

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER IV. A WALK HOME.

THIS little scene was witnessed from a distance by admiring and envious groups. The jaundiced Mr. Ridley led a sort of clique. "Those two lickspittles, just watch 'em, touting for the unfortunate people the instant they come into the parish. Look at that spunging Shipton, with his false air of bonhomie, and that low, whisky-drinking Findlater! It would be a charity to put them on their guard against those two schemers."

This rather accurately described the bearing of the two gentlemen, for Lord Shipton began fluently: "Charming people; so unassuming; not the least puffed up."

"And may be we did a stroke of business too, this blessed day," added the Doctor. "Maybe we didn't push my little fellow into a corner. He'll have to do it. It's the grey mare that draws the coach, eh, my lord?"

"Oh, the thing is done. There can't be a doubt about it. I always said this was the way to go to work. Mrs. Leader seems one of the most sensible women I have met with for a long time."

Lord Shipton and the Doctor and his family walked home slowly, his lordship still so affable and fluent. "The young ladies must give me a testimonial. I have, indeed, worked hard to get the handsome young red coats here for them. Two of them shall fall slain by those Irish eyes."

"For shame, my lord," said Polly, laughing. "I only care about the balls they'll give."

They were now at the Doctor's door, at that warm-looking barrack of a house,

the lower part of which the Doctor's "ways" and taste had given very much the air of a snug inn, with a faint notion of a bar, and a general pine-apple fragrance. Many a pleasant little dinner was given there, and many a pleasant little evening followed, as it were, in several acts; the first being up-stairs, with the lively, spirited girls; now at the piano singing, now organising a round game; now playing "Post" to hysterical screaming, and scampering, and flustering, with papa down on the floor, and "Billy" Webber, who, by the rules of the game, had rushed at one chair, and had sat half down on it, and was struggling with a lady for the other half. All this was delightful, and, as the Doctor said, quite pastoral. This was one act; and another as agreeable was below, in the Doctor's little bar, the world shut out: some "real poteen" in a stone jar, which "had never paid a halfpenny to the queen," and some really capital "emperors," of which the doctor could always count on an inexhaustible supply, also obtained in defiance of the customs. About his "hob" people drew in the chairs, and were very happy until one or two in the morning. The Doctor's little dinners were also admirable. His pride was, he said, to send every one away "with something good inside of him." He had a first-rate eye for meat, and was as good a cook as his own Biddy, whom he had trained himself.

Lord Shipton thought of all this as he was saying good-bye; the faint pine-apple aroma came floating out, and inviting him. "I hate Shipton of a Sunday; curious, isn't it? It puts me in the lows. My girls are so serious, and must have the servants up, for piety, and all that."

"Well, I tell you what, my lord," said

the Doctor, who, with all his faults, delighted in being hospitable, "we have as noble a bit of beef, the old-fashioned 'corned,' pickled under my own eye—as noble a bit as ever made mahogany creak. Now, my lord, if you'll come and cut it: we've only Billy Webber——"

"Don't say a word more; I will. This is what I like. Promise, too, you'll give me one of the 'emperors' going home."

"No; but Coaxy shall fill your case for you when you're going. Now, this is what I call friendly. It reminds me of old Ireland"

"A capital place to be reminded of; trust an old soldier often quartered in Dublin. I declare your description of the corned round is quite appetising! I long to be at it."

When he was gone, rejoicing, the Doctor made this simple comment: "Then it's Hungry Hall he's going to. Cold baked meats a Sundays, to let the servants go to church, that is, the public house! But, my sweets, you'll have the soldiers here, as sure as the duns come at Christmas."

Polly flew to his arms. "Ye think so, Peter, dear? But don't they always only make love to girls?"

"Only, Pet? And what then?"

"Oh you know, Peter. And then back out?"

"I'd like to see the jackheen among 'em as would dare trifle with my Polly or my Katey. Send word to Peter, dears, the moment one of them so much as names his heart, and I'm down on him like the snap of one of their rifles. Let one of the party try so much as the ghost of a trick with my sweets, and Peter has him by the scruff of the neck."

"In all their marching they won't see such a pretty girl as Polly, will they, Peter?" said Katey, earnestly. "There's always two or three of them marry in a country town!"

"The pick of them, my child. Now I'll just take a peep at the round and give the drinks a gentle warm. God speed ye both, dears."

Doctor Findlater and his family have been thus rather sketchily outlined. So, before his favourite joint is introduced to his guests, we may go back a little, as some friends of his were fond of doing, and put together a few scraps and rumours as to his previous history.

#### CHAPTER V. HISTORY OF DOCTOR FINDLATER.

DOCTOR FINDLATER was, unhappily, one of those men who, instead of standing at

elegant bars, all ablaze with soft lights, and having their oysters luxuriously opened for them, with no more trouble than adding lemon, and pepper, and other seasoning, must painfully open their own oysters with the first rude tool they can find, and such skill as they can bring to it. He was a very "low" person indeed, and, to do him justice, was never known to make claims about lineage, or boast of being connected with any special Findlaters of eminence. He had had a laborious struggle, and "had fought his way up," to use his favourite expression, "every inch of it." "Ah, my boy," he would say, in the snuggest of parlours, the words floating on the pleasant steam of mellow Kinahan, "it was sore and heart-scalding. But through the bounty of Providence, I made my way!" This was, indeed, unfairly laying to the account of Providence the not over-scrupulously clean path which his struggles compelled him to take; for Findlater, putting on his profession, as it might be, "an old rag of a dressing gown," performed in it many questionable rites, being ready, as he said, "to do any kind of a decent hand's turn to make an honest copper." Some of the Doctor's friends, when he reached ease and comfort, were fond of repeating that they had known him when he was running about, the son of a little apothecary near Cork, a practitioner who had later run off to America, leaving a large family to the ratepayers. This incident the "friends" took care to keep fresh and green, as news came to them in course of time of Peter's doing so well in England. In truth, no accurate or consecutive account could be given of Peter's biography, it being marked by strange gaps, long disappearances—blanks, as it were; just as an otter will take to the water, the dirtier the better, and come up at long intervals to breathe. He had what his friends called a "good manner" with him, which could be resolved into a sort of oily obsequiousness, a kind of universal agreement with all, controlled by a sharp instinct, which told him in a second who was the most profitable to agree with. Compared with this "manner" of his, which he protested could have made him "Lord Chief Justice," he owned candidly he did not value his medical attainments "that snuff there!" And, to be candid, he was not much indebted to them for getting him on. After prodigious exertions, and what his "friends" always—he would not admit any enemies—called "a deal of dirty work," he had got a small

dispensary, and then boasted with pride that he had his leg well on the ladder, and that "he'd be on the roof in no time." Unhappily, however, either ladder or foot gave way, and through an accident of the Doctor's refusing to break up a pleasant punch party at his house to attend a pauper, he was put out on the cold bleak world, with wife and children. Then came a long gap, after which the Doctor came up above the dirty billows to breathe, having a private house in Dublin, and the charge of a genteel lunatic patient. That was the sort of thing, the Doctor said, after his own heart. No beggarly peddling and huckstering about fees, but what he called "the tendher exploring of the corridors of the diseased human mind, the searching through the old bleak lumber rooms for some precious bit o' rayson gone astray for years," that surely was a noble occupation. However, after only ten months of this Samaritan-like duty, the Doctor sank with a sudden plunge, deprived of his patient, his house rent unpaid, his furniture sold, and he himself and the wife and children all on the bleak world again. However, he had made his mark. As he had said: "he had got on the rails, and was merely lying by at a siding." He was now a person of great experience in the treatment of persons unhappily afflicted in a certain way; or, as the Doctor put it with more truth, those who "afflicted their relatives, and must be taken care of." Insinuating after his own fashion, "never throwing away a chance, my boy," never weary of what he called "scraping acquaintance," he very soon came up to breathe, and this time made a little investment which set him on his legs for the rest of his life. He had met an old general who was guardian to some sons of a wealthy family, and had pleased that officer for a whole night by his spirits, humorous stories, and, at the end, by the prescription of "a little dinner pill of his own," which, through accident or imagination, had brought comfort to the general's system. Without being tedious, the Doctor based some of his anecdotes on apocryphal patients of weak intellect—giving variety to his selection, and making them male and female as the narrative required. When symptoms of failing intellect began to exhibit themselves in one of the general's younger charges, and application was made to the Court of Chancery for an allowance to a suitable medical man to travel with the patient and superintend the cure,

the old general declared with an oath that no one should have the job but an uncommon pleasant Irish doctor, who had great skill in those matters. "Five hundred a year," and "reasonable allowance for travellin' expenses," out of which the Doctor, with a wink, boasted that he had boiled out the essence "to the tune of one half." "There was the true 'Stractum Carnis,' the genuine Liebig, my boy, and the court as generous and gentlemanly as born princes!" After two years superintendence of this agreeable sort, during which time the Doctor took his patient abroad, and saw foreign parts most agreeably, the young man suddenly recovered, but remained for some time with the Doctor enjoying the comforts of a home, and the society of the Doctor's daughters. This, the Doctor gave out, was ripening into an uncontrolled passion for Polly, the youngest, "the poor young fellow having settled th' intellect I got back for him on the daughter of the man that did it; a fine generous-hearted fellow. God forgive those who put him against me!" Which happened in this wise: The old general died suddenly, and there succeeded him in his office a cold barrister-like man, who came down to overhaul everything without a week's delay. He at once held a sort of commission, examined Doctor Findlater, made inquiries, and, pronouncing him "a most unfit and improper selection," removed the young man. Then it was that, on a settlement of accounts—which the Doctor took very indignantly, being much outraged and insulted in every way—a sort of bond was produced, regularly drawn up, by which an annuity of three hundred a year was formally settled on Doctor Findlater, the consideration being, as that gentleman said, "the love and gratitude the poor lad bore him." It was drawn up with singular skill, and due regard to the rather awkward circumstances of the case; and, to use the Doctor's language, "The Lord Chief Justice himself couldn't pick a hole in it." The barrister-like gentleman wrote strong letters, and spoke to his friends about "a swindling doctor that should be in the dock at the Central Criminal Court," but the deed could not be upset, and the Doctor was to enjoy his little annuity peaceably. That was a happy day when all was settled, and "his little family" came into legal enjoyment of what the honest labours of the father had procured, "paid to the day, my boy, quarterly in advance, with the usual penalties."

With this leverage, he could now operate with far more advantage, and his next step was to move over to England, to secure the blessings of the best education for his dear girls. There, casting about for settlement, the recollection of some sketch or description of Tilston (over punch) by his friend the general, made him think of that place. It was pastoral, rustic, rather at the back of God speed; in short, just the sort of oyster our Doctor felt he was able to open in the most skilful way. He often, to both his family and friends, dwelt on what he called the mysterious agency that had led him to Tilston. He knew no more of the place than the child unborn! He vowed, if it was to be his last moment, that something, something kept drawing, drawing him to the place. He really seemed to convey the idea that some miraculous interposition had been specially exerted to bring him, Peter Findlater, to that particular spot to work out some undefined mission. But, as he said, with great justice, "let Peter get his fingers closed on the rope, and he'll show you his soles before you can look about you." Then, with the judicious airing of his late pupil, the annuity allowed in token of gratitude, the due ventilation of the late general, well known in these parts, and with his own singularly pushing ways, and attempts at setting up ladders on which he was to mount, he made himself a personage in the place—hail fellow well met with all: friendly, jovial; and in about three weeks was known to every one. Another reason short of the miraculous one which led Doctor Findlater to this curious spot, was the fact that an asylum was about to be built, and he arrived there just as the first stone was laid by the Lord-Lieutenant of the county. By the time of its completion, in two years, he expected to have reared his own structure of interest and connexion, and to be appointed one of the assistant physicians of the place, or at least to a vacancy left by such an appointment. By the time it was ready and the election had to be made, quite a fierce contest set in, the Doctor modestly "going for" an assistant physician to the local infirmary; offices about which the county gentlemen grew quite excited. A sort of hot party feeling was roused, and, as every weapon was thought fair in such matters, the accident of the Doctor's birth was worked against him. "Oh! listen to this! Here's my country thrown in my teeth bodily! After that, can you wonder, sir, that we feel like slaves and Parryers, 'ewers of wood and drawers of water

in a strange land? Where's your English knock-down spirit of fair play? Where's your British fair field and no favour? Here am I, Peter Findlater, an honest man, earning my bread by the sweat of my brow, ready to dig, or carry a hod with any man, to put bread in the mouths of those children, and, of course, Mrs. Findlater's, and no sooner do I get a firm grip of the ladder, than the lads of the place come screeching and howling after me: 'He's Irish! hunt him! hunt him!' as if I was some wild fox to be chased over the country."

One of Doctor Findlater's bitterest opponents was a certain Mr. Ridley, a cousin of Lord Ridley's, a tall, long, yellow-faced gentleman, with a large family. He was of a very litigious "cranky" nature, and had had a violent quarrel with his family, of many years' standing. At any sort of meeting—for charity, vestry, politics, or any other purpose, he was certain to oppose and move amendments, and had a small party to support him—worshippers of the idol, rank. A good deal, too, he owed to a certain dread of his powers, and especially of his tongue. From the first, this gentleman had set himself against Doctor Findlater. He was "a low, scheming fellow that never ought to have been let into the place. A humbugging, over-drinking adventurer, that always seemed to have his tongue in his cheek. The only prescription he knew how to write, was one for compounding whisky-and-water. Don't tell him: he had been quartered in Ireland, and knew exactly the stamp of rascal. There was one of this sort in every little village." But when the Doctor became a candidate for official position, Mr. Ridley grew furious, and worked hard to oppose it, and with such success, that it was only by the narrowest chance that he was elected to be a sort of supernumerary assistant to the infirmary. This, however, was some sort of a rung to that wonderful ladder on which he was going up, as often as a gymnast at a circus.

The Doctor's public behaviour under this persecution was strangely resigned. He said, "he supposed it was laid upon him for his cross. He despised Ridley. He himself was plain Peter Findlater, who had not been held at the font by noble or lordly ladies; but if he had, he'd be ashamed to lend his aristocracy to the oppression of the lowly man, the sweat of whose brow was his sole inheritance. He left it all to time, and to the Maker of all!" In his own family, before his two sympathising girls and obedient wife, the Doctor was

more unmeasured. "The low, skinny, death-upon-wires! I'll hound him—I'll make his old beak scrape the very mud off my boots. Who is he at all, the hungry saveall? By the Lord," added the Doctor, "if anything goes wrong in this, maybe I won't question his old death's head with my blackthorn stick! Who is he?" continued the Doctor, rising in a sort of Donnybrook fury, and making as if he would fling his coat off, "that he should ram my unfortunate country between my teeth, as if it was some disability? The meagre, skin-dried, sapless, spiceless hound!"

"Ah! never mind him, Peter," said his wife; "he's beneath the contempt of a man like you."

"Yes, Peter dear," says Katey, softly drawing up the coat collar about his shoulders, "but surely no one heeds him. Look how popular you are with them all!"

Mr. Findlater shook his head mournfully, and stirred his drink in harmonious motion.

"Ah! Katey, my child, *there's* where it cuts, and th' iron drives into my soul like your mother's spit!"

This struggle, however, increased the Doctor's popularity, and gave a little excitement to the district: while the defeated Mr. Ridley, solemnly forecasting that they would rue their connexion with "this man," vowed that if it was to cost him a thousand pounds he'd hunt him down yet. Inconsistent, however, with which proclamation were the Doctor's almost obsequious advances to his enemy, striving hard to propitiate him in many ways, and of course without result.

#### CHAPTER VI. KATEY AND POLLY.

THE Doctor was, however, a man of mark in the town: popular with the lower class for his jovial manners, liked by many of the higher people, and suspected by but a few. His bright daughters were the quicksilver of the place: and it was no wonder that the attractions of that curious household, drew there Lord Shipton, and any decent young men of the place. Genteel people wondered invariably how such refinement, such delicate lines and tints, could have come of such "vulgar" parents. But this is a common *lusus naturæ*. Sometimes Nature gives an airy *freshness* which lies like a bloom very thickly over the low surrounding associations. Dressed properly, according to the same authorities, they would have produced an effect "at

court"—a vital test. Their heads were set on elegantly, and their necks fell into graceful curves and archings, as the dramatic expression of their spirits required. In moments of shyness with people much above them, there came, in Polly's instance, a certain awkwardness and embarrassment about the shoulders. But they walked well, and with the haughty carriage of Killarney peasants. Polly was so piquant and dashing, she affected strangers at once, and did mischief right and left. Katey grew on all: she was sweet and generous, with a charm of graciousness she threw over everything. She delighted in life, and all its joys, in the pleasant song, the inspiring dance. She was inclined to be tall, with a finely-shaped head, and a great wealth of brown hair, rich in colour as in quantity, and she had a way of throwing back that head with a flash, while her eyes gazed thoughtfully, and with a challenge. People saw her lips quivering long before she spoke, as a hundred ideas (she was full of fancy) fluttered there. Her eyes had a sort of languor at times, soon lit up with dancing waves of mischief, which spread and spread downwards over her face. Then with a turn she became grave. She had quaint expressions of speech; but had great thought and forethought, putting on, very often, what her father called her "conning" cap. He had a wallet of names of respect for her. She was his "Counsellor Katey," and "My Lord Chief Justice," with "That girl has *barrels* of sense put by in that little head of hers." But, indeed, it would take many pages of this chronicle to summarise her family gifts, which were really, as the indulgent father put it, "worth a hundred and fifty pound a year to him." In fine, she had a stormy, quick, and generous temper in presence of wrong or injustice, which made her cheek glow, and supplied winged and burning words to her pretty tongue. Such was the Doctor's first daughter.

Miss Polly Findlater, the second daughter, was of quite a different pattern. Stouter, rosier, and brighter than her sister; her face was rounder, but there was not much thought in that face. She was bright, quick, and full of little "ways," as acquaintances and the partners she much delighted would call them; but which relatives, more severely, styled "humours." She was in boisterous spirits when some village party was coming on; but if so much as an east wind of disappointment began to blow on her delicate chest, she

was put out, and became sulky. Polly was an exotic plant, and required special treatment; and she had a turn for smart reply, which obtained for her in the district quite a reputation for repartee. She was as of right assumed to be the leading person in her family: when Findlater spoke despondingly of the certain marrying off of his daughters, it was assumed by all mankind that the reference was to Polly. There was the parson's son and "all that"—a pretty old story now—for Katey; but Coaxy was the choice, highly bred, beautiful bit of blood, kept "dark," and splendidly backed to win the matrimonial Derby when her owner chose to start her. In every family circle there is some sort of assumption like this. And Katey, like many more, accepted it in the most perfect submission.

Such were the Doctor's daughters—a dangerous and bewitching pair. For the genteel young ladies round about, "perfect adventuresses;" for those who knew them, delightful company. "There's my pair," the father would say admiringly, "my beautiful double-barrelled gun. Which is the happy father to fire first?"

#### CHAPTER VII. THE DOCTOR'S DINNER.

BUT now, while Peter Findlater in his best blue, and his high collars—it was "clean shirt night" with him—waits his company, these two country-town beauties come in, ready for any sport. Polly's eyes danced with anticipation: "she was ready to laugh," her father said, "if you held up your finger." Katey, graceful, well-cut in face, had a more sly and collected humour, though looking forward to a night of pleasure. Peter, always peeping round the curtains for his guests, calls out:

"Tention, dears, here's Billy!"

"Oh, I am so glad Billy's coming," says Polly.

Enters the Reverend William Webber, in a shining cloth skin, his round face sweetly shaved, with linen like "De la Rue's best extra note" (the Doctor's simile).

"Blessings on you, my boy. Don't say you haven't brought your voice in your pocket."

"Listen to this sinner," says Mr. Webber; "wasn't I doing my best to touch his flinty old heart at church? That's what I did with my voice. But he'll die impenitent. And how are you, Miss Polly?"

"Never better," said that young lady. "You were looking down at me to-day."

"Well, he did his best at the competitive examination, anyhow. They won't put you into the living, my boy, though you'll have to do some dirty work first."

"My dear fellow, nothing that comes under the name of work is dirty. Thus I sanctify every action of mine."

"Here's my lord," says the Doctor, from the "spy-hole" in the curtain, "on the best horse he has got, Shank's mare."

Lord Shipton now came in, all smiles on his large mouth, from which a soft ooze of compliments was distilled. He was fond of a little old-fashioned gallantry with the two girls—affecting to say they would not have an "old fellow like him," and yet always "laying his heart at their feet."

Miss Polly, it was known, would long ago have made a snatch at his bridle as he ambled by, and tried to draw him into the matrimonial stable; but the wise father saw it was no use.

"He's as wary as an old hen, dear. If you chased him into the very coop, he'd slip out of your fingers. Those pious girls of his would tear you with their holy claws."

Now began one of the Doctor's pleasant little dinners. Between him and Billy Webber went on a ceaseless exchange of persiflage of a very unconventional and highly personal sort, and very amusing to those listening.

"I declare," says the Doctor, "I'd sooner give up the religion I was born in, than do such a thing. I declare I'll turn Jew!"

"Suppose you turned Protestant first, my dear Peter," says Billy, gaily, a thrust received with great laughter.

"And put myself under you to be instructed: wouldn't he awaken me! Wouldn't you stir the fires of compunction in me, my ascetic! You chastise me badly, my dear boy."

The "tail end" of the corned beef came in for general approbation, Billy declaring that the sight of such "a bank" of meat, expanded the heart and the affections, and was full of generous charity and peace to all men.

Peter was slicing away diligently with an enormous carver. "The poor needn't come to me for anything of this. I couldn't spare them a scrap of the fat if it was to save my soul."

"No one need think of getting you to do anything, by holding out a prospect of that sort. If it was a five-pound note, indeed——"

"Yet there are fellows who take the

public money for saving souls.—professionally, you understand—and I'd like to know what they can show for the cash."

"You two are always at it," said Lord Shipton. "Uncommonly good."

"Another slice—thin as a wafer—I think we just hit the turn. Polly, my sweet, I'm sending you just a shaving. Never mind, please the pigs maybe, we'll have many a young sub getting his legs under as fine a piece of beef as that. We'll have the captain and major, and the tender sucking little cornets all round. My poor boys! in a strange place, and away from their mammas! Only think."

"Never fear, you'll be paternal enough," said Billy. "I look on the soldier affair as quite settled. I think our joint and spirited attack to-day, was the last nail. Leader will do it, and they can't resist a man of that sort."

"She'll do it, you mean. Did you ever see such a Judy, with her green mildewed face? She ought to have a glass over it, like the bit of cheese I'm giving you by-and-bye."

"Well, she impressed me very favourably—spoke to me so nicely," said Billy.

The Doctor put on a comical look. "Just listen to him. Dr. Dodd, that was hanged, is a child to you! You may put the living out of your head, my boy. Clarke is tough enough, and there is a ready-baked cousin of hers ready to skip into his shoes."

"Did you pick up that low view of human action in Ireland, Peter? We don't understand it over here."

"That's why it's such a fine district for the knaves——"

"And why, I suppose, it attracted you here?"

"Ah! but d'ye think, Lord Shipton, we'll have the soldiers? And when, now?" asks Polly. "I'm dying to see them. It'll be such fun seeing them ride by on their horses, and having the band to play."

"Yes, my child, we'll have them running in and out here like scarlet Tom cats."

"Oh, we do want a little freshening up," said the Reverend Billy.

"A few sixpenny points, my boy, eh? You'll be ex-officio chaplain to the men—won't you make them pious and virtuous!"

The Reverend Mr. Webber was a little nettled at this strain of jesting, and said with an air of great reproof: "My dear Peter, you are very funny in your own way; but you sometimes trench a little profanely on sacred matters. I do hope I shall do

my duty by the soldiers, and make them wiser and better fellows."

The Doctor smiled round the table. "Mea culpa, your reverence, I meant no harm. I'm a poor dacent boy. Surely, Polly there knows I'd be a mere castaway but for the ministrations of the reverend gentleman opposite."

"Nonsense, Mr. Webber; the idea of you! You know you were never intended for a clergyman."

Billy had to laugh, though a little ruefully. It is rather hard on our clerical jesters, that the return for their efforts to entertain us, and de-ordain themselves, should be what the Doctor would call "rude wipes" of this sort. The ladies now went up; the Doctor, diving into the "bar," re-appeared in a most comically suspicious way with a mustard-coloured, corpulent stone jar in his hand, which he affected to carry, as if in terror of the preventive service. The Reverend Mr. Webber, now in full flush of spirits, at once entered into the spirit of the scene; starting up and seizing the carver off the sideboard, he assumed the bearing of a gauger, hitching up his trousers nautically, and seizing his host by the collar.

"Mercy! It's milk—only a little milk, sir, for a sick child at home," the Doctor whined, with comic terror.

After this performance, "the materials" appeared—a noble copper punch-kettle "that you could see to shave in," lemons enough to set up a shop with, nutmegs "as big as alleytaws," and a stick for each man "to put in his mouth"—scraps of description from the Doctor's speech.

"Here's to the soldiers, when they come," said the host. "And I tell you what, my lord, we're neither of us worth the rind of that lemon, if we don't retain a percentage of them in the parish."

"I have no doubt if they get into this house they'll get hard hit, and happy for them. Miss Polly and Miss Katey upstairs are very dangerous."

"Ah! you are setting me down so selfish as all that? Do I want to keep all the military fat for myself! Heaven forbid! Won't anything be done at Shipton? Never fear!" added the Doctor, maliciously. "Many's the banquet we'll have in the hospitable halls of Shipton to the gallant defenders of our country, and much good may it do them."

Lord Shipton, puffing his "emperor," said, "it was very good, indeed," though scarcely pleased at this familiar "dig" at

his rather slender style of entertaining. Then he added: "Suppose we go up to the ladies now."

### WALKING FISH.

NEARLY two years ago, a paragraph appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, stating that Dr. Francis Day, the well-known Indian ichthyologist, had transmitted to the Zoological Gardens a number of "walking fishes." We learnt that they started by the March (1868) steamer from Madras; but, although we regularly read the list of passengers and arrivals by the overland route, we never heard any more of the fate of these fishes until the Proceedings of the Zoological Society for 1868 happened to come under our notice a few days ago. As, probably, few of our readers study these proceedings, we will give a brief abstract of Dr. Day's explanation of the habits and manners of the singular creatures in question.

In the first place, we may observe that of the nineteen specimens of ophiocephalidæ, or "walking fishes," that started from India, only six arrived alive at the place of their destination, on the 21st of May; and these were not in good condition, and did not long survive.

Most fishes respire the air which is held in solution in the water by which they are surrounded, and, except in special cases, find this supply sufficient. But there are others which may be called compound breathers, which never obtain air for any length of time from the water alone, but require it direct and undiluted from the atmosphere; and, however cool and well-aërated the water may be, these others are, if unable to inhale free air, simply drowned. These phenomena are more easily seen in India than in England, in consequence of the difference of temperature; but even here, in hot summer weather, carp may often be seen with the mouth out of water and open, while the gills are at the same time in constant motion. Loaches and some other fishes, chiefly inhabiting the mud at the bottom of ponds, sometimes rise to the surface, and, instead of inhaling, expire a bubble of air, which has doubtless had its oxygen more or less abstracted, and was no longer fit for respiration. More often, however, these fishes rise to the surface to swallow air, some of which passes through the intestine, and is discharged by the vent, the mucous membrane of the alimentary

canal thus acting as an assistant respiratory membrane. The air thus discharged has been analysed, and found to contain an excess of carbonic acid in place of oxygen gas, just as is the case in ordinary exhaled air. In India, Dr. Day has not observed this strange process of intestinal respiration. The purely water-breathing fishes can live without rising to the surface, unless under special circumstances, while the compound breathers expire after a longer or shorter period. Mr. Boake, whose singular researches on the nest of the crocodile were noticed in a recent number of *The Zoologist*, placed air breathers (as he terms the compound breathers) and water breathers in the same aquarium, across which, an inch below the water, he placed a diaphragm of net, so that the fishes could not rise to the surface. The result was that the water breathers were unaffected, while the air breathers died. Dr. Day observes that the difference in the kind of breathing of the two classes of fishes, is very apparent when they are lying side by side on the moist sand at the bottom of an aquarium. The water breathers keep their gills in constant excited motion, while the compound breathers scarcely move their gills, but at intervals rise to the surface, open their mouths, and take in air. Dr. Jerdon, a well-known Indian naturalist, kept some of the climbing perch (*Anabas scandens*) in an aquarium, and observed that, while they were generally very sluggish, they would every now and then make a spring to the top, to obtain a mouthful of air: after which they dashed down again to the bottom.

Mr. Boake gives a very remarkable account of the mode in which certain fishes, living in mud and requiring to ascend at intervals to the surface, are captured in Ceylon. As his description is published in an Indian journal, not readily accessible to ordinary readers, we shall offer no apology for copying Dr. Day's somewhat long extract from it. In the part of Ceylon to which he refers, swamps abound, covered with rank grass, forming a sod sufficiently firm to support men and cattle, which move freely on it. Between this sod and the true terra firma, is an intermediate layer, two or three feet thick, of diluted mud of about the consistence of thick pea soup; and in this mud are the fishes, which are caught in the following manner:

"When the swamp is in a proper state for such operations, a native goes out when the air is still, and walking through the swamp

listens for the peculiar sounds which the fishes make in breathing. Having selected a part in which these sounds are heard so frequently as to afford a prospect of catching a considerable number, he proceeds to remove the sod from a few circular patches, each about three feet in diameter, in those places in which there already exist small holes in the sod, which the fishes frequent for the purpose of breathing. When that is done, he returns home for the night. On our reaching the fishing ground in the morning, operations were commenced by making a kind of enclosure to cut off from the rest of the swamp that portion in which the circular patches had been cleared of sod the night before. This was done by breaking the sod in a narrow line encompassing the space which it was intended to enclose, and trampling a portion of it down to the more solid mud at the bottom. The long grass, which is thus carried down, makes a kind of fence, which is supposed to confine the fishes, but which one can hardly suppose to be very efficacious, as they would have but little difficulty, if so inclined, in making their way through it. When this is done, the diluted mud in the holes that have been opened over night is thickened by mixing it with some of the more solid mud, or peat, scooped up from beneath. Some of the long grass which grows on the surface is then laid over the thickened mud in two strata, the stalks of which the one is composed being at right angles with those composing the other. The whole is finished off with a coating of mud. Nothing then remains to be done but to watch for the appearance of the fishes. The first indication of their presence is the rising of bubbles of air, and in each instance when these bubbles appeared, the natives who were standing by named correctly the species of fishes by which they were emitted, being guided probably by their size, and by their coming up singly or in larger numbers. After a bubble of air has appeared, but a short time elapses before the head of the fish appears protruding above the surface of the mud. There is no difficulty in securing a fish when he shows himself in this way, as the blades of grass, which have been arranged so as to cross each other beneath the surface of the mud, form a net through which he cannot easily force his way back. I remained watching the process for about an hour, during which I saw eleven fishes taken, and the natives told me that as the day advanced larger fishes would be caught, and in greater numbers. None of those I saw taken were

large. They were of three species: *connia* (*ophiocephalus kelaarti*), *magoora*, and *hoonga* (*clarias taysmanii*). It is obvious that this mode of catching the fishes is entirely based upon the fact that they cannot breathe water, but are forced to ascend at stated intervals to the surface to breathe atmospheric air—a fact which I afterwards verified by drowning two or three specimens by inverting a net over them.”

In 1866, when engaged in carrying out experiments by order of government, on the introduction of fishes from the plains to the waters of the Neilgherry Hills, Dr. Day ascertained that the walking fishes and some other genera could be carried for long distances in water mixed with mud; whereas if the water were pure, they soon died. The solution of this apparently remarkable phenomenon, as afforded by a series of ingenious experiments which he subsequently made, shows that these fishes respire air directly from the atmosphere and not through the gills, and that, therefore, the muddy water does not pass through those organs; and, further, that the mud is of direct service towards decreasing the agitation to which the fishes were exposed when travelling in vessels containing clear water. The following are brief descriptions of his chief experiments:

No. 1. Three walking fishes were placed in a vessel, containing fresh water, and were prevented reaching the surface by a diaphragm of net. At the end of four minutes they all became excited and tried to reach the surface. The largest and strongest fish only lived one hour and twenty-eight minutes, the others dying some minutes earlier. On opening their gill covers under water and pressing the gills, no air escaped.

No. 2. Three similar fishes were then placed in the same vessel as that in which the others had died, the water not having been removed, but the diaphragm being now placed an inch *above* the water, while it was previously an inch *below* it. These fishes were taken out in ten hours quite well and lively.

No. 3. Three water breathers and three loaches were placed in the same vessel prepared as in the first experiment. The water breathers remained unaffected, but the loaches died in eight hours. The reason why the latter lived so long, is due to this species (*platacanthus agrensis*) having a receptacle for air in the first vertebra at the base of the skull.

No. 4. Three specimens of walking fishes were then placed on some wet grass in an

earthen vessel. At the end of three hours they were alive and well.

No. 5. A bandage was tightly stretched around the head of one of these fishes, so as entirely to prevent it from opening its gills. It was then placed in a globe of water, and at the end of twenty-four hours was as lively as possible. In this case there was direct evidence that the fish must have sustained life by aerial respiration.

No. 6. A water breather similarly banded died in thirty-four hours; but in this case, owing to the external form of the fish, the gill cover could not be entirely closed.

No. 7. A walking fish was placed in a dry cloth at 9.55 A.M. and left without any moisture, the temperature being seventy-five degrees. It lived until 1.20 P.M., occasionally opening its mouth and taking in air. At 12.15 it moved across the table and fell on the ground; and it had proceeded several feet across the room before it was picked up. The fall probably hastened its death. Another of these fishes eighteen inches long, lived for sixteen hours, wrapped up in a dry cloth, and placed in a closed cupboard.

No. 8. A number of these fishes were placed in a tub, with a small amount of water and plenty of common grass. No other food was allowed them; but at the end of three weeks they were perfectly well and lively.

There is considerable discrepancy among naturalists as to the anatomical peculiarities which allow these and some other genera of fishes to exist for a comparatively long period out of water. Professor Owen observes that, "Accessory respiratory organs, acting chiefly as a reservoir or filter of water, are developed from the upper part of the pharynx or gullet in the climbing perch (*anabas scandens*) and allied fishes of amphibious habits; they are complex folds of slightly vascular membrane, supported on sinuous plates; whence this family of fishes is called labyrinthibranchii;" and he copies curious figures of the labyrinthic reservoir of *anabas*. Günther states that "the ophiocephalidæ (or walking fishes) have a cavity accessory to the gill cavity for the purposes of retaining water."

Following these authorities, Dr. Day started with the belief that this cavity was for the purpose of retaining water to be gradually doled out to the gills when the fish was out of water, with the object of keeping those organs moist, and thus able to obtain oxygen from the air. Personal

observation led him, however, to arrive at a different conclusion. He found that the cavity or reservoir does not contain water, but has a moist secreting surface, and that it contains air, which is retained there for respiratory purposes; he believes that this air, after having been thus employed, is ejected by the mouth. If the fish be kept under water, this cavity, which is surrounded by bony tissue, becomes filled with water, which cannot be discharged; and as the cavity cannot be emptied, the water becomes carbonised, and unfit for oxygenating the blood. The whole respiratory process thus becomes thrown upon the gills; and this will account for the fact noticed by Dr. Day, that when the fish is in a state of quiescence it will live much longer in exclusion from atmospheric air than when excited and moving about in the water.

A strange-looking, finless, snake-like eel, the *symbranchus euchia*, found in holes in the Indian marshes, affords a good example of an air-breathing fish. The peculiarities of its breathing apparatus are described by Professor Owen in vol. i., p. 487 of his *Anatomy of Vertebrates*. It is sufficient for the general reader to know that the gills are in a mere rudimentary state, and that the respiratory process is transferred to a receptacle on each side of the head, above the branchial arches. The cavities are connected by an opening with the mouth, and are lined with a highly vascular membrane, to which impure venous blood is conveyed. These cavities thus act as lungs, and the blood permeating their vessels, is changed from the venous to the arterial state. Although the anatomical arrangement of the blood vessels is such that about half of the volume of the blood transmitted from the heart is conveyed to the aorta without being exposed to the action of air, the fish (notwithstanding its reptilian form of circulation) is not "of a sluggish and torpid nature," as Professor Owen asserts, but is very active in its movements, and almost invariably gives rise to an exciting chase over the grass before it can be captured.

Most of the great tenacity of life for which many of the Indian fresh-water fishes are famed is, no doubt, as Dr. Day observes, "due to their capability of respiring atmospheric air." In India the majority of inland acanthopterygians\* are compound breathers, as, for example, the whole of

\* The acanthopteri or acanthopterygians are an extensive order of fishes so called from the prickly and inflexible character of the rays in the fins.

the hollow-headed fishes as well as many siluroids and some of the loaches. This method of respiration appears to be a wise provision of nature to enable the fish, during periodic dry seasons, to migrate from pond to pond in search of water in which their natural food still exists. In experiments he made with the climbing perch at Cochin, he found that they would live without moisture for twenty-four hours, or even longer; while in Calcutta the fishermen keep them alive and well for four or five days, in earthen pots without water.

Dr. Day has collected a number of instances of the migration of fishes by land from one piece of water to another. Mr. Morris, the Government agent at Trincomalee, in a letter to Sir Emerson Tennent, states that as the tanks dry up, the fishes congregate in the little pools in which only some thick mud is left; and as the moisture further evaporates, they crawl away in hundreds in every direction in search of fresh water. He has seen them at a distance of sixty yards from the tanks, still struggling onward over the cracks and indentations of dried mud. Sir John Bowring states that in Siam he saw "fishes leaving the river Meinam, gliding over the wet banks, and losing themselves amongst the trees in the jungles." He also states, on the authority of Bishop Pallegoix, that some of these "travelling fishes" can wander more than a league from the water. We have the undoubted evidence of many Europeans that the climbing perch can travel by land, at all events, for short distances, such migrations usually occurring in the early morning, when the dew is on the ground. Mr. E. L. Layard once met a number of perch-like fishes, probably the anabas, travelling along a hot and dusty gravel road at midday.

It is not only in India and Ceylon that fishes exhibit these migratory tendencies. In many parts of Europe, including England, eels have been known to travel considerable distances from ponds to rivers, and vice versâ. In the West Indies the flat-headed hassar (*doras bancockii*) may be seen marching in large droves, sometimes during the whole night, from dried-up tanks to pools of water. Humboldt saw another species of *doras* (*d. crocodili*) leaping over the dry ground, supported by its pectoral fins; and he was told of another specimen that had climbed a hillock some twenty feet in height.

Dr. Day discusses at considerable length

a very curious subject which has never been clearly explained, namely, the sudden appearance, in various parts of India, of large healthy adult fishes, with others of proportional sizes, immediately after a heavy fall of rain, in situations which have been perfectly dry and hard for months. After showing the fallacy of Yarrell's theory of the sudden vivification of ova by the rain, he points out the almost certainty of the phenomenon being due to the æstivation of the fishes during the dry season—a process closely analogous to the hybernation of many animals. The low organisation of many genera of fishes would predispose them to a state of torpidity, such as is known to occur in the dry season in other animals, as the lepidosiren, certain crocodiles, &c. That many of them are capable of burrowing, is easily seen by watching their proceedings in an aquarium, where, if the water be disturbed, or if they be otherwise alarmed, certain loaches and various other fishes dive at once, and totally disappear by burying themselves in the sand. The pectoral fins are the agents the fishes employ in this process. That they actually do burrow, is incontestably proved by numerous observations. The callichthys aspar has been found where wells were sunk in certain parts of the West Indies. An anabas was obtained by Sir Emerson Tennent that had been dug out of a dried-up tank, a foot and a half below the surface; and he was informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity, Mr. Whiting, that he had been twice present when the villagers were engaged in digging up fishes. He described the ground as firm and hard, and the fishes as being full-grown (about a foot long) and jumping on the bank when exposed to the light.

When Dr. Day was engaged in the composition of the article from which we have been drawing our present materials, the scientific world had heard nothing of a remarkable mud-fish which is found in New Zealand. In the autumn of 1867, Dr. Günther, the well-known author of *The Catalogue of Fishes in the British Museum*, received a letter from Dr. Hector, the Government geologist in New Zealand, giving a sketch of a fish five and a half inches long, which was found at a depth of four feet from the surface, in a stiff clay imbedding roots of trees. The locality is thirty-seven feet above the level of the Hokitika river, and three miles from the sea, and had at one time been a back-water of the river, during floods. Little more

than two years ago it was a swamp, covered by dense forest; a party of gold miners have pierced it in all directions, so that for about that period no surface or river water could have collected in it, and it is now quite drained. Dr. Hector further adds that the early settlers in New Zealand were frequently much astonished by digging up fishes along with the potatoes which they had planted in the rich swampy land. Mr. Schaw, the warden of the district, has examined seven or eight specimens of these fishes, which were found enclosed in hollows in the clay. He found that when first extracted they moved freely, but when placed in water they got sluggish, and soon died. They varied from three to seven inches in length. Accompanying Dr. Hector's letter and sketch was the actual fish, that had sat for his picture. Dr. Günther regards it as the type of a new genus, to which he gives the name of *neochanna*; it belongs to the family of *galaxiæ*, but, in being devoid of neutral fins, it differs from *galaxias*—a remarkable genus which is most developed in New Zealand, but extends westward to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, and eastward to the southernmost parts of America. It also differs from the last-named genus, in having small and almost rudimentary eyes, indicating that it lives habitually in mud or swampy places. All *galaxias* are remarkably fat, and this was the case in the *neochanna* forwarded to Dr. Günther, who was much surprised to find that, so far from having undergone a protracted trial of fasting, its stomach was distended with food, consisting of the half-digested remains of the larvæ or grubs of a dipterous insect. In conclusion, he directs attention to the fact that in numerous groups of fishes living permanently in mud or periodically in dry ground, the ventral fins, having no duties to perform, are either rudimentary, or totally absent.

The peculiar cavity in the head occurring in the Indian walking fishes, has clearly nothing to do with the process of æstivation, because it is not only the hollow-headed acanthopterygians which then re-appear after rain, but also the cyprinidæ or carp family and others. The æstivation that occurs in hot and dry countries is apparently identical with the hybernation of various animals, as bats, bears, dormice, certain birds, and several fishes in cold regions. Even in England, eels bury themselves a foot or deeper in the mud during the winter months. Carp have been found

in great numbers lying closely packed together, and buried in the mud at the bottom of fish-ponds in exceptionally severe weather; according to Yarrell, soles frequent the river Arun nearly up to the town of Arundel, and have been found in that neighbourhood buried in the sand during the colder months.

We shall conclude this article with a few words on the climbing perch (*anabas scandens*). Does this fish really deserve the names of *anabas the ascender*, or *scandens the climber*? From our childhood we have seen and admired pictures of this perch, some six feet high up a tree by the river side. Are we, in these days of scepticism, ruthlessly to knock it down from its proud position? For the earliest record of its climbing propensities we are indebted to two Mahomedan travellers, who visited India in the ninth century, and left a record of their observations, which has been translated into French by M. Reinaud. They mention a sea-fish which, leaving its natural element, climbed cocoa-nut trees and drank the juice of the plant. After an interval of little short of a thousand years, Lieutenant Daldorf, in 1791, wrote to inform Sir Joseph Banks that he had observed this fish, five feet from the ground on the stem of a palmira tree. In corroboration of these statements, the Tamil designation of this fish is *pannieri*, a "climber of palmira trees," and in Malabar and elsewhere the natives fully believe in its climbing powers. On the other hand, neither Buchanan, the author of *The Fishes of the Ganges*; nor Carter, author of *The Malayan Fishes*; nor Sir Emerson Tennent, could find any direct evidence of these powers, nor did they ever hear them noticed by the natives of the Malay peninsula or Ceylon. Dr. Day does not give a decided opinion on the subject, but he observes that the climbing perch possesses such jumping powers that it cannot be kept in an aquarium, unless the top be covered over. Without this precaution it will contrive to escape, even when the water is a foot or more from the top.

Dr. Day is, we believe, still engaged in attempting to stock, either by means of ova or young fishes, some of the principal rivers of India; and has already published one or two official reports on his progress. Considering the frequency of famine in its most appalling form in many parts of our vast Indian possessions, we need hardly add that he has our sincere wishes that he may prove successful in introducing

a new and rapidly increasing source of food into countries where it is often sorely wanted.

#### THE VOICES IN THE FIR WOOD.

THERE'S ever a soft, low breathing through the fir-trees  
long dark ranks,  
When the violets cloud with purple the cone-strewn  
mossy banks;  
There's a soft and murmurous stirring, how faint soe'er  
it be,  
Though not a cloud is sailing upon the sky's blue sea.

There's a soft low simmering whisper when the summer  
flowers are still,  
And not a sound is stirring but the sheep-bells on the  
hill;  
There's a soft low murmur spreading all through the  
sombre trees,  
Dim, distant lamentations of the prisoned Dryades.

It's like the distant surging of an ocean ill at rest,  
Round some sleeping lotus-island hid in the golden  
west,  
Where, on pebbles that are jewels, the long, broad, roll-  
ing tide  
Shouts with a laughing anger, and a half lazy pride.

It's like the banshee's wailing, heard from a distant fen;  
It's like the fairies mourning the earlier race of men,  
Those chieftains who once proudly wore the bracelet,  
crown, and chain,  
And now, beside their crumbling swords, sleep calmly  
'neath the plain.

But the voices wax more terrible in the damp, cold  
autumn eyes,  
When down the long, dim riding come driving storms  
of leaves,  
That swell to tigrish ravings, and roars, as when Jove's  
thunder,  
Smote the crushed and stricken giants, and drave their  
hosts asunder.

They charge, with swelling fury, like horsemen hurled  
to break  
The close ranks of the legions no storms of war could  
shake,  
Those dark-browed sinewy Romans, that here once faced  
the spears,  
And lie beneath us, all unwept but by the dew drops'  
tears.

When the wind, with a madman's frenzy, raves scream-  
ing in despair,  
And tries to wrench, by their tangled roots, the saplings  
green and fair;  
Those gusts of surging anger, that roll through the  
tossing trees,  
Are the frantic lamentations of the prisoned Dryades.

#### THE LAST NEW EDEN.

SINCE the days of the ill-fated Darien expedition, and the more recent times of that flourishing speculation, the Eden Land Corporation, and its slimy settlement on the banks of the Father of Waters, the swindling of emigrants has been a lucrative profession. Outfitters, agents, and shipowners have waxed fat upon it; the scanty savings of the intending emigrant, have been for too many years the prey of

a vile tribe of blood-suckers and parasites. To induce emigrants to buy what they do not, and cannot by any possibility, want; and to supply the articles of which they really do stand in need, at the highest possible prices, of the lowest possible quality, and in the largest possible quantity, constitute one branch of this predatory profession. To charge all sorts of expenses and commissions for services that have not been rendered, is the occupation of the second, or agent department; while the opportunities ready to the hand of the transport or shipping branch of the business, are charmingly profitable. Consider the berths, for which extra payment is enforced, and which turn out to be rickety planks; think of the special cabin accommodation for married couples, provided at a special charge, and only accommodating the ship-owner's pocket. What scope is there for swindling, in the provisions; in the weevilly biscuit, the damaged pork, the lime juice, artfully prepared from alien substances by the ingenuity of chemistry, the musty rice, the mouldy flour! Go to any great port of departure for emigrants, and admire the rickety old tubs, which represent the fine, fast-sailing, copper-bottomed liners of the advertisements; tubs only good enough to carry emigrants, and for the loss of which heavy insurances easily console owners. Talk to some of the favourite captains and experienced surgeons, and ponder over the probable delights of a three or four months' voyage under their auspices!

This is the dark side of the picture. It is by no means to be understood that all emigrants' outfitters are cozening knaves; that all emigrants' brokers and agents cheat; and that all emigrant ships are ill-found, ill-fitted, and ill-officered. The careful emigrant can be as well and as honestly served as any other traveller; there are good and bad in all trades. But it unfortunately happens, from the very nature of the case, that the emigrant is peculiarly exposed to robbery and deceit. He is usually in a hurry. His chief anxiety is to get away from the old country with its recollections of struggle, and defeat, and vain striving. His thoughts are all of that new land whither he is going, where there is room and scope enough for workers, be they ever so numerous. What matters it if people do take advantage of his ignorance? What matter the discomfort and misery of the voyage, so that the Promised Land be reached at last?

It is not always, however, to be pre-sup-

posed that the intending emigrant has clear and definite ideas on the subject of his promised land. Where it is, what it is like, and what are its capabilities, subjects of the highest importance to him, are, nevertheless, subjects on which many emigrants have the haziest ideas. No doubt the advantages and disadvantages of Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and other such beaten tracks for the adventurous, are well enough known, even in the duldest and remotest districts of this country. Trustworthy information concerning them can be readily obtained, and there is not much fear of even the most ignorant going very far wrong. It is when the beaten tracks are left, that the danger begins. The less known the country, the more magnificent are the promises of the agent. The more florid the descriptions of the agent, the more eager is the ignorant victim to swallow the bait. Dazzled by the brilliant promises of the fluent salesman, the unfortunate emigrant invests his little all in an eligible lot, and too often finds too late, that his Eden is a fool's paradise. When once the money is got, and the victim is packed off, his future fate is usually a matter of supreme indifference to the Mr. Scadder who has robbed him. That astute personage well knows that whatever may happen to his man in the wilderness to which he has been sent, he is, at all events, pretty certain never to get home again and demand his money back. Thus Scadder lives and prospers, and, as the race of the credulous and ignorant never ceases out of the land, fresh dupes succeed and the emigration agency never lacks clients.

These assertions may be illustrated by a little story of certain South American emigrants of quite recent date.

The edifying history has just been communicated to our parliament, through the medium of a despatch addressed by the Hon. A. H. Gordon, Governor of Trinidad, to Earl Granville. It seems that in the month of February, 1868, a company, bearing the grandiloquent title of the "American, English, and Venezuelan Trading and Commercial Company," was incorporated according to the forms of law, in the city of Richmond, in Virginia, in the United States. The company was described as being based upon a grant of land made by the Venezuelan government to Dr. Henry M. Price on the 13th of September, 1865, and the same was declared to be the establishment of certain lines of steamers be-

tween New Orleans and the ports on the Orinoco river in Venezuela. Trade, commerce, and the carrying of passengers and freight, were announced as its chief business. A board of directors, all resident in the United States—with the exception of one gentleman, Mr. J. Frederick Pattison, described as of America-square, in the city of London, England—was appointed to manage affairs. The capital was fixed at two millions of dollars, and the company, without loss of time, proceeded to business. It would appear that the point which first attracted the attention of the directors was not so much the establishment of the line of steamers, and the attainment of the other more immediately specified objects of the association, as the development of the territory ceded by the Venezuelan government to Dr. Price. Two hundred and forty thousand square miles (the extent of the little piece of ground in question), is a good property for a company with a capital of two millions of dollars, especially when the land is very thinly populated. It is only natural that the directors should have felt anxious to promote emigration to Venezuela, and to establish on their domain colonies of industrious agriculturists, miners, and planters, whose payments for land would increase the resources of the company, and whose exports and imports would, in the fulness of time, keep the line of steamers and the other branches of the company's business in constant and lucrative work. The method by which the managers sought to attain the desired end is to be gathered from an interesting little volume, published in London, under the auspices of Mr. James Frederick Pattison—not of America, but, the next thing to it, of America-square—"director-general in Europe of the company." This literary treasure is called, the *Emigrant's Vade Mecum*, or *Guide to the Price Grant in Venezuelan Guyana*.

It appears from this work, which is quoted in Mr. Gordon's despatch, and is now before us, that of all places in the world for the emigrant, Venezuelan Guyana is the very best; and, further, that in the whole of Venezuela there is not such another eligible situation as Dr. Price's grant. Watered not only by the mighty Orinoco, but by such minor though still splendid streams as the Caroni and the Caura; rich, to a fault almost, in the luxuriance of its produce, it is glowingly described. Everything grows in Venezuela. Cotton, sugar, coffee, cocoa, rice, tapioca, sago, corn,

tobacco, drugs, and medicinal plants of every description, are all at home in the happy land. Do you want indigo, dragon's blood, cochineal, logwoods, or vanilla? Venezuela is the place for you. Are you in the lumber trade, and do you long for vast forests of mahogany, live oak, cedar, ship timber, and all sorts of hard woods? Come to Venezuela. If you are eccentric in your vegetable tastes, Venezuela can supply you with Bahema wood, the bombax ceiba, the chiqui-chiqui palm, and even the generous milk tree or palo de vaca. Do your commercial tastes incline to the miscellaneous? Venezuela can set you up with ox hides, deer hides, rich oils, wax, india-rubber, asphalt, petroleum, sulphur, and (in short) everything else that there is a market for anywhere. Gold, silver, coal, diamonds, quicksilver, iron, and pearls, abound. There is no special mention of the oysters which produce the pearls; but they are to be had, no doubt, at nothing per dozen. Are you afraid that it may possibly be difficult to transport these riches to the markets of the outer world? Read this paragraph of the *Vade Mecum*, and be consoled. "The water communications in this magnanimous grant consist of four hundred and four navigable streams flowing into the great Orinoco, making communication with Europe safe and easy." If you be a little surprised at the word "magnanimous" in this connexion, recollect that we are an American company (even our English hailing from America-square), and that we are transatlantically fond of long words. All climates are to be found in Venezuela: all, that is to say, except the disagreeable and extreme. Birds of the most varied plumage and most delicate and nutritious flesh, roost in all the trees; fish, "varying in size from the tiniest pan fish to fish ten and twelve feet long, and weighing from two hundred to three hundred pounds," fill all the streams. The fifty thousand Indians who inhabit the territory, are harmless and friendly. Even if it be objected that they are uncivilised, what then? Properly directed, they would doubtless become useful members of society, and agreeable company for the earlier settlers.

It would, on further examination, appear that Dr. Price did not incur the heavy responsibilities inseparable from the proprietorship of two hundred and forty thousand square miles of land, with no higher motive than a sordid commercial yearning for profit. Dr. Price was a citizen of Vir-

ginia—of the State which suffered more than any of her Confederate sisters in the great American civil war. It was obvious to Dr. Price that it would be quite impossible for the Southerners, when defeated, to settle down in their old places. No! The ravaged land must be left, as an extract from the *St. Louis Times* declares, to the incendiary whose torch has made it a wilderness. The South is despoiled and desolated. There is no hope, as remarks Colonel Belton, a fervid and "spanglorious" writer, also quoted in Mr. Pattison's volume, absolutely no hope, save in expatriation. It is quite clear to Colonel Belton, that the liberal concessions made by the Venezuelan government, make that country the very place for unfortunate Southerners. And Dr. Price having made that little bargain in land at the critical moment, there was absolutely no reason why they should not at once enter on the occupation of their new country, and set to work to grow cotton with all their might.

Consider Venezuelan Guyana in another light! How useful to those English settlers who should find their way to the delightful spot! For it must be remembered, says the *Vade Mecum*, that the foreign emigrant has always found a home and a friend in the Southern States. It is by descendants of the men who received the persecuted Quaker, and the other victims of the "Pilgrim Fathers," that the British immigrant will be welcomed. A kindred race (professing the same religion, the pious *Vade Mecum* is happy to reflect) welcomes the stranger to the delicious land.

The result of the united philanthropic efforts of the *St. Louis Times* and of Colonel Belton's fervid eloquence appears to have been that a party of Americans did actually start for a settlement on the Caroni river. What happened to them when they got there, or whether they ever got there, are matters with which the present paper has no concern. It is with the operations of the company, as they affect English people, that we have at present to deal. The American people are as well able to take care of themselves as any people on the face of the earth.

The remainder of the information we have to go upon, and which brings the story of the company down to the latest period, is derived from Mr. Gordon's despatch to Lord Granville. It will be observed that the actual facts throw a slight shadow over the brilliant picture of the great painter, Pattison.

Mr. Gordon tells us (under date Trinidad 10th March, 1870) that he had, some time before, privately heard from the President of the Republic of Guyana, that certain English colonists had been sent out by a company having offices in London, and styled the "Chartered American, English, and Venezuelan Trading and Commercial Company." That the emigrants had been sent out, almost destitute, to an unhealthy, uncleared, and undrained locality on the Caura river. And that he (President Dalla Costa) had provided these unfortunate persons with three months' provisions, and had forwarded them to the land they had unhappily bought. Furthermore, the President begged Mr. Gordon to do all he could to prevent any further immigration under similar auspices. From December, 1869, until a few days before the date of Mr. Gordon's despatch, nothing more was heard of the unfortunate immigrants. Early in March, however, the re-appearance of two of their number, survivors of a party of three who had been sent by their fellow victims to seek assistance, confirmed the gloomiest views that had been formed of the probable prospects of the expedition. These two gentlemen, one of whom, Mr. Barry, had been an officer in the Third King's Own Hussars, gave a lamentable account of the disasters that had attended the journey of their party. Under the leadership of Mr. Bond, late a captain in Her Majesty's Ninety-first Highlanders, it had, in the previous December, left the city of Ciudad Bolivar for the Caura river.

Mr. Barry and the other messenger from the Caura river reported that they had left some sixty-five persons, men, women, and children, chiefly English, at the settlement. The "township" to which they had been sent was merely a dense, uncleared, tropical forest, liable in many places to be overflowed by the river during the wet season; and it was the chosen home of fever and dysentery. Two deaths had taken place at the settlement, and two elsewhere. The canoe men had stolen the greater part of President Dalla Costa's provisions. The supply of meat (hard jerked beef at the best) had run out, and a week's stock of rice and country beans was all that remained between the party and absolute starvation. Alas, for the birds, and the fruit, and the fish, and the other choice articles of the *Vade Mecum*! They had no more existence in fact than certain tools, with delusive promises of which Mrs. Pattison (who appears

to have transacted Mr. Pattison's business with Mr. Bond's followers) had charmed the ears of her confiding customers. Yes; the advantages of Venezuela turned out to be as mythical as the agricultural implements which Mrs. Pattison promised to bring out with her for the use of the colonists; but which, as the sensible lady discreetly stayed at home, were never supplied. What has since become of this wretched, deluded, starving, sixty-five Mr. Gordon does not inform us. But it is to be hoped that President Dalla Costa has added one more kindness to the kindnesses he had already done our countrymen, and has helped them out of the mud of their primeval forest. If so, it is devoutly to be wished that some survivors of the sixty-five may eventually confront some of the individuals connected with the management of the American, English, and Venezuelan Trading and Commercial Company.

The price charged by the company for their land does not appear, at first sight, high. Four pounds for ten acres sounds reasonable, and, a reduction being made to persons taking a quantity, the larger allotments were still cheaper. Thus, one hundred acres might be had for seventeen pounds ten shillings; and any fortunate possessor of twenty-five pounds, might find himself a Venezuelan landowner to the extent of one hundred and sixty acres. But, as the land was unhealthy, utterly unimproved and undrained, and a mere famishing-ground, the bargain was not so good after all for the buyer. Anybody can die miserably, on a more contracted area than ten acres, and for less than four pounds! For the seller, the terms were well enough. Dr. Price's company had been fortunate enough to secure their grant at the moderate rate of four pounds for *three square miles*. It is easy to see that if Mr. Pattison could only have disposed of sufficient land, the profits would have been decidedly comfortable. That this company did really receive a large grant of land in Venezuela seems to be established; whether the two hundred and forty thousand miles mentioned in the company's prospectus represent the actual quantity allotted, or whether the same halo of romance which pervades most of the statements of the *Vade Mecum* has also tinged this part of the business with a roseate hue, may be open to question. But it appears that the grant, whatever it was, has been revoked, in consequence of the non-fulfilment of its conditions by the company; and that any future purchasers of

Mr. Pattison's land warrants will not even have the satisfaction of finding themselves owners of graves in forest, jungle, and swamp.

But it was not only through the sale of land warrants that the company's coffers were replenished. Luggage passes were sold to the emigrants, and were represented as being absolutely necessary to enable the baggage, on landing at Bolivar, to enter the country duty free. It must have made the more reflective of the sixty-five a little uncomfortable as to the prospects of the future "Pattisonville," as the visionary "township" was to be called, to find that these luggage-passes were received with no respect whatever by the Venezuelan custom-house officers. In fact, but for the consistent kindness of President Dalla Costa, the unfortunate victims would have been compelled to pay the custom dues, against which they had fondly hoped their payments to the company had insured them.

Even this was not all. A dexterous appeal was made especially to the pockets of the clerical portions of the British community, and was crowned (it would appear from pages 31 to 34 of the *Vade Mecum*) with success. A circular was sent round by Mrs. Pattison, "the wife of James Frederick Pattison, Esq., Managing Director of the American, English, and Venezuelan Trading and Commercial Company," pointing out a heartrending result of the ravages of Sheridan and Sherman in the Southern States. The miserable Northerners had made away with all the books; what they could not steal, they burnt; and the Southern States were left without the comfort and solace of literature. There being no books in the land, it follows that the hundred thousand sturdy planters who were expected to flock to Caroni, could take no books with them. And to what a condition would this "reading Christian people" be reduced! Would not a generous and clerical British public subscribe books to form the nucleus of a library for the new colony, where the native productions were to be cultivated by the settlers for the benefit of themselves and (an adroit touch this) of the European markets? Of course the generous, and clerical British public would. And it did. It rained books on Mrs. Pattison. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge heads the list of donors, and Mrs. Pattison appears to have been recommended to that body by the Bishop of Llandaff and the Reverend Canon Dale. Bibles, prayer-books, tracts, are the

principal items in the catalogue of gifts; but there are one or two entries, possibly more in Mr. Pattison's immediate line. Thus, one present of books is accompanied by a sovereign. In another instance, five pounds are sent by M.F.H. (More Fool He?) to buy books "for the poor afflicted Southerners going to Caroni." A lady sends books, and thirty shillings "for special purposes." A sovereign, likewise, comes flying in for special purposes; and, to crown the list, a lady sends a quantity of books, a church service, an altar piece, ten pounds for scientific works, and ten pounds towards a "harmonium for St. Paul's church at Caroni!" For this same un-built and utterly non-existent ecclesiastical edifice, the last-mentioned lady's sister sends "many illuminated texts." Mr. Gordon remarks of these voluntary contributions: "Mr. and Mrs. Pattison having omitted to supply the emigrants with tools, medicines, or other necessaries, I need hardly add that the Free Library has not reached its intended destination."

#### ARAB POLITENESS.

A POLITE people the Arabs—the politest, at least in fine phrases—among the nations of the earth; for about three or four thousand years or so they have gone on twisting anew their guttural language into all varieties of complimentary and stately forms of speech, into all kinds of sugared expressions for benediction, for flattery, and for solicitation, till the quantity of small coin which they possess in way of compliment is unparalleled in any other tongue.

Those who have spent much time among the Arabs can recite a hundred ways of giving benediction, from the "Allah increase thy substance," down to the lower form of "May thy stomach never know hunger." It is true, indeed, that these forms of benediction are generally used to precede a request; for the crafty Arab is a great solicitor, and well knows how to flatter and cajole the possible benefactor: "to him who is mounted on an ass," says an Arab proverb, say, "O my Lord, may thy horse fare well," and "kiss the dog on the mouth," enjoins another, "till you have got all from him that you require." To comprehend the pleasant energy of which latter saying we must remember that the dog is an unclean beast for an Arab, and that he cannot even touch

him without incurring the necessity of ablution before his next prayer, out of the five daily prayers which the Monaddin calls upon him to perform.

Nevertheless, prodigal as the Arab may be of fine phrases, such as "May Allah give thee a thousand-and-one camels," before you grant him what he wants, you must not be altogether unprepared to hear him say, if he should meet you in after time, and have no need of you, "My horse may know you, but I don't."

However, such cases, it is said, are not common, although, as a rule, the Arab thinks himself little bound by any obligation to an infidel.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of Arab manners is that politeness is not mainly confined, as with us, to certain classes; but that its most refined rules are known equally to all, to rich and to poor, to noble and to peasant, from the borders of Mesopotamia to the Atlantic.

As M. Renan has observed, there are no men in the world among which there is so little difference in mental culture and in dignity of bearing as the Arab. The lowest Arab, when he approaches the sultan, the pasha, or the shiek, in the form of a suppliant, looks his superior straight in the face, and is not ashamed. "Allah," he says, "regards with the same eyes the cedar and the hyssop," and Allah is the unseen witness whom the Arab considers, or ought to consider, as present at every action of his life. Whether he eats, drinks, sleeps, or goes on a journey, he mentally refers everything to Allah; Allah, in fact, is the real fountain of good manners and all the rules of Arab politeness.

Arab good manners, then, require that a man shall be decently dressed, and pious in every action of his life. He must, to begin with, be careful in all the ablutions prescribed by his religion; he must have his head shaved once a week, keep his beard, not cut, but carefully trimmed, and that to a point; he must keep, also, his upper moustaches clipped to the level of his upper lip, except at the corners, so that he may not soil his dress in eating; and he must not omit to keep his nails in good order, never biting them, but paring them carefully; and even the parings are not to be thrown carelessly away, but they must be thrown into the fire, or buried in the earth, for the nails are, in fact, sacred, according to Arab superstition.

When you speak of the weather, you will take care not to say, dogmatically,

"The weather will be fine or bad to-morrow;" you, poor finite mortal, should not have the insolence to predict anything absolutely about the weather. God alone can do that. All you can say is, "It will be fine to-morrow, Inshallah"—if it please God; and you must not even say, "To-morrow I will go to market," without the Inshallah. The Arabs affirm that the lion one day took to counting over the animals who were at his mercy. "Inshallah," he said, "I can carry off a horse without hurting me. Inshallah, I can carry off a heifer, and gallop no whit the less fast." But when he came to the sheep, he disdained to use the Inshallah; therefore, so at least report the Arabs, the lion is not able to carry off the sheep (the fact being, it is said, that the lion does not like to feel the wool of the sheep in his mouth). Every exclamation of surprise or wonder must be accompanied by the expression, "Glory be to God," "Sebahen Allah." And no decent Arab will undertake an expedition, go on a hunting party, or begin any serious affair whatever without saying first Bismillah!

If you speak of any respectable person no longer living, be sure whenever you mention his name to say, "May God be merciful to me," "Allah inhamon." Similarly, likewise, if inquiries are made of you about any person who has died unknown to your interrogator, do not by any means say, in a coarse way, "Abdallah ben So-and-so is dead," but "May Allah be merciful to him." Your companion will understand you. You must avoid, moreover, to speak of death at all if you can help it, except of death by battle in the holy war. The word is not a pleasant one. Moreover, never ask an Arab his age; he does not like to think on the subject, and generally takes care to forget all about the date of his birth; his beard, he says, will have the pepper-and-salt colour quite soon enough, and give him unpleasant suggestions. Never, moreover, under an Arab tent admire a horse, a child, or anything whatever that may be his or hers without saying, "May the blessing of Allah be on it," or "May it be blessed with the prolongation of thy life and the protection of Allah." Should you act otherwise, you will be considered an ill-bred fellow, or an envious one, perhaps, who designed, by giving a cast of the evil eye on the object of your admiration, to bring trouble into the family.

When an Arab in company says he has

seen a dream, all well-bred men present cry out at once "El kher Inshallah," "The good of it please Allah;" that is, may it be of good omen.

Should you condole with a person who had a misfortune, say, "Inshallah, thou shalt now for ever know no evil;" that is, thou hast paid thy debt to misfortune.

When you meet a friend coming out of the bath, say, "May thy bath be to thee like a bath of the water of Zemzem," the holy well of Mecca. And he, if he be a well-bred fellow, will reply "Inshallah, thou shalt be prosperous."

When you have gone to the barber to have your head shaved, and the operation is finished, the barber says, "With health, the shaving;" that is, may your shaving do you good. You reply, "the blessing of Allah upon you."

Should you pass a labourer, or inspect a man's work, say, "May God give thee strength," or something like it. The reply will come pat. "May Allah be merciful to the authors of your days."

If you pass before people sitting at meals, say, "May Allah make thee satisfied," and when one sneezes before you, say, "May Allah preserve thee," which form of expression is indeed common to most countries; "Dieu vous bénisse."

Should a man come into your room and leave the door open, don't cry out coarsely, "Shut the door," but "May Allah remember the carpenter;" that is, it appears you don't seem to think he is of any use.

You must never blow out a light with your breath; but wave it out with your hand rapidly passed over it—certainly the method is a more graceful one; but this is not the only reason—light is regarded as one of the most visible signs of the Deity, and you should not profane it with the corrupt breath of your body.

Do you want a light for your pipe? don't cry out, "Bring me fire!" somebody, especially if you be a Christian, may be tempted to reply, "You will have enough of it by-and-bye;" but say, "Bring me tranquillity."

Do you want to get rid of an importunate solicitor? hear his request to the end with patience and resignation, and then say, "Allah will look upon thee," or recommend your petitioner to Allah in some other form, and if he be a good Mussulman, he cannot doubt of the munificence of Allah, and *must* go away contented.

Do you wish to escape from a troublesome questioner? say "That is far from

me, the knowledge is with God," which after all is but a prolonged form of our somewhat coarse expression, "God knows." The Spaniard's or Italian's phrase of escape seems the most sensible. Quien sabe? Who knows? Chi lo sa? Who *can* know that? Should you commit an error of any kind which you cannot remedy, and wish to put an end to the condolence of a troublesome friend, you have but to say, "Hakoum Allah!" "It is the order of God!" or, "Mektoub Rebbi," "It was so written of God." When a man of superior rank questions another, and the latter would avoid reply, he has but to say "You are sultan, and you know."

If you are in trouble and wish to escape from importunate questions, you can reply "Kher kann ou chorr makann," "There is good, and there is no evil;" or "God is everywhere," "Kher Rebbi koul mekane."

If you, however, wish to get rid altogether of your troublesome companion, you have but to make use of the "Lott el ayeen," "The turning away of the eyes;" that is to say, to speak coldly to the man, and cast your eyes down to the ground.

Never ask a chief if he will sell his horse; you will seem to accuse him of poverty: you should not even admire his house or weapons. He feels obliged by all the Arab politeness to offer them to you, though it is said the practice in these degenerate days is less followed than formally.

No Arab is ever curious. Curiosity with all Eastern nations is considered unmanly. No Arab will stop in the street, or turn his head round to listen to the talk of bystanders. No Arab will dance, play on an instrument, or indulge in cards, or any game of chance: since games of chance are forbidden by the Koran. Never, moreover, invite an Arab to take a walk with you for pleasure. Although the Arabs are on occasion good walkers, they have no notion of walking for amusement, they only walk as a matter of business. Their temperance, their constant out-door habits, render all exercise for exercise sake unnecessary; they cannot, therefore, understand the pleasure of walking for walking sake. What Arabs like best is to sit still, and when they see Europeans walking up and down in a public place in Algeria, they say, "Look, look, the Christians are going mad!" The Arab does not even mount on horseback except as a matter of business or for his public fêtes and carousals. And when you do walk you must never walk quickly.

just as in speaking you should not talk fast or loud, for the Koran tells you: "Endeavour to moderate thy step, and to speak in a low tone, for the most disagreeable of voices is the voice of the ass."

Indeed, it was observed by a famous Arab: "Countless are the vices of men, but one thing will redeem them all, propriety of speech."

And again. "Of the word which is not spoken I am the master, but of the word which is spoken I am the slave."

The famous proverb, "Speech is of silver, but silence is of gold," is a motto of Arab origin.

A silent, grave people the Arabs, and a polite one too as we said, very much given, nevertheless, to highway robbery on a large scale, which they call razzias in Algeria; but the Arab's tent is always open to you, and you get any amount of couscoussou, camel's milk, or even roasted mutton if he has it. You will be treated as a "guest from God," as long as you are under his roof, after which, "Your happiness is in your hands," which means that your host who fed you in the evening may, at a decent distance from his tent, rifle your saddlebags in the morning, and let the "powder speak to you" if you object, after which "Allah be merciful to you."

## IN THAT STATE OF LIFE.

### CHAPTER II.

WHEN Maud Pomeroy said, "Their only idea now is to get rid of me," a very distinct and growing cause of annoyance was present in her mind. Among those important guests who were at least once a year bidden to the great battues of Mortlands, was Mr. Durborough, of Durborough, one of the richest men in the county. He was a widower, of nearly two years' standing, without children, rapidly approaching fifty-five, and resolved to lose no time in replacing the late Mrs. Durborough, who had been of a sickly habit, by some strong healthy young woman, whose appearance should justify the reasonable hope that the direct line of Durboroughs might yet not become extinct. This selection of a spouse upon hygienic principles, akin to those which determine the choice of a wet nurse, and uninfluenced by any other consideration than that of birth—for Mrs. Durborough must be well-born—was, it so happened, easy enough. In very early days

after his "bereavement," as it was called, when on a visit to Mortlands, where he had not been since Maud had come to woman's estate, he cast the eye of speculation upon her fine well-grown figure, and determined that she was the article he wanted. She was highly connected, and there was a certain fitness of things in the fact that she was the stepdaughter of even a greater man in the county than Mr. Durborough, which clinched the matter in his mind. As to her character, or mental qualifications, he knew nothing, nor did it occur to him to inquire. Neither did the faintest idea intrude itself upon him that his suit might not be successful. He was Durborough, of Durborough: that was the ruling idea in his mind, which was of the narrowest dimension, and she, though a healthy young woman of high family, was poor and dependent. Did the question admit of a doubt?

After this, it is perhaps unnecessary to say that years did not deal with him as they deal with most of us, sprinkling our hair with that salt which is without savour, and bowing our backs to bear their increasing burden. Age only dried him up by slow degrees: he was as spare and upright as at thirty; his hair still brown, and his teeth sound; there was no sign of decay in the wiry man of fifty-five.

On this first visit, Mr. Durborough had done no more than cast an eye of speculation, as I have said, on Miss Pomeroy; and then drop a hint to Lady Herriesson, which he left for six months to germinate. And when fifteen months had decently elapsed since his "bereavement," he came again to Mortlands. By this time, the hint had borne seed, and multiplied, and many little hints had left their maternal nest, and flown towards Maud. She was therefore prepared as much as possible to avoid the stiff silent man, whom pity for his loss had drawn her to notice occasionally six months before. He took her in to dinner every day: that she could not help; but so speechless was he upon these occasions, that she made up her mind that Lady Herriesson's hopes had led her entirely to misapprehend the worthy widower. Then, again, she relaxed from her severity, and talked to him, and grew easy when she found how little impression her amenities made. So it came like a thunder-clap upon her when Sir Andrew sent for her to his study, the day on which Mr. Durborough was to leave, and informed her that that gentleman had made a formal proposal for her hand. Amazed

as she was, Maud could hardly help laughing at this business-like method of tendering a contract for life: but she simply replied that she must decline the honour Mr. Durborough had done her. Then the baronet asked her why; and condescended to argue with her, as he rarely did with a woman, and when he found his arguments of no avail in changing her resolve, he dismissed her in great anger. But to Durborough, of Durborough, he softened the refusal in such terms as left it to be understood by that ardent suitor that a little maidenly coyness alone rendered Miss Pomeroy unwilling to accept him on so slight an acquaintance.

"Come to us again in February or March," Sir Andrew had said (it was then November). "Girls like a little pressing, you know—a deuced deal of romance and nonsense about them—high-flown ideas, and all that. They never like giving in all at once; but come again in three or four months' time, and you'll find, Durborough, it will be all right."

Then Mr. Durborough had gone away, if not satisfied, at least no more than mildly surprised that any girl should be found not to snatch eagerly—even at the expense of maidenly coyness—at the alluring prospect of becoming Mrs. Durborough, of Durborough.

Sir Andrew, from that day forward, trusting to the old Latin adage, that dropping water will wear away a stone, began a system towards his stepdaughter, in which he was ably seconded by her mother. Well might Maud declare. "Their only idea is to get rid of me." Durborough's merits as a man "universally respected," Durborough's lineage, Durborough's rent-roll, the excellence of Durborough's venison, the high esteem in which Durborough's shorthorns were held—almost every subject of discussion at Mortlands was a well from which some drop of water was drawn to let fall upon the stone of Maud's heart. It is astonishing, when you are so minded, how every topic under the sun may be ingeniously made to serve a particular purpose. Maud grew positively to loathe the very name of Durborough. She said nothing; but she felt all the more bitterly how they were trying to force her into this contract, against which body and soul alike rebelled.

And now February had come, and with it, Mr. Durborough in person, by no means anxious as to the result of his visit, but rather with the quiet confidence of a Cæsar. Then Maud knew that a crisis was at hand

when she and her father-in-law would have a pitched battle, compared with which all former encounters were as mere skirmishes. But she was so dead-sick of her life, so weary of the monotony of her days, and of the absence of any strong vital interests, that there were moments when she asked herself whether, after all, it might not be better to go away with this man, and have a home of her own, with a round of active duties, and be independent. Aye, but would she be independent, bound to such a man? She knew that she would not; and it was only for an instant that such an alternative suggested itself. Her nobler nature scornfully rejected the idea. If they wanted to get rid of her, let them do so; she would gladly go out as a governess—earn her bread in any honest way, nay, beg it rather than sell herself, and commit perjury by swearing to love, honour, and obey a man whom she despised.

It was Lady Herriesson who opened the trenches.

In the dusk of the same evening on which Mr. Durborough arrived, Maud's step-mother called her into her boudoir, on some pretence, and shutting the door, drew her to a sofa near the fire. Lady Herriesson leaned back, and, looked away from her daughter, straight into the burning embers. She had a paper-knife in her hand and she balanced it between her delicate fingers, emphasising what she said occasionally by a weak upraising of the bit of ivory. Maud, on the contrary, sat erect, looking her mother full in the face, with her hands folded on her knees.

"My dear, I hope you have made up your mind to be more reasonable. I hope you have thought seriously, and are prepared to listen to Mr. Durborough, now that he has returned—which, indeed, I am sure is more than one had any right to expect he would do, under——"

"I neither expected nor wished it," said Maud, quickly.

"It really seems, my dear, like flying in the face of Providence, when everything that we could possibly wish for offers, that you should set yourself against it in this—this shocking way. As Sir Andrew says, what do you expect? Very few girls have such a chance of settling, and I really must say I think it ungrateful after all Sir Andrew has done for you, to be so—so obstinate and headstrong."

"I don't wish to be ungrateful," said Maud, with unusual gentleness. "I am very sorry to be a burden to Sir Andrew,

and were there any other escape from the position in which I am, but by a marriage which I know would be a sin, depend upon it, mamma, I would too gladly embrace it."

"A sin, my dear? That is such an exaggerated way of talking . . . you are so very high-flown, as Sir Andrew says. I am sure I am the last person who would urge you to do anything sinful; and if Mr. Durborough wasn't highly-principled, and all that, I wouldn't press you—I wouldn't, indeed. A man of that age, as Sir Andrew say, is just what you want to quell your impetuosity; and as to love, love-matches, as a rule, turn out unhappily, there is no denying it. A marriage founded upon respect and esteem—"

"I have no particular respect or esteem for Mr. Durborough. Mamma, let us understand each other. You want to get rid of me; it is very natural. I don't the least complain. I am in Sir Andrew's way, and he makes you feel it, as he does me. It is much better that I should stay here no longer. Send me away, anywhere. Let me go and earn my bread somehow, and be no longer a burden upon your husband; but do not try and force me into this marriage, for I cannot and I will not do it!"

"Really, I don't know what to do, you are so violent, Maud! Who wants you to 'earn your bread'? Such an expression! We only want to see you comfortably settled. It is a great anxiety—of course it is, and I am sure Sir Andrew has done everything for you, you could possibly expect, and it is very ungrateful of you talking in that way."

"I am only saying the truth, mamma, and you know it . . . As to marrying for love, is it expecting too much that there should be *some*, on one side or the other? Mr. Durborough has chosen me like a cow or a horse. For any ardent affection, I might as well marry my grandfather. If I can't love the man I marry, at least he can love me, and I won't marry one who chooses me like a cow or a horse."

She spoke with raillery, but Lady Herriesson knew that the substance of her daughter's words were said in sober earnest. She tried, in a weak way, to prove that the strength of Mr. Durborough's affection was shown in his return to the charge after a first rebuff, but Maud was not to be taken in.

"He comes back because Sir Andrew did not tell him all I said the first time, and assured him of success, perhaps, if he

tried again. He had much better know at once that it is of no use. Will you tell Sir Andrew, mamma, or shall I?"

"Oh, I wash my hands of it," murmured Lady Herriesson, with a helpless, deprecatory movement of the paper-knife. "You must talk to Sir Andrew yourself. I see that I have no influence over you; you pay no attention to *me*. And, after all I have done for you, too, as Sir Andrew says—" Here Lady Herriesson put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"You are right, mamma. We had better not speak again upon this subject, you and I. It is useless; and I am only tempted to say a great many things I had better not say." With which speech Maud left her mother's boudoir.

But the following morning, after breakfast, in Sir Andrew's study, that battle was fought in good earnest, which was to determine Maud's whole future career.

Sir Andrew stood with his back to the fire, his coat-tails turned up, his face very red, his eyes burning angrily as he looked at Maud, who stood before him. He had placed a chair for her, when she had come in, but she had chosen to stand, and had been standing for the last quarter of an hour. All the veteran force of argument had been brought up, and had charged again and again, and had been repulsed with loss. And now the enemy, inflamed with the rage and shame consequent on defeat, was preparing for a last attack, in which no quarter should be shown.

"Pray, may I ask what you intend to do? Perhaps you mean to marry the red-nosed parson, and live at my park-gates with a swarm of children, and expect me to support you?" (Maud coloured, in spite of herself, as she thought of poor Miles.) "If you do, you're confoundedly mistaken. If you choose to make some disgraceful marriage, which I suppose you call *romantic*, remember I have nothing further to say to you. I have already done a great deal more for you, and borne your airs with more patience than most men would have done, but I tell you fairly my patience is exhausted—there! Do you know what your position is, young lady? You haven't a farthing in the world you can call your own! If it wasn't for me you would be almost starving in a lodging in Torquay! For seven years you have lived in my house, and I defy any one to say I haven't behaved well to you. You've had a couple of horses of your own; I have sent you to London, and paid your mil-

liners' bills; you have never been denied anything you wanted, and this is the return you make me. You won't take a home of your own when it is offered you—a most unexceptionable offer in every respect, with settlements such as you may wait a long time before you get again. Pray, do you think I am going to keep you here, and indulge your confounded romantic rubbish, until some penniless blackguard takes your fancy?"

"Not if I can help it," said Maud, in a voice tremulous with indignation. "I am conscious enough, Sir Andrew, of the obligations under which it has been my fate to be placed towards you, without being so delicately reminded of them—conscious enough to be most anxious to relieve you of the burden of my presence in your house as soon as possible. It cannot be too soon. But I will not relieve you, and myself too, of this burden by marrying an old man because he is rich, and holds out the inducement of leaving me a rich widow some day. I suppose that is what a large settlement means. When I marry, whether it be a 'penniless blackguard' or not, I shall not look forward to widowhood as the consummation of earthly felicity. And therefore, once for all, I do not choose to marry Mr. Durborough. I will not sell myself—no, not even to be independent of *you*. But for all that, Sir Andrew," here the girl strove in vain to speak calmly, but angry sobs almost choked her, "depend on it, I shall not continue to trouble you here much longer. After what you have said—and I am glad you have spoken plainly at last—the sooner I leave your roof the better."

She turned quickly to the door, and had left the study before her astonished adversary could find any fitting rejoinder. She ran up-stairs and locked herself into her room. Then she flung herself upon the bed, and the storm, like a great wave, broke over her; the long-pent tears—tears of passion, and humiliation, and anguish—burst forth, until the bed shook under her as she lay and sobbed there with uncontrolled violence.

It had come, then, at last. The crisis which she had long felt was imminent, which latterly, in her restless longing to be free, she had at times almost impatiently hoped for, had come. Words had been spoken which could never be forgotten, and the only thing left for her was to go. No matter how, no matter when, the main point now for her was, as soon as might

be, to get out of this man's house, who had reproached her in the coarsest terms with her dependence upon him, and to shake the dust from off her feet in going.

Then, after awhile, the tempest of outraged feelings subsided, leaving the sky, indeed, black and starless, but succeeded by that dead, cold calm in which alone permanent resolves are made. She would write to London by that day's post; she would advertise for a situation of some sort; but what? What was she fit for? Had she the patience and temper to be a nursery governess? Had she the education fitting her to be a schoolroom teacher? In these days of sewing-machines, could she support herself by her needle? She asked herself these and similar questions, turning over in her mind twenty different schemes, and seeing the difficulties that beset each of them as she sat there, leaning her two elbows on the table, her hot cheek resting on her hands, her keen bright eye fixed upon the wall opposite.

Small accidents determine almost all the serious events of life. The Times was a paper Maud never read; but the supplement of the Times several days ago had been brought up to Maud's room with some large photographs which she was going to mount; and there it still lay on the table. She had sat nearly an hour, immovable; opposite this paper, when her eye fell on one of the columns of advertisements. "Wanted," in conspicuous letters, ran all down this column. She drew it towards her, and began wearily spelling down the list of housekeepers, cooks, butlers, gardeners, whose remarkable merits, in their various ways, had hitherto been overlooked by an indiscriminating public. Then came an advertisement of another sort: a single gentleman who wanted a housekeeper; his requirements seemed to be small, only he wished for "a personal interview," and, upon the whole, Maud thought she would not answer this advertisement. She passed on to the next and the next; whatever the advertiser sought, whether governess, companion, or housekeeper, the necessary qualifications were such as Maud felt she had not. At last she came to the following:

"Wanted immediately, by a lady resident in the country, a young woman as second lady's maid, who is a good reader and writes a clear hand. Must make herself generally useful. High testimonials will be required. Address A. C., Post Office, Salisbury."

She read this twice over. Why should

she not answer it? What was it to her whether she were called a servant or not? This sounded like the very thing for her. She could read aloud, and was quick at her needle. And as to making herself "generally useful," in her present frame of mind she would hail any hard manual labour; had she not often longed for it at Mortlands? She was fit for nothing better than this; she was not gifted or skilled in anything whereby she could earn her bread; but *this* she felt she might conscientiously undertake. And with all her pride, she had none of that particular kind which would have made her hesitate to take this step. Of course, it entailed an entire severance from everything else in her past life. Under another name, unknown, she would begin a new existence; her mother should hear from her occasionally, but the secret of her hiding should be carefully kept, or she would be prevented from carrying out her intentions; and she was now resolved that she would leave no stone unturned to carry them out if it were possible.

The chief difficulty that struck her at the outset was the matter of testimonials. How was she to procure such a one as would be satisfactory to the advertiser? Chance came to the aid of her quick intelligence, sharpened as it was by the craving to accomplish this thing. The afternoon's post brought her the following letter:

Bristol, Feb. 14th.

DEAR AND HONOR'D MISS. This leaves Me well, as it hopes to find You. I have got, Dear Miss, *a situation*, but not such as you think, and was looking after, for Me. Mr. Joseph Hart, that is a carpenter in this city, and a good business, has been visiting at Aunt's of Sunday evenings, and him and me is engaged to be married, Dear Miss. He is a little fellow, but he is very Respectable, if You please, Miss, and he can keep me comfortable, which, and he says I shan't have to do no work, but mind the house. So this, dear Miss, is a better *situation* than ever I expected to get, and our Bands is to be called next Sunday. And knowing you will like to hear it, Miss, I write this, and please to tell Mr. Miles with my duty. And I am with affecte respect, Dear Miss,

Your obedt. Servt,  
MARY HIND.

This letter gave Maud real pleasure. She

was not so engrossed by her own selfish troubles as to be unable to sympathise with her little maid, in whose future she had taken so keen an interest, and she sat down and answered that letter on the spot. Then, after a while, an idea struck her, an idea which she at first rejected as unjustifiable but which, on second thoughts (they are anything but "the best" very often) she deliberately took up again, argued its claims to consideration, and finally adopted. This was the making use of that testimonial which Mr. Miles had written for Mary Hind, now that it could be of no use to the girl, and adopting that name as her own. That this was a very grave offence, and one punishable by law, certainly never clearly presented itself to Maud's mind. In her eagerness to solve a difficulty which seemed absolutely insurmountable, she caught at an expedient which, if not strictly right, could at least do no harm to any one. All the virtues wherewith Mr. Miles had accredited the little school-girl in his certificate, would he not have amplified upon them largely, had he been writing of Maud? In the character given there was no deception, only in the name of its bearer. And what was in a name? It was thus she argued with her conscience, until she had persuaded it to allow her to make use of the writing in her desk.

She had time to write her letter, and walk with it to the village post—she would not trust to the prying eyes of servants over the post-bag—and back again in the dusk, before the first dinner bell had rung. But John Miles caught sight of her from a cottage window, and wondered what could bring Miss Pomeroy to the village post-office at that hour in the evening.

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