TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING.

BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

THERE is one thing in which I think novelists make a great mistake. If they particularly desire to enlist the sympathies of their readers for their hero, or heroine, they represent him, or her, as alone in the world, destitute of relatives or friends, with no uncle nor aunt, or even a country-cousin to fall back upon.

Now, to my mind, such a situation is the acme of this.

Everybody who reads this will call me a brute; but I wish, before he judges me, he would wait until he is the youngest of sixteen children; born of a mother who was afflicted with twelve brothers and sisters, and son of a father who has ten sisters living.

That is my situation—the situation of James Franklin Brown, of Brownville.

I cannot remember the time when my relatives were not a source of trouble to me. All through my childhood I was pestered with aunts. They wanted to kiss me; and though I never objected to being kissed by the ladies in general, I do object to this monopoly of aunts. And, besides, all of my aunts but one took snuff; and she smoked.

As I grew older, my uncles became my trial. They wanted me to do chores. They were all settled down near my father's residence—most of them farmers; and if the sheep got in the field, or the horses jumped out of the pasture, or the cat eat up the chickens, Jim was called upon to attend to the matter. It's the greatest wonder in the world that I did not run my feet off before I reached the age of young manhood.

When I reached the period of being tortured with the tie of my cravats, and agonized about the glossiness of my dickies, then my cousins came down upon me with their wants. If they wanted to go to a concert, or singing-school, or lecture, or dance, why there was cousin Jim. Of course, cousin Jim would be delighted to go.

And cousin Jim would go; and they would flirt with some other fellows, who were not cousins, all the evening; and likely enough get to sleep going home, and leave cousin Jim the privilege of whistling to the moon for amusement.

When I was about twenty, my father removed to Boston. Twelve of my brothers and sisters were married; two were at school; and only Ellen and myself were left at home.

I was delighted with the change. We should be relieved from our relatives. Most of them were thoughtful of their money, and would not be likely to spend fifteen or twenty dollars in visiting us.

I began to make myself into a gentleman. I patronized the barber and his unguents—and cultivated a mustache, which was my *beau ideal* of perfection. I wore bright-colored neck-tyes, and sported a gold watch, and invested three dollars in a rattan, and six dollars in a beaver, which always gave me the headache, and made me look precisely like an inverted candle-mould. But no matter for that, so long as I was fashionable.

I made the acquaintance of several charming young ladies, among whom was Miss Flora Van Voorhies, the belle of the street on which we lived. Flora was a beauty, and one of the most fastidious creatures in the world. Nothing was quite good and elegant enough for her. She would not have breathed the common air if she could have conveniently dispensed with it; and if the soles of her dainty boots touched the soil of mother earth, it affected Flora's nerves so badly, that she had a headache for hours afterward.

I was raised to the seventh heaven and lemon-colored kids by her preference; and every night I devoutly prayed that none of my relatives would appear and nip the whole thing in the bud.

Five months rolled away, and I began to feel at ease. None of them had troubled us, and we had not heard from them in any way. I indulged the hope that they had forgotten us. So, I think, did my mother, who had become quite genteel, and had formed some very genteel acquaintances.

One morning, while Mrs. St. Michel, and Mrs. Leroy, two of our most distinguished acquaintances, were in the parlor with my mother, one of the railway hacks stopped at our front door. An indefinable dread seized me. I felt myself growing cold as a peeled frog. From the hack there issued three band-boxes, two trunks, a butter-box, a handled basket, a bundle in brown paper, an umbrella, and, lastly, a green poke

bonnet, beneath which I distinguished the little wizened face of my father's oldest sister—aunt Sally Nutter. The very black sheep of the whole flock of relatives!

"Bring 'em all right into the entry," she called, in a stentorian voice, to the coachman; "I'm to hum here. This is brother Jason's house. La! Jason's got up in the world sense he used to peddle lobsters! It was a lucky thing for him when he went to making pills, and got doctor hitched on before his name! I ixpect Martha's so big you can't tech her with a ten foot pole. But, law! she needn't try to put on no extras with me! I know 'em all, root and branch! egg and bird!" and she burst into the room, carrying her basket, and band-boxes.

The blinds were drawn, and aunt Sally's foot struck against an ottoman, which brought her down, basket, bundles, and all, to the floor. The cover of the basket flew off, and out rolled several dozen of eggs—most of which were smashed by the fall, but some were in a good state of preservation.

"Consarn it!" cried aunt Sally, struggling from the ruins, "there goes seven dozen of eggs! And I brung 'em up here to git thirty cents a dozen; they hain't but fifteen at Brownville! What on airth do you have your house so dark for? Anybody sick, or dead, or gwine to be? It smells mouldy here! Do open a winder, so I can see an inch afore my nose!"

My mother, red and discomposed, threw open a blind. Aunt Sally rushed up to her.

"Why, Martha, how tickled I am to see you! You look as natral as life, only, seems to me, you begin to show your age! Wall, tain't to be wondered at! A woman that's brung up so many children as you have, when she gets to be fifty year old, will natrally begin to look old! And here's Jim, I declare! why, how you've growd! But, I must say, you hain't growd handsome! The Brown family hain't apt to. He's a going to be the express image of his old granther Bewly—hain't he, Martha? Jest the same drop to his under jaw! But who's these ere people here? Some of yer city friends, I reckon?"

Mrs. Leroy lifted her eye-glass, and surveyed aunt Sally with ill-concealed contempt.

"Ho! ho! I reckon you're nigh-sighted, marm; thought so the minit I seed your eyes. Eyes that is kinder faded out, and reddish, like yourn, is apt to be weak. Ever tried red rose-leaves steeped in milk?"

Mrs. Leroy arose, and drew her skirts around her. Her face was as red as her eyes. She spoke very pointedly,

"I think I will be going, Mrs. Brown; you have other company vastly more amusing."

My poor mother stammered out something, and followed the ladies into the hall. Aunt Sally brought up the rear, crying out,

"You'd better do sunthin' for your eyes rite off! They look dreadfully! I can see it clean here!"

My mother drew my aunt back.

"I will show you up stairs, now, if you please," said she.

"Oh, no! thank ye. I don't keer about seeing your house jest yet. There'll be time enuff for that; for, if I like Boston, I calkerlate to stay four or five weeks! I'm tired, now; them pesky keers has eanamost shook me all to pieces. And then your roads here is so rocky, I got all jounced up! If I lived here, I'd have the rocks picked out of the roads, if I had to do it myself."

I seized my hat and left the house. I was too much excited to remain in aunt Sally's society any longer at present. Anything was better than staying at home with her.

I rushed down the first street that offered; but, my course, was soon stopped by a crowd, among which the star of a policeman shone conspicuous.

"I say I didn't do it!" cried a somewhat familiar voice, pitched on an extremely high key. "I tell you I didn't tech it; and if you don't let me alone, I'll knock you down, by hooky! Hallo! there's my cousin Jim! He knows me, and he'll tell you that I'm jest as honest a feller as the day is long!"

I shuddered. Here was another of my relatives; and at a little distance I recognized the glossy tile of Dick Van Voorhies—Flora's brother.

"I say, Jim!" cried my cousin, Tom Brown, flourishing his arms at me, "come here, this minit, and tell this man that I hain't a pick-pocket! I say, Jim!"

"I do not know you!" stammered I; and, taking a step backward, I stumbled over the stand of a candy and apple-woman, upsetting the whole concern, and myself besides. The woman was angry, as she had a right to be; and she called me some hard names in a very strong brogue, and hit me two severe blows with a long-handled, two quart noggin!

I scrambled to my feet and fled, hearing, as I went, the flattering remark from a bystander,

"*He* looks more like a pickpocket than tother one! Shouldn't wonder if he was the one! He's got a real hang-dog expression!"

I plunged into the first cross-street that

offered, and came upon George Seaward, a young sprig of the aristocracy, with whom I had an acquaintance. He gave me a segar, and we walked up the street together, smoking, and making remarks on the ladies we met.

A coal-cart came rattling along, and a lusty voice sung out,

"Hallo! if there hain't cousin Jim Brown! Jim, I say, look up here and see Sam Smith, won't you? Shake hands with a feller, do;" and he extended toward me a paw which, for size, would have fitted a Hercules, and, for color, an Ethiopian.

I made a dodge into the back yard of a house, the inmates of which set a dog on me; and, inspired by the stimulus of his bark, I managed to escape into another yard, by climbing over the fence, and leaving my hat and coat-tails behind me as a *souvenir!*

In my mad flight through yard No. 2, I nearly overturned a young woman who was hanging clothes on a line. I opened my mouth to apologize, but she seized me by the arm with an exclamation of delight,

"Why, Jim Brown, I declare! don't you know me? Me, your cousin Nelly?"

I broke from her; and no grass grew under my feet until I was safe in my own chamber. I sunk down completely exhausted, wondering if the entire population of Boston consisted of my relations.

Suddenly, I remembered that I was going to the theatre that night with Flora. I must put my hair in papers, and perfume my mustache.

At dinner, aunt Sally eyed me curiously, and asked me what I'd got my hair rolled up for. She guessed there was a going to be a quilting somewheres, she said. My mother, unfortunately, informed her that I was going to the theatre. From that moment my doom was sealed.

That was the very place, of all others, that aunt Sally wanted to visit. And she "could go with me jest as well as not, if not more so," she said, complacently.

I dressed myself, when the time came, and hurried out at a side-door, determined to baffle aunt Sally; but the old lady was too sharp for me. There she sat, composedly, on one of the stone lions that flanked the gateway, dressed in a flounced, pink calico, and a yellow bonnet, waiting for me.

"I'm all reddy," she remarked, jumping up; "and I've took my work-bag along, with some crackers in it. If it holds in till arter nine o'clock, we shall want a lunchin."

We stepped into the street. The people stared at us. I felt as red as a full-blown poppy. My face streamed with perspiration. I could not endure it; it was no use. Politeness I ignored in this case. I took advantage of the old lady's rapt gaze at the window of a print-shop to bolt down a by-street; and in a few moments I was in the presence of my divine Flora. We walked leisurely to the theatre; I at my ease—for I knew the old lady never could find her way, unassisted, to the theatre.

Judge, then, of my horror, when, on reaching that place of amusement, the first spectacle that greeted my eye was aunt Sally, standing in the door, her work-bag on her arm, her voice raised to its highest tension, and her right hand gesticulating to the crowd she had gathered around her.

"He went out of sight jest like a flash!" she was saying; "and I give a little boy a ten-cent piece to show me the way here—and I'm a waiting for him to come along. I'm kinder afeard he's got lost, for he was allas rather weak-headed; but, seeing as if he might have asked somebody the way; he's got a tongue in his head—— Hallo! there he's now, and the Queen of Ingland with him, by her gound! Come along, Jim; the meetin's jest a goin to begin! They're a tooting on the bass-viol now! Where on airth did you go to so quick? Is that your gal?"

Indignation and dismay held me silent. Flora's face was like a blush-rose. The crowd, by a great effort, restrained themselves from cheering the old lady; but it was very evident to me that they would not long exercise any such forbearance.

"Jim," said my ancient relative, in a confidential whisper, loud enough to be heard by the whole assembly, "you've got some smut onto your upper lip! I seed it before we started, but I didn't like to say nothing. You'd better wipe it off; it looks dreadfully!"

The crowd fairly roared. Smut, indeed! my cherished mustache, that I had scented and oiled, and admired for three long months! If the old lady had been a man, I should have challenged her on the spot. With a desperate effort I addressed Flora,

"Flora, my dear, we will go in, and not pay any regard to this insane old woman."

Flora turned toward me, an iron determination in her blue eye,

"Frank," she said—she always called me Frank—"tell me who that horrid old creature is before I go another step!"

"Horrid critter! I hain't a horrid critter!" cried aunt Sally, waving her work-bag. "I'm a

decent woman, and haint got no paint onto my face, as some folks that I know of has. And I'm Jim Brown's own aunt—his father's sister, Sally, that married a Nutter; and I've mended his pinnyfores and trowsers many a time!"

Flora listened; and when aunt Sally finished, she cast upon me such a look!

"Mr. Brown," she said, quietly, "I have the honor to wish you a very good evening, with your estimable relative;" and then she took the arm of Fitz Ludlow, and sailed away.

I thought I should have fainted on the spot; and, perhaps, I should, if I had not felt my sleeve vehemently pulled. I turned, and saw a lean-faced man.

"Jim," said he, "lend your uncle five dollars, do. I've left my pocket-book to hum!"

Good gracious! it was uncle Solomon French! and behind him was my uncle Bill; and behind him my aunt Mary, and cousin Susan. I did not stop to see how many more there was. I took it for granted that the whole audience was to be composed of my relatives. I jumped down the steps, and fled at the top of my speed. Aunt Sally cried at the extent of her lungs,

"Stop him! Stop him! I'll give a quarter to the man that captivates him!"

Community at large at once decided that I must be a thief, or a murderer; and they rushed after me at railway speed. A dozen dogs joined in the chase, making night hideous with their howling. I was in too much of a hurry to keep a very keen look-out for obstacles; and the first thing I knew, I ran headlong over a lady drawing a baby-carriage.

Of course, she was angry. She seized the baby with one hand, and my shoulder with the other, and began a lecture in language more forcible than polite. I tore myself loose and renewed my flight.

But they overtook me. I had committed a crime which people never overlook; I had abused a woman with a baby—so they said. I deserved death on the spot.

A couple of policemen came up opportunely. They made a little flourish of authority, and marched me off to the watch-house.

In that interesting school of morals I remained until the next morning, when my examination took place; and no one appearing against me, I was discharged.

But I would not go home. Aunt Sally was still there; perhaps a dozen more of my relatives; since "it never rains but it pours."

A bright thought struck me. I would put the ocean between us. A whaler was lying at one of the wharves, which was advertised to sail that very day. I went down there, entered my name on the book, got a seaman's rig, and presented myself to the captain for inspection. He received me with open arms.

"Why, Jim!" he exclaimed, "how glad I am to see you! My dear cousin——"

"Good heavens!" cried I.

"Yes!" said he, "I am your own cousin, David; and your cousin Daniel, and George, are among the crew; and your aunt Peggy is going as far as Florida for her health."

I waited to hear no more. The vessel was just putting off; but I could swim! Yes, thank heaven! I could swim! And without so much as saying good-by, I dashed into the water, and struggled to the shore, to be met by aunt Sally, who exclaimed,

"Better go right home, Jimmy, and change your stockings. Wet feet is dreadful apt to bring on the rheumatiz. Don't mind him, captain!" yelled she, after the receding vessel; "he was allers a little weak in the upper story!"

I broke from aunt Sally—went to a hotel—dried my clothing—got into a railway car—went to Philadelphia, and enlisted in the army; and my captain is my uncle Saul; and I have three cousins in my company, and five more in another regiment with which ours is brigaded.

Did ever a poor fellow have such luck?

If I should ever be found, some fine morning, at the end of a rope, it will all be the fault of my relatives.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

BY EMMA M. JOHNSTON.

Bloom! bloom! sweets of to-day,
To-morrow ye shall wither.
Spring! Spring! joys of to-day,
To-morrow ye'll be—whither?

Life! be thou bright, and smile;
Sighs are afloat in the air.
Cheek, wear thy bloom awhile,
For blight may be lurking near.

Heart! be merry and gay,
The canker-worm cometh soon;
Hold thee love whilst thou may,
To-morrow it may be flown.

Soul! take comfort and ease,
This life's but a thing to spend;
But, oh! when thy comforts cease,
Where, tell me where, is the end?