

"You see, mamma, I shall have Piers."

So one cold day in December they are married, with Agatha and the two little girls for bridesmaids, and a select party of friends present. It is a quiet wedding, for the trip is to be to India, and circumstances are not altogether *couleur de rose*. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Loftus is present as a guest, but in the gallery of the church sits a lady in a shabby black dress, who cries all through the service, and prays fervently for blessings on the bride's head.

Nothing can separate them now: no hard words, no guardians or trustees. They go to Lithsdale for a three days' honeymoon, and the week following sees them, accompanied by Agatha, embark for India, Christabel with a look of happiness on her face, such as Christabel the heiress, with all her brightness and high spirits, had never worn.

A month afterwards Mrs. Vanstone sees her heart's desire accomplished, and herself united to Lord Henry Musgrave. If money and connections make a woman happy, then Sylvia Musgrave is happy, for she has plenty of both; yet those who know her best are wont to say that the fretful expression has deepened considerably on her face, and that Lord Henry as a husband is not quite the same as Lord Henry as a lover. Be that as it may, Lady Henry sufficiently retains her own way to send out twice a year to India a box from her and Christabel's former dressmaker, containing all that a woman's heart can desire in the way of dress, regardless of expense, and to feel some pleasure in reflecting that, although Christabel is now poor, she will, at any rate, be properly attired. She keeps up a fairly active correspondence with her step-daughter, and so far overcomes her natural indolence as to send her out some of the numerous newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets with which Lord Henry fills the house; and sometimes, as she reads the thin sheets of paper that come in response from India, full of bright contentment, she sighs. By-and-by arrives the news of Agatha's marriage to one of Piers' brother-officers—satisfactory to all parties; later, Piers himself writes to announce the birth of a son, to be named Myles, after Christabel's father; and then comes a hiatus—they are moving from one station to another, and have their hands quite full. But the next letter is a long one from Christabel, chiefly about her son, but relating how, curiously enough, they have run against the General Marston to whom Piers' grandfather had left all his money, consequent upon his daughter's behaviour. He is a delightful old man, she writes; so attached to India that he cannot make up his mind to leave it, having lost his wife and only child there, and

dreading the return in his desolation to England, where he will find everything altered from what he left it. So he lingers on and on, in spite of the doctor's warnings, in his beautiful home at Simla, where Piers, she and the baby are to spend their leave with him. He has taken immensely to Piers, and Piers to him, and is her devoted slave. Lady Henry smiles as she reads this letter, and hands it to her husband.

"It would be very nice, would it not, if it were to come so? They might even afford to live at Vanstone, which appears to be Christabel's ideal of bliss."

"There is many a slip," growls Lord Henry, for every time he reads Christabel's letters it strikes him more forcibly that his revenge for her former disdain has somewhat missed fire; "and Christabel is not a woman who will deliberately go in for a winning game—else, with her face, she might cajole the old man out of anything, unless her temper gets in the way."

"You are always talking of Chris's temper. I never saw it."

"Didn't you?" he sneers; "then you must have been both blind and deaf. I saw it very considerably the day of her coming of age, for instance; and so, I fancy, did John Loftus."

But Christabel's temper apparently does not come in the way, for when, four years afterwards, General Marston dies, he leaves the whole of his large fortune to his cousin, Piers Vanstone, and to his eldest son after him, as restitution for what he had formerly involuntarily deprived him of.

And when the lease of seven years, for which the tenants of Vanstone Abbey hold it, expires, Piers and Christabel and their children take possession of the old home, none the worse for the days of their poverty spent in India.

Save that she is much paler, Christabel comes home more beautiful than she went out, and almost the first person she goes to see with her two children is Mrs. Loftus. Cousin Susan receives her in a flood of contrite tears, and calls her husband into the drawing-room. He comes in, looking somewhat ashamed of himself, but quickly recovers his old serenity and facetious manner.

"It is forgive and forget, eh, Christabel?" he asks, and she laughingly assents—

"On condition that you allow that I was right," she insists, in her old manner.

"Of course you were, fair cousin, and I was a fool. You and Piers are matched as well as paired; there is no doubt about that. Come and dine with us to-night."

And they go.

THE END.

AN AMERICAN PRISON.

THERE are three great prisons in the State of New York, those of Sing Sing, Clinton, and Auburn. Each is a so-called State prison; that, is one in which only those convicts are confined who have offended against the State laws. The criminals convicted in the United

States or Federal courts have special prisons provided for them—as, for example, in New York State, the penitentiary at Albany.

Every one, from the highest to the lowest—and we have such in America—even the most ignorant feels competent to discuss the subject of convict contract

labour. The other phases of the question, involving prison discipline, punishments, and the solution of that difficult problem—In what degree shall a prison be made a reformatory? are relegated to the experts.

It was the privilege of the writer some time ago to inspect the great prison at Auburn, and from what he saw on that occasion, added to subsequent study of the subject, he feels convinced that the prison system there in vogue, while admitting of certain modifications and improvements, and confessedly weak at several points, is on the whole as efficient, as nicely adjusted in its various parts, and as humane in its operation, as any other in the world.

A difficult question, this of our prisons. It must never be forgotten that a large majority of the convicts will eventually gain their liberty and be turned loose upon society. They are presumably the most depraved element of the population, and their presence in any community is fraught with the gravest danger. The nice adjustment of prison discipline so as to inflict the necessary punishment, and at the same time lead to a reformation of the criminal, at least to send him forth a man who shall not thereafter be a constant menace to society, demands not only a keen and intelligent judgment, but also a wise and broad philanthropy.

Auburn is one of a number of those fair cities which are the pride of central New York. To all Americans it is especially interesting as being the home of the late William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State. Broad avenues, beautiful homes, prosperity, and even luxury visible in every direction, it is an odd fortune that has placed a great prison within her limits. Entering by the great gate, we passed through a broad courtyard into the waiting-room of the Warden. A keeper was detailed to conduct us through the prison, and point out to us its various features. What with its numerous factories and workshops, the whirl and noise of machinery, the bustle and activity all about us—for all must work whose health permits—it was hard to imagine that all the operatives we saw were criminals, outcasts from society, handicapped on their discharge in every walk of life by the stigma and ignominy of their present servitude. But one quite forgets the crime when looking at the criminal. We ask the keeper, not what did this one *do*, but *how long* is he in for? Human nature is full of sympathy.

"That man over there working so industriously at his last, when will *he* come out?" I ask our guide.

"He is in for life," was the reply. "But," he added, "do not waste your sympathy. The life men fare the best." By which he would have me understand, not that they receive different treatment in the prison, but that, as a matter of fact, which statistics prove, very few life sentences are ever served. The power of pardon vested in the Governor, the supreme authority in the State, is too often exercised after a few years to open the prison gates to the life (?) convict. Indeed, this sentimental discrimination is so well known that a sentence of fifteen or twenty years is far more dreaded by the criminal classes. The abuse of the

pardoning power is a crying evil in many of the States to-day. Several have gone so far as to deprive their Governors of this prerogative and vest it in a Board of Pardons, composed of five or seven members, of whom the Governor is one *ex officio*; and to this Board all applications are referred, and decisions are rendered by a majority vote. But in New York State the Governor still holds this really kingly power. It is a strange anomaly in a republican form of government, only equalled by the veto power lodged in the same official, and exercised—be it said to his honour—with remarkable discretion and wisdom, yet still exercised and often proving a formidable obstacle to bad legislation. Upon the completion of his term of office it is not unusual for a Governor to signalise the event by bestowing three or four pardons on some particularly deserving convicts. It is a bad practice, and can be defended only upon purely sentimental grounds.

Having completed our tour of the workshops, we were next conducted to the dining-room, which also serves as a chapel where divine service is held each Sunday. This room is large and airy, neatly whitewashed, and furnished with long deal tables running in parallel rows its entire length. The food provided is plain and wholesome: bread and coffee for breakfast, soup and potatoes for dinner (with an occasional bit of meat as a substitute for soup), and tea and bread for supper. The men are absolutely forbidden to speak with one another, either at work—except as their labours demand—or at meals. Imagine a dinner without conversation! They march single file to and from meals, to and from work, and finally to their cells at night. They are always attended by keepers heavily armed. Insubordination is very rare, and always severely punished.

Our attention was next directed to the cells of the prisoners, the holes—they seemed scarcely better—into which these fifteen hundred men are locked at night, and left to their own meditations. Hitherto, the general air of the place had not been that of a prison; but now, as we beheld corridor after corridor of these peep-holes in the walls, and knew that they were the nightly habitation of human beings, we began to realise how unspeakably awful it is to suffer the merely physical penalties of wrong-doing. Each cell is in dimensions about seven feet by four, and contains a bunk and a stool. It is neatly whitewashed, and its inmate is required to keep it perfectly clean. It was touching to note the rude attempts at decoration in which several occupants had been allowed to indulge. Here was a cheap picture pasted on the wall; there a little knick-knack, that probably came from some loved hand, and was hallowed by a score of tender associations. Yes, these are but straws, I know, but they certainly show a great truth, that in every human heart there is one soft spot; and though crime and wickedness cover it up until it seems, indeed, as if nought could penetrate their flinty tissue, yet there it is, and it may be only a simple love-token that can prove it still exists. So please, stern keeper, do not begrudge the little decoration of your prisoners' cells. It will do no harm.

The sanitary arrangements of institutions such as this present a very difficult problem ; but at Auburn it is overcome by the best methods that can be devised by constant watchfulness and rigorous discipline.

On our way from the cells we passed through an inner waiting-room, and there beheld a touching scene. A convict, in the presence of a keeper, was receiving a visit from his wife and little daughter. Oh, rare glimpse of happiness to the wretched man ! Oh, humane system that permits even so little to cheer a broken heart ! I cannot but feel that it is an evidence of the highest wisdom, on the part of the prison authorities, in thus allowing an occasional visit from the nearest relatives of a prisoner ; it is carrying out the reformatory idea in the best and most beneficent manner. A woman's tears and a child's laughter will do more to touch that soft spot in the heart than all other human means put together. The convict is shut out from the society which he has wronged, but by these brief moments of happiness, permitted to him by a justice that is also merciful, he is made to feel that he is not utterly cast down—that there is still one link that binds him to his fellow-men.

I will pass quickly over the dark side of prison life—the punishments, which seem to many, unacquainted

with the subject, so barbarous and inhuman—the solitary confinement, the shackles, the heavy iron cage or muzzle, which we saw one poor fellow bearing on his shoulders for some infraction of prison rules. But in general the men are all on their good behaviour. And they have something more than the negative reason of immunity from cage or shackles to keep them so ; they have the positive incentive of a commutation of sentence. By a recent law of the State of New York, the good behaviour of a convict, duly certified to by the prison authorities, reduces his term of incarceration in a certain definite ratio to the term of sentence. The working of this law has proved most happy. It was another long advance in the reformatory spirit of prison administration.

We bade farewell to the Warden, walked again through the broad court, and heard the great gate clash behind us as we passed into the street ; and, looking up at the walls of the gaol, as we saw the sentries pacing up and down the ramparts, each one of us felt that during that brief visit to Auburn Prison he had learned something new of human misery and woe, and, at the same time, had discovered that in this mighty working of the State's strong arm there was everywhere the plainest evidence that justice was tempered with Christian charity.

WALTER SQUIRES.

THE FLOWER GARDEN IN MAY.



THE gardeners may fairly call May our transformation month ; certainly those of us who rely wholly upon the bedding-out system may do so, though, on the other hand, we have never held to the practice of allowing a garden to have a dreary, desert-like appearance for nearly half a year. Some sort of consecutive bloom and

brightness, even though in the worst season of the year we can find nothing better than variegated evergreens, can be maintained through the twelve long months.

Having in view, then, our decided preference for plenty of prolonged brilliancy in the garden—and in some of our small gardens that are much exposed to view this is almost forced of necessity upon us—we may as well give at the outset a few hints as to the best method of maintaining consecutive bloom.

What we want, then, for our purpose is plenty of pot culture, and our small greenhouse, and perhaps single frame, may be well utilised to accomplish our end. For instance, our hyacinth and bulb shows in general, which about this time may be said to be over, we are naturally anxious to get speedily out of the way, leaving our flower-beds clear for the next change.

By the middle of May, however, we shall, of course, for some months, find most of our difficulty to obtain

continuous bloom at an end. Yet had we a few annuals forced on in pots, it would be a great advantage to set them out now, interspersed with a few of the ordinary bedding-out geraniums. And for the purpose of bringing on a few flowers in pots, an ordinary frame is really better than our greenhouse, and for this reason : we are then better able to have our pots with the face close to the glass, and nothing conduces more to the healthy growth of a plant than the practice of keeping it well against the glass. If, however, you are bringing on your annuals in a greenhouse, grow them all in the front, and in the highest part that you can afford to give them. There are many flowers, then, which, although by their nature they do not need it, should have been sown in pots some little time back, merely for the purpose of having them in an advanced state now, and ready to turn out—such, for example, as mignonette, sweet peas, nemophila, stocks, &c. These, and all such-like flowers, may also be sown now in the open, and even a third lot forced on again under your glass : by this means you will have these bright annuals in flower at three different times of the summer ; for, bear in mind, these annuals are useful to us only so long as they are in bloom, and this period is never a very long one ; and, indeed, in some instances a very short one, a hot and dry summer like that of 1884 soon drying up many of our flowers. It was noticed last summer that a large bed of sweet peas lasted not half the time in flower that a similar bed did in 1883. A little management by this