

round of the *cafés*, and afterwards walk back to their hotels or apartments by the side of the river, beneath whose moonlit waters the dead lie.

Lilias stands on her balcony alone in the moonlight. Two days have passed; the second day's search has been as fruitless as the first: the crowds have dispersed—the people have gone away soberly to their homes. She looks out upon the cold, silver-radianced water flowing ever onwards; the line of bright lights fling their reflection across the river as on other nights, but one window from the other side is darkened—there shines no good-night signal there.

Across the bridge come hurrying, with swift noiseless steps, a weird procession of those whose office it is to carry the dead—the secret confraternity of the *Misericordia*—disguised figures robed in black from head to foot, only the eyes visible. Two and two they go, carrying lighted torches before and after the corpse. Some among them, it may be—noble or citizen—have just been called away from the dance or the feast to serve as they have bound themselves to serve at all times of necessity. Another minute they have hastened away on their midnight mission; the flare of their torches is seen no more.

Lilias, standing mute, immovable in the moonlight,

remembers how on that bridge two days before she has parted with him she loves; recalls the proud, hard words which have been their last, and tries—very hard she tries—to realise that between them now runs the River of Death, and that before she can whisper the word "Forgive!" she must wait until she too shall reach "the other side."

"O Ralph, if you were here but for one short moment, I think I could make you understand!" Then, as in answer to her half-uttered cry, some one who, unnoticed, has with rapid uncertain steps passed twice or thrice below the balcony, pauses and looks up, and calls her by her name.

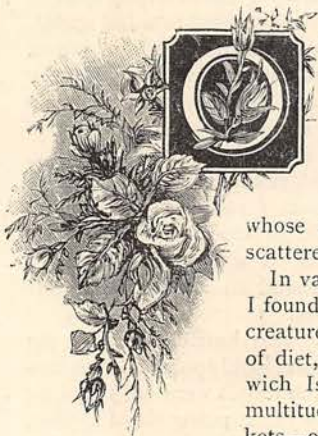
Down in the front vestibule, still left opened to the street, with none near but the old half-sleeping concierge, she learns the glad news that all Florence has been under a mistake; that Ralph has come home from his prolonged stay in the *campagna*; that the River of Death has been but the dream of two sad days; and that Ralph "understands" already, and has come to make her understand. No river need longer divide them.

"Will you come to me there on the other side?" Ralph asks once again.

And Lilias answers, "I will come."

## ON CUTTLE-FISH AS A DAINTY DISH.

BY C. F. GORDON-CUMMING.



If all the creatures which in divers countries are accounted good for food, few are to my mind so uninviting as the whole family of octopus and cuttle-fish,

whose members are so widely scattered throughout the world.

In various parts of the Pacific, I found that these horrid-looking creatures were a favourite article of diet, but chiefly in the Sandwich Isles and in Japan, where multitudes are sold in the markets—octopuses and cuttle-fish,

large and small, old and young, living or dead—and find a ready sale. The large ones are cut up in sections, all ready for a dish, smaller ones are kept alive in water, and twine their long slender arms, as if vainly feeling for the seaweeds and rocks where they were wont to feed. Neat little cuttle-fish are sold by the dozen, all ready for a dish. Some are dried whole, for inland carriage, and others are salted and sold as squid.

On the shores of the Mediterranean, dainty little octopuses are served as a garnish for larger fish, their long arms when delicately fried being somewhat suggestive of macaroni. Larger ones are chopped up

and eaten with tomato sauce, and when thus disguised are not unpalatable.

A preliminary visit to the fish market would, however, suffice to deter most folk from venturing deliberately to make a meal of one of the hideous creatures which they may there behold floating in large tubs; in some are delicate-looking cuttle-fish, like transparent jelly; in others, the more repulsive octopus, with protruding eyes, apparently watching for the approach of the customer whose order seals their fate. When a purchaser has selected the octopus he most fancies, the owner adroitly seizes it by the back of the neck, and though its arms twist and writhe around his hands, he contrives to give it a twist, which instantly disables, and generally kills it. Then it lies, a hideous, inert, gelatinous mass, scarcely to be recognised as the same amazingly active creature which, but a moment before, was outstretching its long arms in every direction, reaching over the sides of the tub and displaying the rows of suckers which give such terrible tenacity to its grip. When the creature is at rest, it coils these terrible arms at its side.

In breathing it spouts like a whale in miniature, spurting water from a pair of blow-pipes. It has a strong beak like a parrot, with which it crunches up crabs and other crustacea. Its partiality for these is so well known, that the fishers of the Mediterranean often bait their lines with crabs and drop them over-

board, knowing that very soon some unwary octopus will seize the prey, and hold it so securely that it will suffer itself to be drawn into the boat rather than relax its grasp.

When thus seen, moving at large in the clear water, it is not an ungraceful creature. It carries its arms curled up about its ugly body, only shooting them out as it passes any object which invites inspection, such as a rock, in whose crevices may lie hidden dainties. Then with the tips of these feelers it rapidly explores the possible storehouse, and if nothing is forthcoming, the long arms are once more coiled up into the smallest possible compass, ready in the twinkling of an eye to be thrown like a lasso around any desirable prey.

Well may the fishers dread an encounter with a full-grown representative of this horrid family, and terrible are the tales which some can tell, for the truth of which they are ready to vouch, tales wellnigh as sensational as the wildest fancies of writers of romance. Even the gigantic devil-fish described by Jules Verne, as attacking the famous submarine yacht, and that equally terrible monster of which Victor Hugo writes so thrillingly in "The Toilers of the Sea," are now proved to be no mere creation of a fertile imagination, but actual living monsters, which may at any moment enfold the unwary fisher in their awful clasp.

The largest specimens of cuttle-fish that have as yet been seen and verified by naturalists have recently been found in Cook's Straits, and are described in the "Transactions of the New Zealand Institute." One of these is of the genus *Steenstrupia stockii*. The hideous sack-like body was seven feet in length, and nine in circumference, its head all but two feet in length, and its internal shell measured six feet three inches.

Another, of a different genus, namely the *Architeuthis verrilli*, was found stranded on the shores of Island Bay, also in Cook's Straits. It was still living, and its gigantic snake-like arms writhed and curled like a cluster of huge serpents. The principal arms measured twenty-five feet in length, and the lesser arms were eleven feet nine inches in length, by seven and a half inches in width. Each long arm was furnished with three rows of powerful suckers, nineteen in the central row and fifteen on each side, each individually capable of gripping any object, with a tenacity horrible to contemplate.

The body of this monster measured seven feet two inches in length, nine feet two inches in girth, its head was four feet three inches in circumference, and its evil projecting eyes measured five inches by four. Judge of the sensations of the luckless swimmer around whom those awful arms entwined, and who felt each dreadful sucker fastening on him, and rendering escape hopeless—nothing before him but the certainty of being crunched up by the hard cruel beak, just as though he were a crab or a lobster!

After all (though, as in most South Sea deeds of vengeance, the innocent have to suffer for the guilty), the giant cuttle-fish would but be carrying out a simple law of retaliation in thus devouring one of the race which so ruthlessly consumes his lesser brethren, too often

devouring them with the utmost relish while still-alive. In the Sandwich Isles I was assured that a live cuttle-fish is a far greater delicacy than the finest oysters.

I heard a most horrible description of a Hawaiian chiefess of the real old school, who had thus deliberately commenced crunching up one of the long arms of a good-sized octopus, whereupon the luckless victim showed fight. First it deluged her face and neck with the inky secretion with which nature has endowed it as a means of baffling its foes. Then it twined its remaining feelers in her long black hair, but still the lady was not discomfited, but while battling with her prey, continued her horrid feast.

We talk a good deal about the ruthless beasts of prey in the lower ranks of creation, but I fear that for simple downright barbarity the human biped, in certain phases of epicureanism, could scarcely be surpassed. Our own tables might furnish painful illustrations of the evils which we encourage rather from want of thought than from deliberate cruelty: the artificially diseased livers of geese nailed to boards, kept near roasting fires, and periodically crammed to suffocation, all to furnish us with *pâté de foie gras*; the veal and the turkey blanched by subjecting the poor victims to a slow death by bleeding, the turkey being bled by having its tongue cut out.

Occasionally when I have ventured to express to some South Sea maiden my qualms on seeing her crunch a living wriggling fish between her strong white teeth, she has laughingly reminded me of our British taste for eating what she called living oysters, and I felt that I had not much ground to stand upon.

But surely horror's crown of horror centres in Japan, where at the most civilised entertainments, with every adjunct of refined taste and advanced art, the dish which holds the place of honour is a living carp, of which all present partake as of a most choice delicacy, the utmost care being displayed in carving it so as to touch no vital organ, so that if possible all the guests are helped from one side of the miserable victim, which is occasionally sprinkled with water to keep it lively, and which looks round on its barbarous torturers with melancholy eyes.

Equally cruel, and only less horrible because the deed was perpetrated by a less highly polished race, was the horrible torture to which turtles were subjected by the Tamil fishermen in the Jaffna peninsula of Ceylon, till their barbarity was checked by the police. The miserable creatures were sold piecemeal, and the great object of the vendor was to keep them in life till the last pound of flesh had found a purchaser, a matter of perhaps many hours, during which the tortured turtle lay writhing in agony, exposed to a burning sun. It was thrown on its back, and the lower half of the shell was cut off, so as to expose the defenceless animal; then each customer selected the portion he preferred, till, one by one, each fin had been amputated, and all the flesh and fat had been duly apportioned; the contortions of the unhappy turtle indicating plainly the agony which it thus endured through a long series of hours. The heart and head

were left to the last, and not till the head was actually cut off did the eyes cease to open and shut, and the mouth to snap, proving that life and sensation were still active.

I write of this horrible subject in the past tense, owing to strenuous and well-enforced police regulations, such barbarity is happily no longer to be witnessed in the open fish-markets. But as a cruel

nature does not change at the bidding of the wisest officials, there is reason to fear that many a poor turtle may still be doomed to die by slow torture in the back courts of many a Tamil home. I should note that the people of Jaffna are all Tamils, an immigrant race from Southern India. The Cingalese themselves are mostly Buddhists, and are consequently exceedingly tender to all living creatures.

## YES OR NO?

A RONDEAU.



GOOD man's love! Oh, prithee,  
stay,  
Before you turn such gift away,  
And write no unconsidered "No"  
To him who proves he loves you so,  
And humbly owns your regal sway.

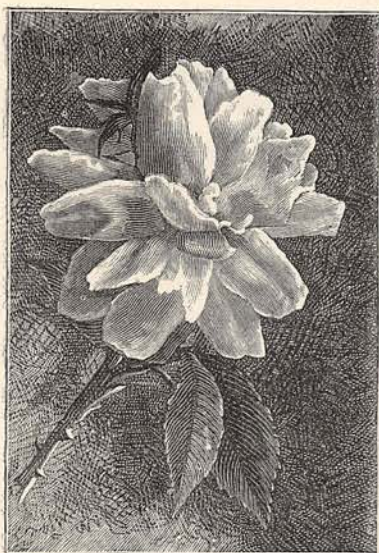
For hearts may change, the wise folk say,  
And as full oft the brightest ray

Fades in an hour, so too may go  
A good man's love.

Then pause awhile. This short delay  
May gladden many an after-day.  
Search well your heart, and if it show  
True signs of love, bid pride bend low,  
And take this great gift while you may—  
A good man's love!

G. WEATHERLY.

## OUR GARDEN IN JULY.



THE important and interesting operation of budding our roses is that which occupies during the days of this month which are favourable for undertaking it. It may be worth while to give a few brief hints on a matter in which too many of us at times have to record only a failure and disappointment.

Now there is certainly a great risk run if we set about our budding during an intensely hot, dry, and sultry season. Our bud gets simply scorched out of the stock after all has, as we thought, been happily completed. Or it may be that we have allowed too long a time to elapse between the removal of the young buds from the trees and budding them upon our stock, so that our collection, or lapful, has already begun to droop, wither, and dry up; or, lastly, our failure may, alas! be attri-

butable to downright defective manipulation. Our bast matting or worsted has been perhaps tied too tightly, and we choke the very life out of our bud, or perhaps nearly displace it; or we have tied it so loosely that the veriest puff of air carries it away. As for the time of the day in which to bud, the evening is the best, and if with warm weather it be showery and thundery also, so much the better.

Briefly, then, we may recapitulate the operation and then pass on to something else; for although our garden should of course by this time of the year be in all its perfection and glory, there is, as usual, an endless amount of work to be done.

We first of all shave off, so to speak, a thin slice of bark from a rose-tree, taking with it a leaf, while at the base of this leaf is the bud. And next we simply run our knife one inch down the bark of another rose-tree—that is, of the stock upon which we are about to bud. We do not, however, cut deeply in with our knife, but merely cut through the bark to the hard wood, and we make also a small cross-cut of corresponding depth. Then with the thin ivory piece of our budding knife we gently and slightly raise the bark of our stock, which we have just cut sufficiently to enable us to tuck in our little bud under the bark, bringing the leaf just to the point where the cuts in the bark cross each other. Then we tie the bark down with matting or worsted—that is, good coarse worsted, for very fine worsted might easily afterwards break—bringing it round several times to make all secure. The next morning, should the weather turn out to be very