

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XLII. THE SKY CLEARING.

LADY VERNON passed from the great drawing-room, smiling; but as she traversed the two rooms that lie between it and the hall, the light rapidly faded from her features, and her face grew dark. Across the hall she went, and entered first one lonely room, then another, until she found herself, at last, in the shield-room.

In deep abstraction, she walked slowly about this room, gazing, one after the other, at the armorial bearings, with their quarterings, "gules" and "or," of the Rose and the Key. Looking on her face, you would have thought that she was reading malignant oracles on the wall. She did not see these things. The eyes of her spirit were opened, and she saw, in the abstraction of horror, far beyond them, the pictures of a tragedy.

Then she stood still at the window, looking out upon a cloistered square, hedged round with yew. Dark yew-trees, trimmed into odd shapes, stand in files along the sward, and many arches are cut in the quadrangle of yew hedge that forms the inner and narrower square, and white statues gleam faintly in the shadow.

Neither did she see this funeral cloister, rising as it recedes, and backed by the solemn foliage of masses of Roydon timber.

She sighed heavily again and again at long intervals. She was restless, and looked round the room, and then left it, going through a corridor, and passing up a narrower staircase, to her own room.

It was her custom to read in her morning room every day, for only five minutes, or fifteen, or sometimes for nearly an hour, between one and two.

Latimer, her dark, silent, active maid, by no means young, was in attendance, as was her wont, in the dressing-room, from which opens Lady Vernon's smaller morning room.

Into this the lady passed; Latimer, stiff and angular, following her to the door, with soft tread, and there awaiting orders.

"Are you quite well, please, my lady?" she asked, with the privilege of an old servant, looking a little hard at her mistress.

"Quite, thanks—that is, very well—yes, I'm very well. I think, Latimer, I shan't want you," she said, seating herself at the table, and placing her hands on the large, noted Bible that lies there, and sighing again heavily.

She opened it, she turned over the leaves slowly; they lay open at the Gospel of St. John.

Latimer, with a tread soft as a cat's, withdrew.

"Have I lost the power to collect my ideas?" said Lady Vernon. "I'm excited. If my heart did not beat quite so fast! Ah, yes, I know how that must end."

She got up and walked restlessly to the rows of prettily bound books, and stood as if reading their backs for a time, and passed on in abstraction. The first thing that recalled her was the sight of her face in the porcelain-framed mirror.

"Yes, I do look a little ill," she said, as she saw the hectic fire in her cheeks. "My God! that such a thing should have befallen!" she almost cried suddenly, lifting her hand to her temple. "I have lost him—I have lost him—I have lost him! What has gone right with me? Oh, God! why am I pursued and tortured?"

She began to tremble like a person pierced with cold, and this trembling be-

came more violent. It was a continued shudder. After a time it subsided. She felt faint and ill. But her agitation had, in a measure, quieted.

She knelt, but she could not "lift up her heart," or fix her mind.

She sat down again, and looked on the open Bible. Her eye rested on the text:

"Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

It glared on her from the page, like the sudden reality of her smouldering despair.

"Yes, God has hidden his face for ever from me. I seek him, and cannot find him, and where he is, thither I cannot come," she muttered, with clasped hands, and eyes raised. She sat for a time silently in a dull misery.

An idea had taken possession of her. It did not make her love Maud better. It was that she had heard, or guessed at, the suspicions which were conveyed in the rumour that officious Mr. Tintern had mentioned—the rumour that she, Lady Vernon, liked Captain Vivian—and this demonstration of Maud's, she thought, whether she cared or not about him, was meant to take him away from her. She would not yet be quite sure that Maud liked him. She had watched that closely. What insane malice that girl must have!

But a woman of her strong will, pride, and ability, could not be very long incapacitated, and in a little time she had resolved upon several things.

She shut the big Bible, that still lay open, with an angry clap.

"I have asked for help, and it has been denied me," she said, sourly and fiercely to herself, with an odd mixture of faith and profanation. "I shall see what I can do without it."

The first thing she resolved was to send instantly for Mr. Dawe. Once she decided upon a measure, she did not waste time over its execution.

She glanced at her image in the glass. She was looking a little more like herself. She felt better. Her confidence was returning.

Not a human being should trace in her features, manner, conversation, the least evidence of her sufferings and her resolution. She would meet them more easily and cheerfully than ever.

She paused at the door, till she had decided what would be the most rapid and potent mode of invoking Mr. Dawe. She stood in deep thought for a minute, with

stern lips and brows knit, and her dark eyes wandering—the image of a beautiful Thracian witch.

This point at last determined, she opened the door quickly, and Mr. Dawe himself stood before her in the lobby. Mr. Dawe, in his black-caped coat, shiny leather leggings, and black wig, his low-crowned hat in his left hand. His right arm was extended, for he was on the point of knocking, if he had not been arrested by the unexpected opening of the door.

The figure stood with arm extended and knuckle bent, and its dark furrowed features lighted by the fixed eyeballs that were staring at her.

Very unusually for him, he was first to speak.

"Latimer said you were here. I was going to knock. You are pretty well?"

"Very well, thanks; I'm so glad to see you. You remember this room?"

He followed her in, and shut the door.

"Perfectly," he answered, rolling his eyes round the room.

"Sit down. The gong will soon sound for luncheon. Let us talk a little first, and tell me—it seems an inhospitable way of putting it, but it is so difficult to move you in the direction of Roydon—what has brought you here? Nothing that is not pleasant, I hope?"

She looked in his face.

"Something—I am not at liberty to tell what—that may affect Captain Vivian very seriously."

"Nothing in his profession?" said the lady, in alarm.

"Nothing," says Mr. Dawe.

"Surely you can tell me what it is?" she urged.

"Certainly I cannot," he answered.

"Is it money?"

"I shall answer nothing at present. You ask in vain."

"Surely you will say yes or no to that?"

"To nothing. No. If that guess were not right you would go on to another, and so my refusing at last to answer would imply that you were right."

"Well, I shall learn by-and-bye whether you won't yield a little."

"You shall," he answered.

"You mean you won't. Tell me, then, generally, what you are going to do," said the lady.

"To remain here two or three days with Captain Vivian," he answered.

"No," she said. "You have come to take him away."

"H'm!" replied Mr. Dawe; and his prominent eyes stared in her dark ones. "How soon?"

"This afternoon," she answered, decisively.

"That's untoward," he said, lowering his hand, and looking down.

"Why untoward?" she persisted.

"I can't tell you yet."

"It may be; if it be I'm sorry; but it is inevitable. He must go this afternoon."

As she thus spoke, the old gentleman's eyes fixed on her with a look of inquiry, and were then lowered again; and he nodded once or twice slightly, as if affirmatively to some thought of his own.

"He can return—he shall return," she said, softly, laying her pretty hand on the old man's arm.

"In the mean time, you begin to feel that you were precipitate?" he said, dryly.

"No," she answered, passionately. "He shall return in a few days. I will lose my life rather than lose him. I will write, and he shall come again."

"How soon?"

"Ten days—a fortnight perhaps; perhaps in a week. But at present he must go."

"So be it," he said. "I wanted to tell you that they have extended his leave four weeks."

"I thank Heaven," she said, gently and fervently. "I thought they would. I thought I knew how to accomplish that."

"I came to your door here to tell you. It is near your luncheon hour. Yes; eight minutes to two. Vivian will be at luncheon. I don't lunch, but I don't mind going in. I must not let him slip through my fingers."

"You're not offended with me?" she pleaded.

"Who? I? I never was offended in my life," said the dark little gentleman, in perfect good faith.

"It seems so unaccountable and unkind," she continued; "but I can't help it, and I can't explain yet, any more than you can; at least you won't ask me."

"No, certainly," he interposed.

"And you have been very kind in this matter," she added.

"Respecting Captain Vivian?"

"Yes, very kind," she repeated.

"No, not kind—savage. But I have done what, all things well considered, I thought wisest. That is all," he said, and took the pinch of snuff he held in his fingers.

"Well, I am grateful. I thank you from

my heart, and I am going to beg another favour," she went on. "You will not tell him that it is I who wish him to leave Roydon at present, but give him some other reason."

"I'll give him no reason," said Mr. Dawe.

"Will you take it on yourself?"

"Certainly."

"You have not seen him since you came?" she asked.

"No."

"So much the better; and you must come as well as he: you promise?"

"Yes, I must come, and the sooner the better, for him at least."

"You will find them now at luncheon. I'll follow you when I have put up my books."

She did not care to enter the room at the same moment with Mr. Dawe, or that people should suppose that they had been conferring.

CHAPTER XLIII. AN TOMARCHI.

DOCTOR MALKIN was the only guest present, except Mr. Dawe, for, by this time, we have come to regard Captain Vivian almost as one of the family.

Maud, looking quite lovely, but professing to be very much fatigued by her exertions at the Wymering ball, was chatting gaily with Miss Max and Captain Vivian as Lady Vernon came in.

That handsome lady was the only one of the party whom fatigue, to judge by her looks, had touched. Quite at her ease she seemed, and joined very gaily in the general talk.

Doctor Malkin at first was too busy to contribute much to the conversation, but he soon became less absorbed.

"I saw you, Doctor Malkin, at the ball last night," said Maud; "but I don't think you danced?"

"No, certainly," said Doctor Malkin.

"Well, I think you were right," put in Miss Max, who did not like him. "Would not a dance of doctors be rather like a dance of death?"

"Awfully grisly," acquiesced the doctor, with a laugh. "No, I don't go to frighten the people; I attend merely as a spectator, to evidence my loyalty. You know, it is a very loyal celebration; and, besides, one meets one's friends; and then there is supper; and, after all, a nobody who doesn't dance may slip away whenever he pleases, and no one misses him."

"Yes, except his friends," said Miss

Vernon; "and I'm so glad you mentioned them, because I wanted so much to ask you about one in particular, whose appearance I thought very striking. You told me you remarked him also, Captain Vivian?"

"I know, yes; the man with the dark face, and very odd eyes, and black beard, cut as square as a book," said the fair-haired captain. "If he had not been so very odd-looking, I should have thought him almost handsome."

"I thought him quite handsome," said Maud; "he had such a strange, energetic, commanding countenance. I felt that I could not quite decide whether he looked like a great man, or only a great charlatan, but still there was something so striking about him, and so interesting, that it was hard to take one's eyes off him while he was in sight."

"I was trying to remember, last night after we came home," said Maximilla Medwyn, "where I had met him before, for I know I did meet him somewhere, and now I recollect perfectly, it was at Lady Mardykes', whose house is, I think, one of the most charming and wonderful places in the world. She has every one that is worth seeing or knowing, I do believe, in the habitable world, and she is such good company herself, and so clever, and I have been trying to remember his name."

"Would you remember it if you heard it?" asked the doctor, who had once or twice essayed to put in a word, with a smile.

"I'm certain I should—I think I should," answered Miss Max.

"Was it Antomarchi?"

"The very thing, said Miss Max, much relieved. "The same name, I think, as the physician's at St. Helena—Napoleon's, I mean. Then he is the very person I remember meeting at Lady Mardykes'. What is he?"

"A physician; a very accomplished one," said Doctor Malkin. "He has written some of the ablest papers extant in our medical journals."

"Is he any relation of Napoleon's physician?" asked Miss Vernon.

"Very distant, if any," answered the doctor.

"Have not we talked enough about doctors?" said Lady Vernon, a little impatiently.

"Only one word more," pleaded Miss Max. "I do assure you, Barbara, if you had seen him you would have been just as curious as I."

"I don't know a great deal about him," said Doctor Malkin, suddenly cooling upon the subject, in which, up to then, he had appeared very well up.

"Where does he practise?" asked Miss Max.

"He tried London, where his writings had made him a reputation, but it did not do," Doctor Malkin answered, smiling a little uncomfortably, as if some awkward recollections were disturbing him, and the obliquity of his dark, close-set eyes looked, as whenever he was put out, a little more marked and sinister. "I can't say he practises anywhere as a physician. He is consulted, and he writes. The profession have a very high opinion of him. I don't know him, that is, I can't say I am more than a—a—just a tolerated acquaintance and an admirer."

"Where does he live?" asked Miss Max.

"Oh—a—it is very stupid, but I really totally forget the name of the place," said Doctor Malkin.

"How far away?" persisted Miss Medwyn.

"How far away? I am the worst guesser of a distance in the world," says the doctor, looking up to the cornice, as if in search of an inspiration.

"You must let me ask a question, Max, if you think for the present we have talked enough about this Mr.—whatever his name is. I want to trouble Doctor Malkin with an inquiry," said Lady Vernon, who seemed to grow more and more uncomfortable under the inscrutable stare of eccentric Mr. Dawe's prominent brown eyes from the other side of the table. He seemed suddenly to become conscious that he had been treating the handsome face of that great lady a little too like a picture, and he rolled his eyeballs in another direction. Lady Vernon continued, "And how did you find poor old Grimston to-day?"

"She's a shade better, but you know she is a very old woman. I suppose she was here sixty years ago?"

"I dare say; more, perhaps," said Lady Vernon. "You know poor Rebecca Grimston?" she asked Maximilla, who acknowledged the acquaintance. "Well, poor thing, she had a fainting fit, about ten o'clock to-day. She had one about three months ago, and recovered so slowly that this alarmed me a good deal."

"Dear me! I had not an idea. I must have seemed so unfeeling, delaying you so long about Doctor Antomarchi. But I am so glad to hear she is better."

Lady Vernon had ever so many questions still to put to Doctor Malkin, and the doctor seemed to take a very special interest in old Mrs. Grimston's case, and grew more and more animated and confidential.

Miss Max was now talking to Mr. Dawe, and now and then a little to Maud, and to Captain Vivian.

"I saw an old flame of yours at the ball last night," said Miss Max. "I'm sure you know who I mean."

"I don't," said Mr. Dawe, conclusively.

"You have had so many, I dare say. But this one you will remember when I tell you. It was Diana Rowley."

"Diana Rowley," repeated Mr. Dawe.

"Is Miss Rowley still living?"

"What a gallant question! Do you know she made precisely the same inquiry, in the same tone of wonder, when I mentioned you. Lovers dissemble their feelings so."

"She must have been eight or nine-and-twenty then."

"When?" interposed Miss Max.

"In the year thirty-four; June. Let me see, she must be sixty-three or sixty-four now; this is the twenty-eighth of August."

"She was slight, very good figure, and fine eyes," said Miss Max.

"Yes, she was comely," assented Mr. Dawe, reflectively.

"You used to say she was a little too thin," said Miss Max, "but she has improved. She is the fattest woman in the county now."

"Really!" exclaimed Mr. Dawe.

"Yes, and she has given up the only thing you used to complain of—she has given up riding to the hounds."

"H'm!" said Mr. Dawe.

"Well; then she is still approachable," continued Miss Max, cheerily. "She might have been married, I'm told, twice; but—I don't know who she has been waiting for."

"She must have known very well that Richard Dawe was not a marrying man. Tut, tut, Maximilla; you were always fond of quizzing people," said the old bachelor.

"You'd have done very well to marry her, though," said Maximilla.

"I don't see any good it would have done me."

"An infinity. She'd have given you a good shaking," said Maximilla, as they got up.

Miss Medwyn and Maud went together into the drawing-room, and then out among the flowers. Mr. Dawe signed to Captain Vivian, as he was leaving the luncheon-

room to follow the ladies, and he turned. Mr. Dawe led him to a window, where they had a quiet and earnest talk.

As Maud and Maximilla stood among the flowers, doubtful whether they would take a walk into the woods, or visit the conservatory first, Miss Max, who was looking in that direction, said suddenly:

"Oh, look there! Who can that be?"

Maud looked round, and saw a hired carriage, with luggage on the top, driving down the avenue.

"It can't be Mr. Dawe, for he told me, when he arrived, that he intended staying two or three days, and that Captain Vivian's leave was extended."

The ladies stood side by side looking after the carriage, until it was lost to sight.

"I should not be a bit surprised," said Miss Max, "if Barbara had ordered Captain Vivian to make a march to headquarters. Come in, and let us find out what it is."

There was no one in the hall as they passed. But in the drawing-room they found Lady Vernon.

"Who has gone away, Barbara?" inquired Miss Max.

Lady Vernon looked up, so as to see Maud's face as well as Maximilla's.

"One of Mr. Dawe's imperious whims. He has gone, and taken away Captain Vivian with him."

Maud felt that Lady Vernon's all-seeing eyes rested upon her for a moment as she said this, and her colour changed.

Lady Vernon did not seem to observe her embarrassment.

"Very sudden," said Max.

"And mysterious," added Lady Vernon.

"He came with the intention of remaining a few days, but he had a long talk with Captain Vivian, and the end of it was a total change of plans, and they came in here and took leave. It was all so sudden. I dare say Mr. Dawe will write to say something more. In the mean time we must only command our curiosity."

She laughed carelessly.

"But aren't they coming back?" asked Miss Max.

"They have not obliged me with any information. I don't know, either, that I could have them very soon, because I shall be going for some weeks to town, and Maud, I suppose, will be going to Lady Mardykes'. I don't think, Maximilla, you care about drawings like these" (there was an open portfolio before her), "ecclesiastical architecture and decoration?"

"No, not the least," she answered; "but I suppose you are busy just now."

"I'm obliged to look at these to say what I think of them. I should rather have left it to the committee, but as I have subscribed a good deal, they choose that I should tell them what I think."

"Then we may as well take our little walk to the woods, Maud."

And away they went.

But Miss Max, instead of going out, stopped in the hall, and said, all radiant with satisfaction, to Maud:

"Well, that is settled very quietly, and I am glad of it. You are to go to Lady Mardykes'. I was afraid to say a word, Barbara is so odd and suspicious, sometimes, and if she saw how pleased I was, it might have put it into her head to recal her permission. I'll write to Lady Mardykes this moment to tell her she may ask you, with every confidence that your mamma will interpose no difficulties."

So instead of going to the woods, Miss Max ran up to her dressing-room, and wrote a note to that effect.

THE LAST TOWN BESIEGED IN ENGLAND.

THE last siege that ever took place in England was that of Carlisle, by the Duke of Cumberland, on the retreat of the Pretender from Derby. It was a mere matter of a few days. The duke secured three hundred and ninety-six rebel prisoners on the capitulation of the town, and among these was Colonel Townley, governor of the place, whose head soon afterwards bleached on Temple Bar.

But it is an earlier, longer, and more picturesque siege of Carlisle that we would make the subject of the present paper. In May, 1644, after the overthrow at Marston Moor, Montrose fled to Carlisle Castle, and was there besieged by the Earl of Calendar, who had pursued him out of Scotland. After the taking of York, in July, 1645, Sir Thomas Glenham, commander-in-chief for King Charles in the north, came, with his forces, to Carlisle, expecting that General Leslie would lay siege to Carlisle; and, indeed, in the following October, Leslie appeared before the town. The next day, however, he left Carlisle, and marched on to besiege Newcastle.

This respite the Carlisle garrison spent in fetching in corn from the neighbouring fields, and in bringing meat, salt, coals, and

cows from Wigton. Provisions soon grew so abundant and cheap that an ox could be bought for eighteenpence. Sir Philip Musgrave, of Eden Hall, the king's lieutenant-general of Cumberland, was governor of Carlisle, and Sir Henry Stradling governor of the garrison. With them were Sir William Dalston, Sir Henry Fletcher, and other militia commanders, Philipson, a dashing cavalry officer, with some of the Whitecoat Regiment, and two hundred reformadoes, or officers discharged from the army by Cromwell's artful, self-denying ordinance. Sir Thomas Glenham was commander-in-chief.

A month later, Leslie, having filled up his regiments, returned and laid close siege to Carlisle, erecting his batteries at Newtown (a mile west of the town), and at Stanwick (on the north), Lord Kirkcudbright commanding at the latter place. Betwixt them and the town ran the Calder and the Eden, scarcely passable but by the bridges. On the north-east stood Colonel Lawson's guns, and at Harraby, near the gallows, Colonel Cholmley had placed his cannon. The Roundheads had four thousand horse and foot. The garrison and armed townsmen were about seven hundred. Leslie's head-quarters were at Dalston Hall (now a farm-house), four miles from the town. A party of Cavalier horse tried to surprise him on his arrival, but quarrelling about a leader and halting, the Cavaliers were ridden down by Captain Forester, Captain Birbeck was killed, and the rest chased for two miles. A few days after, Sir Thomas Glenham sallied out with a strong party of horse and a company of dragoons to attack Cholmley's battery at Harraby; but Captain Marshall and his dragoons, who had vowed to give no quarter, were beaten out after effecting an entry into the work. The suburbs were at this time all fired and pulled down, beginning with the houses and barns at Calder Bridge.

Six weeks passed in inaction, except for occasional skirmishes. The corn was taken from the citizens and rationed out from the magazine, and of the cattle the owners received only the head, heart, and liver, in addition to their fixed allowance. Every one had to give up his plate to be coined into money for the troops, and the citizens' houses were searched, to stop any malingering. The cattle in the fields outside the walls were duly guarded by a troop of cavalry, who kept their horses saddled and bridled, and their pistols in their holsters, ready at any movement of the enemy to mount, and charge. One day,

the enemy bearing down, the Cavaliers retreated till more troopers joined them from the city, then leaving the cattle by the Eden, they charged the Roundheads and drove them off, killing and wounding several, and taking two prisoners. Another day, some Cavaliers "vapouring" round Harraby, were attacked by the enemy, whom they chased to their batteries. Immediately the Scotch horse and musketeers began to swarm out of Newtown, but the Cavaliers slashed so many, that the musketeers ran behind Coldale Hall, and had the Royalists had a dozen foot they could have destroyed the enemy's batteries.

About this time Dr. Basire, Archdeacon of Northumberland, in a sermon reproved the garrison for excessive drinking, and the governor then appointed certain traders to supply each street with rations, although before that (such were the hopes of speedy relief) fifty bushels of malt had been used every week. Fuel growing scarce, the governor sent out all the horse and sixty foot with carts to Caldcoats (half a mile from the city), and within musket-shot of the Scotch works at Newtown, to bring away the timber of the houses in Leslie's very teeth. Half a score of the horse took four Scots and two cows, and being charged by Captain Noble and some Scotch horse, killed one of his men, unhorsed him, and brought him away prisoner, no Cavalier being hurt except one Simonds, who received a little cut on the head.

On the 28th of January, there was a pleasant rencontre that delighted the Cavaliers. Lieutenant Frisle, one of Leslie's officers lately arrived from France, and some dragoons, going on the Sands to catch a horse, marched over the Stone Bridge within pistol-shot of the wall, to carry off some linen that was drying there, there being no Cavalier horsemen at hand. The daring lieutenant blew a trumpet in defiance of the musketeers, who fired at him from the walls. John Hinks (alias Red Coat), a hot-blooded soldier, seeing this, could not contain himself, and, having no armour but his sword, ran out, and gave him five cuts on the head. The Scots at Stanwick seeing this, sent Lieutenant Barkly and another horseman to assist him; but gallant Hinks so galled them with stones, that Barkly, refusing quarter, was eventually twice struck to the ground, bruised, disarmed, and hauled by force into the town. Macarty, a friend of Hinks's, killed another trooper, and two other troopers arriving from the town, two more

Roundheads were killed, and one of Leslie's dragoons was brought in with no less than seventeen wounds in his head; nevertheless, the hardy rascal recovered within a few months. Poor vaunting Lieutenant Frisle was courteously used, and his wounds being tended, he was released. As for the stout-hearted Hinks, Sir Thomas Glenham sent for him, and to reward the example he had set the garrison, placed in his horny palm a gold broad-piece.

On the 2nd of February, Philipson, the most chivalrous and daring of all the Cavalier captains, rode out with sixteen horse to take the air near Botcherby. Joined by ten more Cavaliers, Philipson charged fifty of the enemy's foot, and at the first dash of swords killed and took six, and pursued the rest up to their works. The Roundhead horse, eighty in number, were gallantly kept at bay by a few Cavaliers. One of them pursuing too close, was shot in the breast, and died four days after. The Puritan horse soon gathered two hundred strong from Cummersdale, Blackhall, and Harraby, but only cut off one Cavalier straggler.

On the 15th of February, some Carlisle gentlemen and gentlewomen, without arms, rode a-hunting into Blackhall Fields (two miles south of Carlisle), and were pursued by a Roundhead troop from Harraby, but escaped. The next day some Cavalier horse beat up Cummersdale (a hamlet on the Calder, opposite Blackhall). The Parliament horse drew out at the challenge, and lined the hedges with foot, but the Cavaliers scattered both. In this skirmish, Captain Story, a Cavalier of Brough, was wounded in the head. The Scots fired a pistol at his back, and thought they had killed him, but his arms were pistol-proof, and he leaped a hedge, and escaped out of their hands. On the 17th of February some Cavaliers on the same road, straying behind their troop, were set on by twenty horse. Arnold, a trooper, was shot in the arm, and the same bullet disabled the arm of the gallant Hinks. A day later, Sir Thomas Glenham, "admiring the sweet temper of the enemy," "sailed" out with all his horse, two hundred foot, scaling ladders, and fire-balls. The Cavalier scouts beat off the Roundhead scouts, who, at last seeing the Cavaliers within musket-shot of Newtown works, galloped back and gave the alarm. The Roundhead musketeers instantly fled, not awaiting the firing of even one musket, and the Cavalier horse pursued. In the mean time the Carlisle foot

destroyed the works, took the commander, killed four men, capturing a great number of cloaks and arms, and twenty-four of the cowardly musketeers. The next morning half a score of drunken Scotch troopers dashed over Etterby Ford, and rode as far as the bridge, when one of them being shot in the breast, and another having his horse killed under him, they retreated. Captain Lainham, snatching a horse from a boy, leaped on it and charged their leader, Captain Patten, whom he wounded mortally and brought in to die. The slain horse being "a very stately beast and fat," was dragged into the town, and Sir Thomas Glenham ate part of him at his own table.

It was about this time that a ghost story (at least as well authenticated as most stories of this kind) threw a blue light upon the stern faces of the besiegers of Carlisle. The ghost of Captain Forester, a Roundhead officer, slain at the commencement of the siege, was said to appear nightly at the Botcherby battery, fiercely demanding of his old comrades if they were yet converted to the king, and when they cried "No," he would shout to Captain Philipson to fall upon them with horse and foot. On one occasion the Roundheads replied to this spirit's challenge by discharge of cannon, which at once brought reinforcements from their works at Stanwick, and two of their horsemen were drowned in crossing the ford at Rickerby (one mile and a half north-east of Carlisle). Major Barnes afterwards assured Philipson of the truth of this, and swore he could bring five hundred soldiers as eye-witnesses of the fact.

On the 1st of March, Corporal Wood and Lieutenant Bratlet stole out of the city, killed a Roundhead scout, whom they met near Botcherby, and got safe to the prince's army. That same day there was a parley with the enemy, and the sack went merrily round; but there was no talk of surrender, although only half a hoop of corn weekly was now allowed to each person, for there were two thousand one hundred bushels safe in the magazine. The same day intelligence coming that the prince had routed Fairfax, and killed two thousand Roundheads, there was great rejoicing at Carlisle, and the next day, as Leslie might be slinking off, the indefatigable Philipson rode to Newlathes and sent ten horse to Cummersdale, where they broke a company of foot, and pistolled four or five Scots with infinite satisfaction. On the

17th of March, Cornet Philipson (a brother of the captain), returned from Pontefract, where he had been to solicit aid from the king. While returning he was taken at Wetherby, and carried to York. Fairfax, finding the king's letter on Philipson, sentenced him to the rack the next day, but that same night the brave and slippery fellow leaped the walls and got away safe to Carlisle with the king's gracious promise to relieve the town by the 9th day of May. That night the Roundheads at Stanwick, looking across the Eden, saw the sky over Carlisle crimson with bonfires, and heard the roar of cannon that proclaimed the city's joy and defiance. Two days after this, Philipson, always full of fight, rode out to Blackhall with twelve horse, and charged a troop of sixty Roundheads. He was surrounded by two more troops from Botcherby and Harraby, and some of the troopers caught his bridle, and offered him quarter. But scorning to receive it from such crop-headed knaves, he slashed his way out and made good his retreat, having only one man wounded by Major Cholmley, who, pursuing close, ran him through the back. As they were entering the port Sir Thomas Glenham ordered them out again towards Newtown. At Catcoats they charged five times their number of Scots, pistol in hand, routed them, and killed one of their commanders. The Cavaliers suffered no hurt, but Philipson's horse was cut in the head. On the 22nd the enemy tried to entrap the Cavalier horse by sending false intelligence that the Westmoreland men had gathered at Penrith for their relief; but "old birds were not to be caught with chaff," says Tullie, the faithful and sarcastic chronicler of the siege. And nothing of importance occurred until the 28th of March, when the pleasantness of the day induced Sir Thomas Glenham, with some gentlemen and gentlewomen, to go out coursing near Botcherby. The Scots stood and watched them take a hare under their very noses, and at last made a feeble attack; but Captain Dixon running one of them through up to the hilt, they retreated. That same evening Quartermaster Wood and three more rode towards Botcherby. Captain Rose and half a dozen more tried to cut them off at the end of a stony lane. Wood and another turned on the enemy and drove back the pursuers, Wood slashing at Rose for eighty yards. If the other three Cavaliers had come up they would have been taken. Two days after this exploit, Wood, with two troopers and two of Sir

Thomas Glenham's servants, rode without orders towards Botcherby, and for mere love of adventure charged through fifty Scotch horse and routed them. Wood, in his retreat, was, however, shot in the groin; "he was hardly persuaded not to charge them again, but of this wound he died within a few days. The garrison lost in him a man of unparalleled courage and judgment in arms; yet, they lost more men in such unwarrantable skirmishes without order than in all commanded services in the siege."

Fodder, except thatch from houses, was all exhausted in the town by the 3rd of April, and the horses had to be sent out daily with a guard to graze. Sir Thomas Glenham, anxious to stir the country to relieve the town, sent Sir Thomas Dacre to Lanercost, to induce his tenants to fall on the Scotch on the 6th of April, but the heart of the Gilsland men failed them. This day all the cavalry were ordered out to surprise some cattle at Scotby. There were five parties sent, and in each of these about thirty horse. Captain Dixon's thirty were to ride straight to Scotby, and bring in as many cattle as they could. Forty-two reformadoes, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Minns, were to stay at the water-side and watch Harrabay. Captain Philipson's thirty were to face Botcherby. The fourth party, sixteen horse, under Captain Scisson, was to guard the Gallows Hill. Captain Toppam, with twelve horse, was posted on St. Nicholas Hill, while twenty dragoons held the ford in case of a retreat. Dixon drove home forty-two cows, Philipson check-mating the enemy's horse; Leslie sent a company of musketeers to intercept Dixon at Durran Hill (a mile and a half east of Carlisle), but Dixon boldly drove his spoil within twenty yards of them, and lost only one horse and one cow. Horse and foot were soon pouring out to rescue the cattle, and Minns sent fourteen horse to harass the reinforcements. The Roundheads, despising this small force, marched by them without notice. Lainham, one of the fourteen, instantly bravely charged on their flank, routed the Scotch horse and foot, chased them through the town, slew five or six, wounded more, shot a Lieutenant Anderson in the thigh, and retreated with two prisoners, and only one man badly wounded.

It was about this period of the siege that the governor, finding his designs often betrayed, discovered the traitor to be a man named Head, who brought food into the town. On being seized, a letter was found

on him. It was from Dick Lowry, a soldier of the garrison, to his wife at Wigton, desiring her to inform Major Barnes that the town could not hold out more than three weeks. Both Head and Lowry were put to the rack, and confessed their treason. On the 29th of April, Captain Toppam, having to guard the cattle while grazing, and finding Scotch musketeers holding some old walls at Catcoats Bank, stormed the hill. Upon this, Captain Noble, Lieutenant Fife, and some other quondam prisoners, held a parley with Captain Philipson, who guarded the hill, and brought up a store of sack, in hopes to make the Cavalier officers drunk, and so carry off the cattle. In the meanwhile, Noble stole out alone secretly for the Scotch cavalry, who, about five in the afternoon, drew out in five parties of fifty men each. Philipson had at the time only half a dozen horse ready, but his brother the cornet quickly put in order those grazing under the hill, keeping his ground in a very hot skirmish; eventually the brave Philipsons routed the enemy, who were brought off by some Scotch officers of Leslie's own regiment. "The Cavaliers," says Tullie, "in this engagement, were eighty horse, who performed as neat a piece of service as was at any time during the siege." Soon after this the Roundheads again tried their old tricks, suborning country people in large companies to rendezvous at Penrith, hoping that Sir Thomas Glenham, urged by the Cumberland gentlemen in the garrison, would send out all his horse to head them. But Sir Thomas was Yorkshire too, and sent three horsemen out to forage for news at Brougham Castle. Finding they were snapped up, he sent no more doves out of the ark. The cattle being nearly all eaten, the horse was divided into four parties, and sent over Etterby Ford to fetch cows from Cargo (three miles from Carlisle). The Cavalier commanders in this raid were the two Philipsons, Musgrave, Scisson, Toppam, and Minns. These last two captains, with forty-five foot, were to face the Scots at Newtown, and keep them in. The enemy made a show of coming to the cows' rescue, but the redoubtable Minns was in the way. The Cargo people ran after the Cavaliers, beseeching them to baste "the beggarly Scotch," who had promised to protect both them and their cattle. Moved by these appeals, the Philipsons sent ten troopers in with the cattle, and joined Minns and Toppam on Catcoats Hill. Toppam, who led the

forlorn hope against the Scots, in a gallant charge, was shot in the stomach, and soon after died. Captain Philipson, soured at this, fell on the Scots, beat them out of the town, and pursued them on the moor. Another party, with Cornet Philipson, charged with sixteen horse and chased the Scots towards Newlathes, where the reformadoes came up, and wounded and took many of the fugitives. The victorious foot stayed at Newtown, and stumbling on a barrel of strong ale, gave over firing at the enemy, and commenced drinking hard with true Cavalier recklessness. This encouraged the Scotch foot to renew firing. They shot one Cavalier roysterer through the nose, while the can was at his mouth. They lamed a second, and killed a third. The Carlisle soldiers were so drunk that they forgot to bring away the wounded man when they retreated with sixteen prisoners and horses, and stores of cloaks and hats. To prevent such reverses in the future the Scots raised a small work on the top of Catcoats Bank, securing their ground as far as Coldale Hall, and commanding a great part of Willow Holme, near the junction of the Eden and Calder. The garrison now began to graze their cattle on the Swift, to the east of the castle, and this set the Scots to work to plan a grand foray. It was a day that Captain Robert Philipson, who had the guard, was grazing the cattle as far as Botcherby Mill. Sir Thomas Glenham, seeing the barricade at Stanwick taken away, suspected some mischief, and ordered Philipson to come nearer the town with the cows, and to be very diligent and watchful. There was need of care, for about noon some eight hundred horse came powdering from Stanwick, St. Nicholas, Botcherby, and Rickerby. They instantly surrounded Philipson and the cattle; but he charging desperately through the enemy, brought away all the cattle but six cows and fifteen horses. Philipson ran his sword up to the hilt through a Scot named Kennedy. The fellow, turning sharp round, wrested the sword out of Philipson's hand, and set off to his own quarters at Parke Broom (three miles from Carlisle), with the sword still in his body, boasting that he had encountered and disarmed "little Philipson." A Scotch major was wounded, and a lieutenant killed. The Cavaliers only lost a trooper, and a poor old townsman who was not a soldier. Several unarmed servants were hurt. On May-day Tullie makes a note in his amusing Diary,

which gives a very picturesque notion of many similar episodes of the siege. Robert Philipson, guarding the cattle on Willow Holme, heard the great bell of the city toll an alarm, and looking back to the battlements, saw an ensign with a flag, indicating the direction of some musketeers, who, from behind a hedge, were firing on the cattle. He at once beat these sportsmen from their covert, killing two and dispersing the rest. On the 3rd the cattle were taken to graze on Denton Holme, on the further bank of the Calder. From thence the Cavaliers foraged out to Newlathes, and killed a scout; and at Blackhall Wood, finding a troop of the enemy's horse grazing, tried to sweep them off; but a Scotch squadron saved them, and pursued the Cavaliers. Next day the elder Philipson, commanding the cattle guard, was menaced by three or four Scotch horsemen, but they drew off towards noon, one of them being mortally wounded by a shot from a fowling-piece. The enemy then lined a hedge with musketeers, whom Philipson drove away, killing two, but under a little hill was suddenly hotly charged by Major Cholmley and his troop. Philipson broke through them, unhorsing many, and, before they could regain order, was at them again, and so routed them that he might have cut all off if Lieutenant Ray, a slow fellow, had hurried up the reserve before he was overpressed.

A week after this exploit Philipson rode out to guard the cattle at Denton Holme, and being irritated by the enemy's foot firing from Stanwick Bank, towards noon sent a corporal with a party of twenty horse to ride quickly over the bridge (near the present bridge, which was erected in 1815). The Scots fired upon the party from an outwork, but seeing the Cavaliers come fiercely on, left their guns, and ran into the village. Philipson's men killed five, captured two, wounded four or five, took eight or nine horses, and brought them all away, losing only one horse of their own. If they had only had some foot the foragers could have brought in the Scotch cannon. The same afternoon the indefatigable Philipson rode out with six men to Legget Hill, at the east end of the Swift, near the confluence of the Petteril with the Eden, and carried off eleven of the enemy's horses that were grazing. Towards evening Philipson met the Roundhead cavalry, and with his musket shot Lieutenant Davison in the thigh, killing his horse; the rest fled. On the 11th of May there was skir-

mishing on the Willow Holme, a Scotchman shooting a Cavalier trooper as he fought with a comrade. Captain Scisson, who guarded the cattle, cut down two Scots, who fell as if dead, but rose up, "and with much ado recovered," which Tullie seems to imply was unworthy of even Roundheads. May 13th was a hot day. About supper time the great alarm-bell began to toll fast. The enemy's horse were bearing down from all quarters towards the cattle on the Swift. Upon this, daring little Philipson, snatching up a sword, galloped to the Cavaliers, who were in disorder, rallied them quickly, drove off the Roundheads, and galled them as they retreated. Immediately Captain Lainham, an undaunted Cornishman, with Andrew King, and two or three more, dashed over to the Scotch outworks at Stanwick, and brought away three of the enemy's horses. Unfortunately, young Philipson, over-rash, staying behind, was shot dangerously in the back by a boy. Our old friend Hinks that night sallied out on the Sands, and brought away some horses Lainham had left behind. Nearly one hundred bullets were fired at him from the Stanwick battery. That same evening a letter came to Sir Thomas Glenham from Skipton. It was from the king, who was at Chester, promising speedy relief if they could only hold out a little longer. On the 16th the Roundheads began a work on Swift Hill to debar the garrison from grazing on that side of the city. Philipson then sent out one hundred foot and forty horse to guard the cattle. The foot were in a ditch below Philipson's tower; the troopers sat on their horses while they grazed, being so near the enemy. The Scots drew out some foot, but retreated after losing one man. At nine o'clock Lord Kirkcubright came with three hundred Scotch musketeers from Stanwick to break through the musketeers in the ditch, but they were so thrashed that they had to fall back. Philipson and his few horse then charged them, but they came on him as fast as he retreated towards his musketeers, upon which he charged again, and routed them, killing Captain Rose and two more. The Scotch carried away many led horses, but boasted they had not lost the riders. Four of Philipson's men were hurt, but none slain. The Cavaliers on the walls, unable to see for the clouds of dust, believed at first that the Scotch had enclosed Philipson, and were carrying him off to Stanwick. Imagine, therefore, their delight when

glints of steel shone through, and Philipson reappeared, chasing the Scotch home with whistling sword and pistol flash.

On the 19th there was again some hot fighting. Cholmley had raised a work near the south port, which if allowed to remain would have stopped all the grazing. About ten o'clock, just as the work was well finished, Captain Moore sallied out of the English port with sixty foot, who marched to the south-west of the work. Captain Dixon, with sixty foot, advanced straight to the fort, and sheltered his men in a ditch very near. At the same time the Cavalier horse drew out of the town in five parties—one going towards the St. Nicholas work to prevent the enemy retreating there, when driven out of the new fort. Then Moore marched boldly on the Scotch, and returned no answer to their hot fire till he got within pistol-shot. A lucky fire-ball, thrown by one of Dixon's men, lighted on some loose powder in the work, and blew up spades, mattocks, and men. Upon that the Scotch leaped out of the work, and Moore and his men leaped in, killing Conyers, the commander, who stoutly defended himself. The Cavalier horse, meeting the fugitives full butt, cut them up cruelly, drove back one hundred foot coming from the greater fort, and then returned to the town with thirty-nine prisoners, many of whom were dreadfully scorched. They destroyed the battery, and set the water which the enemy had diverted from the mills in its right course. They brought back six dead Scots and one hundred muskets, and lost only one man, who was shot through the heart. Tullie closes the record of this most satisfactory day by saying, "In the afternoon they grazed their cattle where Troy once stood. I mean that bloody work." On the 26th there came a letter from Newark, to say the king had got as far as Latham House, in Lancashire, to their relief, and on the 30th Captain Blenkinsop came in with news that the king had entered Westmoreland, and that Leslie was collecting country carts for his baggage. The overjoyed garrison celebrated the news by eating at one meal three days' provisions, of which they soon bitterly repented. More false news was circulated on the 5th of June, when Major Baxter brought in a lie that the king had taken Manchester, and would be with them presently. Men believe what they wish to be true, and soldiers reduced to dogs, rats, and hemp-seed, were ready to believe anything. "Now," says Tullie, half pathetically,

"were gentlemen and others so shrunk, that they could not choose but laugh, one to another, to see their clothes hang as upon men on gibbets, for one might have put his head and fist between the doublet and shirt of many of them. The foot would be now and then stealing away, but not a man of the cavalry." On the 9th two men came in with greater lies than ever, reporting the king to be in Yorkshire. Two days after the receipt of this cheering, but wholly illusory, information, six troopers rode without order to Cummersdale Mill, and brought home fourteen bushels of corn, leaving the reserve cavalry watching at Denton Holme; while, on the second trip, Lord Dalhousie's Scotch regiment attacked the reserve, but were driven off. Makarty and Philipson, always in the thick of it, were left among the enemy, but they helped each other, cut themselves free, and returned to their party without hurt, except that Philipson was bleeding from a slight gash in the face. In the mean time, the troopers (fourteen now) with the corn, seeing the danger, threw away the grain and wheeled about for the town. Falling among a company of foot that fired fiercely upon them, the troopers resolved to break through Dalhousie's horse. The Scotch, mistaking these Cavaliers for their own party, asked them which was the best way to charge Philipson through the water. The prompt men replied, "This!" and every man directing his pistol at an enemy's face, charged through the whole body back to Philipson, who then charged also, and routed the Scotch regiment, killing thirteen and wounding many. In this action, a poor fellow from Carlisle, wearing a Scotch cap, was shot by mistake by one of his own side.

Hunger was so unbearable now, that resistance was no longer possible, and Philipson was sent to York to decide with Fairfax or Leslie as to whether he should surrender to the English or Scotch. The next thing Carlisle heard was great volleys of musketry from the besiegers' works, announcing the victory at Naseby. That afternoon, divers officers and soldiers came to the public bakehouses and took away by force all the horseflesh preparing for the poor. "Now," says Tullie, "the besiegers, perceiving the Cavaliers, who were scarce able to walk in the streets, not to issue out as they were wont, grew insolent, and vapoured amaine." The garrison had had but half a pound of horseflesh in four days. On the 20th of

June the townsmen humbly petitioned the governor not to take away their horseflesh, saying they were not able to endure the famine any longer. Four days after, "a few women of the scolds and scum of the city" met at the Cross, railing at Sir Henry Stradling. On his threatening to fire on them, they replied they would take it as a favour, and he left them with tears in his eyes, saying he could not mend their commons. "Dr. Burnell, the chancellor," says Tullie, "was the only man who had any beer left, and he had a little barrel of strong ale known only to the governor." The first messenger sent by Leslie was made so drunk with this that he could give no rational account of what he had done. Leslie then sent a graver person, who, being assured of the surrender of the town, was demurely leaving, when Sir Thomas slyly kept him waiting at the Scotch port, and decoyed him into the chancellor's quarters, where he also was made drunk, and returned in the same pickle as the former, professing "that the garrison was everywhere full of strong drink." The next day, the 25th of June, the articles were agreed upon, and the city of Carlisle, "little in circuit, but great and memorable for loyalty," received a Scotch garrison. The treaty prescribed that all the Carlisle officers and soldiers should march out "with their arms, flying colours, drums beating, matches lighted at both ends, bullets in their mouths, with all their bag and baggage, and twelve charges of powder apiece." All the conditions of this treaty were faithfully kept by Leslie, except that in violation of the third article, that "no church be defaced," the Roundheads pulled down part of the nave of the cathedral, together with the chapter-house, cloisters, prebendal houses, and part of the deanery.

Sir Philip Musgrave was, after this, sentenced to death by the Roundheads, but escaped the night previous to the day appointed for his execution. He afterwards raised one thousand foot for the king, and defended the Isle of Man for the Countess of Derby. After the Restoration he was appointed governor of Carlisle. Sir Thomas Glenham was afterwards governor of Oxford for King Charles.

At the close of the war, Major Philipson (who figures so conspicuously in this narrative) was besieged for eight months in his brother's house on the island in Windermere. His brother, the colonel, at last raised a party, and relieved him from Colonel Briggs of Kendal, his persistent

enemy. Soon after this, "Robin the Devil," as he was called by the Roundheads, rode, armed to the teeth, into a church at Kendal during service, intending to pistol Briggs. Seeing his enemy was not there, the major turned his horse and rode quietly out; but the Puritans rousing and gathering round, cut the girths of his horse, and Philipson fell. Instantly calling his men, the major struck down the fellow who had seized him, clapped the loose saddle on his horse, vaulted on it, and dashed off towards Windermere, through the streets of Kendal, followed by all his troopers, who had been guarding the avenues of the church.

PASSING.

THE sun-motes glint across the eaves,
The light dust flickers on the leaves,
Calm is the sea, the heaven blue,
The roses blush the trellis through.

The barley-beards grow full and white,
Day lingers into hours of night,
The babbling brook is low and still,
And scarce can feed the toiling mill.

The summer glow is in the air,
The hay-fields yield an incense rare,
On the green earth, in sky above,
A halo gleams of life and love.

O happy days, O summer time,
O dreaming youth, in golden prime;
All that is bright, and pure, and sweet,
Shines when ye twain together meet!

'Tis so, and so 'twill ever be,
Youth plucks the blossom from the tree:
That which it sows, long years give root,
But only few may taste the fruit.

And we who passed long since our prime,
And bear the wrinkled stamp of time,
Look on and smile, look on and sigh,
Look in our breasts the reason why.

COPHETUA THE SECOND.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"So—spliced at last, old fellow?" said I, shaking hands heartily with my friend Augustus Meadfoot, whom I met in Pall Mall.

"I am 'spliced,' as you say," replied Augustus, rather stiffly; "but Jack, dear boy, I wish you would be a little choicer in expression. Splicing—not to mention that it conveys the idea of some species of repair, of which, I do assure you, neither my wife nor myself stand in the slightest need—is too familiar. Marriage, Milford, independent of its exalted duties and soul-stirring responsibilities, is a solemn—a majestic—thing."

"I believe you——" I fear I was about to add "my boy." Luckily, I didn't, but added: "My dear Meadfoot, call it as we

will, it is plain the process agrees with you. You look radiant."

"My lustre is not fictitious," replied Mr. Meadfoot. "There is nothing, as you know, Jack, artificial about me. I am the happiest man out. I will not say that my Alice is, like her namesake, all my fancy painted her, for fancy had nothing to do with the matter. I always felt that the mawkish booby, jilted by Miss Grey, was served perfectly right, for falling in what he called love with a girl he had never seen. No, no. I came, I saw, and—ahem!—was conquered," concluded Augustus, with a candid smile.

"You told me of your purpose, but never the young lady's name. Am I acquainted with her family?"

"I—I am inclined to think not," replied Augustus. "Do you know Spuddington-le-Street?"

"The Lestree's of Ruthyn Castle?"

"No, of North Lincolnshire. Spuddington-le-Street is the nearest village to Spuddington-le-Less, which has only three cottages and a beershop, and is as sweet and primitive a little settlement as any of which rural England can boast."

"There is a commendable absence of brag, in the fact that it does not appear even in Bradshaw."

"It does not. I discovered it in an ancient road-book," said Mr. Meadfoot, "which constituted the entire library of a little inn at which I happened to be storm-stayed. The directions for finding it were sufficiently complicated and obscure to awaken the highest interest. On the following morning, carrying with me three days' provisions, I set forth and found it. I was rewarded."

Augustus paused, as if lost in happy recollections. After a few moments, finding he did not speak, I recommenced the conversation.

"You encountered Miss—Miss——"

"Shortcake, there," replied Meadfoot. "I had taken a footpath through some fields, principally attracted by the information that there was not only 'no thorough-fare,' but that spring-guns and man-traps were in profusion on the borders of a neighbouring copse. Now, although not wholly unacquainted with man-traps, I knew nothing of the mechanism of a spring-gun, and instinctively accepted the challenge. At the corner of the copse, I came upon another obliging notification, 'Beware the brindled cow.' No such animal was at the moment in sight, but continuing to

round the copse, I came suddenly upon a scene worthy of Watteau. A rustic maiden, seated on the three-legged stool of the period, was engaged in milking a particularly vicious and observant cow.

"Time was not allowed me to notice more. The brindled brute pinned me with its eyes, stood for a second as if petrified, then, with a kick that sent the milk-pail into the air in a cloud of white spray, and a wild stoop and flourish of the head, plunged furiously towards me. I saw the rustic maiden throw up her bare white arms, I heard a shriek, 'As you vally your life!' and, without pausing to make the calculation suggested, turned and leaped the deepest ditch and the prickliest hedge I ever met with in combination.

"But I was safe, for, scrambling up, I saw that the absurd animal had danced away to the other end of the meadow, where, in company with two quiet friends, and attended by an exceedingly small boy, she was grazing composedly as if nothing had happened.

"The demeanour of my maid-of-the-milking-pail was less satisfactory. She was standing, her hands pressed into her pretty sides, literally convulsed with laughter. 'I must stop this,' thought I, and, with what ease and dignity I could command, effected a sortie, and stood before her. Jack," continued Mr. Meadfoot, emphatically, "on my honour, that girl's beauty struck me like a sudden gush of light. Her fresh, flower-like face, her deep blue eyes, swimming with the tears of mirth, her milk-white teeth, of which a good many were visible, though the rather wide mouth, to do it justice, could contract itself at pleasure into the sweetest rosebud you ever saw, her royal wealth of hair, about nine-tenths of which had escaped from the coarse kerchief supposed to bind it, then her lithe and yet (as you turf fellows phrase it) 'furnished' figure, these—ah, well," concluded Augustus, "the wise-acre that announced man-traps beside that copse was not such a booby after all."

"Here we are, opposite my club. Come in and taste our sherry," said I. "You must finish the story of the disguised princess before we part."

"The sequel is even of stronger interest," replied Mr. Meadfoot, "as the sultana remarked when not altogether certain that she would be allowed to live to finish it. Humph! This sherry is sound. Her health, bless her."

"Amen. Whose?"

"Alice's. Patience; I wish to omit no particulars. I left my shepherdess speechless with laughter. My approach did not check her merriment.

"Well, that were a queer start as ever I see," she gasped, wiping her beautiful eyes with the corner of a very coarse apron. 'To see his boot heels a-poppin' through the hedge. Oh my! Oh my!' (Another peal of laughter.)

"My dear girl," I remonstrated.

"I say, come, none o' that," retorted the maiden, growing suddenly serious, with even a slight frown appearing on her smooth brow. 'Dear girl ain't my name.'

"What is your name?"

"Hen or Hem, as the case may be." (A demure curtsy.)

"May I, at least, be allowed to ask where you live?" I inquired, piqued, but interested.

"Ho yes, sure," replied my Perdita. 'I'angs out, as Tom Turbary says, at Uncle Grumball's, down year.' And she pointed backwards with her thumb towards a hovel in the distance.

"Your excellent uncle resides in that—edifice?" I exclaimed.

"No, he don't reside in the cow-h'us. Farm's ahind the copse. But, deary me, whatever shall we do about the milk?' (touching the prostrate pail with her bare white foot. Though not small, it might have served for a sculptor's model.) 'Oh, sir, 'twas all along of you, coming so sudden upon Damson, which never see a gent in shiny boots afore.'

"Do all the pretty feet in this neighbourhood go bare?" I ventured to ask.

"There ain't none but mine," she said, simply, and pressing one of them down into the spongy green surface of the meadow, she brought it up white and pure as the milk that had just been shed there. 'Well, I must walk my chinks, as Tom Turbary says,' continued my sylvan goddess, with a sigh.

"Who the d——, I mean, who is this Turbary, whose choice expressions you seem to relish so highly?"

"The damsel drew up her lithe form.

"Tom Turbary is him which keeps company with me—leastways, wants to' (blessed qualification!) 'and wouldn't never see me carrying all these things—pails, and stool, an' all—without saying, 'Let me help 'ee,'" remarked Perdita, with a quick side-glance of her blue eve.

"My darling child!—I—I beg pardon."

I was shocked at my own remissness. I hastily added: 'In Mr. Turbary's, no doubt, unavoidable absence, and in his language, let me help 'ee.'

"That's you," said Perdita, briskly.

"I hardly thought it *was* me as I trudged along, carrying the pails, which the damsel imperiously confided to me, instead of the stool, which I should have preferred.

"You have many a pleasant walk with Mr.—Turbary, I suppose—eh?" I inquired.

"Hah! A many. Specially nuttin' time," was the reply.

"And he is very agreeable?"

"Talks o' turmots, and such like."

"Clever, is he?"

"Understands beastesses. Knows a good cow when he sis her," replied the nymph, carelessly.

"The range of Mr. Turbary's abilities was certainly not alarming. I fell into a momentary reverie, from which I was aroused by the clinking of one of my cans against a gate-post.

"Woa! Steady there!" said my lovely guide, as if addressing a horse. "We can't afford to lose any more milk to-day. Farm's just round the next corner. Ha, ha, ha! If Tom could see me being helped by a swell, as he calls it!"

"Swell as I am, I can collapse at pleasure, as you have seen," said I, quietly lifting the wooden yoke from my shoulders, and placing the half-filled cans in safety on the ground. "And now, before we part, won't you tell me your name?"

"Alice Shortcake, sure."

"Shake hands, Alice, dear Alice."

"She put her hand frankly in mine. It was singularly small and soft, and out of harmony, I felt, with the girl's condition in life.

"What makes your hand so white?" I asked, half angrily.

"She snatched it quickly back.

"I'm sure I don't know at all," she said, ruefully, rubbing it hard with the other. "I s'pose it's the milk. But," brightening up, "they're better in winter. I has chilblains awful."

"Alice, dear, I am very much obliged to Damson. She has given me a very happy half-hour. I am sorry it is over."

"So am I," said Perdita, very softly, and without raising her eyes.

"Good-bye, dear."

"Good-bye."

"But I must see your eyes."

"Well, there!"

"They flashed up bluely, and fell again,

not, however, before I had detected a crystal drop on each lower lid, awaiting orders. A sudden impulse seized me.

"Alice, darling, do you love—that is, intend to marry—this Tom Turbary?"

"I hate 'm—in that way," said the girl, with almost savage earnestness, which left no doubt of her sincerity.

"And will you be his wife?"

"Not if I knows it, as T—T—Tom——"

"But, in speaking, she burst into a passion of tears.

"Now, Alice dear, one question more. Shall I go on my way?"

"No answer. Lids down, cheeks crimson, slight heave of the fair bosom.

"Do you wish me to stay?"

"Can't say—but what—I doos," was the half-whispered reply.

"I almost wish you couldn't," I thought. But if the grammar was loose, the sense was perfect. "Alice, dear, do you know what I am thinking of?"

"Damson," coquettishly.

"Do you know what I desire most in the world? To marry Alice Shortcake."

"Oh law!"

"Even so, my darling. Marriage law. What say you?"

"Alice looked up, with eyes laughing through tears.

"To think that you should a been afeerd o' Damson. (O, them boot-heels!) Why, you're the boldest gentleman I ever did heer tell on. You doesn't know me from Haddam."

"That we are both descended from that stock is enough for me," I said. "Ignorance, Alice, is the misfortune I am seeking to remedy. Help me. Do you like me, Alice?"

"Very much indeed," said my candid shepherdess.

"Is my being a gentl—that is, as Mr. Turbary would call it, a swell, very much against me?"

"Likes 'n, rather 'n not."

"Then you will be my wife?"

"No I woan't," was the reply. "Least-ways, not now."

"When, Alice?"

"Listen," said the girl, raising her blue eyes at last, and fixing them steadily on mine. "Don't ye come aneer me, nor write to me, nor even think of me, if you can help it, for three months. Then, if you still remember Alice Shortcake, I won't say but you'll find her where you seen her first, in the meadow by the copse, a-milking Cowslip (which is quieter than Dam-

son), about sunset. Go now, sir, if you please. That's *your* road, alongside the hedge, past the pound where the donkey is—and—(well—God bless 'ee, anyways) here's *mine*.'

"The white feet went twinkling down the road. I was alone.

"Well, Jack, I have little more to add, but that's significant. As luck would have it, I found in the incumbent of the adjoining parish my old college friend, Hyndman. He introduced me to the curate of Spuddington, who was well acquainted with the respectable old Grumballs, and knew the bright creature who had, from a child, been the light of their house, as she was now the aid and the solace of their declining years. Alice had been sought in marriage by every celibate clod within a radius of ten miles; nay, even the remote market-town of Ditchingford had sent its suitor. All in vain. Mr. Thomas Turbary's chances had indeed been spoken of as fair, but the opinion was found to originate with himself, and to be devoid of any more foundation, than that old Mr. Grumball had, for some time, owed him (Mr. Turbary) a 'little matter of money.'

"Jack, you know what I have always said. Simplicity and truth for me. I am wearied of the artificiality of what is ironically termed 'good society,' its polished hypocrisies, its gilded meanness, its immeasurable falsehood, its smiling hate. What, if you sometimes lose in refinement? You are royally repaid in truth. Leave your educated sweets, your delicate human exotics, for those who prize such fribble. The hardy, honest wayside flower for me.

"Sir, I returned to Spuddington-the-Less. On that day three months, at set of sun, my shiny boots reflected his parting glow as they rounded the copse, and marched, without flinching, straight upon a group of cows, patiently awaiting the attentions of the whitest-fingered milkmaid that ever jingled can.

"I forbear to describe the meeting. Enough that, in three short weeks, which seemed as many years, I married Alice Shortcake, my friend Hyndman officiating, and my ex-rival, Tom Turbary (resplendent in a bottle-green coat) enacting the part of best man.

"What happened to my darling during those three months I cannot say. In grace and propriety of manner she might have lived in a circle of duchesses! My only terror is that she should become too refined. Except in little faults of grammar,

and occasional expressions of the Turbarian school—which I correct jocosely—Alice is perfect, sir—perfect. As I said before, I am the happiest fellow extant. Come down to our cot at Hammersmith and see. The honeymoon is not over, but you are an old friend. Thanks; no more sherry. Hi there, hansom! Hammersmith."

CHAPTER II.

THE next day but one, I visited the married turtles. Meadfoot was alone, in the front garden.

"She has run in for a moment," he said, "but will be down directly. A little nervous, you see, at first, in society that she—. Do you know she asked me twice at breakfast how she should behave! I was a little impatient the second time, and answered: 'Exactly as is most natural to you, Alice. I wish my friend to see and know precisely whom I have married, without artifice or affectation of any kind.' Here she comes!"

Mrs. Meadfoot came tripping along the path, holding out both her pretty hands. She was in appearance all—and more than all—her husband had depicted her. But her first words startled me a little:

"Well, Jack, how's yourself?"

"My dear! my dear!" said Augustus, rather hastily, "Mr. Milford is only 'Jack' to his male friends! And, inasmuch as he cannot be anybody but himself, a little less stress, my darling, on the relative pronoun."

The pretty lips pouted for a moment, then parted, a sunny smile revealing the whitest teeth imaginable.

"How tired you must be!" Alice continued. "Especially if you stumped it all this way."

"Ahem!" said Meadfoot.

"My dear?" said Alice, opening her innocent blue eyes.

"Nature, darling, made man a walking, not a stumping, animal."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said the beautiful creature, corrected; "I done as I was bid."

"I trust, my love, that you will never 'dun' anybody. What you may *do* is another grammatical question altogether," replied her husband.

Alice looked a little puzzled; but a topic being started on which she conversed with perfect ease and propriety, both recovered their equanimity, and Meadfoot was evidently delighted at the impression his little wife was making on me.

"Well," he remarked, presently, "I must leave you two together for a few minutes, while I despatch my letters." And with a glance at once tender and cautionary, he went into the house.

Mrs. Meadfoot continued the conversation, and, without the slightest effort or display, positively astonished me with her intelligence and mental culture. In a few minutes we were summoned in to lunch, and here again all went charmingly until Alice, as if suddenly recollecting her duties as hostess, asked me if I would not take some more "swizzle?"

"My love!" ejaculated Augustus, much shocked. "'Swizzle!' You seem to have reserved some most extraordinary conversational gems for my friend. Bitter beer, if you please. Bit-ter beer."

"Oh, now, Augustus, dear, you told me," pleaded Alice's sweet full voice, her eyes brimful of tears.

"Told you, darling? Told you to be vulgar?"

"No, no, dear. Natural. 'Exactly as was most natural,' you said. So I tried to remember the words I used when I was natural, and hadn't learned a bit. And, oh! I couldn't think of any more!" Another sob.

"Well, well, my love," said Meadfoot, laughing heartily; "Milford, having now learned your natural gifts, may prefer the acquired. But, oh—yes. . . . Good Heaven! it is that woman!" he continued, rising hastily, much disturbed, as a cornetted carriage, drawn by magnificent bays, drew up at the gate.

Alice, blushing like a very rose, seemed to partake of her husband's annoyance, and, either from a sign from him, or from an impulse of her own, vanished from the room.

"It is my aunt-godmother, the Dowager Countess of Haughtington," Meadfoot explained; "the proudest woman on earth, and the only visitor I dread. She heard of my marriage, was furious, and now honours us with this early visit, impatient to wound my poor little rustic wife with her refined sarcasms, or crush her with her haughty condescension. Excuse me, Jack, I shall not be long. She shall have no lunch, if she stops a fortnight," added Augustus, spitefully, as he left the room.

The countess (he afterwards told me) met him with the sweet, but rather diabolical smile, well known to her enemies—and these were not a few—as meaning mischief. She had, moreover, a cordial

manner of extending her arms, which forcibly recalled that famous instrument of execution, which—using the same gesture—folded the criminal to a bosom richly set with spikes five inches long.

"How shall I plead for pardon?" demanded the kind lady, sweetly. "Dearest Augustus! My jealousy lest any one should welcome my lovely niece before me, compelled me to forestal permission. I am positively wretched till I hold her in my arms."

"Your misery, my dear aunt," said Meadfoot, quietly, "shall last no longer than your niece requires to take off her cooking-apron, smooth her hair, and practise the curtsy with which she, no doubt, intends to meet your ladyship's condescension."

"You are jesting, I suppose," said Lady Haughtington. "But, in any case, why this preparation? True elegance and refinement are independent of such aids."

"My wife was a dairy-maid and farm-servant," said Augustus, slowly, looking his aunt in the face. "And your ladyship knows it."

The countess coloured slightly, and if, as asserted, people do sometimes "look daggers," the point of a very sharp one glistened, for a second, in her eye. But she sheathed it instantly. War was not her game.

"My boy, I do know it," she replied, in a tone of condolence that was not entirely hypocritical. "Well, I will not say that I rejoiced. The noblest blood of England cannot see itself suddenly allied to the poorest without repugnance. But there, it is a fact accomplished. And now," she added, with a bewitching frankness that would have deceived any but the fore-armed, "I have a petition. Will you grant it?"

"I am too sensible of your friendship, my dear aunt, to refuse anything you are likely to ask," replied that humbug Augustus.

"Accord me then the pleasant duty of introducing this wild rose of yours into those circles where her fresh uncultivated loveliness, her natural grace and sweet simplicity, will place her at once among the most admired."

"In other words," said Meadfoot, calmly, "take possession of my wife while yet unaltered in her rustic thoughts and ways, and, in revenge for the connexion I have given you, make her, through her supposed vulgarity, her ignorance, her awkward

demeanour and dowdy attire, the laughing-stock of every acquaintance of your ladyship—and I fear they are many—whose selfish souls can batten on such food. Calm yourself, if you please, Lady Haughtington. I do but repeat your own incautious words, reported to me by one on whose word I can rely. Quickly as you have found us, my dear aunt, your kindly purpose has, you see, been beforehand with you."

Lady Haughtington rose up, white with rage.

"You are right, sir," she hissed through her set teeth. "That was my purpose. Do you imagine that anything less could have induced me to cross that threshold? That anything but hate—unmitigated hate and biting revenge—could have tempted me to look upon the vacuous visage of this dairy wench—this farm drudge—this barefooted beggar-girl, whom you—King Cophetua the Second—have plucked from the ditch, to make your wife? You miserable fool, farewell! I have done with you."

"Will you not see my wife, Lady Haughtington?" asked Meadfoot. "In the society of which your ladyship is the most distinguished ornament, courtesy, I think, suggests—"

"I will not see her. My carriage, sir."

"But she is here," said her nephew, as Alice, simply, but tastefully, dressed, tripped into the room with the grace of a princess. Augustus thought he had never seen her look so fair.

The countess, watching at the window for her carriage, did not deign to move.

Stepping forward, Meadfoot took his wife's hand, and drew her towards the window.

"My wife, Lady Haughtington, expects your greeting."

The countess turned like a tigress brought to bay. What passionate words the high-bred lady would have permitted herself to utter can only be surmised, for, as her flashing eyes fell upon Alice, their fury died away. Her whole aspect changed. The flush of anger gave way to a deadly pallor, and the whole stately figure quivered for an instant, as if about to fall.

"Who—what—is this? Rosa!" she gasped out, faintly. The lips remained open, as if further utterance failed.

"My name is Alice."

"Voice, too; eyes, lips, hair! Child, your mother's name? Speak! What was she called?"

"I never knew her," said Alice; "but"—taking a locket-miniature from her

bosom—"here is her likeness, and here, at the back, two letters, R. V."

"Rosa Vavasour!" murmured the countess, with deep emotion. "It is the finger of Heaven. I need not ask you how they knew this to be your mother's face. Are you not her living image?"

"You knew her, aunt?" asked Meadfoot, eagerly.

"Knew her! She was my sister. That Aunt Rosa, whose name and memory have been so banished from our tongues and hearts, that it is little wonder you have forgotten such a being ever had existence. She was the very jewel of our hearts, but she made a mean and secret marriage, and we cast her off. They died in poverty, unnoticed, unforgiven, and their one child—we knew that one had been born to them—was adopted by some compassionate neighbour, in the sequestered village in which they had resided under a borrowed name. We never sought the orphan, rejoicing, in our pride, that she should be thus, as it were, cut off from our line. But, Augustus, Providence has rebuked and overruled our selfish ends. You have been directed to the orphan's home. You have married your *cousin*. Forgive me, both of you," concluded the countess, shedding, for once in a way, genuine tears, as she folded Alice in her arms. "I lament my pride and passion. Henceforth, my children, give me what love you can, as I, in all sincerity, offer you mine."

Among the presentations at a drawing-room, that occurred shortly after the interview above described, I noticed: "The Hon. Mrs. Meadfoot, on her marriage, by her aunt, the Countess of Haughtington."

AN OLD PROJECT AND A NEW ONE.

A PENNY well Bestowed. Such is the title of a folio sheet of two pages, printed and circulated in London in the year 1680, a copy of which recently found its way into the possession of a dealer in waste paper, and from his possession passed into ours for a consideration, more in accordance with its interest and curiosity than with its physical weight. The full title runs, A Penny well Bestowed; or, a Brief Account of the New Design contrived for the great Increase of Trade, and Ease of Correspondence, to the Great Advantage of the Inhabitants of all Sorts, by conveying of Letters or Pacquots under a Pound Weight, to and from all parts within the

Cities of London and Westminster, and the Out Parishes within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, for One Penny. The colophon bears the words, "London: printed for the Undertakers by Thomas James, at the Printing Press in Mincing-lane. April, 1680." It was said on high authority, more than two thousand years ago, that "there was nothing new under the sun." And we of the present day, who owe so deep a debt of gratitude to Sir Rowland Hill for the boon of the penny post, may admit without derogation from his merits, or the wish to deprive him of any portion of the credit fairly belonging to him, that the germ of his great idea is to be found in an anonymous publication thrown upon the world nearly a hundred and twenty years before he was born. Possibly Sir Rowland never heard of it, for we should remember, as Coleridge recommends us in all cases where plagiarism is charged and cannot be proved, "that there are such things as fountains in the human mind, and that every stream we see flowing does not necessarily proceed from a perforation made in some other man's tank." But even if the great postal reformer of the nineteenth century borrowed his thought from a predecessor in the seventeenth, none the less are our thanks due to him for converting into a living fact that which was formerly an unproductive fancy, just as we render homage to the practical genius of James Watt for the improvement of the steam-engine, which others had invented, but had not been able to turn to account.

The author of *A Penny well Bestowed*, like other original thinkers, was in advance of his time. "There is nothing," he said, "that tends more to the increase of trade and business than a speedy, cheap, and safe way of intelligence, much being obstructed and more retarded in all places where that is wanting. For as money, like the blood in natural bodies, gives life to trade by its circulation, so correspondence, like the vital spirits, gives it sense and motion. And the more that these abound in any place the more doth that place increase in riches, strength, and vigour." This was said in 1680. It was said again, in other words, and with higher authority, in 1838, when Sir Rowland Hill's plan was before the House of Commons. The first reformer, however, knew his public too well to imagine that his project would meet with immediate or cordial acceptance. "It is not," he wrote, "to be expected in this age that any new design can be contrived for the public good with-

out meeting many rash censures and impediments from the foolish and malicious, therefore 'twas not likely this should escape the common fate; yet we hope to all the reasonable and candid, who are willing to understand their own interest, that this paper may be satisfactory." The design was to provide means for the delivery of letters and parcels throughout the metropolis hourly every day, from six in the morning until nine at night—fifteen deliveries in all—a frequency which the modern Post Office, with all the improvements it has made during the last thirty-three years, has not yet attained. Whatever may have been the opinion of the public on this scheme, the opinion of the Post Office authorities was decidedly hostile, not only to the carriage of parcels of a pound in weight, but of letters at a penny. The Post Office would not work the scheme itself, nor allow any one else to do so. Nevertheless, in 1683 a penny post was established for London and the district within the bills of mortality, but without that frequency of delivery which, next to the cheapness, was the life and soul of the projected improvement. The Post Office at that time was in its infancy. Its revenues were farmed out to a contractor, who paid the government a round sum for the monopoly of conveying letters, and he levied such rates upon the public as enabled him to make a profit by his bargain—rates that were regulated upon a scale of distances, and upon the actual paucity, not upon the probable multiplicity of correspondence. The penny post was never extended to the provinces. Owing to mismanagement, it soon ceased to be remunerative in the metropolis, and was replaced by a twopenny rate, which remained in operation until Sir Rowland Hill swept it away, within the memory of living men who have not yet reached the grand climacteric.

The wisdom of our ancestors is not always to be sneered at, as this document and its history show, and it strikes us that the idea of conveying packages, a pound in weight, to and from every part of the metropolis, might be advantageously carried into effect in our time, with certain extensions and limitations which we proceed to explain. Mr. Lowe, our present Chancellor of the Exchequer, granted a boon to newspaper proprietors and to newspaper readers, which latter class already includes a majority of the population, and will, it is likely, under the operation of the new Education Act, include at no very remote time nearly

the whole community, by enacting that any newspaper weighing six ounces and under, might pass through the Post Office to the remotest ends of the realm for the sum of one halfpenny. This is nearly half-way towards the concession which we propose to ask, namely, that the Post Office should convey any printed book, new or old, to any part of the country at the uniform rate of one penny per pound weight, and of twopence for two pounds, and under. The boon bestowed upon political and periodical literature by the halfpenny rate is universally acknowledged; and if we consider, as has been said of old, that the chief glory of any country is its literature, we think the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster-General would do well to devote their attention to the reform we advocate in the interest alike of authors, of publishers, of readers, and of the revenue. To purchase a new book in London, the great mart and emporium of literature, as of everything else, is easy enough, but to purchase a new book in a provincial town or a village is a matter of time, difficulty, and unnecessary expense. The retail bookseller, if there be one in the place, which is not often, especially in the villages, has to write to the London or Edinburgh publisher for the volume which the purchaser requires, and it is generally a month before the order is completed. The publisher makes up his monthly, and sometimes fortnightly, parcel, and the purchaser has to await his convenience. By means of the penny postage rate for a pound weight of literature, the reader and the author, or at all events the reader and the publisher, would be brought into direct and immediate communication, without the intervention of the costly and dilatory middle-man, to the very great advantage of the producer and the consumer. The middle-man is generally a miscellaneous dealer in stationery, nick-nacks, newspapers, and periodicals, as well as in books, and will not always take the trouble to write a letter to a publisher for a single volume, to oblige a stranger or an infrequent customer. Political literature, great though its claims may be upon the favour of a liberal and progressive government, such as that of Great Britain, is not the only branch of literature which requires a freer dissemination than existing agencies supply. It does not include the history, the divinity, the science, the romance, and the poetry, which are the glorious heritage of our people; and which, quite as much as the current history and opinion contained in the newspapers, de-

serve to be spread over the land by the same convenient and well-regulated machinery that supplies us with our letters of business or affection.

No doubt the project will not at first recommend itself to the favour of the retail dealers in books, any more than railways and steam-engines recommended themselves to the owners of stage-coaches, gas to the tallow chandlers, or the spinning-jenny to the hand-loom weavers. As our old friend of 1680 says, in reference to the porters and other people who fancied they might lose employment and bread by the adoption of his larger project, "If it were granted to be prejudicial to the porters (which I do not allow), yet the lesser ought to yield to the greater, and the private to the public good, seeing that in all well-regulated governments the public good was never forced to stoop to private convenience. For if so, printers and guns must have been suppressed for copyists and fletchers (bowmen), and public water-works for the sake of tankard bearers." The question is one solely for the decision of the Government and the Post Office, and we are glad to have the opportunity of calling public attention to it in these columns.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

THE storm had ceased, and it was fair weather, when the curate, having remained with his penitent to the last, was at liberty to return to his home, carrying with him the document mentioned at the close of the last chapter. But he did not, smooth as the sea now was, avail himself of the offer of the young fisherman who had brought him to Tresneven to take him back across the bay in his boat, preferring to start on foot for a three hours' walk by the coast.

He had much to think of; many thoughts were seething in his mind, on which he had had no time to dwell while the duty of smoothing that old man's passing hour was the foremost one to be attended to. But he wished to think over the strange facts with which he had so strangely been made acquainted in all their various bearings and aspects. And the solitary walk round the coast of the bay would give him an excellent opportunity for such self-communing.

So then he, Jean Delaroche—John of the Rock, as good Captain Morel had, in grimly literal accordance with the facts of the case, named him—he, the curé of Tregastel, was a De Kergonnec of Plogarrion, and,

more than that, was the rightful heir to, and owner of, the property. The Monsieur Gregoire of the terrible history told by the dying Morvenec was his uncle, the younger brother of his father, to make way for whose succession to the property he, John of the Rock, had been left to perish by the death from which he had been so wonderfully rescued. And more than this—and the following train of thought was among those which pressed into the foreground of his mind—this same Gregoire de Kergonnec was the father of the man who had won the heart of Marie Morel.

The fact that such wooing had been followed by such winning was but too well known to him. Though he had abstained in that bitter and cruel hour of his rejection from making any inquiry of Marie herself, he had not been allowed to quit Rouen in ignorance upon the subject. There are always friends kind enough to carry tidings such as those. And if gossip had not meddled with Marie's secret, the young seminarist had been made the confidant of all poor Mademoiselle Vezin's hopes, and fears, and disappointments on the subject. Talking to Jean Delaroche she deemed to be pretty much the same thing as talking to a brother of Marie's. And when the young priest left Rouen, he knew that he left the heart which it had not been given him to win, as desolate and as broken as his own.

And now what did he mean to do? What course was he to make up his mind to take? It was clear that he was true heir to, and owner of, a considerable landed property, and it admitted of very little doubt that he might, by virtue of the evidence contained in Morvenec's dying testimony, and of that which Morel could give, readily compel the restitution of that which was rightfully his. Ah, could this knowledge have come to him earlier, have come to him in time! Could it have been in his possession on that terrible day when he slunk back to his seminary, knowing that there was to be no share in the happiness and joy of the warm world outside its gates for him. But no. He would not wrong Marie by such thoughts. He did not believe in any such. It would not have availed him. He knew that no such consideration could or would have changed the fact that Marie loved another man, and did not love him.

And now what would this property be to him? He might go and live where he would—in Rouen, in Paris, if he pleased—but always a lone man. He might go and live a life of what is called ease, and eat and drink his revenues—alone! The curé

of Tregastel was not a man to whose imagination any feature of such a life would smile. Better, better a thousand times labour on in the path into which the hand of Providence had guided him—labour on faithfully in that high vocation, one of the most awful and most beneficent duties of which he had even now been performing. Once—once he had looked back from the plough to which his hand had been set, and that looking back had been the cause to him of anguish unspeakable, of a pain which had run, was running, and would continue to run through the web of his life like the one-coloured thread which indelibly marks the rope of which it forms a part. Never again would he be tempted to repeat the error. And if such was to be his life, what to him was this estate that should have been his?

Nevertheless, it was not right that this crime should be passed over as if it had never been done. It was not right that that guilty uncle of his should go to his grave, thinking that the crime he had purposed had been consummated in all its atrocity. It was fitting that he too should have the assurance, which had been so wonderfully granted to his accomplice, that murder had been done only in intention, and that his soul should not be so weighed down by the consciousness of a crime which no repentance could repair, as to be by its despair prevented from turning in penitence to God. No. Gregoire de Kergonnec must be made aware that the nephew lived whom he had sought to destroy.

And this cousin of his—this young man for whose sake, or, at least, in whose interest this wickedness had been planned, this cousin who loved Marie, and whom Marie loved, loved with a hapless love that was to make her heart as cold and desolate as his own.

And then suddenly, suddenly as a lightning flash, when his mind had reached this point in his meditations, there came an idea into his mind, which less than a minute of concentrated thought turned into a determination.

He had been walking very slowly along the shore of the sea, as the meditations which have been described were passing through his mind. But the immediate result of the determination which he had taken was to quicken his steps. Not that his arrival at the lone Tregastel parsonage an hour sooner or an hour later could make or mar aught in the execution of the resolution he had formed. But it is natural to a man who doubts to saunter, natural to

the man whose doubts have found a solution to be turned thereby into a man of action, and to adopt the gait and bearing of one accordingly.

Yet all that he could do that night towards the putting his resolve into effect, when he reached his home, was to ascertain, what he was as yet wholly ignorant of, the whereabouts of the home and the property of his uncle. He knew that the name of it was Plogarrian, having heard that Alain de Kergonnec was of Plogarrian. And, knowing this, he had no difficulty in ascertaining that the place was in the immediate neighbourhood of Audierne.

And on the following morning the curé of Tregastel set out on a journey into the neighbouring department.

There were no railways in those days, and, measured by the means of locomotion which then existed, the journey undertaken by the curé was a long one. On the first day a cross-country conveyance, misnamed a diligence, which resembled a colossal covered gig, holding nine persons, and drawn by one horse, with much ado, and by dint of early departure and late arrival, brought him to Carhaix, situated as near as may be in the centre of the province of Brittany. And on the following day a similar vehicle enabled him to reach Quimper. Two-thirds of the next day were employed in journeying thence due west to Audierne.

The poor curé's heart beat fast, and he looked about him eagerly as he approached the place of his birth. The country, though so near to the terrible and famous Pointe du Raz, was, in the immediate neighbourhood of Audierne, of a more smiling and less desolate character than that part of the northern coast of the province in which his own present lot was cast. There were green woods and fertile fields around him, and a smiling sea gently lapping the sands of a low rockless shore before his eyes, as he reached the little village-town of Audierne, and had the direction of Plogarrian pointed out to him. On those fields and woodlands, then, his eyes had first opened, and, if right were done, they should belong to him.

He extricated himself as well as he could from the huge vehicle when it drew up at the inn in the main street of Audierne, and, looking around him as he alighted on the pavement, set himself to consider the somewhat embarrassing point, how he should begin to set about the object he had in view.

The first thing was to ascertain the exact situation of Plogarrian, and that, at least, was simple and easy.

There was an old gentleman—evidently the individual most entitled to that appellation among the little knot of idlers gathered to witness the arrival of the diligence—standing with his hands behind his back, enjoying the last rays of the winter afternoon sun, and apparently having nothing in the world to do but to extract what little mild amusement he could from observing the travellers as they descended from the carriage. He might be a man of some seventy-five or so, with a florid, red face, the colour of which deepened in a somewhat tell-tale manner as it approached the point of the nose, and an abundance of perfectly white hair.

It was clear that he had nothing better to do than to answer any questions that might be asked of him, and to him, therefore, the curé, accosting him with a courteous bow, addressed himself:

"Could monsieur be so obliging as to inform me, a perfect stranger to this part of the country, in which direction Plogarrian lies?"

"That can I, your reverence. Nobody better. I can do better for you than that, if you wish to go to Plogarrian. I can show you the way, for, as it happens, I am myself on the point of starting for a walk thither," returned Monsieur le Docteur Corseul, for he it was whom the curé had addressed.

The offer was courteously accepted by the priest, and the two men set off on their short walk together.

"Is it indiscreet to ask," began Corsenl, as soon as they were clear of the town, "if your reverence's visit to Plogarrian has reference to the event which is to take place next week?"

"Not the least indiscreet, my dear sir," said the curé; "but the answer to the question may be found in another, which I hope you will not find indiscreet. What is the event you allude to? I was not aware——"

"Ah, then you are not, I presume, acquainted with the family. The event is nothing less than the marriage of Monsieur Alain de Kergonnec with the heiress of one of the largest properties in this neighbourhood. It is to come off on Monday next."

"Indeed! Monsieur Alain de Kergonnec is the only member of the family with whom I have any acquaintance. I had the pleasure of knowing him slightly a few years since at Rouen. And I was aware of the proposed marriage with the lady you allude to—Mademoiselle de Tressuinen. But I had imagined that it was to come off

sooner than this; in fact, that it had taken place long ago."

"It was intended that it should have done so. When Alain was at Ronen, we hoped that the marriage would have taken place as soon as ever the lady was of sufficient age. It was necessary to wait a year or two after the betrothal had been solemnised, because Mademoiselle de Tressinien was fifteen only at that time, and her family were unwilling that she should be married so young. And then other causes of delay arose," continued Corseul, with a heavy sigh; "Alain's mother, Madame de Kergonnec, died. She was my daughter, Monsieur le Curé, and you conceive—Monsieur de Kergonnec, indeed, would have pressed on the marriage; more quickly, to say truth, than the general opinion in these parts would have deemed becoming. But Alain was a good son, who had loved his mother well," continued the old man, wiping a tear from his eye with his blue checked cotton handkerchief as he spoke, "and he resisted the being thus hurried. And, you conceive, Monsieur le Curé, I supported him in his wish for a little delay. And then, when the time had come when the marriage might have with propriety been solemnised, Mademoiselle de Tressinien fell ill. Ah, you know what is said of the cup and the lip! So the upshot has been that they are not married yet, but will be, I hope and trust, as fast as the church can bind them, on Monday next."

The curé had remained perfectly silent while his companion had been thus speaking, and he continued so when he ceased. He was meditating deeply.

"Here we enter the Plogarrian property," said Corseul, after walking awhile in silence. "There you can see the shore of the bay, that is the bay of Audierne, curving away there to the south, with the woods coming almost down to the shingles. All those are the Plogarrian woods. And the value of them is rising every day."

The curé paused a minute in his walk, and gazed over the landscape in the direction pointed out to him by his companion. But he resumed his walk again still without speaking. He thought that he saw his way to a determination which was very pleasant and comforting to his heart. He thought he saw his way; but before he could do so quite it was necessary that he should learn one or two things.

It was necessary, in the first place, that he should see and speak with Alain de Kergonnec.

"I was far from thinking that I should

have to congratulate Monsieur Alain on such an occasion," he said, at last, as soon as his resolution was taken, "though I would not pass so near his home without renewing our former acquaintanceship."

"I am sure he will be glad to see any of his old Rouen friends. I may tell him that——"

"Delaroche—the Reverend Jean Delaroche. I had not taken orders when I had the pleasure of knowing your grandson, monsieur."

"Stay. That's he, I think, with his gun over his shoulder, strolling along under the hedge yonder. Alain!" he shouted, with a force of lungs that many a Parisian young man in the flower of his age could not have rivalled, "Alain, mon garçon!"

The man he had pointed to looked round, and then began to cross the field leisurely towards them.

"Here's an old acquaintance of yours, Alain, à ce qu'il paraît, come to say 'bon jour,' and wish you joy of your marriage—the Reverend Monsieur Delaroche. He thought that he should find you a married man of a year or more's standing!"

"Delaroche!" cried Alain; and the blood rushed to his head and face as he spoke. For all he knew or had ever heard of Delaroche had been in connexion with Marie Morel, and as a friend of hers. Of course the habit Delaroche wore, as well as that which he had in those Rouen days worn as a seminarist, put all thought of jealousy out of Alain's head, and his sole thought at the moment was that Delaroche came charged with some message or some word from Marie.

And it would have been difficult to say whether the thought that the priest was the bearer of perhaps some word—some tidings at all events of Marie brought more of pain or pleasure with it to Alain. He had loved Marie Morel with a very genuine love; he loved her still, and had never loved any other. To have been told that the rich marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien had all been broken off, and that he was free to throw himself and the lands of Plogarrian at the feet of Marie Morel, would have transformed him from an unhappy to a happy man. But he knew that he had behaved badly to her, and that he was behaving badly to her now. He had done so, and was doing so, because his father was a man of iron will, and he was weak; because to fear the violence of his father, to be led and guided, and to obey implicitly, had been the habit of a lifetime, and he had not the daring and the vigour

to break it. And now what could it be that this old friend of the Morel family was come to say to him on the eve of his marriage? For he did not imagine for an instant that his grandfather's statement to the effect that Delaroche knew nothing of the postponement of the marriage was correct.

Be it what it might that Delaroche had to say to him, it was clear that it would be well that it should be said to himself alone. So asking his grandfather to be kind enough to carry his gun for him to the house, he put his arm through that of the priest, and proposed to him a stroll down to the coast before taking him to the house to introduce him to his father.

The conversation that ensued between them lasted the whole twilight hour of that February day; and it was dark night when they returned, still talking, to the house.

"If, then," said the priest, as they reached the door, "if I bring you your father's full assent to your union with Marie, together with his promise that he will take upon himself the task of breaking off the marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien—"

"If—if you can do that, and if Marie can forgive me, not an hour shall elapse before I would hasten to throw myself at her feet. But Monsieur le Curé, you do not know my father. I have small hope that any good will come of your exhortations. Should it be otherwise, I shall be a thankful man indeed, both to God and to you."

The curé's interview with the father was longer than that with the son had been; longer and stormier and more painful. It is needless to detain the reader with any detailed account of the conversation, because he knows already what arms the curé held in his hands, and what was the nature of the arguments he could bring to bear on Gregoire de Kergonnec.

The statement and proposition of the priest may be summed up thus:

"I, Jean" (or Eugène, as it afterwards turned out that he had been baptised after the name of his father)—"I, Eugène de Kergonnec, am the rightful heir and owner of this house and this estate. I hold the means of compelling the restoration of it, unavoidably at the same time making public the means you, my uncle, took to possess yourself of my inheritance. Should I do so, you know well what chance there

would be of any marriage between your son, my cousin, and Mademoiselle de Tressinien. Now, as the condition on which I will consent to bury the past in oblivion, to forego all claim to the lands or house of Plogarrian, and to leave my cousin in unmolested possession of the same, I require that the proposed marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien should be broken off, leaving you to find whatever pretext for such rupture may seem best to you, and that you should give your full consent to a marriage between your son and Mademoiselle Marie Morel. And I undertake to deliver up to you the paper containing the confession of the man Morvenec on the day that such a marriage shall be solemnised."

Gregoire de Kergonnec was a violent man; and had this proposal been made to him by his nephew, while both of them were standing alone on the rock above the Pointe du Raz, the result would probably have been a different one. But as it was there was nothing for it but to yield. He might, and he did, try storm and violence, and the night was half worn through before the victory was won. But the priest was firm as the rocks at the Pointe du Raz themselves; and Gregoire de Kergonnec had to accept his terms.

The result of his victory, the happiness it insured to Marie—who looked upon Alain's defection with the eyes of a French girl who deems opposition on such a point to the will of a father wholly impossible, and not with those of an English girl—the happiness of her lover, and the true delight that, though it could not yet be all delight, poured a balm into the curé's heart as he listened to the outpouring of Marie's gratitude and the blessings of her father, might all be related pleasantly enough. But it is not necessary to speak of them; cannot every reader imagine them for himself?

Eugène de Kergonnec returned alone, when his cousin's marriage with Marie had been celebrated, to his bleak and lonely parsonage on the storm-beaten coast of the Côtes du Nord, and sought, not eventually without a satisfactory measure of success, tranquillity, and perhaps even as much of happiness as is allotted to most of us, in the faithful and zealous discharge of the arduous and often trying duties which belonged to the station in life to which God had called him.