

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N<sup>o</sup>. 173.]

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1862.

[PRICE 2d.]

## NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

### CHAPTER IV.

CAPTAIN WRAGGE and Magdalen retraced their steps until they were again within view of North Shingles Villa, before any signs appeared of Mrs. Lecount and her master. At that point, the housekeeper's lavender-coloured dress, the umbrella, and the feeble little figure in nankeen walking under it, became visible in the distance. The captain slackened his pace immediately; and issued his directions to Magdalen for her conduct at the coming interview, in these words:

"Don't forget your smile," he said. "In all other respects you will do. The walk has improved your complexion, and the hat becomes you. Look Mrs. Lecount steadily in the face; show no embarrassment when you speak; and if Mr. Noel Vanstone pays you pointed attention, don't take too much notice of him while his housekeeper's eye is on you. Mind one thing! I have been at Joyce's Scientific Dialogues all the morning; and I am quite serious in meaning to give Mrs. Lecount the full benefit of my studies. If I can't contrive to divert her attention from you and her master, I won't give sixpence for our chance of success. Small-talk won't succeed with that woman; compliments won't succeed; jokes won't succeed—ready-made science may recal the deceased Professor, and ready-made science may do. We must establish a code of signals to let you know what I am about. Observe this camp-stool. When I shift it from my left hand to my right, I am talking Joyce. When I shift it from my right hand to my left, I am talking Wragge. In the first case, don't interrupt me—I am leading up to my point. In the second case, say anything you like; my remarks are not of the slightest consequence. Would you like a rehearsal? Are you sure you understand? Very good—take my arm, and look happy. Steady! here they are."

The meeting took place nearly midway between Sea-View Cottage and North Shingles. Captain Wragge took off his tall white hat, and opened the interview immediately on the friendliest terms.

"Good morning, Mrs. Lecount," he said, with the frank and cheerful politeness of a naturally

sociable man. "Good morning, Mr. Vanstone; I am sorry to see you suffering to-day. Mrs. Lecount, permit me to introduce my niece—my niece, Miss Bygrave. My dear girl, this is Mr. Noel Vanstone, our neighbour at Sea-View Cottage. We must positively be sociable at Aldborough, Mrs. Lecount. There is only one walk in the place (as my niece remarked to me just now, Mr. Vanstone); and on that walk we must all meet every time we go out. And why not? Are we formal people on either side? Nothing of the sort—we are just the reverse. You possess the continental facility of manner, Mr. Vanstone—I match you, with the blunt cordiality of an old-fashioned Englishman—the ladies mingle together in harmonious variety, like flowers on the same bed—and the result is a mutual interest in making our sojourn at the sea-side agreeable to each other. Pardon my flow of spirits; pardon my feeling so cheerful and so young. The Iodine in the sea-air, Mrs. Lecount—the notorious effect of the Iodine in the sea-air!"

"You arrived yesterday, Miss Bygrave, did you not?" said the housekeeper, as soon as the captain's deluge of language had come to an end.

She addressed those words to Magdalen with a gentle motherly interest in her youth and beauty, chastened by the deferential amiability which became her situation in Mr. Noel Vanstone's household. Not the faintest token of suspicion or surprise betrayed itself in her face, her voice, or her manner, while she and Magdalen now looked at each other. It was plain at the outset that the true face and figure which she now saw, recalled nothing to her mind of the false face and figure which she had seen in Vauxhall Walk. The disguise had evidently been complete enough even to baffle the penetration of Mrs. Lecount.

"My aunt and I came here yesterday evening," said Magdalen. "We found the latter part of the journey very fatiguing. I dare say you found it so too?"

She designedly made her answer longer than was necessary, for the purpose of discovering, at the earliest opportunity, the effect which the sound of her voice produced on Mrs. Lecount.

The housekeeper's thin lips maintained their motherly smile; the housekeeper's amiable manner lost none of its modest deference—but

the expression of her eyes suddenly changed, from a look of attention to a look of inquiry. Magdalen quietly said a few words more; and then waited again for results. The change spread gradually all over Mrs. Lecount's face; the motherly smile died away; and the amiable manner betrayed a slight touch of restraint. Still, no signs of positive recognition appeared; the housekeeper's expression remained what it had been from the first—an expression of inquiry, and nothing more.

"You complained of fatigue, sir, a few minutes since," she said, dropping all further conversation with Magdalen, and addressing her master. "Will you go in-doors and rest?"

The proprietor of Sea-View Cottage had hitherto confined himself to bowing, simpering, and admiring Magdalen through his half-closed eyelids. There was no mistaking the sudden flutter and agitation in his manner, and the heightened colour in his wizen little face. Even the reptile temperament of Mr. Noel Vanstone warmed under the influence of the sex: he had an undeniably appreciative eye for a handsome woman, and Magdalen's grace and beauty were not thrown away on him.

"Will you go in-doors, sir, and rest?" asked the housekeeper, repeating her question.

"Not yet, Lecount," said her master. "I fancy I feel stronger; I fancy I can go on a little." He turned simpering to Magdalen, and added in a lower tone, "I have found a new interest in my walk, Miss Bygrave. Don't desert us, or you will take the interest away with you."

He smiled and smirked in the highest approval of the ingenuity of his own compliment—from which Captain Wragge dexterously diverted the housekeeper's attention, by ranging himself on her side of the path and speaking to her at the same moment. They all four walked on slowly. Mrs. Lecount said nothing more. She kept fast hold of her master's arm, and looked across him at Magdalen with the dangerous expression of inquiry more marked than ever in her handsome black eyes. That look was not lost on the wary Wragge. He shifted his indicative camp-stool from the left hand to the right, and opened his scientific batteries on the spot.

"A busy scene, Mrs. Lecount," said the captain, politely waving his camp-stool over the sea and the passing ships. "The greatness of England, ma'am—the true greatness of England. Pray observe how heavily some of those vessels are laden! I am often inclined to wonder whether the British sailor is at all aware, when he has got his cargo on board, of the Hydrostatic importance of the operation that he has performed. If I were suddenly transported to the deck of one of those vessels (which Heaven forbid, for I suffer at sea); and if I said to a member of the crew, 'Jack! you have done wonders; you have grasped the theory of floating vessels'—how the gallant fellow would stare! And yet, on that theory Jack's life depends. If he loads his vessel one-thirtieth part more than he

ought, what happens? He sails past Aldborough, I grant you, in safety. He enters the Thames, I grant you again, in safety. He gets on into the fresh water, as far, let us say, as Greenwich; and—down he goes! Down, ma'am, to the bottom of the river, as a matter of scientific certainty!"

Here he paused; and left Mrs. Lecount no polite alternative but to request an explanation.

"With infinite pleasure, ma'am," said the captain, drowning in the deepest notes of his voice the feeble treble in which Mr. Noel Vanstone paid his compliments to Magdalen. "We will start, if you please, with a first principle. All bodies whatever that float on the surface of the water, displace as much fluid as is equal in weight to the weight of the bodies. Good! We have got our first principle. What do we deduce from it? Manifestly this: That in order to keep a vessel above water, it is necessary to take care that the vessel and its cargo should be of less weight than the weight of a quantity of water—pray follow me here!—of a quantity of water equal in bulk to that part of the vessel which it will be safe to immerse in the water. Now, ma'am, salt water is specifically thirty times heavier than fresh or river water; and a vessel in the German Ocean will not sink so deep as a vessel in the Thames. Consequently, when we load our ship with a view to the London market, we have (Hydrostatically speaking) three alternatives. Either we load with one-thirtieth part less than we can carry at sea; or we take one-thirtieth part out at the mouth of the river; or we do neither the one nor the other, and, as I have already had the honour of remarking—down we go! Such," said the captain, shifting the camp-stool back again from his right hand to his left, in token that Joyce was done with for the time being; "such, my dear madam, is the theory of floating vessels. Permit me to add, in conclusion—you are heartily welcome to it."

"Thank you, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "You have unintentionally saddened me, but the information I have received is not the less precious on that account. It is long, long ago, Mr. Bygrave, since I have heard myself addressed in the language of science. My dear husband made me his companion—my dear husband improved my mind as you have been trying to improve it. Nobody has taken pains with my intellect since. Many thanks, sir. Your kind consideration for me is not thrown away."

She sighed with a plaintive humility; and privately opened her ears to the conversation on the other side of her.

A minute earlier, she would have heard her master expressing himself in the most flattering terms on the subject of Miss Bygrave's appearance in her sea-side costume. But Magdalen had seen Captain Wragge's signal with the camp-stool, and had at once diverted Mr. Noel Vanstone to the topic of himself and his possessions,

by a neatly-timed question about his house at Aldborough.

"I don't wish to alarm you, Miss Bygrave," were the first words of Mr. Noel Vanstone's which caught Mrs. Lecount's attention—"but there is only one safe house in Aldborough—and that house is Mine. The sea may destroy all the other houses—it can't destroy Mine. My father took care of that; my father was a remarkable man. He had My house built on piles. I have reason to believe they are the strongest piles in England. Nothing can possibly knock them down—I don't care what the sea does—nothing can possibly knock them down."

"Then, if the sea invades us," said Magdalen, "we must all run for refuge to you."

Mr. Noel Vanstone saw his way to another compliment; and, at the same moment, the wary captain saw his way to another burst of science.

"I could almost wish the invasion might happen," murmured one of the gentlemen, "to give me the happiness of offering the refuge."

"I could almost swear the wind had shifted again!" exclaimed the other. "Where is a man I can ask? Oh, there he is. Boatman! how's the wind, now? Nor'-west and by west still—hey? And south-east and by south yesterday evening—ha? Is there anything more remarkable, Mrs. Lecount, than the variableness of the wind in this climate?" proceeded the captain, shifting the camp-stool to the scientific side of him. "Is there any natural phenomenon more bewildering to the scientific inquirer? You will tell me that the electric fluid which abounds in the air is the principal cause of this variableness. You will remind me of the experiment of that illustrious philosopher who measured the velocity of a great storm by a flight of small feathers. My dear madam, I grant all your propositions——"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mrs. Lecount; "you kindly attribute to me a knowledge that I don't possess. Propositions, I regret to say, are quite beyond me."

"Don't misunderstand me, ma'am," continued the captain, politely unconscious of the interruption. "My remarks apply to the temperate zone only. Place me on the coasts between the tropics—place me where the wind blows towards the shore in the daytime, and towards the sea by night—and I instantly advance towards conclusive experiments. For example, I know that the heat of the sun during the day, rarefies the air over the land, and so causes the wind. You challenge me to prove it. I escort you down the kitchen-stairs (with your kind permission); I take my largest pie-dish out of the cook's hands; I fill it with cold water. Good! that dish of cold water represents the ocean. I next provide myself with one of our most precious domestic conveniences—a hot-water plate—I fill it with hot water, and I put it in the middle of the pie-dish. Good again! the hot-water plate represents the land rarefying the air over it. Bear that in mind, and give me a lighted candle. I hold my lighted candle over the cold water, and blow it

out. The smoke immediately moves from the dish to the plate. Before you have time to express your satisfaction, I light the candle once more, and reverse the whole proceeding. I fill the pie-dish with hot water, and the plate with cold; I blow the candle out again, and the smoke moves this time from the plate to the dish. The smell is disagreeable—but the experiment is conclusive."

He shifted the camp-stool back again, and looked at Mrs. Lecount with his ingratiating smile. "You don't find me long-winded, ma'am—do you?" he said, in his easy, cheerful way, just as the housekeeper was privately opening her ears once more to the conversation on the other side of her.

"I am amazed, sir, by the range of your information," replied Mrs. Lecount, observing the captain with some perplexity—but, thus far, with no distrust. She thought him eccentric, even for an Englishman, and possibly a little vain of his knowledge. But he had at least paid her the implied compliment of addressing that knowledge to herself; and she felt it the more sensibly, from having hitherto found her scientific sympathies with her deceased husband, treated with no great respect by the people with whom she came in contact. "Have you extended your inquiries, sir," she proceeded, after a momentary hesitation, "to my late husband's branch of science? I merely ask, Mr. Bygrave, because (though I am only a woman) I think I might exchange ideas with you, on the subject of the reptile creation."

Captain Wragge was far too sharp to risk his ready-made science on the enemy's ground. The old militiaman shook his wary head.

"Too vast a subject, ma'am," he said, "for a smatterer like me. The life and labours of such a philosopher as your husband, Mrs. Lecount, warn men of my intellectual calibre not to measure themselves with a giant. May I inquire," proceeded the captain, softly smoothing the way for future intercourse with Sea-View Cottage, "whether you possess any scientific memorials of the late Professor?"

"I possess his Tank, sir," said Mrs. Lecount, modestly casting her eyes on the ground; "and one of his Subjects—a little foreign Toad."

"His Tank!" exclaimed the captain, in tones of mournful interest. "And his Toad! Pardon my blunt way of speaking my mind, ma'am. You possess an object of public interest; and, as one of the public, I acknowledge my curiosity to see it."

Mrs. Lecount's smooth cheeks coloured with pleasure. The one assailable place in that cold and secret nature, was the place occupied by the memory of the Professor. Her pride in his scientific achievements, and her mortification at finding them but little known out of his own country, were genuine feelings. Never had Captain Wragge burnt his adulterated incense on the flimsy altar of human vanity to better purpose than he was burning it now.

"You are very good, sir," said Mrs. Lecount,

"In honouring my husband's memory, you honour *me*. But though you kindly treat me on a footing of equality, I must not forget that I fill a domestic situation. I shall feel it a privilege to show you my relics, if you will allow me to ask my master's permission first."

She turned to Mr. Noel Vanstone; her perfectly sincere intention of making the proposed request, mingling—in that strange complexity of motives which is found so much oftener in a woman's mind than in a man's—with her jealous distrust of the impression which Magdalen had produced on her master.

"May I make a request, sir?" asked Mrs. Lecount, after waiting a moment to catch any fragments of tenderly-personal talk that might reach her, and after being again neatly baffled by Magdalen—thanks to the camp-stool. "Mr. Bygrave is one of the few persons in England who appreciate my husband's scientific labours. He honours me by wishing to see my little world of reptiles. May I show it to him?"

"By all means, Lecount," said Mr. Noel Vanstone, graciously. "You are an excellent creature, and I like to oblige you. Lecount's Tank, Mr. Bygrave, is the only tank in England—Lecount's Toad, is the oldest toad in the world. Will you come and drink tea, at seven o'clock to-night? And will you prevail on Miss Bygrave to accompany you? I want her to see my house. I don't think she has any idea what a strong house it is. Come and survey my premises, Miss Bygrave. You shall have a stick, and rap on the walls; you shall go up-stairs and stamp on the floors—and then you shall hear what it all cost." His eyes wrinkled up cunningly at the corners, and he slipped another tender speech into Magdalen's ear, under cover of the all-predominating voice in which Captain Wragge thanked him for the invitation. "Come punctually at seven," he whispered, "and pray wear that charming hat!"

Mrs. Lecount's lips closed ominously. She set down the captain's niece as a very serious drawback to the intellectual luxury of the captain's society.

"You are fatiguing yourself, sir," she said to her master. "This is one of your bad days. Let me recommend you to be careful; let me beg you to walk back."

Having carried his point by inviting the new acquaintances to tea, Mr. Noel Vanstone proved to be unexpectedly docile. He acknowledged that he was a little fatigued, and turned back at once in obedience to the housekeeper's advice.

"Take my arm, sir—take my arm, on the other side," said Captain Wragge, as they turned to retrace their steps. His parti-coloured eyes looked significantly at Magdalen while he spoke, and warned her not to stretch Mrs. Lecount's endurance too far at starting. She instantly understood him; and, in spite of Mr. Noel Vanstone's reiterated assertions that he stood in no need of the captain's arm, placed herself at once by the housekeeper's side. Mrs. Lecount recovered her good humour, and opened another con-

versation with Magdalen, by making the one inquiry of all others which, under existing circumstances, was the hardest to answer.

"I presume Mrs. Bygrave is too tired, after her journey, to come out to-day?" said Mrs. Lecount. "Shall we have the pleasure of seeing her to-morrow?"

"Probably not," replied Magdalen. "My aunt is in delicate health."

"A complicated case, my dear madam," added the captain; conscious that Mrs. Wragge's personal appearance (if she happened to be seen by accident) would offer the flattest of all possible contradictions to what Magdalen had just said of her. "There is some remote nervous mischief which doesn't express itself externally. You would think my wife the picture of health, if you looked at her—and yet, so delusive are appearances, I am obliged to forbid her all excitement. She sees no society—our medical attendant, I regret to say, absolutely prohibits it."

"Very sad," said Mrs. Lecount. "The poor lady must often feel lonely, sir, when you and your niece are away from her?"

"No," replied the captain. "Mrs. Bygrave is a naturally domestic woman. When she is able to employ herself, she finds unlimited resources in her needle and thread." Having reached this stage of the explanation—and having purposely skirted, as it were, round the confines of truth, in the event of the housekeeper's curiosity leading her to make any private inquiries on the subject of Mrs. Wragge—the captain wisely checked his fluent tongue from carrying him into any further details. "I have great hope from the air of this place," he remarked, in conclusion. "The Iodine, as I have already observed, does wonders."

Mrs. Lecount acknowledged the virtues of Iodine in the briefest possible form of words, and withdrew into the innermost sanctuary of her own thoughts. "Some mystery here," said the housekeeper to herself. "A lady who looks the picture of health; a lady who suffers from a complicated nervous malady; and a lady whose hand is steady enough to use her needle and thread—is a living mass of contradictions I don't quite understand. Do you make a long stay at Aldborough, sir?" she added aloud; her eyes resting for a moment, in steady scrutiny, on the captain's face.

"It all depends, my dear madam, on Mrs. Bygrave. I trust we shall stay through the autumn. You are settled at Sea-View Cottage, I presume, for the season?"

"You must ask my master, sir. It is for him to decide, not for me."

The answer was an unfortunate one. Mr. Noel Vanstone had been secretly annoyed by the change in the walking arrangements, which had separated him from Magdalen. He attributed that change to the meddling influence of Mrs. Lecount, and he now took the earliest opportunity of resenting it on the spot.

"I have nothing to do with our stay at Ald-

borough," he broke out peevishly. "You know as well as I do, Lecount, it all depends on *you*. Mrs. Lecount has a brother in Switzerland," he went on, addressing himself to the captain—"a brother who is seriously ill. If he gets worse, she will have to go there and see him. I can't accompany her, and I can't be left in the house by myself. I shall have to break up my establishment at Aldborough, and stay with some friends. It all depends on you, Lecount—or on your brother, which comes to the same thing. If it depended on *me*," continued Mr. Noel Vanstone, looking pointedly at Magdalen across the housekeeper, "I should stay at Aldborough all through the autumn with the greatest pleasure. With the greatest pleasure," he reiterated, repeating the words with a tender look for Magdalen, and a spiteful accent for Mrs. Lecount.

Thus far, Captain Wragge had remained silent; carefully noting in his mind the promising possibilities of a separation between Mrs. Lecount and her master, which Mr. Noel Vanstone's little fretful outbreak had just disclosed to him. An ominous trembling in the housekeeper's thin lips, as her master openly exposed her family affairs before strangers, and openly set her jealousy at defiance, now warned him to interfere. If the misunderstanding were permitted to proceed to extremities, there was a chance that the invitation for that evening to Sea-View Cottage might be put off. Now, as ever, equal to the occasion, Captain Wragge called his useful information once more to the rescue. Under the learned auspices of Joyce, he plunged, for the third time, into the ocean of science, and brought up another pearl. He was still haranguing (on Pneumatics this time), still improving Mrs. Lecount's mind with his politest perseverance and his smoothest flow of language—when the walking party stopped at Mr. Noel Vanstone's door.

"Bless my soul, here we are at your house, sir!" said the captain, interrupting himself in the middle of one of his graphic sentences. "I won't keep you standing a moment. Not a word of apology, Mrs. Lecount, I beg and pray! I will put that curious point in Pneumatics more clearly before you on a future occasion. In the mean time, I need only repeat, that you can perform the experiment I have just mentioned, to your own entire satisfaction, with a bladder, an exhausted receiver, and a square box. At seven o'clock this evening, sir—at seven o'clock, Mrs. Lecount. We have had a remarkably pleasant walk, and a most instructive interchange of ideas. Now my dear girl! your aunt is waiting for us."

While Mrs. Lecount stepped aside to open the garden gate, Mr. Noel Vanstone seized his opportunity, and shot a last tender glance at Magdalen—under shelter of the umbrella, which he had taken into his own hands for that express purpose. "Don't forget," he said, with his sweetest smile; "don't forget, when you come this evening, to wear that charming hat!" Before he could add any last words, Mrs. Lecount glided back to her

place; and the sheltering umbrella changed hands again immediately.

"An excellent morning's work!" said Captain Wragge, as he and Magdalen walked on together to North Shingles. "You and I and Joyce have all three done wonders. We have secured a friendly invitation at the first day's fishing for it."

He paused for an answer; and, receiving none, observed Magdalen more attentively than he had observed her yet. Her face had turned deadly pale again; her eyes looked out mechanically straight before her in heedless, reckless despair.

"What is the matter?" he asked, with the greatest surprise. "Are you ill?"

She made no reply; she hardly seemed to hear him.

"Are you getting alarmed about Mrs. Lecount?" he inquired next. "There is not the least reason for alarm. She may fancy she has heard something like your voice before; but your face evidently bewilders her. Keep your temper, and you keep her in the dark. Keep her in the dark; and you will put that two hundred pounds into my hands before the autumn is over."

He waited again for an answer; and again she remained silent. The captain tried for the third time, in another direction.

"Did you get any letters this morning?" he went on. "Is there had news again from home? Any fresh difficulties with your sister?"

"Say nothing about my sister!" she broke out, passionately. "Neither you nor I are fit to speak of her."

She said those words at the garden gate, and hurried into the house by herself. He followed her, and heard the door of her own room violently shut to, violently locked and double-locked. So-lacing his indignation by an oath, Captain Wragge sullenly went into one of the parlours on the ground floor to look after his wife. The room communicated with a smaller and darker room at the back of the house, by means of a quaint little door, with a window in the upper half of it. Softly approaching this door, the captain lifted the white muslin curtain which hung over the window, and looked into the inner room.

There was Mrs. Wragge, with her cap on one side, and her shoes down at heel; with a row of pins between her teeth; with the Oriental Cashmere Robe slowly slipping off the table; with her scissors suspended uncertain in one hand, and her written directions for dressmaking held doubtfully in the other—so absorbed over the invincible difficulties of her employment, as to be perfectly unconscious that she was at that moment the object of her husband's superintending eye. Under other circumstances, she would have been soon brought to a sense of her situation by the sound of his voice. But Captain Wragge was too anxious about Magdalen to waste any time on his wife, after satisfying himself that she was safe in her seclusion, and that she might be trusted to remain there.

He left the parlour, and, after a little hesi-

tation in the passage, stole up stairs, and listened anxiously outside Magdalen's door. A dull sound of sobbing—a sound stifled in her handkerchief, or stifled in the bed-clothes—was all that caught his ear. He returned at once to the ground floor, with some faint suspicion of the truth dawning on his mind at last.

"The devil take that sweetheart of hers!" thought the captain. "Mr. Noel Vanstone has raised the ghost of him at starting."

#### PERVERTED INGENUITY.

TIRED out with the search after ideas, with the uncertainty and incompleteness of all human science—wary of great speculations that end in doubt, of unrewarded efforts, of misinterpreted opinions, of wisdom that brings no heart's ease, and knowledge that only enlarges the self-cognisance of pain—the intellectual men of all ages have, in that mood of playfulness which sometimes partakes of the sadness of disappointment, no less than of the brightness of fancy, employed their leisure moments in the composition of laborious trifles, such as mock the fruits of their graver studies with something of a fairy quaintness. Hence the flood of anagrams, acrostics, palindromes, alliterative verses, shaped verses, echo verses, macaronics, *bouts rimés*, &c., poured forth over the broad lands of literature, not by mere flippant idlers, or dull men mistaking themselves for wits, but often by authors of real scholarship and ability. It is true that Addison, in his papers on False Wit, published in successive numbers of the Spectator, says that it would be impossible to decide whether the inventor of the acrostic or the anagram were the greater blockhead. But, with all due respect to the exquisite essayist of the days of Anne—to the immortal creator of Sir Roger de Coverley—there was a little affectation of extreme classical propriety about the period to which Addison belonged, which sometimes cramped even his genial mind, and certainly rendered him incapable of doing justice to the wild freakishness of these literary games. Men of larger powers than Addison have not disdained to stoop to this level. Friar Bacon, Huyghens, Galileo, and even Sir Isaac Newton, communicated several of their discoveries to the world by means of anagrams; and Camden wrote an essay on the subject (to be found in his Remains), in which he calls the objectors to such toys, persons of "the sowre sort." In fact, it is as great a mistake to under-rate as to over-rate them; and, considering the extraordinary degree of ingenuity, patience, and wit, often exhibited in their construction, they are deserving of more regard than they have recently obtained.

A curious collection of anagrams and other cognate oddities has just been put forth by Mr. H. B. Wheatley, who, in a little volume, produced in the manner dear to antiquarians—with gilt edges at the top, and plain edges at the bottom and side: with toned paper, old-fashioned type, and fantastic ornaments—has brought

together a large amount of rare information on the topics which he undertakes to handle. We cannot spend half an hour more agreeably than by glancing through Mr. Wheatley's pages, occasionally supplementing his knowledge by the fruits of our own casual reading.

Chronograms are sentences so formed that they shall include the letters necessary to signify in Roman numerals some date relating to the person or circumstance commemorated. These are generally in Latin, and the numeral letters are distinguished by being placed in capitals. A chronogrammatical Latin poem is in existence, containing a hundred hexameters, every one of which contains the date 1634. Like its twin brother, the anagram, the chronogram has been used as a vehicle of mysticism by the fanatical. Michael Stifelius, a Lutheran minister at Würtemberg, deduced in this way from a passage in John, xix. 37, a prophecy that the world would come to an end in 1533. The passage ("They shall look on him whom they pierced") stands thus in Latin, which we give in the chronogrammatical form adopted by Michael: "VIDebVnt In qVeM transIXerVnt;" from which the reader may pick out the date MDXVVV VIII (1533). The prophet even went so far as to state the month, the day of the month, and the hour, at which the vaticination was to be fulfilled; but for these he does not seem to have had even a fanciful warrant. On the morning when the chronogram was to come true, Stifelius was preaching to his congregation, when a violent storm arose, and the people began to think that their pastor was verily an inspired man. Suddenly, however, the clouds dispersed, to the confusion of chronogrammatical prophecy, and to the great indignation of the worshippers, who, disappointed of the wonder they had been led to expect, set upon the preacher, and beat him severely for not knowing better. The frame of mind of the worshippers at the coming on of the storm must have been equivalent to that of the Irish hodman, who had made a bet that his comrade could not carry him up a ladder to the top of a high house without letting him fall, and who, feeling the other's foot slip about the third story, "began to have hopes." Their exasperation at the non-fulfilment of the prophecy will probably be understood by those modern believers in similar forecastings who have been so frequently disappointed of late that one of them has been heard to declare he shall "give it up" if something does not happen next year.

Palindromes are words or sentences that may be read the same backwards and forwards, letter by letter; such as this motto, once made by a lawyer for himself: "Si nummi immunis"—translated by Camden, "Give me my fee, and I warrant you free," in which the sense is preserved, and the mechanical ingenuity lost. Such, also, is the sentence in which Adam has been supposed by some profane wit to have introduced himself to Eve: "Madam, I'm Adam." In Lyon verses (apparently so called after the city of Lyons, where they originated), the sentence is read backwards word by word, instead of letter

by letter; and a question or statement is sometimes thus made to supply its own answer. An epitaph in Crumwallow churchyard, Cornwall, is composed on this principle:

Shall we all die?

We shall die all;

All die shall we;

Die all we shall.

Mr. Wheatley might have mentioned, in connexion with this branch of his subject, the singular fact that the third line of Gray's *Elegy* may be transposed eighteen times without injury to the sense, the metre, or the rhyme; as thus, by way of specimen:

The weary ploughman plods his homeward way.

The ploughman, weary, plods his homeward way.

Weary, the ploughman plods his homeward way.

Homeward, the ploughman, weary, plods his way.

The homeward ploughman plods his weary way.

But this is a very poor triumph compared with that of the subtle scholar who discovered that the words contained in the following lines—

Lex, Rex, Grex, Res, Spes, Jus, Thus, Sal, Sol, *bona*  
Lux, Laus,

Mars, Mors, Sors, Lis, Vis, Styx, Pus, Nox, *Fœx, mala*  
Crux, Fraus,

can be changed in their order 39,916,800 times, while still retaining the two words in italics in their original position, to preserve the measure of the verse. In presence of such a fact (if it be one), what can we do but exclaim, "Good gracious!" and pass on?

Lipograms are a species of verse in which, to quote the account given of them by De Quincey, the writers, "through each several stanza in its turn, gloried in dispensing with some one separate consonant, some vowel, or some diphthong, and thus achieving a triumph such as crowns with laurel that pedestrian athlete who wins a race by hopping on one leg, or wins it under the inhuman condition of confining both legs within a sack." Macaronic verses consist of a grotesque union of Latin and English or some other modern tongue, in which the vernacular words must have Latin terminations, and agree, the one with the other, in number and case; as in this specimen:

Omne quot exit in um,

Ceu winum, beerum, toastum, cheerum.

Still more amusing was Swift's freak of writing English words with Latin spelling, of which, we think, Mr. Wheatley should have taken some notice. The following, for instance, has the appearance of Latin, and yet is very good English:

Mollis abuti,

Has an acuti;

No lasso finis;

Molli divinis.

Restore the English spelling, and we get—

Moll is a beauty,

Has an acute eye;

No lass so fine is;

Molly divine is.

Bouts Rimés, or "rhymed ends"—a French

invention—make a capital game for those who are gifted with a little fancy and literary address. You are presented with a set of rhymes—the skeleton of so many lines or stanzas—and you have to supply verses of your own to fit these words. This species of literary exercise was at one time so popular in France that the ladies imposed on their lovers the task of filling up "rhymed ends" of their own supplying; and we doubt not that many a pretty compliment was thus asked for and had. The practice originated in rather a singular way. A poetaster named Dulot, who lived in the middle of the seventeenth century, was one day grieving for the loss of three hundred sonnets. His friends expressed their surprise at the largeness of the number (though it was nothing to what was achieved by some of the Italian poets); whereupon, Dulot told them that the sonnets he had lost were only the ends waiting to be filled up. He thus became the unintentional originator of Bouts Rimés. It is said that in this way Campbell wrote his poem, *Lochiel*; and Dryden in some degree justified the habit by that wonderfully ingenuous confession of his, that a rhyme sometimes helped him to a thought. The practice was for a long while kept alive in France by the Academy of Lanternists at Toulouse proposing each year a set of fourteen on the subject of the Grand Monarque, and giving a medal to the author of the best.

Echo verses are best described in the following clever specimens:

I'd fain praise your poem—but tell me, how is it?  
When I cry out "Exquisite!" Echo cries "Quiz it!"

During the rage for Paganini, a wit thus expressed in the columns of a weekly newspaper his contempt for the prevalent mania:

What are they who pay three guineas

To hear a tune of Paganini's?

Echo—Pack o' ninnies!

To the same class must be referred that catch, commencing with the words "Ah how, Sophia," which are frequently repeated, and made to bear both the sound and the meaning, "Ah, house a-fire!" and that other, in which a skit against Hawkins's *History of Music* is conveyed in the constant iteration, in connexion with Sir John's name, of the words "Burney's History," which take the sound of "Burn his History!" Echo verses are generally comic and satirical; but George Herbert has some of a religious character, quoted by Mr. Wheatley; and Webster, in his ghastly tragedy, the *Duchess of Malfi*, introduces an Echo into an old churchyard, with an effect at once fantastic and dreary.

Much amusement may be derived from equivocal verses; that is to say, verses that contain two precisely opposite meanings according to the order in which you read them. They must have been invented by some one with a genius for malicious insinuation, and they have been found very useful in the propagation of political libels during troublous times. Thus, the following lines, read straight down in the ordinary

way, are very loyal to the house of Hanover; but, read from column to column, they change into a piece of rank Jacobinism:

I love with all my heart	The Tory party here
The Hanoverian part	Most hateful do appear
And for that settlement	I ever have denied
My conscience gives consent	To be on James's side, &c.

Mr. Wheatley has given several specimens; but he has missed one which is in our opinion among the best, notwithstanding its want of gallantry. It is a little poem on matrimony; and the subjoined are the first two stanzas:

That man must lead a happy life  
Who is directed by a wife;  
Who's free from matrimonial chains  
Is sure to suffer for his pains.  
Adam could find no solid peace  
Till he beheld a woman's face;  
When Eve was given for a mate  
Adam was in a happy state.

At first sight this seems very complimentary to the sex; but read the lines alternately, and you will see what a quintessence of poison the savage old bachelor or henpecked husband (as the case may be) has contrived to wrap up in the heart of his rosebud.

Our author might have given us a chapter on Nonsense Verses, which were at one time popular; but of Shaped Verses he tells some curious stories. The English poets of the time of James the First and Charles the First were fond of displaying their ingenuity this way, and certainly rode their hobby to death. One Edward Benlowes made verses in the shape of altars, of pyramids, of gridirons and frying-pans (wherein, "besides the likeness in shape," as an old writer records, "the very tone and sound of the words did perfectly represent the noise that is made by those utensils, such as the old poet called sartago loquendi"), of bridles, saddles, cruppers, and bits. Mr. Wheatley does not mention the achievements in this way of "silver-tongued Sylvester," who translated the works of the French poet Du Bartas, and literally wrote "columns" of poetry; but he was in truth surpassed by others. The freak was a genuine product of the age which, while giving birth to Shakespeare and Bacon, Spenser and Ben Jonson, delighted in cutting trees into the similitude of peacocks and ships, box-edgings into hour-glasses, and men's beards into spades, forks, and hammer-heads. Yet, in this as in other matters, we must go to the East for the greatest marvels. Shahin Ghiraz, Khan of the Crimea in the last century, composed an ode in Turkish, in the form of an orb, from the centre of which flow thirteen rays, intertwining with each other; and the manner of reading the poem is thus described in vol. xviii. of the Journal of the Asiatic Society: "The letter at the centre is the first and last letter of every distich; the letters in the radii are the penultimates of each distich, and, read inversely, follow the initials in the next succeeding distich. The words in the intersectional compartments are common to each of the intersecting verses. The ode begins and ends at the centre through the radius which points directly upwards."

Acrostics are among the most curious of these literary amusements. They seem to have become common in the early Christian ages; and Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who died in the fourth century, professed to have discovered a copy of verses by the Erythræan Sybil, the initial letters of which make up the Greek words corresponding to "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." The poem describes the coming of the Day of Judgment, and what renders the acrostic more noteworthy is the fact that the initial letters of the five Greek words forming the sentence give the Greek word for "fish," which St. Augustine says is to be understood as a mystical epithet of Christ, "who lived in this abyss of mortality without contracting sin, in like manner as a fish exists in the midst of the sea without acquiring any flavour of salt from the salt water." The passage has been translated into Latin hexameters, so as to give the words "Jesus Christus, Dei Filius, Servator;" but the allusion to the fish is lost. Addison, in his Essay on False Wit, says that "there are compound acrostics, where the principal letters stand two or three deep. I have seen some of them where the verses have not only been edged by a name at each extremity, but have had the same name running down like a seam through the middle of the poem." Some writers have even carried their triumphs so far as to produce pentacrostics, in which the name is repeated five times. A strange instance of an involuntary or accidental acrostic occurred in the reign of Charles the Second, when the initials of the five ministers of the king after the fall of Lord Clarendon—viz. Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale—formed the word Cabal, which had already been used as the designation of the cabinet. It is commonly supposed in these days that the word originated in the way alluded to; but this is a mistake. The expression existed previously, and seems to have been derived by us, through the French, from the Cabala of the Hebrews, signifying something occult and hidden from the vulgar.

Simply to write acrostics in the shape of poems requires no great ability, for we find that they are frequently put forth in the handbills of shopkeepers, who cannot be supposed to command the services of very illustrious wits. But to execute them with grace of style, elegance of thought, and poetical feeling, is quite another matter; and in this way there are few if any equals of Sir John Davies, poet and judge, who, towards the close of the sixteenth century, wrote twenty-six acrostic hymns on Queen Elizabeth, the initial letters in each of which form the name and title of "Elisabetha Regina." Two of these in particular (the fifth and seventh) are so charming, that, as they are not generally known, and are not included in Mr. Wheatley's volume, we quote them here. The fifth is addressed to the lark, and runs thus:

E arly, cheerful, mounting lark,  
L ight's gentle usher, morning's clerk,  
I n merry notes delighting;  
S tint awhile thy song, and hark,  
A nd learn my new inditing.

B ear up this hymn, to Heav'n it bear,  
E 'en up to Heav'n, and sing it there;  
T o Heav'n each morning bear it;  
H ave it set to some sweet sphere,  
A nd let the angels hear it.

R enown'd Astrea, that great name,  
E xceeding great in worth and fame,  
G reat worth hath so renown'd it;  
I t is Astrea's name I praise:  
N ow then, sweet lark, do thou it raise,  
A nd in high Heav'n resound it.

The seventh hymn, addressed to the rose, is as follows:

E ye of the garden, queen of flow'rs,  
L ove's cup, wherein lie nectar's pow'rs,  
I ngender'd first of nectar;  
S weet nurse-child of the spring's young hours,  
A nd beauty's fair character;

B est jewel that the earth doth wear,  
E 'en when the brave young sun draws near,  
T o her hot love pretending;  
H imself likewise like form doth bear,  
A t rising and descending.

R ose, of the Queen of Love belov'd!  
E ngland's great kings, divinely mov'd,  
G ave roses in their banner:  
I t show'd that beauty's rose indeed,  
N ow in this age should them succeed,  
A nd reign in more sweet manner.

A very ingenious species of acrostic is the Telestich—verses in which two words of opposite meaning are to be indicated by the first and last letters of the lines taken consecutively; while, to make the difficulty still greater, the words are to be composed of precisely the same letters. We might fairly suppose such a feat impossible; but we have met with the following specimen:

U-nite and untie are the same—so say yo-U.  
N-ot in wedlock, I ween, has the unity bee-N.  
I-n the drama of marriage, each wandering gou-T  
T-o a new face would fly—all except you and I,  
E-ach seeking to alter the *spell* in their scen-E.

Anagrams are extremely ancient. They were known to the Greeks, who were taught by Plato to discover in these transpositions of names a mystical meaning typifying the character or fate of the persons concerned. The later Platonists carried the theory to a still greater extent than their original master, as in many other matters; and the Cabalists ranked anagrams among the elements of their secret wisdom. Camden says that the French of his time leant much to the same opinion, "and so enforced the matter with strong words and weak proofs, that some credulous young men, hovering between hope and fear, might easily be carried away by them into the forbidden superstition of Onomantia, or Soothsaying by names." The same writer calls anagrammatism "the only quintessence that hitherto the alchemy of wit could draw out of names;" and he tells us what amount of latitude is permitted to those who practise the science. The more precise only make free with the letter H, which they either omit or retain, because it cannot challenge the right of a letter. Those who are more lax in their principles allow

themselves to double or reject a letter, to use E for Æ, V for W, S for Z, C for K, and vice versâ. It is to be feared that a large number of anagrams are referable to the latter class; and in some the meaning elicited by the transposition of the letters is not sufficiently applicable to the original subject. When, however, an anagram is perfect in every respect, it may really claim a place among the achievements of wit. Of such was the answer discovered by a mediæval anagrammatist to Pontius Pilate's question, *Quid est veritas?* ("What is truth?") Transposed in due order, the letters composing these words give the sentence, *Est vir qui adest* ("It is the man who is here.") But one of the happiest of anagrams was made on the name of a certain lady of the time of Charles I., widow of the Sir John Davies already alluded to. Sir John, as we have seen, was great in acrostics: his wife was equally so in anagrams, which she used as a means of prophecy, and, owing to one or two successes, obtained a name in this species of divination, though ultimately doomed to be discomfited in the same way. There can be little doubt that she was insane; and her libels on several persons of distinction gave so much annoyance to her husband that he threw her MSS. into the fire. Thereupon, she prophesied that he would die within three years, at the expiration of which time she put on mourning. Sir John died suddenly of apoplexy, and the widow soon after married again. Her second husband, however, treated her writings in the same fashion as the first; but the lady went on with her prophecies and her libels, until she was prosecuted before the Court of High Commission. She seems, unlike Davies, to have inclined to the Puritanical side; and she endeavoured to convince the court that the spirit of the prophet Daniel was within her, because she had found in her maiden name (Eleanor Audeley) the words, "Reveal, O Daniel!" The judges tried in vain to argue her out of so ridiculous a fancy; but at length the Dean of Arches, one Lamb (who must surely have been an ancestor of Elia), discovered in her first married name (Dame Eleanor Davies) the sentence "Never so mad a ladie!" This he read aloud, throwing the court into extreme laughter, and the poor prophetess into such utter confusion of spirits that she appears never to have recovered her former confidence.

The discovery of prophecies in anagrams has at all times been rather common. Thomas Billon, a Provençal, who was specially retained by Louis the Thirteenth as an anagrammatist, with a pension of 1200 livres, made a set of prophecies in this way; and Cotton Mather, the fanatic New England minister and witch-persecutor (whose name one can hardly mention without a shudder of abhorrence), found a good deal of religious teaching, after his fashion, in the art of verbal transposition. When carried to such extremes, these ingenious exercises become a pernicious folly; and, in a purely literary sense, all such freaks of fancy must be sparingly and modestly used, or they do an injury to more

dignified composition. But, temperately resorted to as an amusement, they are worthy of all praise, for they combine mental recreation with intellectual discipline, and redeem playfulness from frivolity. There are many more beautiful objects of art than a Chinese carved ivory ball; yet we admire the ball for the sake of the mechanical skill necessary to its production. The skill in itself is a good thing; the exercise of patience, the mastery over stubborn materials, the gay defiance of difficulties that to the indolent might seem insurmountable—all these are excellent for their own sakes, whether the substance be simple bone, or the nobler organism of human speech.

#### A DAY'S RABBIT-SHOOTING.

I AM a pretty reasonable shot with the rifle at what sportsmen call, graphically enough, "a dead mark," yet I confess it was with some feelings of apprehension that one February morning in Downshire I received a note from Farmer Redleaf, inviting me to my third day's rabbit shooting up in Summerleas Wood. I longed for the sport, but I dreaded the ignominy of perpetual misses. Now a target, white and black, like the ace of clubs, is a good patient thing, and waits for you; but your rabbit is a dodgy bustling creature, and puts a quiet slow man like me out. A zig-zag snipe, a pheasant that rises like a firework, a whirring partridge, all want good shooting; but rabbit-killing has its own independent artifices, and requires its own especial training. Before you can wink, a rabbit has flashed by and is out of sight among the furze. The aim must be instinct, the eye and finger must work together, quick and sure, or no luck; all this I knew, and, being a beginner, I trembled at the knowledge.

I had, however, two golden rules of my friend Silvertup in my mind, and they upheld me. The one was, "Fire at everything you see." The second was, "Aim at a running rabbit's head, or the shot will fall behind." I repeated these golden rules incessantly to myself, as I made my way that cold whistling February morning to the upper wood.

High and pale was the blue sky; the rolling clouds were a cold brightening grey; the wind north-east, sharp and cutting, sounded shrill in the black close wiry hedges in which there still dolefully dangled wheat-straws that had been swept from last autumn's harvest-waggons. The great white horses were speeding on bravely with the ploughs, preparing for the barley sowing in the broad dark fields that sloped up on my right hand from the country lane, and there were files of women stone-picking there far away to the left. The only sounds to be heard were wild wintry sounds, such as the chattering of flocks of starlings, the fluttering "chink-chink" of the startled blackbirds, and occasionally the cry of a stray plover overhead.

It was pleasant, that February morning, from the higher land to look down on the pretty coloured ground plan of Downshire, and see

roads that seemed mere white lines, grass fields that appeared mere squares of green, and fir plantations that might have been taken for small patches of mustard-and-cress. It was pleasant to see the blue lines of distance, too, melt gradually into air, lessening and lessening, with now a farm-house, now a little grey spire, peering from the folds of azure.

I am on the path leading to Summerleas across the grizzled grass, when I see Badger the keeper approaching, his double-barrel on his shoulder, and my friend Silvertup's little pack of beagles at his heels. He wishes me "the top of the morning," and gives a tug at the rusty brim of his hat; while he is performing these acts of politeness, we are joined by Farmer Redleaf busy and hearty, Silvertup business-like and alert, and young Farmer Stockton, a fresh-coloured vigorous sportsman, who is shy, seldom speaks, but halloos a good deal at the dogs to relieve his spirits.

Now, after mutual greeting, there is a general loading of guns; powder is poured in, wadding driven down, shots are rattled in, and finally caps are fitted on nipples. The respective merit of brown and shining barrels is discussed, and Silvertup shows us in the palm of his hand the size shot he finds best for rabbits. A slight discussion also on the price of wool and the prospects of the lambing season while away the few minutes until Rasper, the second keeper, has time to come up and take charge of the beagles.

He has been away with four other men, pitching the nets all round Summerleas Wood, round nearly half a mile of bushy hazels, purple-leaved brambles, leafless larches, and green firs. Many a rabbit will to-day dash gallantly or blindly at that net wall, and there be clubbed with sticks, or leaped on and strangled. Herod and his dogs are out—there will be no quarter to the innocents.

There are four guns in our party, and we range ourselves at the corners of a large patch of yellow-blossomed prickly furze, as Rasper, with long whip trailing over his left arm, halloos the dogs into the covert, yelling with elevated eyebrow and with hand guarding his mouth, shouting alternate praise and chiding to "Challenger," "Conqueror," "Bruiser," "Beauty," "Music," and their mottled companions. The white tails of the dogs are twinkling among the furze in a moment. "Click, click, click, click," go the hammers of the four guns, and Silvertup's two-barrel—one of which I have christened "MURDER" and the other "SUDDEN DEATH," for they never seem to miss—seem to actually glare at the covert they point at. Woe be to the rabbit that comes out on Silvertup's side of the covert! As for myself, I begin to feel what the Americans describe as "kinder skeared," and could almost pray, were it not pusillanimous, that the first rabbit would not come out on my side of the furze.

Presently an old dog in the centre of the covert gives tongue in a tone of deep melancholy conviction; a second repeats the alarm with a

light playful alacrity; a third carries it on petulantly; presently all fall to and assert their discovery, as with one voice, until the welkin resounds.

Every sort of dog-voice is now heard asserting itself; every note in the dog-gammut is audible, from the deep growling bass of the old dog, to the shrill petulant falsetto of the most ardent puppy. They are all at it tooth and nail eating the rabbit up alive—a novice like myself would be inclined to think—then quarrelling over his bones.

Look how the four guns point at the covert, the death-flame as yet unlighted in them, but all ready to launch at the poor timid creatures we are all so earnestly intent on destroying. Hark! A quick snappish yelp, and next moment out bolts the rabbit at my corner—a mere little lump of reddish-brown fur, a twinkle of white tail, a mere glimpse and gone again, before you can wink! I fire and Stockton fires; but the rabbit is unscathed. I see the little trough in the turf that my shot ploughed up. I tried to be prepared. I thought nothing could startle me, or be too quick for me; but that conceit of mine has gone for ever.

Farmer Redleaf roars with laughter at my wanting "a slower breed of rabbits;" but stop! they have him again. A posse of dogs throw themselves on a certain furze-bush, all their white tails vibrate through the covert as they worm in, stirred by a common sympathy. Badger shouts and urges on the dogs. Rasper, whip in hand, dashes forward; having high boots on, he springs into a world of thorns, shouting "Tally-ho! Tantivy!" or some such old sportsman's war-cry.

Now the dogs go fairly mad; out bolts the rabbit again; he skims across the path between the two furze clumps. After him, pell-mell, go the dogs. I fire again, as the animal trips in a deep rut; taking no aim whatever, of course I miss. Again he is lost in the furze—but this trick is his last. The unerring Silvertup sees him for an instant. Bang! cries "Sudden Death," and next minute Rasper emerges from the covert with a dead rabbit on his shoulder; but I feel no envy and no mortification, for I am but a beginner, and I have at least attended to Silvertup's golden rule of rabbit-shooting, "*Fire at everything you see.*" It is a step of progress in the art of shooting when the sportsman can feel cool and ready as the game starts into view. The instant a pheasant rises and does not appear to you in the likeness of a sky-rocket—the instant a rabbit's bolting out of covert startles you less than if a tiger had shown himself—the instant a covey of partridges can get up and not appear to make a noise like ten watchmen's rattles sprung at once; that instant, depend on it, you have passed your "*Little Go*" in shooting, and have only to improve your eye, gain experience by frequent practice, accustom eye and finger to work exactly together, and avoid either undue haste or undue slowness.

The scene has changed. We are now some three hundred yards further on towards the nets. I myself am just on the edge of a green riding of Summerleas Wood. A great wall of dry leafless larches rises before me, mixed with the horned and wayward firs whose deep green no frost can harm and no east wind blight. I delight in the grateful resinous smell of the fir-cones, and in the pretty chequer of light I can see moving between the trunks of the young trees. The violets are as yet hushed and flowerless in the dry white brake; the primroses dare not show their little blossoms under the oak-trees; but still, far overhead I can hear the pairing wood-pigeons murmuring together their love-secrets, and I remember at once that love and spring walk ever hand in hand.

I might, perhaps, have stayed half an hour, for all I know, day-dreaming in this manner, or staring with rapt wonder at the magic blue distance that, stretched fold on fold in misty recessions of beauty, seemed to grow only more divine the further it passed from the real earth, when a sharp cry from Redleaf, who was guarding the wood a hundred and fifty yards off, awakes me to the fact of an impending rabbit.

"Look out!" he roared. I did look out, and that impromptu vigilance of mine was not unrewarded. The distant yelp of dogs widened into a fuller sound that rapidly fanned out in my direction.

"Here they are!" Whish! The rabbit runs across the riding, thirty yards before me. I fire a little before him for he is "going the pace," but he dashes into the covert apparently unhurt. What! have I missed him? Then I'll throw my useless gun away. No! Redleaf comes to my rescue, steps calmly into the brake, and emerges with my dead victim. Hurrah!

But all this time the wood further in is echoing with the death-knells of "Murder" and "Sudden Death." Silvertup is performing miraculous feats of shooting. He has killed two rabbits with one shot—two rabbits that had foolishly got into a line. He kills a rabbit with a shot from the hip—I mean with the gun not even placed at his shoulder. More wonderful still, he is "so smart, sir," that he actually kills two rabbits with right and left barrel—two almost simultaneous shots. All these feats are told me exultingly by old Badger the keeper, as again "Forward!" rings through the woods and we plunge among the trees.

Another scene. We are now deep in the fir-wood, and on the brow of a small dell filled with bramble-bushes, dead wood, and short scrub. I am ankle deep in beech-leaves that are dry and dusty above and a dark wet purple below. The coppery antlers of the fir-trees rise over my head waving to the blue sky. Below, in the dell, the beagles are working with excellent though fussy unanimity. It is an excellent "stand-point" here for a beginner, because there is little covert for the fugitive rabbit, who has to race up hill in face of our fire, and to pass unsheltered over the dead leaves and between the tall slim pillars of the fir trunks. I can get a

clear full shot here, and though the aim must be equally quick as elsewhere, still there is a great increase of chance for me.

But before I shed blood again in fair field I bag two more rabbits in a less glorious way. Redleaf, suddenly stepping up to me, quietly points me out what seems a large flint at the foot of a beech-tree some thirty yards off.

"It's a flint," said I.

"Bah! it's a rabbit," said he; "kill him."

I aimed at what must be the head. The next moment the rabbit lay stretched out dead upon the leaves, a drop of blood and a pinch of bluish grey fur the only proofs of the cause of his sudden decease. Presently I see another cowering under a dead tree trunk, and I kill him also just as he is springing up.

But it is Silvertup who shows me the true path to glory, though "it leads but to the grave." A rabbit comes trotting up the hill. Bang goes "Murder," and the rabbit rolls over on the leaves like a round ball of whitish fur, throwing such a strange summersault that had you never seen fire-arms you might have supposed it some harmless trick of the live animal.

"Bang-bang" from different stations in the wood, at intervals, go Redleaf and Stockton's guns; sometimes, like other mortals, they kill, sometimes they miss; often when Redleaf's first barrel blunders, his second barrel corrects. I too have my occasional moment of slaughter, for I fire at everything, but as for Silvertup he never misses but once, and then he kills with the post-script shot.

Sometimes, from not quite understanding which way the dogs are working, I find myself far behind the other guns, and hear them squibbing about such an immense way off, that the crack of the shot comes quite faintly to my ear. On these occasions, I generally stumble out of the wood, when I can, into the spongy mossy path, where the nets are reared. There I stop like an Indian scout watching, till I see perhaps a rabbit suddenly emerge cautiously from the wood, and thinking himself safe and unseen, dash at the fatal opening where the treacherous net walls out hope.

Sometimes, with the speed of lightning, the frightened animal turns back into the dog beleaguered wood; but more often, just as I run up to bag him, down comes an ash stick on his skull, and a boisterous voice shouts, "I say, Mas'r Kippur, I've been and clubbed another rabbit." The voice is that of one of Redleaf's shepherd-boys, who, under covert like myself, has been watching stealthily the same animal.

But now it gets late; the furze has all been drawn, the dogs have worked every part of the wood; it is time for lunch. The net-stakes are pulled up, the dead rabbits are taken down from the dead fir-boughs, where here and there they are hanging; we all converge to one point, and that point is the old lodge in the wood, where luncheon has long ago been prepared.

Rasper whips in the dogs. Badger and his retinue groan under grievous burden of rabbits.

Stockton, Redleaf, Silvertup, and myself, a trifle tired, lounge towards the lodge.

The cheese in great moist wedges awaits us; the cider is ready in its great stone jar; the loaves are duly cloven; the strong XXX ale is frothing in the horns; the guns stand in the corners; long rows of rabbits, twenty couple at least, lie in the outhouse; the keeper and his men seat themselves on distant benches, joking under their breath about Harker's appetite and Fitzpayne's laziness; and we eat and talk.

#### STRANGE AND YET TRUE.

WHEN the evening lamps are lighted, or, rather, just before that operation—say in the little interval which follows the retirement of the ladies from the dining-room, and precedes the appearance of the laughing, sceptical faces left temporarily below—a grain of ghost-talk mingles, not inharmoniously, with the gentle and domestic topics invoked by the subdued light and confidential feeling of the hour. The treatment of the subject is necessarily superficial. Twenty minutes will not suffice for a dive into philosophic deeps. Facts are simply adduced. Theme and proposition are laid bare, and left so, for any after-manipulations profounder thinkers please. Nevertheless, from the pabulum (often exceedingly raw) supplied by these little conversations, may be deduced a whole garden of thought, worthy the attention of the most earnest sage.

Whatever be the cause, the fact will hardly be disputed that a taste for the supernatural has greatly augmented of late among the educated classes of society. It has, indeed, as might be expected, abandoned its ancient form of bald credulity. We neither believe in the ghost, nor shoot at him. We require to know something of *his* nature who walks uninvited into our dwelling, and what may be his immediate business there, but not with rudeness nor intolerance. In a word, the indulgent spirit of the time is the welcome child of progress. As every age stamps itself upon the roll of time with the seal of some grand discovery—as every successive year reveals its half-suspected wonders—the mind becomes less and less inclined to impose limits upon that vast unexplored ocean which, like the natural horizon, seems to know no bound but God—and man, as he grows wiser, grows humbler.

To this improved feeling, and this better discipline of reason, we are indebted for many an interesting narrative which would else have never passed the bounds of a family circle; or, in doing so, would have at least been carefully denuded of such corroboration as name, place, and time afford. In the incidents hereafter to be related, these have been supplied without scruple, and without desire for any greater reticence than the editor in his discretion may impose. The circumstances of each case have been verified with unusual care, because another object than simple curiosity sug-

gested the inquiry. Still, it may be proper to call attention to the fact, that persons who have been, or who have conceived themselves to have been, the witnesses of so-called supernatural appearances, are, in recalling the occurrence, never wholly free from the dominion of that exalted feeling which accompanied it, and which is ill-calculated for minute and accurate detail. He, therefore, who undertakes to relate a ghost story at second-hand, may have the difficult task of rendering incoherences in such a manner as shall not bring down unjust doubt upon what is no less correct than clear.

To assist analysis, we must compare. To aid comparison, the least possible reserve should unite with the closest possible adherence to facts, so far as facts can be ascertained after passing through strongly susceptible imaginations. Even were these extra-natural occurrences not explicable (which we hold them in every case to be), there is surely nothing terrible or revolting in the pursuit. It is, for example, a simple, touching, and beautiful faith that the last earthly regards of the liberated spirit should be fixed upon its best beloved. If such be the work of a mocking spirit, it wears a wonderfully heavenly dress. "I am a ghost," says Wolfrau, in the Fool's Tragedy:

Tremble not. Fear not me:

The dead are ever good and innocent,  
And love the living. They are cheerful creatures—  
And quiet as the sunbeams—and most like,  
In grace, and patient love, and spotless beauty,  
The new-born of mankind.

To proceed at once to illustration, here are two instances of "intuition," both brief and true. The first is supplied by a gentleman well known in French literary circles, whom it induced to bestow much attention on that and kindred subjects.

In 1845 he was visiting a lady of his acquaintance at Rouen. They were engaged in earnest conversation on the subject of the future prospects of the lady's children, the youngest of whom—a girl of eighteen—sat working beside them. Suddenly, the latter started from her seat with a loud shriek, and threw herself into her mother's arms. On being questioned as to the cause of her agitation, she pointed to a sofa, and, weeping bitterly, declared she had seen descend upon it the figure of her elder sister, Rosalie, then on a visit to some relations at or near Havre. The countenance of the phantom was pale and death-stricken. This occurred at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th September. Two days after, tidings arrived that Rosalie L—— had been unhappily drowned in a boating excursion at Havre, at (it was affirmed) the precise moment of the appearance.

As another instance, here is a circumstance minutely related by Monsieur M——, a retired French officer, in a letter to a friend:

"Left an orphan at an early age, I was brought up under the care of a kind-hearted godmother, who could scarcely have cherished me more, had I been her own offspring. She resided at Harfleur, and being in easy circum-

stances, refused me nothing that could contribute to my youthful pleasure, keeping my pockets, withal, comfortably lined with that material which rendered my frequent visits to the Sunday fêtes in the neighbourhood doubly agreeable. On one occasion I had started as usual in company with a band of young vagabonds like myself to attend a fête at Quillebœuf, on the opposite side of the Seine.

"Contrary to my natural habit, I felt uneasy and depressed. An inexplicable feeling of gloom hung upon my mind, and neither my own efforts, nor the raillery of my companions, could drive it away. I had, indeed, left my good protectress confined by illness to her bed, but I was not aware that she was in any danger. However, the cloud upon my mind, far from dispersing, momentarily increased. If I joined as usual in the different sports, I was slow and unskilful; and, in the war of wit that generally accompanied our games, had not a word to say for myself. We had engaged in a match of skittles. It was my turn to deliver the ball, and I was standing, half pensively, poising it in my hand, when I distinctly heard a soft voice pronounce my name. I started, and turned round, hastily asking who had spoken.

"'Nobody,' replied those around me.

"I insisted that I had heard a woman's voice say 'M——.'

"'Bah! you're dreaming. Play away.'

"Hardly had the ball quitted my hand, when, a second time, I heard my name pronounced in a soft and plaintive tone; but fainter than the former. Again I inquired who called me.

"No one present had heard the sound.

"It struck me that some one of the party was playing a trick upon me, in order to increase my evident melancholy. Nevertheless, under the influence of some impression caused by the plaintive summons, I refused to play any longer, and presently returned alone to Harfleur. On reaching my godmother's house, I was shocked to learn that she had expired during the afternoon, pronouncing my name twice, and breathing her last sigh at the moment of the second summons I had heard. These facts are well known to some twelve or fifteen people at Harfleur and at Quillebœuf, most of whom are still (in 1854) living, and were I to live fifty years, the sound and the impression will never depart from my memory." But, of course, these so-called "facts" had their common source in the narrator. Therefore, as a question of evidence, no corroboration is gained by their being known to the dozen or fifteen people still living.

The heroine of our next illustration is Mrs. D——, an English lady.

When, five years ago, Mrs. D—— became a widow, it pleased the brother of her husband to dispute the dispositions of the latter's will—a proceeding the more annoying as the provision made for the widow was already extremely moderate. Ultimately an appeal was made to Chancery. The suit lasted three years, and caused Mrs. D—— the utmost vexation and anxiety, when, at length, the law, finding

those claims indisputable, which had never been anything else, decided in her favour. Some short time after this, Mrs. D— was residing in L— Place, Brighton. A friend, Miss F—, usually shared her bedroom. Both were lying awake one morning about eight o'clock, when Mrs. D—, with some surprise, saw her friend rise up suddenly in bed, clasp her hands, and sink back again on the pillow in a profound sleep. Strange as seemed the movement, it was so evident to Mrs. D— that her friend was really in a tranquil slumber; that she made no effort to disturb her. A minute elapsed, when the door quietly opened, and there seemed to enter a figure which she believed to be supernatural. She describes her feelings with great minuteness. She owned that, by nature, she was somewhat nervous, yet her impressions, as she afterwards remembered them, on this occasion had not the slightest intermixture of fear. She was conscious of a reverential awe, such as might become the witness of a revelation overruling the accepted law of nature, united with a feeling of intense curiosity as to the object of the apparition. Gliding through the subdued light, the figure had all the appearance, gait, and manner of her deceased husband; until, passing round the room, and sinking down into an arm-chair that stood nearly opposite her bed, turned slightly aside, the figure presented its profile, and Mrs. D— instantly recognised her connexion, and late opponent, Mr. W. D—, at that time residing in the north. No sooner had the mysterious visitor sat down, than he raised his clasped hands, as in passionate entreaty; but though the spectral lips appeared to move, as in harmony with the gesture, no sound was audible. Three times the hands were lifted in the same earnest manner, then the figure rose, and retired as it came. Some nervous reaction followed its disappearance, for Mrs. D—'s maid appearing a minute or two later, found her mistress trembling violently, and much agitated. Nevertheless, she quickly regained her self-possession, and calmly related what she had seen, both to Miss F— and the maid, the former being unable to recollect anything unusual, and only knowing that she had fallen asleep again, contrary to her own intention.

The succeeding day was cold and stormy, and neither of the friends quitted the house. In the evening some neighbours called. As they were taking leave, one of the party suddenly inquired:

"By-the-by, have you had any recent news from the north? A rumour has reached us, I hardly know how, that Mr. W. D— is dangerously ill, some say dying, even (but it is only report) *dead*."

"He *is* dead," said Mrs. D—, quietly.

"He died this morning."

"You have a telegram?"

"You shall hear."

And Mrs. D— told her story to her wondering friends.

As quickly as news could reach Brighton, she received intimation of Mr. D—'s death, at the hour of his appearance.

A singular and suggestive statement is, that the scene witnessed by Mrs. D— at Brighton, was being enacted in the death-chamber of Mr. W. D—, hundreds of miles distant. His mind wandered somewhat, as the end drew near, but perpetually returned to the subject of the unhappy lawsuit. Mistaking his sister for Mrs. D—, he addressed to her the most fervent entreaties for pardon, avowing his bitter regret, condemning his own injustice and covetousness, and declaring that he could not die in peace without her forgiveness. Three times the dying man had raised his hands in the manner she had witnessed, and so expired.

One morning, some years since, the lady of a distinguished London physician was lying in bed at her house in P— Street. It was daylight, and she was broad awake. The door opened, but Lady —, concluding it was her maid, did not raise her head, until a remarkable-looking figure, passing between her bed and the window, walked up to the fireplace, when, reflected in the mirror which hung above, Lady — recognised the features of her stepson, Dr. J. C—, then attached to a foreign embassy. He wore a long night-dress, and carried something on his arm.

"Good Heavens! is that you, John? and in that dress?" cried Lady —, in the first surprise.

The figure turned slowly round, and she then became aware that the object he carried was a dead child, the body being swathed round and round in a large Indian scarf of remarkable workmanship, which Lady — had presented to Mrs. J. C— on the eve of her departure. As she gazed, the outline of the figures became indistinct—invisible. They were lost in the familiar objects of the room. Lady — neither fainted nor shrieked, nor even rang the bell. She lay down and thought the matter over, resolving to mention it to no one until the return of her husband, then absent in attendance on an illustrious household. His experience would decide whether her physical health offered any solution of the phenomenon. As for its being a dream, it may be taken as an accepted fact that, though nobody is conscious of the act of going to sleep, everybody knows, by the sudden change of scenery, and snapping of the chain of thought alone, when he has awakened.

On hearing her story, her husband immediately looked at his lady's tongue, and felt her pulse. Both organs perfect. Of her nerves he had seen proof. Touching veracity she was truth itself. All his skill could devise nothing better than a recommendation to patience, and to see what came of it. In the mean time the day and hour were noted down, and the next advices from T— awaited with more than usual interest.

At length they came. Dr. J. C— informed his father that their child—an only one—had died on such a day (that of the apparition), and that his wife, anxious that it should be laid to rest in the land of its birth, had begged that it

might be forwarded by the next ship. In due course it arrived, embalmed, but enclosed in a coffin so much larger than was required for the tiny occupant, that the intervening spaces had to be filled up with clothes, &c., while the Indian scarf had been wound, in many folds, around the child's body.

A favourite theory lays it down as law that it requires two minds to produce one ghost. There must be, on the one side, the power of projection of the image—on the other, that of receptivity. Unless the mirror be specially prepared, the object, though at hand, cannot become visible. Yet, here is an example of the substitution of one, certainly in no such condition of special preparedness, for another unquestionably interested.

Colonel M——, who perished, with a party of his men, in the lamentable burning of a transport on her voyage to the Crimea, was well known to the writer. M—— was a man of the coolest nerve, of the most imperturbable self-possession. It was his habit to sit up late, reading, in the chamber of his invalid wife, after the latter had retired to bed. One night, Mrs. M—— having fallen asleep, the door opened, and her maid, Lucy, who had been sent home, ill, to the charge of her friends, a few days before, entered the room. Perfectly conscious, as he declared, from the first, that the object he beheld was not of this world, the steady soldier fixed his eyes on the apparition, careful only to catch its every movement, and impress the whole scene with accuracy on his memory. The figure moved slowly to the side of the bed, gazed with a sad and wistful expression on the sleeper's face, and then, as though reluctantly, died away into the gloom. Colonel M—— then awoke his wife, and related what had occurred. The hour was noted, and proved to be precisely that at which the poor girl had breathed her last, murmuring her mistress's name.

Some twenty years ago, the attention of Sir M—— and Lady S—— was attracted to the friendless position of a little orphan boy. So great was the interest with which he inspired them both that they took entire charge of his future, giving him an excellent education, and, at a proper age, introducing him, on his own earnest request, into the navy. Several years passed, during which the young man advanced rapidly in professional and general knowledge, and was to all appearance on the outset of a prosperous career, when, one rude November night, about half-past twelve, the inmates of Lady S——'s country-house, at which she was then residing, in the absence abroad of Sir M——, were aroused by a loud ringing at the bell. Lady S——, herself awakened, heard the step of her steady old butler moving in person to ascertain who could possibly be arriving at such an hour. A furious gust of wind and rain seemed to burst in with the opening door. A long pause succeeded; after which the butler was heard reascending to his apartment. Lady S——'s curiosity was sufficiently aroused to

induce her to summon her maid, who slept in an adjoining room, and send her to question the butler as to the untimely visitor. The answer returned was that, on opening the door, no one was to be seen. The night, though rough, was not very dark, and neither on the gravelled approach, nor on the broad lawns, could be discerned a living thing. But for so many having heard the bell, the butler would have imagined it a dream.

Gradually the household resumed its repose, when, at two o'clock, a second summons startled everybody. There was no mistaking now, for the bell had not ceased its impatient vibrations when the butler, with several other servants, set foot on the stairs. Again the storm dashed into the house, and nothing but the storm. No human shape was visible without, nor were any footprints to be traced on the smooth gravel sheltered by the porch. As they were about to close the door for the second time, Lady S——'s maid appeared on the landing, and beckoned, with a white scared face, to those below.

"Come up—come up, somebody! My lady has seen Mr. D——. I dare not stay there alone!"

It was, in effect, as she had said. Immediately after the group of servants had descended the stairs, Lady S—— had seen the figure of young D—— standing at the foot of her bed. Believing at the moment that it was actually himself, she had accosted him:

"What, Edward, you here?"

The figure immediately disappeared. News shortly arrived that the young man had perished at sea on that wild November night, between the hours of twelve and two.

The following singular story, belonging, perhaps, more strictly to the realm of dreams than visions, was related to the writer, a short time since, by the lady of a distinguished German diplomatist, now residing at Frankfurt:

A friend of the narrator had herself a beloved and attached friend, who died after a brief but severe interval of suffering. A short time after, the spirit of the departed stood, in a dream, by the bedside of her friend, Madame L——, and, with a countenance distorted with indescribable agony, implored the latter to interest in her behalf some "great, strong soul," that might wrestle for her in prayer, and emancipate the afflicted spirit, if it might be, from its present intolerable condition. This condition she described as one of an eager longing to repent, but of perpetual contention with some terrible hindrance, only removable through the means suggested. Much troubled in mind, Madame L——, after some deliberation, resolved to appeal to the strongest and most ardent soul within the range of her acquaintance, in the person of ——, sometimes called the "German Luther." To him, accordingly, she made her appeal. The good man consented, and redeemed his promise with characteristic zeal.

Soon after, the apparition revisited Madame L——. This time with aspect more composed,

but still marked with traces of suffering and anxiety, and warmly thanking her friend for what had been already done, adjured her, in the most touching language (repeated by the narrator with wonderful power and pathos), to prevail upon the zealous intercessor to engage once more—but *once* again—in prayer, on her behalf. Madame L——, deeply moved, did as she was requested, and wrote at once to ——, who happened at this time to be absent at the distance of two days' journey.

On the third night, the spirit once more stood by her friend's side, with an aspect of complete tranquillity, and surrounded with angelic radiance, declaring that all was now well.

Two days more, and —— burst into Madame L——'s presence, pale, and greatly agitated.

"Woman, woman!" he exclaimed, "what have you done? For no reward that could be proposed to me would I endure such another hour of conflict and agony as that which my compliance with your request has caused me." He then proceeded to relate that, having—though with some reluctance—engaged in prayer as he was desired, he felt as though at once environed by all the powers of evil. Nevertheless, with reeling brain and bursting heart, and all but overcome, he steeled himself to the very utmost, and, struggling on through unutterable mental torture, at length regained his calm. But never more, for *him*, such fearful championship!

Without entering more deeply into discussion of this last example, it may be enough to hint that a solution might probably be found in the collision of two ardent and impressible natures, devoted, for the moment, with intense eagerness to a common object.

A broad distinction, of course, lies between cases of mere cerebral excitement and such as we have before adduced. Hallucinations are as fully recognised, if not quite so common, as colds in the head. Few of those who must have noticed the twitch or toss of the head peculiar to the late eminent counsel, Mr. B——, were aware that it was engendered by a perpetual vision of a raven perched on his left shoulder. A gentleman now residing in Broadway, New York, transacts business daily, under the immediate supervision of his great-uncle, who, in a laced coat and ruffles, occupies a large arm-chair placed expressly to receive the honoured vision.

However, the purpose of this paper being rather to suggest than to demonstrate, enough has been said, if we reiterate the opinion that inquiry is better than ridicule, that the object of relating "ghost stories" is not to propagate idle falsehood, but to elicit philosophic truth; and if there be among our readers one whose nerves are not trustworthy, it may comfort that individual to know that, in our experience, none who have been the subject of what (until we better comprehend their nature) must be called extra-natural visitations, have ever, at the trying moment, experienced the slightest agitation or fear. The inference is that the witnesses themselves are—albeit unconscious of the fact—inti-

mately concerned in the production of those phenomena which they have been hitherto disposed to attribute to influences entirely independent of their own bodily and mental organisation.

## OUT IN OREGON.

"WILL you sell your horse, Harry, my boy? I'd be glad to give a fair price for him, if you like, and I want a second mount for the Surrey, since old Darius got that sprain. Fifty? Sixty? Well, seventy, then?"

I could not help laughing at my friend's ill-concealed anxiety to become the owner of my steed; but I still shook my head, in sign of negation. Snowball, as I called the pretty coal-black creature, was not for sale.

My friend, Tom Rawlinson, of the Stock Exchange, who prides himself above all things upon his knowledge of horseflesh, rode in silence beside me for a while, and then broke out again.

"I say, King, do oblige me. I've taken a particular fancy to your nag, and I know you're not the man to run me up because I say so. I'll give you any fair price—name it yourself, but let us have a deal. Why, man, you'd get a decent hack for half what I'd give you, and you don't hunt, and Snowball is too good for a stupid jog-trot from Highgate to Austin Friars, and from Austin Friars back to Highgate, six days out of seven."

I was not to be tempted into parting with my faithful dumb friend; but, to divert Tom's mind from his disappointment, I told him as we ambled homeward how I became Snowball's master, and why and how I had grown so fond of him.

"You recollect, Tom, that although we were old friends and schoolfellows, and shared pretty fairly the rice milk and canings at old Podmore's, there was a long hiatus in our intercourse. You, like a lucky fellow, got into a straight groove in life, which has kept you prosperous up to this hour, while I, through circumstances which you partly know, had to rough it on my journey through the world. Canada, Australia, and South America, all saw me in turn, and at the end of several years of hard living and desultory work, I found myself in one of the Western States of the Union, still a poor man.

"It was then that the loud outcry which followed the first discoveries of gold in British Columbia reached my ears. I do not know whether I should have given it any heed, but for the advice of one to whom I was under obligations for unexpected kindness, and on whose experience I placed much reliance. This was a corn-dealer in Chicago, whose book-keeper I then was, and whose good wife had nursed me, a lonely stranger, through one of the swamp fevers which are not uncommon in that 'Venice of the West,' where the houses rest on piles driven into the muddy alluvial soil.

“‘I shall be sorry to lose you, Mr. King,’ said the worthy man, ‘and if you care to remain and keep my books, well and good. But I think you’re just the man to thrive up there. Climate’s healthy, rowdies scarcer than in California, placers are rich, for my own brother’s written me word what he’s seen, and a sober man with good muscle and brain power, and used to shifts, can get on nicely. The journey’s a wild one, for sure, but you’ve cut your eye-teeth. So, if a loan of money, and an introduction to my brother out there—’

“‘What could I do but squeeze the kind old factor’s hand, thank him for his good will, and accept the offer? You needn’t arch your eyebrows, Tom, and look incredulous, as if you thought an American must always overreach those he meets, and never, under any circumstances, do a generous thing. I have met with plenty of kindness across the Atlantic, ay, and confidence, too, though my tale will prove to you before I have done that the States are not peopled with angels.

“‘The corn-merchant lent me five hundred dollars. I had saved three hundred more. So, for an emigrant, I was by no means ill provided. One grand mistake I made at the outset. My best course would have been to follow the stream, to take the Panama route, and go up to Vancouver and Victoria in one of the coasting steamers from California. Instead of this, I chose the cheaper but more perilous overland route, and after procuring a plain outfit of homespun and blanketing, high digger’s boots of greased hide, poncho, tin cullender, knife, rifle, and pistols, with a few tools and other necessaries, I travelled to Lecompton, in Kansas, there to make arrangements for my further journey.

“‘This appeared likely to prove a more difficult enterprise than I had anticipated. A war of extermination—that long cruel war that sometimes smoulders for a while, but never comes to an end—was going on in Oregon between the settlers and the natives. Many trappers, and more emigrants, had been cut off by the Indians, inspired by cupidity and smarting under a sense of bitter wrong. The northern prairies were the scene of many dreadful outrages, alternately committed by whites and aborigines, and vague but shocking rumours reached the frontier district in which I was a sojourner. Still the glittering bait of Columbian gold was too potent to fail of its effect, and numbers beside myself came crowding into Lecompton, eagerly inquiring for means of transport, and listening with a fearful interest to every wild story of the half-explored region before them.

“‘The greater part of the emigrants were of American origin, some of them Western farmers driving their own huge waggons in which their families sat commodiously enough behind the team of strong northern horses or big Kentucky mules, while many were from the New England States, and not a few from Europe. The latter, Germans and Irish for the most part, with a small sprinkling of English and Welsh,

were by far the poorest, the most ignorant and helpless, of the party. Their scanty resources, whether brought from their distant homes or hoarded from the gains of a term of service among the Atlantic cities, were fast becoming exhausted, and the El Dorado of their dreams seemed as remote as ever. Many of these poor people, ill versed in geography, had been led by steam-boat agents and others to believe that the gold country lay within easy reach of the last river-side quay or railway station; and they broke out into passionate grief or indignation on learning how grossly they had been deceived. In this emergency aid arrived. A Yankee speculator set up an office in Lecompton, issued a flaming prospectus, and advertised his projects in the border newspapers. Dr. Ignotus Fieschi Smith announced himself as at once a capitalist and one of the earliest pioneers of the Indian territory. He offered the help of his means and his experience to intending emigrants, and was willing to supply information gratis, and to contract, on ‘absurdly trifling and egregiously unremunerative terms,’ for the conveyance of families and goods across the plains and mountains of the wild west. Dr. I. F. Smith—thus ran his printed promises—would ‘guarantee absolute immunity from danger, suffering, or privation,’ he would furnish ‘the most intelligent and hardy guides and hunters,’ would propitiate, elude, or discomfit the warlike tribes, would feed everybody, guard everybody, and convey the whole multitude to their journey’s end, safe and sound, for a very slender pecuniary consideration.

“‘There is an amazing amount of gullibility in the United States, after all, for no ‘spec’ is too audacious or glaring for acceptance on the part of at least a portion of the public. So it proved on the present occasion. A great many emigrants entered into a contract with the doctor to convey them to Lytton, on the Fraser River, in British Columbia. I was among the number. I can truly say that I never gave unlimited credence to the tempting statements of our Yankee Mentor. But I fell into the error of imagining that where so much of superfluity was proffered, the performance must at any rate comprise all that was essential. As for the Irish emigrants, they were quite fascinated by the speculator’s graces of deportment. I did not, personally, share in this admiration for the doctor. He was a thin cadaverous person, with hard features, a yellow face, and a backbone of eel-like suppleness. But it must be owned that his conversation was very persuasive, amusing, and full of anecdote.

“‘Dr. Smith paid me the compliment of ultra-frankness, candidly avowing that with a man of the world like myself it was useless to keep up the impression which served well enough for the rest.

“‘‘You see, mister,’ said he, ‘well enough that it can’t pay an individual like myself to carry these Paddies and Dutchmen to your British placers just for the few dollars agreed upon. Well, sir, and what then? Why, I. F.

Smith has two strings to his bow. He means to get a big claim, and he's been long enough prospecting in California to know stuff that pays, when he sees it; and then he'll import machinery, and get up a regular grand quartz-crushin', steam-power washin', company. And these emigrants, who'll soon have spent their last dime in provisions, will be glad enough to work for the new company, and as they know me, and as I know them, we'll soon come to terms, and there's labour ready to hand.

"'Ignotus is a queer given name, ain't it?' he said on another occasion; 'the minister to Salem poorhouse, he invented it for me, I guess. I was picked up in the streets of Salem, wrapped in an old shawl, the ugliest baby in the Union, I've heard tell. Not knowing what to call me, they wrote me Smith, and as it was just then that the chap tried to shoot the old King of the French, Fieschi was tacked to me, as well as Ignotus. Well, I growed. I've tried most callings. I'm a real doctor of Augusta College, and here's my diploma to prove it. I'm young enough yet, and I mean to be President afore I die.'

"The start at last took place, and a motley throng it was that poured out of the streets of Lecompton and struck into the renowned 'Oregon trail.' It had not been necessary for the doctor to provide means of conveyance for all the passengers. The farmers, as I have said, drove their own waggons, which formed carriages by day and tents by night for the accommodation of their families. But the Europeans, and many of the New Englanders, were of course destitute of such vehicles, and for them Dr. Smith had provided transport. Several waggons had been purchased or built, and these were crammed with women and children, with clothes, food, cooking utensils, bedding, and necessaries of various kinds. These waggons were variously horsed. Some were dragged by broad-footed strong-limbed steeds from the North; others were drawn by mules; one or two were set in motion by the exertions of a string of Indian ponies, piebald or brindled for the most part, and looking almost rat-like in their diminutiveness when compared with the big-boned importations from Kentucky. It was an understood thing that the able-bodied men were to walk, and to assist in the management of the teams; but those who could afford to pay for such a luxury as a pony were duly provided, the doctor having made an advantageous barter for some half-tamed animals brought in by an Indian half-breed, and I was one of this band of the privileged.

"Let me try to explain how the staff of the expedition was composed. First of all, there was Dr. I. F. Smith, physician in ordinary, contractor, and manager of the community. Then there were two satellites of the doctor's, whom he called his 'mates' by word of mouth, but who in the prospectus had been euphemised into 'assistant deputies'—Hiram Hall and Ben Tubber. There was a cook, a French creole, a gay laughing fellow, who played the fiddle, and who

was the life and soul of the caravan when a halt was called; there were the cook's boy, a mulatto lad and runaway slave, and seven or eight teamsters. Besides these we had for guides and hunters the Indian half-breed who had sold the ponies, two savage kinsmen of his who accompanied him, and a promise of two or three more, who were to meet us at Yellowstone Rock, out on the prairies of the Platte. So far, so good.

"There were plenty of weapons belonging to the party; but we were far from trusting to our own valour in case of assault. Another caravan was to set out nearly at the same time, from another point on the frontier, bound for Oregon, and escorted by dragoons. We were to join this caravan, and travel under the protection of its soldiers, so far as our roads lay together; and when they diverged, the doctor assured us that the most dangerous part of the journey would be over; further, that the United States officer in command would not refuse to detach a party to guard us to the British borders.

"We set off confidently, gay with hopes of the bright fortunes in store for us in the far North-West. As we passed out of Lecompton, some of the idlers gave us a cheer in answer to the hurrahs of the Irish, the 'hoch hochs' of the Germans, and the shrill clamour of the women. But I noticed that one or two bearded old trappers, rough men of the wilderness, clad in greasy skins, and as grim and rude as bears masquerading in human shape, eyed us with a sort of scornful pity, and shook their grizzled heads as they watched the train of waggons rattle merrily by.

"The first part of the long journey gave us little to complain of. Our progress, to be sure, was tediously slow, but for this we were prepared; food was plentiful, and there was no danger, and but little fatigue. We were soon across the frontier, and out of the territory of the United States, but we found the plains of the Platte well watered, abounding in grass for our cattle, and brushwood to make our fires when we camped, and free from hostile savages. For the latter, indeed, we had little reason to care much, for we had met and joined the other caravan at Marysville, beyond Fort Leavenworth, and we were under the protection of a strong detachment of dragoons, hardened to the rugged warfare of the borders. Our principal trouble was in fording the numerous feeders of the Platte river, on which occasion the waggons were apt to stick in the slimy blue mud, until a number of men, waist deep in slush and water, literally put their shoulders to the wheels, and heaved the huge machine up the yielding bank. One or two of the children sickened of ague, and one was bitten by a snake; but Dr. Smith showed genuine skill in attending the sufferers, and set them right by prompt and vigorous measures, thereby winning more good will and admiration from every woman in the party.

"The doctor's satellites were by no means as popular as the doctor. Hiram Hall and

Ben Tubber were a pair of the most truculent ruffians in all America, and it seemed a marvel to me what bond of union could exist between them and the soft-spoken pliant Ignotus, who gave me the idea of anything but a fighting man. Hall was a black-browed shaggy Missourian, athletic in person, and forbidding in countenance; his character was more than dubious, and he was reputed to have been one of the fiercest of those 'border ruffians' who had afflicted Kansas during the pro-slavery riots. Tubber was a powerfully-built Georgian, who prided himself on his prowess in 'rough and tumble,' and who boasted to me one evening, after a fourth tumbler, that he had 'gouged nigh twenty eyes,' and would back himself to 'do the trick neatly, all thumb and forefinger,' with any one in the United States. This engaging pair, who wore revolvers and bowie-knives in their belts, and who were never seen without their rifles, were nicknamed the doctor's bull-dogs.

"The teamsters were of very various characters. Two of them were lathy dark-complexioned Missourians, with reckless mien, and whisky written on their blotched faces; but still they were bold muscular men, who knew their trade. Two were mere lads, recent draughts from some Alleghany farm, and quite raw to prairie life; the others were flaxen-headed Germans, well-meaning enough, but very inexpert where horses were in question. The cook and his boy were general favourites, but the guides hardly pleased me. In the first place, even after they were joined by three other Indians at the Yellowstone Rock, they brought in no fresh meat.

"They made no pretence of hunting, but lounged about at every hut, sleeping in the shade of the cotton-wood trees, smoking and drinking, prowling about the waggons, and begging for tobacco and spirits, but never sallying far beyond the camp. When remonstrated with by those who began to grow tired of pickled pork for breakfast, dinner, and supper, the half-breed replied:

"'What for hunt here? No game here, so near settlement. All frightened away. Hunt when far off. You very foolish man—you emigrees. Gib Rising Sun some tobacco, and he get you plenty of deer meat presently.'

"My second reason for not liking the half-breed and his red relations was a mere question of physiognomy. I did not like Rising Sun, in particular, for the same reason assigned in the poem for an aversion to Dr. Fell. He had the long slanting Mongolian eyes—the true feline eyes of his race—and as for his high cheek-bones, large mouth, and lank hair, these were such as all the aborigines possessed. But with him they had an especial treacherous crafty look, or so I fancied, and I hinted as much to the doctor, who merely laughed, and said the man had been well recommended.

"Nothing worthy of notice occurred till we crossed the Rocky Mountain, which we did by way of Fremont's Pass. Up to that time we had

certainly seen bands of roving Indians, dim against the evening sky, a sort of distant vision of spears and blanket-clad horsemen; but they had been mere Pawnees or Foxes, tribes which were in a kind of vassalage to the white man. At the foot of the pass, however, an imposing cavalcade of Crows arrived, and seemed to design an attack. For some hours they kept prancing and caracoling around us, uttering loud shouts, and shaking their lances and robes at us, with many a barbarous gesture of defiance or threat, but they took care to keep out of rifle range, and our camp was too well watched at night to allow them an opportunity of stampeding our quadrupeds. The officer in command of the dragoons valued these Crows very lightly, but when we got over the pass, and into the country usually traversed by war parties of the Blackfoot tribe, he grew more serious, and his vigilance was unremitting.

"Our supply of meat now began to run short, for some of the barrels which had been stored up, and which were duly labelled with the words, 'Prime Pickled Pork,' proved to be half empty, and to contain little more than garbage, unfit for human consumption. Some of the flour and biscuits, too, turned out to be mouldy, and full of weevils; and while the doctor laid the blame on the storekeeper who had supplied the provisions, many were disposed to lay the blame on the doctor.

"Violent reproaches were also lavished on the laziness of the guides, and the military officer was appealed to, to exert his authority in compelling the half-breed and his dusky kindred to hunt for us, in terms of the agreement. The officer spoke tartly, the doctor suavely, and the red-skinned attendants of the caravan were induced to sally forth; but they rarely brought in anything beyond a half-grown deer or a wild turkey, and excused themselves on the ground of the buffalo herds having been driven off by Indians.

"We found the grass much less plentiful and succulent, to the west of the mountains. It was a stony region which we were traversing, and the animals lost flesh and strength from the difficulty of picking up sufficient nutriment among the boulders and pebbles. Over vast tracts, too, extended a carpet of charred turf and white ashes, where the grass and flowery weeds had been wantonly set on fire by careless emigrants or roving savages. But when we got into the well-watered region on the banks of Lewis River, we found verdant pastures enough, and our jaded quadrupeds recovered their strength and sleekness.

"At Fort Boisé, on Lake River, our leader, Dr. Smith, suddenly announced that our road no longer lay in the same direction as that of the Oregon party. This was a great disappointment to myself and some others, who had begun to imagine that we should journey on with the other caravan, under military protection, almost as far as the British possessions. But Dr. Smith had decided that we should here quit the main Oregon trail, and strike off into the mountainous

region to the westward: steering our course by Mount Jefferson and Mount Hood, and crossing the Columbia a little below the point where it is joined by John Dyer's River. This was certainly the most direct route, the usual Oregon road being very circuitous; but it led through an unknown tract of country, and its adoption deprived us of our escort.

"Fierce remonstrances and a long debate ensued, but the doctor was obstinate. He believed, or affected to believe, the assurances of the Indian guides, that the western region was safe, easy of access, and abounding in grass, water, and game. Indeed, some of us shrewdly suspected that this rumoured plenty of buffalo-meat, salmon, and venison was the main attraction in the eyes of our chief; for it would save his stores, which were nearly exhausted, and afford cheap sustenance for the hungry folks under his charge. Be that as it might, Dr. I. F. Smith was peremptory. In vain the officers, both the lieutenant commanding the dragoons and the captain who was governor of the fort, advised him to "keep on along with the Oregon emigrants, by way of Grande Ronde and the Walla Walla." He was deaf to all persuasion, and peevishly informed us that we might leave him if we chose, but that it was for him to select the route. It was a melancholy morning for us when, after two days' rest at Fort Boisé, we saw the Oregon caravan start, waggon after waggon, with the dragoons riding in front and rear, their arms and accoutrements glancing in the sun. Under their guardianship we had travelled safely for hundreds of weary miles, and a gloom that seemed prophetic of coming evil settled upon us as the last horseman vanished among the swells of the prairie.

"The commandant of Fort Boisé could not spare us a guard. His garrison consisted almost wholly of invalids or convalescent soldiers of infantry, dragoons, and rifle-rangers. These pallid veterans, most of whom were suffering under wearing intermittent fevers caught by long exposure on the swampy plains, were well able to man the stockades and crumbling earthen curtain of the little fort, but active service seemed beyond them.—I say seemed, because these poor sick soldiers were capable of much more exertion, under the influence of generous feeling, than would have appeared possible.

"We set forth on our lonely westward march. The doctor affected to rely implicitly on the knowledge and skill of the guides, but there were alarmists who noticed that a strange sort of understanding appeared to exist between Dr. Smith, the half-breed, and the two 'deputies.' These men had grown undisguisedly surly and insolent since the departure of the escort, while there was a sinister expression in the half-breed's cunning eyes as he pointed his finger northward, and spoke of the 'plenty grass, plenty meat' up there. Our journey was now very difficult. The grazing was bad, the springs were brackish, and we had to travel plains where the white salt crystals lay strewn like sand in an Arabian desert,

dazzling our eyes as the sun glared upon us. Then there were innumerable slimy creeks to be crossed, where much exertion was needed to push or drag the waggons out of the deep mud. Worse than all, our provisions began to fail. The public stores were nearly spent, and inroads had been made on those supplies which a few of the more thoughtful farmers had taken with them in the waggons. Sickness appeared among us, and five children and a woman died of fever, while many suffered more or less in health from the effects of constant wettings and privations.

"Then the doctor showed the cloven foot. On the third day after leaving Fort Boisé he demanded payment of the second moiety of our passage money. I ought to have told you that, before starting, we paid down one half of the doctor's demand: the rest being to be paid, according to stipulation, on our arrival in British Columbia. Thus his sudden call for a second instalment was not only a very suspicious proceeding, but a direct breach of agreement. There was a warm dispute, for the doctor was by this time unpopular. His varnish of gentleness and politeness had long been rubbed off, and his hard grasping nature stood revealed. Besides, we were all half fed, weary and sickly, and it was but that very morning that one of the poor German women had been buried under the prairie turf, in a shallow grave scooped by the hands of her husband and son. The doctor's claim, then, came with a very ill grace, and so we flatly told him.

"But we found out, to our cost, the use of the doctor's human bull-dogs. Hall and Tubber came forward into the conclave, bristling like boars at bay, and armed to the teeth.

"'Jest look here, chaps,' said Hall, cocking his rifle, 'I'm not a man for many speeches, I ain't. You jest pay up the shiners, or I'm scrunched if we won't kick every tarnation emigrant, Britisher, or Dutch, or Irish, out of our waggons, and set 'em afoot on the parara, to pad the hoof to the diggins. As for you, western citizens, your traps is your own, but the grub's ourn, the Injuns air our Injuns, and if you don't like us, jest fish for yourselves. If any gentleman ain't satisfied, hyar's a convincing argument. He won't need two, I guess.'

"The ruffian tapped the brown barrel of his rifle and ran his wicked eye over our party, while the women set up a scream and clung to their husbands' arms, as if to restrain them. There were several present who had guns and knives, and who were no cowards; and at one time I really thought a bloody scuffle would have ensued. But Hall and Tubber were backed by the two Missourian teamsters; the doctor himself, though his face was very sallow and his eye unsteady, had turned out with rifle and revolver; and the guns and tomahawks of the six guides were plainly ready to be employed against us. The Irish and Germans were unarmed, or nearly so, while the western farmers could not resist the entreaties of

their wives, who dreaded a sanguinary struggle, in which even victory must be fatal.

"The dollars were reluctantly told out, and the doctor received the entire remuneration for his services, while yet Columbia was far remote. I do not know, I never shall know now, what was the original project of this unscrupulous man.

"After another tedious day's march we had encamped on a plain of short crisp herbage, nearer to the rolling range of the Blue Mountains than we had previously attained. The guides had brought in a quantity of bull meat; they had fallen in, I believe, with a disabled buffalo that had been lamed by an Indian arrow, and which had been an easy prey. For once, we had supped well, and we settled ourselves to sleep, some under the waggon-tilts, the rest around the fires, the horses being picketed, and the care of keeping watch being left, as usual, to the sharp-eared Indian guides. The dews were heavy, lying in big beaded drops on buffalo-robe and blanket, and I gladly accepted an invitation to sleep under the waggon-roof of one of the Indiana farmers, big Simon Davis, a very good specimen of his sturdy class. Davis was a widower, having lost his wife but a short time, and his whole affections centred in his only child, a fine dark-eyed boy of six years old, over whom he watched with a care and patience wonderful in so rugged and bluff a man. The farmer had been for a fight when Dr. Smith extorted the second moiety of our payment from us, and he was by far the most resolute and respected member of the caravan. Well, we were all asleep, when I was awakened by the neighing and snorting of a beautiful coal-black horse, a mustang, which the farmer had bought from a trapper at Fort Boisé, and which had been captured out of a wild herd far south. This animal, kindly used, had become very affectionate and docile, and Davis had picketed it close to his waggon. He generally rode it for a short time every day, merely to pace it, meaning it for the riding of his young son, little Lafayette Davis, when he should be a couple of years older: for it was unfit to bear the father's weight.

"The mustang neighed and snorted, and I awoke with a sense of danger, and thrusting my head out, saw by the light of the expiring fire a dark form hovering around Snowball's heels, and apparently trying to reach the picket-ropes: a task rendered difficult by the furious way in which the gallant horse lashed out at the intruder.

"'Hulloa!' I cried, 'who are you, there? What do you want?'

"No answer was returned, until I called out that I would fire unless my challenge were replied to. Then the guttural voice of the half-breed Indian called out, cautiously,

"'Hist! no harm. Rising Sun walk sentry. Him tink hoss get loose from heel ropes, dat all. Good night!'

"And off the semi-savage went with his noiseless mocassined tread. Davis awoke, and sleepily

asked what was amiss, then growled, and sank back into slumber.

"In the morning there was a great outcry. Treachery had been at work. We had been basely abandoned by our precious Mentor, his confederates from Missouri and Georgia, and the Indians. More than this, the beasts of draught were gone, every hoof of them had vanished. Horse and mule had been stolen away, not merely those animals which belonged to the contractor, but the teams which the richer among us had brought from distant farms. Only Simon Davis's beautiful black horse remained in camp, preserved, no doubt, by my opportune wakefulness on the previous night; but some distance off we saw a spotted mustang quietly cropping the short grass, and this, by the broken lariat about his neck, had probably escaped from the 'caballada' which I. F. Smith and his accomplices carried off with them. Further scrutiny showed that the store waggon had been stripped of clothes, medicines, arms and ammunition, and, in fact, of all that could be easily packed up and carried away. The trail of the deserters, trending due south, was plainly to be seen, but pursuit was hopeless, even had there been any use in overtaking so hardened a set of villains as our false allies.

"The screams, passionate outcries, and sorrowful forebodings that now resounded among us, made a perfect Babel of confusion. The women were loud in their wrath and fear, the men angry and perplexed, the children querulous and hungry. We had very little food—a few pounds of sorry flour and worse biscuit, and a small quantity of meat. What was to be done? Could we return on foot to Fort Boisé? The strong men might do so, but the feeble, the young, and the sick, must perish on the way.

"Big Simon Davis took no part in the idle clamour of the rest. He sidled quietly up to me.

"'Britisher,' said he, 'I don't think you're no chicken-hearted chap, an' so I'll tell you truth. I'm kinder skeared.'

"I stared at this confession, for my burly companion was a person of tried courage.

"'Kinder skeared,' repeated Davis, dropping his voice, 'and that not so much because the rascal Smith has skedaddled with the teams, as for what I see, jest now, when I took a turn round the outside of camp. Mister, I seed the print of a mocassined foot stamped into a bit of soft mould, clear as if 'twas the American eagle in the sealwax on a lawyer's letter.'

"'What of that?' said I, surprised. 'Our scoundrel guides wore mocassins, and—'

"'Stranger, I ain't a blind mole,' interrupted Davis; 'our guides war Osage Injuns, warn't they? and strapping redskins as all their nation? Their mocassins war soled with buffler parflêche, and all stitched up with porkypine quills and beads, smart as a squaw could work 'em. This foot war small; the leather mout have been deer, or mout have been pronghorn, but 'twar plain and hairy, raw hide, I guess. I tracked it

up, and I found the hoofmarks of an unshod horse, down by some bushes. Shoshonies hev' been scoutin' nigh us, mister.'

"Shoshonies?"  
"Ay, that's what they call themselves; the cruel Snake Injuns. That war a Snake's moccasin, I tell 'ee. Some cussed war party's hard by, and their loping spies hev seen the doctor vampoose, and know our helpless condition. May I never," he suddenly exclaimed, "but here the red beggars come!"

"Far off on the prairie appeared something like a herd of wild horses galloping towards us, for no riders were visible: a circumstance which drew a grim smile from the tall farmer.

"'Tis a stale trick, that," said he, bitterly; "every darned brave of the lot is hangin' at his nag's flank, clingin' by the mane like a bat to a bough, and with jest one foot over the mustang's withers. We'll see enough of their painted faces afore we finish."

"Then, uplifting his voice, he thundered out the alarm call:

"To arms, men, to arms! Don't ye see the Injuns? Quick, Western-men, with your rifles, and recklect every grain of powder's preciouser nor gold dust, short of ammunition as we are. So—no use screechin', you gals and women (for a shrill cry had broken from the females of the party), we must fight for our scalps."

"After the first moment of panic, nine-tenths of the men, and even several of the women, showed no lack of sense and courage. All the available weapons were brought out and got ready, the waggons were dragged and pushed until they formed a circular fortification, proof at any rate against the first rush of the mounted foe. The children were placed under shelter, and an active lad among the teamsters went out and caught the grazing horse, just as it threw up its head with a frightened air and was about to gallop off.

"You must not expect from me a detailed and minute account of what followed. I only remember what seems a hideous nightmare of frightful painted faces, brandished weapons, shields, lances, and tomahawks, the trampling and rearing of horses, the hurtle of arrows, and the hiss of rifle-balls. I remember the dreadful cry of the Indians, repeated again and again as they renewed their charge, and a sense of something like disappointment on my part that this horrid war-whoop was not *more* horrid, since it had been to me a subject of curiosity from childhood. And I recollect the oaths and cheers of our men, the shrieks and prayers of our women, the dust, smoke, flashes, and volleys, and that we fought hard, and drove off the yelling painted pack, again and again.

"We beat them, for the time at least. Seven grim bodies, smeared with paint and charcoal dust, lay stark upon the prairie, and five wounded horses were rolling over in the death-struggle, before the red robbers fell back. On our side we had many slight wounds, but only

one death. A poor child, a little fair-haired German girl, had been pierced through the neck by a barbed arrow that went through the tilt of the waggon where she lay trembling beside her mother. The wound would have been mortal, even had surgical aid been at hand; the poor thing bled to death, while her parents almost raved in their entreaties to all present to save her.

"The Indians had not done with us yet. They hovered about like vultures, greedy for prey. Warned by their loss, they did not again try to storm our camp, but harassed us with endless stratagems and alarms, while awaiting the sure progress of starvation to reduce us. We had to fight for the water of the creek, and it cost us two lives before we remained masters of the deep stream, fringed by bushes, near which we had halted. We kept a vigilant watch by night, and our feverish slumbers were sure to be broken by the war-whoop. Several were badly hurt by the arrows that hailed on us every day; but the worst infliction was that of hunger. Our scanty food waned. The children cried for nourishment; but even they had to be severely stinted, and men and women grew pale, gaunt, and hollow-eyed, till our camp was as a camp of spectres. And still the hideous merciless savages thirsted for our blood and our plunder, and beset us like wolves. They were in no want. They hunted, and brought in plenty of game, and would tauntingly show us venison steaks and wild turkeys, impaled on the points of their lances, and then, with ferocious gestures, would draw the scalping-knife around their own uplifted hair. They were squat and low of stature, almost dwarfish in comparison with the tall tribes to the eastward; but these accursed Snakes showed no lack of strength or hardihood. And we knew too well how fearful it would be to fall *alive* into their hands.

"It was settled, as the sole last chance, that two messengers should mount the two remaining horses, and try to reach Fort Boisé and obtain a rescue. It was a desperate service, for the mounted Indians beset the path, while the captain of the fort and his ailing garrison seemed little likely to render prompt help. But it was a chance, and a chance not to be slighted. The food was all but gone. The powder was nearly spent. There was no other hope. The messengers were chosen. It was needful that they should be good horsemen. It was also needful that they should be light weights. The only good riders, in fact, besides big Simon Davis, were myself, and Triptolemus Nutkins, a little withered Yankee jockey who had ridden many a match in the North, and who had taken a fancy to make his fortune in Columbia. It was agreed that Trip Nutkins, as the lightest, should mount the spotted mustang, and I the black.

"Then it was that Davis gently twitched me by the sleeve, and addressed me with a timid hesitation quite uncommon to him:

"'Britisher, we're gone coons. Even if you git through safe, help won't hardly find

us livin'. Twenty charges left, and no more, as I'm a sinner. I don't care over-much for myself. The Injuns will find my old bones tough pickin'. But the women—well! 'twill be soon over. Look here, sir, I'm that anxious about my little Laff—the child—I can't but ax a favour. Will ye take him with you? I know he'll hamper you some, but he's brave for a little chap of six; he'll hold fast and never cry. His weight's triflin'; but if you hev to fight, I don't disguise as Laff will hamper you. Still, do save him, and the very last word old Simon Davis says shall be, God bless and reward you, stranger!"

"There were tears in the father's bold eyes, and his voice shook in a manner very foreign to its usual manly tone. But the brave fellow was quite unselfish in his fears, which were wholly for the child. He had forgotten himself. I wrung his muscular hand.

"Trust the boy to me," said I; "that is, if you really think it best."

"Harkye," he continued, "nothing for nothing. Snowball's your own from this minit. You've always consaited hev'in' that hoss, and win or lose, you shall keep him in remembrance of Simon Davis."

"It was no easy matter to coax little Laff Davis into a quiet consent to the flight. The little fellow was my very good friend; but he had got an inkling of what was afoot, and he clung sobbing to his giant father's neck, declaring that he would not go unless 'daddy went too.' It was a painful parting. The tears ran down the farmer's sun-browned cheeks, but he dashed them away with the back of his rough hand, and lifted the boy on to the saddle-bow, bidding him hold tight, and be good, and do as Mr. King told him.

"Nutkins was already in the saddle, surrounded by anxious wild-eyed women, holding up their children and beseeching him to take some little Ellen or Gertrude along with him to the fort and safety. But the jockey was deaf to their cries, not from hardness of heart, but sheer conviction that such a burden must lead to capture and destruction. He was past middle age, and quite weak, though a superb horseman, and altogether unfit to carry a restless screaming child through so terrible a ride as lay before us. As for myself, I took off my cravat and tied little Lafayette fast to my belt, looked to my knife and pistol (the rifle I had abandoned), and asked Nutkins if he were ready.

"Ready, mister!"

"Out we went, with a rush, from between the sheltering waggons, which had as yet screened our proceedings from the wild besiegers. The Indians were gathered around their fires, about half a mile off, their horses tethered and grazing, every horse with the hide saddle on his back, and a lance stuck in the turf beside him. We got out unseen, and headed for Fort Boisé.

"Steady, mister," said Nutkins, who was pale but collected; "spare the hosses all we

can. The niggers don't see us! We've got a goodish start, so let's canter quiet."

"On we went at an easy hand-gallop, and perhaps we might have got off unperceived, had not some of those left behind given way to their feelings in a most luckless cheer of encouragement.

"Cuss the noise; they'll be after us, now," said the jockey, peering over his shoulder; and the words were hardly uttered before a yell, loud and fierce enough for the throats of a drove of wolves, was heard, and we saw the Indians leaping on horseback and dashing madly in pursuit of us. Fifty wild riders were in our rear. The fort was far ahead. It was a terrible race for life and death that ensued.

Nutkins proved a valuable companion. His experience suggested what I should never have thought of.

"Keep a tight rein," he cried; "hold your beast together, Britisher. Beat 'em by jockey-ship. Do, Mr. King, keep a turn of speed in your hoss, and we'll beat them rowdies yet, for see how they flog and jag the reins, and a'most leap off in their hurry. The blood-thirsty muffs! They'll blow their beasts afore they go a brace of miles."

"Instinctively I felt that the man was right. Still, it was an awful sensation to feel that the Indians were gaining on us, to look back and see their excited gestures, as they shook their spears and rattled their shields, while every now and then they beat their open hands upon their mouths as they uttered the hideous war-whoop. At last they got within a hundred yards, and an arrow whistled past us.

"Slip ahead, mister! No hurry, but hustle on quicker!" cried Nutkins, and we heard the yells of the disappointed savages as we forged ahead. We got clean out of sight of our pursuers, and saw nothing of them for a long time. Nutkins was triumphant, but I entertained strong doubts as to the chase being really over. And, indeed, more than an hour later, as we forded a creek, we heard the whoop of our barbarous foes, and twenty arrows were discharged at us, while the hoof-strokes resounded thick and fast on the turf of the prairie. We were in no light danger for the next half hour. The savages pressed us hard. Nutkins was slightly hurt by two shafts, a third arrow struck into the fleshy part of my right arm, causing a slight throb of pain, but doing no severe injury, while another grazed Lafayette's cheek, just drawing blood. The gallant little fellow behaved very well. He never sobbed or screamed, but held fast to my belt with his small hands, and scarcely winced when the arrow touched him. We had hard work, swimming two rivers before we were free from our savage foes, but at last we saw them rein up, and heard their farewell yell of vexation.

"We had yet a rough and long ride to the fort; we had missed the direct route, and had to shape our course by bearings; but at last, after twenty hours in the saddle, we came in sight of the moss-covered stockade and shingled roofs of

Fort Boisé. By this time even Snowball was in a sad state, covered with mud and foam, and with drooping head and quivering flanks. As for the other horse, he was so utterly done up that he fell about a mile from the outpost, and Nutkins had to walk the rest of the way. Both the jockey and I were very weary and worn, but I was glad to find that fatigue had proved a kind nurse, and that for some hours the child, quite exhausted, had been asleep.

"Our arrival created a great sensation, and when the lonely garrison of that little place heard that Christian men and women in sore distress were calling on them for help, they responded nobly to the summons. Captain Watkins, a grizzled, disappointed old officer, but of sterling stuff, as events proved, was at first much perplexed.

"What on earth are we to do, doctor?" said he to the regimental surgeon; "out of ninety men of all arms, there are but twenty fit for duty. There are horses enough, if we take the waggon-teams on their way back to Fort Leavenworth, but the men! Yet, I'll go, if it's with a corporal's guard!"

"The surgeon considered awhile, then tapped his forehead briskly.

"Our men are moped here," said he, "and nerves are queer things. This is a call might move the dead. I'll go to the infirmary and tell the lads there are women and children in danger a few miles off, beset by Indians, and you shall see what follows."

"And, wonderful to tell, out of seventy invalids, fifty-five volunteered for instant service. Pale, gaunt, and tottering, but with bright eyes and faces elate with courage, the bold fellows came up one by one to report themselves as 'fit for duty' to the captain. I felt my own eyes moisten as I looked upon the simple chivalry of these poor soldiers, for the most part foreigners in American pay, who staggered from their very sick-beds to save those they had perhaps never exchanged a word with.

"Many who volunteered were too weak for such a ride, but at last a force of about fifty well-armed men set off on horseback. They were led by Captain Watkins, and guided by myself, the jockey being left behind, as too exhausted for more toil. Little Laff Davis was left at the fort, in charge of a good-humoured Scotchwoman, the wife of the pay-sergeant.

"Much time was necessarily lost; our march was not so rapid as we could have wished, for the waggon horses were heavy animals, and the infantry soldiers not very expert riders. Our progress was therefore slow."

"But you got there in time, eh?" exclaimed Tom Rawlinson, excitedly; "you set things to rights, and gave the Indians a lesson, surely?"

"No, Tom, we were too late. Too late by many hours. No living soul was left to tell the tale, but the ashes of the waggons were nearly cold, and we guessed that, the ammunition being spent, the camp had been forcibly entered immediately on the return of the party that had chased us. Doubtless the Indians struck quickly, lest a rescuing force should arrive to wrest the prey from them. The horrid work was complete. Everything portable had been carried off. The waggons had been set on fire, and the people—happiest those that died fighting, like poor Simon Davis, whose body, dreadfully disfigured, we found in the centre of a trampled patch of ground, marked by gory footsteps and torn turf. Yes, all had perished, some in fight, and some by torture, I fear, for the bodies that lay around, stripped and gashed by the knife, had been partially consumed by fire. Women, children, strong and weak, old and young, the butchers had spared none, and the mutilated corpses alone were left on the blackened turf. Tom! it sickens me to think of it, and I saw the bronzed soldiers' cheeks blanch, as they gazed on the hideous sight, and heard many a muttered vow of vengeance—vows generally well kept in those stern frontier wars. But the Indians were beyond reach of pursuit for the time. They had carried off their own dead.

"And now, Tom, I see the Whittington milestone, and we shall soon part company, so I must be brief. Little Laff Davis was adopted by Captain Watkins, who took a great fancy to him, is giving him a good education at Chicago, and promises to send him to the military school at West Point, there to qualify for a commission. Snowball, his father's gift, bore me faithfully for years; I kept him through my struggles in Columbia, where I did well, and saved enough to enter into the mercantile firm in which I am now a partner. And when I returned to Europe I could not bring myself to abandon the faithful creature, but brought him home, at no small cost, so you may easily guess, my friend, that Snowball is not for sale."

"But the knave of a doctor—Ignotus Smith—was he ever hanged?" asked Tom, eagerly.

"Never. But Nemesis overtook him in another form. I was in San Francisco, on my way home, when the event happened. Dr. I. F. Smith fought a duel in a tavern, 'over a handkerchief,' with a man whom he had cheated at cards. As usual, one pistol was loaded, and one empty, and the doctor put faith in a confederate, who acted as second to the antagonist, and was to give Ignotus the loaded weapon. But by some bungling or treachery the biter was bit. Dr. I. F. Smith received the wrong pistol, was shot through the heart, and died like a dog, without warning or repentance."

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