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A STRANGE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY NOVEL," "RIENZI," &c.

CHAPTER IX.

IN a very few minutes I was once more in the grounds of that old gable house. The servant, who went before me, entered them by the stairs and the wicket-gate of the private entrance; that way was the shortest. So again I passed by the circling glade and the monastic well—sward, trees, and ruins, all suffused in the limpid moonlight.

And now I was in the house; the servant took up stairs the note with which I was charged, and a minute or two afterwards returned and conducted me to the corridor above, in which Mrs. Ashleigh received me. I was the first to speak. "Your daughter—is—is—not seriously ill, I hope. What is it?"

"Hush!" she said, under her breath. "Will you step this way for a moment." She passed through a doorway to the right. I followed her, and as she placed on the table the light she had been holding, I looked round with a chill at the heart—it was the room in which Dr. Lloyd had died. Impossible to mistake. The furniture, indeed, was changed—there was no bed in the chamber; but the shape of the room, the position of the high casement, which was now wide open, and through which the moonlight streamed more softly than on that drear winter night, the great square beams intersecting the low ceiling—all were impressed vividly on my memory. The chair to which Mrs. Ashleigh beckoned me was placed just on the spot where I had stood by the bed-head of the dying man.

I shrank back—I could not have seated myself there. So, I remained leaning against the chimney-piece, while Mrs. Ashleigh told her story.

She said that on their arrival the day before, Lilian had been in more than usually good health and spirits, delighted with the old house, the grounds, and especially the nook by the Monk's Well, at which Mrs. Ashleigh had left her that evening in order to make some purchases in the town, in company with Mr. Vigors. When Mrs. Ashleigh returned, she and Mr. Vigors had sought Lilian in that nook, and Mrs. Ashleigh then detected, with a mother's eye, some change in Lilian, which alarmed her. She seemed listless and dejected, and was

very pale; but she denied that she felt unwell. On regaining the house she had sat down in the room in which we then were—"which," said Mrs. Ashleigh, "as it is not required for a sleeping-room, my daughter, who is fond of reading, wished to fit up as her own morning-room, or study. I left her here and went into the drawing-room below with Mr. Vigors. When he quitted me, which he did very soon, I remained for nearly an hour giving directions about the placing of furniture, which had just arrived from our late residence. I then went up-stairs to join my daughter, and to my terror found her apparently lifeless in her chair. She had fainted away."

I interrupted Mrs. Ashleigh here. "Has Miss Ashleigh been subject to fainting fits?"

"No, never. When she recovered she seemed bewildered—disinclined to speak. I got her to bed, and as she then fell quietly to sleep, my mind was relieved. I thought it only a passing effect of excitement, in a change of abode; or caused by something like malaria in the atmosphere of that part of the grounds in which I had found her seated."

"Very likely. The hour of sunset at this time of year is trying to delicate constitutions. Go on."

"About three-quarters of an hour ago she woke up with a loud cry, and has been ever since in a state of great agitation, weeping violently, and answering none of my questions. Yet she does not seem light-headed, but rather what we call hysterical."

"You will permit me now to see her. Take comfort—in all you tell me I see nothing to warrant serious alarm."

CHAPTER X.

To the true physician there is an inexpressible sanctity in the sick-chamber. At its threshold the more human passions quit their hold on his heart. Love there would be profanation. Even the grief permitted to others he must put aside. He must enter that room—a Calm Intelligence. He is disabled for his mission if he suffer aught to obscure the keen quiet glance of his science. Age or youth, beauty or deformity, innocence or guilt, merge their distinctions in one common attribute—human suffering appealing to human skill.

Woe to the households in which the trusted Healer feels not on his conscience the solemn

obligations of his glorious art. Reverently, as in a temple, I stood in the virgin's chamber. When her mother placed her hand in mine, and I felt the throb of its pulse, I was aware of no quicker beat of my own heart. I looked with a steady eye on the face, more beautiful from the flush that deepened the delicate hues of the young cheek, and the lustre that brightened the dark blue of the wandering eyes. She did not at first heed me; did not seem aware of my presence; but kept murmuring to herself words which I could not distinguish.

At length, when I spoke to her, in that low, soothing tone which we learn at the sick-bed, the expression of her face altered suddenly; she passed the hand I did not hold over her forehead, turned round, looked at me full and long, with unmistakable surprise, yet not as if the surprise displeased her; less the surprise which recoils from the sight of a stranger than that which seems doubtfully to recognise an unexpected friend! Yet on the surprise there seemed to creep something of apprehension—of fear;—her hand trembled, her voice quivered, as she said,

"Can it be, can it be? Am I awake? Mother, who is this?"

"Only a kind visitor, Dr. Fenwick, sent by Mrs. Poyntz, for I was uneasy about you, darling. How are you now?"

"Better. Strangely better."

She removed her hand gently from mine, and with an involuntary modest shrinking, turned towards Mrs. Ashleigh, drawing her mother towards herself, so that she became at once hidden from me.

Satisfied that there was here no delirium, nor even more than the slight and temporary fever which often accompanies a sudden nervous attack in constitutions peculiarly sensitive, I retired noiselessly from the room, and went not into that which had been occupied by the deceased inmate, but down stairs into the drawing-room, to write my prescription. I had already sent the servant off with it to the chemist's before Mrs. Ashleigh joined me.

"She seems recovering surprisingly; her forehead is cooler; she is perfectly self-possessed, only she cannot account for her own seizure, cannot account either for the fainting or the agitation with which she awoke from sleep."

"I think I can account for both. The first room in which she entered—that in which she fainted—had its window open; the sides of the window are overgrown with rank creeping plants in full blossom. Miss Ashleigh had already predisposed herself to injurious effects from the effluvia, by fatigue, excitement, imprudence in sitting out at the fall of a heavy dew. The sleep after the fainting fit was the more disturbed, because Nature, always alert and active in subjects so young, was making its own effort to right itself from an injury. Nature has nearly succeeded. What I have prescribed will a little aid and accelerate that which Nature has yet to do, and in a day or two I do not

doubt that your daughter will be perfectly restored. Only let me recommend care to avoid exposure to the open air during the close of the day. Let her avoid also the room in which she was first seized, for it is a strange phenomenon in nervous temperaments that a nervous attack may, without visible cause, be repeated in the same place where it was first experienced. You had better shut up the chamber for at least some weeks, burn fires in it, repaint and paper it, sprinkle chloroform. You are not, perhaps, aware that Dr. Lloyd died in that room after a prolonged illness. Suffer me to wait till your servant returns with the medicine, and let me employ the interval in asking a few questions. Miss Ashleigh, you say, never had a fainting fit before. I should presume that she is not what we call strong. But has she ever had any illness that alarmed you?"

"Never."

"No great liability to cold and cough, to attacks of the chest or lungs?"

"Certainly not. Still I have feared that she may have a tendency to consumption. Do you think so? Your questions alarm me!"

"I do not think so; but before I pronounce a positive opinion, one question more. You say you feared a tendency to consumption. Is that disease in her family? She certainly did not inherit it from you. But on her father's side?"

"Her father," said Mrs. Ashleigh, with tears in her voice, "died young, but of brain fever, which the medical men said was brought on by over study."

"Enough, my dear madam. What you say confirms my belief that your daughter's constitution is the very opposite to that in which the seeds of consumption lurk. It is rather that far nobler constitution, which the keenness of the nervous susceptibility renders delicate but elastic—as quick to recover as it is to suffer."

"Thank you, thank you, Dr. Fenwick, for what you say. You take a load from my heart. For Mr. Vigers, I know, thinks Lilian consumptive, and Mrs. Poyntz has rather frightened me at times by hints to the same effect. But when you speak of nervous susceptibility, I do not quite understand you. My daughter is not what is commonly called nervous. Her temper is singularly even."

"But if not excitable, should you also say that she is not impressionable? The things which do not disturb her temper, may, perhaps, deject her spirits. Do I make myself understood?"

"Yes, I think I understand your distinction. But I am not quite sure if it applies. To most things that affect the spirits she is not more sensitive than other girls, perhaps less so. But she is certainly very impressionable in some things."

"In what?"

"She is more moved than any one I ever knew by objects in external nature, rural scenery, rural sounds, by music, by the books that she reads—even books that are not works

of imagination. Perhaps in all this she takes after her poor father, but in a more marked degree—at least, I observe it more in her. For he was peculiarly silent and reserved. And perhaps also her peculiarities have been fostered by the seclusion in which she has been brought up. It was with a view to make her a little more like girls of her own age that our friend, Mrs. Poyntz, induced me to come here. Lilian was reconciled to this change; but she shrank from the thoughts of London, which I should have preferred. Her poor father could not endure London."

"Miss Ashleigh is fond of reading?"

"Yes, she is fond of reading, but more fond of musing. She will sit by herself for hours without book or work, and seem as abstracted as if in a dream. She was so even in her earliest childhood. Then she would tell me what she had been conjuring up to herself. She would say that she had seen—positively seen—beautiful lands far away from earth; flowers and trees not like ours. As she grew older this visionary talk displeased me, and I scolded her, and said that if others heard her, they would think that she was not only silly but very untruthful. So of late years she never ventures to tell me what, in such dreamy moments, she suffers herself to imagine; but the habit of musing continues still. Do you not agree with Mrs. Poyntz, that the best cure would be a little cheerful society amongst other young people?"

"Certainly," said I, honestly, though with a jealous pang. "But here comes the medicine. Will you take it up to her, and then sit with her half an hour or so? By that time I expect she will be asleep. I will wait here till you return. Oh, I can amuse myself with the newspapers and books on your table. Stay! one caution: be sure there are no flowers in Miss Ashleigh's sleeping-room. I think I saw a treacherous rose-tree in a stand by the window. If so, banish it."

Left alone, I examined the room in which, O thought of joy! I had surely now won the claim to become a privileged guest. I touched the books Lilian must have touched; in the articles of furniture, as yet so hastily disposed that the settled look of home was not about them, I still knew that I was gazing on things which her mind must associate with the history of her young life. That lute-harp—must be surely hers, and the scarf, with a girl's favourite colours—pure white and pale blue,—and the bird-cage, and the childish ivory work-case, with implements too pretty for use, all spoke of her.

It was a blissful intoxicating reverie, which Mrs. Ashleigh's entrance disturbed.

Lilian was sleeping calmly. I had no pretence to linger there any longer.

"I leave you, I trust, with your mind quite at ease," said I. "You will allow me to call to-morrow, in the afternoon?"

"Oh yes, gratefully."

Mrs. Ashleigh held out her hand as I made towards the door.

Is there a physician who has not felt at times how that ceremonious fee throws him back from the garden land of humanity into the marketplace of money—seems to put him out of the pale of equal friendship, and say "True, you have given health and life. Adieu! there, you are paid for it." With a poor person there would have been no dilemma, but Mrs. Ashleigh was affluent: to depart from custom here was almost impertinence. But had the penalty of my refusal been the doom of never again beholding Lilian, I could not have taken her mother's gold. So I did not appear to notice the hand held out to me, and passed by with a quickened step.

"But, Dr. Fenwick, stop!"

"No, ma'am, no! Miss Ashleigh would have recovered as soon without me. Whenever my aid is really wanted, then—but Heaven grant that time may never come. We will talk again about her to-morrow."

I was gone. Now in the garden ground, odorous with blossoms; now in the lane, enclosed by the narrow walls; now in the deserted streets, over which the moon shone full as in that winter night when I hurried from the chamber of death. But the streets were not ghastly now, and the moon was no longer Hecate, that dreary goddess of awe and spectres, but the sweet, simple Lady of the Stars, on whose gentle face lovers have gazed ever since (if that guess of astronomers be true) she was parted from earth to rule the tides of its deeps from afar, even as love from love divided rules the heart that yearns towards it with mysterious law!

CHAPTER XI.

WITH what increased benignity I listened to the patients who visited me the next morning. The whole human race seemed to me worthier of love, and I longed to diffuse amongst all some rays of the glorious hope that had dawned upon my heart. My first call, when I went forth, was on the poor young woman from whom I had been returning the day before, when an impulse, which seemed like a fate, had lured me into the grounds where I had first seen Lilian. I felt grateful to this poor patient; without her, Lilian herself might be yet unknown to me.

The girl's brother, a young man employed in the police, and whose pay supported a widowed mother and the suffering sister, received me at the threshold of the cottage.

"Oh, sir! she is so much better to-day; almost free from pain. Will she live, now? can she live?"

"If my treatment has really done the good you say; if she be really better under it, I think her recovery may be pronounced. But I must first see her."

The girl was indeed wonderfully better. I felt that my skill was achieving a signal triumph, but that day even my intellectual pride was forgotten in the luxurious unfolding of that sense of heart which had so newly waked into blossom.

As I recrossed the threshold, I smiled on the brother, who was still lingering there:

"Your sister is saved, Waby. She needs now chiefly wine and good though light nourishment; these you will find at my house; call there for them every day."

"God bless you, sir! If ever I can serve you——" His tongue faltered—he could say no more.

Serve me—Allen Fenwick—that poor policeman! Me, whom a king could not serve! What did I ask from earth but Fame and Lilian's heart? Thrones and bread man wins from the aid of others. Fame and woman's heart he can only gain through himself.

So I strode gaily up the hill, through the iron gates into the fairy ground, and stood before Lilian's home.

The man-servant, on opening the door, seemed somewhat confused, and said hastily, before I spoke,

"Not at home, sir; a note for you."

I turned the note mechanically in my hand; I felt stunned.

"Not at home! Miss Ashleigh cannot be out. How is she?"

"Better, sir, thank you."

I still could not open the note; my eyes turned wistfully towards the windows of the house, and there—at the drawing-room window—I encountered the scowl of Mr. Vigors. I coloured with resentment, divined that I was dismissed, and walked away with a proud crest and a firm step.

When I was out of the gates, in the blind lane, I opened the note. It began formally, "Mrs. Ashleigh presents her compliments," and went on to thank me, civilly enough, for my attendance the night before, would not give me the trouble to repeat my visit, and enclosed a fee, double the amount of the fee prescribed by custom. I flung the money, as an asp that had stung me, over the high wall, and tore the note into shreds. Having thus idly vented my rage, a dull gnawing sorrow came heavily down upon all other emotions, stifling and replacing them. At the mouth of the lane I halted. I shrank from the thought of the crowded streets beyond. I shrank yet more from the routine of duties, which stretched before me in the desert into which daily life was so suddenly smitten. I sat down by the roadside, shading my dejected face with a nerveless hand. I looked up as the sound of steps reached my ear, and saw Dr. Jones coming briskly along the lane, evidently from Abbots' House. He must have been there at the very time I had called. I was not only dismissed but supplanted. I rose before he reached the spot on which I had seated myself, and went my way into the town, went through my allotted round of professional visits, but my attentions were not so tenderly devoted, my skill so genially quickened by the glow of benevolence, as my poorer patients had found them in the morning.

I have said how the physician should enter the sick-room. "A Calm Intelligence!" But if you

strike a blow on the heart, the intellect suffers. Little worth, I suspect, was my "calm intelligence" that day. Bichat, in his famous book upon Life and Death, divides life into two classes—animal and organic. Man's intellect, with the brain for its centre, belongs to life animal; his passions to life organic, centred in the heart, in the viscera. Alas! if the noblest passions through which alone we lift ourselves into the moral realm of the sublime and beautiful really have their centre in the life which the very vegetable, that lives organically, shares with us! And, alas! if it be that life which we share with the vegetable, that can cloud, obstruct, suspend, annul that life centred in the brain, which we share with every being howsoever angelic, in every star howsoever remote, on whom the Creator bestows the faculty of thought!

CHAPTER XII.

BUT suddenly I remembered Mrs. Poyntz. I ought to call on her. So I closed my round of visits at her door. But the day was then far advanced, and the servant politely informed me that Mrs. Poyntz was at dinner. I could only leave my card, with a message that I would pay my respects to her the next day. That evening I received from her this note:

"DEAR DR. FENWICK,—I regret much that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow. Poyntz and I are going to visit his brother, at the other end of the county, and we start early. We shall be away some days. Sorry to hear from Mrs. Ashleigh that she has been persuaded by Mr. Vigors to consult Dr. Jones about Lilian. Vigors and Jones both frighten the poor mother, and insist upon consumptive tendencies. Unluckily, you seem to have said there was little the matter. Some doctors gain their practice, as some preachers fill their churches, by adroit use of the appeals to terror. You do not want patients, Dr. Jones does. And, after all, better perhaps as it is.

"Yours, &c.

"M. POYNTZ."

To my more selfish grief anxiety for Lilian was now added. I had seen many more patients die from being mistreated for consumption than from consumption itself. And Dr. Jones was a mercenary, cunning, needy man, with much crafty knowledge of human foibles, but very little skill in the treatment of human maladies. My fears were soon confirmed. A few days after I heard from Miss Brabazon that Miss Ashleigh was seriously ill, kept her room. Mrs. Ashleigh made this excuse for not immediately returning the visits which the Hill had showered upon her. Miss Brabazon had seen Dr. Jones, who had shaken his head, said it was a serious case; but that time and care (his time and his care!) might effect wonders.

How stealthily at the dead of the night I would climb the Hill, and look towards the windows of the old sombre house—one window, in which a light burnt dim and mournful, the light of a sick-room—of hers!

At length Mrs. Poyntz came back, and I

entered her house, having fully resolved beforehand on the line of policy to be adopted towards the potentate whom I hoped to secure as an ally. It was clear that neither disguise nor half-confidence would baffle the penetration of so keen an intellect, nor propitiate the good will of so imperious and resolute a temper. Perfect frankness here was the wisest prudence; and, after all, it was most agreeable to my own nature, and most worthy of my own honour.

Luckily, I found Mrs. Poyntz alone, and taking in both mine the hand she somewhat coldly extended to me, I said, with the earnestness of suppressed emotion:

"You observed, when I last saw you, that I had not yet asked you to be my friend. I ask it now. Listen to me with all the indulgence you can vouchsafe, and let me at least profit by your counsel if you refuse to give me your aid."

Rapidly, briefly, I went on to say how I had first seen Lilian, and how sudden, how strange to myself had been the impression which that first sight of her had produced.

"You remarked the change that had come over me," said I; "you divined the cause before I divined it myself; divined it as I sat there beside you, thinking that through you I might see, in the freedom of social intercourse, the face that was then haunting me. You know what has since passed. Miss Ashleigh is ill; her case is, I am convinced, wholly misunderstood. All other feelings are merged in one sense of anxiety—of alarm. But it has become due to me, due to all, to incur the risk of your ridicule even more than of your reproof, by stating to you thus candidly, plainly, bluntly, the sentiment which renders alarm so poignant, and which, if scarcely admissible to the romance of some wild dreamy boy, may seem an unpardonable folly in a man of my years and my sober calling; due to me, to you, to Mrs. Ashleigh; because still the dearest thing in life to me is honour. And if you, who know Mrs. Ashleigh so intimately, who must be more or less aware of her plans or wishes for her daughter's future; if you believe that those plans or wishes lead to a lot far more ambitious than an alliance with me could offer to Miss Ashleigh, then aid Mr. Vigors in excluding me from the house; aid me in suppressing a presumptuous, visionary passion. I cannot enter that house without love and hope at my heart. And the threshold of that house I must not cross if such love and such hope would be a sin and a treachery in the eyes of its owner. I might restore Miss Ashleigh to health; her gratitude might—I cannot continue. This danger must not be to me nor to her, if her mother has views far above such a son-in-law. And I am the more bound to consider all this while it is yet time, because I heard you state that Miss Ashleigh had a fortune—was what would be here termed an heiress. And the full consciousness that whatever fame one in my profession may live to acquire, does not open those vistas of social power and grandeur which are opened by professions to my eyes less noble in themselves—

that full consciousness, I say, was forced upon me by certain words of your own. For the rest, you know my descent is sufficiently recognised as that amidst well-born gentry to have rendered me no mésalliance to families the most proud of their ancestry, if I had kept my hereditary estate and avoided the career that makes me useful to man. But I acknowledge that on entering a profession such as mine—entering any profession except that of arms or the senate—all leave their pedigree at its door, an erased or dead letter. All must come as equals, high born or low born, into that arena in which men ask aid from a man as he makes himself; to them his dead forefathers are idle dust. Therefore, to the advantage of birth I cease to have a claim. I am but a provincial physician, whose station would be the same had he been a cobbler's son. But gold retains its grand privilege in all ranks. He who has gold is removed from the suspicion that attaches to the greedy fortune-hunter. My private fortune, swelled by my savings, is sufficient to secure to any one I married a larger settlement than many a wealthy squire can make. I need no fortune with a wife; if she have one, it would be settled on herself. Pardon these vulgar details. Now, have I made myself understood?"

"Fully," answered the Queen of the Hill, who had listened to me quietly, watchfully, and without one interruption. "Fully. And you have done well to confide in me with so generous an unreserve. But before I say further, let me ask, what would be your advice for Lilian, supposing that you ought not to attend her. You have no trust in Dr. Jones; neither have I. And Anne Ashleigh's note received to-day, begging me to call, justifies your alarm. Still you think there is no tendency to consumption?"

"Of that I am certain, so far as my slight glimpse of a case that to me, however, seems a simple and not uncommon one, will permit. But in the alternative you put—that my own skill, whatever its worth, is forbidden—my earnest advice is, that Mrs. Ashleigh should take her daughter at once to London, and consult there those great authorities to whom I cannot compare my own opinion or experience; and by their counsel abide."

Mrs. Poyntz shaded her eyes with her hand for a few moments, and seemed in deliberation with herself. Then she said, with her peculiar smile, half grave, half ironical:

"In matters more ordinary you would have won me to your side long ago. That Mr. Vigors should have presumed to cancel my recommendation to a settler on the Hill, was an act of rebellion, and involved the honour of my prerogative. But I suppressed my indignation at an affront so unusual, partly out of pique against yourself, but much more, I think, out of regard for you."

"I understand. You detected the secret of my heart; you knew that Mrs. Ashleigh would not wish to see her daughter the wife of a provincial physician."

"Am I sure, or are you sure, that the

daughter herself would accept that fate; or if she accepted it, would not repent?"

"Do not think me the vainest of men when I say this—that I cannot believe I should be so enthralled by a feeling at war with my reason, unfavoured by anything I can detect in my habits of mind, or even by the dreams of a youth which exalted science and excluded love, unless I was intimately convinced that Miss Ashleigh's heart was free—that I could win, and that I could keep it! Ask me why I am convinced of this, and I can tell you no more why I think that she could love me, than I can tell you why I love her!"

"I am of the world, worldly. But I am woman, womanly—though I may not care to be thought it. And therefore, though what you say is—regarded in a worldly point of view, sheer nonsense—regarded in a womanly point of view, it is logically sound. But still you cannot know Lilian as I do. Your nature and hers are in strong contrast. I do not think she is a safe wife for you. The purest, the most innocent creature imaginable, certainly that, but always in the seventh heaven. And you in the seventh heaven, just at this moment, but with an irresistible gravitation to the solid earth, which will have its way again, when the honeymoon is over. I do not believe you two would harmonise by intercourse. I do not believe Lilian would sympathise with you, and I am sure you could not sympathise with her throughout the long dull course of this work-day life. And therefore, for your sake as well as hers, I was not displeased to find that Dr. Jones had replaced you; and now, in return for your frankness, I say frankly—do not go again to that house. Conquer this sentiment, fancy, passion, whatever it be. And I will advise Mrs. Ashleigh to take Lilian to town. Shall it be so settled?"

I could not speak. I buried my face in my hands—misery, misery, desolation!

I know not how long I remained thus silent, perhaps many minutes. At length I felt a cold, firm, but not ungentle hand placed upon mine; and a clear, full, but not discouraging voice said to me:

"Leave me to think well over this conversation, and to ponder well the value of all you have shown that you so deeply feel. The interests of life do not fill both scales of the balance. The heart which does not always go in the same scale with the interests, still has its weight in the scale opposed to them. I have heard a few wise men say, as many a silly woman says, 'Better be unhappy with one we love, than be happy with one we love not.' Do you say that, too?"

"With every thought of my brain, every beat of my pulse, I say it."

"After that answer, all my questionings cease. You shall hear from me to-morrow. By that time, I shall have seen Anne and Lilian. I shall have weighed both scales of the balance, and the heart here, Allen Fenwick, seems very heavy. Go, now. I hear feet on the stairs.

Poyntz bringing up some friendly gossip; gossipers are spies."

I passed my hand over my eyes, tearless, but how tears would have relieved the anguish that burdened them! and, without a word, went down the stairs, meeting at the landing-place Colonel Poyntz and the old man whose pain my prescription had cured. The old man was whistling a merry tune, perhaps first learned on the play-ground. He broke from it to thank, almost to embrace me, as I slid by him. I seized his jocund blessing as a good omen, and carried it with me as I passed into the broad sunlight. Solitary—solitary. Should I be so evermore?

PASTORS AND MASTERS.

A QUARTER of a century ago—in the year 'thirty-five—appeared the first report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales. It showed that the gross income of all the bishops amounted to One Hundred and Eighty-one Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty-one pounds a year, being an average of Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty-seven pounds per bishop. It showed that of the beneficed clergy one had an income of Seven Thousand Three Hundred a year, another nearly Five Thousand, two others nearly Four Thousand, and about a hundred and fifty more had incomes varying between One and Three Thousand, but generally under fifteen hundred. There were, at the same time, nearly five thousand of the beneficed clergy who had incomes less than Two Hundred a year, and more than five thousand unbeneficed clergy, acting as curates—of whom more than four thousand were doing the work of non-resident clergy—who had not more than Eighty pounds a year to keep their families upon. Then, too, as now, while there were churches wanting congregations, there were congregations wanting churches. In thirty-four London parishes, with a population of a million and a hundred thousand, there was church-room for the hundred thousand, but none for the million. The want in many other places was hardly less urgent, and upon the facts thus ascertained action was taken. They were not facts showing the Church to be a failure, but they were facts showing reason why men of all creeds who honestly work for love of God and their neighbour, should agree as much as possible and pull together.

The Archbishop of Canterbury himself brought into the House of Lords the bill which passed into an act for reducing episcopal incomes, widening the sphere of episcopal work, abolishing thirty-four useless canonries, lowering the stipends of new deans and canons, suppressing sinecure prebends and rectories, and appropriating all that could be saved, especially what could be saved out of cathedral and collegiate revenues, as far as possible towards two great purposes: namely, the better payment of clergy-

men who worked for large populations on inadequate stipends, and addition to the church-room in districts where it was most deficient, by the founding of new churches and the endowment of more clergy. There was a most honest desire to do what had to be done.

For the proper application to these two appointed uses of the surplus revenues created by a wise retrenchment, commissioners, styled the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of England, were appointed, with full powers to work, by means of orders in council. It was thus that in August, 'thirty-six, established with a righteous purpose, in which—though there was a party that resisted—the Church even as represented by its dignitaries who would be the chief worldly losers by the change, took a right Christian part, the Ecclesiastical Commission came into existence. The first commissioners were the two archbishops and three bishops—five in all—on the part of the Church, an equal number of members of the government, and three laymen. Four years later, parliament, dealing with the revenues of the cathedral chapters, enlarged the number of commissioners to forty-nine. For, the affairs of all cathedrals being brought into question, all the bishops of England and Wales obtained the right to sit in the commission, besides three deans; so that there were twenty-nine of the clergy, and to balance these there were added twenty laymen, two of them to be nominees of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The provision of additional church room was the use to which these commissioners were directed to put the surplus revenues under their control.

Three years later the commissioners received a loan of six hundred thousand pounds from Queen Anne's Bounty, towards the endowment (with not less than one hundred and fifty pounds a year) of additional church districts. Another change was made when, in eighteen fifty, the three Church Estates Commissioners were added to the forty-nine. Of these three, the first, appointed by the crown, was to receive a salary of not less than twelve hundred a year, and in him were to be vested all the estates held in trust for the commission. The three, with two out of the forty-nine, were to form a "Church Estates Committee" for exclusive management of all the property of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

Six years afterwards, namely, in 'fifty-six, the elder "Church Building Commission" being extinguished, all its powers were transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commission. And last year an act was passed giving to the commission all the estates of each see from the close of the tenure by its occupant at the date of the act's passing, and providing that in place of the fixed money payments hitherto secured to the archbishops and bishops there shall be secured to each see other estates calculated to yield the amount of the stipend enjoyed at the time of transfer. These arrangements represent the main principles governing the sixty or more acts by which the Ecclesiastical Commission as it

now exists is defined and regulated, while more than a thousand orders in council have given validity to its decisions.

The practical result of all this legislation is, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are the greatest buyers and sellers of landed estates in the kingdom. No other corporation holds so large an amount of national property in trust. Stewardship by a cumbrous commission is not likely to be of the best. In April, 'forty-five, nine years after the commission was established, a Board minute stated that "no definite principles had as yet been laid down respecting the general mode of dealing with lessees of Church property." The manner of sale was precisely that of the costermonger, who asks tenpence for a basket of strawberries when he means to take sixpence. As the agent of the commissioners put this principle of trade to a committee of the House of Commons—using, no doubt, finer phrases than the costermonger would employ—"in negotiating, the prices respectively fixed to each property were treated by us as the upset price, and, for the purpose of negotiating, a larger amount was asked in the majority of cases." This was, he says, "quite the usual plan," the exceptions were "not one in a hundred." If a gentleman accustomed to plain dealing assumed the straightforwardness of a transaction thus carried out under episcopal superintendence and paid the overcharge, did the commission return the excess with an explanation of the mistake under which its customer was labouring, or did it rejoice in having pigeoned a simpleton, and put the gains to the account of the Church? They might, however, be entitled to the money, for as they were in the habit of calculating the value of reversions by the obsolete and erroneous Northampton tables, the price set by them on an estate was sometimes ten per cent below, sometimes even as much as ninety per cent above, the market value. Until the use of these tables was taken away from them by act of parliament seven years ago, the Ecclesiastical Commission always stuck by them as a chosen guide, although they had been in disuse almost everywhere for half a century.

No doubt the most irreproachable commissioners were often told of their mistake, but they seem to resent being spoken to by anybody so audacious as to suppose they can require to be further edified. The vicar of Aberdare, witness before a committee of the House five years ago, testified that he had informed the commissioners of the real value of property held by them in his parish; indeed, for the good of the Church, he had troubled himself to come up to London and make known in the proper quarter that land yielding the commissioners only a nominal revenue had increased in value, so that if let for building it would be worth fifteen hundred a year, while thirty thousand pounds might be got for the lease of another part of the same land because of its containing mineral. The Ecclesiastical Commission, though it acted on the information, took it unkindly. What

right had a country vicar to suppose that the great commissioners were not aware of everything? Said the secretary, Mr. Chalk, to Mr. Griffith, the vicar, "What business is it of yours to meddle in this matter, which does not concern you at all?" Mr. Griffith was so bold as to think that the interests of the Church did concern him and every member of it. The vicar's mistake was the not understanding, what nearly every inferior clergyman who does business at the office of the Ecclesiastical Commission complains that he is made to understand, how very magnificently high and mighty the commission is, and how entirely it is cream of the first skimming.

Like their magnificence, is the sense of spiritual destitution the commissioners have shown. When they had given ten thousand pounds to build a palace for the bishopric of Ripon, upon its being represented that the new bishop wanted standing room for four carriages instead of two, and "four additional stables to best stables," also that he had laid out four hundred pounds beyond his allowance on paper-hangings, and two hundred and fifty pounds upon a flower-garden, the ten thousand were made nearly fifteen, for here was destitution! Four stables too few, and only allowance of room for two carriages! Then, for the Bishop of Lincoln (and, without intervention of a valuer, from the agent of the bishop, who had himself become owner of the estate), Riseholme was bought at a price that made the land pay less than two per cent because the house was certified to be a fit and convenient residence. But, fourteen thousand pounds were afterwards allowed by the commission for "repair" of this fit and convenient residence, which was, doubtless, destitute of many necessaries. Stapleton House having been bought as a second residence for the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, and twelve thousand spent upon repairs and alterations—the whole property being bought without survey and valuation, because in their all-sufficiency the commissioners "were satisfied that the estate was worth the money that was paid for it"—cost in all not a hundred less than four-and-twenty thousand pounds. Afterwards it was sold for twelve thousand, because, said the commissioners—reliant still on their own self-sufficiency—"it appears to us that the said sum of twelve thousand pounds is a fair and reasonable price for the said house, with the lands and premises attached."

For the Bishop of Rochester, Danbury Park was bought at eighty or ninety pounds an acre, when similar estates adjacent to it had been bought at an average of little more than fifty pounds an acre. Eight or ten thousand pounds too much—according to the vulgar computation of the lower race of men—was paid for that property. In common life, nobody makes such a fool of himself, or gets so much taken in, as the pompous Sir Oracle, who bases all his business and all his argument upon the sublime ground of an "it appears to me." Perhaps there may be a rule of the

same sort governing the lives of some commissions.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have spent upon episcopal residences one hundred and seventy thousand pounds, and "cannot withhold the expression of their deep regret that the limited amount of their present means must still leave untouched a considerable portion of that spiritual destitution the removal of which was the main object of the crown in issuing the original commission of inquiry, and of parliament in confirming its recommendations."

The commission had a discretionary power of augmenting the incomes of archdeacons; and that power they have used without regard to the large incomes which many archdeacons derive from other sources. No less than fifty-two archdeacons have been thus enriched to the full measure permitted by the law. We all remember how, the other day, the income of a rich Dean of York was raised from one to two thousand a year by this commission, with a lively sense of the destitution of the higher clergy.

By Sir Robert Peel's act of the year 'forty-three, empowering the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to borrow six hundred thousand pounds from the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty for the formation of additional church districts, with an ultimate endowment of not less than one hundred and fifty pounds a year, the formation of what are now called the Peel districts was set on foot. The commissioners looking, properly enough, to populous places, have marked out large flocks for about two hundred and fifty shepherds, now and then giving as many as twelve thousand persons to the charge of one minister: and here they economise. For, while they spend the most that the law suffers on the comforts of dignitaries, they spend quite as uniformly the least that the law suffers upon the necessities of the poor and hard-working priests. The least sum named by the act is the highest sum paid for work in a Peel district. No doubt a great many districts are manned in this way for a little money, and a show of great results is made; but surely it is not upon the bread-and-cheese of the working clergy that the economy of the commission is most usefully enforced. The Dean of Chichester, respected for twenty years as the earnest and indefatigable Vicar of Leeds, knew in Leeds five of these Peel districts, and of town livings generally he has said, they are, "with few exceptions, the worst endowed livings in the Church. The more highly educated of our clergy, therefore, remain at the universities until they retire to country parishes, where the work might be done by men of inferior ability, and of less intellectual power. And this being the evil complained of, instead of supplying a remedy, we are actually increasing it by the formation of our Peel districts. By the formation of Peel districts we are creating an additional number of pauper benefices, and by so doing we are, for the reasons already assigned, retarding the extension of the Church." If the commission

must vote pine-apple money to bishops, let it at least economise by dividing its crumbs among a smaller number of what it would call the inferior clergy, and endow its new livings with means for the pastor and his family actually to taste meat every day.

But the all-wise commissioners, not stopping at the mismanagement of what they have to distribute, actually divert gifts from the Church, and slam their doors in the faces of men who bring offerings for the service of God and for the maintenance of an efficient clergy. They are known to some of their brethren as Commissioners for the Prevention of Church-building. If any man, having a good practical title to his land, wishes to give a part of it to the commissioners for a church, down they come upon him with a solicitor, who, instead of being paid by a salary for making requisite inquiries, makes, as the valuer does, his separate charges for every bit of work, and in this case inflicts his charge on the benevolent donor for a searching scrutiny into his title to his own estate. No offer of land is entertained by the commission till the donor agrees to pay law charges for investigation of his titles, and will run the risk of having a flaw found for him that may damage the value of his whole estate. A wise man will think twice before he gives land upon such ungracious terms. A salaried law adviser might include in the duty, for which he should be paid by the commission, all requisite inquiry of this sort, and nothing would have been easier than for the commissioners to have obtained long since a short act, giving them, under proper restriction, parliamentary titles to gifts of this sort. But even this incredible energy of obstruction to the cause they are bound to support is not enough for the most mighty commissioners. Why must they deny to a man who will build or endow a church the patronage of the living he has given, and insist that it shall go to enrich patrons of the adjoining living? The Dissenters, free from all these arbitrary and offensive trammels upon generosity, are always eager to meet spiritual destitution, and the chapel-building, as we know, goes on where church-building is at a stand-still.

There was, indeed, a fund given to the commissioners twenty-one years ago, by the Cathedral Act, for the augmentation of benefices. Good resolutions were made as the conditions of augmentation in February, 'forty-four, and, for want of means, suspended in the following August for the next twelve years, at the end of which time there was again a surplus; and the earlier resolutions having been rescinded, it was determined that grants, no longer of annual aids, but of capital sums, never exceeding six hundred pounds, should be made, only when met by a benefaction of equivalent amount. The common fund has been mixed with the episcopal fund since eighteen fifty. The deficiencies, therefore, arising out of grants to bishops, when in excess of the episcopal fund, are covered by deduction from the fund available for augmentation of small benefices; and that fund has accordingly been lessened

by very considerably more than a hundred thousand pounds. More than a hundred and twelve thousand have thus been transferred from the account of the poor clergy to meet the wants of bishops. Even the augmentation of poor livings has gone on most actively among men who, if they are not the rose, live near the rose. Before the year 'forty-four, less money had gone to the great populous towns and town districts than to the cathedral cities blessed already with large and strong bodies of clergy. More money had been allotted to Norwich than to Manchester; more to York than to Liverpool; more to Ripon than to Birmingham. From that year to the end of 'fifty-nine, the small towns enjoyed not less favour. Manchester had fifty pounds, Liverpool nothing. The grants of additional income went to two hundred and thirty-one places with a population under a thousand, and to three hundred and twenty-four with a population under two thousand, but only to a hundred and fifty-nine with a population greater than two thousand.

In respect of local claims on account of tithes, there has been the same inequality. Thus, while a hundred and thirty-five pounds a year is practically considered an extreme income for the hard-working town clergy, we find that the vicar of West Tarring, with a population of about a thousand, has granted to him three hundred and eighty pounds a year from the Ecclesiastical Commission, raising his income to four hundred and seventy-four. Similarly the vicar of Figheldean, with a population of five hundred and twenty-seven, receives within ten pounds of the sum of the grants made to the whole of Manchester, besides two acres of land, to raise to three hundred and fifty pounds a year an income already greater than the commissioners' ideal for a clergyman in a populous town district! The hard-working posts in those town districts, were they twice as well paid as they are, could not be given away as matters of favour or reward. The favour—if there is to be any in question—is conferred by the man who, with a stout heart and earnest Christian spirit, undertakes to do the work. Is it for this reason that so much of the money entrusted to the commission for increasing the efficiency of the Church, is diverted from the populous places ill furnished with religious instruction, and spent on those quiet country livings, of which the enrichment goes to the bettering of a great man's patronage?

The accounts of this bad commission are imperfect and confused. As the secretary has testified, "capital and income and all sorts of things are mixed up together." The commissioners themselves said, in their second report, that the accounts did not include all sums paid—agent's charges, for example, are habitually omitted. But upon the best calculation that can be made, the gross result appears to be, that of the large funds entrusted, for the benefit of the poor clergy and of populous town districts needing spiritual aid, to the mismanagement of this precious commission, one-third part has been

sunk in costs of management and favours done to the high dignitaries of the unequally paid Church.

Has no exemplary person in power anything to say, or do, about this?

ON THE TIGHT ROPE.

“DANCING,” say learned ballet-masters, “is distinguished into High Dance, or Funambulism, consisting of Capers, Gambols, and Low Dance, which is Terra à Terrâ, or close to the Ground.” Funambulism may therefore claim to be one of the highest branches of the dance. But art not unfrequently moves in a circle, reverting, after a certain time, to some ancient phase of its previous career. Such is the case with dancing on ropes. Rope-dancing, which began with rope-creeping (*funerepus*, *qui in fune repit*) and with rope-walking, after passing through *pas seuls* and *pas de deux* on single and double tight ropes, has returned to primitive rope-walking and rope-running again, it must be confessed, with additions, if not with embellishments. The funambulus of Terence, despising minor feats of grace and agility, is once more a high funambulus at the Crystal Palace. The Greek expression was like the Latin; the *σχοινοβατης* mentioned by Chrysostom was literally a walker on a rope of rushes. And now, the Terpsichore of the straightened cord sends her pupils to take lessons and gymnastic training of Hercules and Mercury. Herr Groddeck, in his day Professor of Philosophy at Dantzic, in his learned dissertation, *De Funambulis*, defines, in Hibernian vein, a rope-dancer, a person who *walks* on a thick rope fastened to two opposite posts.

The ancients, he tells us, undoubtedly had their rope-dancers as well as we, who exercised their art in four several ways. The first vaulted or turned round the rope, like a wheel round its axis, and there hung by the heels or the neck. The second flew, or slid from above, downwards, resting on their stomachs, with their arms and legs extended; a modification of this feat has been performed by elephants. The third ran along a rope stretched in a right line, or up and down. Lastly, the fourth not only walked on a rope, but made surprising leaps and turns thereon; in short, their funambular æsthetics were those of the rope school now flourishing.

Passing from historical to moral considerations, Herr Groddeck maintains that the profession of a rope-dancer is not lawful; that the professors are infamous and their art of no use to society; that they expose their bodies to very great dangers; and that they ought not to be tolerated in a well-regulated state. Afterwards, tempering the severity of his sentence, perhaps also yielding a little to his own private and particular tastes—for who would write an erudite essay, “*De Funambulis*,” unless he took some interest in funambuli and funambulæ?—he admits that there are sometimes reasons for patronising persons of precarious lives; that the people must have their shows; that one of the secrets of government is to furnish them therewith, and other pretexts of equal plausibility.

Herr Groddeck did right to withdraw his hard words, so long as the funambulist risks his own life only. What a task it is that a man undertakes—or which more frequently is undertaken for him by his parents and guardians—when he sets to work to earn his bread by juggling with the laws of gravity, his own person being the object juggled with! Before the rope-walker can exercise his art, two distinct difficulties have to be overcome: first, the maintenance of his equilibrium, and secondly, the faculty of reaching and remaining at precipitous heights without feeling fear or turning giddy. But although these two difficulties, in combination, appear almost insurmountable to persons unused to them, they are, nevertheless, frequently surmounted unconsciously and instinctively by many animals and many men.

The very act of walking upright, with which the human species is gifted, is a complicated and continued process of balancing, effected by adapting very small supports—the feet—to the varying position of the centre of gravity of the whole body. The child has to acquire the art in his infancy; and the adult loses it, temporarily, whenever intemperance, congestion of blood, convulsion, or faintness affects his mental faculties. Let a statue of a man be fabricated out of any solid material of the same specific gravity as the human body, and it will require a skilful artist to make it stand on its feet unsupported by a prop and unfastened to its pedestal. Even when it has been made to stand upright, a very slight shock above or shaking below will cause it to fall.

This really wonderful feat of equilibrium is performed by every living biped, without being considered anything extraordinary. Quadrupeds, with their four supports, have a mere nothing to do in comparison. They stand, like tables or chairs, of themselves; even in case of accident to one leg, they would still keep up and avoid falling, as tripods, so long as their muscular powers remained unimpaired. Certain quadrupeds do, however, attain considerable proficiency in the equilibrist’s art. The chamois will balance itself adroitly on narrow pinnacles and ledges of rock; the goat the same; and may also be taught tricks as surprising as human performances on the slack wire. Mountain sheep show great steadiness and courage in picking their way along dangerous paths. Mules enjoy an undisputed celebrity. All these animals seem to take a perverse and foolhardy pleasure in skirting the very brink of the precipice. What occasional accidents may happen to the chamois is hard for lowlanders to ascertain, but neither of the latter species are absolutely perfect in their training. Poor Madame d’Herlincourt, only the other day, was pitched over the precipice of the Gemmi Pass, through the fault of a very fallible mule, and smashed to bits, literally. In the basins of waterfalls of any respectable height, it is not rare to see floating the body of a sheep or a lamb that has fallen into the upper stream, and then, carried away by the current, has been shot over the rock into the caldron below.

No reasonable doubt can be entertained that elephants have been taught to walk on ropes. The bibliography of the subject, which we spare the reader, may be found in Aldrovandi, *De Quadrupedibus*, lib. i. From this it appears that the funambula species was the African, not the Asiatic, elephant. To show the preciseness of these records, one statement is, "Nero, according to Xiphilinus's account, gave great and most magnificent games in honour of his mother; on which occasion, an elephant, introduced into the theatre, mounted an arch on the top of it, and from thence walked upon a rope with a man on his back." Whoever, now, should go to the expense of training elephants to walk a rope, would probably receive very considerable returns for his outlay.

With the exception, however, of elephants, we may hold quadruped funambulists to have mistaken their vocation. The animals who are really at home amidst giddy heights, delighting to traverse suspension-bridges composed of a single rope or cane, are the quadrumani, the four-handed animals, the monkeys, great and small. In fact, the best rope-dancers imitate their personal mechanism as far as they can. True, Blondin has no prehensile tail; but his hands are prehensile to an eminent degree, while his feet are quite handy, grasping the rope. Without wishing to offend those gentlemen (on the contrary, to pay them a compliment), we may take Léotard to be a flying squirrel of superior grace, and Blondin an experienced gorilla of surpassing abilities and suavity.

From walking erect upon a boarded floor to walking along one of its narrow planks, and thence to walking along a plank across a stream, to walking along the top of a single-brick wall, along a square bar of iron or wood, along a very stout rope like a ship's cable, the transition seems natural and easy. It would be so in reality, but for the entrance of the second element of difficulty in the practical problem—the influence of height on the human nervous system.

Come on, sir; here's the place: Stand still. How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

I'll look no more;

Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight

Topple down headlong.

There ought to be no more difficulty in walking along the top of a wall thirty feet than on one only three feet from the ground. To cross the joists of the fourth story of an unfinished and unfloored house ought to be just as easy as to cross those of the ground-floor with no cellar beneath it. To run up a rope to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral, and to run up a rope to a first-floor window, requires exactly the same conditions of equilibrium, exerted for a longer interval of time in the former case; and yet most persons would rather attempt the one than the other.

The power of resisting giddiness in looking down from precipitous heights is partly constitutional and partly the effect of habit. The

safest way is *not* to look down at all, if it can be avoided; but it cannot always be avoided. This is the reason why it is so much easier to ascend an upright cliff or crag than it is to descend it. It is not the mere elevation which tries the nerves, but the sheerness of the precipice, the abruptness of the slope, the angle of inclination, the danger in fact. Many persons who would look with indifference down an inclined plane of forty-five degrees, shrink at the brink of a perpendicular descent. At Cape Blaney, on the French coast, opposite to Folkestone, there is a chalk cliff varying from two to three hundred feet, which gives goose-flesh sensations, and causes cold water to run down your backbone in a way unfelt on the top of Snowdon, Vesuvius, and the Righi.

To resist this feeling is a point of honour with mountaineers, sailors, and several other professions. Hence, Nelson's invitations to his midshipmen to meet him at the masthead. In Martyn's time (see his *Voyage*) no young man of St. Kilda could pay his addresses to a girl, until he had previously performed the ceremony, which consisted in standing on the top of a lofty, precipitous rock overhanging the sea, with both his feet half over the edge of the rock, and with his face towards the sea, and then bowing forwards until he touched the tips of his toes with both hands; being then only at liberty to resume his upright position, and to retire inland to his lady fair. The curious may practise the evolution on their private door-step with a horse-hair mattress spread before it. In respect to the resistance to giddiness, it is probable that many mariners, shipwrights, Swiss guides, finishers of cathedral spires and weathercocks, and members of the Alpine Club, with Professor Tyndal at their head, are quite as accomplished and as sure of themselves as any funambulist that ever mounted a rope.

Vauxhall, now historical, displayed during a considerable period remarkable rope ascents, rendered still more trying by the accompaniment of fireworks. Of the rope-runners who have attained celebrity by mounting up to great heights, one of the most famous is Madame Saqui, a Frenchwoman married to an Italian, who for years and years danced on the cord, to the delight of Parisian and other audiences. Her style was fantastic rather than graceful, abrupt and fearless, striking by its originality instead of charming by its elegance. This might be a matter of necessity more than of choice; for she was a short, thin, wiry little woman, so badly made that some people said she was deformed, and she artistically exaggerated her natural defects by the eccentricity of her costume. She established a small theatre in Paris, for the display of her funambular feats, named after herself, the *Théâtre Saqui*, which, like the still existing *Funambules*, subsequently discarded rope-dancing for vaudeville and farce. The *Théâtre de la Gaîté* also, in its infancy, derived its support from athletic displays and rope-dancing.

Madame Saqui may still retain a place in the

memories of veteran English playgoers, from her performances at Covent Garden Theatre—the Covent Garden of the Kembles and the Youngs. It was little enough indeed that she did there to make up for encumbering the house with her rope, and marring the effect of the dramatic portion of the evening's entertainment; but that little sufficed to make people's flesh crawl on their bones, and to give them, if not a new, at least a violent sensation.

The rope was stretched from the back of the stage to the back of the one-shilling gallery. At the appointed moment, Madame, suddenly becoming visible, like a fiendish apparition, climbed to her station on the foot of the rope, with the agility of an ape, and then, with nothing to balance her but a short wand held between her two hands, and with her eyes fixed on the upper end of the rope, started on her ascending course at what appeared to be a rapid run, but which, doubtless, was a skilfully regulated pace, consisting of a quick succession of short steps. The eye of the spectator would be more likely to be caught by a brilliant vibration of the feet, and by the *apparent* effort, than by the actual onward progress made. Anxious were the looks upturned from the pit, as the human meteor sped on its way overhead.

Arrived at the summit of her aerial mount, she turned round abruptly and immediately began the descent, which, unlike other faciles descensus, was by no means easy, especially as she had to combine apparent rapidity with the power of putting a continual break upon herself—a constant restraint upon her own impetus down such a slope. In this, her light weight would be in her favour, seeing that the momentum of an object is made up of the velocity and the mass. Her journey ended, she leaped away and out of sight with the same imp-like briskness as she had begun. The apparition was gone—until the clock struck the following evening.

One of the last, if not the very last, and certainly not the least surprising of her appearances, occurred at Havre, in August, 1852. Political events in France had then taken so clear and decided a course, that it was deemed expedient to celebrate them by a "Venetian Fête," got up with properties sent down by "The Administration of National Pleasures;" the same properties which have since contributed to national pleasures at Chambery and Nice. Madame Saqui was then decrepid, poor, and old; she had seen some seventy hard-working winters; but she was game to the last. In politics, she was a staunch Bonapartist. She had danced for the First Consulate and for the first Empire, and she would dance for the second Empire. The authorities could not refuse her.

The rope, fixed to the ground at each end, and then raised by props, so as to leave a horizontal portion, or rather a gentle catenary curve in the middle, at a sufficient elevation to be dangerous, was located in one of the largest open spaces belonging to the town, for the accommodation of the crowds of spectators.

The day of the Venetian Fête was stormy, with wind, rain, and heavy squalls from the sea. At four in the afternoon, the hour fixed for Madame's exhibition, it blew almost a hurricane. The rope quivered in the gale. With her costume (an enchanter's robe with flowing sleeves, and a long white beard) and her fleshless frame, she was altogether as light a body as one of Mr. Waterton's owls stuffed with cotton wool. The gale would have carried her away past finding, and she consented not to make the attempt then. But about seven in the evening there was a temporary lull, and the old acrobat's heart glowed to renew her triumphs. Confidently she set foot on her beloved rope; mounted steadily, took the level portion undismayed, and descended safely. She had done it; she had run the rope for the second Empire, and so sealed its prosperity. She considered it next door to a coronation.

On this occasion it was observed that Madame Saqui, in consequence of age and infirmity, walked not too well on vulgar earth, but that as soon as she set foot on hempen ground, her vigour returned and she became inspired; also, that she grasped the rope with her feet, Blondin-wise, and likewise chimpanzee-wise, with the exception of having no pedestrian thumb.

Madame Saqui does not seem to have ever imagined omelette-cookery or other operations at her giddy eminence. An amateur, who might never have heard her named, improvised a pleasant interlude of the kind. As soon as the first chain of the Menai-bridge was fairly hung and fixed between its points of suspension on the opposite shores, a Welsh cobbler walked along it to the middle, sat down, and there made a pair of shoes. He was followed by a less courageous individual, who crossed the Strait on the single chain astride.

HAPPY AS A PRINCESS.

FOR is it not the ultimate of human happiness to be a princess and a queen's daughter? Is there anything more beautiful, more enchanting, than her rose-coloured existence? Does she not live in the most magnificent palace in the world, always dressed in gold and silver, with a diamond crown on her head, surrounded by the most amiable and beautiful young ladies—none of whom are to be compared in any manner to herself, though—and with a thousand kings and princes, all handsome young men, of undeniable territories, fighting at tournaments, and doing the most incredible prodigies of valour, for sake of her smiles alone? To be sure she has the trifling inconvenience sometimes of a fairy godmother, as spiteful as she is ugly; of a dwarf, or an evil genius, or an ogre, or a Saracen, for her lover, who may carry her off and bury her in some enchanted cave, guarded by dragons, and only lighted by carbuncles or sapphires; but then she is always sure to be delivered by the most charming prince that was ever seen, and her very sufferings are only so many enhancements of her future joys. Who

would not be a princess, to live always on cakes, and fruits, and bonbons; to have as much money and as many lovers as she can possibly manage, and more than she wants; to be the darling of the whole world about her; and finally to be married to a young king, as beautiful as Love, and as amiable as he is beautiful? "As happy as a princess!" What female imagination can go beyond that?

And yet there was once a princess living here on this island, and during the lives of some of us, with whose fate not the meanest of the sisterhood might have wished to exchange her own: a princess who, when a marriageable young woman, was treated with the disrespect and tyranny of a naughty child; who was kept close prisoner in an ugly and unhealthy place, and denied even the privilege of change of air for her health; who was tyrannised over by her father, separated from her mother—which last was no great loss, though—neglected and ill-treated by her grandmother, surrounded by spies and gaolers; at one time almost forced into a marriage with a man she did not and could not love; and who passed her days in alternate terror and despair, not knowing what new humiliation her tormentors might not have imagined against her since the last had had time to cool. This was a princess who would have sat on the throne of England had her life been spared, and who, at the very moment of her worst humiliations, had apparently a better chance than the worn-out debauchee, her father, of wearing the crown which would have made her sovereign of the most powerful kingdom in the world. Poor Princess Charlotte!

The daughter of a reckless woman and an abandoned unprincipled man, the marvel was that she had any virtues of her own, and had not rather inherited all the vices on both sides with which nature had so liberally endowed her parents. As it was, she was even beyond the average in good feeling and ability; and, notwithstanding a hasty temper and more than the ordinary amount of royal imperiousness, she gave fair promise of a capable and noble womanhood, and of sufficient good sense and discretion to have made her reign as rational and judicious as the present. She was handsome in person, dignified and yet kindly in manner, with the good personal habits traditional to most of her race, and of a very warm and loving nature. Moreover, she was the passive symbol and rallying word of the liberal party, and without having ever done anything marked in life, good or bad, was the idol and the hope of the whole nation. She was, in fact, all the more beloved, and showed to all the more advantage, because of her freshness and untainted girlhood, contrasted as she was with the regent, whose very name was synonymous with vice, and contrasted with the princess, whose grave errors her best friends could only excuse, not deny. She was the only one of the sovereigns in present being, or in future time, for whom the nation could feel pride or love. The familiar, domestic, "family man," was a moping idiot; the mean, close-

fisted, German queen, who darned her stockings and slapped her daughters at Windsor, had never been popular; of the Regent all good men were ashamed; for the Regent's wife all good women blushed and sorrowed. The young Princess Charlotte alone was left as the hope and darling of the people; whose virtues were not mere dust and ashes, and in whose future there might be expectation and delight.

But what a life of petty trials and home humiliations she went through! As happy as a princess? The heiress of three kingdoms, a principality, and a crowd of conquests and colonies, was not half so happy as red-cheeked Betty, who trundled her mop in the kitchen, and was of too little importance to be made miserable by tyranny and intrigues. A more melancholy picture of the inner life of royalty cannot well be imagined than that which Miss Cornelia Knight gives us in her Autobiography; nor can a much more sorrowful lesson on the debasing influence of a court on the souls of courtiers be met with anywhere. I doubt, indeed, if courtiers have any souls, and rather incline to the belief that they have burnt them all away in incense to their earthly gods; that they have kowtowed so long and so lowly they are no longer able to stand erect and look before them like men. What can we say of a poor weak slavish creature who goes into hysterics if majesty looks coldly on her; who manœuvres, and studies, and plans, and plots, for her fitting presentation at the next drawing-room, as if a queen's feathers were literally angel's wings, and a queen's familiar word the passport to heaven itself? I wonder if any poor sinning soul kneels at Saint Peter's feet before the gate with half the unction and self-abasement of a thorough-going courtier grovelling before majesty in the throne-room!

Well! Weak, intelligent, intensely proper, humble, cautious, kowtowing Miss Cornelia Knight, was put into the uncomfortable little temple where the Princess Charlotte was the presiding deity, and she burnt her incense to her heart's content, and exhaled all her independence, and self-respect, and womanhood, in magnificent clouds of perfumed smoke, according to the fashion of time and place. In the mean time the princess did not care a straw for all the incense in the world. What she wanted, with her solid character and material matter-of-fact imperiousness, was more personal liberty; more personal consideration, a finer house, and a more appropriate establishment; her purse in her own hands, and not held by both ends by *gouvernante* or lady; she wanted a husband of her own choice; a private little court of her own ruling; she wanted to be freed from the unkindness of her father, and the prim old maidenisms of her aunts; from her coarse old grandmother's insolence and dislike; from her state of pupilage and dependence generally; and she kicked over Miss Cornelia Knight's burning censer without the least remorse, as she paced backwards and forwards through the dark uncomfortable little temple, where she was nothing better than a

prisoner with a few second-hand and very shabby "properties" of an idol.

"The life we led at Warwick House was exactly that of a child and its nurse," says Miss Knight; the child being then a well-grown, finely-developed young woman, with a decided will of her own, and the object of all the matrimonial intrigues convulsing half the courts in Europe. One of the many annoyances heaped on this poor "child" was being kept very close in money matters. She was allowed only ten pounds a month for her own private pocket money, but afterwards this was increased to fifteen, out of which she had to find her losses at play, always very heavy; make presents, which she was very fond of doing, and ever of the most handsome and costly description; do all her little charities, and buy all her little knick-knacks. We must acknowledge that fifteen pounds a month was not quite the amount usually ascribed to the ideal princess who gives away diamond rings, and pearl necklaces, and magnificent estates, and fairy palaces with bewildering profusion; who is never at a loss for means to equip armies or navies at her pleasure, or to pension off faithful pages and constant damsels, with some fabulous amount of dower and pin-money; and who makes the astounding fortunes of a whole family if they chance to strike her royal fancy, and are not too virtuous to accept her royal bounty. Fifteen pounds a month could not do much of all this; and even with all Mrs. Lewis's economy, and turning and twisting about of old silks and well worn laces, her patching up of two antiquities to make one very doubtful novelty, eight hundred a year for dress and private expenditure was not exactly the sum one would have thought sufficient for the heiress of the royal revenues of England.

The "child" had a gouvernante—the Duchess of Leeds—as well as the nurse, who was the travelled Miss Cornelia Knight; but the duchess was a very good, easy woman, "who had no inclination to quarrel with anybody," and still less to coerce her royal charge; and so was of very little obstruction or offence in the path of the high-spirited young lady, whom, indeed, it would have been no easy matter for any one to coerce. "Provided that she might ride two or three times a week at Hall's—a second-rate riding-school—on an old, quiet horse, for exercise, get into her shower-bath, and take calomel when she pleased, dine out, and go to all parties when invited, shake hands with everybody, and touch her salary, she cared for nothing more except when mischievous people, to plague her, or curious gossips to find out what was going on, talked to her about Princess Charlotte's petticoats being too short, of her royal highness nodding instead of bowing, or talking to the maids of honour at chapel between the prayers and the sermon." Then the poor duchess became miserable and bilious, cried in her sleep, and besought the "nurse" to speak exhortatory words to their joint charge, as she herself was far too nervous to do anything of the kind unless driven to the last extremity. She was a very

placid, amiable kind of gaoler, far too amiable, indeed, for her employers, while priggish, conscientious, well-intentioned Miss Knight passed everybody, both employers and charge, by her inordinate amount of sensibility, and the extraordinary quantity of incense she daily burned. But, above all, she fussed everybody by her passion for letter-writing. If the queen—old Queen Charlotte, too, as if any one in their senses would have cared for what she did or did not do!—did not speak to her as usual, there was a correspondence; if she disdainfully called her a "sub-governess," and not a "lady companion," there was a correspondence; if Princess Charlotte shook hands with her more coldly to-day than yesterday, or did not shake hands with her at all, there was a correspondence. In short, there was a long letter sent to some one on every possible occasion; for Miss Knight was famous for her pen, and, evidently proud of her powers of writing, so diligently inflicted her productions on all the royal family, and all the great personages with whom she could connect herself, in the most provoking manner possible. Among the troubles of the young princess, I think Miss Cornelia Knight may count as one of the most oppressive if one of the least hostile.

Then the princess had the trouble—very annoying to a young girl not disinclined to a little stately flirtation—of being watched and whispered about, whenever she spoke to any gentleman of the circle. If her cousin the Duke of Gloucester sat by her at a ball, she was desired to change her seat, so as to be divided from him: if the Duke of Devonshire danced with her once too often, there were all sorts of winks, and nods, and hints, and innuendoes; not that this was objected to—not the least in the world; for the duke was romantic and ardent, the princess frank and handsome, with beautiful shoulders and lovely little feet; and both the Regent and his ministers saw the political importance of making the most of her charms, if by them they could attach to their own special party any influential and as yet dubious and unconverted partisan. But the princess, not entering into all this, and only caring for a little innocent liberty, used to come home "hurt and indignant at having been watched and worried;" and so even the few balls to which she was admitted were more pain than pleasure to her, much as she would have enjoyed herself if they had but let her alone, and suffered her to be natural and gay in her own manner. But though the Regent and his ministers did not object to the attentions of the Duke of Devonshire while they thought they could turn them to account, no sooner did the Prince of Orange appear on the scene, than the poor duke was flung overboard, and now there could not be too much reticence and formality. The Duchess of Leeds, correct Miss Knight, and their royal charge, were all severely rated and reprimanded one day for having been seen driving twice in the day on the Chiswick-road, when the duke was giving a grand breakfast there. Twittering slavey Cornelia devotedly

took the whole blame on herself, saying that she had proposed the drives, that "Princess Charlotte might see the carriages," poor child! for her life was so monotonous and cheerless, added Cornelia, she thought it her duty to do all she could to brighten it. Slavey was ill of her scolding, nevertheless, and wrote to Lady Liverpool a long letter of self-justification, according to her wont; and the royal mountain and the Chiswick mouse finally dissolved away in smoke, as is the rule with such royal mountains in the enchanted regions of a court. The Orange affair was now the chief thought of the world in which Princess Charlotte lived her brief day; how to get her finally disposed of, the Regent's main care. And though she had no inclination towards the match or the man; though she told Sir Henry Halford that she would prefer her cousin of Gloucester to any man she knew; though she had a picture, like the Duke of Devonshire, hanging up in her room; and though, again, she told her mother that she thought the Prince of Orange so ugly she was often obliged to turn away her head in disgust when he was speaking to her; yet the love of liberty and the hope of independence were stronger in her than admiration, kinship, or disgust; and in a very short time she was brought to accept the engagement offered to her, consenting to be the betrothed of the plain and sickly-looking young soldier, whose ears she would have boxed before they had been married a week and a day. That she did not undertake this engagement with any large amount of graciousness or good-will, may be inferred from the characteristic fact that when she went to dine at her father's, on the eventful day which was to fix her fate, she went in the most unbecoming and dowdyish dress she had—violet satin and black lace—which was not a combination likely to suit her fair young liberal figure. The little bit of girlish spite and spleen put into that choice of costume is very amusing.

The marriage was ultimately broken off, because the princess was afraid she should be sent out of the country. She thought it as well that she should remain in it, and fight her own battles, and her mother's, on the field of action; and because she was, characteristically, kept in ignorance of her father's intentions with respect to her foreign residence, if even she had consented to live abroad, he meaning, or saying that he meant, that she should hold her own court at Brussels, and she believing that she was to be shut up in the same house with the father and mother Orange, all among the dykes and the Dutchmen, with no more independence than she had at present—a home in a frightful country, with the addition of an unwelcome husband and the loss of personal friends, the only changes in the outward conditions of her life. So then there was more stormy weather between the Regent and the heiress. Slavey went backwards and forwards with messages and letters, and there were intrigues here and intrigues there, and the whole courtly atmosphere was in a turmoil and a flame. And of course a Russian woman got

mixed up in the fray; and because the Russian court had its own designs on the Orange prince, the young lady's dissatisfaction was fanned and fomented, and Prince Augustus of Prussia, but specially Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, were manœuvred into her way, and pressed on her notice, so that the plot might be made so thick and slab not the keenest-sighted among them would discover the truth, nor the deftest-handed extricate it from the lies and intrigues with which it was mixed up. Of Prince Leopold, Miss Knight says that he was "a handsome young man, a general in the Russian service, brother-in-law to the Grand-Duke Constantine, and a great favourite with the Emperor of Russia. He paid many compliments to Princess Charlotte, who was by no means partial to him, and only received him with civility." However, he got her great friend, Miss Mercer Elphinstone, on his side, and Miss Mercer Elphinstone had almost unbounded influence with the Princess; and he crept into the Regent's favour; and though his first proposals were rejected by that exemplary father and most moral man, yet the handsome young German general knew the value of time and tide, and in his due season rode triumphantly over the bar, where better craft had been wrecked. Mysterious reports got about how that he was frequently admitted to tea at Warwick House—Princess Charlotte's town temple—where he was on the most delightfully easy and familiar terms with her, her *gouvernante* the dear old duchess who was so fond of calomel and shower-baths, and even with starch-necked Slavey herself; all of which reports, though contradicted, as of course, yet set certain ideas afloat, and accustomed the public to the notion that the penniless, handsome, cool-headed Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, was not an unlikely match for the future Queen of England.

In the midst of this pleasant, crafty game, came the Regent's thundering command that the princess should dismiss her *gouvernante*, her ladies, and her servants, leave Warwick House for Carlton House where she was to be confined for five days, then carried off to Cranbourne Lodge in the midst of Windsor Forest. And when there, she was to see no one but the horrible old queen once a week: the person whom, of all the world, she most hated, and who most hated her. In short, she was to hold herself as a criminal and a prisoner, and trust to her father's love and mercy alone for things to come right. On hearing this new trouble, the princess rushed down those convenient back stairs, without which court life would be unendurable, flung herself into a common hackney-coach, and flew off alone to her mother's: about the most imprudent thing the poor headstrong, passionate girl could have done. Then the row became general, and things came to their climax; as they do when nothing worse can possibly happen. Her flight caused the most intense excitement. The Dukes of York and Sussex, Lords Eldon, Liverpool, and Ellenborough, the Bishop of Salisbury, Mr. Henry Brougham, and

other people of note and influence, were either sent for by the princess or sent to her by the Regent; but not one among them all—not even Mr. Brougham, the sworn champion of liberalism and the Princess Caroline—not even the Princess Caroline herself, the sworn foe of the Regent and the whole court party—had madness enough to wish her to remain. On the contrary, they all urged her to return at once to her father's guardianship, and urged her to accept as meekly as might be the fate to which he should please assign her. Meekly? Not much of that could be hoped for from the fiery daughter of the still more fiery Caroline of Brunswick, or from the imperious child of the most selfish man of his time! Lord Brougham seems to have given her sound and practical advice. The taunted badgered girl turned to him and asked him what he would advise her to do.

“Return to Warwick House or to Carlton House, and on no account pass a night out of it.”

She was exceedingly affected, even to tears, and asked if he, too, refused to stand by her? The day was beginning to break; a Westminster election, to reinstate Lord Cochrane (after the sentence on him, which abolished the pillory and secured his restoration), was to be held that day at ten o'clock. Mr. Brougham led the young princess to the window, and said, “I have but to show you to the multitude, which in a few hours will fill these streets, and that park—and, possibly, Carlton House will be pulled down, but, in an hour after, the soldiers will be called out, blood will flow, and if your royal highness lives a hundred years, it will never be forgotten that your running away from your home and your father was the cause of the mischief; and you may depend upon it, the English people so hate blood that you will never get over it.”

These wise and seasonable words did what no threats or attempts at coercion had been able to do; the storm subsided, and Princess Charlotte went home in one of her father's coaches, to await her punishment for past offences, and be a better girl in future.

It is not surprising that she tried to escape the guardianship of a man whom she could not but feel was the most bitter enemy she possessed. The Regent was no father to her; he was simply a master and a jailor; while she to him was an obstacle, a displeasure, a rival, a being to be harshly treated on all occasions, and to be spoken against in the most uncompromising manner possible. As, when he spoke of her to the Empress of Russia, after the Orange match was broken off, and abused her soundly, daughter or no daughter. And as when she ran away to her mother's, and he sat in the vacant rooms at Warwick House, “very cool and rather pleased, saying he was glad, that everybody would now see what she was, and that it would be known on the Continent, and no one would marry her;” adding a few more striking amenities, in the usual first-gentlemanly style of the Prince Regent. No one can be astonished, and no one now can judge her harshly if, in her first terror at know-

ing that she was to be separated from her ladies and given up wholly into the keeping of this enemy of hers, she took the natural step of an escape, and tried to avoid what she could not overcome. But it made a tremendous scandal at the time, and of course public opinion was divided into two parties, according as the Regent or the princess was in favour. Between father, grandmother, and aunts—between monotony and seclusion on the one side, tyranny and espionage on the other—our poor princess had but a weary time of it; leading about as stupid, careless, and colourless an existence as it was well possible for any one to have. None of her own family ever visited her, save when absolutely obliged by the frigid proprieties of their condition. Her father would pass months without seeing her; and when he did see her, it was only to rate her, more or less severely, as the last fit of debauch was pressing more or less heavily on the royal blood and bile. Her grandmother's dislike to her was positively frantic; her aunts were timid, cold, and tried to keep matters as smooth as they could by perpetual compromise. The Regent was the ogre, the Saracen, the Jinn, the cruel sprite, the haunting demon, of the princess's life; and that terrible old queen was the fairy godmother, who had not been asked to the christening breakfast; and both together they made her as miserable as any poor persecuted damsel in a fairy tale, who is shut up in an enchanted castle, and is forced to do all manner of despite to her nature and her love.

Do not let us hear any more of the happiness of a princess, or the perpetual delights of royalty. Kings and queens are very like actors. They keep all their flutter and grandeur for the stage and the public; they parade before the footlights with sweeping trains and flashing crowns of burning jewels—with a crowd of courtiers ever kneeling and huge censers of incense ever burning before them. But they have comfortless homes and aching hearts, and squalor and wretchedness for their own firesides; and when quietly behind the scenes, they hate, and squabble, and bicker, and fret, just like meaner creatures: only covering up the scars with a little French chalk when the call-boy beckons, and the public parade begins anew. “Happy as a princess?”—Happy as a victim; free as a captive; cherished as an enemy. These were the conditions of Princess Charlotte's life.

THE HUNDRED AND FIRST REGIMENT.

WHILE France possessed only one hundred regiments—and that is not so very long ago—Monsieur Jules Noviac, one of Figaro's contributors, conceived the happy idea of giving a general sketch of the leading features of the French army, under the title of the Hundred and First Regiment, which title, as no such regiment then existed, acquitted the author of the slightest intention of personality. “The 101st Regiment” (in combination with other clever essays forming a volume to which *it* gives the title) is now in its thirty-third edition.

What is a regiment? (Thus, the author in question.) Everybody looks upon it from his own point of view. The dictionary calls it "a body of military men." The country regards it as a faithful dog that hinders the neighbours from committing petty annoyances; orderly people pretend that it is tranquillity; agitators will have that it is the sword of Damocles struck off in three thousand copies. Contractors consider it as an income of twelve hundred pounds per year; mathematicians, as an integral number reducible to vulgar fractions. For Béranger, it was the Sons of France; for the nursemaids of the Tuilleries, it is the Conservatoire of Sentiment. Mothers are sad when they see it pass; fathers are good-natured enough to fancy that it is gratuitous board and lodging which the government offers for the reception of their sons. To the school of cowards, it is an enigma; to the women, it is three thousand men. In all this, it is possible that only the women and the dictionary are right.

The Hundred and First is a fine regiment. Separately, the men are not handsome; by no means. But put them together in a corps, and they are magnificent—and are they brave? Inquire of the whole army. 'Tis not along the Boulevards that you should see the Hundred and First pass; there, you will think it stuck-up and given to attitudinising—two sad defects in a regiment. Here, on the high road, is the place to see it, with its cap on one side and its eye alert. It enjoys existence, laughing and singing, with its three thousand voices, one of its favourite songs. While it sings on its way, let us have a good look at it. Take a chair. First come the sappers.

To know one sapper from another, is a proof of remarkable perspicacity. Sappers resemble negroes in this respect, that, if you know one, you know all. This soldier—not to call him always by his name—with his hairy cap, his face to match, and his hatchet, reminds you of Robinson Crusoe. He wears a white apron, the emblem of his functions in the capacity of nursemaid; you will see him soon taking out the colonel's little girl for a walk. That black and bearded head beams ineffable smiles on the little pink and white creature who, far from being afraid of him, calls him "*My ducky darling sapper.*" If you listened to the stories which the soldier invents to amuse the child, you would be highly delighted. They overflow with unheard-of-ness. Unfortunately, the dénouement never varies. It is, to wit, the history of a little girl who, after being very well-behaved, very kind, very charitable, and very virtuous, marries at last—a general of division. Poor little thing!

Good gracious! What a handsome soldier!

Parbleu! I believe so; 'tis the drum-major. I would wager my head, sir, that you have heard that the drum-major of the Hundred and First is somewhat stupid? It is really the case; but the whole truth is, that he won't take the trouble to sharpen his wits. What could he do with them if they *were* sharp? "That sort of thing

is beneath his position." Accustomed to behold humanity beneath him, he believes himself above humanity. Envied by some, disdained by others, he remains alone—with his shoulder-belt. Even love cannot regenerate him, for he is loved solely for his feather and his cane. Of all the varieties of womankind, he knows only the most insipid—the women who admire *fine men*. Don't wish to step into his shoes, and stop your ears, for here are the trumpeters.

Handsome pay (three sous per day) and the certainty of making a noise in the world, render the drummer insufferably proud. In obedience to tradition, he slightly cocks his head on one side, to give himself a gracious air. When he returns to his cottage, his daddy, and his pigs, he will cleverly insinuate that he renounced military honours to follow his vocation for agriculture.

The colonel is always serious and wearied out, which is perfectly comprehensible. To manage three thousand men is no trifle, and to hear the regimental band play every day the same variations on Guillaume Tell is anything but amusing. On his Arab horse, with his back turned to the regiment, the colonel sees and knows everything; what he does not know, he guesses. On returning to quarters, he will consign to barracks for a couple of days, number seven of the second rank, of the third company, of the second battalion, for slinging his cartridge-box awkwardly; but his proverbial severity will cease, the moment he passes general of brigade.

The lieutenant-colonel speaks like the colonel, walks like the colonel, scolds like the colonel, laughs like the colonel, does everything like the colonel. But he is an older man. How does this happen? Nobody knows; it lieth between Destiny and the Minister.

The commandant of the third battalion, scarcely thirty years of age, won his epaulettes and the officers' cross of the Legion of Honour in the Crimea, where he reaped glory by waggon-loads. He bears one of the most honourable names in France; he has an income of sixty thousand francs a year; and he has a young wife as fair as his fortune. Esteemed by his chiefs, beloved by the soldiers, a magnificent career is open to him. Here is more than enough to make him the happiest man in the world. Well; he is nothing of the kind. This poor commandant bears a serpent in his bosom—a chronic grief, an incurable pain. The serpent, the grief, the pain, lie in the fact that he is an inch shorter than M. Thiers, the shortest of all known great men.

Amongst the officers of the Hundred and First is found the married officer who associates with nobody, not even with his married colleagues, because it "gives rise to gossip;" and, in the corps, half a word soon takes gigantic proportions. It is an unlucky day when Captain Michel calls on Captain Baudoin, and asks, "Captain, is it true that you said that I said my wife told me that Captain Laudry's wife had told her that her husband wore stays?" The officer of fortune has no fortune at all.

The serious officer employs his time in studying theory, administration, and manœuvres. One type has all but disappeared from the French army; namely, the loud, braggart, coarse officer, finding fault with everything in season and out of season. Every day Atticism is gaining ground. The Crimean war gave the last blow to boastfulness and insolence. Why need a man boast, when he has shown solid proofs of courage? What is the use of putting on threatening looks and staring right and left with an ever-knitted brow, when all the world knows how redoubtable you are if occasion require?

The sergeants constitute three categories: the *sergent* who has only seven years' service, the *sargent* who has fourteen, and the *chargent* who has one-and-twenty.

The *sergent* is a badly-drawn portrait, with a feeble outline of the features. He combines simpletonism with presumptuousness. In the novelty of his relative superiority, he feels an immoderate craving to display his full authority; he worries the soldiers. If the colonel knew it! Never does he leave the chamber without having punished his man. The French soldier never murmurs; he sings, which is his revenge. Hardly has the punisher turned his heels, when the light breeze wafts to his ear the finale of the Vexed Sergeant:

And, rrrrantaplan,
Do what you can;
Lieutenants two
Are higher than you;
So, while we can,
Sing r-r-r-rantaplan.

His looks are sombre, he boils with rage, but he holds his tongue for fear of being taken for a vexed sergent.

The *sargent* is quite a different person. A perfect trooper, serving for the love of the art, conscious of his value, nothing moves, nothing surprises, that placid and martial countenance. Provost at arms—pronounce *provoo*—he takes a part in every duel. In the regiment, they fight more readily than in the world. If one soldier says to another, "You are an awkward fellow!" it is sufficient. The proper steps are taken. Arrived on the ground, the adversaries salute each other. Then one of them, laying his sword-guard on his heart, says, "Begin, *Monsieur*."

"Certainly not," replies the other, with courtesy.

"To oblige you," resumes the first, stretching his legs, almost wide enough to split himself.

The blades are on the point of crossing. The *sargent* advances, and gravely pronounces the following speech, which never varies:

"*An instant!* Before you begin you ought to know that, from the remotest times of antiquity, even as far back as the Romans, the diverse disputes of honour have always been decided by arms, notably by the foil, which is the noblest, without wishing here to humiliate the sabre in any way. But before your fury carries you beyond the bounds of politeness, reflect that it is more beautiful to repair a fault than to have not

committed it. It is never too late to retrieve one's errors, and to avoid the greatest remorse in this worldly life. If you feel yourself to be in fault, throw yourself into the arms of your adversary, that he may grant you pardon. In the other case, if your cause is good, fight till your very last breath; for remember, *both one and the other of you*, that he who retracts out of fear and pusillanimity, or through other motives, no matter what, is considered as a coward and—and—as a *pignouf*, not fit to be a French soldier."

The combat commences; you know how it finishes; a scratch on the right hand, the accolade, and all is over.

The *chargent* is brave to the tip of every hair. For the last twenty years a hundred thousand men have saluted his lace stripes; and it costs him a very slight effort to believe that those salutes are addressed to himself: which belief justifies the very good opinion he entertains of his own person. He has seen everything, he knows everything; beloved and respected by the Hundred and First, he expects to be beloved and respected everywhere. Louis XIV. was not so strict about etiquette as he is about his prerogatives.

A carabineer, passing near him, neglected to raise his hand to his cap.

"Why don't you salute me?" asks the *chargent*, walking straight up to him.

"I beg your pardon, sergent, I did not notice your stripes."

"Do you intend to insinuate that you are short-sighted?"

"No, but——"

"There is no 'but' in the matter. I could take down your matricular number and have you put into the corner; but I am not susceptible of bringing anybody to grief. Only please to listen to what I say. You belong to the First Carabineers, which is the finest regiment in France; well! by your insolent incongruity you entirely deprive it of its prestige. That is all I have to say to you."

The carabineer was flabbergasted, as well he might.

With this profound knowledge of life, he is overwhelmed with questions: "*Chargent*, what is that grease in the yellow pots which stand in the windows of the dealers in eatables?"

"Grease! It is fat liver pâté; the most delectable thing in the world. It costs twenty-seven francs the half-pound, without the truffles."

"Oh, ho! And with the truffles?"

"It is worth its weight in gold."

"Have you ever tasted any yourself, *chargent*?"

"Approximatively."

"I don't know what that means."

"It means that I have never tasted it personally myself; but I once had a comrade who had a fellow-townsmen who polished the floors of a captain who often had it on his table."

"*Chargent*, is it true, what Corporal Siphlet says, that at Bordeaux you kept company with a black woman?"

"Certainly, it is quite true."

"With a negress?"

"Not exactly."

"With a mulatress?"

"Not exactly; it was with one of my fellow-townswomen whose husband was a coalheaver."

"*Chargent*, why does the commandant of the first battalion wear green spectacles?"

"When his wife gives him a glass of sugar and water, it is to make him fancy it a glass of hock."

As long as the oldest trooper can remember, the Hundred and First has always had in its ranks *a sergeant who saved a general*. At Fontenoy, Wagram, and Montereau, the glorious deed was performed. In Spain, during the campaign of '23, a sergeant found an opportunity of saving a lieutenant-general, who, in truth, was in no great danger; but seeing the difficulties at the time of finding a general more exposed, they could not be over-particular, and the Hundred and First maintained its traditional heroism. Alma and Inkermann were inscribed in glorious letters on the regimental flag, without the possibility occurring of saving a general. They saved superior officers, captains, lieutenants, subalterns, corporals, and soldiers, but nothing in the shape of a general. A man is a man, and it is a very fine thing to save one's fellow-creature, but humanity once satisfied, vanity holds up her head. It is of no use talking; one is better pleased to save a general than a musician, to say nothing about a sapper and miner. Besides, it was necessary for the honour of the corps; the colonel several times alluded to it with some degree of bitterness. But it is probable that the persevering way in which the subalterns of the Hundred and First watched over their generals, prevented even the likelihood of their ever falling into danger.

This topic was the general subject of conversation in camp, when, during the night of the 15th of February, 1855, Sergeant Blandureau with four volunteers was posted in an ambuscade situated about forty yards from the French parallels, and about seventy from the Russian batteries. The weather was enough to kill a dog; there was the silence of death and so thick a darkness, that you could not tell a foraging-cap from a twenty-four cannon-ball. Sergeant Blandureau had to remain there fourteen hours—from half-past four in the afternoon, till half-past seven in the morning; and, to pass the time, he could not even venture on the resource of smoking. The light of his pipe would have betrayed him to the enemy; and he was placed there to give the alarm to the guard of the trenches, in case of a sally. With his eye on the watch, his neck stretched to its utmost length, and his ear attentive, the brave subaltern could not prevent his thoughts from wandering to his native village, when the sound of a trumpet recalled them.

"Listen, sergeant," whispered one of his companions; "they are going to be at it again to-night——"

The poor wretch had no time to say more; a

Russian bayonet pinned the rest of the sentence in his throat. The other three volunteers were instantly killed. The sergeant had scarcely time to give the alarm by discharging his musket, when he was felled to the ground with gun-stock blows. But a sergeant of the Hundred and First is not so easily settled; he is tough enough to stand a score of hard knocks. Blandureau was a little stunned; nothing more.

The Russians were vigorously repulsed. A calm succeeded to the cannonade. Sergeant Blandureau recovered his senses, sought for his comrades, called them by name. Dead! All dead! He was the sole survivor. He determined to regain the trenches. Still bewildered by the contusions he had received, he groped his way with difficulty. All was black around him; at every step he stumbled over a corpse. Is the Hundred and First never to set eyes on its sergeant again? Courage, then! And on he plodded again. Once more he tripped against a body stretched on the ground. It was that of a Frenchman, still alive; for it rapped out so energetic a "*Nom de Dieu!*" that the Russians, who were only twenty paces off, heard it.

A cannon illumined the scene for an instant. Blandureau heard the grape-shot plough up the earth; a biscayan shattered his gun. Misfortune is always good for something; the flash showed him the direction to follow. He resolutely hoisted on his shoulders the comrade who had procured him this friendly greeting from the Russians.

"*Sacrebleu!*" he thought, as he toddled along, "here's a fellow who does not starve himself! The clocks of Sebastopol are striking three in the morning, and I have yet a good long walk to take, with this well-fed individual on my back."

And so he tottered and stumbled along, sometimes wrong and sometimes right, over rough ground, among dead bodies and broken weapons, until at last he deposited his burden in the battery which guarded his regiment, and then fainted.

Next morning, Blandureau woke up as fresh as if he had passed the night in his bed. "Where's my wounded man?" he cried, rubbing his eyes. "Let me see the little lamb who could not walk because he had a couple of bullets in his belly."

"Here he is," they said, pointing to a person surrounded with surgeons, who were dressing his wounds with the most anxious care.

"The general!"

"Yes, my brave fellow. Come, and let me press you in my arms."

"The general! 'Twas the general!" shouted Blandureau, half crazy with joy.

"Yes, indeed; 'tis I. Come to me, I say?"

"Oh, general!"

"You are a brave fellow; thank you. I shall never forget that I owe you my life."

"As for that, general, you are under no great obligation. I took you for one of my comrades so thoroughly as to call you a little lamb. But since it is you, general, you may be sure that—

that—certainly that—I am very glad of it, and that if I had known it—naturally—I should have saved you all the same. There!”

The corporal—that subaltern commandant—is the connecting link between the soldiers and the inferior officers. Charged with the direction of four men, you are aware with what modesty he acquits himself of that important mission. Occasionally obliged to send in a report, he compresses his orthography in a style which is not without its merit.

“*Onthetwen tysev enthmarchin theeve ningwe metfourmen.*”

[On the twenty-seventh March, in the evening, we met four men.]

In eighteen hundred and forty-odd, Monsieur De X., the préfet of a department, resigned his place, to come to Paris. But monsieur, his son, twenty years of age, was gifted with sundry qualities which unfitted him for the capital. Consequently, young De X. enlisted in the Hundred and First, in the expectation of dazzling everybody around him by his smartness and his handsome allowance. The very day of his arrival he heard a corporal call him by name.

“The matter, *ying* man, is that you are on *corvée*, task-work, to-day, and that you must sweep out the court, *ying* man.”

“Good! We’ll see about it.”

So the young patrician set to work bravely. After slaving at it for a couple of hours, the court was a little dirtier than when he began. Up came the corporal.

“What have you been doing there?”

“I have done what I could; but I don’t know——”

“You don’t know—and they call you a *eddicated ying* man. I dare say! But how did they spend their time in your family, if they never taught you how to sweep a yard?”

“I meant to learn, as soon as I had taken my degree.”

“The explanation is quite sufficient; begin again, and try to do it better. If you don’t, I will nail you for four-and-twenty hours.”

“Oh! corporal, you have too much integrity——”

“That will do; don’t add insolence to insubordination.”

In a regiment, there are as many types of the soldier as there are men—from the model grenadier to the fellow who will be shot. The latter is known by the name of *customer*; but the race has rapidly diminished ever since the government has interfered with the procuring of substitutes. The town workman, when he is called by lot, turns soldier with indifference, sometimes gladly, when the times are hard; but the case is quite different with country folk. One day a peasant lad received a paper, summoning him to join his regiment. He ought to have been prepared six months, because, at the conscription he drew No. 7. He weeps; it is a sad thing to leave his kindred for so long a time, and to be cut off from communicating with them, because he cannot write. A con-

script’s departure is pitiable to see. After grief, comes rage; he says he is a peasant, and won’t be a soldier. He seizes his gun, his flail, his scythe, and is transformed, for two or three minutes, into a sort of revolted angel. But his father comes, and says, “It is your duty.” His mother pretends to dry her tears; he goes away singing. On reaching his corps, he neither weeps nor sings. The revolted angel is become an angel of resignation. In six months, you will see him proudly strutting in the Champs Elysées, cheerful and happy.

Did you notice a man with a red nose, and a ribbon the colour of his nose, closely buttoned up to the chin, with a stiff gait, a sparkling eye, and a brush moustache? He follows the regiment. We found him at the door of the officers’ mess-room, we saw him in the barrack-yard, and we find him again at the gate of the quarters. That man is Captain Morel, the last of the *grogards*, or grumblers, literally translated.

The species is becoming rare, which is not to be regretted. This person is an unique specimen of the *grogard* and ill-bred officer. Retired on half-pay, three years ago, he cannot live without the regiment to which he ceases to belong; he is now merely an ornamental appendage. He is tolerated, but not liked; he is wearisome. His only excuse is that he has been a brave fellow in his time. While he was in the corps, the soldiers used to say, “That mad fellow, Captain Morel, is never happy but when he is in a rage.”

During his last year of service, the colonel, who had been made an officer of the Legion of Honour, gave a grand dinner, to which were invited the authorities of the town and the whole staff of officers. As ladies were to be present, he sent for Morel to come and speak to him.

“Captain, I give a dinner on Monday.”

“I know it, colonel.”

“And, as I hold you in esteem, I have sent you an invitation, but I now beg of you not to come.”

“May I ask, without indiscretion, colonel, why you offer me such an affront as this?”

“*Mon Dieu*; captain, there is no affront in the matter, since the refusal will come from you; but considerations which you will understand——”

“All I understand is, that I am not considered in the least.”

“Well, then; I am afraid that your very military style of conversation should shock the ladies whom we expect.”

“A thousand thunders! May the devil’s carcass double strangle me if I understand!”

“You will go on in that way at table. You know that the city dames are a little——”

“Stiff and starch, precise and prim; butter won’t melt in their mouths. They screw up their lips like——”

“Exactly.”

“Very well, colonel, the thing is settled; I won’t come. I am a mangy, itchy, scurvy fellow. It’s a pleasant position——”

“But, captain——”

“It’s a very pleasant position to be in, after thirty years’ service, eleven campaigns, and seven wounds!”

“If you would only promise me not to talk?”

“As for that, colonel, I can easily promise you; even if I had your permission, I would not open my mouth.”

“Positively?”

“If I utter a word, I’ll spit out my tongue five-and-twenty feet above the level of the sea.”

“I had rather have your word of honour.”

“You have it, colonel; you have it.”

On the day of the dinner, the captain, in full uniform, presented himself at the colonel’s, and bowed to everybody without pronouncing a syllable. One gets used to everything. Shortly, nobody paid any further attention to the captain’s pantomime, who ate like an ogre to render silence less difficult. The third course was about to be succeeded by a dessert; the captain was eating a roasted woodcock; the colonel was congratulating himself at having escaped humiliating an old brother in arms.

All at once, a horrible cry burst from the captain’s lips. One of his grinders had been broken by a shot lodged in the woodcock’s thigh.

“*Sacré nom de millions de diables!*” shouted the *grogard*, holding out with one hand the murderous shot and with the other the woodcock’s head. “This infernal brute didn’t die of the measles!”

DICTIONARY DREAMS.

THE merits of these small sugar-plums—which appear to have been dropped with a spat upon the yellow paper to which they adhere—may be very great; yet are they something fly-blown, and less protected from dust and other defilement than their neighbours the brandy-balls, which live in a square green bottle stopped at the mouth with a wedge of newspaper. The “Parliament” looks as if it had been in existence for such a length of time that it might with propriety be called the Long Parliament. The transition from parliament to sleep is so natural and easy, that it is no way surprising to see a baby’s nightcap in close proximity to the pastry just named. The doll with the stare and the eyelashes set in flat radiation like *chevaux-de-frise* is in strict keeping with the baby nightcap, and had they given any nostrils to its wedge-shaped nose, it would have been as pleasing an object of contemplation as the little china baby in a bath, which, sitting up in a singularly erect and rigid manner, looks as if it had turned on the hot water in a scalding stream, and, unable to turn it off again, was summoning assistance with screams of anguish.

The writer begs many thousands of pardons of the reader for not having mentioned before that he is looking in at the window of *the* shop in the village of *Torpor-cum-Slugs*, Bedfordshire. It is a wet day, and he has nothing to do: so, being of a restless nature, he goes out in

the rain, and finding a pent-house mercifully and inexplicably erected over the shop front of *the* shop, he encamps at once underneath it, and stares into the window with all his eyes. The objects already named are far from being the only objects which claim his attention. Is there not hair-oil in little thin blown bottles? Are there not portraits of the clerical world? Are there no papers of pins, no herrings, no whetstones for scythes? Are there not masks, and besides the tracts, strips of ballad and comic song? Is there not one envelope with a Queen’s head upon it? There are all these things, and there is one thing more (and in the literary department of the window, too), which at once has a marked effect upon the conduct of him who is making this village shop a subject of study and reflection.

To dive a finger and thumb into his waistcoat-pocket in search of a penny, to rush into the emporium, to come out again without the penny, but bearing in his hands a small pamphlet (stitched), to hasten along the village street, reading as he goes, to stumble up the stairs of his lodgings, reading still, and to drop upon the horsehair sofa without even taking his hat off, were with the present writer proceedings which occupied infinitely less time than it has taken to record them.

The object of all this excitement was a pamphlet, a small and shabby pamphlet; the principal external characteristic of which, was, that while the back of its cover was of a bright pink colour, the front was of a pale drab—indications which will carry at once to all thoughtful minds the conviction that the work so bound had been an old inhabitant of the shop-window, and had paled on the side exposed to the light, while its more protected cover had retained its normal freshness of tint.

Let us speak of the illustration with which the front or pale side of this little volume is decorated, for it is one of much beauty and refinement. It represents a lady and gentleman kneeling on a cushion, hand in hand, the lady dressed as a bride and the gentleman in a shooting-jacket, but with his hair curled, to make amends for this apparent carelessness in his attire. The cushion on which this young couple (they are both much depressed in spirits) kneel, seems to surround the base of a circular stove, which has, however, apparently no fire in it, as a Cupid, very slightly draped and with not so much as a sock to protect the foot on which he is supported, stands on one leg upon the top of the stove and flourishes a lighted torch, with which he will perhaps ultimately light the fire. A vase of flowers grows out of the lady’s back, and a smaller vase out of the gentleman’s left heel, completing the composition. Let us hope that this is all right, but it must be admitted that there is no clergyman present of any persuasion or denomination whatsoever. The only way out of this difficulty is to suppose that this marriage is a Scotch one, and that the Cupid is the witness. He will do as well as another.

The illustration here described is found inside

the cover, repeated on the title-page, and further adorned by colour. It has apparently been executed with much freedom of handling and a full pencil. The bride has a crimson body and a flesh-coloured skirt; and there is a suggestion in the manner of the execution that all the dabs of red (in an edition or two) have been done first, while that colour was in the brush, and that then the green, yellow, and flesh-coloured dabs have followed in due course. The artist having with that noble impetuosity which is ever the characteristic of true genius, scorned the limits of outline, and suffered his brush, in imparting a bright blue tint to the bridegroom's shooting-jacket, to encroach at the cuff upon the limits assigned to it by the engraver, in such wise that this interesting personage shows us a hand that seems at first sight to be decorated with an indigo mitten. For the rest, it would be hard to say what the work of art thus minutely described has to do with the volume of which it forms part; for the book itself is of a philosophical and speculative rather than a matrimonial character, and is called (not to keep the reader longer in suspense) the Ladies' Own Dream-book.

Of all those topics which it is the function of thought to investigate, there are none perhaps possessing a more universal interest for all mankind than those in which the unseen and immaterial world, the world of spirits, of omens, of superstitions and dreams, becomes the subject of our speculation. Who has not been troubled by strange and inexplicable dreams? Who has not been pursued by such dreams during the day succeeding their occurrence? Who has not longed to get some means of explaining the vision by which he has been haunted? And lastly, who has not felt how invaluable would be the aid of some guide in such matters, on which profound dependence might be placed. Such a guide, confident, unerring, and authoritative, is the Ladies' Own Dream-book.

In this precious volume the subjects on which well-regulated persons may most reasonably be expected to dream, are found alphabetically arranged, so that the fevered victim of nightmare, starting from his couch of suffering, has nothing to do but to light a candle, and turning to the subject of his dream, may put himself at once out of his misery, or into it, as the case may be; for it would be useless to attempt to deny that, according to the opinion of the Ladies' Own Dream-book, there are some topics which it is by no means desirable to dream about, and which augur all sorts of impending horror to the dreamer.

The very first word in the list (adders) is an instance of the kind. Let us see what we have got to expect if we should happen to dream about adders:

ADDERS.—To dream of these venomous reptiles, are a bad omen, they signify you have enemies who are endeavouring to do you some harm; if you are bitten by them, it signifies you will experience some misfortune, but if you destroy them you will triumph over your enemies.

Under the head of "awning," let us see what we have.

AWNING.—To dream that you are sitting under an awning is a sign that you will shortly leave this country most probably to Australia; if you seek this shelter on account of the heat of the sun, that you will prosper there.

The use of the word "to" in the above passage is very remarkable, and seems to imply that the dreamer will either abandon his country to be seized upon and annexed by Australia, or that he will be in such a position as to bequeath his native land as a legacy to that portion of the globe. This is, indeed, giving something like an interpretation to a dream. If such results as these are to follow all dreams upon the subject of awnings, it will surely become necessary for government to require Mr. Edgington and all other tent-makers to keep their shutters up, and not expose longer to the public eye anything that might suggest the shade of canvas to the British dreamer. But we have not done with the letter A. Let us see what dreaming about ale-houses may be expected to bring about:

ALE-HOUSE.—To dream that you are in an ale-house is a sure sign of sickness, especially if your dream happens about break of day.

This is a very rational interpretation; the transition being easy and obvious from the ale-house to sickness. It is impossible, too, to name a time in the twenty-four hours when the visitation is more likely to occur than at the break of day.

We come now to a very remarkable announcement indeed, the latter part of which, especially, is environed with mystery:

ABUNDANCE.—To dream of abundance shows that you will experience great prosperity; and that your future husband will be true to you; and you will have many children, who will be a blessing to you; *but if you sell any part, you will be crossed in business.*

Gracious Heavens! what *does* this mean? "If you sell any part you will be crossed in business?"

Let us approach this matter in a spirit of humble inquiry. This is the Ladies' Own Dream-book, and the lady here addressed is obviously supposed to be in business. It would be delightful to know in what branch. Is she in the chandlery line, or is it tobacco? It might be licensed victualling; but there is no end to conjecture on the subject. She is in business, she will be courted and won by an exemplary personage, who will be true to her, and by whom she will have many children; but if she sells any part she will be crossed in business. Sells any part! Any part of what? Her children obviously! "Crossed," too, in business; we have all of us heard of being crossed in love, but never, surely, in business.

Business, however, is for ever in the mind of the distinguished compiler of the Ladies' Own Dream-book, which, considering the speculative subject of the work, is rather remarkable. The allusions, throughout, to business are continual and of very high value. We have

already considered this in the case of the dream on abundance, but this is only one instance among many, as shall be presently shown.

BAKING.—To dream that you are baking bread is a good sign; *if you are in business* you will most assuredly prosper; if you are in love, that your affection will be returned; but should the bread be burnt, it portends assault by enemies, poverty, and various misfortunes.

Thus we see how a dream, which commences hopefully, may, by a very small change in its course, become fatal to our best wishes. The whole hinging on the question whether the loaf which we are engaged with in our dream should turn to be slack-baked or the reverse. We find "business" again alluded to in another portion of our manual, and here, also, a curious suggestion of another kind is forced upon our attention:

CUCUMBER.—To dream of cucumbers denotes recovery to the sick, and you will fall speedily in love; or if you are in love you will marry the present object of your affection; *also moderate success in trade.*

Now, does not a suggestion such as this open an enormous field of conjecture as to what may be done in the way of *cultivating* auspicious dreams. Let the young tradesman, for instance, who wishes to succeed in business, after reading the above, proceed straightway to get himself a gigantic cucumber; let him spend the day in contemplating it from every conceivable point of view, and, finally, let him eat the whole of it for his supper, and immediately retire to rest. Between the intervals of indigestion the young tradesman is not unlikely to get a nap or two, in the course of which the cucumber, which is rending his entrails, may dance for a moment before his mind's eye. Once let this happen, and he is a made man. He wakes up dyspeptic, probably for life, but with a blissful consciousness that a "moderate success in trade" (and what well-regulated person desires more) is secured to him during the remainder of his career. If, however, the young tradesman could manage to introduce an egg or two into his dream, there is no end to the prosperity which he might expect, for see what is said on this subject:

EGGS.—To dream you are buying eggs is a favourable omen; to dream you are selling eggs is also lucky; you will be happy in marriage, have many children, and do well.

There are, however, some things which we should be as careful to exclude from our sleeping thoughts as we should be to cultivate others. Let us, by all means, beware of Hares, for "to see hares is pain and agony." "Hanging," again, "indicates generally misfortunes and chagrin." "Ravens, denote disaster, adultery, death, and enemies," while if you dream that you see tailors at work, you may expect treachery and deceit. "Onions" denote "much suffering;" and as to comets:

COMETS.—To dream of comets is a sign of war, plague, famine, and death; to the lover it denotes an entire frustration of his hope; to the farmer,

failure of his crop; and to the seaman, storms and shipwreck. After such a dream, change, if possible, your present place of residence.

This last piece of advice given, as it appears to be, to persons on ship-board, seems somewhat cruel. There are many doubtless so situated, who would gladly follow this counsel, but where are they to go? The natural answer to the question is—overboard.

While on the subject of evil dreams, it may be well to mention that "needles are a sign of hatred; to thread a needle is inquietude;" while "to dream that you are bandy is an unlucky omen, it is a sign you will meet with many misfortunes."

Among the remarkable phenomena which strike one in perusing the pages of the Ladies' Own Dream-book, may be classed the peculiar views held by the compiler as to the subjects which people are in the habit of dreaming of. Thus we are informed that "to dream you are sitting on the top of a church denotes vain hopes." *Does any one ever dream that he is sitting on the top of a church? Does any one ever dream of coals, which, it seems, "is a sign of riches?"* It is affirmed, too, by our author, and here once for all attention may be called to his peculiar grammatical idiosyncrasies, that "to dig up an iron pot is great cares." Surely it is too much to suppose that anybody ever dreams of digging up an iron pot. Did the reader, again, ever dream that he was a fool?

FOOLISH.—To dream you are a fool is a very favourable omen, and imports much good to the dreamer; expect to be successful in your undertakings. If a maiden dreams that she is foolish, it is a certain sign that she will soon be married to the *youth* of her affections.

But perhaps of all the outrageous things that a lady can be expected to dream about, the most wonderfully unlikely is *her own backbone*. Yet this contingency is thought by our sage to be worthy of especial notice.

To dream of the backbone is a lucky omen; it denotes health and prosperity in all your undertakings; if you are in love, your sweetheart will be faithful, and you are very near marrying; it also denotes that you will have many children, and be very happy. To dream you have *grown strong in your back* denotes that some legacy will fall to you, and that you will unexpectedly become rich; if you are in love, you will marry the object of your affections; to a man it denotes that he will shortly see the woman who is to be his wife; and to a woman, that she will soon see the man destined to be her husband, and they will become rich, and be very happy.

We will give a few more quotations from our oracle for the reader's comfort and advantage, begging, in passing, to call his attention to the patriarchal manner in which this interpreter of dreams invariably connects happiness and a large family as inseparable things.

KITTENS.—To dream of kittens is a favourable dream, your marriage will be prosperous, and that you will have many children.

DRUNKENNESS.—To dream you are drunk is loss

in business, but success in love; to a woman it denotes she will be beloved by a stranger; and to a man it denotes that he is beloved by a woman whom he does not at present think of.

FINGERS.—If you dream you have cut your fingers, if they bleed is a good omen; you will be successful in love and get money when you least expect it; if you dream they do not bleed, then it denotes damage by a variety of accidents, and that lawsuits will attend you.

ORGAN.—Betokens prosperity; to play, an unsettled life; to hear it play many tunes, that you will be happy; discordant, misfortunes.

RIDING.—To dream you ride with a company of men is very lucky and profitable, but with women it signifies misfortune and deceit.

SHAVING.—To dream you are shaved denotes disappointment and crosses.

TEETH.—To dream your teeth fall out is good; to put them in unlucky; to break them, vexation; decayed or hollow are good friends; good teeth, troubles and sorrow; short teeth, prosperity.

AUNT.—To dream of this relation is a happy omen, provided she is not angry with you; but if she frowns on you, you must expect to meet with some misfortune.

UNCLE.—To dream you see your uncle, depends in a great measure upon the temper you see him in; if looking *favourable* upon you it is a good dream; if on the contrary, you will have many trials to overcome.

We will now leave this portion of the interesting volume we have been considering, with one word of expostulation. Under the word "beheading," we find that "to dream you see any one beheaded" denotes, among other things, "that if you are in prison you will speedily gain your liberty." The insertion of this clause seems to have been an ill-considered proceeding, calculated to shake the reader's confidence. For, a work of reference intended to meet the exigencies of "ladies" who are committed for fourteen days to the House of Correction is scarcely calculated to find favour with the general public.

The concluding portion of the Ladies' Own Dream-book is devoted to matters of even greater importance than those we have been already engaged with. Arrived at his last page, the author, from having been simply an interpreter of dreams, launches forth into a wider and deeper field, and displaying before his disciples the black mirror of Destiny, bids them take courage and behold. The Book of Fate is printed on a single page, and shall be given entire, for the benefit of those who are not afraid of a few home-truths.

Reader! On what day wert thou born? Peruse this page and tremble.

Concerning children born on any day of the week.

SUNDAY.—The child born on a Sunday will obtain great riches, and be long-lived and happy.

MONDAY.—Not very successful, irresolute, subject to be imposed on, good natured, and willing to do everything in his power (nice fellow).

TUESDAY.—The person born will be subject to violent starts of passion and not easily reconciled;

and he will be in danger of dying by violence if he does not put a constraint upon his inclinations.

WEDNESDAY.—He will be given to study, and excel in literature. (Evidently the natal day of the author of the Book of Fate.)

THURSDAY.—The child born will attain great riches and honour.

FRIDAY.—The child will be of a strong constitution and amorous.

SATURDAY.—Is an unlucky day, but the child may come to good, though they are in general of an evil disposition.

Signs of a Generous, Civil, and Courteous Person.

1. The forehead large, fleshy, plain, and smooth.
2. The eyes moist and shining.
3. The countenance expressive of joy and content.
4. The voice pleasant.
5. The motion of the body slow, &c.

Signs of a Churlish, Rough-hewn, and Ill-natured Person.

1. The form of the body both meagre and lean.
2. The forehead cloudy, sullen, and wrinkled.
3. The eyes cast down and malicious.
4. A nimble tongue.
5. Walking a short, quick, and uneven pace.
6. Secret murmuring to himself as he walks.

The reader now knows the worst. He knows that if he were born on a Monday, a Tuesday, or a Saturday, he is in a rather bad way. He knows by close observation of himself whether he is a civil and courteous, or a churlish and *rough-hewn* person, though perhaps this last epithet may puzzle him a little. He knows that if he has "a nimble tongue" he had better hold it; that he must beware of a short quick step in taking his constitutional; and that he must not enliven his walk by "muttering to himself." He must cultivate, moreover, a *fleshy* forehead and a moist eye, a "slow motion of the body, &c.," though what peculiar quality this same " &c.," may indicate is less clearly shown than might be wished. And so we take our leave of this awful volume, heartily wishing the reader a fleshy forehead, a moist eye, and pleasant dreams about his or her backbone.

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