark, the southern suburb of England's capital, where Earl Godwin had once dwelt, was given to the flames by the Normans. But William did not yet venture on the City. He marched through Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire, and crossed to the left bank of the Thames at Wallingford. He pushed on then to Berkhempstead, in Hertfordshire, in order to surround London with a black ring of barrenness and desolation. At last London yielded. Its defender, the wounded Staller Esegar, the sheriff of the middle Saxons, sent ambassadors to Berkhempstead to treat with William, and to offer him the crown he had, in fact, already won. The conqueror, accepting the crown, sent soldiers before him to commence that fortress, probably at first of wood, which afterwards grew into the Tower of London.

In the civil wars of Henry the Third's time, London pronounced for Simon de Montfort. In London he held that first parliament to which the Commons were admitted, and which did so much to establish a basis for future liberties. When the earl fell at Evesham, with one hundred and sixty of his knights, Fitz-Richard, the mayor of London, at first threatened resistance, but he surrendered before the king's troops could formally besiege the place.

In the reign of Edward the Second, London had another narrow escape of a siege. In 1326, when Queen Isabella landed at Dover to free England from the tyranny of the Spensers, the favourites of the weak king, the Bishop of Exeter demanded the City keys of the lord mayor, and would have held London for the king, but the populace seized the keys, and running to Exeter House, fired the gates and burnt all the plate, jewellery, and furniture. The bishop, riding straight to the northern door of St. Paul's to take sanctuary, they beat him off his horse, dragged him to Cheapside, and, lopping off his head, set it on a pole. The corpse they threw, without funeral service, into a hole in the old churchyard of the Pied Friars.

Under the head of sieges, it is right to include the coups de main by which London has been at various times taken. The first of these was Wat Tyler's. Massing at Maidstone, and gathering still closer at Blackheath, Wat Tyler and his wild rabble poured down on London, which admitted them with little resistance. Lawyers and Flemings they slew everywhere, and the more the citizens feasted the rough intruders, the more savage and bloodthirsty they became. In Southwark they demolished the Marshalsea and King's Bench,

and in Lambeth they sacked the archi-episcopal palace. They destroyed Newgate, fired the house of the Knights Hospitallers at Clerkenwell, and that of St. John's at Highbury, and, seizing the Tower, chased away the queen-mother, and beheaded the archbishop and several knights. At their great bivouacs at Mile End and on Tower-hill, Wat Tyler made all new-comers swear that they would be true to King Richard and the Commons, and keep John of Gaunt from the throne. The next day the mob bore down on John's Palace in the Savoy, and burnt and destroyed everything it contained. They tore the silk and velvet into strips, they crushed the jewels in mortars, and beat up the gold and silver plate, and threw it into the Thames. But Wat Tyler allowed nothing to be stolen. One wretch, seen to slip a silver cup into his doublet, was tossed into the fire, and burnt to death. In the cellars which fell in, thirty-two of the rebels were buried alive. In the wildest tempest of their rage, these ruffians rolled some barrels, supposed to contain money, into the flames. In a moment they exploded, blew up the great hall, shook down many neighbouring houses, killed many men, and reduced the palace to ruins. Two days after, Wat Tyler, advancing insolently towards the king at an interview at Smithfield, was struck down by Walworth, mayor of London, and slain on the spot. The rebels then dispersed across the Islington fields, and the rebellion was at an end. Jack Straw left a name at Hampstead. Wat Tyler can never be forgotten, but Hob Carter, Tom Miller, John Ball, and the other obscure leaders of that great insurrection perished, history has not even recorded where.

In Henry the Sixth's reign a Kentish "rebel" named Jack Cade, headed one of these sudden attacks on London. As we have, very lately, dwelt at length upon this page of history*, it is not necessary to repeat the chronicle here, and we may pass on to the third dash at London, which was that of Wyatt's, in the reign of Queen Mary. Sir Thomas Wyatt, hot-headed and turbulent, had planned an insurrection to prevent the marriage of the saturnine queen with that gloomy Spaniard, Philip. Sir Peter Carew was to rouse Devonshire, the Duke of Suffolk the midland counties. But Carew rising before the preconcerted time, was defeated, and fled to France. The duke, on his way to Warwick and Leicester, was pursued by three hundred horse, taken, and brought prisoner to London. But Wyatt at first throve better. A captain named Brett, and eight hundred Londoners, came over to his head-quarters at Rochester, from the troops led against him by the Duke of Norfolk. Norfolk upon this retreated to London. Wyatt, marching into Southwark, demanded of the queen that she should surrender the Tower to him, should deliver four of her counsellors, and, lastly, that she should immediately marry an Englishman. But London Bridge was fortified against the rash rebel, and he could not force it. Upon this he marched to Kingston, and crossing the Thames with four thousand men, returned to London, which he hoped would at once rise in his favour. But the tide had turned, Piccadilly was thronged with pikes, and bows, and muskets. His men dwindled as he fought his way from Westminster, and near Ludgate, as he sat weary and dejected on a stone by the gate, he was arrested by Sir Maurice Berkely. Wyatt and seventy of his followers suffered for their wild raid on London, which endangered the life of the Princess Elizabeth, and brought poor gentle Lady Jane Grey to the scaffold.

In 1643, the parliament resolving to fortify the City, the work was carried out with great expedition. In those troublesome days London must have been always swarming with soldiers, and we perpetually find in the newspapers of those days such entries as the following: "His excellency the general (Sir Thomas Fairfax) drew this day, August 7th, 1647, most of his forces into Hyde Park, and marched through the City of London with all the horse and foot and train of artillery, with drums, trumpets, and colours flying. First, part of the horse marched in, then his excellency with his Life Guards (Cornet Joyce and some six or seven more bareheaded) encompassing him, then the foot, led on by Major-General Skippon. Presently after, the train of artillery. Lieutenant-General Cromwell brought up the rear of the foot, and Quarterman marched after the horse."

A short time after Cornet Joyce had seized King Charles at Holmby, the army and parliament fell out so violently that the dispute very nearly ended in a siege of London. The army, gathering eighty thousand men at Hounslow Heath, threatened the City. Their advanced posts were stationed about Brentford, Hounslow, and Twickenham, but they did not stop the car-

* See All the Year Round, New Series, vol. iii., p. 181.

riage of provisions into London. In a lull of the negotiations, Colonel Rainsborough, with a brigade of horse, foot, and cannon, took Southwark, and the works and forts securing the end of old London Bridge. Rainsborough took the southern suburb without any opposition, the soldiers fraternising with him, and shaking hands with his men.

The parliament, prepared to oppose the rebellious soldiers at the west side of London, were thunderstruck to find what they had confided in as the strongest gate so easily taken. They then sent to propose terms, asking for a guard of horse and foot, and promising to open to the army all forts and passages. Fairfax replied that he would have all the western forts delivered to him immediately, those on the south side being already in Rainsborough's hands. The common council, blue with fright, and sitting night and day, instantly replied (with a due dread of pike and gun) that they would humbly submit to his command, and that now, under Almighty God, they did rely only upon his excellency's "honourable word for their protection and security." They then withdrew their militia along the whole line, as well as out of the forts, with all the cannon and ordnance, over which the general promptly put a guard. At Hyde Park the mayor and aldermen met the general, who received them sourly, and pushed back into their hands a big gold cup which they stammeringly presented on behalf of the City. The next day the army of horse, foot, and cannon marched through the City, which, extremely touched at the sight, immediately undertook to supply one hundred thousand pounds for the payment of the troops. Cromwell's men (for Cromwell was really the head of the army) behaved well, doing no damage, and speaking "no disrespective word to any man," proving their fine discipline, and the extraordinary temper and sobriety of both officers and soldiers. The army then marched over London Bridge into Southwark to the quarters assigned them, while some regiments were craftily posted in Westminster, the Strand, and Holborn, under pretence of being a guard to the parliament, but really to get a firm grip on the City. The general's head-quarters were at Chelsea, the council of officers and agitators sat at Fulham and Chelsea, and the rest of the army was quartered between Hampton Court and London.

The last attack that London had to apprehend was in the reign of James the Second. It was shortly after James had fled, and the London mob had burnt the Roman Catholic chapels. A ground swell of terror spread through London. The cavalry were drawn out, the train-bands were under arms. The wretch Jeffreys had just been seized, disguised as a Newcastle sailor. Powis House, at the north-west corner of Lincoln's-inn-fields, was being threatened by the mob. Then arose a wild rumour that Faversham's Irish troops were marching from Hounslow on London, to take the City and massacre the Protestants. The City sprang to arms. At one in the morning the drums of the militia began to beat. Before two every window was illuminated; the chief avenues were barricaded. All travellers were stopped and questioned. Interested persons had spread these rumours of danger from the disbanded Irish. The Irish Panic went down as suddenly as it had arisen.

In the Commonwealth time, during one of the panics at the approach of the Royalists from Oxford, Newcastle and his white "Lambs," Rupert and his fiery horse, the citizens set to work with all their might piling up earth ramparts at Hyde Park Corner, in High Holborn, and, if we remember rightly, in Gray's-inn-road. Behind these, the train-bands and the gallant young apprentices were to gain courage, and discharge their muskets. Only fancy now, barricades at Temple Bar or in Pall Mall, and the windows of the club-houses full of country gentlemen, armed with chassepots, ready for a cut at the invader. Yet, joking apart, there is no doubt that our government has begun seriously to think of the defence of London from sudden forays of ambitious foreign powers. Ten years ago some not over hasty commissioners on national defences issued a report on this subject, in which they said: "There can be no doubt that the main object of an enemy invading the country would be to push for the capital, in the hope that if he succeeded in obtaining a command of it, such a disaster would result in our buying him off upon any terms he might think it expedient to make."

We should then be reduced to the pitiful and degraded condition of the later Saxons, who were always buying off those hungry Danes, swarms of whom succeeded one another with remorseless and relentless rapidity. We should have all the poor nations upon us one after another, and should

become a mere bone for every dog to gnaw at. We should be the mere money-bag in which every thief would dip his hand. The important point of central defence (the cuirassing, as it were, the heart of England), that the commissioners neglected, several eminent men, whose forte was engineering, took up and discussed in the public prints with sagacity and candour. Foremost among these writers were General Shaw Kennedy and Sir Joshua Jebb. General Kennedy, taking an imaginative and hopeful view of our future army, proposed to belt London with a girdle of small forts, each of them about two hundred yards square. These forts were to be raised at intervals of a mile, upon a circle having a five-mile radius round London. To garrison these forts he required two hundred and sixty-five thousand men, and for a movable auxiliary force to pivot round upon them an additional force of two hundred and fifty thousand. But where the half million of warriors were to be obtained, without resorting to Hindoo sepoys or New Zealand chieftians, General Kennedy did not sufficiently explain. Sir Joshua Jebb, in his turn, threw a wider girdle round the defenceless city, for he proposed to throw up field-works on commons, in parks, or streets, for a line of sixty miles, extending along high grounds all the way from Maidstone to Reading. Now, this was all very well for the south and western suburbs, but it left the north and east open to all invaders. A clever writer in the Cornhill Magazine suggested a still looser order of defence, that is, the erection of redoubts on all the chief eminences round London: Shooter's Hill, Norwood, Wimbledon, Harrow, Mill-hill, and Enfield; a range of strongholds so scattered and far apart, indeed, that they hardly amount to any defence at all, while a later writer, still further widening the line of resistance, proposes to include even Boxhill (twenty-two miles from London) in the enceinte of forts.

But of all the schemes projected, that of Mr. Eddy seems to us the most calm and feasible, and we propose, therefore, to consider his suggestions at some length. That gentleman, in a recent very business-like pamphlet, commences by showing, without any wish to create a panic among the timid and rich, the facilities which steam has given to ambitious and unscrupulous nations who desire our destruction or our humiliation.

The Defence Commissioners of 1860 avowed this alarming fact openly: "Since the application of steam to the propulsion of vessels," said the report, "we can no longer rely upon being able to prevent the landing of a hostile force in this country." Our old bulwarks, the wooden walls of Old England, can no longer rely on barring up the Channel. If they were in the Downs when the hostile fleet is at Yarmouth, what use would they be? Any foggy night a fleet of steam ironclads might pour an army on defenceless portions of the east coast, and secure a position before London ever heard of the danger.

The enceinte of the forts of Paris is about forty miles. That proposed by Mr. Eddy is sixty-nine, of which eleven are to be formed by the river, forty-two by existing railways, four and a half by railways already projected, and eleven and a half by railways would have to be made. The quantity of earth to be removed to form a vast ditch would be about one million cubic yards, or one and a half million tons. This, it is computed, would take twenty thousand navvies five days only to dig out. This fosse would be twenty-four feet wide and seven and a half feet deep. The bank for the riflemen would be nine feet high and ten feet wide. The line of defence would begin at a stream about half a mile beyond the Alexandra Park, which it would follow to the low grounds of the Lea near Tottenham; then by the low level Great Eastern lines it would pass by the Barking or Dagenham Creek to the river. A little beyond Erith, marshes and low ground would bring it to the Dartford loop line near Lewisham, whence it would follow the East Croydon to Croydon. There would be at this place a ditch run for almost a mile through the chalk. Crossing then the Epsom line, it would run to Merton, thence follow the high level South-Eastern to Kingston, and there strike the river near the water works. At Kew the line would follow up the North and South-Western Junction and Midland, and lastly, follow up a branch of the Brent to Finchley.

These fifty-eight miles of ditch, Mr. Eddy nicely calculates, would require one hundred and sixty-two acres of land, which, being chiefly London clay, and unfit for building, would not cost more than one hundred and sixty-two thousand pounds. By this scheme the seven streams that water the suburbs of London—that is, the Brent, the Lea, the New River, the Cray, the Ravensbourne, the Wandle, and the Mole—streams springing chiefly from the

chalk hills, and that have at all times of the year a copious flow, are all pressed into the service, and utilised for the defence of London. The Kew Water Works would serve to flood the ditch. The Colne is useful on the west. On the north-east side the line of the high-level sewer, from its junction with the North Metropolitan line at Old Ford to the rising ground on Plaistow, forms a ready-made dam for flooding the valley of the Lea. "This is so level," says the author whose scheme we here abridge, "that this dam, together with another of above one mile in length along the Walthamstow road, would, I believe, form a lake all the way up to Waltham Abbey, such as no troops could cross. It would, however, require works near Plaistow and Tottenham to prevent the dams from being cut." A railway parallel to the ditch, along which guns, mitrailleuses, and men could be rapidly run from place to place, is part of this design. Where the high-level lines cross roads, the arches must be marked by high banks, which would be provided with rails and turntables to enable the guns to command the road.

The recent siege of Paris has shown that guns, rapidly moved from spot to spot by a protected railway, form one of the strongest possible lines of defence, because the besieger never knows where to direct his fire, but, whilst laying his guns at the spot from whence he has been annoyed, receives a shot in his flanks. Mr. Eddy proves, from the sieges of Paris and Metz, that lines of earthworks, even rapidly thrown up and unsupported by forts, and exposed to the fire of heavy guns, if held by steady and resolute men, will keep out even a superior force.

This circle of defence, ditch and railway, would run round Woolwich (one of our dangerous points in a bombardment), and would embrace all London and its suburbs with all the great railway junctions, and the gas and water works. It would elbow the enemy back to a safe distance from the centre and most densely peopled part of London; London, singularly enough, being hid by hills from every part of the circle. The area of population has hardly anywhere, except at Croydon or Kingston, overflowed this line, which runs along a low and unwholesome level of London clay adapted for inundation.

This plan has certainly many advantages over the ring of forts proposed by Major Palliser and others. In the first place, it can be rapidly completed; secondly, it involves little or no sacrifice of valuable property; thirdly, it is in accordance with the current opinion in favour of a continuous line of defence; and, fourthly, it involves no interference with existing roads and bridges, which need only be cut on emergencies.

There is no winking at the fact, if Mr. Eddy's figures are correct, that rich London is in constant danger now from any greedy enemy. The Russians have now nineteen monitors, drawing only ten and a half feet of water, while of our fifty-one ironclads, thirty-seven, Mr. Eddy says, draw above twenty-one feet. Now there is a large extent of Essex shore where vessels of light draught could land troops without molestation from our bulkier and more cumbrous ships, unsuited to defend our shallow coasts.

A nation may be cautious and yet brave. We must not rest in a fool's paradise of self-complacent helplessness. Without any wish for bloated armaments, and with the most loyal tax-paying dread of fresh expense, let us calmly consider Mr. Eddy's sensible and calm view of our present position. Germany, bleeding from one hundred thousand wounds, has no wish at present for anything but peace. But the time will come when the graves will grow green, and the widows and orphans will cease weeping, and the war fever may revive. Half a million of men, who have trodden down France and threatened England, may pine for fresh conquests. It may suddenly appear necessary for United Germany to win colonies, and a foothold in Central Asia, Persia, or India. It is a poor statesman, indeed, who cannot find a grievance. We shall grow impatient at the scorn expressed or implied, and war may be the result. The Germans, grown veterans in six months of victory, despise our loosely disciplined volunteers, and will long to prove their superiority to a peaceful and commercial country that rests upon its old glory. They will fly straight at London, the centre of our wealth. Our fleet may no longer be able to barricade the Channel. Steam has done much to level the inequalities of nations. According to Mr. Eddy, the Germans have now nine large ironclads, nine wooden frigates, all drawing less than seventeen feet of water, four corvettes, and twenty-two gunboats. Germany is striving hard to become a preponderating naval power, and she is as well able to buy as we are to build. The Russians, Prussia's steadfast allies, have in the Baltic nineteen

iron-clad monitors, each armed with two powerful guns; and we are still building vessels, perhaps no more seaworthy than the unfortunate Captain. The naval port of Jahde is said to be already very complete, and the contemplated ship canal connecting Kiel in the Baltic with Tonning in the German Ocean, will place the Russian and German fleets within twenty-eight hours' steam of Yarmouth; and Tonning cannot be blockaded, as the fleet will have two exits six hundred miles apart. For transports the Germans have their five lines of American steamers, besides all the English steam colliers and merchant steamers they could seize on an emergency in the Baltic and German ports. To resist such a sudden dash, we have a defenceless City, an unprotected arsenal, and railways unprepared for the sudden conveyance to an assailed coast of any large body of men.

"All railway managers," says Mr. Eddy, "appear to be sworn to secrecy on this subject; but it is believed that no single line could take on an emergency ten thousand men in the course of a day from London to the east coast—to say nothing of horses and artillery."

Our defencelessness is our danger. There is no use in blinking the fact. Russia has the Crimea to avenge; Prussia her past inferiority. Let us be wise in time. Absurd as it may seem to throw up earthworks, to resist invisible enemies, it is better done too soon than too late. We have still our old pluck, and our physical vigour still renders the bayonet irresistible in our hands. Our colliers and miners are still giants endowed with the old Berseker strength. The sons of Nelson's sailors will be as terrible behind iron as behind wooden walls. Our gentry are born cavalry soldiers, and are as brave as they are chivalrous. Our engineers yield the palm to none. There may be Moltkes even now latent at Sandhurst and Woolwich, and Falkensteins at the Duke of Cambridge's elbow. The race of Napiers and Lyndochs, of Havelocks, ay, and of Wellingtons, is not yet extinct. We need fear no one with our courage and our wealth. Our fleets would soon be in every sea before the third trumpet of war had sounded. We must let no unworthy panic betray the fears of our rich men who see in war a suspension of business, and that only. Defence, not defiance, is our motto. It is too late for us to start in the trade of conquerors; but we must take care of ourselves, and above all things we must guard against the possibility of a successful dash upon London, the consequences of which would, assuredly, be unspeakably disastrous.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

About a twelvemonth subsequently to the latest of the events related in the preceding chapter, the good ship La Belle Louise, of Havre de Grace, regular trader between that port and the coasts of the Pacific, was returning from a prolonged, but prosperous voyage. It was the third voyage which Monsieur le Capitaine Morel had ever made in that distinguished capacity. And as the brave Norman, after a life spent on salt water, had married a wife only on returning from his first voyage as captain, he may perhaps be excused if, on leaping ashore on the quay at Havre from the boat which had brought him from his ship in the offing, his first thought was to run for a hurried visit to No. 10, Rue de la Côte, instead of, as in strict duty bound, hastening at once to the office of his owners. The long hours of many a dreary middle watch, as La Belle Louise was ploughing her way through the long rolling swell of the Atlantic with a favouring breeze from the west, had been rendered less tedious by thoughts of Marie Morel, née Givray, in her snug neat little home at No. 10, Rue de la Côte.

During his first voyage as captain, such hours had been mainly cheered by somewhat less peaceful thinkings of the bright dark eyes, fair clear cheeks, and trim figure of Marie Givray. The second voyage had been filled with thoughts quite as closely circling round her, though more tranquilly. But during all the hours of this third voyage, which duty would spare to such dalliance with home fancies, it was not the wife, though as dear as ever—dearer, Captain Morel would have sworn—who had the husband's thought all to herself. For before her husband had started on this third voyage, Marie had presented him with a little daughter, the very miniature of herself, as he declared.

It had been a hard task to tear himself away from the mother and child, at the call of duty, when the former had barely recovered from her confinement. And never had Morel jumped on shore at the end of a voyage with so much of painful anxiety as he now felt.

He had not made two steps on the quay, however, before he was recognised by an acquaintance.

"What Morel, mon vieux! Is that you? The wife has been on the look out for you; but she hardly expected you for a week or so yet. You have made a fair wind of every breeze."

"All well at home?" asked the sailor, almost breathlessly.

"All well, my boy! And Madame Morel looking prettier than ever! Make haste up the hill."

"Mother and child all right?" asked Morel again, observing with quick misgiving that the other had not mentioned the latter object of his anxiety.

"Mother and child! I passed down the Rue de la Côte yesterday, and saw 'em both! And as pretty a babe as one would wish to look on. Allez, Monsieur Morel! Mais . . . . qu'est ce que vous avez là, mon vieux! What is that little chap you have in your hand there? Hein? Are you going to take him home to Madame Morel, eh? One would say that it was permissible to doubt of the welcome in store for ce petit moutard là!"

The "petit moutard" thus alluded to was a fine-looking child some two years old, or a month or two more, whom Morel was tenderly and carefully leading by the hand; certainly a strange enough present for the young captain to be bringing home to his wife from his long voyage.

"Pas de farces, ami Gigoux!" returned the captain, half seriously, though with a laugh in his eye. "Marie will have a very cordial welcome for the little fellow, never fear; a child intrusted to my care . . . . having a wife that can look after him, and one of my own. But that concerns nobody but me and Marie. Au revoir!"

"Come along, little man!" he continued, speaking to the child, who clung with a scared air to his hand; "I suppose I must carry you up the hill. There, put your arm round my neck, and sit fast. That's it; now we will be at home in the twinkling of an eye! Those may laugh that like at the trouvaille Captain Morel is bringing home to his wife! I know my Marie better than that."

And thus speaking and thinking, the brave captain, relieved of his anxiety as to the well-being of his dear ones, trudged on with the child sitting upon his shoulder, and in a very few minutes found himself at the door of No. 10, Rue de la Côte.

The knock of the bright brass knocker on the bright green door was almost instantly answered by the appearance of a still brighter female head in a spotless "cauchoise" cap at a window of the second floor; such appearance for an instant barely sufficient to allow the captain, who had taken the child from his shoulder, and was now holding him by the hand, to catch a glimpse of the cap and the head it surmounted, and to hear the little shriek of delight which accompanied the disappearance of it again within the window.

In the next instant Marie was at the open door, breathless with pleasure, and with the speed with which she had rushed down the stairs; a condition which was not improved by the vigour of the embrace in which her husband's arms encircled her.

"Oh, mon ami, how I have wearied for this minute! You are well, my cabbage!" (This the good Norman woman said, because she was very fond of her husband.) "You are well! I see it! Ma foi! You look younger and better than you did when you went away! Absence agrees with you, méchant! Come in! Come and see our little Marie! She is lovely as an angel! and so grown! It is a true wonder! Come in! Are we to pass the rest of the day in the street?"

So saying, the young wife turned towards the foot of the staircase, and her husband followed her, shutting the door, and leading the child, who had been observing the foregoing scene with grave and wondering eyes, along the passage.

"Mais—what have we here then?" said Marie, turning round at the foot of the stairs, and taking heed of the "little stranger" for the first time. "Qu'est que c'est que cet enfant, Morel? Qu'est ce que ça veut dire, mon ami?"

And there was a sort of little catch in the speaker's breath, and a shade of misgiving in her manner as she asked these questions, which did not escape her husband's ear.

"Let us go up-stairs, ma bien aimée! There is nothing to conceal from you, and nothing to vex you, my dearest wife. Tu me connais n'est ce pas? Allez donc! But my heart is yearning to embrace our little Marie. We will speak of this little one afterwards."

And then the captain, treading very gingerly, and thereby causing his boots to make more noise by their creaking than the most careless step would have made, was led to the side of the cradle in which the little Marie was reposing, with an air of reverential mystery on the part of his wife, which bespoke her consciousness of the ineffable and unparalleled glory of the sight that was about to burst upon her husband's eyes.

It is rarely that a father's raptures can visibly attain the height demanded by a mother's wondering adoration of her first babe. But perhaps a seafaring life is good in that respect. A captain of a ship don't see babies every day, and sees his own after perhaps a twelvemonth's absence from it, and a twelvemonth's thinking of the absent ones at home. The result in Captain Morel's case was a frame of mind nearly adequate, even in his wife's opinion, to the greatness of the occasion. The bronzed and abundantly bearded sailor stood by the cradle-side, with shoulders raised and hands half lifted, as if longing but not daring to take the wonderful creature in his arms, while his head bent down rested on his great broad chest, and a smile of intense delight slowly came over his face, as just one great tear gathered in either eye.

The child opened wide its large deep blue eyes as he stood thus, and staring up steadily into the face above her, oh, wonder of wonders! said with unmistakable distinctness, "Dada!"

There was a theme for after-talk, and ever newly springing wonder and delight! Captain Morel was never tired of discussing the portent with his wife; but I do not think that he spoke much of it to his friends out of doors. But how often the wondrous tale was repeated by Madame Morel to every mother in the Rue de la Côte, is a matter that passes the power of any statistician to estimate.

"Take her up, Jean!" said Marie, nodding gravely to her husband, as became the seriousness of the occasion, but with a suppressed chuckle of delight in her voice. "You may take her in your arms—carefully, you know—carefully, mon ami!" she repeated, fluttering, with her own hands ready to remedy on the instant any awkwardness on the part of the sailor father, as he availed himself, not without some trepidation, of the privilege accorded to him.

All this time the little stranger boy had been standing with his little shoulder leaning against the corner of a chair near the door of the room, very gravely watching all that had passed; but not approvingly, as it seemed, for one little finger was squeezed into the corner of one eye, and there was a little movement of the lips, which seemed to indicate that a rising roar of weeping was only suppressed by the awe of the new circumstances and strange surroundings.

At length, when all the varied and never-before-equalled perfections of the little Marie had been duly pointed out and descanted on; and when the captain had sat down with his child in his arms in an excruciatingly constrained and unprecedented attitude, intended to afford security against the possibility of little Marie jumping, or sliding, or rolling, or slipping, or oozing out of his arms on to the floor, Madame Morel allowed her attention to revert to the little stranger. Marie by this time had, by some female system of logic, reached the conclusion that, however mysterious the appearance of the strange child might be, and however vividly her curiosity might be excited by the mystery of it, there was nothing in the matter that could give any umbrage to her feelings as a wife.

"Come hither, my little man," she said, calling the child across the room to her, and opening her arms, as she sat beside her husband, to serve as a sort of haven into which he might run with safety at the conclusion of his voyage across the bricked floor; "come hither and tell me thy name."

The child came across to her, not with a run, as little Marie was wont to do, but slowly, staidly, and gravely stumping in careful fashion, and pausing once or twice to redress his balance.

"Now tell me thy name, little slow and sure!" she said, encircling him, not untenderly, with her arms, as he arrived.

"Zean!" said the child, looking up into her face with a melancholy gravity.

"Jean!" said Marie, turning to her husband; "that is your name, mon ami!"

"Yes, I gave him mine, for want of a better; but whether he has ever been baptised or no, and whether he may have any other name, I can't say," said the captain.

"Mon Dieu! And where . . . . Has he any other name?" asked Marie, more and more mystified.

"I have called him Jean Delaroche, seeing that it was necessary to call him something. But what his real name is, I have no more notion than you have, wife. Tenez! the child was intrusted—yes; intrusted to me," continued the captain, after a pause, as if he had doubted for a minute of the propriety or exactitude of the phrase, but had been satisfied that it was correct, on consideration; "but let us wait till we have put the poor tired little fellow to bed, and then I will tell you all about it, and a queer story it is. I won't speak of it before him; for he is a cute little chap, and understands more than you would think for. And it is just as well not to freshen up any remembrance he may have on the subject, as you will see. The fact is,

that I have no more idea than you have who he is; and be it as it may, he shall be sent away out of the house in some way or other, if you do not like to keep him here. It is, as I said, a queer story enough; but you know, Marie, that when I tell you anything, I don't tell you lies!"

Marie felt no doubt that the story her husband promised her would be the perfect truth; and she made up her mind to wait as patiently as she could for the gratification of her curiosity, till she and Jean Morel should find themselves alone.

And it was very soon determined between the captain and his wife that the little Jean should remain with them. He was evidently about the same age as their own child, and would be, Marie said, an excellent playfellow for her; much better than that she should be alone in the house, or dependent for playfellows on the children of the neighbours, who might be anything, for what they knew.

Perhaps the little Jean might be somewhat older than their Marie, he was so grave and staid in his manner; but that might be due to the circumstances under which he had passed the first months of his life. He seemed a strong, healthy child, dark in complexion, with regular and rather delicately cut features, and very fine large eyes.

So, when Captain Morel again went to sea, Jean Delaroche was left with the good and kind Marie. And there was a nine days' wonder among the neighbours; and the young wife had to endure at first a few malicious smiles, and nods, and knowing winks, and assertions, that "Vraiment Madame Morel était d'une bontè envers son mari! mais d'une bontè par trop naive! c'etait inconcevable!" on the part of her dear friends and neighbours. But she had her logic, and had drawn her conclusions, and was not to be shaken in them. And when the nine days were over little Jean Delaroche was accepted in the Rue de la Côte as a fait accompli; and the chattering came to an end. And Madame Marie had kept her husband's secret. The most assiduous of the chatterers, and the most spiteful of the dealers in winks and insinuations, had alike failed to extract from her one iota of information on the subject.

And gradually, and more on the initiative of little Marie than of little Jean, the two children grew to be great and close friends. And, of course, Jean began to call Marie his little wife; and Marie made no objection whatever to being so called, until Captain Morel had gone forth and returned some ten times on as many voyages to the far shores of the Pacific. Then she began to say that it was nonsense talking in that way, and thought that she and Jean ought rather to consider themselves as brother and sister.

One day, on the captain's return after a longer absence than usual—a voyage of nearly fifteen months—on his asking Marie—now grown to be a tall slip of a girl, not nearly so pretty as she had been two years before, and still less pretty than she would be two years later—after her little husband Jean, Marie tossed her head, and told him she did not like such nonsense.

The captain and his good wife had a longish talk that night, after the children were gone to bed, and it turned mainly upon the desirability of "doing something" with reference to young Delaroche. It began to become manifest to the excellent couple that the time would soon come when it would not be desirable that he and their daughter should continue to live on the terms they had hitherto been on under the same small roof. It was all very well talking about sisters and brothers; but people don't become each other's sisters and brothers by deciding to call themselves so. On the other hand, it was very expedient that some forethought should be taken as to the future destination of the poor foundling. It would, of course, be necessary that he should do something for his living.

The result of this conversation was, that before the worthy couple laid their heads on their pillows, it had been settled between them that the captain should on the morrow go to Rouen to pay a visit to his brother, the Reverend Ignace Morel, who was a canon of the cathedral there, and very comfortably off. If he could be induced to take the lad, partly as a servant, partly as a protégé, such an arrangement would, doubtless, be the means of giving the boy something more of education than he was likely to get in any other manner, and at the same time would put him in the way of earning his own livelihood.

The captain was not one of the men who, when they have taken a resolution, allow a habit of procrastinating to interfere with it, on the pretence of further "thinking about it." On the morrow, as had been settled between him and his wife, he started for Rouen, and took Jean Delaroche with him. The parting between Madame Morel and Marie and the boy, who had so long been as one of themselves, was not a dry-eyed one. But boys must go forth into

the world, and at the age of young Delaroche they are rarely disinclined to do so.

On the next day the captain returned to Havre alone. The notion had turned out a most fortunate one. The reverend canon was, as it happened, just then in want of such a lad in his establishment. He had been much pleased with Jean, and Mademoiselle Vezin, the priest's old housekeeper, took quite a fancy to him at first sight.

"I am right glad that it has been all so fortunately settled. Ignace will be good to the boy, I know. He will do better for him than we could have done. And it would not have done for him to continue much longer here," said the captain.

"No doubt of that, poor little fellow! I hope he will do well, for I have quite got to love the child, and that is the truth."

"Yes, you women are for all the world like the hens. You get to love anything that you are set to brood over," said the captain, laughing.

"Fi donc, Jean Morel. Comme si c'etoit——"

"Ta, ta, ta! ne nous fachous pas. Est ce que jè ne connois pas le cœur de ma bonne Marie. Come, let us be off to bed," said the captain.

And thus the destiny of Jean Delaroche was settled.

CHAPTER IV.

In sending the boy Jean Delaroche to the Reverend Ignace Morel at Rouen, the good captain and his wife had done even better for him than they had ventured to hope. The little fellow seemed admirably well fitted to suit such a position as that which had been made for him in the family of the well-to-do canon of the Norman capital. Gentle, docile, intelligent, and graver in his disposition and manner than seemed to be proper to his years, he soon endeared himself both to the priest, who was a man some fifteen years older than his brother, the merchant-service captain, and—which was perhaps still more important—to the strictly firm and proper Mademoiselle Vezin, the canon's gouvernante.

Before he had been a month in the priest's service, the gouvernante, whose claim to that title was based on the most etymological accuracy, had declared that it was truly a credit to the establishment to have such a lad as a member of it. Mademoiselle Vezin's mind had been sore vexed, and her temper severely tried, by a long series of undesirable predecessors to Jean Delaroche, that it was a most welcome comfort to her to be waited on and obeyed by so staid a lad as little Jean. He was beginning to be very good-looking also, dark of hair and eye, and olive pale of cheek, which did not make the pleasant respectableness of having such a lad any the less acceptable in the gouvernante's eyes. As for the priest himself, he was quite charmed with the quick intelligence and aptitude for study which the lad manifested.

Every morning from the time when the canon returned from early morning mass at the neighbouring grand old church, till eleven o'clock, the hour of his reverence's déjeuner, little Jean was closeted with his master in the canon's study for the purpose of receiving all the instruction which the good priest was able to impart. Of course this included, nay, mainly consisted of, instruction in the Latin language. The boy could already read and write, and was probably a better arithmetician than his master. And what naturally could come next, if it were not the rudiments of Latin?

How the path in life of a serving-man could be likely to be made more easy or pleasant to him by a knowledge of Latin, the good priest might have been puzzled perhaps to say, and probably never asked himself. But it was good to impart instruction, and surely, when one could already read and write, the next thing meant by education was Latin.

So little Jean went through the Latin grammar; and the canon began to be proud of as well as pleased with his pupil. Others of the cathedral clergy were invited to hear how wonderfully the Reverend Chanoine Morel's errand boy could conjugate amo, amas, amavi in every mood and tense, and even audio, audis, audivi, down to the gerunds and supines. And then the ambitious canon ventured onwards to the Colloquies of Erasmus. And then his still increasing success began to suggest to him the idea, that so gifted an intelligence, joined to so excellent a disposition, ought certainly to be secured to the service of the Church.

It cannot be denied, I think, that the Church of Rome has ever been more true to herself and to her interest in such matters than our own. Certainly it would have been a very strange and unusual thing for an English rector to think of causing his footboy to be brought up for the Church because he happened to be a good and brightly intelligent lad. And it is equally certain that there was nothing very extraordinary or unprecedented, among the clergy of the Reverend Ignace Morel's

church, in the idea which presented itself to the canon.

The first step which he took towards the realisation of it was to obtain for his pupil a place as chorister in the cathedral church to which he himself belonged, a matter which, as Jean Delaroche among other good gifts developed a good voice, was not at all difficult. And this position, though serving, as it were, to set the Church's mark on him, was not incompatible with his continuance, for the present, in his position in the canon's household, and the prosecution of his education.

As time went on, the canon's notion approved itself more and more to his mind. And before the boy was fifteen it had been a settled thing that he was to be duly educated for the priesthood. Others of the cathedral clergy had been led to take an interest in him. And when he had reached fifteen there was no difficulty in procuring for him a "bourse" at the seminary attached to the diocese.

Doubtless the young seminarist's career was not accomplished without some drawing of the strings of the canon's well-replenished purse. But such demands must have been moderate. And for such a purpose, no doubt, the audit for the supplies was passed without much difficulty by that severe auditor, Mademoiselle Vezin, the canon's gouvernante.

It was about three years after Delaroche had entered the seminary, that one morning a letter was brought to the canon from Havre, containing very sad tidings. Poor Madame Morel, his sister-in-law, was dead. Happily the good captain had been at home at the time, and his Marie had breathed her last in his arms. It was a consolation, though a very bitter one, that it should have been so. Poor Morel was heartbroken as it was, but it would have been worse for him to have returned from sea to find his home desolate.

But it was necessary for him to go to sea again, and that shortly. Though the captain had done well, he had not yet laid up such store for his old age, and specially for his little Marie, that he could afford to nurse his grief in idleness. Besides, he had the good sense to know that, in every way, work was best for him. To sea, therefore, he would go, at the time fixed for his sailing by his present engagement with his owners—about three weeks from the date of his wife's death.

And the most immediate care, therefore, that pressed upon him was for the safe disposal of his sole remaining treasure, his little Marie—no longer such, indeed, on anybody's lips but her father's, but a tall, and singularly beautiful girl of eighteen.

Poor Morel had nobody to turn to in this need save his brother. He had, indeed, little doubt that his brother would gladly take the charge of his niece, but he knew that there was a superior power to be consulted. The captain had no idea of imposing a burden, in a pecuniary sense, on his brother. He had no need to do so. He was well able to provide for his child's expenses. And he had a strong trust that this view of the matter might render the gouvernante not inexorable. In fact, in the priest's little household, the rule that where there is enough for one there is enough for two was eminently applicable. And, indeed, the addition of a boarder, paying for her entertainment, in such a family was equivalent to a decided saving or increase of means. Captain Morel was too much a Norman for these considerations not to have presented themselves to him, or for him not to be quite aware that they would have their due weight with Mademoiselle Vezin. Nevertheless, the fear of having one who might become a rival too near the throne would very possibly weigh more with the gouvernante, who had ruled sole and supreme for so many years. And the brave captain was anxious and ill at ease till he should get a reply to the letter he had written to his brother.

"This is sad news, mademoiselle," said the canon, looking up from his arm-chair into the gouvernante's face, as she stood behind him, looking over his shoulder as he read the letter—not surreptitiously, for it was quite a matter of course that she should read his letters; "very sad news, indeed. Poor Marie! She has died very young. What a pretty creature she was."

"Beauty won't keep folks alive, Monsieur le Chanoine. Au contraire," said Mademoiselle Vezin, pushing a truism into a falsehood in the energy of her conviction on the subject.

"C'est bien vrai!—bien vrai!" said the canon, abstractedly. "My brother does not say whether poor Marie had all her sacraments duly; but doubtless she had—doubtless. My brother is a good man, and a pious. I will say twenty masses for the repose of her soul myself. Poor Marie! Requiescat in pace."

"Mais, il me semble, Monsieur le Chanoine, that it is not exactly that that Monsieur le Capitaine asks of you, though, doubtless, he is a very pious Christian."

"He would not have thought of it in the

first violence of his grief, you know. But he would wish it all the same. Poor Marie!"

"No doubt, no doubt, Monsieur le Chanoine," returned the gouvernante, with a little impatience, "but don't you see what he does ask you?"

"About little Marie, about the child? Of course she must come here, ma bonne Vezin. Jean cannot take her to sea with him, don't you see, and she a child in arms only the other day."

"That was a good many days ago, your reverence. Marie Morel is just about the same age as notre Jean. I remember that. She must be seventeen, if she is a day."

"But even if she is, ma très-chère, it would hardly do for her father to take her to sea with him. From all I have heard I should not think a ship a good place for a young person at that time of life—for my niece, you know, Vezin."

"No, your reverence. I should think not. But the question is, what is to be done with the young lady?"

"There is the room over the study, which opens from your own chamber, Vezin. Would not that be well adapted for little Marie?"

"Your reverence has decided on having her here then? But I think it would be well to remember that she is not 'little Marie' any more, but a young person of eighteen, which is quite another matter."

The canon perceived that he had made a blunder, that he had been too precipitate, and he hastened to repair the error.

"As for having her here, poor child, the lodging of her is, of course, the least part of the matter. And it would be altogether out of the question, if it were not for you, ma bonne Vezin. What could I do with a young person of eighteen? The grand question is, whether you could be persuaded to undertake the superintendence and formation of her? Had it not been for the knowledge that you are so eminently fitted for such a trust, my brother would never have thought of sending the poor girl to me. Of course it will be a great burden on your shoulders, my poor friend. But I think you will find the child docile and obedient. She has been well brought up. And perhaps—perhaps, ma chère Vezin, you might find the house less dull and dreary if you had such a companion."

"Oh! pour ça! your reverence knows that I want no companionship beyond such as you are good enough to accord me. I have never wanted any other these fourteen years, and I am not likely to begin to wish for it now. If the young person comes here" (the canon knew at this point of the conversation that the object was gained) "if she is to come here, of course I shall do my duty by her. That your reverence knows."

"That I am quite sure of, ma chère Vezin," put in the canon.

"But in order to do it effectually, it will be absolutely necessary that I should have authority over the young lady, and that such authority should be respected and upheld."

"Authority! Of course your authority must be upheld and respected. Ma foi! Without that we should all be in a bad way."

"It is true, that in another point of view the arrangement would not be a disadvantageous one," pursued the mollified gouvernante. "The terms proposed by Monsieur le Capitaine are not illiberal. It cannot be denied that two in a family do not cost the double of one. Certainly the arrangement will be a profitable one, as, indeed, it ought to be, for there will be care and trouble enough."

And thus it was arranged that Marie Morel was to be domiciled in her reverend uncle's house.

Some eight years previously Jean Delaroche had been sent to live under the canon's roof, very mainly for the purpose of separating him from the captain's daughter, then a pretty child. Now circumstances, those all-powerful shapers of human destinies, were sending Marie Morel, a lovely girl of eighteen, after him. For though it was true that his home was now at the seminary, Delaroche was naturally a frequent visitor at the house of his patron, and would assuredly have abundant opportunities of seeing Marie, unless, indeed, he were forbidden to come thither in order to prevent such meetings.

But then Delaroche was now, not, it is true a vowed, but a destined priest. And of course that made all the difference.

Now ready, price 5s. 6d., bound in green cloth,

THE FOURTH VOLUME

OF THE NEW SERIES OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

To be had of all Booksellers.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

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