PLAYTHINGS AND PARODIES

BARRY PAIN

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PLAYTHINGS

AND

PARODIES

BY

BARRY PAIN

AUTHOR OF "IN A CANADIAN CANOE," ETC.

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Dedicated

TO

MRS. RUDOLF LEHMANN.

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THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY.

I.—OF MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.

A SLIGHT INACCURACY.

THIS is not a tale. It is a conversation which I had with a complete stranger. If you ask me why I talked to him, I have no very good reason to give. I would simply tell you to spend three hours of solitude in that same compartment on that same line. You may not know the line; which is neither your loss nor the company's gain. I do, and I had spent three hours alone on it. And at the end of three hours I longed for human converse. I was prepared to talk Persian poetry to an assistant commissioner; I was ready to talk to anyone about anything; I would have talked to a pariah dog; talked kindly, too.

So when the complete stranger got in I began at once. You see, I did not know then that he was an inaccurate young man. I thought he was a nicely dressed, average speci-

men. It never does to judge from appearances. I once knew a T. G., or, rather, Tranter of the Bombay side knew him . . . but that is another story. First we talked weather, and then we talked horse. He smoked my cheroots, and I told him several things which were quite true. He began to look a little uneasy, as if he were not used to that kind of talk. Then he told me the story of the little mare which he bought in Calcutta. He gave Rs. 175 for her. It was thought by his friends at the time that he had been too generous; she had a very bad cough and a plaintive look in the eyes.

"I have now had her for two years," he said, slowly removing my cheroot from his lips, "and she has not got over that cough yet. She also continues to look plaintive. But she is fast. The other day I drove her sixty miles along the road in an *ekka*."

I was given to understand that the time had been five hours, twenty minutes, and a decimal. Well, a country-bred mare will go almost any pace you like to ask. I should have thought about believing the man if he had not

put in the decimal. As it was, I never really wanted to call him a liar until he picked up the book which I had been reading. It was a copy of "Plain Tales from the Hills," and it lay on the seat by my side. I have a liking for that book, and I often read it. It is a good book.

"Can you understand," he asked, "why that book is so popular in England? Perhaps you will allow me to explain. I understand books as well as I understand horses and men. First, note this. Even in your schooldays you probably saw the difference between the prose of Cicero and the conversational Latin of Plautus."

This last remark enabled me to place the man. He was, it seemed, a full-sized Oxford prig. They are fond of throwing their education about like that. Which is loathly in them. But they do it. I explained to him that I had never been to school.

"Well, then, to come down to your level," he continued. "You have read English books, and you must have seen that written English

is not like spoken English. When we speak, for instance,—to take quite a minor point,—we often put a full stop before the relative clauses —add them as an afterthought."

Which struck me as being true.

"But when we write we only put a comma. The author of 'Plain Tales from the Hills' saw this, and acted on the principle. He punctuated his writing as he did his speaking; and used more full stops than any man before him. Which was genius."

I think—I am not sure, but I think—that at this point I blushed.

"Secondly, the public want to be mystified. They like references to things of which they have never heard. They read the sporting papers for that reason. So this man wrote of Anglo-Indian life, and put very little explanation into it. It was all local color. Do you suppose the average cockney knows what 'P. W. D. accounts' are? Of course he doesn't. But he likes to be treated as if he did. The author noted this point. And that also shows genius. Thirdly, the public do *not* like the

good man, nor do they like the bad man. They like the man-who-has-some-good-in-him-after-all. 'I am cynical,' says our author, 'and desperately worldly, and somewhat happy-go-lucky, yet I, the same man, am interested in children. Witness my story of Tods and my great goodness to Muhammed Din. With all my cynicism I have a kind heart. Was I not kind even unto Jellaludin? I am the man-who-has-some-good-in-him-after-all. Love me!' Genius again. Fourthly, take the subject-matter—soldiers, horses, and flirts. Of these three the public never weary. It may not have been genius to have seen that. And the public like catch-words. I knew a girl once who did the serio-comic business at the ——, but that is another story. To recognize the beauty of catch-words may not be genius either. But it *is* genius to say more than you know, and to seem to know more than you say—to be young and to seem old. There are people who are connected with the Government of India who are so high that no one knows anything about them except themselves, and their own knowl-

edge is very superficial. Is our author afraid? Not a bit. He speaks of them with freedom, but with vagueness. He says Up Above. And the public admire the freedom, and never notice the vagueness. Bless the dear public!"

The train and the complete stranger stopped simultaneously. I was not angry. "How do you come to know the workings of the author's mind?" I asked.

I put the question calmly, and I waited to see him shrivel.

He never shriveled. He was getting his gun-case out from under the seat. "I am the author," he said blandly. "Good-afternoon." Then he got out.

He was so bland that I should have quite believed him if I had not written the book myself. As it is, I feel by no means sure about it.

Which is curious.

II.—OF MR. JOHN RUSKIN.

FROM LECTURE I.—ARROWROOT.

49. EAT! Nay, you do not eat. I do not know why any man of us under heaven should talk about eating. We spend our money—the money of a great nation—on filthy fossils and bestial pictures; on party journals and humiliating charities; on foolish books and gas-lit churches. And on solid, honest beef we will spend nothing, unless we are driven by necessity; and, even then, there are those who content them with frozen mutton, the fat of which is base and inferior. I do not think there is any sadder sight in this world than a nation without appetite.

I have pointed out to-night that the meat and vegetables which you have despised—nay, which you are daily despising—go to form part of the body; and that the brain is a part of the body; and that on the brain all just concep-

tions depend. So far we found that the scientist was with us. I left him dazed and trembling, hesitating on the verge of conclusions which I have not feared to state quite plainly. If you forget every other word that I have said, remember at least those conclusions; for I do feel that they are significant and important to every one of us. I will state them once more. *The brain-life increases with the amount we eat. If we would have just conceptions, we must devour seven solid meat-meals a day.* You do not do it. You cannot, in any true sense, be said to eat. Why do you thus neglect your duty? Have patience with me a little longer, and I will show you why.

I say, firstly, that with most of us this thing is a physical impossibility. We trifle in some sort with three, or, at the most, four meat-meals, and we dare to say that we eat. I do not wish to speak wildly or harshly. On the contrary, the wonder to me is that we can do what we do on the little that we take. But have we not fallen very low when, in our struggle upward, we find ourselves blocked by a physi-

cal impossibility? Secondly, we are the victims of the insanity of avarice. How long most people would look at the largest turbot before they would give the price of a first folio of Shakspere for it! We venture even to ask the blessing of Heaven on lentil soup and a slice of jam pudding. For what do you suppose is the cause of this consuming white leprosy of vegetarian restaurants which has broken out all over our fair land? Lentil soup is cheap, and for that reason we allow it to take the place of nobler food. Every day I see in your streets some fresh sign of this insanity. I see men go forth from their houses and pollute the pure morning air with the breath of their filthy lungs, when that same breath might be sweetened and disinfected with the aroma of a *Villar y Villar*. Is this offense against nature excusable on any plea of economy?

Lastly. You are influenced by fashion. There is no need of words of mine for proof of this. I will say nothing of fashion, and I will not chide you. I know that you are weak, and the knowledge saddens me. I will only ask

you to let me read to you four lines of true poetry:

> Her eyes were deeper than the depths
> Of waters stilled at even;
> She had three lilies in her hand,
> And the stars in her hair were seven.

Aye, and even to-night it may be that this blessed damosel looks down upon us from heaven's golden bar. Can you not picture the sorrow that must be in her eyes? Can you be any longer content that your meat-meals shall be as the lilies, and not as the stars in number? Remember this, my friends: *The lilies look up to the stars.*

50. What, then, shall we do? I have now spoken to you for several hours, and I must bring my lecture to an end. I have drawn my bow at a venture; I have shot my arrow; I shall find it after many days; not, as the poet sings, in the heart of an oak, but in the root of our national degradation. That, indeed, is one of the reasons why I called this lecture "Arrowroot." What shall we do? The night is here, in which no man can either work or eat.

For the present, my friends, our holiest act will be to go to bed. And if, as you lie there to-night, sleep refuses to come to you, take refuge in no vile drugs, no doctor's narcotics. Drink rather of the pure arrowroot; in other words, read a few pages of this lecture, which I have had printed by an entirely honest man, as well as he can do it, and which will be sold for a just price at the door of the hall. So shall you sleep well.

And on the morrow may we wake, you and I, with fresh strength and a better appetite.

III.—OF MR. R. D. BLACKMORE.

CHRIS AND CHRISSIE.

At this my uncle raised himself slowly from his chair. All his actions were slow and deliberate, not from laziness or rheumatics, from which two complaints he never suffered, but because he would undertake nothing without due care and forethought. And this was one of the reasons why he was so respected that his opinion was constantly being asked in the village, and his orchards were never robbed except in unusually good seasons, when the fine sense of the Lonton boys pointed out to them that the jargonelles were unduly plentiful, and should be thinned, in order to promote more thankfulness for the remainder.

He went straight to the little corner cupboard where the cigars were kept, drew his bunch of keys with the yellow labels on them from his pocket, and attempted to unlock the

door with the key of the little toolhouse that stood at the south end of the garden just where the Lonton Brook entered our land; being, in fact, a little short-sighted, but unwilling to acknowledge the fact, from humility, lest he should be credited with a greater age than it had pleased Providence to give him. He found the right key at last, and got the door open. There were two boxes—one of threepenny and one of sixpenny. That, at least, was the way he distinguished them, having a hearty contempt for all foreign names and fal-lals, as became a good English market-gardener with land of his own and the third best pew in the village church. Now these cigars were a luxury, upon the purchase of which my uncle never would have embarked knowingly; but the unforeseen overtakes us in many ways, and assuredly it had overtaken my uncle in the matter of these cigars. His head man, Long Jim, had showed such misplaced confidence in human nature as to send bushel after bushel of early kidneys up to the "Green Lion" as fast as the landlord, a man of no prin-

ciple, liked to order them. Now it was well known all over Lonton that the "Green Lion" was in a failing way, the beer being inferior and the house standing too far back from the coach road. At any rate, as no money was forthcoming, my uncle had been compelled to take the "Green Lion's" entire stock of cigars instead; and though it grieved him at the time, he found them useful afterward to mark occasions.

"Which shall it be, Chris; threepenny or sixpenny?" he said. "Chris, you're a good lad, and you're going to marry a sensible girl with no nonsense about her. So it shall be a sixpenny. Chris, my boy, you shall see me smoke a sixpenny in honor of your Chrissie."

I thanked him humbly, feeling quite sure now that he considered it a great occasion, and one of which he approved. For the sixpennies not only cost twice as much as the others, but did not entirely suit him, being very full in flavor and (it was thought by those who had had the good luck to try them) a trifle out of condition. I made a paper spill and lit his

cigar for him, and mixed him a second glass of rum and water without saying anything about it. He did not seem to notice what I had done, but he sipped it cheerfully. He only allowed himself one glass every night; sometimes I took upon myself to mix him a second, when the weather had been wayward and he seemed to me to require consolation. He always chid me for doing it; but, being a sensible man, and knowing that there should be no bad blood between near relations, he would finally forgive me and drink the liquor; for he knew that, if he did not drink it, it would fall to the portion of our old servant Martha, and that rum and water was too high feeding for that spirited old dame. At this moment Martha tapped at the door and entered. She told us that Long Jim had just come back from Birstock, that he had put up the cart and seen to the pony, and that she had given him supper, as ordered. Further, that Long Jim had eaten two pounds of solid beef, but had not touched the undercut, having been duly instructed that the undercut was not for the likes

of him; that he had drunk therewith three pints of the second-best ale; that he seemed to have something on his mind, and had hardly spoken; and that he sent his respects and compliments, and would like to speak to Master Chris.

"I will go to him," I said, starting up.

"No, no," said my uncle, with a natural feeling that Long Jim was his property, and had no business to speak at all, except in his presence and after encouragement; "show him in here."

Long Jim's real name was James Long, but he had been called Long Jim from his great height. He was a thin, dry, humble, dejected man. He had a large family and worked hard for it; and was treated with a good deal of loving contempt by his busy little wife. He came shambling into the room with his hat in one hand, and gazed sheepishly first at my uncle and then at myself.

"You may sit down, James Long," said my uncle, "and tell me what you have to say."

He seated himself awkwardly. "There be a

wise woman come to Birstock, and she do say that there be rain more'n enow to fall next Lord's Day, an' it seemeth."

"Jim," I struck in, for I could see his manner, "you're lying. Tell us the truth, and don't shirk it."

"Miss Chrissie Greenhouse hath left her home, an' no man knoweth where she be—no, not one on 'em; nor why she hath done it."

I do not quite know what happened next. My uncle shaded his eyes with one hand, as if the glare of the candles hurt them. I felt that I must do something or die; so I drank my uncle's rum and water. I could hear poor Jim blubbering. My uncle was the first to speak.

"James Long, be quiet." I never before had seen my uncle look so brave and noble as he did then. "Where are we?"

"In the first vollum," sobbed Jim.

"Then we must at once get on a false scent, and, to do that, we must have a detective. We must keep on with the false scent all through the second volume, and find the right trail about the beginning of the third. Bear

up, Chris, my boy; we're all right, because we're in a novel. Have a cigar. Have a six—I mean, have a threepenny cigar."

It was my first cigar. While I smoked it, we discussed our plans.

"George Bradby is at the bottom of this," I said. My uncle slapped his knee. "You're right, Chris. Of course, he isn't really," he added in a whisper, "but we must keep it up."

"Else there'll be no second vollum," said Jim sadly.

IV.—OF MR. WALTER PATER.

MARIUS AT SLOANE STREET.

ABOVE all, there was at this time a desire abroad to attain that which was best. It had spread over the country like a great wave; its furthest ripple reaching even to the lower and more common minds, and awakening in them an intelligent seriousness, a newer and brighter perception of their own immediate good, and the will to secure it at any cost to others. It seemed, as it were, a stray fragrance from the old school of Cyrene, blown by some petulant wind down the ages, and lighting at last upon this weary, overwrought civilization. At least, this lucent, flame-like devotion to self– this strenuous, almost feverish, worship of the Ego —was there, vividly present among men, and like to some new religion in its animating power. And if upon its high altar the happiness of others had to be sacrificed to personal

and individual ends, that sacrifice was ever made—as, indeed, all such must be made—in perfect simplicity and hopefulness. There was no tetchy fretful complaining. The individual and his ideal being one, his holiest act was to please himself. All that was lost, with that purpose, was well lost; the highest and purest form of asceticism was the utter devotion to self.

Marius—susceptible, as he had ever been, to all sweet influences—found himself strangely dominated by the beauty of this new spirit. Standing at the corner of the old *Via Sloanensis*, he felt almost faint with the longing to do something—a little thing, perhaps, but still something—to show how he loved himself. The public vehicles—snow white or scarlet, sapphire or peach color—passed before him in gorgeous procession from the distant circus. To him—as, indeed, to others—each color had an inner meaning, and was not only decorative. It was an appeal, a voice that called:

"Come into us. Be part of us. Come to the dreamy South or to the burning West. Come all the way, all the way!"

The afternoon had been broken by showers, the wind only half drying the pavement before another torrent came; and Marius noted the ardent and special apprehension of the *subsellia interiora* of these vehicles, and the musical chant of *Plenum intra! Plenum intra!* Yes, even in this crowd of quite ordinary and common people, the new spirit was showing itself. The renunciation of others for self, that true sacrifice, was made again and again, willingly and cheerfully, each time that one of these public vehicles stopped.

A chance gave Marius his opportunity, and he at once decided to take it. "I am going from this wet weariness," he said to Cornelius, who stood by his side. "In yonder vehicle there is room for one only; I shall be that one; and you, dear friend, will wait for the next."

Without another word he pushed his way through the throng. Never had he been more conscious of his strength, his great, fiery manhood. Carelessly enough he flung from the step of the vehicle some daughter of the people who would have anticipated him. He had

not noticed that she was not alone. Afterward he could remember but little of what next happened. His capacity for receiving exquisite physical impressions seemed suddenly satiated by some intense experience. He was only conscious of quick movement; and then he knew that he had seated himself in the road, and that the people were crowding about him. For a few seconds he seemed to be living too quickly, too keenly.

"What has happened?" he gasped, with a look of mad appeal.

"You have been kicked," said Cornelius simply, as he helped him to his feet.

"Ah!" He limped away with the young soldier. "I have indeed been kicked," he said very slowly. Then, as the fullness and sharpness of the sensation became more convincing, he burst out: "*Vixi! Vixi!* And where is the nearest temple of Æsculapius?"

V.—OF COUNT LYOF N. TOLSTOI.

DONOVITCH'S CONFESSION (SHOCKINGLY TRANSLATED).

DONOVITCH uttered two sighs, and for some time remained silent. His face had become longer, and there was more of his mouth. His ears twitched. It was frightful. Two passengers, who had been going on to Liverpool Street, got out at Charing Cross. I think they said that they would go on by the next 'bus. One of them was a young woman; she wore a green hat. It has nothing to do with the story or anything else, and that is why I mention it. I am a Russian realist, and in a fair way of business. Admire, and pass on.

"Music is an awful thing," he went on at last. "What is it? Why does it do what it does? What is there in his wife's musical evening that makes the husband to be detained on business? Answer me that. You

cannot? I will tell you, because I *know*. People say that music causes *ennui*—that it bores; also, that it occasionally distracts. Lies, lies, lies—all lies! It elevates the soul. That is why music is so dangerous and acts at times in so peculiar a manner. If one's soul is elevated too far—how am I to express myself? —if one's soul passes out of one's reach, one has to get along without it until it comes down again.

"On that particular morning it was bright and sunny. I felt light, but prescient; I knew that the Italian would come again, and that something would happen. I want you to see that I was not entirely myself even before the Italian came. New feelings, new qualities suddenly declared themselves within me. What was I experiencing? Dyspepsia? I cannot say. The Italian came at eleven o'clock. I hated him—hated his black hair and coarse face—hated the mechanical piano with the green baize covering — hated the immoral monkey which sat on the top. I would not let them see that I hated them. I was too

proud for that, but my heart swelled. It was very painful, but I kept quiet. I was determined to be perfectly natural; so I went to the sideboard and drank a glass of *vodka*. Then I lit a cigarette; I thought that it would deaden the feeling. I said to my soul: 'Soul, don't move. Stop where you are. Refuse to be elevated.' Yet I must confess that directly he began to play 'See-saw,' I felt my control over myself lapsing from me. I went to the window and looked at the Italian. I can see him now—a man in robust health, well nourished, with horrible red lips, turning a handle. Do you know 'See-saw'? They always play it at the circus when the two performing dogs are fooling about at opposite ends of a plank. Every bar sends the soul up with a jerk; you will not believe me. But there is a point at which one positively wishes the music to stop. With me, that point was reached very soon. I flung open the window, and said distinctly: 'Go away. Go quite away, and leave my soul alone, can't you?' I do not think the Italian understood. His

monkey grinned. Oh, why did it grin? It ought not to have grinned. It is immoral to grin. In China monkeys are only allowed to grin on important occasions. Here they do it in the open street, with young girls passing every minute. Do let us be moral! Have you never thought what the effect *must* be on the cab horses? The Italian changed his tune. It was a florid arrangement of a music-hall song—I forget by what composer. I turned back into the room and flung myself on a sofa. I sobbed, but I do not know why. Then I put on my boots, and smoked two cigarettes at once, to deaden the feeling. I may tell you that I knew very well now what I was going to do; it was all planned in my mind just as it actually happened. Yet, if he had stopped playing at that moment all might have been well. He did not stop; he began to play 'Annie Rooney.'

"I crept with soft, wolf-like steps into the hall. I took from the umbrella-stand a slightly curved Damascus blade which had never been used, and which was extremely sharp. It had

been intended for the water rate, but now I had another use for it. Then I put on my hat and went out. I do not remember how I got out of the front door and into the street. I cannot say how I moved, whether I walked or ran. I remember nothing of all that. I remember only the expression of the Italian's face as I stepped toward him, holding the dagger behind me. It was an expression of terror —absolute, abject terror. I was glad to see it. The monkey looked annoyed, and darted a quick look of interrogation at his master. Suddenly the Italian smiled, and assuming an air of indifference so false as to be ludicrous, said: 'We was giving you a little music.'

"He did not finish his sentence. I felt the need of giving free course to my rage. With a sudden cry I flung myself upon him. I must have frightened him dreadfully, for he became as white as a sheet; he ran away, accompanied by the monkey.

"'You are poltroons, poltroons!' I shouted after them. I did not care much, because the mechanical piano was there. I took it by the

handle with both hands, and shook it convulsively. The contact was repulsive, but I felt driven to it. It shrieked terribly. Then I felt that this was not enough; it did not satisfy me. I raised my dagger, and struck it twice in the 'Annie Rooney,' section. It never struggled. There was a jet of warm arpeggios, and then it was still. I crept back again to the house, and smoked some more cigarettes. Then I went to sleep. I slept for two days."

Donovitch ceased, and buried his head in his hands.

"This is Liverpool Street," I remarked.

He rose hurriedly, to descend from the 'bus, tumbled down the flight of steps, and broke his silly neck.

I am a respectable Russian realist, but I *was* glad.

THE HUNDRED GATES.

THE HUNDRED GATES.

A DREAM OF BAD BOOKS.

My friend Timson, of the Psychical Society, is peculiarly successful in the matter of dreams. For years they have gone on in an ascending ratio; each one is more vivid than the last, and fulfilled in more detail. There are some people who consider that Timson overdoes it a little, that he rides his nightmares too hard. Tastes differ as to the proportion of untrustworthy narrative which a man may introduce about himself into the general conversation; and when a man has three distinct dreams in one night, and relates them all at one dinner on the following evening, he does lay himself open to a certain amount of criticism. But Timson is no ordinary man, and cannot be judged by ordinary standards. He lives in a haunted house, his wife is a medium, and he numbers among his intimate acquaintance several fascinating people who have posi-

tively seen with their bodily eyes things unspeakable. His extensive leisure is spent entirely in researches of the deepest and most psychical character, and though you may be thankless enough to find him a little wearisome, you must at least own that he is an authority in his special subject. In fact, what Timson does not know, or think he knows, about the unseen world is hardly worth the knowing.

Yet when, a few months ago, I told Timson a dream from which I had recently suffered, he proved most unsatisfactory. I related it to him partly to repay him for the many wicked falsehoods he must have told me at different times about himself, but chiefly because I thought that Timson's great knowledge of this subject would enable him to give me some explanation and advice. In the latter point I was wrong. Timson is an exponent of the scientific method which does not explain but classifies. In my case he refused even to classify definitely. I could get little from him except some criticism on parts of my story. I

may possibly have offended him by something in my manner which he mistook for levity, but it appeared that the fatal objection was that my dream had not come true, and never could come true, and was therefore not worth consideration. Now, although admitting the fact, I took exception to his deductions from it. I pointed out to him that I was only a beginner, and that if I were encouraged I should soon acquire the right knack; that, besides, a dream which did not come true must be more startling to him than the other kind. But my arguments were of no use; he positively refused to classify my story in its present incomplete condition, although he owned that if it ever did come true it would rank as an aggravated case of inverted telepathy. I do hope it is not going to be as bad as that, and I told Timson so. I feel that I could not bear it. I entreated him to tell me if he thought that a few weeks at the seaside, or riding exercise, or a generous diet, would do anything to avert disaster. But at this point the oracle had the misfortune to lose its temper, and insisted that

I was not being serious with it. So I obtained no further information.

In laying my dream before the unscientific public I must request them not to fall into Timson's error of imagining that I would trifle with them. I account for it myself in this way. A month before, I had been confined to my room for several days with a sprained ankle, and during that period I had been supplied by my friends with light literature. I dare say they meant it well, but if I should ever again be afflicted with a sprained ankle, I will either take it plain, or I will choose the light literature myself.

The first distinct sensation that occurred to me after falling asleep was that I had started to take a nice long walk in the country. I had passed through Putney, across Wimbledon Common, and into a shady lane, and I was feeling duller and duller with every step that took me further from London and civilization. I am always sorry for the poor people who live all the year round in the country. How many poor children there must be amid our rustic

lanes and hedgerows who will pass their whole lives without ever having seen the interior of an omnibus or the exterior of a sandwich man! While I was occupied with such sad thoughts, I was suddenly surprised by seeing before me a large square field, the sides of which were composed almost entirely of wooden gates, there being only a yard or two of low hedge in between each. One of these gates was rather higher than the rest, and seemed to form the principal entrance. This was unoccupied, but on each of the others there was one person seated. I stood still and counted them. There were a hundred gates in all, twenty-five on each side. For some moments I hesitated. Curiosity advised me to inquire the reason for this phenomenon. It would be absurd to suppose that a field would wantonly have a hundred gates with ninety-nine of them occupied, unless there was some good reason for it. Dignity, on the other hand, urged that it was beneath me to show the least interest in anything except myself. As a rule I obey the voice of Dignity, but on this occasion Curiosity

prevailed, and I stepped up to the nearest gate.

On the gate a man of middle age was seated, of striking appearace. He wore a pointed beard, and he was unusually handsome. His figure was athletic and graceful. It is always difficult to remember what anyone wears, but he left in my mind a general impression of expensive fur, diamond sleeve-links, and great glossiness of boot. Raising my hat, I apologized for troubling him, and asked if he could give me any information. He looked up, and threw away the cigar which he was smoking. In a languid voice he answered, "We are stock characters—out of books, you know—and we're turned out to grass for the present, and that's why we sit on gates. Fatiguing weather, is it not?" He paused to light another cigar. "Take my own case, for instance."

"Thank you," I said; "I don't smoke."

He took no notice of my remark, and I see now that I must have misunderstood him. "I am a hero," he continued, "the ideal man as imagined by the idealess woman. I have been

wonderfully popular in my time. At present I sit here and practice the leading traits in my character—my consumption of cigars, for instance." He flung away the one he was smoking and carefully selected another. He sniffed at it gently, smiled, and dropped it into the ditch.

"I recognize you, sir," I said. "In most of the ladies' novels I think it is stated that you were educated at Cambridge or Oxford?"

"Good old Cambridge College!" he interpolated.

"Some of the books have given details," I went on.

"Oh, details!" he interrupted, "I should think they did. I rowed in the May sixes shortly after I'd taken my Fellowship at King's. The fellows there eat ham pie and drink seltzer and hock. Such times! Learned men they are, too, but cynical—very cynical. I remember when the old Regius Professor was coaching me for my Smalls—in which I took a Special, sir, without work—he turned to me and said, with a bitter laugh: 'My motto's *Pro ego*, sir; *Pro ego*—pass the audit.' Splendid man he

was, but always drunk! The enthusiasm he could awake in the young was wonderful. When he was raised to a Bishopric they accompanied him to the station, shouting after his cab in the words of the ten thousand under Insanias: 'Thalassis! Thalassis! the See! the See!'"

The excitement of recalling old times was too much for him, and he tumbled off his gate. He lay on his back, murmuring faintly, "Egus, ege, egum, egi, ego, ego." I have no conception what he meant, and after picking him up and putting him on his perch again, I ventured to ask for a free translation.

Before replying, he lighted and immediately threw away another cigar. "Ah!" he said pityingly, "you never had a classical education, you never were at Eton school. But you asked me, I believe, for a short sketch of my subsequent career. In after-life I frequently enter the army. She had refused me, you know, and my heart was broken. I did not know then, as I know now, that her only motive was that it would have cut the book short in the second volume if she had accepted me. They found

my horse next morning in the stable, covered with foam from head to foot."

"Poor old stable!" I sighed sympathetically.

"All night long," he continued, "I had been riding in the old desperate dare-devil way—— Can you go on?"

"I can," I replied. "The noble animal seemed to have caught the reckless untamed spirit of its rider. Over the black moorland and through the flooded river you sped together in that fearful ride. With the first glimmerings of dawn your resolution was taken, for your life was valueless."

"Thank you," he said; "you've left out a page or two, but it will do. I entered the army in order to die on the battlefield. She naturally became a Sister of Mercy, and found me delirious in the hospital. She nursed me night and day, moved softly about, pressed cooling drinks to my burning forehead—and all that kind of thing, you know. The doctor generally remarks that it is the nurse, and not the doctor that is to be complimented on my recovery."

"It is too true," I answered. "But you are not always in the army."

"Oh, no; but, wherever I am, I have much the same peculiarities. Wealth is one of them; hence an almost painful profusion of cigars. My strong emotions are another. I frequently push away my plate untasted, owing to strong emotions; my emotions are nothing if they're not strong. Just see me smother an oath in my beard."

"Don't trouble," I said, "if it hurts at all."

"Well, I have a small beard, and I take a large size in oaths; but I do want you to understand that my emotions are strong, and take a great deal of repression. At such times I generally crush my heel into something, or gnaw my teeth or mustache, or curse a menial. You see that heel. It's been ground into the maple-wood flooring, into the rich tiger skin on the carpet, into the wet sand of the seashore, into the fragrant violets, into almost everything into which a heel can be ground."

"And yet," I suggested, "you have your moments of repose."

"True," he replied, "but you see nothing of my heel then. I am not a Panpharmakon." This was another touch of the classics which was lost upon me. "On these occasions my accessories are more important even than myself; faultless evening dress, silken cushions, perfumed lamps, for instance. I merely sit there lazily peeling a peach—peaches are an expensive fruit, aren't they? or curling a loose leaf round my Manilla cheroot. A tame Circassian brings me a cup of Mocha coffee delicately flavored with kirschwasser. There's an Oriental tinge about it."

"And now," I asked, "can you tell me why all you people are sitting on gates?"

Flinging a handful of gold into my face, to show his profusion, he replied:

"Because those who use us have no style; so we're compelled to sit on gates."

"But," I urged, "the critics are always sitting on the style of those authors."

"Indeed!" he returned contemptuously; "then how do you account for the critic on the hearth? But I will bandy no more words with

you. Go and see my brother Jack on the next gate. He isn't rich, but he's burly, and athletic, and English. In some respects he's like me, and he's always in love."

I turned away without any intention of visiting Jack. I felt certain that Jack would probably request me to have a few words with some intimate friend of his on the gate next to him, and that I should be finally compelled to interview the whole of those ninety-nine individuals who were pining for someone to bore. I might possibly have a little conversation with some of them, but certainly not with all; and I was determined not to include Jack in my selection. However, as I passed his gate, he called to me:

"Stop a moment, sir. I am still as big, simple, light-hearted, frank, buoyant, and boyish as ever. You really ought to know me."

"I know you only too well," I replied brutally; "and you don't interest me."

"What!" he cried, "not interested in poor Jack, no one's enemy but his own, with an arm as white as a duchess's, and corded like a black-

smith's! You must be joking. Why, sir, I was playing football for England *v.* Wales the other day—a hot afternoon in June it was. I was half-forward, and we were being beaten, when I looked up and saw that the dear girl was watching us. It seemed to put new strength into me. I set my teeth hard, and with a cry of 'Julia!' plunged into the scrimmage, secured the ball, and bore it off in triumph to our own goal. I shall never forget it."

"Tell me honestly," I said, "are you often as far gone as this?"

"I am sorry to say," he answered, "that the public seem to have lost their taste for me in quite so strong a form. But I still exist. I still preach the great gospel of manliness."

"What is that?" I asked.

"Be strong. Knock your neighbor down, and love him as yourself."

I noticed with considerable satisfaction that the apostle of manliness was secured to his gate by a short iron chain, so I took this opportunity of expressing my opinion of him. "I regret," I said, "that I must repeat my asser-

tion that I am not interested in you. You have been done well, but of late years you have been overdone. I do not think much of your gospel, because I do not believe that the highest form of manhood is the affectionate bargee. I have also noticed some defects in your character. Your great point is your pluckiness; and yet you are not plucky. As you always knock your man down it stands to reason that you never attack anyone who is superior to yourself. You are constantly standing up for the right, but your method is so abominably dull and monotonous that you make the wrong seem preferable. When you were treated idiotically, I was amused at you; when you fell into better hands, I liked you; at the present moment I am exceedingly weary of you, sorry to have met you, and trust I shall never see you again. Good-morning."

His only answer, as I moved away, was a long, low whistle. This is the way in which he habitually expresses surprise.

I had been so disappointed with the two characters I had already seen that I thought I

would interview one or two of the opposite sex, and then go home. But I had not passed many gates before the occupant of one of them called out to me a little snappishly:

"Why don't you laugh?"

I turned round and saw before me a man of middle age, with sandy hair, and a pale green face. He was dressed as a city clerk, but without a hat, and he was smoking a new clay pipe.

"Why don't you laugh?" he repeated.

"Why should I?" I asked.

"Why should you? Well, sir, I'm the leading character of English comic verse, and I've just sat down on a new silk hat. I don't know what else you want. You must have heard it go pop, but there's no pleasing some people. Perhaps you didn't know my name was Jinkins. As a general rule, I've only just got to mention that, and then the smile begins to slowly spread itself. It's a curious fact how truly humorous all names are which end in *-kins*. There's nothing particular about the name Tom, but Tompkins is really funny. Jinkins is still funnier. Look here, you're not laughing!"

I felt too depressed to be rude to the man. Even as he spoke, the sun, which had been shining brightly, went in and the wind changed to due east. The air seemed to be heavily charged with flat soda water and the back numbers of a dead comic paper. When I told the dream to Timson he flatly denied that such an atmosphere was possible, even in dreams. But I experienced it, and I suppose I ought to know.

"I am very sorry," I said, "but I do not fancy that I shall ever smile again."

"But you haven't heard all," he replied, with a kind of desperation. "There's this pipe. Now I'm not used to smoking, so I shall be sick. Sometimes I travel on a steamer, and that makes me sick. It doesn't seem to matter much as long as I *am* sick. That's what England really wants. It's popular with all classes, but you're too dense to see it. Sometimes I go home drunk late at night, or I drop the baby, or I'm thrown off a horse, or I have a painful impediment in my speech. Curates recite me at penny readings, because there's no vulgarity

about me. And, as I said before, my name's Jinkins."

This finished me. I felt at once that I could interview no more characters, and that my best course was to go home at once, and go to bed, and stop there. I felt prostrated by humiliation and agonizing dullness. But it was not to be.

"You don't look very cheerful," the brute remarked, "and yet I'm sure I've done my best. But do go round to the other side of the field. You'll find my wife there. I'm compelled by the tradition of men to speak of her as the 'missus.' What a fine old girl she is! She will probably commence conversation by saying, 'Drat the man! or 'Like his imperence!' But both are funny. It's a light and tasty style that I should think would just suit a man like you. Do promise me to go and see her. She's certain to cheer you up."

"I positively refuse to see your wife. I am going home."

But even as I spoke the field began to turn gently round, while the lane in which I stood remained perfectly still. I think I ought to say

that, when I recounted this part of my story to Timson, he positively refused to credit it. He pointed out that a square field revolving on its own center would come right across the lane which bordered one side of it, and that anyone in that lane would be swept into space. I am quite unable to answer him. I have no doubt that, if I could have managed my dream a little more mathematically, I should have been swept into space. I could only point out to Timson once more that I had not had his experience in dreaming, and that he must not look for too much from a beginner. At the conclusion of my dream I did obey a known mathematical law, which certainly seems as if I had improved with practice. Besides, let us suppose that the field revolved not on its own center, but on some center that it had borrowed for the occasion—where are Timson's arguments then?

The fact remains that, although the field most certainly turned round, it did not interfere with me in the least. One by one familiar characters on their respective gates passed slowly before my eyes. There was the impos-

sible rustic, scratching his head, and talking that mixture of Devonshire, Cumberland, and the imagination which is the recognized village dialect. Then came the negro servant. He hailed me as "Buckra massa." I don't know what it means, but I suppose it's all right. He disapproved of the motion of the field. "Me plenty fear. Me no like dis sarecular rotability, sare." I had not time to inquire whether his name was Pompey or Cæsar; the negro servants of fiction generally are either one or the other, and I have known one bad case where the poor man was both. He was followed by the usual family lawyer, who was wrinkling his brow, rubbing his white hands, and giving his dry and deprecatory coughs alternately. I have tried the deprecatory cough myself, but with no success to speak of. Then the field began to move faster; the characters on their respective gates simply flew past. The traditional sailor only just had time to expectorate and offer a short prayer for the destruction of his vision, before he vanished from my eyes; and out of the whirling chaos came a flash of bright

green bonnet-strings and a shrill cry of "Where's that blessed child?" I knew it was Mrs. Jinkins. She had passed in the very act of being amusing but not vulgar. The worst, at any rate, was over. A second afterward the field stopped short.

A very pretty girl, with soft dark hair and a graceful figure, was sitting on the gate immediately before me, with a book in her hands. I knew her at once. I knew that her ear resembled a delicate pink sea shell; I knew that her eyelashes must inevitably be long. She was the charming innocent type. The hero finds her thus in her guileless village simplicity reading some harmless story, in her inexpensive white dress with the knot of common or garden geranium at the throat. He startles her as he passes, and she drops her book, and he picks it up. It is thus that the intimacy begins. She is the daughter of the poor vicar and he is the scion of a noble house. He has come to the village for the sake of rest, or fishing, or sketching. Whichever it is, he does it rather better than anyone else; it is a way these heroes have. The poor, old, gray-haired vicar goes

pottering about his garden, and never sees that a train for a three-volume novel is being laid under his very nose. He is devoted, of course, to his only daughter, and his blindness proceeds partly from the childlike simplicity which is natural to these sylvan haunts, but also because he must be aware by this time that the story could not possibly get on without it. So the hero makes love to her, because he is not in the least in love with her; and she does not make love to him, because she is very much in love with him. In this sinful world the heroes get most of the undercut. As a rule, he kisses her on the eyes and mouth alone; but the nose and back hair are the only parts of a girl's head which the hero never kisses. He leaves the village, and marries someone else. Then comes the breakfast table scene, which we all know and hate so well. She takes up the newspaper with a merry laugh, and suddenly sees the advertisement of the hero's marriage. She turns deadly pale, grasps the table to save herself from falling, and, murmuring that the heat is too much for her and that she will be better

presently, staggers from the room. The complacency and blandness with which this excuse is always received is simply maddening. "Poor child!" the vicar murmurs pensively, as he sips his last cup of tea, and then goes out to play the fool among the azaleas without giving the matter another thought.

If the book is to be sad, she pines and dies; if it is to be cheerful, the curate, who has all the time adored her in secret, now comes to the fore, kisses over the same old ground, and finally marries her.

As I looked at her, I felt sorry for her. I determined to give her a little variety in her monotonous existence; so I stepped softly up to her, took her by the hair, and kissed the tip of her nose. There was a whirr and click as of machinery set in motion; then she gave a little frightened cry, and fluttered like a bird. I might have known it—a kiss is as certain to produce this effect on the innocent and automatic doll of fiction as the placing of a penny in the slot is to procure fusees when you want wax vestas.

There were several other ladies on adjacent gates, but I am naturally rather shy, and I did not have much conversation with them. One was in a riding-habit. She glanced at me with evident disapprobation from head to foot, and told me that a certain kind of stretcher prevented the male garment from becoming baggy at the fetlocks. I had read "The Stench of the Stables," and one or two other sporting novels, so I knew that her conversation would not be intelligible, and I did not stop to hear any more of it. Next to her was the small plain governess, who confides to her diary how surprised she is that all the male characters fall in love with her. It is a pleasing trait in the virginal character.

"I've just made an entry," she said.

"I don't want to contradict you," I replied, "but I fail to understand how you can make the entry when you're sitting on the gate."

She corrected my mistake. "I referred to my diary, and not to the field," she answered. "I will read it to you."

I expostulated, but her only reply was to

read as follows from a little volume bound in morocco:

"Another hot morning in the schoolroom. Editha was very unruly again, and did not know her geography. I hope I was not unkind to her, but I was very firm. I told her that she must learn it again, and that I would finish correcting her theme in the meantime. While I was engaged thus, Mr. Charles sauntered into the schoolroom. I tried to speak quite sharply to him, and to tell him that it was not the place for him, but I am afraid that my poor little voice quavered. He only laughed at me, and began putting flies in the inkpot. Then he came round behind me and let my hair down. 'What a little beauty it is!' he said banteringly. I told him that if he did not go away I would tell Mrs. Beecham. So he retired, walking out of the room on his hands. How strong and manly he is! Can he possibly see any beauty in my poor insignificant face? If only my dear Aunt Maria were here to advise me!"

I thanked her, and passed on until I came to the gate which was next the principal entrance.

A curate sat upon it. Occasionally he pressed his forehead with one hand in a weary way. There were dark lines under his eyes, and he gazed at me as if I hurt him badly.

"You were wondering who I am," he said, and it was hardly worth while to contradict him. "I am the uncommon curate."

"Then," I said, "you had better get off that gate. This field is reserved for commonplace characters only."

"Ah!" he moaned, in a voice so tired that it almost seemed to ache, "you don't understand. The uncommon curate has now grown more common than the other sort. You expect a curate to be a good man and a Christian. The most commonplace way of avoiding the commonplace is to make him either a murderer or an agnostic. It is far from difficult; a mere child can apply it. For myself, I am perfectly conscientious and unusually intelligent. That is why I took orders without examining the faith that I professed to embrace. I'm not a Christian now, and my wife won't be an agnostic. She is pious, but dull—mostly cold mutton

and hymns. So I've gone and made a nice little religion all to myself. Sermons! I should think so—regular stingers! Ah me!" He gave a sigh that shook the gate till it rattled.

I did not see any way to console the poor man. I thought of pointing out that those who read about him suffered even more than himself, but I was by no means sure how he would take it, so I changed the subject. "I see that the gate next to you—the principal entrance—is vacant. Are you expecting anyone?"

To my surprise he brightened up at once. "Yes," he said, "we've been waiting for you. The man who tries to get a cheap reputation for wit by sneering at things not worth the sneer is the most commonplace character of all. Pray be seated."

I obeyed, because I could not help it, and the field at once began to rotate. Faster and faster it whirled round. I clung to my gate, but known mathematical laws were too much for me. I was flung into space, went into three volumes, and was much appreciated by the public. The surprise awoke me.

THE SECULAR CONFESSIONAL.*

* This series is taken from private letters formerly in the possession of a First Authority, now deceased. He appointed me his literary executor, with instructions to publish nothing. *Paupertas me impulit.*

I.—THE LAST CHAPTER.

My Dear Friend and Counselor:

I wish to consult you once more, and in the strictest confidence. I want your advice because you are the First Authority on Everything; I trust you because you are of a truly noble nature, and have a due sense of honor, and would not make any public use of a private letter.

I am, as you know, a lady writer of ladylike stories for children; and you may be assured that when I undertook the serial for *The Nursery Nightlight* this winter, I counted upon coming to you in all my difficulties. I know that if there is anyone in this world who could make my stories for children more ladylike than they are at present, it is yourself. Some time ago I purchased your manual for literary beginners, "How to Avoid Originality: By One Who has Done It," and I have found

it of immense assistance to me. When I first procured it, I was trying to write what I had observed or imagined, and was starving in a garret. My present position of affluence is entirely due to the first aphorism in your book, "Pioneering does not pay. Prig and be popular." I have prigged. I have skimmed the cream of all the most successful stories for children and worked it into my serial in *The Nursery Nightlight*. I have wallowed in the faithful hound, the stolen pencil-case, the child's devotions, the incoherent sick-bed. I believe in Selection rather than Invention. Thanks to your manual, I have done well, exceedingly well; my editor is pleased and my readers are pleased. But I am rather in doubt about my last chapter. Up to that point I followed your directions implicitly. My story is called "Little Phil." The title was selected in accordance with one of your notes on cheap advertisement:

"Let your title be such that a critic may be bright about it. He can refrain from noticing your book, but he cannot refrain from being

bright when he has an easy chance. So shall you come to a paragraph."

Forty-two critics have said that "Little Phil" was really a little filling. Thirty-nine of them added that it was, however, a pleasant story, to show that they said what they said from wit, and not from unkindliness. In my incidents and development I obeyed the rules in your manual entirely. But now I have come to my last chapter. Your aphorism says as follows:

"If the hero's Christian name be monosyllabic or used in a monosyllabic form, the hero dies. To this rule there is no exception. Timothy may recover; but Tim says, 'I'm going—home—home now,' and all is over."

On the other hand, my editor insists that my hero Phil shall not die. He is rather a violent man, and he writes to me as follows: "I'm not going to ruin my circulation by having any deaths in my Christmas Number. You've got to be cheerful, or you get no more work from me. Do you understand that?" Now I am in doubt whether to follow your advice or his order. Is any compromise possible?

The circumstances are these: There is a brutal, drunken cabman in my story, whose horse runs away with him, because he has beaten it unmercifully. Little Phil sees it tearing down the street, and tries to stop it. The noble and intelligent horse avoids treading on the poor boy, who had never done it any harm; but one wheel of the cab goes over him and breaks his spine in five different places. He staggers to his feet, and exclaims dizzily: "I am afraid that I am badly hurt." Then he swoons away in the arms of the "good, kind lady" (she is No. 185 in your list of useful types). He is taken to the hospital and is undoubtedly very ill. At times he is unconscious, and talks about the gates of the west. I have found two of your aphorisms most useful:

"Invalids in fiction eat grapes and jelly—nothing else. Their drink is 'cooling drink.' No one knows what it is, and no one wants to know. But give it them. The public expects it."

"Do not trouble to be medically possible. The public knows nothing of medical science.

No known anæsthetic, for instance, takes effect with the speed of the fictional chloroformed handkerchief."

I must also express my obligations to your list of the six diseases which alone are mentioned in stories, together with the mental qualities attached to each. Phil's uncle has gout, and is selfish and cynical; his sister has consumption, and is pious; and his own spinal complaint is, of course, accompanied by courage and resignation. But what am I to do about the last chapter? By your rules, Phil must die. On the other hand, the editor says that he must live.

Please keep this appeal to you a secret. My editor would not forgive me if he got to hear of it; and my public would cease to believe in me. It will break my heart if I have to let Phil live. Can I get out of it?

II.—BROKEN HEARTS.

[*The following two papers, from the collection of the First Authority, seem to treat of the same subject; they are fastened together by a pin. The opening sentences of the first letter were partially destroyed by fire; perhaps some critic will kindly restore them.*]

(I.) . . . to forgive . . . azaleas . . . blushed slightly. He said several absurdly complimentary things, remarking that I had just the grace and delicacy of the flowers. I pleaded that they were already withered, but he said it was for their dear associations that he wanted them; so I gave them to him. I cannot remember quite when he began to call me Blanche; it had been going on some time before I noticed it,—at least he said so,—or I should certainly have stopped him. I am perfectly sure that he would have proposed to me there and then, if the others had not happened to come out on the balcony and interrupt us; of course I should have refused him, but it would

have been difficult to make him understand that I had not really encouraged him—that I had never wanted him to hope—that I had acted simply from a natural kindliness of disposition. As it is, every day I am in mortal terror that he will call and rush upon his doom. I am not a flirt, thank Heaven! I do not plead guilty to anything in the remotest degree resembling flirtation; but I am full of natural kindliness, and if it is a fault to indulge a generous disposition, then I confess that I have committed that fault. I should tell you that I never called him Reginald once—except twice under strong provocation. Always Mr. Blubuck.

I am so miserable. I cannot help imagining how he will look when I refuse him. He has remarkably fine eyes, and he can make them unspeakably pathetic. His voice will drop to a hoarse whisper. I know he will be immensely overcome; he has just the nature that feels things deeply, and I am sure he never loved any woman before. I cannot help thinking that, without intending any harm at all, I have broken a strong man's heart. The rest of his

life will be spent in loneliness. I should not wonder if he were driven to some rash act, or even lost his reason. I have indulged my native generosity some twenty or thirty times before, but this is the first time that I have had to confess that in consequence I have spoiled a noble human life.

I only wish that before I met Reginald I had come across your excellent shilling manual on "The Relationship of the Sexes: By a Bachelor of Sixty Years' Standing." The chapter on balconies would have warned me. "There is only one step from the Balcony to the Altar," you remark; and in another place, "Moonlight lowers the standard of feminine reserve." It was in the moonlight that I called him Reginald. Truly we are the slaves of the influences of time and place. "There is no historical instance," you point out, "of a woman who flirted at breakfast; if life were all breakfast, passionless affection would be possible between the young of opposite sexes." Why—oh, why—did I not meet Reginald at breakfast only! I should not have had to reproach myself, as

I shall have to reproach myself now, with having ruined his life and career, and completely broken his heart. But we never breakfasted together—and we did sit out together. Every girl should possess a copy of your manual; the concentrated wisdom which you have wrung from your forty-seven engagements, subsequently broken, is not to be despised. But you are wrong on one small point. You say, "Women who are *very* fond of the smell of gardenia mostly go to the limit." That is absurd; I am very fond of the smell of gardenia myself.

Well, it has been some small consolation to confess my wrongdoing to you, if indeed I have been wrong, and not, as I think, merely mistaken. In any case,

I remain, yours in deepest penitence,
BLANCHE SUNNINGVALE.

(II.) DEAR FIRST AUTHORITY: I am thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I want to say so to somebody. You must know that there's rather a pretty little thing, called Blanche Sunningvale, who has been crossing my path a

good deal lately. She's not quite a beauty, but distinctly *provocante*. Well, I did my best to amuse myself and her; and I am afraid now that the thing has gone rather beyond amusement. In fact, if I had not cleared out, she would have married me, as sure as my name is Reginald Blubuck. As far as money and that kind of thing is concerned, she is all right; but I could not marry her, and it is of no use to think about it. Things came to a climax the other night; she got me out on to the balcony, and there was the old business that one has been through hundreds of times. The pace was good. I am not a vain man, but she called me by my first name, and made it fairly obvious what she expected; women do take things so seriously. I might have said anything, if we had not been interrupted.

The game was not fair. She, poor child, had obviously never done anything of the kind before; I—well, I'm a man of the world, you know. Yet I have my feelings. I am haunted by a persistent vision of Blanche sitting alone in her own room, with tears in her eyes, wonder-

ing why I do not call, growing gradually hopeless, heartbroken. I can imagine her eyes; she can make them look very mournful and sweet. She will never, I know, marry anyone else; she is just the kind of woman that loves once and once only; I only hope that she may not be driven to desperation or madness. She would, I am quite sure, take no one into her confidence; I do not mind writing to you, but Blanche is far too shy to speak or write of such things to anyone. It is an awful thing to think that one has taken advantage of the simplicity of a good woman to break her heart.

Why are you so desperately cynical? I have just been reading your little manual on "The Relationship of the Sexes." You say, "In an affair of the heart, the impression which the man believes he has made on the woman is always identical with the impression that the woman believes she has made on the man; provided that, as usually happens, both beliefs are inaccurate. For conceit is of humanity, not of sex." That's nonsense. But you are right about the gardenias; Blanche adored the smell

of them. I am honestly sorry about that girl. I know that I must have hurt her terribly—in all probability spoiled her life.

Yours in deepest remorse,

REGINALD BLUBUCK.

III.—THE MURDER AT EUSTON.

[On the margin of this letter the First Authority had written in pencil: "The execution was shockingly bungled."]

My Dear First Authority:

I think I knew what was wrong with me, even before I studied your last book, "The Art of Silence: A Hand-book for Conversationalists." Even before I read your chapter on "Repeaters," I knew that I suffered from the vice of repetition. I knew that if I said a thing once, it was fated that I should say it twice, possibly thrice. It is too late now for repentance to be of any real use, but I wish I could have followed your advice then. I did not believe then that the ability to interchange thoughts was the curse of the human race; I thought you were wrong when you said that it was chiefly the gift of articulate speech which prevented man from rising to the level of the pig; in short, I considered your

praise of silence to be quite excessive and exaggerated. Do you remember the first sentence of your book: "To talk well is to be admired; to listen well is to be loved." I read it, but preferred to be admired at whatever cost. I am a Repeater, and the only remedy for Repeaters is, as you say, everlasting silence. Well, I am likely to get the everlasting silence now. I will tell you how it happened. And I must first of all explain why I stole A.'s epigram.

A. undoubtedly has wit, if you can give him time and he can manipulate the conversation until he gets his opportunity, and he never repeats himself or anyone else. And yet he is one of those for whom you would prescribe everlasting silence, because he has not got the Conversational Manner. He goes on well until he has got his opportunity and brought out his epigram; then he at once, like lightning, assumes the appearance of a stuffed toad with glass eyes three sizes too big for it, and a guilty conscience. Well, A. lives in Edinburgh, and one night when I was dining with him there

he brought out the very best epigram I had ever heard from him. The lead-up to it was superb. He started on public swimming baths, and got by seventeen perfectly natural steps to the subject of the epigram, which was on match-boxes. I traced it out afterward. The epigram was, of course, ruined by the fact that A. has no Conversational Manner. He has not the trick of saying a thing. So I told him that I did not think much of his little joke.

On my return from Edinburgh I stopped for one night at the house of my friend B. at Carlisle. B. does not converse; but he talks a little and listens brilliantly. I played off A.'s epigram on him as my own. B. laughed for three hours consecutively and said it was the best thing that he had ever heard in his life. He wrote it down in a notebook.

I then went on to London, and there one afternoon C. called on me at my chambers. I repeated the epigram, as my own, to C. He had hysterics from sheer delight. He rolled on the floor. "It's the wittiest thing that has ever been said. It *can't* have been impromptu," he

remarked. "It *was*," I replied. "I'm not in the habit of repeating things." I looked hurt, and I felt hurt. A perfectly true accusation always hurts.

"Anyhow," C. said, "it will be something to tell B. to-morrow. I'm going up to Carlisle to-night by the express, you know. Of course, I will give you all the credit of it, but I positively *must* tell B. that impromptu."

I shuddered. At whatever cost, C. had to be prevented from repeating that epigram to B.

"Why," C. went on, "I'm going on to Edinburgh the day afterward, and then I shall have a chance of telling old A. as well."

It sounded simple enough. It meant, of course, that if he was allowed to do what he wanted, all three of them, A., B., and C. would have the fixed idea for the remainder of their lives that I was a thief, a liar, and a fool. I resorted to strategy, and asked C. to dine with me at the club. It was my intention to keep him there by some means or other until he was too late for the north express. I remembered that C. was an ardent politician. "Gladstone's

dining with me to-night, and you'll meet him." I should mention that I have not the honor of being acquainted in the slightest degree with Mr. Gladstone. It had never occurred to me before that he was a living man. I had always regarded him as a tendency—something, not ourselves, that made for Home Rule. But now I saw that he was a human attraction. "Really?" said C., a little incredulously, I thought. "Yes," I said meditatively, "I've known him for some time. But do as you like about coming. Ruskin will probably look in after dinner. But do just as you like." In my determination to save my conversational reputation I was getting, perhaps, a little wild. But C. is simple-minded, and accepted.

I exhausted myself that night with my excuses for Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Ruskin, and with my endeavors to detain C. But he would not be detained. He had brought his portmanteau with him to the club, and was intending to drive straight to Euston. I offered, finally, to go with him, and managed to get to the cab first. "Here are two sovereigns," I said

in a hurried whisper to the cabman, "*Now, miss the train that my friend tells you to catch.*"

But after we had run into the third omnibus C. insisted on getting out and taking another cab. We had plenty of time at Euston. By means of more bribery and strategy I managed to get C. and his portmanteau thrust into some local train that went to nowhere-in-particular. I even had him locked in. But an idiot of an inspector came and bundled him out again. I entreated C. not to go on to Carlisle; I told him that I had a presentiment that harm would come of it. He laughed at me. "No," he said, "I must tell B. and A. that impromptu of yours." He was standing on the edge of the platform at the time, and a train was just steaming in. The least shove did it. The rest you have probably gathered from the newspapers. To you only have I told my real motive. I am the victim of conversation.

Yours unhappily,

A REPEATER.

IV.—BAD HABITS.

My Dear First Authority:

I cannot tell you how impressed I was by your "Bad Habits, and How to Form Them." It is quite the most moral book that has been written for some time. The greatest virtue, as you well maintain, is the resistance to the greatest temptation; the greatest temptation is that which results from a bad habit long continued. The man who has never smoked has no claim upon our admiration; the man who has long been in the habit of smoking from early morn to dewy eve, and then relinquishes the practice—such a one is worthy of election to a County Council, of a biography, of a real marble tombstone, of all honor. As I read, I saw how wrong I had been all my life. I had never formed any bad habits; consequently my virtue had nothing to work upon. One cannot fight when there is nothing with which to fight; one cannot conquer when there is absolutely nothing to conquer.

I saw that what I wanted, in order to make myself more perfect, was a few besetting sins; then I could exercise my will-force.

Long ago, in my childhood's days, Humility claimed me for her own. I was not ambitious. I did not want to commence with the greatest and grandest sins, such as arson, or harmonium-playing, or high treason. I turned modestly to your chapter on "Minor Vices," which you especially recommended to young criminals just learning their business. For some time I hesitated which of your list to choose. At first I tried two at once—your list, you remember, was in alphabetical order—back-biting, and breakfasting-in-pyjamas. Well, sir, it may have been my stupidity, or it may have been my congenital innocence, but I found I could not manage these two sins simultaneously. They confused me. On the very first day I found myself breakfast-biting and backing into my pyjamas. To prevent further complications, I gave up these two offenses and selected one good, plain, ordinary vice—the vice of reading-in-bed.

I followed your directions implicitly. There

were no curtains to my bed, but I had some put up, and especially ordered that they should be of a light and inflammable material. Then I put two lighted candles close to the curtains, opened my window and door in order to secure a draught, and began to read. After a time I let the book drop from my hands, and fell asleep. In one hour I ought to have waked up and found the room full of smoke, to have extinguished with difficulty the smoldering curtains, and seen the evil of my ways. However, I never got any conflagration at all. Time after time I did my utmost to be careless and thoughtless; I always used candles, although there is gas in my room; I took no end of trouble about it. But I never could get the evil results. Those curtains might have been made of twopenny cigars; they seemed absolutely incombustible. Neither could I manage to suffer from want of sleep, for I have not been able to find any book which will keep me awake for three minutes after I get into bed. Now, sir, it is not worth while to battle with a habit which cannot be bad because it produces no bad re-

sults whatever. Besides, it is a habit which absolutely refuses to be formed; if I am very sleepy I do not always remember to take a book to bed with me, and I have frequently forgotten to forget to put the candles out. Briefly, I cannot display any virtues, or exercise any will-force, by fighting against a bad habit which is, in my case, neither bad nor habitual.

So at present my will-force is doing absolutely nothing, eating its head off. I want to break myself of something. I feel sure that I shall never really be virtuous until I can overcome a bad habit, and I find myself utterly unable to form a bad habit. My natural inclinations are all good. Tobacco and drink are repulsive to me and make me ill; I am unable to get any interest out of gambling. I cannot tell a lie; George Washington suffered in just the same way. But why should I particularize further? Isolated faults I may occasionally commit, but in spite of your excellent manual I cannot form a bad habit.

Yours in despair,

INITIALS BLANK.

P. S.—Immediately after writing the above, I turned once more to your manual, and there for the first time came across your advice to the desperate cases: "If you cannot acquire a bad habit in any other way, imagine that you have it and are trying to give it up." I acted upon this advice. Three weeks have elapsed since then. I am now a slave to the practice of opium eating, and habitually untruthful. My virtue at last has something upon which to work, and life is once more bright and happy. The highest moral perfection may yet be mine. Allow me to offer you my sincerest thanks.

V.—THE PROCESSIONAL INSTINCT.

My Dear First Authority:

In one of the chapters of your interesting little "Curiosities of Humanity," you point out that our private life is circular, and our public life is rectilineal. The curate and the choir are grouped carelessly in the seclusion of the vestry, but tread the aisle in an arranged procession. The twelve policemen who form a constellation in the station yard walk in regular file in the street. The marriages and funerals of humanity involve processions, because they are public; betrothals and deathbeds involve no such arrangement, because they are private. The circus in its own tent, partially secluded —only to be seen by those who have paid entrance money—is circular, as, indeed its name implies; but when it is most truly public and may be seen of all, it is prolonged and processional. And then you go on to speak of the

processional instinct; you say that it may grow upon a man and choke all higher motives. Read, then, the story of one who illustrates the truth of every word that you have said.

I am a young man, and I have much leisure time on my hands. Seated one day, a year ago, at my window, I saw a girls' school pass down the street. They walked two and two. Stately and slow they proceeded. The proud, ugly mistress made glorious the close of that long line. She held her parasol almost defiantly, and her spectacles flashed and flashed. For some time after they had gone I sat and mused; later in the day I went out and joined our volunteers. I did not know why I joined them; I thought that I wanted to do something for my country, and also to exercise myself; I know now what the reason was. It was the ignoble processional instinct asserting itself. It poisons everything that I do; it has destroyed every noble motive within me. I am not worthy to be a man at all; I ought to have been born a panorama.

What was it made me agree to assist in the

collection of the offertory in church? It was the processional instinct. What was it that made me take an active part in our local politics? Once more it was the processional instinct. I walked up the chancel to slow music; I careered in a carriage with a banner in front of me and a brass band behind me. It was complete rapture. I glowed, expanded, and almost purred; I knew that the eyes of my native village were upon me and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I thought then that I was working for the Church and my political party; I deluded myself. Unconsciously I was giving way to that mean and unworthy motive, the processional instinct. About this time I spent one penny on an illustrated account of the Lord Mayor's Show, and read it in secret. How I envied him! Slowly I began to realize what was wrong with me. I thought what a beautiful word *cortége* was, and introduced it into every private letter that I wrote. I bought an expensive picture of a conquering army entering a captured town, because there was a distinct similarity between my face and the face of

the conqueror's horse. I gazed often at that picture, murmuring under my breath, "A magnificent pageant!" I imagined that I was prancing brightly at the front of it. I was now a complete processomaniac, a victim to *cortége* craving. Whenever I got a chance of proceeding, I always availed myself of it eagerly.

One day I had just been reading an account of a fashionable wedding. It said that the sunlight streamed in at the stained windows, and, as the happy procession passed up the flower-strewn aisle, the grand old organ pealed forth the beautiful wedding march. I put down the newspaper, walked over to the piano, and picked out a portion of the wedding march with one finger; then a sort of paroxysm came over me. I put on my hat and rushed out into the street. I ordered a pearly gray suit, with silk facings and buttons that would reflect the joyful sunlight. Then I careered out of the tailor's, and, after some difficulty, found Amabel Stoker. I talked of indifferent matters to her for a few moments, and then I asked her if she would marry me. I did not say that I loved her, be-

cause I did not think it would seem probable enough. She answered shyly: "Yes, I think so. Have I been weak? Have I allowed you to guess the feelings of my heart?" I encouraged her a little, and left her. The wedding took place a month afterward; my new clothes fitted me perfectly; it was a glorious procession. As I got into the carriage with her to drive back from the church, I said: "I enjoyed that. I should like to do that every day of my life." She replied: "Ah, but it was a great trial to poor, little, nervous me!" Then she did up her face into kinks to make it look more childishly winsome. I mention this to explain that we were never very well suited to each other; in fact, we are not at present on good terms at all. I had simply married to satisfy my processional instinct. I am very much ashamed of myself.

Since then I have had very few opportunities to indulge myself, but one has little processions from the drawing room to the dining room before dinner, and these help to brighten my existence. Processions alone have any charm for me now, and I am thinking of buying a cir-

cus and taking it round the district. Amabel says that if I do she shall refuse to come with me; which is another argument in favor of the plan. I have promised her a capital funeral, but she is selfish about this point. I have nothing to say for myself; I am enslaved and worthless. I desire, however, that you will destroy this letter after reading it, as I do not wish the facts to be generally known.

Yours, etc.,

ALGERNON MUMPLIN.

VI.—BINLEY'S CIGARS.

My Dear Sir:

I am acquainted with you through your capital handbook "The Complete Liar." In it you point out that the last two things about which a man begins to be truthful are his wine and his tobacco. I can almost fancy that you must have heard my friend Binley talk about his grocer's amontillado; as for the tobacco, it is my belief that the recording angel shed tears over the invention of the cigar; Binley is just as imaginative about his cigars as about his wine. He is monstrous. His sins cry out for confession, and I long to confess them to somebody. "Never," you remark in your "Curiosities of Humanity," "does a man feel more pure and clean than when he is confessing the sins of his intimate friend"; you are right there. At this moment, when I am about to narrate the monstrous conduct of Alexander Binley, I feel like

a virginal lily growing in the snow-covered garden of a young laundress.

Well, sir, it began one night in Binley's rooms, when he produced and put upon the table a box containing twenty-five of the largest cigars that I have ever seen in my life. They were the kind of cigar that could only be smoked by the corpulent lessee of a music hall while in the act of wearing a diamond center stud. There were several of us there, and we looked at those cigars suspiciously.

"Are those cigars?" asked Drisfield sadly.

"What did you think they were?" retorted Binley, preparing to be offended.

"I hoped they were just a horrid dream."

"Oh, you did, did you? Perhaps you'll allow me to tell you a thing or two about these cigars."

"Do," said Drisfield, "only—only make it end happily if you can. And would you mind if I sat somewhere where I couldn't see them? They get on my nerves."

Drisfield and Binley are always about together, but they are never decently civil to

each other. They have been intimate enemies for the last ten years. Drisfield is inclined to be a little pessimistic. "I associate with Binley," he has frequently explained to me in Binley's presence, "because he is a living confirmation of all the saddest opinions concerning human nature."

On this occasion, Binley talked at length about these cigars. There was no such thing, he informed us, as a bad cigar in the extra sizes; those who bought cheap cigars always inquired for the smallest sizes, and manufacturers acted accordingly. These were not Havana cigars; the Havana fields were effete, and the crops were tainted from the use of manures; these were from virgin fields in Jamaica. Then Binley handed them round; we all happened to be smoking pipes at the time, and had to refuse them. We all, with the exception of Drisfield, thanked him courteously.

"The taste of them is perfectly heavenly," said Binley, who had just lighted one.

"And the smell of them is perfectly devilish," said Drisfield. "Life is full of such paradoxes."

Three weeks after this I happened to be again in Binley's rooms. He has no memory, and just as I was leaving he produced that very identical box of misfortunes once more. "Smoke one of these on your way back," he said. "They are from Mexico—the home of the mustang, and the finest tobacco-growing country in the world." It hardly seemed worth while to call him a liar. I slipped one of the large cigars into my pocket, and thanked him. When I got home I flung it into the fire-place. The fire was out, and on the following morning I found that my servant had picked out the cigar, dusted it, and placed it on the mantelpiece. It lay there like a vast, unhealthy threat. I carried it into my bedroom, with a vague notion that it might be useful in case of burglary.

When Binley came to see me some time afterward, I fetched out his own cigar and offered it to him. "I know you like the large sizes," I said.

"Ah, yes," he answered pleasantly, "you are thinking of the weeds my uncle in India sent

me. India produces the very cream of cigars, of course." He held the big cigar up to his ear and rolled it meditatively between his finger and thumb. "You'll excuse me," he said, "but this is not quite in condition yet. I can't smoke a cigar that is not in condition. Those large Indian cigars of mine were the '85 crop."

I tried him with the same cigar again three days afterward, having cut one inch off the end of it with a sharp knife in order to alter its appearance. This time he found it to be in perfect condition. But he would not smoke it. "I still have a few left," he said, "from a box of twenty-five which originally belonged to Bismarck, and were given by him to a cousin of mine in the diplomatic service. They are three inches longer than these, and they spoil me for all other cigars. They are—well, they are imperial." Binley has no memory and no conscience. I cut one more inch off that cigar and offered it to him again when I found an opportunity. Before lighting it he told me that he had just two left from a box of twenty-five which had paid no duty. "I forget the name of

the brand," he said, "but they are three times the size of this. They are reserved by the Havana planters for their own use, but an elder brother of mine got hold of them through a Creole woman who was—well—rather devoted to him; and he smuggled them across—he's rather a devil, I'm afraid." Binley lit that remnant of his own cigar, took three draws, and then put it down. "I'm sorry," he said, "but those weeds of mine have created in me a sort of distaste for ordinary tobacco. Don't be offended." Comment is useless; but I may add that before Binley commenced the habit of smoking, he was fairly truthful. I have since joined an anti-tobacco league.

Faithfully yours,

PSEUDONYMOUS.

VII.—THE VICTIM OF INDIRECTNESS.

[*I have thought it advisable to omit certain portions of this letter. I have added a note in parenthesis wherever I have made such omissions.*]

MY DEAR FIRST AUTHORITY:

I cannot help thinking that the author of "Curiosities of Humanity" must be interested in the exceedingly strange story which I have to tell. For me, I fear that the story has ended fatally; to others it would perhaps serve as a warning, but do not let it be made public.

I suffer, sir, and have always suffered, from the sin of Indirectness. My process is always a curve—never a straight line. I attach immense importance to the means and generally miss the end. There are people who, if they had a piece of bad news to tell a given man C., would ask A. to tell B. to break it to him; there are men who will buy a clumsy piece of mechanism to perform some action—such as the

making of the cigarette—which can be done much more easily and quickly by the common human fingers. If they were traveling from London to the North Pole, they would go *via* the Equator. These are lesser instances of that same Indirectness which has brought me to a condition that may fairly be described as desperate.

You must know, sir, that the only woman who has ever really touched my heart is Arabella Lee. Of her personal appearance I can only say that (*a column and a half is omitted here. The reader can flavor to suit his own taste*). Can you wonder at the effect that such a woman would have on my very deepest feelings? When the Mushleys asked me to their place in September, I asked them to let me leave it open for a few days—an impertinence which is not uncommon among the Indirect—in order that I might first find out whether Miss Lee would be there. I found that Miss Lee would be staying at the house, and then I accepted. There are three Miss Mushleys—Mary, Martha, and Margaret. They are much

alike. Each is angular and spectacled, looks like the rough sketch of a scientific diagram, and has a complexion like a bath towel.

I had not stopped in that house for a week, before I found out that, in consequence of my Indirectness, the one person to whom I could not declare my passion for Miss Lee was Miss Lee herself. I could have told anyone else about it. I could even have confided in the butler, who was friendly, as butlers go. But I could not bring myself to tell Miss Lee herself. One day I saw her petting a collie—she is fond of dogs—and I noticed that she kissed it on the neck. The collie went out into the garden, and a minute or two afterward I followed it. It pleased my Indirectness to think that I could kiss the same dog on the same spot that she had kissed. I tracked the beast into the stables. The temper of collies is proverbially uncertain—or, perhaps, I got hold of the wrong dog—but anyhow (*a few lines of quite unnecessary detail are omitted here*). I had them repaired by the local tailor, but he did not make a good job of it.

On the last day but one of my visit Miss Mary Mushley and myself were down to breakfast rather earlier than most of them. We wandered out in the garden, and I experienced a desire to confide to Miss Mary Mushley my passion for Miss Arabella Lee. The inevitable result followed. I was very incoherent and indirect, and I was badly misunderstood. I can just remember her saying, "Yes, Charles, I will marry you; I have always loved you." But I had presence of mind enough to ask her to say nothing to anyone at present, and then I went back to the house. It was awful. Partly from Indirectness and partly from ordinary civility I had engaged myself to the wrong woman. I determined to ask Martha Mushley to tell her sister Mary of the mistake. I felt quite unable to tell Mary myself.

In the afternoon, when the men were all out, I managed to get Miss Martha Mushley alone in the billiard room. When our game was over I began my explanation:

"I am afraid that this morning I led your sister Mary to believe that I loved her. Much

as I admire her, I do not love her. I was only trying to confide to her my passion for another —you must know—you must have seen whom I——"

"Oh, my poor, dear boy!" she murmured. "Yes, I knew it all along. Yet can such joy be mine? Oh, to be loved by you, Charles, my Charles——"

"Yes," I gasped, "you've got it. Keep our secret."

I got out of the room somehow. My nerve was all gone, and I felt desperate. After dinner I found myself in the conservatory with the third sister, Margaret. I tried to tell her what had happened; she burst into tears; and before I knew where I was, I had asked her to marry me and she had accepted. During the rest of that evening I suffered great agonies. It may be a fine thing to be engaged to the one woman whom you love. But I, sir, am engaged, under the bond of secrecy, to a syndicate! Three white handkerchiefs were waved at me from three different windows as I drove away early on the following morning.

But that is not the worst of it. I feel that I have lost Arabella Lee. I can imagine even now that I see her, she is (*another column of description is here omitted*). And she will hear of my conduct toward the three Mushley girls, and despise me. I hesitate between suicide, a cattle ranch, or a Carmelite brotherhood. Even in my misery my Indirectness follows me. Can you suggest anything?

Yours in desperation,

CHARLES GINLAKE.

SKETCHES IN LONDON.

I.—UNDER THE CLOCK.

One railway station is very much like another. They are of different sizes but of the same quality, and the likeness extends even to small details. There is probably not a single station in the kingdom on the platform of which there are not at this moment two or more milk cans standing. I have no statistics on the subject, and I may be wrong, but that is my impression. There is even a distinct similarity between all porters; their voices are all husky and confidential, and it is easy to see why this must be so. Of course some stations have distinctive features. Waterloo and Willesden, for instance, are remarkable for their structural subtleties. Charing Cross is a favorite meeting-place. It is central and convenient in some respects, but better meeting-places might be found. If, instead of waiting under the clock, one waited in the very center of the road out-

side the station, one would be only a little more in the way of other people.

But it would be inaccurate to say that there is nothing to interest or occupy the mind while waiting at Charing Cross, although much depends on the mind. "The proper study of mankind is man," and there are plenty of men and other automatic machines on the platform. One or two of these latter are a little curious. One machine delivers four different photographs, but it is impossible to say which of the four it will deliver next. You may get a photograph, I noticed, of the Princess of Wales, or you may get one of Miss Bessie Bellwood. I thought—it may have been fancy—that I detected a smile on the slot of this machine. An automatic "Oracle" is an appeal from modern civilization to ancient superstition. It professes to answer any question you may select from a number printed upon it. I gave it a penny, and it at once told me a distinct lie, and told it without a blush. It is an immoral machine, and its charge is far too high. I have had a better lie told me by a human boy,

simply for the small profit which is to be made by the sale of one half-penny paper.

Every crowd in London is interesting, but the crowd at a railway station reveals most of its real nature. If you would see a man as he really is, see him when he is trying to catch a train, or when he has just missed it. The lounger in Piccadilly, the theatrical personage in the Strand, the journalist in Fleet Street, the Jew in Whitechapel, all hide something from us. But the test of the railway station puts aside the veil; and if the man is by nature mean, or impolite, or bad-tempered, his weakness or his baseness is revealed. It is useless to attempt an estimate of any man's character from his deliberate actions; look at him when he is in a hurry, or when he is irritated. Put him in a crowd in front of a booking-office with two minutes in which to catch the last train; or leave him on the platform from which the last train has just retired. A woman does not generally look her best when she is hurried. But the ordinary passenger allows little time for the abominably curious to become inter-

ested in him. Before we can conjecture where he comes from, or whither he is going, or why he is doing it, he vanishes from our sight. We have more time to watch those who have made appointments under the clock, who wander backward and forward from the hotel to the road, and from the road to the hotel, pondering upon the sins of unpunctuality and untruthfulness, or seduced into buying books which they do not want from the stall behind them. If ever I write a book, I should like one of the young men at the Charing Cross bookstall to review it in one or more of our leading journals, and to have an interest in its sale. It is a great consolation when one is waiting to see that others have to wait as well; but it is maddening to find that others have not to wait so long. A respectable, middle-aged City man came here five minutes ago. I know nothing of him except that he only had to wait five minutes, and I have had to wait twenty-five; but that is enough. I hate him, and desire his blood. One notices the gradual change in a man's expression as he waits here. He looks brisk and

bright as he enters the station. He glances at the clock, and finds that he is three minutes too early. He does not mind waiting three minutes. He lights a cigarette, buys a latest edition, and hurries through the news. He has plenty of time, if he only knew it, to learn the greater part of that paper by heart. But he does not know it; he has a simple faith that the other man will come at the time appointed. Gradually his brightness changes to irritation. Twenty minutes have passed, and the irritation becomes dejection. Ten minutes afterward he walks out of the station, filled with impotent wrath and wild despair. Two minutes after that, the man for whom he was waiting turns up. It is in this way that cynics are made. The clock at Charing Cross probably has very few delusions—it sees so much.

I have tried occasionally to conjecture from the man who waits the sex and appearance of the person who is to meet him; and, as a general rule, I have been wrong. Three men, who were here the other day, essayed a more difficult task—I was told this afterward by one of

them. As they stood chatting together, one of them noticed two-thirds of a cigarette lying on the platform at his feet.

"Ah!" he said, "she came sooner than he expected. He would never have lit it if he had known."

"No," said the second. "He was only a beginner and he couldn't stand any more of it."

"I think you're wrong," said the third. "He dropped it by accident, and was too proud to pick it up."

Every one of the three was confident that his conjecture was the correct one; and they stood there for a minute, urging their respective views with some little heat and animation. At a short distance from them stood a couple of boys, and one of them had been watching the group.

"Bill," he said to his friend, "look at them three toffs—hall of 'em fightin' over 'alf a cigarette. The big 'un found it first, but the others were on him afore he could grab it."

It is impossible to conjecture with certainty, even from the most insufficient data. I turn to

the different notices on the walls. I am hemmed in by prohibitions and warnings. I may not travel fraudulently; I may not have my pockets picked; I am requested not to touch the scales, I am allured by advertisements, and I am still more allured by time-tables. I glance once more at that clock; calmly and dispassionately it tells me that I have now wasted thirty-five minutes of my valuable time. I might, it is true, leave a message for my friend in the ingenious automatic machine which is here for the purpose; but he is of the country, and probably knows not that there is such a thing. I possess one more penny, and in a desperate desire for something to do, I drop it into the first slot I come across. I am now the proprietor of one very small and very brown cigar. I am just wondering what on earth to do with it, when I see my friend approaching from the other side of the platform. He says that he is very sorry, but he does not look it, and it is difficult to believe him.

Later in the day he will be caused to smoke

that very little cigar. I am glad now that I got it. He is a polite man, and he will smoke all of it, for I shall give him no chance to dispose of it surreptitiously. He will be really sorry then.

II.—OUTSIDE A BOARD SCHOOL.

I HAVE watched this particular Board school grow. I walked by it every day when the building was mostly scaffolding poles, and the playground was a wilderness. From constantly seeing it, I came to be interested in it. I wondered why the workmen who were engaged upon it showed so little enthusiasm. When the glass was at last put in all the windows, I think I was more delighted than the glazier. When bills appeared on the walls announcing that the school would be opened in a few days for the reception of children, it was I, and not the foreman of the works, who felt most keenly the joy of completion. The building has a new interest for me now; for it has lately been seeing a good deal of the most delightful children. It is my privilege to see them occasionally as I pass, to notice the fine points, and not to be blind to that which is less admirable in them.

Their chief fault is this—they all show their real individuality in the street. It is in this that they chiefly differ from you, the well-bred member of the upper classes. For in public you are careful to be as much as possible like everybody else; it is only among intimate friends that you offer an individuality for observation—not always your real individuality. They are children, and in this respect they know no better; if, when their education stops, they still have distinct personalities left, they will probably have learned to conceal them, and to conform to a type. Now, in other respects they do sometimes try to reproduce some of the quality and the convictions of the upper classes, and for this we should be thankful. Let me give two instances which I witnessed outside my Board school.

Out from the boys' entrance came a thin, lanky boy, with dark hair and eyes, and a yellow complexion. He had apparently been getting himself disliked in the playground. His clothes were dusty, and he was breathless. He stood in the street, leaning against the wall, and brushed

himself with one hand in a spiritless fashion. He pulled his cap out of his pocket, and was just going to put it on his head, when he saw a burly boy coming out; then he replaced the cap in his pocket hurriedly, for greater safety, I think.

"'Ullo, 'apeny oice!" shouted the big boy as he hurried past. It was a reference to the thin boy's Italian appearance; a tendency to sell ices at low rates in lower places is the characteristic of the Italian in England. The big boy was so big that a retort would have been dangerous. So the wretched, capless, ill-treated creature smiled. It was the smile of policy—the smile that is trying, and failing, to cover a hurt. I have been told that it is sometimes seen among the upper classes.

The big boy vanished, and out came another tormentor—a red-haired boy, small and fat, in a tight blue suit. He took up his position on the curbstone opposite to the tormented one, and commenced by saying emphatically:

"Furriner!"

"Sossidge!" was the immediate retort, a reference to the fat boy's fatness.

"Look 'ere," said the small boy with dignity, but very little logical connection, "that aint your father's 'ouse what you lives in. 'E aint only got two rooms in it. I knows yer."

This was apparently true and not immediately answerable. The spiritless "furriner" walked slowly away. When he had got a few yards off he was so ill-advised as to turn round and remark once more, "Sossidge!" so the fat boy picked up a stone and threw it at him, and hit him.

On another day I saw a big girl of twelve or thirteen, with an infant sister, waiting outside the girls' entrance. She seemed a good-tempered girl, and very fond of her sister, a grave little child whom she called Hannie. Down the street came another big girl, leading a little brother, and this couple also waited outside. The two big girls gazed demurely at one another without saying anything. Then they both held up their heads and drew in their lips. It was clear that there was some social barrier between them. But the infants of whom they had charge were too young to understand the

beauty of barriers. In a sweet, unreasonable, babyish way, the grave Hannie suddenly smiled, and stretched out her hand to the little boy; the little boy also smiled, and would have spoken if he had not been roughly checked: "You aint never to speak to that little gel." Her elder sister spanked Hannie for having made overtures, and I do not see what else she could have done. Still, it was a pity she had to do it, because I think she was fond of Hannie.

Two such instances as these should be cheering and comforting. They show that at an early age, and comparatively low down in the social scale, patriotism and our remarkable taste as a nation may display themselves; but they do more than this. They show that the disgrace of poverty and the existence of social distinctions are recognized. "You don't 'ave yer 'air cut at a shop!" is a sneer which I have heard addressed by one boy to a fellow. To a really large mind the poor attempt at economy must have seemed mean. Perhaps this is not a very close parallel to what goes on in the upper classes. The upper classes do not, as the satir-

ist would have us believe, worship great wealth; they only make certain concessions to very great wealth. But the recognition of social distinctions brings the Board school child very near to the spirit of many delightful people who are her superiors. It is true that the method of conversational attack and retort which prevails among Board school children is not good; but, in these instances, they certainly showed the want of good feeling which is at the back of most epigrams. They were unkind enough; the wit may follow.

The street games of these children are remarkable. At one time the whip-top prevails, and for weeks not to own a whip-top is a social disability. Then the whip-top disgraces itself in some way, or becomes stale, and its name is not so much as mentioned in the streets. Tip-cat takes its place. There are periods when no one game is in power, and then one sees the charm of variety. The girls and the smaller boys are mostly imitative. They pretend to be anything. That fat, sarcastic boy to whom I have alluded has a marvelous faculty for imita-

tion. One day he careered down the street as a remorseless steam engine; on the next day he put on his cap inside out and stated that he was John the Baptist. The girls seem to like playing at school best. One girl is the teacher; the rest are divided into two classes, good girls and bad girls. The good girls all sit with their hands folded and assume an exasperatingly meek expression. The teacher tells them that they are a comfort to her, and promises them impossible rewards. The bad girls refuse to sit down, use impertinent language, and run away; the teacher captures them, and spanks them most realistically. One day I walked behind a very little chubby girl of about seven, who was carrying a very large cat. The cat was a dirty white, and not happy; it had an appointment elsewhere, and wanted to be off. "No, you 'on't," its chubby mistress remarked at each fresh struggle. When she arrived at the school she set the big cat down in the middle of the road. "Now, you silly 'ittle fool," she said to it solemnly, "you may go 'ome." The cat trotted off, looking pained and surprised, with its tail erect.

Sometimes I pass the school when there are no children about outside. The windows are open, and I hear a chant of

> "Five nines' for' fi',
> Five tens' fifty."

Their voices all drop a tone on the last word of each line. Or a question has been asked which I have not been able to hear; I only catch the answering roar of many voices: "Tew-an'-sixpence," and for some reason which I do not know I find myself inventing arithmetical problems to which this answer would be a correct solution. It is often easier to find a question for an answer than an answer for a question.

III.—A SUNLESS DAWN.

SATURDAY night is a busy night; but nearly everyone had done with their work or their play, and had gone to bed, as I came up Church Street, toward the Embankment, at two o'clock on the Sunday morning. Overhead was a sky of leaden gray, without a star to be seen; a few spots of rain fell at intervals. The street was almost silent; the sharp click of a footstep on the pavement seemed an outrage on the stillness, and one tried to walk more quietly. At a distant corner two policemen had met, and had stopped for a chat; one could hear their gruff voices with grotesque distinctness. A little farther on a woman, old and painted, belated and hopeless, had sunk down to rest on a doorstep. The lamplight fell full upon her face. She had pushed her bonnet a little back over her untidy yellow hair; her head rested on one hand. She sat mute and motionless in her rags

and finery, her bleared eyes wide open, with no expression on her coarse features. In most of the houses the lights were all out; but now and then one saw the cheerful glare, and marked, perhaps, a shadow cross the blind. What kept them up so late? Here, possibly, some joyless dissipation, and there some entrancing story! or there, behind the small upper window, someone may have been watching by a bedside, longing for the dawn. In the church tower at the street corner the lighted clock showed that it was not long to wait now before the hour at which the night and morning had agreed to meet.

I came out into Cheyne Walk, the abode of genius, and crossed the deserted road, and watched the river. It was too dark to see it moving immediately below me, and one could only hear the swirl of the water against the piles of the bridges, or the gentler lapping where it licked the stretches of mud and shingle, left bare at the low tide; but a little farther away, in the broken bars of crimson or yellow light reflected from the lamps on pier, or bridge, or barge, one

could see ripple chase ripple in endless haste, coming out of the darkness into the bar of light, only to vanish in darkness again. In that grim brick building on the farther side, the rows of windows were all lighted up; there, at least, rest had not yet begun. I heard a step behind me, and looked round. It was only a midnight loafer, who came slouching slowly toward me out of the darkness. He rubbed his eyes with one hand, as if he had been asleep. His face was lean, dirty, and unshaven, with an ugly scar on one cheek. He held a short clay pipe, bowl downward, in his mouth; but it was empty, and the man looked like one bereft of all comfort. He stopped for a second or two, to survey me carefully; and he was displeased with me. He grunted disapproval, and slouched away into the darkness again, while I turned eastward, along Chelsea Reach. On the opposite shore the trees in Battersea Park seemed a long, low line of darkness, merging indistinctly into the paler darkness beyond. Chelsea Bridge in the distance looked a maze of lights and shadows flung across the river. A late hansom flashed past me

on the road; and as the rattle of wheels died away, I heard suddenly a sound like a woman sobbing. It was, of course, only a cat—a stray, wicked, London cat. Cats in the daytime are nothing but cats, but at night a strain of morbid humanity seems to come out in them, and at times they catch the exact tones of the human voice.

The road now was quite deserted; but do no ghosts walk here? For suddenly I thought how, not very many years ago, one who well knew the small hours might often have walked up and down this pavement at some such time —one whose eye would have missed no beautiful detail in the scene, whose wearied mind would have drunk "like some sharp strengthening wine . . . the stillness and the broken lights." Others, too, there might be, and one who—so the fancy takes me—would ever walk alone, a fierce, ardent, rugged philosopher, still but partly understood by the best of us.

Already it was growing lighter. The trees in Battersea Park were more distinct, and now I could dimly see the line of shore beneath them

and the black barges waiting there. With a quick, business-like step, a young man hurried past me, with a long pole in his hands, putting out the Embankment lights. The gray of the sky grew paler and pinker, and those dark smudges on it would soon be seen to be clouds, blown quickly along by the cold morning wind. As I passed on to the Chelsea Bridge, I noticed the strange groups of people on the seats between the trees. Most of them looked as if they were used to it, and were snoring peacefully; but one or two were amateurs, apparently, and had not caught the trick of it yet. These were not asleep, although they looked tired enough as they sat there gazing blankly toward the river.

I stood on Chelsea Bridge. At the farther end a little group had gathered round a brightly lighted coffee-stall; men were talking together in subdued voices. Far away in the east it came creeping up the sky, the gray dawn. There was to be no gorgeous display of brightness and color; all was cold and cheerless. In the Park a thrush had woke up, and sang alone. Then

the other birds joined it, thrush and linnet together, singing joyously. It was cold and cheerless enough, but it was morning—the morning of a day for rest; and this was their hymn of praise. As I stood there, listening to the birds, some women reeled out from one of the side streets on to the Embankment. They were shrieking abuse at one another, swearing at the top of their ugly voices. On the one side of the river the birds had woke up on Sunday morning; on the other side were these terrible women staggering away from their Saturday night. I hope the birds could not hear them.

I waited till the last bad word had died away in the distance, and then I turned homeward. It was quite light now. One could see the blue lobelias in the Embankment garden; and the few lamps which were still alight on the river looked pale and faint. Some men hurried past to their work on the line. The policemen looked sleepy, and were not nearly so interested in me as they had appeared to be an hour or two before; but a small black cat followed me down the street for some way, keeping twenty

or thirty yards behind me. He thought, possibly, that I was going round with the milk, and that there might be chances for a cat of some spirit and enterprise. He was a young, sanguine, ignorant cat, and when he discovered at last that I had no milk cans with me he got very unhappy. He went off and sat in the middle of the road by himself, and pitied himself, and mewed wearily. When I saw him last he was still sitting there, and still complaining, as I fancied, of the generally unsatisfactory nature of everything.

IV.—NO THOROUGHFARE.

It cheered me to read that the Fulham Road was closed. It was only that morning that my omnibus had gone exceedingly deviously because Fleet Street was up. I liked to think that others had to suffer inconvenience—I mean, that I could sympathize with them over an annoyance which I myself had felt. As I went farther on, I reflected that I was going where neither cab nor omnibus could follow me, and I began to realize what the feelings of the privileged classes must be; nor was I only pleased at the extension of my sympathies—all around me were workmen doing the most interesting things; the road was putting off the old macadam and putting on the new wood pavement; and one could see all this without paying anything. The cheapness of the spectacle allured me, and I have since enjoyed it frequently. I have even fancied at times that I have found

here a salutary change of air; the smell of tar has much the same simplicity and directness that may be found in the smell of a village duck pond; the most rural road could not be more impassable than this; in the most retired hamlet it could not be more difficult to hire a cab. I liked best to watch the men at work. One sees the road in every stage of completion. In one section you hear the rhythmical beat of the hammers on the iron spikes that loosen the old road, the click of picks, and the scrape of shovels. It is work which calls forth great energy from the workers, and which it is inspiriting to watch. To see other people working hard is always exhilarating. In another section the old material has all been cleared away, and there is a bed of cement, wet, smooth, and shining, waiting to receive the wooden blocks. These blocks are piled up in a low wall running along the edge of the pavement. In a third section the blocks are being put down; occasionally a workman chops a piece off a block to make it fit better. This practice does not seem quite fair, until one remembers that this is not a puzzle or an

exercise for ingenuity. In another place a sort of thick black soup is being ladled out of caldrons, and swept over the surface of the blocks which have been already laid down. I have not used the technical terms in describing this road-making, because I thought that the average reader might not understand them; also, because I do not happen to know them myself. There are plenty of spectators there, and they are mostly critical. I noticed two boys of ten or eleven, who seemed to know all about it. The leading spirit of the two was smoking a cigarette, and seemed to feel his own importance; but the world had apparently few other delusions for him. He might condescend to watch the making of a new road, but he was not optimistic or enthusiastic about it. In fact, he looked almost sorrowfully at the gangs of workmen.

"They 'ont get it done in theer corntrac' toime. They cawnt do it, Bill."

"Cawnt they?" said Bill. The knowledge of affairs shown by the other's remark, and also by his cigarette, seemed to make a spirit of emula-

tion in Bill. He also felt called upon to prove himself a man of the world. "Got a speer bit o' baccy?" he added with artistic carelessness.

"I might 'ev a bit, or I mightn't; I cawnt say till I see." The beauty of the answer was in its implications. He fished out of one pocket an old matchbox, and opened it. "I've got more'n I thought—'elp yerself."

He held out the box to Bill. Now I feel confident that up to this moment Bill had intended to keep the thing up properly—to smoke a cigarette, and pity people, and show a knowledge of affairs. But when he saw that precious matchbox extended innocently toward him, a sudden impulse of sheer boyishness overcame him. He smote the matchbox from underneath, sent it flying into the air, and burst into a roar of undignified laughter.

"Just wait one minute, will yer!" said the aged smoker, as he gathered up his treasure from the road. "I'll give yer what-for for that, my boy." Bill did wait; I believe the other boy was subsequently sorry that he had detained Bill.

I have also seen the workmen in their hour of repose. They can apparently sleep under considerable difficulties. A sack on a loose heap of rubble forms the couch. The man lies flat on his back with his hands under his head. His hat is tilted a little forward to keep the sun out of his eyes. His clay pipe droops in one corner of his mouth; even in sleep his teeth do not loose their hold of it. Other men make themselves something which is almost an easy-chair by tilting a wheelbarrow. After a morning at road-making, I should think it would be possible to sleep almost anywhere.

At night the scene is weird, solitary, and romantic. The light from the lanterns or furnaces is dim and wavering, the kind of light which at a little distance makes inanimate objects seem to be living and moving. One feels how easy it would be to murder the policeman who has just passed,—there are plenty of pickaxes near at hand,—and to destroy all traces of the crime by the help of one of those furnaces. Perhaps the same idea has occurred to the policeman; he looks very suspiciously at

me. I could not in any case have made use of the furnace, because I see now that there is a watchman seated in front of it. His head rests on his hands, and he appears to be asleep. He turns round sharply when he hears my footstep, and he too looks at me suspiciously. By the time I have reached Walham Green I know precisely how a condemned murderer feels. This in itself is a kind of change—not perhaps quite as good as a fortnight at the seaside, but some relief in a career of monotonous innocence.

V.—IN LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

THE ordinary man's strongest point is his ignorance. And the subject of which he shows the most thorough and unlimited ignorance is generally the law of his own land. Consequently, if he is called upon to walk through any place where many solicitors congregate, he has a sense of awe. He has an uncomfortable feeling that he is a bad man, and that it is of no use to try to hide it; that he is an ignorant man, and that every solicitor who meets him knows him to be ignorant, and blandly despises him for it. He does not know what a *tort* is, or what common form means, or how to find his way about Somerset House. In Lincoln's Inn Fields the air is redolent with the very best law, and the ordinary man as he walks through the place feels like a poacher. Many clerks are coming and going. Some are chained to a black bag; others have done nothing worthy of fetters, and go freely; nearly all are in a hurry. They

run up steps and down steps, and take short cuts, and know their way about. Cabs are always waiting in case of emergencies. Judges pass through on their way to the Courts in their own private equipages. I saw one the other day in a common hansom; I will not mention his name, but I hope he is ashamed of himself. Clients enter eagerly and smilingly the offices of their respective solicitors, and some time afterward pass into the street again, looking limp and dejected. I do not know what the solicitors do to them; but it is something, apparently, which destroys all enthusiasm, knocks down one's castles in the air, and leaves one face to face with a few facts, which are generally unpleasant. Or, perhaps, it is the combination of mystery and severity which seems to prevail in a solicitor's office. They give you a morning paper to read, but you have no heart for it. You gaze at a few black boxes—very black, and cold, and shiny—that have strayed into the waiting-room, and read curious inscriptions upon them. "The Pimpleton Colliery Co." You wonder where Pimpleton is, and

what kind of a company it was. No opinion is expressed about it on the outside of the box; the inscription is impartial and reticent. "Smithers' Trustees" are the words on the next box. Who was poor Smithers, and did he ever think he would come to this? It is a large box. Can the Trustees be inside? "Sir Thomas and Lady Polecat's Marriage Settlement." Sir Thomas was generous—generous to the verge of weakness—and she—well, it was not a happy marriage. You have absolutely no grounds for thinking anything of the kind, except that the names and the nature of the box seem to suggest it somehow. In the next room you can hear a clerk reading out something in a dreary monotone; another clerk with a peremptory voice stops him at intervals. You wonder what they are doing. Is it possible that they can be playing some kind of a round game? At last, you go to the window and look out for want of any other occupation. That solicitor must be most conscientious from whose windows the best view of St. Paul's is to be obtained. The longer a man waits, the greater does his respect

become for the man who keeps him waiting. Many more such opinions might you formulate, but a clerk enters, a clerk who conceals as far as he can the contempt which he naturally has for you: "Would you step this way?" In another minute you are taking a lesson in the management of your affairs, or, as you prefer to term it, you are giving your solicitor your instructions.

But Lincoln's Inn Fields are not only legal; there is a space in their midst which is almost rural, a square garden where, as Dickens wrote, "a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to one another, 'Let us play at country.'" Many memories of Dickens linger here. Speaking of himself, he wrote from Broadstairs, "Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so away), and then I'm told there is a sound in Lincoln's Inn Fields at night as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses." The joviality seems to have gone from the place now, and some of the splendor has gone too. My Lord Sandwich—but this was a very long time ago—

had a house here, and hither came Mr. Samuel Pepys to say farewell one fine February morning, when my lord was about to go "out of towne upon his embassy toward Spayne." The Court was in mourning for the King of Spain, and a little less than a fortnight before, Mr. Pepys has duly recorded that he "put on a new black cloth suit to an old coat." He would not, we trust, wear that old coat upon this important occasion; for my lord's house was full of people. Among them was Sir W. Coventry. "Only a piece of courtship," says knowing Mr. Pepys, who was no bad hand at a little "courtship" himself.

The square garden looks barren enough now, but it is quite indisputable. There are real birds, real trees and grass, although they may be a little smoky. And here in the summertime one may see tennis-players amusing themselves, and never thinking that within some few yards of them awful secrets, bound with a blood-red girdle of tape, may be lying in the dark seclusion of a strong-room. If one knew all that these solicitors know, it is to be feared

that one would have no heart for tennis. At certain hours of the day streams of children flow through Lincoln's Inn Fields coming from their school to their unsavory homes in Clare Market. They walk under the shadow of the law, so to speak, but they are not touched by its gravity. They are reckless little children, with a tendency to sample everything. They drink at the fountains, poke their noses through the bars of that almost rural place, and speak contumeliously of those who are inside, hang on to passing vehicles, sit down in street puddles, make absurd fusses over grimy babies, use awful language, whistle piercingly, fight freely—do anything which is not serene and grave.

About the hour of six comes the general exodus; the lights go out in the windows; cloths are flung over tables piled with papers, to keep the dust from them; clerks hurry to secure a place on the 'bus for Camden Town; solicitors fly homeward in hansoms. By nine o'clock, I am told, there is hardly a vestige of the best professional manner left in London. Dinner destroys it.

VI.—ON THE UNDERGROUND.

It has always seemed to me to be more romantic to go by the Underground Railway than to take the 'bus. Consequently, I generally take the 'bus. But there are times when I come fresh from the perusal of some modern novel, in which the hero has black hair and knows a good deal about hypnotism; on these occasions I do feel that the Underground is much less incongruous. It is true that the routine of the booking-office tends to lower the whole proceeding to the level of a commonplace commercial transaction; but one cannot see a train emerging slowly from the darkness and vanishing into darkness again, without recalling to one's mind William Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality"; and, to me personally, the mere fact that I do not know for certain whether or not I change at Gloucester Road makes the journey seem mysterious and even hazardous.

There are many respects in which a station on the Underground resembles all other stations. The guard shows the same supernatural grace and agility in entering his van while the train is in motion. The boy from Smith's bookstall displays the same enthusiasm in his efforts to sell the latest edition. There are advertisements and there are time-tables. The automatic machine here, as elsewhere, pleads with the young man with silent eloquence, tempting him to drop in one penny and take one packet of butter-scotch, and leaving him afterward to wonder what on earth he shall do with it. But there is very little luggage. I have stood at Euston, and watched the piles of luggage disgorged on to the platform, and attempted sometimes to conjecture the man from his portmanteau. I have been uniformly unsuccessful, but the pastime pleases me. Here one has to conjecture the portmanteau from the man. In the case of that gentleman who twists a little black mustache, makes his own cigarettes, and wishes to know if he is right for "San Jemms' Par-r-k," I should expect to find a battered

Gladstone bag still bearing the labels of foreign hotels. Of course, I can never know that my conjecture is right, but that is better than always knowing that my conjecture is wrong, which is my fate at stations not on the Underground.

I am always interested in the advertisements. "Early to bed and early to rise is useless unless you advertise," says the American proverb; but it is quite impossible to think that these advertisements are posted on each side of the line from any selfish motive. They cannot be merely utilitarian, because one passes too quickly to read the whole of them. "Hang your Venetians!" is a line which I have read frequently while traveling in the Underground, and yet it was only the other day that I discovered its full import. At first sight it looks like the cry of some bloodthirsty Italian patriot, but on reading the rest of the advertisements I found that it only referred to a particular way of fixing blinds, which the advertiser desired to recommend. In all probability these advertisements are put here from æsthetic motives, to break the long line of blank wall and to please

the eye. The English sky is not what it should be, and our advertisers probably wished to improve and diversify it when they erected sky-signs. But I do protest against the beautiful girl-child of fourteen, with flaxen hair, tight boots, and a short pink frock, holding up a packet to an amazed and ecstatic mother. The packet may be cocoa, or soap, or pills, or baking powder; but the girl's remark to her mother always begins with, "See, mamma!" and this is maddening.

The compartments which do not quite reach to the top of the carriage are a nuisance, because they often make the man in one compartment the unwilling audience of confidences which are being interchanged in another. The other day the average young man and average young woman got into the compartment next to mine at South Kensington.

"Emma!" he said.

I coughed, but he would not notice it.

"Emma, Hemma," he went on, "spike to me."

Then I coughed in a way which might have

unlinked carriages and disordered the signals at Sloane Square. It had its effect. Before we left South Kensington he was discussing Mr. Irving's *Louis XI.*, and saying some very bitter things about the dramatic critics. It is only safe to discuss impersonal subjects on the Underground. Most passengers know this; and, if they wish to speak of intimate and secret subjects, they do so with a certain care and reservation. Here is a conversation:

"That matter I was speaking to you about on Tuesday night—anything settled?"

"Well, I saw 'im, yer know."

"What, the old man?"

"No, the son. He awksed me to 'ave a glass of wine—sherry wine—but I wasn't to be got over that way."

"What did yer say?"

"Say? I said no-thankyer. I told 'im I didn't drink so early in the mornin'. Then I tackled 'im about the—*you* know—an 'e 'adn't a word to say."

"An' what did 'e do?"

"Caved in, reglar caved in. He just give me

the—the what I wanted, yer know. I wasn't sarcastic exactly, but I let 'im see that I knew what 'e was, and that settled 'im."

It is very low and very despicable, but I felt distinctly curious to know what all this was about.

One idea always haunts me on the Underground. I always remember that up above me the traffic is passing. Men are working, or loving, or sleeping, and under their feet I am passing on some commonplace errand. They do not know it; I am near them, but they do not regard me. I feel like some natural law which works in secrecy and darkness, taking effect at last in the sudden earthquake or eruption. A feeling as grand as this is very cheap at the price charged for a return ticket from Earl's Court to the Temple. I am not quite as disastrous as a natural law, but I am for a time as secret and as dark. It is in the solitude on the outskirts of the crowd that one realizes best what the crowd really means. When I am in the midst of the bustle of the Strand I forget the people around me. When in the solitude of a carriage on the

Underground Railway, I am near them and yet apart from them. I think most of their vast significance; of the merchant in millions returning from too good a lunch; of the street vender of some toy anxious over every penny; of the hurry of special editions and the leisure of the classes who purchase them. Here within but a few yards of me is every class of society, close together locally, immeasurably apart really.

"Temple!" Once more I am in the crowd, and intent on nothing but my own private and particular business.

VII.—IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

On a September afternoon, when the autumn is trying to make up for the summer, it is pleasant to enjoy a penny solitude on a chair in Kensington Gardens. It is pleasant, because in the remoter parts of these gardens London is very far off, and drowsy noises invite one to slumber. One hears the quack of the ducks on the pond in the distance, the barking of dogs well pleased with the open space, the laughter of children—children of beautiful attire from respectable Bayswater or cultured Kensington—the rustle of dead leaves as someone passes across the grass, and the hum of the traffic far away in the Uxbridge Road. As one listens to these faint sounds, things slowly become indistinct and uncertain. The hum of the traffic is changed into the hum of a mowing-machine in a garden which you knew well once, a hundred miles away from London. You remember that the sound of that

mowing-machine always used to send you to sleep. Why, you ask, does it not send one to sleep now? Possibly, because these dogs make such a noise with their quacking—there is something wrong with that reason, but you do not feel strenuous enough to put it right. Oblivion comes slowly over you; your last conscious thoughts are that it is unseemly to sleep in a public place, and that you will keep awake, and then that you simply must go to sleep for two minutes and trust that the curate and the rest of the congregation will not observe it. The curate and congregation have been brought into your mind by some association of ideas which I am unable to trace. So you sleep calmly, until someone touches you on the shoulder; in an instant you are sitting upright and assuming an expression of reverent attention. It is only the man who has charge of the chairs, and who apologizes for disturbing you. The consciousness of things-as-they-really-are comes over you in quick surges, and for one penny you purchase the right to sit on any chair in Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, the Green Park, and St.

James's Park during the remainder of the day.

The desire to walk always follows immediately upon the purchase of the right to sit down, just as the knowledge that one can now sleep undisturbed always induces wakefulness. You walk down the avenue; a nursemaid is running with a perambulator, to the delight of the baby inside. At the speed which she has attained the perambulator is only partially under control, and occasionally zigzags. As you pass, it zigzags into you and hurts you. The nursemaid gives you one look, and you feel at once that in some way, which you cannot understand now, she has conferred a favor upon you, and that you have not behaved at all well about it. You murmur an apology, and she moves away at a reduced speed, talking audibly to the baby: "Did the nasty, great, ugly man try to upset byeby's pretty p'rambulator, then?" There are many nursemaids in Kensington Gardens, and a proper perambulator track ought to be laid down. Under the trees on one side of the avenue two schoolgirls are sitting and read-

ing, or, to be more accurate, one of them is reading out loud, and the other is embroidering a sock, or some work of that kind, and listening. The reader pauses as you pass; not from natural modesty and reserve, but in order to make you feel more like a blight. A little farther on a woman of severe aspect sits with a book in her hands. Occasionally she closes her eyes and her lips move. She is committing something to memory. The book is a reciter; so there is a bad time coming for some respectable drawing room. A very old lady is wheeled past in her chair; as she passes you, she raises a deliberate double eyeglass, discovers all your little deficiencies, and finds them quite uninteresting. Why go farther? Why should you go on to the pond —you, who have no bread to give the ducks, and do not understand the scientific sailing of boats? Have you not still in your ticket-pocket that by virtue of which you may sit on any chair in Kensington Gardens and three Parks? Go back to your penny solitude!

Once more you sit beneath the shadow of some great tree, and hear "the girdling city's

hum." Look upward, and on every bough each leaf is edged with brown, and yellow blotches stain the green, veined centers. It is warm enough now; but in a little while the trees will be bared, and you will scarcely care to sit still for long in the open. It is almost quiet here; here no loud orator exhorts his crowd to hate the capitalist or lead a better life; the noise of the traffic is rather a lullaby than a distraction; but one has not far to walk before one reaches the uproar. The warm, drowsy, autumn afternoon in these Gardens has all the charm of a snatched opportunity; the quiet is more deeply felt because the noisy restlessness is so near. In the desert one is proverbially thankful for the oasis; in the oasis one should be thankful for the desert. In Kensington Gardens—perhaps "in this lone, open glade"—one of our modern poets wrote not the least charming of his lyrics, as he watched:

> All things in this glade go through
> The changes of their quiet day.

You wander away toward the gate, trying to recall the rest of the poem. Fate is fond of

spoiling our most cultured and appreciative moments. The London boy, who has passed out of the gate before you, turns back excitedly and shouts to his brother, who is some twenty yards behind him:

"Awthur! Loossharp! Run! 'Ere's a cabbos down."

VIII.—ON WATERLOO BRIDGE.

THE rain had been falling at intervals throughout the day, and had brought with it, so it seemed, almost universal depression. The passing omnibus sent its shower of mud into the face of the wayfarer, and yet took no pride apparently in doing it. The cab horses were all grown weary and mechanical; they came down Chancery Lane in two slides and a convulsion, but cared nothing for it. On the pavement there were sullen and bitter feelings in the hearts of the crowd, because those that had umbrellas were many and those that could manage them aright were very few. Did anyone feel happier for the gentle spring showers? I cannot say certainly, but I saw a hatter come to the door of his shop and look out; he went back again, rubbing his large hands softly together, and looking thankful.

To-night one naturally turned to the river.

"Are you wet?" it seemed to be saying; "I, too, am very wet and darkly miserable, finding my own length tedious, and tired of my tides." It has its moods. On winter nights it is very angry; the white gleam of the floating ice is like the white of fierce teeth; it snarls and growls against the arches; it shakes itself impatiently under the Embankment lights; it wants to get away and do mischief in the darkness. Then there are happy mornings when the old blind man on the bridge, as he sits reading and mumbling, is conscious of a little sunlight; and then the river is brilliant and active, like a City man wearing a shining hat and hurrying to catch a train. And to-night it is mysterious and sad. It has a great many secrets, and it slides along in the darkness muttering to itself about them. It is full of horrible knowledge, which it does not always keep to itself. Sometimes, out of sheer wantonness, it gives up one of its ghastly secrets, to sicken us and frighten us. But to-night it only mutters to itself. It is like the old woman who passed me just now. She was an old hag with a tattered shawl, sandy-gray hair,

and a wicked face. She skulked along in the darkness, swearing under her breath all the while.

The crowd at night is, or seems to be, more picturesque. There are times in the day when it would be hardly possible to throw a stone on Waterloo Bridge without hitting a small black bag, unless an omnibus got in the way. But now the clerk who comes into business every week day by Waterloo has finished with work for the day, and has gone back to comfort and Clapham. Heavily laden vans covered with dripping tarpaulins are still moving slowly toward the station. Strange characters loiter on the bridge at night sometimes. Some do not seem perfectly easy under the critical gaze of the policeman. There is one type which seems very common, a middle-aged man with a black chin, a white face, and a suspecting eye. He wears a greenish-black frock coat very much too large for him, with the collar turned up to hide deficiencies, and a low felt hat tilted a little forward and a little to one side. Sometimes he wears boots and sometimes slippers, but he

always has them very much too large, so that he shuffles in his walk. To-night I notice that ironical fate has left him with carpet slippers. He is to be found anywhere between Whitechapel and West Kensington, but he is particularly fond of bridges. Sometimes his impulsive nature leads him to confide in you. He is going to call on the French ambassador; he has in fact, an appointment with him, and he has no doubt that the French ambassador will do justice to his case. He will not trouble you with the details of his case. He rather gives you the impression that the French ambassador would not like him to be so indiscreet. No, his point is this: his interview is not until the morning, and in the meantime what is he to do? He has no money, and he cannot beg. He would sooner starve than beg. He would be thankful for a loan of sixpence, not more—he would not take more, because he might not be able to repay it. He asks you for it rather than anyone else, because he could see at once that you were a gentleman. He adds, rather incoherently, that it may be the turning-point in his career.

It is generally at night that he tells this story—or any other story.

Suddenly a lump of mud, large and of irregular shape, darts out from the traffic in the roadway and walks once around me, sniffing. There is a dog inside it, a dog that has temporarily mislaid its master. He turns from me in bitter disappointment, and in his flurry and excitement begins to investigate the most unlikely people. He is perfectly sure that he had a master somewhere about here, but for the life of him he can't remember where he put the man. At last a shrill whistle sounds fifty yards away, and the lump of mud hurries off with a little impatient bark, which means: "Why on earth couldn't the man have said that before instead of giving me all this anxiety!"

It is rather interesting to watch the crowd and to conjecture which member of it would be the most likely to commit suicide by jumping from the bridge. The river does not look particularly inviting; and even if it were cleaner and warmer, I believe that there must always be one moment during the fall from the bridge

to the water when the action seems to be a mistake—a mistake beyond the possibility of correction. Would it be the duty of anyone on the bridge to jump in after the unfortunate? As one looks down at the water, one sees so very many reasons why such an attempt at a rescue would be foolhardy and useless. Personally, I should not like to deprive some worthier man of the chance of displaying heroism.

As I look, the lights of a train pass slowly across Charing Cross bridge, and one sees the steam from the engine. Steam and smoke often seem to be living creatures. Yonder, from one hard-working chimney, the smoke comes out in the form of an angry snake, seeming to be fighting its way through the wind and rain. Then, by some change in the strength or direction of the wind, it alters its shape, and looks like a woman's hair. Then, again, it scatters into pieces, and seems to be a flight of little ghostly gray birds hurrying away into the darkness.

IX.—TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.

THERE are many streets in London which have neither the poetry of picturesque poverty nor the graces of luxury and culture. Pre-eminent among these is Tottenham Court Road. Some of its shops are large; very few of them are beautiful. They may be ambitious, but they do not reach to the level of the artistic upholsterer. There is, for instance, a kind of flowerpot, of one color—a dirty, ugly color; one sees it often on the window-sills of lodging houses in the black back streets of Bloomsbury, and one always feels sure that it must have been bought in Tottenham Court Road; it marks the point of taste at which the middle class has arrived. The artistic spirit and the iniquitous hire-system seldom exist together, and Tottenham Court Road is the home of the hire-system. There is a certain kind of cake which is chiefly to be found in the confectioners' windows of

this road. It is a cake of considerable parts, but it is not nearly so good as it wants to be. Sometimes it adorns a social undertaking of a family. But there is something in it—some subtle quality perfectly independent of currants—which irresistibly suggests a large hall, tea urns, pomatum, platform speeches, and a magic lantern rather out of order. The cake, like the flowerpot, is ambitious. Many of the shops here have not even ambitions. The felt hats in that shop over the way are "all one price." There is no room there for the indulgence of class distinctions; like the processes of nature, they vary neither for peer nor peasant.

And, indeed, the crowds passing up and down the road hardly seem to be given to ostentation and small vanities. There are exceptions, of course; I notice a thin, pale clerk looking intently into a tailor's window and smiling gratefully at the more forcible patterns. But, as a rule, the people seem to have some money, but not much money to spend, and do not look as if they would spend it without sufficient reason. Consequently, the allurements

and seductions which are offered are very strong. The cheapest goods are put in the windows with the price marked upon them; and they are very cheap. How does the grocer, whose establishment I just passed, manage to sell tinned sardines at such an absurdly small price? One cannot but marvel at it, though personally one might prefer a more quiet death. The notices in the windows are peculiarly attractive. One man advertises "The Boots of the Future." This might, perhaps, be called the leather forecast. It appeals to the same instinct as the weary old man in the Strand, who tells us that three most ordinary collar studs, to be purchased for one penny, are "the greatest novelty upon hurth." The shops, I notice, of fishmongers and fruiterers spread themselves out and protrude into the pavement. Can it be safe to allow so much fruit to be within the reach of the passer-by? I feel certain that I could take one of those apples without being seen by anyone in the shop. But at this moment a wiry-looking little man, with conscientiousness written upon his countenance, fixes his

cold glance upon me. He is there to watch; and, unfortunately, he read in my eye that I was calculating the possibility of stealing an apple; he has added the conjecture that I was intending to steal one, which is horribly wrong of him. He watches me suspiciously as I move away. I feel half inclined to go back again and buy something expensive—a cocoanut, for instance—but this might look like the action of a guilty man. Besides, I do not happen to have any money with me. In some of the by-streets irregular commerce is being conducted from barrows; they are lit by candles protected from the wind by glass chimneys. They offer for sale, apparently, an unspeakable shell fish and the effervescing drinks of the summer time. Who buys them? And what on earth can you do with them when you have bought them? As one goes farther north, the shops and houses seem to get smaller and more sordid. I suppose one always reaches the point at last, in walking out of London, where the wretchedness of the outskirt merges into the snug decency of the suburb.

The stream of clerks and business men that flows down Tottenham Court Road in the morning and back again in the evening is quite distinct from the aimless, drifting crowd that lives in the vicinity and seems to be chiefly occupied in looking in shop windows. A girl of seven years or so has just stopped before that upholsterer's and stares eagerly, ardently, at the saddle-bag suite. Then she sighs a little, and moves on to a chemist's, where she again pauses. She looks longingly, almost hungrily, at a bottle of quinine and iron tonic. Suddenly she tears herself away and begins to run; she runs a few steps and stops short, sucking one finger; then she walks sedately back again to the upholsterer's and stares once more at the saddle-bag suite. Now, I should like to know what mental process underlay this series of actions.

The sunlight reveals no fresh beauties in Tottenham Court Road, and the gaslight cannot glorify it. It remains sordid—sordid in its virtues, sordid in its vices. Its temples of dissipation, with their grimy shrubs and ugly glare,

hardly invite one to enter. It has not the brilliant activity of the City, nor the wealth and repose of the West. Almost every face in the crowd looks tired; and most of them seem to be in the habit of getting tired to very little purpose. They can live by their work, but there is always a struggle. There are few less inspiriting places in London than Tottenham Court Road; its greatest emporium does not redeem it.

X.—SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE EDGWARE ROAD.

BETWEEN the line of barrows on one side of the pavement and the shops on the other side the crowd is so dense that one must walk slowly. For to-morrow will be Sunday and many have come marketing to-night; Saturday, too, is pay day, and there is money to spend. The air is filled with the hoarse cries of the most energetic salesmen in the world. The flaring lamps on the stalls and the superior gas of the shops make here a little brilliant tunnel through the large darkness; the noisy triumphs and troubles of buyers and sellers, the heavy rumble and swift whirr of passing traffic, the discord of passionate cornet and sentimental concertina, contrast with the great silence that hovers overhead. The crowd elbows its way along—alert, busy, basket-laden, interesting. Here are two girls, arm-in-arm, talking noisily, with large dyed feathers in their hats. Girls that walk and talk that way always wear these feathers.

Three old women have met at a street corner, and two of them are in fiendishly bad tempers. "'Ev yer bought yer meat?" inquires the first, managing in some indefinable way to make the question sound like an insult.

"Yes, I 'ev bought my meat," answers the second with reserved bitterness.

"Lessee."

"I 'ont."

Attack and retort follow in quick succession.

The third old woman, who has a tame-rabbit-like face, shakes her head sadly: "'Ow you tew do carry on! Afore I'd give way to myself like that I'd—I'd—I'd do suthin'." She is unpopular, as the didactic generally are. A little farther on is a brilliant red coat; Thomas Atkins is shedding the glory of his society on a mere civilian, and the civilian looks pleased. There are boys, inevitable boys, dodging one another in the throng and colliding freely with everybody else. On the outskirts of the crowd a thin blind woman is seated in the shadow; she is reading a Bible in raised characters, very slowly, syllable by syllable; she has not a large audi-

ence, but Joolyer has laid a detaining hand on Awthur's arm, and the two listen for a moment. "That allers do seem to me so wun'ful," says Joolyer, with a pensive expression on her florid face. "An' don't she do it bewtiful, too?" Awthur agrees with some hesitation; he is genial, patronizing, and slightly fatuous. "Well, mebby; I've seen that kind o' thing—well—pretty frequent, I might say." Joolyer does not press the point; her attention has been attracted elsewhere. "Look 'ere, Awthur—one o' them niggers with a strorrat and a banjo. Kimmalong." The nigger takes up his position at the entrance to a public house with plenty of light upon him. Words and tune are recognizable:

> "Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber
> Dere's wha de old folks stay."

"'Ow that does remoind me!" says Joolyer sentimentally. Pleasant things are pleasantest in the memory. "You aint forgotten yet that night in May, down at the Welsh 'Arp which is 'Endon way," sings Mr. Chevalier.

The nigger bases his appeal to our charity on

the fact that he has made music, and blacked his face. Another man supplements his cornet with the statement that he is blind. A third can plead not only that he has lost one arm, but that he turns a mechanical piano with the other. In an age of competition we have, apparently, to eke out our attainments with our afflictions.

But this crowd has not come out to-night merely with a view to distribute largess and suffer tunes. Barrows mean business. On one of them a small scaffolding has been erected from which rows of skinned rabbits are swinging, shining, unseemly, unspeakably blue. Oysters are to be purchased at sixpence a dozen; a monstrous melon may be bought for threepence, and a cokernut for twopence. Other stalls offer to us wherewithal we may be clothed; on one are displayed collars and shirt-fronts; at another, the salesman is pleading with eloquence, with pathos, with all the resources of the dramatic art, the advantages of braces. "Some on yer," he says, and there are tears in his voice, "wear belts. Sooner or liter, if yur continyur so doin', you'll get cramp in the lines.

I appeal to any medical man 'ere present to say if that is not true." At this point he flings back his head proudly, and pauses in defiant silence looking a little like Landseer's Stag at Bay. Then his voice drops to low yet penetrating tones, as he holds forth a sample of his goods. "Shall I say a shillin' for these? 'and-sewn leather, not brown paper—solid work; observe 'ow they stretches! I will *not* ask a shillin'. For this one night and never agin, I offer 'em at sixpence a pair. Your lawst chance, gemm'en." Of course, science has its place among these barrows. A mild, beneficent, clean-shaven old man holds up a glass containing some clear magenta-colored liquid. It represents the human blood. He pours a drop or two from another bottle into it and the clear liquid becomes cloudy, changes color, and is offensive to the smell. The crowd around test this latter point eagerly. This experiment, we are told, shows the effect of nicotine on the human blood. Smokers among the man's audience look at one another dubiously. Can such things be? But there is hope for them. The

old man adds something from another bottle and the liquid once more becomes clear, brilliant magenta. This illustrates the effect of a certain smoking mixture, compounded of many herbs, all polysyllabic, which the old man is now prepared to sell in packets; a little of it mixed with tobacco kills the nicotine and renders it innocuous. Some little distance away an old woman is the proprietor of a model, lit by scraps of candle, and bearing an inscription: "Kind friends, this is the handiwork of my deceased husband, which represents a gold mine. By paying a penny the figures will work, and you will receive a planet of your fortune." She is not doing very good business; a man with a barrow-load of caged birds is doing better. "The air's a bit sharpish, else he'd be singin' now," he says of one yellow bird. "Sings fit to bust 'isself, 'e does. And quality! Any fancier 'ud pick that bird out among a thousand." It seems possible to sell almost anything in the Edgware Road on Saturday night, provided that the price is low. Cheapness has a greater attraction than desirability.

XI.—AT A FIRE.

ALTHOUGH my chambers are quite at the top of the staircase, I sometimes, when I am in them, hear, involuntarily, what is being said by a passer-by. There are voices which travel almost any distance. To-night, as I was busily engaged in writing a popular scientific article, one of these penetrating voices passed under my window, and sent a remark skyward. It looked in upon me on its way, and it impressed me:

"An' it's a big fire, too."

I drew back the curtain and looked out. The sky was positively glorious, and one's first instinct was to wonder why we could not have such beauty every night. When, a few minutes afterward, I joined the crowd in the Strand, I could not but notice the increase of life and energy and brightness. The loafer had found a new interest, and walked briskly in pursuit

of it. Draggled, dull-eyed young women, joining the hurrying crowd, grew more fervent and spirited. Urchins dashed past, filled with delightful, unspeakable excitement. Even the bare, bald face of the Law Courts was lighted up with a roseate, almost illegal, joyousness. Up Wych Street and up Drury Lane went the straggling crowd, knowing the way as crowds always do. An old man standing on the outside of a public house, and thinking about the inside, stayed me with the look of the Ancient Mariner, and sought from me a lucifer match. "My soul!" he ejaculated, as he tried to suck the flame into the fetid remnants of tobacco in his clay pipe, "if thet should be a theayter now—thet over theer!" He was not going on with us to assure himself on this point. He was too old to hurry much, I think, and he still had hope that some kind patron might take him in and finance his drunkenness. But what business had he to damp the popular enjoyment by such talk? He saw only the disaster; he was too old to feel the attraction of a fire, as we did. As we passed down Long Acre the at-

traction almost seemed to be calling us in intelligible language. "Here is a beautiful show and you pay nothing to see it. Thousands of pounds' worth of someone else's property are being destroyed. Be quick, because the quickest will get the best places. Be quick!"

It was mean, distinctly mean, of the voice of the fire to call us down Long Acre, for there were certain policemen there who had failed to take a right view of a fire; instead of regarding it as a show, and pointing out to us the best places from which to see it, they actually stood in our way, and refused to let us interfere with the operations of the firemen, as if the main object were to put out the fire as soon as possible. The full glories of Castle Street and Neal Street, where the fire was raging, were hidden from us. There we were—a fair sample of the people of London—longing to witness a fine artistic effect, and willing that someone else should pay any price for it, yet prevented by the police! We stood in a close crowd behind them; and if some of us said bitter things to them, at any rate we did not behave as

badly as the crowd in Endell Street, which broke through their line. We could see sparks, and smoke, and the reddish-yellow glare; we could see occasionally a fireman's helmet; we could hear the regular panting of the engines—we had not altogether lived in vain. One small boy, with an important expression on his dirty face, was seated astride a man's shoulders to obtain a better view. He did not seem to know the man in the least, but simply to have used him in the absence of a lamp-post. His conversation was chiefly addressed to a less fortunate little boy down below. "'Ere's another injun, Bill!" he cried, as the crowd parted right and left to make way for it. There was one that sat on it who wore, not helmet and uniform, but the ordinary hat and overcoat. The small boy pointed him out at once. "And that's the Prince o' Wiles!" he added with enthusiasm. He did not think it. It was simply that the hilariousness of the occasion had awakened in him a great need which only wild, almost brilliant mendacity could satisfy. This hilariousness was apparent

everywhere. If you want to see really bright, happy faces in London, look at a crowd which is watching a great disaster. But presently the small boy became dissatisfied with the limited view and his elevated position. "This 'ere's no use, Bill," he said meditatively. "I know the plice—Covink Gar'n." He climbed down from the man, without taking any more notice of him than if he had actually been a lamp-post, and went off with Bill to James Street. So did I.

One could see a little more here. At the upper end of the street the scaffolding of an unfinished building had been converted into a grand stand by the crowd. One could see a wall of the burning building. Flames were lolling out of the windows and looking at us. The wall seemed to be standing alone, black against a background of fire and bright smoke. The crowd watched it intently, knowing that it must soon fall, and whiled away the time by inventing, and subsequently believing, exaggerated accounts of the extent of the conflagration. At last the wall came down, in rather a

theatrical way; and after that there was very little left for anyone to see. One almost expected to hear an orchestra play the National Anthem, and see the audience move away, chatting about the performance. They did not, however, move away at once; crowds are always sanguine, and they probably waited in the hope that some other house might catch fire. The general opinion was that it had not been a bad fire, as far as extent goes; but that the style was poor, and that it was lacking in incident.

XII.—OXFORD STREET.

A CERTAIN part of Oxford Street might possibly be defined as the mean between Tottenham Court Road and Regent Street, between a narrow escape from squalor and a near approach to elegance. But, if it is considered as a whole, it seems too great for any brief definition. It merges from Holborn, with its bookshops, and restaurants, and certain cure for corns. It takes upon itself the glories of greater and more advertised commerce. It tolerates the most unimportant side streets, and brushes past the professional quarter where stethoscopes and respectability are equally common. At Regent Street it grows a little uneasy; it feels that it is going west, and must make an effort. It rises; not only does it go up a hill, it also seeks a higher culture, and begins to have higher social aims. And at last it sees the northern end of Park Lane, and dies in rapture. Its variety is

too immense to be held by any meager network of words—any paltry definition. It has its theater and does not disdain its musical hall; and if its amusements or its commerce should tend to make it too worldly, there are correctives at hand—a chapel and a station of the Salvation Army. Its traffic knows nothing of social distinction. Two fat horses, with coats arsenically glossy and opinions about bearing-reins, have the honor of taking their mistress to the circulating library. Omnibus after omnibus is willing to take absolutely anyone to the Bank for one penny. Through the maze of vehicles at the cross-streets a donkey, respondent to the stick and the expressions of the proprietor behind it, miraculously finds its way. A cyclist dodges a cab, and the cabman is rude to the cyclist. The ting of the bell, the rattle of wheels, the babble of voices, make up the orchestra to which this performance goes on, as it seems, continually—the quaint mixture of tragedy, comedy, and farce that fascinates one every day in a great London thoroughfare.

And yet, with all this variety, there are types

which seem to be very common. Often has one seen at the corner of Tottenham Court Road the respectable elderly woman telling a story to another respectable elderly woman while she waits for her omnibus. And the story is always too long for the time at her disposal. "So I sez nuthin'. I just lets him run on. 'E seemed what you might call surprised, too, at my not answering of 'im back. But, thinks I to myself, let 'im talk if 'e wants to talk, knowin' very well in my own mind as 'e'd be very sorry for it arftwuds. An' larst of all I sez: 'Might I arst yur a pline question when you've quite done all that?' And—bless your soul!—afore 'e could speak another word, in she come—the girl 'erself with a jug o' beer in 'er 'and! You never saw a man so took aback in all your——" At this moment the cry of "Lunbridge! Lunbridge Rylewye!" breaks into the story. "Well, Eliza, I leave yer to imajun it," she says, as she turns to the omnibus. Then there are the two children of the street gazing at the brilliant unwholesomeness in the confectioners' window. "I should like to 'ave

some of *them*," says the little girl, pointing, with the instinct of her sex, to the pinkest sweetmeats in the collection. The little boy, with an air of experience, corrects her. "They don't lawst. Now, did yer ever 'ave any of *those*—them black 'uns in the corner? No? Well, I 'ave, then. I made one of them lawst me bes' part of a day—off and on." The last three words are terrible. The venders of penny toys, double numbers, and flowers, are all permanent types. Those with the saddest story, frequently, with some inconsistency, sell the funniest papers. "Larst number of 'Screamin' Jokes'—one penny," whines one shivering woman. "Deer lyedy, do buy, and'elp me to get a bed to-night. A thousand laughs for one penny. I've got children to feed, kind lyedy. Ill'strated throughout." The women who have been shopping are interesting. It is sometimes possible to guess what their negotiations have been inside a shop from the expression on their faces as they leave it. There is a certain masterly look sometimes seen on a woman's face on such occasions. The light of battle gleams in her

eyes. One knows that something was not at all what she had ordered, and that she has made them take it back. They were a little reluctant at first, but they had to give way. She triumphs, and within the shop the air is thick with apologies. There is the woman who emerges from the glass doors with rather a troubled look in her eyes. She has bought something, and thinks she has given rather too much for it. And there is that look of almost saintlike ecstasy which marks those who have perfectly satisfied themselves and anticipate envy. All may be seen any day outside the shops in Oxford Street.

Those shop windows are too alluring. It is impossible for anyone, of either sex or any nature, to get down Oxford Street without either making a purchase or else coveting and desiring. Covetousness stands open-eyed before each jeweler's shop. Reminiscence also has its place there. It is always a delight to a woman to suddenly come upon one just like Maria's in a shop window. She points out the coincidence to her companion. "There yer are," says a tall

woman in black, with high cheekbones and decayed bonnet; "it was a 'arf 'oop, an' as like that as two pins. I don't say 'e ever paid four sov'rings for the one as 'e give 'er. Not but what 'e could well afford it, mind yer. But there—she showed me 'ers last Sunday when I was down Fulham, and that's the very model of it."

On Sundays Oxford Street loses some of its commercial air. Its eyes are closed; its shutters are down. The traffic still goes on, but Oxford Street is now the means and not the end; it exists not as a bazaar, but as a road from one place to another. The Salvation Army parade it. There is noise enough and crowd enough on Sundays. There are hours, dark hours in the early morning, when the street is far more silent; even the traffic has gone. One sees, looking down it, the long line of lights, the gleam of wet pavements, the closed shutters, the dreariness and emptiness. The street, like the face of a man, looks quite different in sleep.

XIII.—NOON IN JUDEA.

THE East of London is a large district—so large that there is room in it for variety. There is space for the Jew to be essentially Jewish, for the workman to work or to agitate, for the thief to thieve, for the murderer to murder, and for the police to catch him if they can. Close to the noisy main street, with the crowds and the many vehicles of noon, rests the quiet group of the old Trinity almshouses; the flag in the center of their inclosure is half-mast high to-day—peaceful death on one side of the pavement and the war of life on the other. Over the gate of the inclosure a notice forbids the entrance of strangers, hawkers, perambulators, beggars, or dogs. So peace may be possible there; but I ranked in one or more of these prohibited classes, and I could not enter. I could only admire the flowers, gazing strenuously through the gateway, and then pass far-

ther westward to Whitechapel, where flowers in their native soil are of less account than fruit on barrows. Even the main thoroughfare is full of variety; it varies with the day and the hour. Not every day, as in the time of the Dock Strikes, does one see the hungry crowd gathered outside the "Food and Shelter" of the Salvation Army. Not every hour, as now, have the street loafers the always new, and to them inexpensive, pleasure of a street accident. This time, I learn, a van and two horses have attempted to perforate a wall. They have failed, and have been removed. There is nothing left but a little blood, slowly mixing with the dust and mud of the pavement, around which the crowd stands and entertains conjectures. Whitechapel at noon, with the watery sunlight coming fitfully through a sky of almost even gray, looks one thing to me; to the workman who lives here, as he comes back from his work at night, though it should be earlier, and sees the lighted clock of St. Mary's winking drowsily at him through the fog, Whitechapel looks something quite different. As I turn up

Petticoat Lane, I remember that if I had come on a Sunday morning, I should have found it far more crowded, and the Jewish population would have been busy there with gambling and speculation. The poverty of the East is brilliant with variety in its outward aspect. It is only from within that one feels sure that to many life must seem but a dull monotone, made lurid at rare intervals with some cheap sensuality.

The names painted over the shop doors, the faces of the people in the streets, and the language they speak proclaim their Jewish origin. It has been computed that there are not less that sixty thousand Jews in London. The other nations would have none of them, and England, crowded as she was and is, found room for them; or they found it for themselves. As one passes through the squalid streets, and watches the crowds of the poorer, though not of the utterly destitute class, one wonders if the Jews—of this quarter, at least—do not still sigh at times for the flesh-pots of Egypt.

There are grades in their poverty. It would be unsafe, perhaps, to estimate from the appearance of a shop the income of its Jewish proprietor; but the shop has a more substantial air than the barrow; the salesman at the barrow seems in a position of permanent comfort when compared with the hawker who has to carry his own tray; and the hawker should surely pity those hollow-eyed, narrow-chested, unshaven men, with the wisp of flannel round their throats, and their coats buttoned as tightly as the presence of buttons will permit, who slink softly and sadly along under the shadow of the wall, or stand gazing vacantly at the street corners. In Wentworth Street there are lines of these barrows on either side. At one there are leeks and gherkins to suit the Jewish palate, at another there are neat rows of Hebrew books, wax tapers, and little tin boxes with thongs attached to them, to suit the Jewish form of faith. At others there are bright-colored prints, or ornaments of imitation tortoise shell appealing to a love of finery which is not characteristic only of the Jewess; for

Wentworth Street and the neighborhood have by no means sunk so low as to altogether neglect appearances. There are bright feathers in the hats of the girls who come streaming down Commercial Street in the dinner hour. There is a certain similarity in their dress. Velvet or cognate material is popular. Jackets and gloves are not worn as a rule; though the former may be carried in the hand and used to kill flies on the wall. Probably the older women who are shopping in Wentworth Street know that they do not look altogether unpicturesque with the crimson or scarlet shawl over their black hair. There are, of course, any number of shops for the sale of second-hand clothes; and one dusty, grimy building in the neighborhood bears the imposing title of "Exhibition and Clothes Exchange." Not far from it one sees a mysterious notice informing us that "The Noah's Ark Dress Suit" can be hired. Conjecture or question would be unwise; to read such a notice is to feel at once that there are some things which it is better not to know.

The children are not apparently much exercised on the question of dress. They sit down when they are tired, or when they happen to think about it, and they never reflect that the muddy curbstone may spoil their apparel. As a rule, the muddiest curbstone would find the task difficult. I noticed one girl make certain cabalistic marks all across the pavement with white chalk. I thought it was going to be hop-scotch, but it was not. When she had completed the lines, she seated herself placidly against the wall, and swore at any passer-by who happened to tread on them. She was evidently waiting for some companion to take part in the game. On the hard, smooth road in Harrow Alley roller skating was going on. One pair of skates is enough for three boys. Two of them wear a skate on one foot and push themselves along with the other. The other boy runs behind and says that it is his turn. The gravity of some of these children is most extraordinary. They play practical jokes on one another with absolutely unmoved faces, or with one terrible grin. Possibly they have

already found out the seriousness of everything, and have no time to waste on the prolonged giggle of the amused aristocrat. Many of these children have the most beautiful faces, but their hair is often spoiled by being twisted into an absurd sort of top-knot or by a painful artificial shininess. Among the women one sees of course a number of brown wigs. They do not pretend to be anything but wigs. Sometimes they are pushed a little backward, and a fringe of the natural hair shows in front.

The whole place is full of incongruities. At one of the barrows a tall, fine woman is standing. She has a Spanish face, and liquid, tragic eyes. Her age may be anything between forty and sixty. Pity and contempt are expressed in her gaze. How stately and magnificent she would look before the footlights, a queen of tragedy, with the best blank verse falling rhythmically from her full lips! At the present time she is differing with the proprietor of the barrow as to the price of certain vegetables. One notices that the Jew loves to deal in commodities of which the prices fluctuate, such as

green grocery. Or, again, one passes many a stall where the frayed garments of last year are sold and finds close at hand a little shop hung with old armor. A tin hat-case of curious shape recalls a fashion of many years ago. When shall we wear three-cornered hats again? And had the bright and beautiful people who wore them of yore anything in common with that gaudy youth yonder who is bargaining for more second-hand brilliancies. Amid such scenes one recalls the words of the gentle and genial Teufelsdröckh: "Often, while I sojourned in that monstrous tuberosity of civilized life, the capital of England—and meditated and questioned destiny, under that ink-sea of vapor, black, thick, and multifarious as Spartan broth —and was one lone soul amid those grinding millions—often have I turned into their old clothes market to worship." The reason, it will be remembered, was that the philosopher desired to worship man as the Temple of the Divinity, but that man had the misfortune to be also possessed of the devil, and vanity, the "clearest phasis" of the devil, would have ap-

propriated the worship; and so Teufelsdröckh was constrained instead "to do reverence to those shells and outer husks of the body," to cast-off clothes. Less far-fetched reasons have led to more than one variety here of another form of worship. *Laborare est orare.* The service of man, whether in connection with other services or not, profits more than the ironical devotion of that imaginary and imaginative philosopher. Nor is it limited to that fragment of the great East End in which I lingered for a few minutes to-day, and caught a glimpse of Toynbee and St. Jude's.

XIV.—AT KEW.

I HAD mounted to the outside of a four-horse omnibus. There is a combination of pomp and cheapness about a four-horse omnibus that always pleases me. Besides, it is more appropriate to a Bank holiday. It has a festive appearance not to be found in the lowlier two-horse conveyance. The very horses seem to be filled with the dignity of the thing; the driver wears a better hat and smokes a browner cigar; no one could guess that somewhere in its black past this same omnibus was in the habit of carrying clerks to the City for an ordinary penny. It is difficult to ride on a four-horse omnibus without looking joyous; but out of pride I attempted it.

The drive was almost entirely without incidents. We paused at a public house, after we had gone through Hammersmith, and the better sort of us drank glasses of stout, and ate

buns. We crossed to Kew Bridge with considerable spirit and dash; and there I descended to mingle with the brilliant throng in the road that skirts the green. I went straight on to the Gardens, not stopping to buy a mouth organ, a tin money box, a fragment of terrible pineapple rock, or any of the other goods offered for sale on the line of stalls. At the stately entrance to the Gardens I paused for a moment; and there I read the notice which says that only the decently dressed are allowed to enter. Through the gateway I could see the blood-red waistcoat and the flashing buttons of one who doubtless would enforce this order.

As a general rule I am law-abiding. But it seemed cruel that I should have come so far and then be rejected at the very gates; so I waited my opportunity, and when for a moment the head of the janitor was averted, I effected my entrance. Kew Gardens are not as Hampstead Heath on an August Bank holiday; here one almost trembles in the presence of the great decorum. For the most part, the visitors to the Kew Gardens represented the more respec-

table of the lower middle classes. They saw notices forbidding them to walk on the edge of the grass, and they were obedient; they knocked out their pipes, as the law demanded, before entering the holy hothouses; they gazed on the prim flower-beds and drank in the spirit of perfect formality. But all were not quite tame. The children were natural. And that young man of London whom the humorists have called 'Arry but who calls himself 'Erry (unless he is Cholly or Albut), was just as vivid and ebullient here as he is everywhere on Bank holiday. The only real objection to keeping children is that they grow up; it was sad to think that the lovely child probably would become the unlovely Cholly.

In the essay "Of Love" we read: "This Passion hath its Flouds, in the very times of Weaknesse; which are, great *Prosperitie;* and great *Adversitie.*" Bank holiday is one of the "times of Weaknesse" for the young man of London. It is then, above all other times, that he allows his fancy to lightly turn. One noticed this in the gravel walks and shaded alleys of

Kew. On every garden-seat there seemed to be two people, of opposite sexes, seated—a blot on the decorum. The attitude in every case seemed to be the same; there was a gallant disregard of publicity about it. Owing to the arrangement of the paths, one could not always avoid giving surprises. I never wanted to hear Albert refused by the only woman whom he could think about seriously; but the sudden turn of the path left me no option. I have noticed that the presence of female society always makes a marked difference in these young men; it either lowers or heightens their tone. Sometimes it lowers it almost to the point of imbecility. As the crowd passed in procession through one of the houses, the exigencies of space forced me to keep immediately behind Frenk and to hear what he said to her. He called everything "nice" or "very nice." He called a giant cactus from Mexico which is something like a prickly bolster standing on end, "really very nice." Regard for her had destroyed in him all perception of quality in other things. It was almost pathetic; she was

not so deeply affected, and noticed all the main points in the vegetable and animal contents of the grass house. "See there, that's grown all skew-wise. That one's more like india-rubber than anything." Then in a hushed whisper, not to be heard by the girl a little way in front of them: "Owdjer like me to 'ave my 'air done like that?" The young man is at his worst when love has heightened his tone, and made him jocular and noisy. He picks up the cast feathers of birds, and sticks them in his hat; if he is carrying any garment for her, he puts it on himself humorously; he rushes humorously at a low fence as though he would jump it; it is not only humor which prevents him from making the attempt; then he makes a personal remark about the nearest old lady and whistles. "I do wish you wouldn't be so sarcastic, Awthur," says his fair companion.

The interest in the Gardens themselves did not seem to be an interest in botany. In a secluded part of the Gardens I noticed something which was wanting to be a tree. So far it had only got seven feet of stem, absolutely bare

except for the label, and one bough at the top of it—a small, solitary bough that looked melancholy, as if it wished it were greener. An old gentleman with a thin white face, a stoop, and a silk hat much too large for him, was examining the label with an interest which I felt sure *must* be scientific. But I have no positive proof that he was a botanist. Most of the visitors had come with the intention of visiting all the main features of the Gardens, and had no time for such minor matters as labels. There were the glass houses, the pagoda, the North collection, the museums, the refreshment house—all requiring inspection. The refreshment house is intensely rustic, with striped awnings, and climbing plants, and hanging baskets of flowers. I lunched there. The museums seemed to be used more as a shelter from the rain than as collections of scientific interest. Museums demand so much previous knowledge; letters written in Tamil on palmyra leaves would be more interesting if one could read Tamil; the band of cotton cloth, which—the label tells us—is the only garment worn by Toddymen,

offers chances to the humorist; but, then, what *are* Toddymen? Possibly the information is on some label that I did not see; I rarely linger in museums. Possibly, it is in the official guides; I never buy official guides; they take the poetry out of everything.

As I stood outside the Gardens waiting for the omnibus, I saw two men leaning sadly against a wall. One was bad-tempered and the other was fatuous.

"Got any more money fer booze?" inquired the first.

"No," said the other, shaking his feeble head, "I aint."

"And yer call this Bangkoldy!" said his companion vindictively.

"I begun mine last night—that's 'ow it is."

"You aint a man whot one can depend on," observed the first moodily, as he moved away.

XV.—"BANGKOLDY" AT HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

THE real nature of a worker is best seen on his holiday. The routine of business does not permit the display of much individuality. Three grocer's assistants each wearing a white apron, each tying up a pound of sugar, and each making the same remark on the weather, are very similar and not very interesting; they have conformed to a type. A Bank holiday sets the individuality free. One of our three puts on flannels, and plays cricket all day in the sun; athleticism shows itself, and one can learn still more of the man's character from noticing his behavior when he is given out l. b. w. The second wears all the more recent additions to his wardrobe and takes a young lady to Rosherville; here are the rudiments of a man of fashion. A third stops in bed till midday, and then takes a walk in Brompton Cemetery. His

individuality is not, perhaps, quite obvious, for routine has broken him. But if he were richer, he would probably have a little volume of minor verse published.

Man's necessity is the tram company's opportunity. During the morning and afternoon the yellow trams were all crowded with passengers on their way to Hampstead Heath. Shortly before noon they were swarming up the streets in the vicinity. There were small children in charge of smaller children; groups of girls with bright eyes and a certain freedom of manner; women of swarthy complexion, with white or brilliantly colored handkerchiefs on their heads, some of them with trained birds in cages to assist them in probing the secrets of destiny; young men in their Sunday clothes, looking very proud of the young women, also in Sunday clothes, whom they were escorting; urchins with pence in their pockets and a tumble from a hired donkey in their immediate future; and fat babies in creaking perambulators, wheeled by anxious mothers, and personally conducted by good-humored, pipe-smoking fathers. All

were seeking the fresh air, and sunlight, and green open spaces; and the artificial allurements of swings, shows, and sandwiches. The top of the Heath was a bright and animated scene. Against the water on one side of the road donkeys could be hired. One little boy was selecting a donkey and being advised in his choice of an animal by another little boy who had the air of wisdom. "'Ev that 'un, 'Enry," says Mentor. "I rid 'im myself, and 'e can go proper. You doan want no stick. Kick 'im in the stomick. 'E can't feel nowhere else." On the other side of the road were the swings, stalls for the sale of cheap refreshments, and penny shows. Each row of swings had a man with a mechanical piano near it; and I noticed that the music never would keep time with the motion of the swings. I did not myself care to visit any of the monstrosities; but anyone who was moved by the spirit of scientific research, or by other motives, had a chance of seeing a six-legged dog, and something which was said to be a boy and a girl joined together. In the crowd here, or further down in the vale, where

more shows were grouped, the cries from the hawkers and the keepers of the booths made one continuous roar. "All the fun of the fair, all the jolly fun!" shouts one man who is selling scent-squirts. "Ask 'em what they think of the show when they come out," is the request of one booth proprietor, who knows that, in the fallen condition of human nature, a man who has been fooled finds no surer consolation than to see his fellow-man fooled in the same way. "We change all the bad 'uns," is an additional inducement to have three shies at the cocoanuts. " 'It 'im as 'ard as yer like! Crack' im over the 'ead! Three shies a penny!" was the invitation to a somewhat barbarous form of amusement, which may sometimes be seen at some of the racecourses. A man thrusts his head through a hole in a screen, and you throw wooden balls at that head. It looks, probably, more dangerous than it really is. The man in this case dodged well; and he wore a wig, which would be some protection. At any rate, I did not see him butchered to make a British holiday.

But the crowd are better to look at than any show. They are attracted by such monstrosities and cruelties as I have mentioned; they make, it must be owned, a perfectly terrific noise; they will defile the Heath with greasy newspapers and scraps of food from their picnics; yet a man would require a very mean mind to feel no affection for them and no sympathy with their boisterous enjoyment on a sunny day. Fine holidays are not so common with them that they can afford to devote them to a study of culture. They are not, at any rate, selfish or self-conscious; their happiness is free and natural. There is more of the spirit of *camaraderie* on Hampstead Heath during the August Bank holiday than could be found in Piccadilly during the whole season. Each man is ready to play a practical joke on his neighbor, but he is equally ready to do him a good turn. I stood on the top of some rising ground, from which one could see a good deal of the Heath. It was shortly after noon, and the midday meal was commencing. All over the Heath were scattered little groups, eating

and laughing. The fat babies had all got out of their perambulators and were crawling about the grass in all directions. Below me were the whirl and noise of the steam roundabout. Crowds were passing to and fro from one group of stalls to the next, the cheap, bright-colored dresses of the girls looking pretty enough at a little distance. The sunlight flashed and sparkled on the water, where bare-legged boys were paddling. There was always a crowd around the ponds; the presence of water in any considerable quantity had the charm of novelty for many. Altogether, there were brightness, and energy, and enthusiasm everywhere.

On the West Heath there was more quiet and seclusion; there, under the shade of the trees, among ferns that grow breast high, more decorous people held more somber picnics. I only saw one person reading. She was not very pretty, and she wore spectacles. She was one of the very few who were quite without companions. I came suddenly upon her among the ferns. She was reading a novel of the circulating libraries, and for a few moments she

had ceased to be conscious that she was a plain, spectacled, solitary girl, whose finger-tips told her profession. She was that beautiful and passionate heroine, Gwendoline, sitting in a dim-lit conservatory, tired of the brilliant glare of the ballroom, and being assured spasmodically of the constant love of a handsome peer, in the usual "faultless evening dress."

THE GHOST OF "GHOSTS."

THE GHOST OF "GHOSTS."

FROM "EVERY MAN HIS OWN IBSEN."

A spacious garden-room, with one door to the left and two doors to the right. In the center of the room is another door, with a window rather more in the foreground. A small sofa stands in front of it. In the background are two more doors, the right-hand door leading to the conservatory, from which a door opens into the garden, from which another door opens into the street. Through a window between the first two doors one catches a glimpse of a gloomy tool-shed, from which a door leads into the conservatory. A staircase runs from the third window to the fourteenth door. There are books and periodicals on the staircase, and a piano on the hire system. So now you know exactly what the scene is like.

MRS. ALVING *stands with a shawl on her head—(a little ambiguous, but you can see what is meant)—in front of the right-hand window.* OSWALD MANTALINI ALVING, *her son, stands partly in front of her and partly behind her.* PASTOR CHADBAND MANDERS *is winding up the clock.* REGINA *is seated at the piano cleaning his boots.*

OSWALD (*drearily*). Tic-tac, tic-tac, tic-tac!

MRS. ALVING. I beg your pardon?

OSWALD. I wish I were a clock, dearest mother. I feel that I want someone to regulate my actions. I am so afraid—afraid of my-

self and the darkness. I do not know, sometimes, what I shall do next. And what a terrible night it is! (*A pause.*) I want Regina, mother. She would save me from myself. When the dread comes on me, raging and tearing—don't scream—I feel the need of her. I want many things. I am thirsty, always thirsty. I want to drink champagne.

(*A sharp click is heard.*)

MANDERS. I have broken the mainspring of your clock, Mrs. Alving. It is a judgment upon this abode of sin.

(*He goes out hurriedly through the window.*)

OSWALD. I am going to smoke—you're not to scream. (*Aside*) Oh, the bitterness of having a fog-horn for a mother! And yet I love her.

(*He draws a large meerschaum from his pocket.*)

MRS. ALVING. Why, that was your father's pipe—no, my dear and only son, you must not smoke in here.

OSWALD. I must, mother. I want to be happy. (*Lights pipe.*) I can remember it all so distinctly.

MRS. ALVING. What? Why? Who?

OSWALD. I was seven years old. I had taken this pipe from my father's room, and I was smoking it. He found me doing it, and took me across his knee——

MRS. ALVING (*correcting him quickly*). Took you *on* his knee, you mean. He always petted his dear boy.

OSWALD. No, *across* his knee.

MRS. ALVING. Ah! he was brimming over with the joy of life. He would jest with you, but he loved you. He was an indulgent parent. If you wanted anything, he would give it you.

OSWALD (*smiling sadly*). He *did* give it me —with a slipper.

MRS. ALVING. Oh, you can recollect nothing of those times. You were too young to understand—to feel things properly.

OSWALD (*still smiling sadly*). But I did feel it properly, I can tell you.

MANDERS (*puts his head in at the other window*). My boots?

REGINA (*petulantly*). They are not done yet, sir.

MANDERS. They ought to be done. You have been all your life under the dominion of a pestilent spirit of self-will. (*Playfully*) O Reginah!

(*He removes his head—from the window, that is.*)

OSWALD. Do you want me to be happy, mother?

MRS. ALVING. You know, my dear son, that I live for you alone. You are the soul of my soul. You are my life, my world, my Oswald Mantalini! How can you ask me that? (*More slowly*) Yes; I want you to—be—happy.

(*A pause. Harmonium in Orchestra, with the tremulant stop out, plays 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep' very softly. Mrs. Alving seats herself on the sofa. Oswald draws a chair to her side, and buries his head in his hands.*)

OSWALD (*slowly exhuming his head*). Then, if that be so, you must not let me think. If I think, I shall—don't scream—I really *shall*, and it will be your fault. It is not enough for me

to smoke. I must also drink champagne constantly.

MRS. ALVING. Yes; but, my dear Oswald, when you consider how much you have already——

OSWALD. Ah! when the torment and the agony and the anguish——

MRS. ALVING. Regina, you might fetch us a small bottle of lager.

REGINA. Very well, ma'am. (*Goes out.*)

OSWALD (*stout-and-bitterly*). Lager!

MRS. ALVING. I cannot deny you anything, my boy. You must live here always now, and forget your troubles. I cannot have my boy worried. Diddums, then?

REGINA (*brings a tray with bottle and two glasses, which she sets on the piano*). Pastor Manders's boots are cleaned now.

MRS. ALVING. Then you need not wait. Take them to him.

(*Regina goes out into the conservatory, leaving door open behind her.*)

MANDERS (*outside in the conservatory*). O Reginah! My ownest!

(*From within the conservatory comes the noise of falling plant-pots and at the same moment is heard:*)

REGINA (*sharply*). You didn't dodge that one, Pastor Manders!

OSWALD (*busy opening the bottle*). Now, then. (*The cork pops, he fills and empties his glass.*) You won't have any, mother?

MRS. ALVING. None for me, thank you.

(*He finishes the bottle; Mrs. Alving watches him anxiously.*)

MANDERS (*enters from the conservatory, and seats himself on the hire system, removing fragments of plant-pot from his hair and clothes*). Did I, or did I not, hear the sound of a cork?

OSWALD. You did; but I, unfortunately, have finished the bottle.

MANDERS. It was ungenerous in you, Oswald. It was unlike you. It was unworthy of the memory of your dead father, in whose honor yonder noble tool-shed has been erected (*bowing to Mrs. Alving*) by one who loved him. I stood there just now, and as I looked at the patent grass-cutter which it shelters, I thought

how exquisitely appropriate the monument was to one who was ever thirsty—who always wanted a little mower.

OSWALD (*aside*). Oh, remove that man!

MRS. ALVING (*aside*). Always thirsty! So is Oswald. Ghosts! ghosts!

MANDERS. So you have finished the bottle. No matter. It is only the spirit of rebellion that craves for happiness in this life.

OSWALD (*despairingly*). Craves for happiness! What can you know about it, sir? Have you experienced the thawing noughts—I mean the gnawing thoughts—the biting, carking, lacerating, torturing, deadly pangs that at this moment are rending my very inmost——

MRS. ALVING (*clasping her hands and calling into the conservatory*). Regina! Regina! Bring a soda-and-milk. (*Regina enters from the conservatory and goes up the staircase to the cow's stable.*) My son, you shall know the joy of life. You shall feel the hot blood mantalining to your cheek.

MANDERS (*pointing to the window*). Look Look!

OSWALD (*excitedly*). My father's tool-shed is on fire.

(*They all rush wildly out and for a few moments the stage is empty*).

[NOTE.—By this time it is probable that the auditorium will be empty as well; so perhaps the drama might be considered to stop here).

A THEME WITH VARIATIONS.

A THEME WITH VARIATIONS.

THEME.

RIDE a cock-horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a fine lady ride on a white horse ;
With rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes.

VARIATION I.—EDMUND SPENSER.

So on he pricked, and loe, he gan espy
  A market and a crosse of glist'ning stone,
And eke a merrie rablement thereby,
  That with the musik of the strong trombone,
  And shaumes, and trompets made most dyvilish mone
And in their midst he saw a lady sweet,
  That rode upon a milk white steed alone,
In scarlet robe ycladd and wimple meet,
  Bedight with rings of gold, and bells about her feet.

Whereat the knight empassioned was so deepe,
  His heart was perst with very agony.
Certes (said he) I will not eat, ne sleepe,
  Till I have seen the royall maid more ny ;
  Then will I holde her in fast fealtie.
Whom then a carle advised, louting low,
  That little neede there was for him to die,

Sithens in yon pavilion was the show,
Where she did ride, and he for two-and-six mote go.

VARIATION II.—DR. JONATHAN SWIFT.

Our Chloe, fresh from London town,
To country B——y comes down,
Furnished with half-a-thousand graces
Of silks, brocades, and hoops, and laces ;
And tired of winning coxcombs' hearts
On simple bumpkins tries her arts.
Behold her ambling down the street
On her white palfrey, sleek and neat.
(Though rumor talks of gaming-tables,
And says 'twas won from C——'s stables,
And that, when duns demand their bill,
She satisfies them at quadrille.)
Her fingers are encased with rings,
Although she vows she hates the things.
("Oh, la ! Why ever did you buy it ?
Well—it's a pretty gem—I'll try it.")
The fine French fashions all combine
To make folks stare, and Chloe shine,
From ribbon'd hat with monstrous feather,
To bells upon her under-leather.

Now, Chloe, why, do you suppose,
You wear those bells about your toes ?
Is it, your feet with bells you deck
For want of *bows* about your neck ?

VARIATION III.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

(*From "The Lady of the Cake."*)

"Who is this maid in wild array,
And riding in that curious way?
What mean the bells that jingle free
About her as in revelry?"
"'Tis Madge of Banbury," Roderick said,
"And she's a trifle off her head.
'Twas on her bridal morn, I ween,
When she to Graeme had wedded been,
The man who undertook to bake,
Never sent home the wedding cake!
Since then she wears those bells and rings,
Since then she rides—but, hush, she sings."
She sung! The voice in other days
It had been difficult to praise,
And now it every sweetness lacked,
And voice and singer both were cracked.

SONG.

They bid me ride the other way,
  They say my brain is warp'd and wrung,
But, oh! the bridal bells are gay,
  That I about my feet have strung!
And when I face the horse's tail
I see once more in Banbury's vale
My Graeme's white plume before me wave,
So thus I'll ride until the grave.

They say that this is not my home,
  'Mid Scotland's moors and Scotland's brakes;
But, oh! 'tis love that makes me roam
  Forever in the land of cakes!
And woe betide the baker's guile,
Whose blight destroyed the maiden's smile!
O woe the day, and woe the deed,
And woa—gee woa—my bonnie steed!

THE POETS AT TEA.

THE POETS AT TEA.

I.—MACAULAY, WHO MADE IT.

POUR, varlet, pour the water,
  The water steaming hot!
A spoonful for each man of us,
  Another for the pot!
We shall not drink from amber,
  No Capuan slave shall mix
For us the snows of Athos
  With port at thirty-six;
Whiter than snow the crystals
  Grown sweet 'neath tropic fires,
More rich the herb of China's field,
The pasture-lands more fragrance yield;
Forever let Britannia wield
  The teapot of her sires!

II.—TENNYSON, WHO TOOK IT HOT.

I think that I am drawing to an end:
For on a sudden came a gasp for breath,
And stretching of the hands, and blinded eyes,
And a great darkness falling on my soul.
O Hallelujah! . . . kindly pass the milk.

III.—SWINBURNE, WHO LET IT GET COLD.

As the sin that was sweet in the sinning
  Is foul in the ending thereof,
As the heat of the summer's beginning
  Is past in the winter of love:
O purity, painful and pleading!
  O coldness, ineffably gray!
Oh hear us, our hand-maid unheeding,
  And take it away!

IV.—COWPER, WHO THOROUGHLY ENJOYED IT.

The cozy fire is bright and gay,
The merry kettle boils away
        And hums a cheerful song.
I sing the saucer and the cup;
Pray, Mary, fill the teapot up,
        And do not make it strong.

V.—BROWNING, WHO TREATED IT ALLEGORICALLY.

Tut! Bah! We take as another case—
  Pass the pills on the window-sill; notice the capsule
(A sick man's fancy, no doubt, but I place
  Reliance on trade-marks, Sir)—so perhaps you'll
Excuse the digression—this cup which I hold
  Light-poised—Bah, it's spilt in the bed!—well, let's on go—
Held Bohea and sugar, Sir; if you were told
  The sugar was salt, would the Bohea be Congo?

VI.—WORDSWORTH, WHO GAVE IT AWAY.

"Come little cottage girl, you seem
To want my cup of tea;
And will you take a little cream?
Now tell the truth to me."

She had a rustic, woodland grin,
Her cheek was soft as silk,
And she replied, "Sir, please put in
A little drop of milk."

"Why, what put milk into your head?
'Tis cream my cows supply;"
And five times to the child I said,
"Why, pig-head, tell me, why?"

"You call me pig-head," she replied;
"My proper name is Ruth.
I called that milk"—she blushed with pride—
"You bade me speak the truth."

VII.—POE, WHO GOT EXCITED OVER IT.

Here's a mellow cup of tea—golden tea!
What a world of rapturous thought its fragrance
brings to me!
Oh, from out the silver cells
How it wells!
How it smells!
Keeping tune, tune, tune, tune
To the tintinnabulation of the spoon.

And the kettle on the fire
Boils its spout off with desire,
With a desperate desire
And a crystalline endeavor
Now, now to sit, or never,
On the top of the pale-faced moon,
But he always came home to tea, tea, tea, tea, tea,
Tea to the n—1th.

VIII.—ROSSETTI, WHO TOOK SIX CUPS OF IT.

The lilies lie in my lady's bower
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost),
They faintly droop for a little hour;
My lady's head droops like a flower.

She took the porcelain in her hand
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost);
She poured; I drank at her command;
Drank deep, and now—you understand!
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost).

IX.—BURNS, WHO LIKED IT ADULTERATED.

Weel, gin ye speir, I'm no inclined,
Whusky or tay—to state my mind
For ane or ither;
For, gin I tak the first, I'm fou,
And gin the next, I'm dull as you,
Mix a' thegither.

X.—WALT WHITMAN, WHO DIDN'T STAY MORE THAN A MINUTE.

One cup for my self-hood,
Many for you. *Allons*, *camerados*, we will drink together.
O hand-in-hand! That teaspoon, please, when you've done with it.
What butter-colored hair you've got. I don't want to be personal.
All right, then, you needn't—you're a stale—cadaver.
Eighteen-pence if the bottles are returned,
Allons, from all bat-eyed formules.

HOME PETS.

I.—BOYS.

READER, do you keep boys? Are you interested in them? I trust that both my questions may be answered in the affirmative. They cost more to keep than rabbits or canaries; but, on the other hand, they are often more intelligent. They can be made to eat out of the hand, although they prefer the ordinary knife and fork; they can be taught to jump through hoops, to pretend to be dead—some of them actually die—and to write their own name; and they can produce the sound of the human voice as accurately as any cockatoo that ever got itself advertised in a high-class weekly review. They are more affectionate than guinea-pigs, but not so affectionate as dogs. They are not so clean as cats, but the method of washing adopted by the two animals is totally different. They are so common that the expense ought not to prevent any family from securing one.

"How am I to feed it?" is the question which any fancier naturally asks about a new pet. You can feed boys on just the same sort of food that you yourself would eat. You must remember, however, that they also crave for intellectual sustenance. If they are not provided with it, they ought to pine away. It is as well to mention this because it is a peculiarity of boys. You yourself—supposing you to be an average person—feel no necessity for it. You read the daily papers, novels, and occasionally the time-tables. That is enough for you. But a boy ought to desire more; his natural instincts would make him devour greedily anything that was at all high-toned, such as history, metaphysics, poetry. Unfortunately some boys will rebel against their natural instincts.

At one time in my life I was assistant to a boy-trainer. We had boys sent there to be broken in, and some of them simply would not obey their natural instincts, but seemed to loathe good intellectual diet. I have known boys who seemed to really want to starve their souls, although I do not remember a single

instance of one who cared about starving his body. For a short time every day we used to give them slices of English poetry to digest and get by heart. "I hate that rep.," one of them said to me dejectedly, "and they've gone and stuck me in the scrum, and put Pilbury, who can't play any more than a cow, full-back in my place. Rot, I call it." All this was said quite distinctly; you could not have told that you were not listening to the sounds of the human voice. There are only a few words in the sentence which distinguish it from our own ordinary articulate speech. I have quoted it, however, chiefly to show that a boy cannot be depended upon to follow his own natural instincts in the matter of poetry; in many cases, unless he is made to take it, he will deny himself. I have thrown a boy a great piece of "Sordello," and seen him sniff at it, and then go away and browse on Harrison Ainsworth, which of course was not good for him. We may notice, too, that in this boy's remarks there was something suspiciously like logical coherence. I have, in fact, noticed less logical coherence in the speech

of a live member of Parliament—there is a very fair collection of these, by the way, somewhere at Westminster. But then the boy was saying all he meant, and the member of Parliament was repeating as much as he could recollect.

The main difference between dogs and boys is this: the tamer a dog is, the more tricks he will do, but in the boy's case the number of tricks varies inversely as the tameness. In fact, it is not necessary to teach a boy tricks at all; give him high spirits, a pewter squirt, and a window commanding a thoroughfare, and nature will do the rest. There is another distinction between these two animals. Dogs generally have the distemper when they are young; with boys a somewhat analogous complaint only occurs in very advanced boyhood. It is called sentimentalism. It is generally only a passing complaint, and not at all dangerous. The symptoms are easily discoverable. The boy mopes, and may be heard to remark that Ouida's "Strathmore" is the finest work in the English language. He hangs up a photograph in his kennel, and begins to be dissatisfied with his

neckties. How are you to cure him? You can, if you like, put a little sulphur—any chemist will supply it—in the boy's drinking-water, as in the case of sick canaries; but if you do, it is probable that the boy will take it out of you in some other way. It is better to apply the "School Magazine" at once; several ounces of distressing verse have been extracted in this way from bad cases. Perhaps the best remedy is to place the patient in the society of boys who have not got the complaint. The healthy boys will probably kick the sufferer, and this will do him good.

This article might well conclude with several instances of the marvelous instinct displayed by boys. But the space at my disposal is limited; I can assure you, however, that not only are boys, as I have said, often more intelligent than rabbits and canaries, but stories of their intelligence and imitative power would be comparatively fresh. The journalistic imagination has played freely round the guinea-pig and the cockatoo, but has left the boy untouched. You have only to acquire a boy, and get rid of

your conscience; then you can make the stories for yourself. I may add that quite the best people in London now have boys in their houses; a couple of well-bred Eton-marked nephews look very well in a drawing room. But it is sometimes difficult to make them stop here.

II.—GIRLS.

GIRLS are the young of women. Nearly all the trouble which fanciers have with these pets comes from a failure to recognize this fact. It is one of those scientific truths which we simply have to face; it has been proved by observation that girls ultimately become women, and it is useless to blink the fact. We must expect, however much we may lament it, to find several points of similarity between girls and women. Some women, for instance, play the piano. Nearly all girls play *with* the piano. A fancier should expect this, and not be frightened at it. There is no need to feel nervous when one sees a girl shedding her scales; some trainers even insist that they should be encouraged to do it, just as they should be encouraged to keep themselves clean. Shortly afterward they may be found turning the instrument into a Sydney-Smithy; if you open the top of the piano while

they are hammering a hard piece, you may see sparks fly from the wires. Or you may not. But at any rate it is interesting to watch a thin little melody working its way home through a whirlpool of arpeggios. By all means give a girl a piano; in aggravated cases the pedals can be amputated. It is not necessary to give the piano chloroform when this operation is performed; besides, all the chloroform will be wanted in the rooms underneath the schoolroom during practice hours. On one point be very careful; if a girl of her own accord takes to playing the common waltz, there is of course something wrong. But be sure you find out what the *cause* of the evil is before you give up hope. A careless fancier might shoot the girl at once, to put her out of her misery; now, with the kindest intentions in the world, he might still be making a mistake. Do not kill the girl until you are quite sure that she is incurable. Sometimes a girl plays waltzes because they are easier than other music. Get another girl to tell her this, and she will never play them again. She may say bitter things about the

other girl's hat, but this cannot be helped. There are of course many other points in which a distinct likeness between girls and women can be traced.

What do girls eat? This is a question which very few can answer. They can be made to eat much the same food as boys. But they have their preferences. Ices and meringues make a good everyday diet. But I have in my possession a letter from a girl at a girl-trainer's giving a list of what was actually eaten at a dormitory supper. It is an important and valuable document, because it shows what unassisted nature prompts a girl to eat. It is not given in facsimile, because the printing of facsimile letters in the public press has been sometimes found to lead to unpleasantness. But these are the items of the repast:

1. Toast and jam. (The toast was made at the gas, pen-holders being used in the place of toasting-forks; the making of it was more popular than the eating of it.)
2. Toasted gelatines. (These were liked, but it was objected that they took a very long time to eat, and the gas was only available for half an hour, so only a few were cooked.)

3. Chocolate creams. (The white cream is very good, but epicures prefer those with the pink inward parts—a rare variety, and believed to be more expensive.)
4. Plum cake and jam. (At the commencement of the term plum cake is always eaten with jam; no girl with self-respect in at all a rich dormitory could offer another girl unjammed cake.)
5. Cheese-cakes.
6. Biscuits. (In taking from the tin, it is usual to select those which have a plaster of paris ornament, unless this variety is obviously scarce, when, of course, *politesse oblige*.)

The beverages were cocoa (which was a little lumpy, because there was not sufficient time to boil the water over the gas and it refused to boil over one surreptitious candle), plain sherbet, pink sherbet, and citrate of magnesia with sugar. The citrate of magnesia was contributed by a girl who was liable to headaches, and had brought it from home. Of course the items of the repast may vary according to the state of plenty which prevails in the dormitory. A story is told of one girl who during a period of great financial depression attempted to eat cherry tooth-paste on bread. In feeding girls, a good general rule to remember is this: the

taste and wholesomeness of the food do not matter as long as the color is pink.

When a large number of girls are placed together, one will generally see friendships formed. The two friends always share each other's secrets, and never tell them to a single soul more than they can help. In violent cases they invent pet names for each other, and write little notes to say what could be said with greater convenience by word of mouth. When the friendship is very romantic indeed, these little notes are generally written in French; the French is conditioned to some extent by the age of the girl and her position in the training establishment, but it is generally understood that English words may be used where the French is not known. For instance: "Je suis kept in pour jettant un tennis-ball a la fenetre. Restez pour moi apres dans le day-room. J'ai quelque chose vous dire tres privatement." To put any accents on these elegant little compositions would be to reduce them at once to the level of an exercise. Two girl friends generally pet one another, and sometimes do one

another's hair. In this respect they differ slightly from boy friends. Enmity also produces correspondence. I have not the author's permission to quote the following instances:

1. DEAR JANE: After what you said to Kitty Syce about my boa and she told me so herself I don't see how you can expect me ever to speak to you again and it's wicked to tell such untruths as you did because you must have known.—Ever yours, MILLY.

2. DEAR MILLY: I didn't say anything of the sort and I'm sure I don't want you to speak to me I was just going to write and tell you I wouldn't speak to you myself when I got your letter and you needn't write any more because I won't read them.—Yours very affectionately, JANE. P. S.—Kitty is a liar.

It must not be supposed that the correspondence ends here. There are thirty-two more letters. Of course, at the close of these, Milly and Jane form an offensive and defensive alliance against Kitty Syce, who does not seem to have been at all a nice girl. The letters of enmity, being generally written in some haste and heat, are not punctuated. The fancier, then, should be always on the lookout for any marked signs of enmity or amity in his pets, and whenever these occur, he should put pens, ink, and paper within

easy reach. The great passions require them. In the case of sentimental friendships always provide fancy note paper.

Let me conclude with a short story of the wonderful instinct of girls. It is true in every particular. A friend of mine was walking over Waterloo Bridge with a girl. She was just the ordinary variety of girl, with no special markings, and not particularly valuable. Suddenly he missed her. He whistled once or twice, and then shrugged his shoulders and walked on, never expecting, of course, to see her again. In fact, he said at the time that he thought she must have fallen into the river or got run over. However, three weeks after this incident, business had taken him to Edinburgh, and he was sitting in his own room at his hotel when he heard, as he thought, something scratching at the door outside. He opened the door quickly, looked out, and found he was mistaken. I may mention that the girl had never been in Edinburgh before in her life, was not in Edinburgh then, and never went to Edinburgh afterward. She has now turned into a woman, and has not

since this event given any sign of remarkable intelligence.

I challenge investigation into the facts of this story. If it can be proved to be untrue, I promise that anyone may pay me the sum of £10,000. Can it be wondered that pets with so marvelous an instinct are immensely popular? For that reason I must repeat my warning—girls are the young of woman. The gentlest schoolgirl will grow up; then she may lose her temper and marry you.

III.—RECITERS.

"THERE she spouts!"

Such was the exclamation of an old sea captain, recently returned from a whaling expedition, when I took him into the yard where I keep my reciters. His attention had been attracted by a large female, who had drawn herself up to her full height and was Eugene-Araming shrilly. It was an animated scene. In one corner there were two very young male reciters. They really looked quite pretty, with broad white collars round their throats, bobbing and fussing about, and knocking the air at intervals with their forepaws. Others were busy with open books, hitting their foreheads and straining their poor memories. Others were hurrying up and down the platform steps. I, like all humane fanciers, have provided my reciters with a little platform; and, indeed, few things give me more pleasure than to see a

happy, well-fed reciter bow and retire. The good-natured old sea captain drew a handful of fresh, crisp press notices from his pocket, and flung them down in the inclosure. All the reciters rushed upon them at once; they like a good press notice with a little paste to fix it.

"But why," someone may ask, "do you keep your reciters out of doors?" Well, I have tried both plans. I once owned a male reciter, twenty years of age, slightly built, with fair fluffy hair, a weak chin, a nervous manner, a green necktie, and the mildest eye I ever saw in man or beast. You would have thought, as I did, that it was perfectly safe to keep him in the house; and as a rule he was most meek and quiet. But one night, when he was on the hearthrug in front of the fire, a friend of mine happened to say that he thought Mr. Irving was not so bad an actor as some amateur whose name I have forgotten. The young reciter snapped at him at once, and then began to strut up and down the hearthrug, shaking his silly head. "Lie down, Arthur! Lie down, sir!" I said firmly. I had called him Arthur after a pet lamb which belonged to my

daughter. But he had completely lost control over himself, and began to recite most furiously. He Death-of-Absalomed all round the room, and then went back to the hearthrug, and Charge-of-the-Light-Brigaded two valuable vases off the mantelpiece. I kicked him out, and resumed my conversation. But this was only the beginning of the trouble. I used to let Arthur sleep in a disused bedroom at the top of the house, and when I turned him out for breaking the vases he went up to his room. He caught the butler on the staircase, and began The Raven at him, frightening the poor man terribly. Finally he went deliberately through a humorous passage and Shylocked the door after him. It was bad enough to have the furniture broken, but I will not have my servants ill-treated. So, on the following morning, I had Arthur sent out into the yard. We found, on examining his room, that the lid of the soap-dish was fractured; and the scientific expert who attended had little doubt that the fracture must have been caused by some heavy instrument, probably didactic poetry. In the open air Arthur

does no harm; he goes Lays-of-Ancient-Roming about the yard, and is fairly well satisfied with himself. Of course, this is only one experience. I have had reciters who were perfectly tame and would never recite at all unless they were asked twice. But they always got unhappy, unless they *were* asked twice. If you allow them in the house, they may be muzzled ; an ordinary dog-muzzle requires very little alteration to make it fit a reciter. The practice of cutting out their tongues is rather cruel, although, if it is carefully done by a good veterinary surgeon, it is not nearly so cruel as some sentimentalists would have us believe. But neither the muzzle nor the removal of the animal's tongue is entirely satisfactory. If the reciter is naturally vicious, he will not be cured by such methods ; he will resort to dumb show, and attempt to prove to us how very much can be done by facial expression alone. In fact, although reciters are frequently allowed to run about the drawing room by some people, and may fairly claim a place among our home pets, I am in favor of keeping them *outside the house* unless

they are specially trained not to recite. Give them plenty of green poetry, an occasional press notice, and let them recite to one another.

I have often been asked, What is the best kind of reciter to get? Well, a great deal depends on your pocket. Reciters with very bad memories fetch the highest prices. Good female reciters are common enough; dealers will give you about five of them for a shilling, as a rule. But their tempers are uncertain, and, if you have more than one in the yard, they must be kept in separate hutches, or they will fight. The two-poem juvenile is a pretty variety; if he is carefully trained he will be entirely free from all the charm of childhood. But I have no sympathy with those who keep really dangerous pets; a full-grown male tragic-reciter is very dangerous. Some fanciers pet them, out of sheer bravado; but you would do better to avoid them, or keep them on the chain. Their soliloquy is poisonous and incurable.

Lastly, many people who come to see my pets notice two reciters in the yard who never recite at all. I have been entreated to say how I

managed to train them to this perfection. Well, I have no infallible method, but I will give you a hint. Much may be done by cruelty. If you give the least encouragement, a reciter will always go on reciting. A thoughtless piece of kindness will undo all the good which has been accomplished by low diet and candid friends. In most cases I do not even aim at this state of perfection. I let the animals recite, and even give them a few press notices. They are happier, of course, when they are left thus, in the natural state. But still, I am proud of my two highly trained reciters. Sometimes I show them to a friend, and the friend by way of a joke says "Shelley!" They drop their ears and slink away at once. Yesterday I threw one of them a little bit of Lord Tennyson, to see what he would do with it. For a long time he would not look at it; then he walked round it very gingerly. giving furtive glances, first at the poetry, and then at me. His lips moved as if he were saying something to himself; he hurriedly drew a little looking-glass from his pocket, and was just going to assume a facial expression, when I gave

a slight significant cough. In a moment he had put the looking-glass back, and scampered off out of the reach of temptation. I confess that I had a feeling of triumph, and I am going to try keeping these two pets in the house next week.

IV.—FANCY PENS.

I MUST commence by owning that I do not keep any fancy pens now. But I used to keep them once, and made a study of them, and only gave them up because I had some writing to do. So I think that I am qualified to speak about them. At present I own twelve common penholders with steel nibs. I bought them fixed to an ornamental card, on which they were accompanied by a piece of india rubber, an inch measure, and a glass flower-holder for the button-hole. The card was entitled "The Youth's Useful Companion," and the whole thing cost sixpence. I am willing to sell the glass flower-holder; I never could quite understand how it came to be included on the card. But the common penholders are affectionate, hard-working little things, and I would not part with them on any account.

The first fancy pen I ever had was given me

when I was very young indeed, young enough to have a nursemaid to guard me from danger and brush my hair. It was my birthday, and the nursemaid told me that Uncle William had sent me a new real gold pen. I had wanted him to give me a canoe, in order that I might explore the Holy Land, and I believe I had hinted as much to him, consequently I did not care much about the gold pen, and I fell in with my nursemaid's suggestion that she should tend and cherish it for me until I became old enough to use so valuable an instrument without exciting public comment. I believe she was a larcenous nursemaid. At any rate she was sent away soon afterward, and took the real gold pen with her, and I never saw it again. A year or two afterward I got a cornelian pen-holder. It was a fast goer, with beautiful free action, but snapped in two when I was trying to draw a pig without taking my pen off the paper. It was sent to the knacker's and became sleeve-links and a brooch. It was not till many years afterward that I bought my first stylomaniac pen, and tried to break it in.

Stylomaniac pens have a delicate constitution and an uncertain temper. They are very dainty feeders. I gave my stylomaniac some ordinary ink one day. It was a very fair dinner ink at about twelvepence the dozen, but of course had no particular body or boquet. The stylomaniac turned up its *retroussé* little iridium point, and refused to touch it. I tried to force its black mouth open, and then the brute bit me. Out of regard for my personal safety I did not insist any further. At last I procured a magnificent ink, grown on the Rhine, I believe. It had a curious fragrance, and had been matured in sherry casks; or else the sherry which I was buying at the time had been matured in ink-pots —I forget which, but both are probable. As soon as I opened the bottle, my stylomaniac rolled slowly across the table, smelled the cork, and then looked at me lovingly. There was no trouble about feeding it this time. But it was a heady ink—deceptive, like Sauterne—and the animal had no sooner drunk it than it went fast asleep. I tried to make it write, but it would not, although I shook it hard, and did all I could

to rouse it. Three days afterward it was still asleep, but after I had given it a little strong coffee it recovered itself sufficiently to write "Dear Sir," and make three blots. As it would do no more, I took it to the man who sold it me, and who guaranteed it to be sound, free from vice, and quiet to write and draw. He looked at it carefully and, I think, took its temperature. He then said, rather coldly:

"You have been using this pen to rake out pipes."

"Of course," I replied.

He then got most unreasonably angry. For my part, I always use pens for this purpose when they are not being used for writing. A change of work is as good as recreation; every doctor knows this. An ordinary steel nib never minds being used to clean out a pipe-bowl, and writes all the better for it afterward. However, it appeared that I had made a very serious mistake. "Your stylomaniac," the man said, "may perhaps never write any more. Take it home and clean it thoroughly."

It could not very well have written any less,

but I was too humble to say so. You cannot even wash a stylomaniac pen as you would wash anything else. I was told to use warm water with a little vinegar in it. I remember this distinctly now, but I had forgotten it that day when I got home. I knew that it was one of the things in the cruet-stand that I had to put in the warm water, but I had forgotten which thing it was. I argued to myself that it would probably be mustard, because, when I had a cold, the doctor papered me with mustard-leaves until I felt like a hoarding. It was careless of me to forget. The mustard gave it paralysis of the iridium point, and in sheer disgust I put the brute in a tray with some other penholders that were past their work. Three weeks afterward I picked it up by accident. It had not a drop of ink in it. I just tried it on the paper, and I found that it wrote freely. It did the whole of a letter to the *Guardian* about a dog of mine which never barked during the hours of Divine service. I do not know what made it write, unless it was hypnotism. It has never written since, and a few months ago I determined to get

rid of it; so I lent it to a friend, and made him promise to bring it back next day.

Of course there are many varieties of fancy pens, of which I have no space to speak at length. One of them requires to be dipped in turpentine instead of ordinary ink; which is very convenient, because you cannot always get ordinary ink. Another will write one word with only five thousand dips. If only our great-grandfathers could come back again, and see how far civilization has progressed, and what triumphs the inventive faculty of man has achieved, how thankful they would be that they died when they did! It is curious that no fancier has yet bred a pen which will always spell *sieze* and *ceiling* correctly. I am quite a cultivated writer myself, but it is only during the last few weeks that I have felt certain about those two words.

I have been asked to say something on the subject of cleanliness. Some people wipe pens on the inside of their coats. Some wipe them with the hair of their heads. The latter method seems to me an excess of devotion; and, by an

ironical fatality, is generally adopted by those who wash less frequently. Others use shot or brushes, and a few prefer a corner of the blotting paper. But why not go to the root of the matter at once? All these methods alleviate, but they do not cure. If you never used your pens they would never get dirty. It is the filthy habit of dipping them in ink which causes all the trouble, but I do not think anyone, except myself, has yet had the courage to point this out. That is the chief beauty of fancy pens—you never make them dirty by writing with them. They sometimes acquire a pleasant aroma from being used as tobacco-stoppers, but they never get contaminated by ink.

V.—PERSONAL FRIENDS.

A SMALL child, who used to patronize me a good deal, once allowed me the privilege of seeing some of his most valued treasures. Among these were a little green frog who lived a motionless life in a very large jam-pot, with a handsomely bound copy of the "Christian Year" over the top of it. "Why do you keep it?" I asked. "Because," the child replied thoughtfully, "he can go all the winter, and never eat anything but one blue fly what I catches for him. You couldn't." The child, with the admirable critical faculty that all children possess, referred at once to the frog's one distinctive quality. Pigs are profitable, fowls are useful, dogs are a stimulus to the imagination; but to keep pets which are of no use whatever, simply for the sake of their distinctive quality, is evidence of a critical and artistic temperament. Personal friends—so called from their habit of making personal remarks—are not so profitable as pigs, and have

not, as a class, so much distinctive quality as may be discovered in a small green frog; but they do differ in a marked manner from mere acquaintances, and the pleasure of keeping them gains an additional zest from the fact that they are very dangerous.

I know a large wild bore who is always bearing down upon me with flashing tusks and some fat commonplace in his mouth. He tosses this down before me as if it were something important and new. The other day he eyed me in Piccadilly, threw up his head, trumpeted, and galloped after me. He caught me in the Strand, and said a variety of things, but the thing which he particularly wanted to say to me was this: "I have many acquaintances, but very few personal friends." He said it with his finest air. He seemed to think it almost significant enough to disorganize the traffic; at any rate, he looked proudly around at the cab horses, as if he wanted to see how they were taking it. I have heard many men say the same thing. All seem to congratulate themselves on having very few personal friends.

This can be easily understood. Intimate, abiding friendship is a very beautiful, consolatory, holy thing, but it is very difficult to avoid; and, owing to some ironical natural law, which science has not yet explained, one is frequently most intimate with the people one hates most. Nobody can make you keep dogs; and if you do keep them, you can decide what sort of dogs you will have; but personal friendships are the result of chance rather than choice. I do not think, however, that fanciers would have nearly so much trouble about personal friends if they really understood how to keep them. They disregard the simplest rules in the management of their pets, and then are surprised that they turn vicious. Now, a young fellow came to me the other day. He had kept pigeons until his doctor recommended a change, and then he had acquired a few personal friends, and they were not doing well. "How ought I to feed them?" he asked me. "I have tried oatmeal, but I do not get any sympathy from them."

I was too angry with the young fellow to laugh at him. Yet many fanciers stand just as

much in need of a few hints as he did. Never feed your personal friends at all. The highest altruism is to let somebody else be altruistic to your advantage. Therefore let your friends feed you and entertain you, if you want them to be really happy. I have adopted this method for years, and never had any trouble. Of course, it was equally absurd to expect sympathy from personal friends. The young fellow might as well have expected to get milk from his pigeons. Personal friends give dinners, advice, and candid opinions, but not sympathy. If you want sympathy you must go to the mere acquaintance or the entire stranger. You pursue an entire stranger into a smoking-compartment at the Temple Station, offer him a window concession, a lighted match, and an evening paper. Then make a remark upon the weather, and lead upward. By the time that you have got to St. James's Park you will be telling him the story of your dear, sacred sorrow, or how your tailor disappointed you, or anything that you feel deeply. Sympathy and South Kensington should happen simultaneously, but entire strangers have

a nasty knack of getting out at Gloucester Road. If you bestow a confidence on a personal friend, he is almost certain to return it quickly, and this kind of conversational tennis is very tiring. He will not sympathize with you, because he knows you too well to keep up any absurd affectation of caring one straw about you.

The young fancier whom I have mentioned complained bitterly that his personal friends were bad-tempered, and even snapped at him when he gave them their food. I am quite willing to own that personal friends are very dangerous pets; but I found on inquiry that he had provoked them in a very stupid and needless way. He had been foolish enough to have a small success right before their eyes—in the very room in which they were lying. They naturally flew at him at once. Your personal friends never forgive your success. If you *must* succeed—and I have never found it necessary to do anything of the kind—you should go into some disused room, lock the door, draw the blinds, have a little success—not more than you can help—and never say anything about it. It

is just possible that your personal friends may not discover it, and then they will not congratulate you or backbite you. This young fancier had done another very foolish thing. He had lent money to one of his friends. Of course, the friend had to be very offensive to keep up his self-respect. Never lend money, and never oblige a friend in any way. Evil is wrought by too much heart as well as want of head. If you intend to keep personal friends, you must be cruel and selfish, otherwise your pets will be unhappy; I never have the least trouble with mine. Fail frequently, borrow money, let them feed you, and flatter them once a week. This makes them feel grand and consequently they become attached to you. Authors take rather more flattery than the other kinds, but you need not try to borrow money from them; they are all so wealthy that they cannot understand the want of money in others.

I have only spoken of bachelor friends, because they are the only kind that I ever kept. If one will only follow the few simple hints that

I have given, and never yield to momentary fits of kindness or good temper, they do very well. It is a little difficult, however, to get rid of them. There is a prejudice against selling them or giving them away. If you have influence, you can give them appointments abroad. If not, the best plan is to make them marry someone—anyone will do. This answers very well and is said to be painless.

VI.—NOTEBOOKS.

My first governess, I remember, left us because my people would not increase her salary by five pounds annually. In this I think they were justified, for there are many women who are willing to teach everything, know some of it, and wash up afterward, in exchange for a comfortable home, without any salary at all. Still, considering the circumstances, I think it was generous of my governess to present me with a book as a token of affection when she left. I believe that she did so because I was a singularly lovable child; but I have heard other motives suggested. Some say that she hoped her little offering might have a favorable influence on the recommendation which she carried to her new post; but these are cynics—people who sacrifice truth to pungency. The book in question was a guide to anyone who wished to lead a better life. It was a complete guide; it exhorted

to personal cleanliness and neatness of attire, and it did not forget my spiritual needs; it also contained a chapter on the culture of the intellect. I am sorry that I have lost the book and forgotten the title of it, because I am still anxious to lead a better life.

Unfortunately, I can only remember very little of its contents now. But there was one injunction in the chapter on the culture of the intellect which impressed me very much, and which first led me to the practice of keeping notebooks. It was this:

"Buy a notebook. Put down in it anything which strikes you in your reading, any remarkable moral reflection or edifying illustration which may fall from the pulpit on Sunday, and any useful fact which seems worth remembering."

There was another injunction in the chapter on neatness of attire, which had been apparently written by another hand. It ran thus:

"Do not bulge your pockets with oranges and notebooks. They destroy the memory as

well as the clothes, and should be discouraged. Always brush and fold up after using."

To this day I do not know how clothes destroy the memory, or how you can discourage an orange, or why you should brush a notebook. I thought at the time that the chapter on the intellect was more likely to be right, and that is why I went to my uncle William. I explained to him that I was going to lead a better life, and that if he would give me two shillings to get a notebook I could begin at once. He told me it was cheaper to get some ordinary paper, cut it up, and fold it in book form. Sooner than culture my intellect with a sorry makeshift like that, I felt that I would leave it just as it was. I then remembered that I had saved up a little money in order to get an orphan boy admitted into a Sailors' Home, or something of the kind. I took that money, went to the stationer's, and asked humbly for a notebook.

The stationer was a very gloomy man. He pulled out three drawers and said hopelessly: "These 'ere are ruled for accounts and intended for business purposes; and these 'ere are meant

for reporters and the like; and these 'ere are for gentlemen."

He almost intoned the words. He did not think I was going to buy one. I chose one of the best; it had a brown, glossy coat, a very gentle clasp, and a small, high-bred stamp-pocket; it was just the notebook for a gentleman. The stationer got almost cheerful when he had wrapped it up in paper, and put string round it, with a little loop by which I could carry it. I then found that it was eight shillings, and as I had only saved fourpence for the orphan boy I was not able to take it. I bought one of the commercial notebooks instead. The stationer would not wrap it up at all. He sat in one corner of the shop with his head in his hands, and sighed at me as I went out. I asked him to show me some drawing-pins, but he only shook his head drearily.

I wrote down a great many useful facts in my notebook at first. I also amused myself with entering in it my opinion of anyone who had offended me. Then I forgot to put anything in it, and it ran away. Notebooks may

help you to remember other things, but you want something to make you remember the notebook. If they are not fed regularly, they always run away. Mine went to the laundress, and stopped there for a few days; it came back with my uncle William's collars, and he opened it at the written statement that he was a liar, to which I had appended my opinion of the ultimate end of all liars. There was no defense.

This made me mistrust notebooks. I did not have another until my aunt gave me one when I first went to school. It was a magnificent animal to look at, very showy; with a strong back, but an evil temper. It must have been ill-treated when it was young. It had a very sharp clasp, and it used it freely; during the whole time that it was in my possession I do not remember a single day when it did not try to bite me. And it had powerful, steel-shod corners that pawed holes in all my pockets. I used to write all my themes in it, so it got plenty of exercise, but I never subdued its spirit. And I never subdued its appetite. It used to take fancies for things, and it simply would have

them. I had a birthday card which represented an angel; the wings folded back and disclosed a verse of a hymn and a scent-bag. It had been sent me by someone who was very dear to me, and I generally carried it about with me. My notebook took a great fancy for that card, and used to follow it about. In whatever pocket I put that card, I always found the notebook waiting for it. It was not a sentimental attachment; it simply meant that the notebook wanted to eat it. At last it tried to get it into the partition which was marked post-cards, and crumpled it a little. I was so disgusted by its greediness that I exchanged it with Pigbury for an old British coin. He made me give him the birthday card as well, which did not show very nice feeling in Pigbury, as I had already explained to him that I had especial reasons for valuing that card. When I returned home my aunt found out that I had disposed of the notebook which she had given me with her own bony hands. There was no defense.

I have always had notebooks since this incident, but I have never been fortunate with

them. However great one's skill as a fancier may be, one can never be entirely superior to fortune, and I do not think them altogether satisfactory pets. It is true that they will eat anything; they will eat scraps—newspaper scraps—which you would not care to eat yourself. Some of the more robust will even stand raw verse or accounts that are only partially cooked. But (speaking of accounts reminds me of this) they always lose their figure. They are graceful little creatures when they are young, but they either grow meager because their owners tear out too many leaves, or they get bloated and plethoric, because they are allowed to have too many scraps. In this respect they present a striking similarity to the human race, a similarity which goes far toward justifying the well known scientific theory that man was evolved from a notebook. As it is also obvious that notebooks were originally evolved from men, we see that existence is a circle, and we do away with the necessity for a first cause. The same theory provides us with a logical defense of the hereditary principle. And not only do

notebooks always lose their graceful figure, but their temper is proverbially uncertain. I only know one story, which is really authentic, of devotion displayed by a notebook. It happened in the Crimea. There was a little drummer-boy, who owned a handsome notebook that had been given him by his mother. He always carried it in his breast pocket. He was a bright, cheery little fellow, and everybody loved him. And one day he was marching gayly along, drumming on his little drum, when a cannon-ball came after him. The cannon-ball was going so much faster than the drummer-boy that it caught him up, and, as it was a rainy day, got inside. It was found afterward that if the cannon-ball had gone one-sixteenth of an inch further through the boy it must have quite spoiled the notebook.

VII.—PIANO-TUNERS.

PIANO-TUNERS—so called from a Greek word signifying one who never wipes his boots—are very difficult to domesticate properly. They may be enticed into the house by the offer of a piano to tune; but as soon as they have satisfied their appetite with it, they rush off at once, unless they are forcibly prevented. Our greatest living naturalist says in a recent work: "I am not acquainted with any instance of piano-tuners being kept in a state of captivity. Little is known of their habits, as opportunities for observation are very rare." Another writer of hardly less repute merely remarks that they are very shy, have sharp talents, and a very moderate bill. I have no hesitation in saying that if these two writers had only exercised a little patient research, they might have had much more to tell us. They are not even correct. I myself own a beautifully marked piano-tuner, who comes to

me every few months. They like their liberty, it is true; but when they get to know you, they always come back at regular intervals. Their curious passion for tuning pianos is very strong, and may be utilized to secure their capture. Take a piano, put it into a furniture van, and shut the doors; then drive it slowly down the street of any suburb. Presently you will see a group of these interesting little animals, with their anxious faces and little black bags, running behind the van, and only pausing to fight one another. So remarkable is their instinct that they can scent a grand piano on a clear day at a distance of over two miles. It is easy enough to select from the little group of tuners the one which you would like to have for your own; a few shots will disperse the rest. But their plumage is not very valuable, and it would be brutal to kill many of them. Although, as I have pointed out, they are very pugnacious among themselves, they rarely bite a fancier. When you have selected your tuner, give him a piano to worry, and then let him go away. Do not keep him on the chain, because that will

only make him unhappy. If you have treated him properly, he will probably come back to you. When they are not devouring pianos, it is believed that tuners make their lair in little tropical drawing rooms, where there are stuffed humming birds and luscious waxen fruit, and the tenants flit softly away in the moonlight. There is generally a brass plate outside, and it is said that females of the species are as likely as not, if provoked, to undertake dressmaking. But this is mere conjecture. In the same way the statement that the females of piano-tuners always teach in a Sunday school is only supposition, based on the fact, which so many fanciers have noticed, that piano-tuners invariably refuse a second glass of sherry.

I have frequently been asked by young fanciers on what principles one should choose a piano-tuner. It is an easy enough task. Just as one prefers a velveteen-coated photographer to the other kind, because he appears to have a higher tone, but is not more expensive; so, in choosing a tuner, you should select the one which has the longest hair. Of course, a good

deal depends on the purpose for which you want him. The long-haired invest their work with the most artistic merit; but those which part their hair in the middle are the best conversationalists, and are far more likely to wear varnished boots. It is not altogether pleasant to watch a hungry tuner at work. You turn the animal into the room where the poor piano is lying. He glares wildly around, until he sees his prey; then throws down his hat, and dashes at the instrument. In a moment he has torn off its hide, and you may hear him breathing heavily, with his head in its entrails. Then he withdraws his head, and proceeds more slowly with his repast, taking little pecks at it. The poor instrument cries piteously, but it is not safe to interfere with a tuner after he has once tasted octaves. When he first opens the piano it is, however, usual to make some remark in order to encourage him; if the remark is technical, it should be correct. It is not right to say, "The mainspring's gone, I'm afraid;" or, "There will be a good deal of soot in it, as we didn't have it done last winter." That sort of

thing only makes the tuner angry; it is both kinder and wiser to point out to him how seasonable the weather is.

If you intend to keep a piano-tuner, you must be very careful not to disappoint him. Tuners are sensitive creatures. A man once told a young, fair-haired tuner to come in the afternoon, not knowing that his wife had told a grizzled plethoric tuner to come in the morning. So when the young fair-haired animal came in the afternoon, the piano was already tuned. But the butler knew nothing about it, and shut the animal up in the drawing room alone, and put sherry within easy reach. After an interval of two hours the butler entered the room again, and found the tuner dead on the music-stool, with his head in a black bag of tuning instruments. It is supposed that the poor animal, finding the instrument in perfect tune, then tried the pitch. You cannot touch pitch without being defiled, and the disappointment, defilement, and sherry—acting together on an already enfeebled constitution—had broken the tuner's heart. I forget what

they did with the body, but I do not think they had it stuffed. On the other hand, another friend assured me that he had his piano tuned by three of these animals in one day, and that they all of them told him that it wanted doing very badly. His rooms were wrecked that night by the occupants of other rooms on the same staircase, but otherwise he seemed pleased with his experiment.

VIII.—DUKES.

My friends are always complaining to me about my dukes. They say that I have too many, that I ought not to allow them in the house, and that they are very ill-mannered. There may, perhaps, be something in the complaints, but what can I do? I own between thirty and forty dukes, and although they are safely locked up in an old shed during the night, they simply will get into the house in the daytime. As a rule, I do not think that they do much harm; most of them are good-tempered, and all of them are quite clean, for I have them well washed with carbolic soap once every fortnight. But there are, of course, exceptional cases. Now, some time ago I bought a large duke who had been in an American novel and got his temper spoiled. I have told my servants time after time that I will not have this animal in the drawing room—that they may make as much fuss with him as they like

in the kitchen, but that on no account is he to be allowed to go any further than the kitchen. I have tried, too, to make the duke himself see that the kitchen is his proper place. But it is all of no use. However careful my servants are, and however often I thrash him for his disobedience, he is certain to break bounds; and then, of course, there is unpleasantness. It is not very nice for a visitor, just ushered into the drawing room, to find a great fat duke asleep on the hearthrug in front of the fire; and it is especially unpleasant when the beast uncurls himself, sits up, and begins to talk about his order. I really hardly know what to do with him. He has a way of saying "*Noblesse oblige*," and not caring where he says it. Then, again, there was a duke in "Sir Percival"; I do not know if you remember him. I bought him; he was expensive, but I do not care what I give for a really good duke. He was well marked, with a broad blue ribbon, as it were, across his chest; and when he passed through the market place, he would speak many a gracious word. The first suspicion that I had of his temper, was

when the butler complained about him. It appeared that he had formed a habit of smelling every cork that was drawn, and carefully examining both ends; he would then shrug his shoulders, frown, and completely lose the drift of the conversation. As the butler pointed out to me, no one in the kitchen could possibly stand such manners. I was reluctant to lose the animal, and tried to break him of the habit by keeping him on Apollinaris. It was of no use, and shortly afterward the poor thing's sense of its social status became so acute that it was no kindness to keep him alive any longer. Another of my failures was also a novel duke. He had been in Mr. Crawford's "Dr. Claudius." He was quite simple, wore cheap clothes, and seemed able to forget that he had any particular rank. The simplicity and forgetfulness were a little ostentatious, perhaps, but he had no serious vices; he did not, for instance, drop many a gracious word. Yet an accident compelled me to get rid of him. He had gone into the garden in the dusk, to get strawberry leaves, and I mistook him for the gardener. Unfor-

tunately the gardener got to hear of it, and was much hurt. So, to prevent the mistake occurring again, I sold the duke.

I have been asked whether I recommend English or foreign dukes. Either do very well if you can only conquer their passion for social aggrandizement. As a rule, the English duke has the greater property, and the foreign duke has the darker mustache; the foreign duke is more of a villain, and the English duke is more of a bore; but these distinctions only hold in the case of novel-bred dukes. Novel-bred dukes are more satisfactory than the other kind, although I myself keep both. I have only got one literary duke, and I cannot remember at the present moment whether he is novel-bred or not. But he is always shedding articles about the house, and I hardly know what to do with them. If only we had some monthly review which made a specialty of ducal articles, without much regard to their inward merit, I could send them there; but, of course, there is nothing of the sort in existence. As it is, I find these articles lying all over the house—one

on the mantelpiece, another on the carpet, and a third very likely on the income tax. But, as I have already said, the main difficulty is to put a stop to their social ambitions. Few dukes, at any rate very few of my collection, are willing to stop downstairs in the kitchen; and yet, if they come upstairs, one's friends begin to complain at once. I often think, cynically enough, when I go to feed my dukes or to superintend their fortnightly bath, that probably at least half of the beasts consider themselves to be every bit as good as I am. The duke that I got from "Dr. Claudius," however, was quite different. He had a proper sense of shame. I've known him run off into the garden, scratch up a hole, and bury all his titles and family estates in it; then he would come back, and put his cold nose into my hand, and fawn on me, and try to make me believe that he was his butler. It was a pretty and pathetic incident, and a pleasing contrast to the conduct of some of my other dukes, who will go running after American heiresses. Of course, they only get snubbed for their pains.

Yes, in spite of what my friends may say, I love my dukes. It is the natural sympathy of the strong for the weak. The poor animals have been terribly handicapped in the race of life, and I feel for them, and I think they are happy with me. The strict discipline, plain living, plain speaking, and carbolic soap are good for them, and they know it. Occasionally one of them will so far forget himself as to drop a gracious word; and, of course, I have had to put up with the exceptional cases that I have already mentioned; but on the whole they are getting to be very well trained—I had almost said civilized. They will never, I am afraid, be quite as common as canaries, but I do not see any reason why every middle-class household should not own at least one of them. The prejudice which exists against them at present is perfectly senseless, but it has prevented fanciers from devoting proper attention to them. And do not be misled by silly stories about their appetite; they eat very little, if any, more than ordinary people.

IX.—BABIES.

BABIES are various. They resemble invalids in their habits of browsing on milk; political programmes in their absence of any decided features; typewriters in their refusal to work; and steam whistles in the gentle cooing sounds which they are said to produce. But, in spite of these minor points of resemblance, naturalists are probably correct in regarding them as a kind of serpent. Nor have they come to this conclusion merely on the ground that both babies and serpents require warmth; that is merely a point which they have in common with soup, the affections, and many other things. There is more evidence than that. Notice the gliding, undulatory motion of a large baby as it crosses the nursery carpet; notice, too, the wicked looks of the hooded variety, or listen to their terrible rattle; or throw a number of schoolgirls into the cage in which your baby is placed, and see the deadly fascination

which it exercises over the poor creatures. There they stand, under his glassy, hypnotic stare, swaying a little to and fro; they cannot escape, even though you leave the cage door wide open; presently their terror causes a partial paralysis of the vocal organs; they are no longer able to speak articulate English, and their efforts only result in gibberish; then they draw nearer and nearer to the crouching baby, and in another minute they are in its clutches. The scene is too painful for further description, but enough has been said to show what the real nature of these reptiles is. Still a few schoolgirls more or less do not matter, and where babies are properly under the control of adults they are not really dangerous The great point is not to let them see that you are afraid of them. If you are going to kiss them, or to punish them in any other way, you must simply show a little pluck. Some young men shirk kissing babies, and afterward allow themselves to be led into it. That is not right; there should be no hesitation. I find that the best way is to shut the eyes, hold the breath, and

take a short run at it. I mean that this way suits me the best, personally; I own that it generally produces in the baby that gentle cooing sound to which I have already referred, and nursemaids say rather bitter things about me afterward.

Any number of middle-aged bachelors who are anxious to have a baby in their chambers to pet have written to ask me where a fat one-year-old specimen can generally be found. Well, there are many places; although, of course, they have one or two special haunts. You will find two or three babies, as a rule, on the edge of any precipice. Or you can ride a bicycle through a suburb and afterward brush a dozen or so off the spokes of the machine; the chief objection to this is that they sometimes get soiled or even broken in the process. The simplest way is to look in any smoking compartment. There you will never be disappointed. If there is a mother attached to the child, it is usual to throw her out of window. Even after you have found a baby, it is just possible that you may not know what to do with it. It is not necessary to

slightly compress a baby's back in order to make it say "Papa!" In fact, by so doing you may damage its works; the mistake is generally made by those who have recollections of youthful experiences in toy shops. The proper way is to put your own nose within an inch of such nose as the baby possesses, make a bad face, and then distinctly mispronounce the word. Another mistake was made by one of my dukes—I think it was the duke I got out of "Sir Percival." He was congratulating himself on the idea that only the upper classes in London possessed babies. He was deceived, of course, by a mere difference of nomenclature. Byebies are the same as babies—just as the tinned peaches of the grocer are precisely the same as the *pêches en compôte* of the Italian restaurant.

I have been asked why young babies have hair so short as to be almost imperceptible. It is to make up for the excessive length of their clothes at the other end. This is the law of compensation which we notice working everywhere in nature. Often when I have seen some poor baby wearing its feet where its waist should

have been, it has comforted me to think that after all it need never brush its hair. Natural laws prevail everywhere; if you drop your baby out of the window, it will fall as far as the pavement and then it will stop. It was Sir Isaac Newton who first made this experiment. But I must not linger any longer upon these deep and philosophical reflections; if, however, you are not sufficiently educated to understand them, they will, at any rate, show you that one may take the keenest interest in home pets, and yet have a cultured mind.

Those who are less philosophical and more practical have often urged that babies are unprofitable pets, that one gets nothing out of them. This is not altogether fair. They have many pretty tricks which it is interesting to watch. Did you ever see a baby cut a tooth? It begins on the outside edge, and ends on the high G. Or, if tricks are not practical enough to please these captious critics, I may point out that babies taste very much like young dairy-fed pork. They make, in fact, a capital breakfast dish, as every epicure knows.

X.—FIRES.

FIRES, like ghosts and eggs, have to be laid. They resemble cats in their dissipated habit of going out late at night. They have, in short, the most varied and complex character of any of my Home Pets. In some respects they are ludicrously irrational. In really hot weather the only room in the house in which they seem to care about sitting, is the hottest of all, the kitchen. You cannot laugh them out of this absurd habit. In the cold weather they may be put in any room where there is a cage for them. I have got a fire which never seems to be happy unless it is sitting immediately in front of me; it does not say much, but it just looks at me through the bars of its cage, pensively and dreamily, as if it could see pictures in me. One must be prepared for a certain display of temper in these eccentric little creatures. On the

most bitterly cold days they will monopolize nearly the whole of the front of the hearthrug; and, as long as they are warm, they seem to care nothing about anybody else. Sometimes they get so fierce that it is really not pleasant to go near them. At other times they just sit and mope. These defects are often due to errors of diet. Before you get angry with your fire, ask yourself, in common fairness, whether you have been starving the poor beast, or overfeeding it, or feeding it on the wrong things. The other day I came into my room and looked round for my fire. There it was, huddled up in one corner of the cage, looking as black as possible, and sulkily sucking the poker. I whistled to it cheerfully, but it took no notice. Then I drew the poker out of its mouth, quite gently, dug it in the ribs once or twice, and threw it a couple of lumps of sugar as a treat. It gave a slight cough, and began to stretch itself. In order to interest it, I held up a large prospectus of a new mining company close to it—fires are very short-sighted. It soon brightened up, and chuckled audibly; finally it thrust out a claw through the

bars, caught hold of the prospectus, and ate the whole thing up. Well, I only wanted it to be happy, and I forgave its greediness.

Perhaps a few words on this question of diet may not be amiss. Of course, everyone knows that the staple diet of fires is coal. They must be coaled if you want them to be hot—one of those paradoxical truths that have a wonderful yet half-dreary interest for those who, like myself, are constantly engaged in a study of the more serious problems of existence. But the diet should be varied. A few sticks may be given to your fires in the early morning, when there is no one about; the noise which they make in crunching them is rather vulgar and unpleasant to hear, and they cannot be taught to eat them noiselessly. Fires are particularly fond of paper; but too much of it is not good for them, and makes them dull and depressed. I can remember one day—a day when the sunlight seemed to have gone out of my young life, and I had returned her letters and she had returned mine—that I gave my fire two pounds of prime note paper cut rather thick. The beast

flew at it and licked up four or five sonnets with avidity; then it looked unhappy and seemed to want to put the rest back. I can never forgive myself for it, but I made it go on eating, and it finished all but one short postscript. Then the poor, faithful, obedient creature gave a pathetic look at me, and lay down and died. It may have been my guilty conscience, but I hardly liked to stop in the room where the body of the dead fire was lying; it gave me an uncanny sensation of coldness. If your fire gets low-spirited, it means that it wants some sugar; but do not feed it entirely on sugar, because it makes one's housemaids so sticky.

Do not wash your fires as you would wash any other pets, with soap and water. It is not good for them. I spilt a kettleful of water over my fire the other day, and it did not like it at all; it was quite put out about it. You should groom them gently with a brush that is sold for the purpose. This makes their coats bright and glossy. If you find that a display of temper on the part of a fire comes not from wrong diet but from innate viciousness, you must be very firm

with it, and at the same time you must not lose control over yourself. Treat it just as you would treat your wife or your mother under similar circumstances. Kick it, and beat it over the head with the poker.

I shrink naturally from telling any anecdotes about the intelligence of my pets, because I have a sensitive temperament and cannot bear to be doubted. But the following story was told me by a man who, I am sure, would sooner die than misrepresent a fact or lead anyone to believe the thing which is not. He was, in fact, a political journalist. Besides, the anecdote in question seems to me to contain strong internal evidence of its truth.

"I had often noticed," my friend told me, "that when I had settled myself for the evening in my easy-chair with my meerschaum, my fire, like yours, had taken up its position immediately in front of me. It always looked at me long and curiously, as though it were imagining landscapes in my waistcoat or building castles in my hair, as the poets say. Little did I imagine, then, that it had its eye on my meerschaum.

One evening, however, I happened to go out, leaving a box of cigars behind me open on the table. When I came back again, about an hour afterward, *my fire was smoking.* It is some consolation to me now—some small consolation—to think that all that *could* be done *was* done. In my agony I stirred it up with the best poker, the poker that was so ugly and costly that I generally used it only as an ornament. I argued with it. I showed it that smoking must stunt its expenses and increase its growth. But nothing that I could do—nothing that anyone could do—could break it of the vile and detestable habit which it had formed. It was no kindness to ourselves to allow it to go on smoking any longer. It had to be killed. One of the housemaids did it—I couldn't. And now that fire's dead—dead—dead!"

At this point my friend who is, like all journalists, of a gentle and tender-hearted nature, completely broke down. "Ah!" he sobbed, "it was my own filthy example that did it, and that's what's breaking my heart. I've used my

last match. You might give me a light from yours."

Reader, need I point out what the moral of this story is? Think it over for yourself. Go quietly to your own room, and think it over.

XI.—CURATES.

I DO not wish to speak of curates in the natural state, of curates in church. I have observed them in their native aisles, but I do not forget that I am writing of home pets, and I only intend to mention the domesticated curate.

Only the other day a lady consulted me on the subject of curates. She generally had a few in her greenhouse, or playing about with tennis-balls on the lawn. "I can never," she said, "remember the different varieties. I have fixed labels on them sometimes, in order to make no mistake, but the vexatious little animals tear them off." The difficulty is not an uncommon one; for although they can be easily distinguished in the natural state, they are inclined to resemble one another when domesticated. Fortunately, one of my dearest friends is the butler at a house where there are a good

many curates kept; it is a sort of curate ranch, in fact, and I have the benefit of his opinion. But, unfortunately, I know him to be prejudiced, and consequently cannot value that opinion as much as I might otherwise have done. He says that he observes the Bibles which they occasionally leave on the hall table, and has noticed:

(1) That low-church curates have large, plainly bound Bibles, with flaps, filled with loose sheets of paper—which may be (*a*) hymn lists, (*b*) verse, (*c*) notes in pencil of the sermons of other curates—and secured with an elastic band.

(2) That the Bible of the high-church curate is smaller, has an ornamental binding, and contains an extract from St. Augustine written on the title page.

(3) That the broad-church curate has no Bible, but manages to get along with selections.

Of course, I do not say that these opinions are absolutely correct; as I said before, the butler was prejudiced, although I cannot remember exactly at the present minute which

side his prejudices favored. I have often thought that curates might, when in the domesticated state, be distinguished not so much by the ordinary scientific terms, dividing them into three classes, as by the qualities which they bear.

For instance, there is the intellectual curate, one of the commonest kinds. He will, in the natural state, quote the original Greek, and, when he is kept in a house, he is likely to read fine pieces of poetry aloud. I have in my possession a copy of the poetical works of Longfellow, given to me when I was young as "A Reward for Marked Improvement in Handwriting," and there are three holes cried straight through the most pathetic part of "Evangeline." The damage was done indirectly by an intellectual curate with a rich tremor in his voice. I should have not minded it so much if they had been my own tears; a man has a perfect right to weep his copy of "Evangeline" into sheer pulp if he likes; but he does not care to have his books spoiled by aunts whom he does not value. Then there is the athletic curate,

whose similarity to a Mexican mustang will be recognized by anyone who has never seen either. He looks very free and fearless as he dashes past one on his tricycle, tossing his head at intervals to increase his impetus, and sniffing the morning breeze. You can generally keep this kind in the stable. But although he is an athlete, he never forgets that he is a curate, and I believe that his passion for lawn tennis is connected with the service. On the other hand, the social curate may be allowed to come into the drawing room. He will get into a corner and purr. Or you can pour a cup of tea into the slot, and draw out a candid opinion of the vicar. Yet in the end the curate becomes a vicar, just as the common frog becomes a tadpole, or a chrysalis, or something of the kind. Then, of course, there is the sad, soulful curate of fiction, who suffers terribly from doubts; sooner or later he discovers that he is a fraud; then in a crowded church, a fit of remorse, and a chapter headed *Non sum dignus!* he preaches a farewell sermon; there is a quivering gasp in his voice; the congregation weep, for they all

love him; the curate weeps and the vicar weeps; the air is redolent with agony. And, lastly, there are some curates who never get domesticated at all.

Why, it may be asked, should one keep curates at all? There is the expense of feeding them to be considered, not to mention the trouble of exercising them and keeping them clean? Does it repay one? I should, from my own experience, answer in the affirmative, for this reason—it is possible to say sarcastic things about curates. If you urge that you do not want to be sarcastic, or to be thought sarcastic, one must, I suppose, believe you. But my impression is that if the gentlest dove that ever cooed were told that it was terribly satirical, it would have difficulty in concealing its pleasure at the compliment. You can be sarcastic on the subject of curates when you would find it impossible to be bitterly witty about anything else—except, perhaps, mothers-in-law, amateur theatricals, and seasickness, or anyone who attempts to write a humorous book. It is not probable that your sarcasm will be new, but it

takes a stronger reason than this to stop a sarcastic person when his blood is up. On the other hand, there are objections to keeping curates. They use a good deal of tea, and set examples, and marry on the least provocation. During the Christmas season they lie in a jungle of evergreens, sucking tin-tacks and watching their parishioners fall off ladders. The greatest objection to them, of course, is that they will work on Sunday.

XII.—WATCHES.

WHENEVER I see the bright, intelligent face of a young watch, or stroke its soft, curly hair-spring, I am paticularly impressed with its charm as a home pet. It costs nothing to acquire one; for watches, like plush tobacco pouches and candid opinions, are generally given to you by someone who knows no better. They are cleanly in their habits. They make excellent playmates for children. Their variety, both in structure and temperament, is very great; many stories might be told by old fanciers to illustrate the distinct and vivid personalities of their favorite watches.

A friend of mine once had a watch of a romantic and imaginative character. He always assured me that there was Italian blood in that watch. One day he was in an upholsterer's shop, trying to find something which would give his chambers a higher tone, when

his attention was attracted by one of those tall old-fashioned clocks. At the same moment he noticed that his watch had climbed out of his pocket and was looking hard at the same clock. He laughed at its playfulness, and put it back again; but he noticed at the time that there was an envious expression on its second-hand. Presently, as he was talking to the upholsterer, he hit his waistcoat pocket, just to remind the watch that he was outside. To his surprise he found that the watch was also outside; it had jumped out again, and was once more staring at that fine old clock. He wound it up hard—to punish it—and took it home at once. It was not safe, of course, to take it about the streets any more. When a dishonest loafer sees a man dangling loose outside a watch, he naturally makes use of his opportunity and takes one of the two. My friend, getting anxious, took his watch to a watch doctor, who said that it wanted cleaning; then, not being quite satisfied, he consulted a psychologist, who said that it was Ambition. There can be little doubt that the psychologist was right. The

watch had admired the big clock immensely, and it was now *trying to be a clock.* This was unmistakable. Whenever the hands pointed to the hour, it always looked just as if it were going to strike; and it went much more cheerfully when it stood on the ground against the wall like a clock. It never actually became a clock. My friend sold it, and afterward found that it had imagined itself into being a sundial, but could get no further.

I do not want you to be misled by this story. I do not say that all watches would show so much ambition and imagination. I simply have given this as an instance of one of the many varieties of temperament to be found in watches. But nearly all watches resemble each other in at least one point—nearly all are extremely sensitive. A man was walking out one day with his faithful watch by his side; he had been in the habit of allowing his watch occasionally to carry some little trifle for him, such as a postage stamp or a scrap of paper with an address on it, and it was always quite obvious that the watch was proud and glad to be able

to assist its master. On such occasions you would notice it jumping about and champing its swivel in a most spirited way. However, on this particular day he purchased a penny stamp, and, out of sheer absence of mind, asked the man who sold it if he would kindly put it in a piece of paper for him. This made it a bigger parcel than could be carried by the watch, so the man took it home in his hand. When he got home he looked at his watch. It had gained two hours, broken its mainspring, and was lashing out all round his pocket with its regulator. This was not bad temper; it was sensitiveness. The watch felt hurt at being neglected. It is not to be denied, of course, that there are such things as bad-tempered watches, but in nine cases out of ten it will be found that this bad temper simply arises from their being constantly kept on the chain. The most sensitive watches are those that have three hands. The third hand is always second-hand, which is a paradox on the face of it; and it is trying for a watch to wear its paradoxes where other people wear their smiles. If you

want your watch to be miserable you must study its temperament. Half the pleasure in the world is caused by careless and inconsiderate actions.

It is not generally denied nowadays that those watches which contain the figure seven in the number they bear never go on Sundays. Science is still groping after an explanation of this phenomenon; and with all our boasted progress it is to be feared that no satisfactory conclusion has yet been reached. It has been asserted, though with less authority, that good watches when they die go to Geneva; while those whose works are evil do not as a rule go at all, even when they are alive.

THE END.

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