

# Victorian Times

Vol. IV, No. 1

January 2017



*Picture-Books of Olden Days • January Out-of-Doors • A Rescued Starling  
New Year's Receptions & Recipes • An Imperial Winter Ball in St. Petersburg  
Some Railway Encounters • A Walk Through London's Seven Dials  
Lore & History of Precious Stones • Fiction: "The Tax on Moustaches"*

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\**The Girl's Own Paper* \*\**Cassell's Family Magazine*

# To See the Future

As the old year gives way to the new, it's our custom today to make "New Year's Resolutions." It's an interesting custom, when you think about it. It suggests that we feel we have some control over what the New Year will bring. At the very least, we feel we can make positive changes to our own lives in the year to come. This will be the year that we shed those extra pounds, write that novel, or declutter the garage. (At least, those tend to be *my* resolutions!)

Victorians didn't tend to make "resolutions." Instead, many Victorians, as they approached the turn of the year, were more interested in predictions and prognostications. Like Halloween, New Year's Eve was a time for divination. Would the coming year be lucky? Would *you* be lucky? It was considered wise to have money in your pocket as the year turned, for if you didn't, you could expect to be poor during the year to come. "First footing" was a common custom in Victorian days; one's luck for the year hinged upon the characteristics of the first person to set foot across your threshold on the New Year. Red-haired people were unlucky, as were (generally) women. Some people actually made a career (or at least a seasonal career) of traveling about to be the "first foot" because they possessed certain "lucky" characteristics.

That suggests that Victorians didn't feel that they had such a great deal of control over what was to come in their lives. They hoped to get glimpses of what they could expect, but didn't seem to feel that, in most cases, they had a role in shaping their own futures. And perhaps, in a world where social status and condition were thought to be assigned and virtually unchangeable (except in a downward direction), this makes sense.

But it occurs to me that as we gaze back at the Victorian world, we have a bit of an advantage: We *can* see the future. Not ours, perhaps, but theirs. If we look at a growing controversy or a pending disaster, we know what's coming. Recently, for example, I tried valiantly to read a book on the Irish potato famine. I couldn't manage to get through it, but what came across clearly was the inability, or unwillingness, of a great many people to see what lay ahead of them. Was this simply stubbornness, or foolishness, or arrogance? Quite probably the disaster of that famine was the result of all three. But when I read such a book, I can see the "future"—I see what's coming a few chapters ahead. Those who were participants in this drama could not.

One of the things that I often find annoying about reading modern books about the past is that they often handle time in large, easily labeled clumps. Just referring to "The Victorian Era" is itself an example of this. The Victorian Era of 1843 was considerably different from that of 1883. If one stops to think about Victorians as *people*, one suddenly realizes that anyone who was an adult (and perhaps a decision-maker and world-shaper) in 1843 was either very, very old in 1883, or more probably, dead. Conversely, anyone who was an adult in 1883 was a mere child in 1843. Adults in 1843 still thought of their queen as new, young, and a change from the past. Adults in 1883 had never known anything else.

This got me thinking that an interesting way to look at history, if it could possibly be done, would be to gather information about a single year, and look at that year as if you were living it. What if, for example, you could look at everything there was to know about the year of 1874, as if you lived in that year—*without knowing anything about 1875*? As we look at history now, in the traditional way, we can pick a bit of information from 1874 and another bit from 1875 and yet another from, say, 1895, and put them all together to form a certain type of pattern. But would it be the same pattern that would be perceived by a Victorian who has to live *in* time, moving from 1874 to 1875 and onwards without being able to see the world that lies ahead?

I'm not sure how it could be done, or even *if* it could be done. But it would be a fascinating way to view a historical period. It would enable us to see the world through the eyes of those who lived it—through eyes that might have hopes and dreams about the future, and from whose actions that future would emerge, but who could never truly predict what that future would be.

It might also, perhaps, remind us that one of the roles of future generations is to judge the deeds and events of those that have gone before. One day, someone will be editing a magazine about the quaint customs of their ancestors back in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. When they do, they'll look at us with the benefits of 20/20 hindsight, and pass judgment upon us accordingly. We can only hope that they will have the courtesy to at least try to look at their past through the eyes of us folks who have not yet had the privilege of seeing our future!

—Moira Allen, Editor  
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## Grandfather's Picture-Books.

**N**otwithstanding the picture-books belonging to the grandfathers of the young and old among us, we are much indebted to Messrs. Field and Tuer for permission to reproduce a number of examples from their "1,000 Quaint Cuts from Books of Other Days."

Here, to begin with, is a set of pictures illustrating the marvellous history of Tom Thumb. First there is a very respectable cut representing that critical moment of the hero's history when he was taken up in a mouthful of grass by a cow. Then we have him astride of his

of a flight of steps. In the fourth picture we have the last sad adventure, when the deadly breath of the wicked spider put an end to the doughty deeds, the butterflyings, and the paste-wallowings of good Sir Thomas. Observe the terrifying expression of the spider's face (he is a rare kind of spider, by the bye, with a monkey's head), and the extraordinary action whereby he essays "cut one," which Sir Thomas is to receive on his shield. A spider who can go through the broadsword exercise is as great a wonder as Sir Thomas himself.

Next we have Jack the Giant Killer. From the first cut grandfather gathered his



THE COW EATS TOM THUMB.

faithful butterfly, sailing gaily over houses, fields, and trees. Comparing the butterfly with the adjacent tree, it would seem to be about as big as a large crocodile, with wings rather larger than a church door. Then we have the furnety bowl accident. It is pleasing to observe, in this picture, the architecture of the period of King Arthur,



HE IS SOUSED IN THE FURNETY.

ideas as to how the first of Jack's famous exploits—that with Cormoran—was accomplished. Observe the dark lantern in the corner—quite up to date, you see, although Jack was, like Sir Thomas, a contemporary of King Arthur. Then we have Jack tackling Blunderbore and his brother, strangling them with a rope tied to his window



HE RIDES ON THE BUTTERFLY.

according to the artist. Rows of brick houses, with severely rectangular doors and windows, appear to have been in fashion, while a magnified bedpost stood at the head



HE IS KILLED BY THE SPIDER.

frame, trampling all over their heads and shoulders and cutting off their heads like anything, while they lean limply on their clubs. The next two cuts tell us all about

the Welsh Giant. First he is pounding away (quite reckless of his own bed-linen) at the supposed Jack, who is represented in the story by a billet of wood, and in the

which the giant's nationality is suggested, by a leek tastefully worn in the hair. In the last two pictures Jack appears in his invisible cloak, and everybody must admire



JACK KILLS CORMORAN.



HE SHOWS THE GIANT A TRICK.

picture by what looks like a school bell-tower, or a patent chimney-pot. With so much light in the room as the picture shows, however, the giant must have had a good deal of cold tea for supper to mistake the chimney-pot for Jack, or to fail to notice that artful person standing in the lightest corner.

the boldness with which the artist has grappled with the difficulty of representing a man made invisible in a picture. The recipe is a simple one—draw him rather larger than usual, more clearly, and blacker; especially make the invisible cloak as black and as visible as possible, and there you



HE STRANGLES THE GIANTS.



THE GIANT AND HIS PRISONERS.

Next the wicked Welsh Giant is committing involuntary suicide in his rash attempt to play "follow-my-leader" in the porridge-bag trick. That long white thing hanging out of the hole in the giant's waistcoat is not his shirt, as might be supposed, but

are. In the last of these pictures, Jack is slashing off the nose of one of his customers. It is a very fine and large nose, of the sort that you buy for a penny at a fair. The giant appears to be making a wild attempt to catch it, although that would



HIS ARTFULNESS.



HE SLICES OFF THE GIANT'S NOSE.

blood, which seems to have frozen into a tall heap. Note, too, the delicate way in

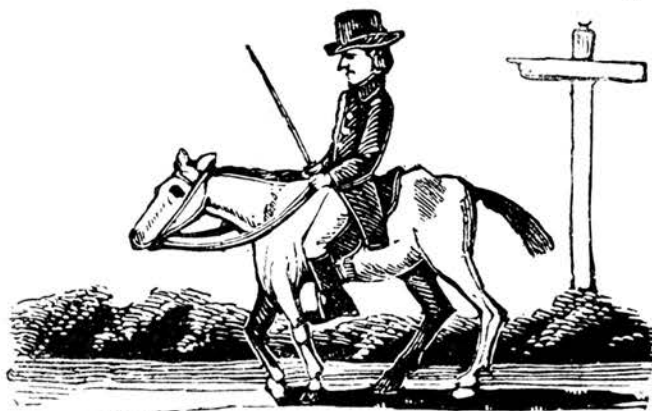
seem scarcely wise, for he certainly looks a deal handsomer without it,

Here is rather an earlier picture, from a book of nursery rhymes. The legend runs  
 Oh dear! what can the matter be?  
 Two little boys are up in the apple tree!  
 Which probably contains a great deal of reason, since there is so little rhyme. It



"OH DEAR! WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?  
 TWO LITTLE BOYS ARE UP IN THE APPLE TREE!"

is a beautiful apple tree, and it would seem very wrong to disturb all those symmetrical apples, growing so regularly in order, each in its proper place. However, the grave young gentlemen in tail-coats and knee-breeches are careful to preserve the general regularity of the scene by shaking off all the apples uniformly with the stalks upward.



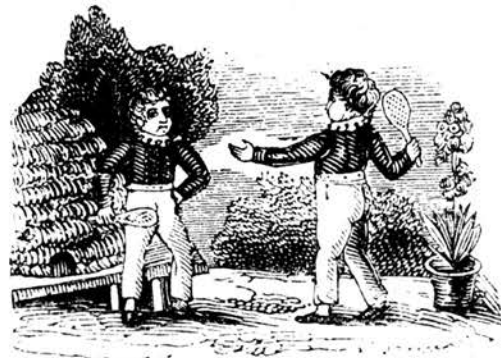
"HE RIDES A COCK-HORSE,"

This picture, of a not very well fed gentleman riding a not very well fed horse past a sign-post with nothing on it, appears over the famous couplet

Ride a cock-horse  
 To Banbury-cross.

We print it here chiefly as throwing some light upon the interesting question as to exactly what species of animal a "cock-horse" is. It may be as well to mention that in the first of the Tom Thumb pictures, already referred to, the quadruped there depicted is by many supposed to be a hen cow.

The two little boys, who are represented in another book as playing shuttlecock near a precipice and a flower-pot, are delightful specimens of the sort of boy familiar in the pages of old goody-goody books, with frilled collars, and puffy trousers buttoned on to very short jackets. They haven't a great



SHUTTLE-COCK.

deal of room for their game, what with the precipice and the flower-pot, and a bee-hive, about the size of a decent cottage, close against one player's back. That boy is really in a dangerous position. It would be so easy accidentally to hit the hive, whereupon there would probably ensue a sally of infuriated bees about the size of pigeons (judging from the hive), who would set upon, murder, sting and devour boys, battle-dores, flower-pot, precipice and all.

From another of grandfather's picture-books comes a series of spirited pictures setting forth certain awful examples of children who meddled with fire. There is a sameness about these instructive catastrophes, as well as a certain want of preliminary detail. Boy with frilled collar and his trousers on fire throws up his arms before fireplace and shouts. Little girl with dress on fire throws up her arms in front of fireplace and shouts. Another little girl with ditto ditto, does

ditto in front of ditto and dittoes. Small child (sex uncertain) with a cheerful fire in nightshirt shouts in front of fireplace and throws up arms. The girls (assuming it to be a boy in the nightshirt) are the more clearly distinguished by the addition in each case of a woman with white apron, mob cap, and outstretched arms, and a kettle on the hob—embellishments denied to the boys, who have to take their chance as best they can with two fenders, a set of fire-irons, and a wooden chair between them. The similarity of the two girls' adventures is relieved slightly by the introduction in one case of a cat with stiff legs, galloping, with much prudence, away from the disaster. But there is a complete and irredeemable uniformity about the whole set in one respect — there is no suggested cause for the accidents, unless the boys and girls have deliberately shoved their clothes into the fire, in order to make an instructive warning for grandfather's picture-book. It is noticeable that the artist has had some difficulty in setting fire to the first boy's trousers with a proper and natural



AWFUL



EXAMPLES OF



CHILDREN WHO



PLAYED WITH



effect, owing to the awkwardness of the garments for the purpose. The girls' skirts are infinitely better suited to the experiment. The title to the series of pictures is spread out among them, and ends with the substitution of a significant hieroglyphic for the word "fire," consisting of certain very fierce flames in a setting of very solid smoke, arising from the combustion of nothing whatever. We have already mentioned the goody-goody books of grandfather's time, with their solemn pictures of virtuous elders in high coat-collars and swallow-tails, and more or less virtuous youths in concertina hats and puffy white trousers. The adventures of Tommy Merton, Harry Sandford, and the respectable Mr. Barlow in the many editions in which the book was printed, were the occasion of many such pictures, and the first half of this century was greatly distinguished by the immense number of serious little books issued with cuts wherein blameless and omniscient tutors lectured solemn little boys on things in general. Here is a cut from one of these, wherein the worthy tutor, whose



A RAINBOW.

thighbone extends down two-thirds of his leg, points to a very solid-looking speckled rainbow with one hand, and with the other urges forward his pupil to make a closer examination.

Then we have a picture of a scene on the ice, whereon one boy has come a cropper. Now, the identity of that boy is rather doubtful. He can scarcely be the good boy who wouldn't play truant to go and slide, or he wouldn't have come a cropper, even



ON THE ICE.

had he been on the ice at all. On the other hand, he can't be the bad boy who insisted on doing these wicked things, or he would have fallen clean through the ice and been drowned. Perhaps he is a reformed bad boy who came on the ice to warn the others. This seems more likely, since he appears to have only one leg; he probably lost the other through climbing after birds' nests on Sunday, or something of that sort, and then reformed. One can't get much fun, you know, with only one leg left, so may as well reform as not.

In the early days an artist often had to draw a thing which he had never seen. We have here the effort of one of these gentlemen who evidently had never seen an elephant, and built the face up as well as he could from a human standpoint, with the trunk on the chin. We won't be personal,



AN ELEPHANT.

but we believe we have seen a portrait very like this in some of the papers.

We have, in the next picture, an opportunity of inspecting the interior of a boys' school of the last century end. Note the little three-cornered hats hung above the scholars' heads, and the portentous array of heavy books over the head of the learned master, in his wig and gown. He opens his palm as though for the benefit of a small boy's ears, but, as there is no small boy sufficiently near it, perhaps he is only indulging in the pleasures of anticipation. The view from the window is particularly



IN SCHOOL.

interesting. The three regular sugar-loaf trees, of the herring-bone species, growing exactly to the same height, and each exactly filling the width of one window-pane in the vision, without encroaching upon the others, offer a beautiful lesson in order and harmony among neighbours.

A specimen of quite a different class is seen in the representation of Polyphemus, at the entrance to his cave, with cloak, staff, and Pandean pipes. The bold, free drawing of the King of the Cyclops is of the school of Blake, but there are points in the





POLYPHEMUS.

execution which diminish the probability of of its being Blake's actual work.

A contrast to this is seen in the queer little cut in which a woman is either drying the tears of a little girl or punching her in the eye. It is from one of the goody books, and the absence of much of the right side of the girl's face seems rather to point to punching than tear drying.



PUNCHING?—OR TEAR DRYING?

Another queer little wood-cut is a mere copy of an inn sign, which was rather popular in old days—the "Bull and

Mouth." It is a very magnificent mouth, at which the bull appears rather scared, as well he may. He seems to be considering the advisability of going in, but doesn't feel quite safe in venturing. This is one of the instances of the corruption of the title of an older sign. Originally it was the "Boulogne Mouth," and referred to the mouth of Boulogne Harbour, being adopted as an inn sign in commemoration of the taking of Boulogne in the reign of Henry VIII. The "Goat and Compasses" (originally "God Encompasses Us") is a similar case.



BULL AND MOUTH.

One woodcut from grandfather's picture-book (or was this from grandmother's?) gives us some information about the inside of a shop in the days when ladies wore their waists just under their armpits. The polite shopman, in a wig, shows a piece of ribbon to the two ladies in big bonnets. The transaction is a very similar one to

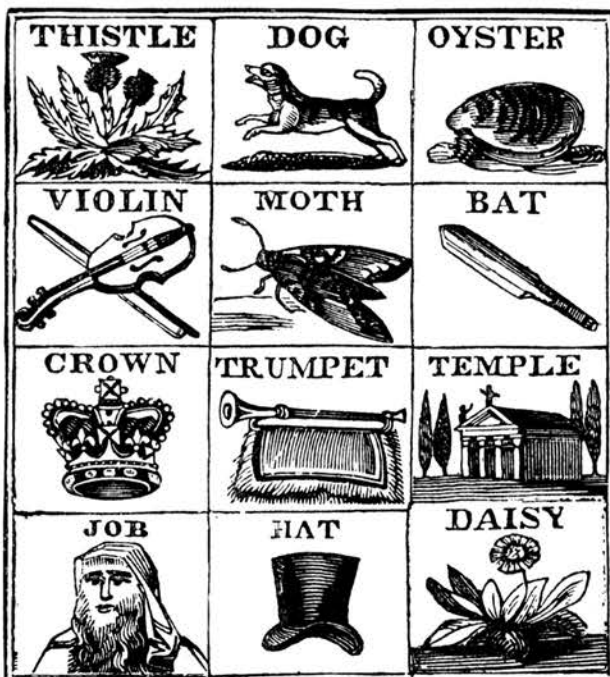


SHOPPING.

those of to-day, but we get a glimpse of the old square-paned shop window; and the cut is rather crude and quaint.

There was a device in some of these picture-books of dividing a space into little squares, and filling each of these little squares with a representation of some object, with its name printed over it. The intention, of course, was instruction—the little grandfather would become familiar with the outline of the object while learn-

ing to spell the name; a sort of early kindergarten lesson, in fact. Here is a block of a dozen such little squares, with the illustrations all very clear and unmistakable, except the oyster, which looks rather like a tortoise (but might be a hedgehog), and Job, who might be Pontius Pilate or Nebuchadnezzar. It is to be observed that over Job's head a crown is placed, so that something is done to compensate him for his troubles, even in grandfather's picture-book. The temple is evidently intended for Dr. Parker's on the Viaduct before the tower was built, and the side-spaces are filled in with trees in order to avoid advertising the adjoining establishments. Next door to the temple is a very



fine trumpet, with a hearthrug hanging on it, and just below the trumpet is a hat, of the fashion worn by grandfather's father. A bow is generously thrown in with the violin, although not in the specification, and the relative proportions of the different objects are striking. Thus the moth is a great deal bigger than the temple, and the oyster is as large as Job's head.

The "Cries of London" were favourite subjects with the compilers of these books. We reproduce a cut of a gingerbread seller. Gingerbread, by the bye, seems to have become quite a thing of the past, and nothing remains to us of it but these pictures, and the proverb about rubbing the gilt off it. This particular cut is actually a portrait—a portrait of the most famous



"TIDDY-DOLL."—THE GINGERBREAD SELLER.

of all the gingerbread sellers, "Tiddy-doll." He is represented in Hogarth's print of the execution of the "Idle Apprentice," selling gingerbread to the crowd. He was a great character in his way, and dressed tremendously in gold-laced clothes of a very fine sort; so that, being a handsome old fellow, and tall, he attracted notice everywhere. Nobody knew his name, and he had that of "Tiddy-doll" from the song-burden with which he interspersed his patter, thus: "Mary, Mary, where are you *now*, Mary? I live, when at



"CUCUMBERS?"

home, at the second house in Little Ballstreet, two steps underground, with a wiskum riskum, and a why-not. My shop is on the second floor back, with a brass knocker at



KNIFE-GRINDER.

the door. Here's your nice gingerbread, your spice gingerbread, all ready to melt in your mouth like a red-hot brickbat. Ti-tiddy ti-ti, ti-tiddy ti-ti, ti-tiddy ti-ti, tidddy doll-loll." His nickname has survived to the present day in the proverbial expres-

sion, "You're quite tiddy-doll," or "Tiddy-fol-loll," addressed to a brilliantly attired person.

The lady with cucumbers on a barrow was invariably present in these "cries." Here the cucumbers might very well be oysters, or sausages, or anything else. The knife-grinder is even more interesting. His machine is of a kind quite unknown to mortal eye nowadays. One doesn't quite see how the grindstone is driven, or, indeed, quite where the grindstone is, but no doubt it is all right, or the worthy tradesman wouldn't look so happy.

Anybody who is doubtful as to the exact appearance of a hobgoblin, a witch, or a fairy may be satisfied by a glance at the next three

however, to learn that a witch has to whip her broomstick to make it go; and one wonders why a flying cat has any need for



WITCHES.



HOBGOBLINS.

blocks. When a hobgoblin wishes to attend to his correspondence, he doesn't sit before a table in the ordinary way, but has a hole made in the table and hangs his legs through it. This is simple and economical, although it would seem to be a little awkward, particularly with a table having only two legs. Most of the hobgoblins appear to be fitted out with every convenience for personal enjoyment, including wings, tails, stings, &c., although one unfortunate has to be content with a very large head and a fowl's legs and no trunk or arms.

The witches are quite conventional. It is a little surprising,

swinging a great besom about in the air. The moon is in eclipse, as is proper at times of witchery, but the stars are all right, and, if anything, rather bigger than usual. One often hears theatrical people speak of a "thin house." The house on the right-hand side of the picture appears to be one of these.

The fairies are rather better dressed than one might expect. Frock coats and breeches are really quite respectable. The ladies wear steeple-crowned hats and laced bodices, which leads to the supposition that they are Welsh fairies. A convenient door is neatly let into an adjoining mole-hill for the fairies to go in and out



FAIRIES.

of, and a toadstool stands handy for refreshments between the dances. The moon seems, on the whole, rather astonished,

—Æsop's, and translations and abridgments of La Fontaine's. We are able to find room for two illustrations from one of these books. First we have "Hercules and the Waggoner." Three rather small horses, driven tandem fashion, have succeeded in fixing a very long, low-tilted waggon in a ditch. The waggoner, who may possibly be completely dressed, and wearing a smock, but whose costume looks uncommonly like a shirt and nothing else, calls on Hercules to overcome the difficulty for him; although presumably there must be people at hand in the very extraordinary houses just over the bridge. Hercules, who doesn't look quite so well as when we last saw him, and is reduced to a most insignificant club, appears



COWS AND CALVES.

which is really quite excusable in the circumstances.

We have found a delightful study of animals—apparently cows and calves in a shed. Observe their piercing eyes, all turned upon the astonished spectator. This may mean fury, or it may mean blindness, or something else, but it looks most like hunger. The shed is built upon the trunks of four trees which have failed in their legitimate business, after growing, with great consideration, exactly at the four corners of a rectangle. Only the roof and two sides of the building have been built (what of is doubtful), in order that the stock may stare at us from the other sides.

Of course, some of grandfather's picture-books were books of fables



THE SHEPHERD AND THE WOLVES.



HERCULES AND THE WAGGONER.

on one of those feather-bed clouds usually employed on similar occasions. To speak more exactly, he appears to be slipping off, and threatening serious damage to the roof just below him. Hercules, it will be observed, was a very large person, as one might expect.

Then there is the shepherd boy who cried "Wolf!" There are four animals in the picture, and anybody can see at once which is the wolf, because he is biting the countenance of one of the others, which lies on the ground; otherwise it would be difficult. The shepherd seems to be rather enjoying the fun, to judge by the gratified look on his face, and the gladsome expressions of his legs

and arms as he hops cheerfully in the left-hand corner. Baronial castles and mountains, assorted, make an effective background.

Our little collection would scarcely be complete without something representative of the legend of Jack and the Beanstalk. One of the old books yields us a very instructive picture, wherein we learn many things. First, that the beanstalk was about ten feet high at most; this judging by the height of Jack's mother, who is coming after him with a broom and a dog in a highly vigorous and gymnastic manner, without stopping to open the garden-gate. The castle at the top of the stalk, too, would seem to have been about the size of a fairly large mantel-piece clock, and the giant—who could almost go into Jack's pocket—looks uncommonly like the little weather-prophet who pops out of the old-fashioned barometer. All this, however, may be intended as an effort to conform to the rules of perspective; but still, one would like to know a little more about the internal arrangements of that cottage. Consider it. The

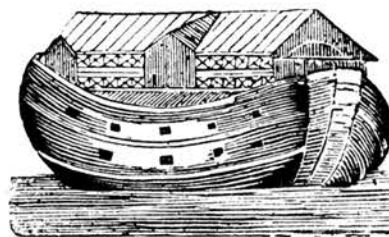


JACK AND THE BEANSTALK.

head of the front door reaches to the eaves, and is then none too high for the passage of Jack's energetic parent. Still, by cutting a piece out of the thatch a window is provided to light an upper floor; an upper floor about a foot or so high, and barely big enough, it would seem, to accommodate that insignificant giant of the castle. If that large black thing at the foot of the stalk be one of the five seeds, one need wonder no longer at the size of the plant, but at the ability of Jack to carry the seeds home.

Finally, as a tail-piece, we print Noah's Ark as it appeared in grandfather's picture-book. It appears, as nearly as ascertainable from the portholes, to have been about a twenty-eight-gun ship, exclusive of bow and stern chasers, of which there are no clear indications. The upper part, it will be observed, consisted of a neat cricket pavilion.

Grandfather's picture-book amused and taught many good men in their childhood. Perhaps the few fragments of it which are here presented may not altogether fail in one of these objects to-day.



NOAH'S ARK.

## JANUARY OUT-OF-DOORS.



HERE is unusual bustle in the rookery this morning. The birds have returned again from the great woods in which they have been roosting since last spring. In 1874 we noticed them actively pairing in their old trees and seemingly nesting on January 2nd; but they were probably choosing sites and allotting boughs to youngsters—"prospecting," as the Americans say—for the serious business of nest-making does not begin till quite late in the month in the earliest of seasons (in 1863 we noticed it on January 27th).

In the first field into which we turn (supposing us to be rambling in the north or eastern shires), two or three of the rook's foreign brethren, the hooded crow, are sure to be seen flapping up from some dainty morsel into the nearest tree. With the strong contrast of greys and blacks in their plumage, they are handsome birds; but they are sly and mischievous to the last degree, and, spite of their northern extraction, seem to possess much of the cunning and rapacity of the Indian crow, than which a bolder thief does not exist. They come to our shores in October, and depart in April, and while here nothing appears to come amiss to them—a dead horse or sheep is a welcome windfall, and they whet their appetites on shell-fish along the coast, as an epicure begins dinner with a few oysters. Game preservers remorselessly shoot them down. In many tracts of Scotland (where they remain during the year), it is wonderful how any grouse survive the depredations of these birds on their eggs. Occasionally they vary their fare by sportively picking out the eyes of young lambs. So cunning is the hooded crow, however, that he manages to laugh to scorn guns, traps, and nux vomica alike. He is the only bird which we rejoice to see made up in the modern fashion into a hand-screen, and, remembering his evil mode of life, it is with much pleasure that we inform his enemies that he does make a magnificent screen, with his strong jet-black bill and head, and his beautiful grey back.

Extending our walk farther afield on the "fytties," or low meadows, say near Great Grimsby, we find ourselves on ground beneath the level of the sea. It is restrained from breaking in by strong banks of earth and masonry, which are diligently watched and kept in good repair. As we skirt one of the curious "blowwells"—ponds of circular outline and great depth—peculiar to this district, probably a little jack-snipe or a teal springs up from the lip of rushes which surrounds it, and is shot by our companion. These meadows are very level, with few trees or bushes, and generally swept by the keenest of winds in the winter months. But they are very dry, being admirably

drained by broad deep "dykes," which run out through "cloughs" into the sea. There are no fens in this district; they are to be sought in the south of Lincolnshire, and at its junction with Cambridgeshire, Northants, and Norfolk. Their aspect at present would probably astonish those who only know them from the chroniclers' accounts of them in the times of our earlier kings, from novel-writers, or from such a poet as Drayton.

But there is the pleasant cry of golden plover, and five or six of these birds, so highly esteemed by epicures, fly up out of shot, and settle a quarter of a mile off in the meadow. It is quite worth an attempt to get these, but they are so wild in the open weather that some subtlety has to be called in. The sportsman hides behind a gnarled hawthorn, or in a dyke, while we take a long round and endeavour to drive the plover over him. In vain: they fly too much to the right. Another tedious circuit, and we have put them up again, and they fly unsuspectingly over the bush. Two little puffs of smoke, and down come a brace, or perhaps three, of these much-prized dainties.

Or it may be a wild duck is secured, which has strayed down from some inland pond. Another popular illusion may here be dispelled. Many connect Lincolnshire mentally with decoys and multitudes of ducks taken nightly during winter. In point of fact there is only one decoy in North-east Lincolnshire, at Ashby, near the Trent. Mr. Cordeaux, in his book on the birds of this district, states that in thirty-five years (from 1833 to 1868) carefully kept records at this decoy showed that 48,664 wild ducks were thus captured. The greatest number taken in any one season was 4,287 in 1834-5. In former days Pennant, however, speaks of 31,200 being taken in one season in decoys in the neighbourhood of Wainfleet. These figures, compared with the few taken at present, show the decline of wild fowl in the district, and that the writers of past centuries were not so given to exaggeration as we now rashly deem them.

Such are some of the incidents of this month in the country. Let us turn back to the garden and the neighbourhood of man, and see what songsters can be found in the open weather of January. The robin, "sacred to the household gods," trills his best ditty during any wet and open weather throughout winter. On a post or rose-bush he defies rain; it is frost that cuts his song short. Then he

—————"leaves  
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man  
His annual visit."

In the third week of the month the chaffinch may be heard singing in the orchard; or, sweeter indication still of spring, the skylark brings back the sunshine of past years with his carolling overhead. The thrush, however, is the songster usually associated in our minds with the opening year. The first spell of warm, soft

weather, bids him sing from the ash-tree just outside the garden, in which he intends to build later on in the season. The blackbird, as a rule, is a fortnight after him before he begins to whistle.

In an ordinary January, blackbirds and starlings pair towards the end of the month, and it is the cares of the nesting time which chiefly draw out the vocal powers of birds. These latter birds may be heard in pairs, or two or three pairs together, on the top of a lime or elm, whispering their singularly monotonous love-tale one to another.

The last week of January, 1874, was exceptionally mild and sunny. Thrushes sang every morning in Lincolnshire; the buds of the pear were swelling, and those of the quince already white. We even found two scented violets by the roadside on the 29th, and several others had been gathered before that date. These foretastes of spring are singularly grateful.

In the garden a very fair nosegay of winter flowers can be collected in January. Winter aconite, meze-reon, hepaticas, blue and red, primroses, snowdrops, and crocuses ought to be found in its sheltered spots. In the wild or spring garden, under the trees, will be gleaming one or two forward polyanthus, and plenty of periwinkle stars. Lichens and mosses will enhance the beauty of these blossoms rescued, as it were, from winter's clutches; for fine weather in January is as deceitful as the proverbial one swallow.

Extending our search to the flowers of the lanes and common, the green hellebore, so called from its greenish-yellow flowers, is one of the earliest blossoms of the year. It is particularly attached to the neighbourhood of old houses and abbeys; it was in such situations often cultivated, in old days, instead of the true "Greek hellebore" of the herbals (*H. officinalis*), and belongs to a family of plants of which the Christmas rose is a familiar example. Several "weeds," however, as they are deemed, save by the botaniser in January, are beforehand with it in blooming. Perhaps the red dead-nettle is the very earliest bloom of the year. In the dullest and coldest of weather, this ought to be found in the first week of January. It is followed, say a week later, by its congener, the white dead-nettle; and then, emboldened as it were, chick-weed, groundsel, dandelion, and the whole battalion of garden pests begin to put out flowers. Every broken cliff, meanwhile, the edges of old quarries, the sides of shady roads, &c., are brilliant with golden sheets of furze, and it must be indeed a severe winter which represses the daisy.

One of the best indications of approaching spring is found in the common wild honeysuckle. Long before Christmas, the pearl and emerald of its buds may be

seen peeping out. They take full advantage of every sunny hour to swell and break into leaf, which takes place from the last week in January to the last week in March, according to weather and situation.

Besides the hare and rabbit, few of our common quadrupeds are now visible in the fields. Torpid and well concealed, they are waiting for settled fine weather. The weasel, however, may be seen hunting at times. With his long lithe body he can penetrate the runs of rabbits amongst tangled hedge-rows, or the winding retreats of the mole and field-mouse, with as much facility as he can glide through the mazy passages opened by mouse and rat in the wheat-stack. It will cross a stream on a hand-rail, or with equal indifference swim over it. Hunger now presses it severely. Woe to the unfortunate rabbit upon whose track it once doggedly fastens! Its quest is never satisfied till its cruel jaws have pierced the poor rabbit's brain. This portion of the animal is invariably devoured first by a weasel. One winter we rescued a sky-lark from one which was evidently very hard pushed for a meal. The creature followed us in the hedge-bottom, and on our placing the lark as we thought in a place of safety, before we had retired two yards the fell little assassin emerged from the hedge, and at once made a rush at the lark. Its first bite was fatal; the poor bird soon died; but we took care that its foe did not dine off it.

Were rabbits the ordinary food of weasels, there would be little doubt that the stock of rabbits, spite of their prolific nature, would soon be greatly diminished, so indefatigable a tracker of them is the weasel.

A familiar sight may often be seen in the flower-garden on a mild sunny noon in January, like a prelude of coming spring. This is a Peacock or Red-Admiral butterfly tempted to a brief flight in the sunshine, from its hibernation in a hollow tree or under the rafters of an outhouse.

Beyond cleaning, pruning, &c., in mild weather, very little work can be done in the garden this month. A few early beans and peas may be sown in the second week, and after them, in ten days, spinach, radishes, and salad herbs. Any bulbs (tulips, narcissus, &c.) that remain unplanted may be put in the ground during the first open weather. Those which are showing above the soil must be protected, if severe frost sets in. All garden walks should be kept dry by sweeping off the snow, and then a great deal of enjoyment may be obtained from the conifers and evergreens, whose dark foliage is never seen to such advantage as when relieved against a background of snow. When snow-laden these trees and shrubs often present beautiful and fantastic forms, which can be studied to advantage from a sheltered gravel walk.



## New Years Receptions.

So many ladies have adopted the method of receiving one day in every week, that it rather interferes with the time-honored observance of the first of January as a reception day. Still it ought to be remembered that in these informal day receptions, ladies mostly participate, gentlemen not having the time to take from their business for matters so unimportant. There is no reason, therefore, why they should interfere with the day set apart solely for the use of gentlemen, nor is it likely that anything but failure on their part to honor it with due formality, will cause its abandonment.

Regularly as the New Year comes round, announcements are made that the first of January has ceased to be regarded a social festival, yet, no sooner has the day actually arrived, than dwellings are swept and garnished, ladies put on their freshest toilettes, set tempting little tables, and receive more callers than ever before.

Still the form has greatly changed within the past twenty years. Tables are no longer elaborately set with substantial viands, but with light refreshments of a simple character. *Bouillon*, coffee, cake, sandwiches, pickled oysters, and glazed fruits, have taken the place of the boned turkeys, the hams, the pies, the chicken, and the tongue of former years. Many ladies, indeed, receive without offering refreshments at all, but this is rather a cheerless way, for, even though it has become quite common for gentlemen to refuse to partake of any, reserving their appetites very sensibly for a regular lunch, or dinner, at the house of some intimate friend, it is still desirable, or at least hospitable, to have something to offer, and serves as an occasional refection not unacceptable to the ladies who are receiving, as they rarely have time for a regular meal, if their circle of acquaintance is large.

The most agreeable way of receiving on New Years day, and one that is becoming very common, is for several ladies to meet together at the house of one, and receive in company. The hostess has her house put in order, more or less decorated with vines, plants, or flowers, and prepares or orders beforehand the delicacies which are to furnish the refreshment-table. A small table is set the previous evening, if necessary—that is, if there are not trained servants to attend to it early in the morning—and upon this are placed plates, spoons, dishes, napkins, and whatever will be required, except the eatables. Of course there are many things which cannot be done until the morning of New Years day; and it is, therefore, necessary for those who have to depend upon themselves, to rise early enough to make their sandwiches, cut and fill their baskets with cake, arrange the fruit, and perform any other necessary duties in addition to the regular breakfast routine, and the important one of dressing for the occasion. All this must be done, and the hostess must be ready to receive her guests by half past ten o'clock at the latest; though it often happens that callers do not begin to put in an appearance before eleven. If the lady visitors are bright, intelligent, and helpful, and especially if one or two of them are musical, the day may pass delightfully, both for the hostess and her guests.

In small establishments, it is a very good way to have a turkey cooked the day before, and this with mince and pumpkin or apple pies, cranberry sauce, celery, and mashed potato, makes a very good dinner, to which a caller may be invited who is sufficiently intimate, if he happens to come in at the right time, and which can be prepared without embarrassing the operations of the staff of domestics, which is usually busily employed in waiting upon the door, and performing other incidental work.

Dress is more a matter of taste upon this occasion than upon almost any other that occurs during the year. Few ladies, however, wear evening dress, and a low neck is in decidedly bad taste. The toilette may be artistic, picturesque, and becoming as can be invented, but it is considered much better for it to present marks of originality and individuality in the wearer, than to be merely costly or elaborate, or pretentious, as a full evening dress in the day time would appear.

## Decorative Novelties.

AN odd, and indeed a childish fancy, it would seem, is the placing glass balls—to which are attached silken strings—in the boudoir and drawing-room or *salle de reception*. These balls which are intended to imitate soap-bubbles—and are so light that they float up or nearly up to the ceiling—are, however, to some extent a source of amusement when a variation of the temperature of the apartment causes them to descend, for, on floating near, they are found to contain little fiends—*diabols*—of paper, cork, or feather, and little dancing figures dressed like Turks and like Russians. A French fancy has improved upon the London idea, which filled the floating glass “air-ball” with little stars of metal and paper flowers.

A very pretty fancy is the imitation, in ware, colored to look like fire-defaced iron, of the antique models for vases, etc. The hue is not unlike bronze, as to the main surface, on which run colors, such as appear on iron when it begins to cool after being exposed to the action of fire. The sides of these vases are formed so as to look as though indented by accident, and the whole affair is a very taking imitation of the antique.

One could not exhaust in many pages the enumeration of the different ways in which the present fancy uses animals, reptiles, and birds in biscuit ware, china ware—so called—porcelain, parian, majolica, and faience. Dolphins, frogs, monkeys, cats, dogs, mice, rats, snakes, insects of almost every description, but especially beetles, and dragon-flies, lions, tigers, elephants, leopards, the tortoise, the alligator, and the lizard, ducks, peacocks, swans, guinea-fowls, and pheasants; all these are used to serve in some way for what may be called *useful* ornamentation. By this is meant that each article has, apart from its beauty or oddity, a use. Each animal, bird, or reptile serves as a receptacle for cigarettes, perfumery, jewels, or cards; the novelty being in the whimsicality of the shape, the ludicrousness of such or such an object being put to such or such a use, or, as when a peacock is made a jewel-case, a certain quaint fitness in its adaptation to the purpose. The utter absurdity of a swan harnessed with ribbon drawing a boat full of cigars; the preposterous notion of a lion's back as a place for depositing cigar ashes; the inimitable nonsensicality of four upright frogs escorting a staggering monkey, whose strength is supposed to desert him, especially as to the knees, under the enormous weight of the jewels in the case upon his back; the risibility of a solemn-faced toad under a palanquin, being fanned by a white mouse, and drawn by four Muscovy ducks—the palanquin being so constructed as to serve for a glove-box—all these define my meaning.

But for beauty, exquisite beauty of design and execution, and of the modern style, a pair of vases lately imported leave far behind anything of like kind that has been seen lately. The surface is gray, and resembles satin in gloss; the ware is exceedingly fine glass—there are many superb novelties in foreign glassware—and the design represents birds of the most brilliant hues perched upon autumn foliage, also of glowing color. But the peculiarity which makes these vases a triumph of art is that, owing to the rounded form of the vases themselves

and the management of the color, both birds and boughs appear to be completely detached from any under surface, and to stand off from the body of the vase, thus giving an effect as to light and position of which description fails to convey an idea. It is really startling. You see the design, and then you see the groundwork, but neither appears to be incorporate with the other. *Touching* is believing.

Some years ago, brass fenders, reaching up so as to cover the whole grate or wood fire, and attached to the sides of the mantel-piece—an excellent precaution, both against children falling into the flames and ladies' dresses catching the same—were introduced here, and, though expensive to a degree, were adopted.

Foreign caprice now demands that the high fender shall be gilt, and some of the very elegant ones are ornamented with a design, fabric on fabric, as, for example, a silver-wire fender on which is a silver-wire design representing a salamander. Another design has three small mirrors set into the body of the fender, apparently to reflect the apartments and furniture. Another, and by far the handsomest, has a design of a vine laden with flowers, and so placed that the fire in the grate seems to form the bright and fantastic blossoms and leaves that creep to the very top. But, of these fenders, the very plainest is still a handsome addition to the furniture of the apartment.



## An Imperial Ball at the Winter Palace, St. Petersburg.

BY MAJOR L. RAMEL.

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THE first Imperial Ball of the season is an event which creates considerable excitement in the aristocratic circles of the Capital of the North, for it is the signal of the opening of a long series of private ones and *soirées dansantes*. It generally takes place in one of the last two weeks of November, and is attended by the *haute noblesse* in force. Tickets are sent by the Chamberlain of the Emperor to the number of 4,500.

It was my good fortune to receive one a few years ago, while on an official visit to the capital, and I gladly availed myself of the privilege of witnessing one of those famous



*réunions*. All gentlemen not included in the military or naval service are to wear a court dress which is so similar to the English one which has been so often described that I will pass it unnoticed. The ladies are also compelled to wear a court dress, which consists of what is called in France *une robe à la Joséphine*, which is simply a very low-necked one which exposes the shoulders, and portions of the breasts almost to the nipples, the dress also has no sleeves, and how the ladies manage to prevent the corsage from falling and exposing the whole of their charms has always been a mystery to me, for the *shoulder straps*, if I may be permitted to call them so, seem very inadequate to the task; however, be that as it may they do not fall, and bachelors are cheated out of the fairest portions of the feminine charms. Barring this peculiar style of dress, the ladies can indulge in all colors of silk or satin, and wear jewels, flounces, laces, etc., *ad libitum*, and I need not say that they make good use of the privilege.

The ball had been fixed for Thursday, the 25th of November, 1875. The winter had already set in earnest, there being not less than forty-five centimeters of snow on the ground, and the thermometer indicated at four o'clock in the afternoon (or rather evening, for it was night already in this latitude), five degrees below zero (centigrade). At seven I entered a sledge, well wrapped up in a pile of furs, and drove down the Nevski Perspekt, a magnificent avenue, the finest in the world, then turning to the right after passing the grand and beautiful pile known as the *État Major*, following along the Admiralty Square to the southeast corner of the Admiralty Palace, you turn to the left and follow an avenue which separates the Admiralty from the Winter Palace, thence to the quay along the left bank of the Neva. It may not be amiss before conducting my readers into the interior of this noble palace, to give a brief account of it.

The Winter Palace, the residence of the emperor and his court during winter, stands on the left bank of the Neva, on the site of a house which in the reign of Peter the Great, belonged to his High Admiral Count Apraxin, who bequeathed it to Peter II. The Empress Anne after being crowned at Moscow, took up her residence in Apraxin's house, but had it pulled down in 1754, and rebuilt by Count Rastrelli by whom it was completed in 1762, in the reign of the Empress Catherine. A fire which is supposed to have originated from a defective flue, consumed the whole interior of the palace in 1837, notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts made to save it. But it rose phoenix-like from its ashes more glorious than ever, and in January, 1840, the first grand ball was held in the present palace.

The huge pile is now some 470 feet long and 350 wide, and is four stories high.

The principal entrance, or *Perron des Ambassadeurs*, is from the quay that lies between the palace and the Neva, while a noble gateway in the center of the southern façade and directly in front of Alexander's Column, leads into the great court. Early as it was when I reached the palace, the approaches were already well filled with strings of sledges. A regiment of the Guard was drawn up in

front of the palace and several squadrons of dragoons occupied the Place de l'État Major. My *isvoschick* having driven his sledge to the main entrance, I alighted, and my servant led the way to the vestibule, where the invited guests present their cards of admission, and are then conducted to a large cloak-room, where the wrappers are taken off and checked.

That done, a servant in blue and gold livery conducts you to the foot of the Grand Stairs, a magnificent flight of marble steps that lead to the state apartments; at the head of which stands the famous Winter Garden, a magnificent conservatory, 120x75 and 60 feet high; here are tall palms, and a host of exotic plants. The whole is lighted by means of colored lamps hung in the branches of the trees, which gives the appearance of an enchanted palace. The light is soft and subdued and resembles a bright moonlight more than anything else.

Here young cavaliers and coy maidens come and rest among the charming nooks scattered through the intricate mazes of this artificial garden. Here and there one meets with pretty little fountains whose basins are alive with gold fishes.

Having passed along the side alley of the garden, you enter the White Hall, a magnificent room in white and gold; next comes the Gallery of the Field Marshals, hung with the portraits of those who fought against the great Napoleon, that of the Iron Duke occupying the upper end; from thence you are conducted to Saint George's Hall, the largest and most magnificent of the series, some forty in number. It is 140x80 and 45 feet high. The ceiling, which is divided into compartments beautifully frescoed, is supported by a triple row of magnificent white marble Corinthian columns. Here I found a large crowd already assembled, and a couple of friends who initiated me.

It being but little after eight, I had plenty of time to look around before falling into line to receive their majesties. This noble hall is hung with paintings representing the most important battles fought on land and sea, from the battle of Poltawa, 1709, to that of Kersk, 1855; victories as well as defeats, for Inkerman, Alma, and Balaklava stand side by side with Leipzig and the passage of the Berezina; but the most striking feature of this enchanting hall, is the bouquets of wax candles which encircle the marble columns, for which purpose over four thousand wax lights are used. The art of illuminating at night is nowhere so artistically done as in Russia, where candles are still happily preferred to gas; which latter every lady knows, does not produce that charming electric fire on jewels, or that lovely and soft tint to the complexion.

The guests continued to pour in. It was a fascinating scene to the stranger to see the charming dresses of the ladies in every imaginable color fitting past you with a musical rustle. To see the beautiful forms, so lithe and graceful, of the young ones, and the stately and majestic airs of the matrons, and the simperings of the dowagers.

"Who is that Juno?" we ask of our friend, as a lovely girl with raven black hair and sparkling eyes passes by us.

"That," replied he, "is the Countess Rumianzoff, and that young one yonder who is talking with that young captain of engineers, is the daughter of Count Paskevitch; she is worth two Rumianzoffs. Come, I will introduce you."

So saying, we crossed over and I was duly introduced. He had told the truth, for she was a Venus. Tall, lithe, and graceful, there was an innate nobility in the carriage of the girl's head, an innate grandeur in the gaze of her large black eyes, and in the lines of her finely proportioned head, which was of the purest Greek mold, that made her irresistibly striking and beautiful. She wore a Joséphine dress of two shades of moss-green silk and *crêpe de chine*, the skirt of the dress of lightest shade, with drapery and corsage of *crêpe de chine*. The neck was cut in the orthodox square shape, exposing her beautiful bosom to the nipples of her breasts, trimmed with an inner tucker of lace (*point d'Angoulême*). Her train was about eighteen inches long, and as she walked across the hall, swept with a majestic curve.

"I believe," said she, "that I have seen your portrait at Count Uruski's. Do you know him?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Then I am right; but, pray, is this your first visit here?" she asked.

"Yes, mademoiselle," I answered.

"Then I will show you the rules which our dear Tzarina Catherine laid down."

So she made a movement to cross the hall, and I, of course, offered her my arm. We went into the hall of Peter the Great, which contains a fine picture representing le Grand Monarque attended by the Genius of Russia, and thence into the Romanoff Gallery, which is richly frescoed and which contains the portraits of the reigning house since Michael Fedorowitch, and those of their consorts. At the upper end on the right and alongside the door which leads into the Neva Gallery is a white Carrara marble tablet which contains the following rules in letters of gold, and in French:

- "1. Leave your rank outside, as well as your hat, especially your sword.
- "2. Leave your right of precedence, your pride, and any similar feeling outside the door.
- "3. Be gay, but do not spoil anything, do not break or gnaw anything.
- "4. Sit, stand, dance or walk as you will, without reference to anybody, not excepting the Tzarina.
- "5. Talk moderately and not very loud, so as not to make the ears ache.
- "6. Argue without anger and without excitement.
- "7. Neither sigh nor yawn, nor make anybody dull or heavy.
- "8. In all innocent games, whatever one proposes, let all join.
- "9. Do not preach the gospel here, nor give lectures on morality.
- "10. Eat whatever is sweet and savory, but

drink with moderation so that each may find his or her legs on leaving.

"11. Tell no tales out of school, whatever goes in at one ear must go out at the other before leaving.

"12. Make love, dance and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

"A transgressor against these rules shall on the testimony of two witnesses, for every offence drink a glass of *cold water* not excepting the ladies, and further read a page of the *Telemachiade*\* aloud. Whoever breaks any three of these rules during the same evening shall commit six lines of the *Telemachiade* to memory. And whoever offends against the eleventh rule shall not again be admitted."

"What do you think of them?" asked Mademoiselle Paskevitch. I had no time to answer when Prince Dalgouski, the son of the late Minister of War, and the friend of Irving tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Allow me my dear Major to congratulate you." "What for?" I asked. "Oh! hear him, Mademoiselle," said he with a smile, and then to me, "Why, Major, for your good fortune in making the conquest of Mademoiselle."

"How do you know, Prince, that Major Ramel has made a conquest of me?" said she with an arch smile.

"Never mind how I know it, but come, *ma chère demoiselle*, what were you trying to do with my friend; give him a lesson of etiquette?"

"Yes, Prince," I replied, "Mademoiselle was kind enough to do so."

"Well, I intended to do so myself, and was hunting for you when I met you, but as I see that you have found a more able and agreeable teacher than I, I will leave you in her charge." By this time the band began to play a march and Mademoiselle Paskevitch said that it was time for us to fall in line to await the entrance of their majesties. So we returned to St. George's Hall and found a large and gay company already taking their respective places. "I shall leave you now, Major," said my fair cicerone, "as I have to take my place, but will be happy and I know father will too, to see you again. You can meet us in the Alexander Hall near the battle of Kulm." So kissing her proffered hand, I left and started toward the quarters assigned to the officers of the Corps des Mines. I had no difficulty in finding the place for Prince Dalgouski had very kindly sent me the Court-Manual together with my *billet d'entrée*. The guests generally form into a double line two deep from the door leading into the grand corridor which separates the private apartments of their majesties from the state ones; and reaches according to the number present up to the Winter Garden and sometimes far into it. The first group nearest the door consists (see plan) of the Diplomatic Corps, including the ladies and foreign visitors, the Ambassador of France occupying the post of honor, that is the nearest the door on the right, while directly opposite is the British Ambassador, next the French are the Prussian, Italian, and American ambassadors, and next the British, the Austrian, Turkish, and so on. Then

\* By Tretiakofsky, an unfortunate native poet whose muse was thus reviled.

come the princes, and a host of them there are; then the army and navy officers, counts, barons, and officers of the various departments, the officers and members of the Academy of Sciences, and others. One would expect that such a crowd would be unmanageable, but, on the contrary, in fifteen minutes each was in his appointed place. It was a grand and fascinating sight, this array of glittering uniforms, rich dresses, beautiful forms, and dazzling jewels. But hark! the imperial band strikes up the national hymn, the emperor is coming, every face is turned toward the door, and presently it is opened with great ceremony, and the Grand Master of the Household enters, staff in hand, followed by a retinue, then comes a pause, and the tall and majestic form of the Autocrat of the North appears in the doorway. He is dressed in the uniform of a general of the Guard, and the solitary star of St. Andrew shines on his broad chest. On his arm leans a noble-looking lady of perhaps forty (she looks only that, but is, I believe, forty-seven), dressed in a lovely white satin, with drapery and waist of blue satin of the lightest shade, the lower skirt trimmed with lace ruffles, headed with a band of embroidered satin, in gay colors. The overdress and corsage is trimmed with a single ruffle to correspond. The neck is cut low, in the orthodox fashion, but does not expose more than one-third of the two breasts, and, at the apex of the *échanerure*, between the breasts, she wears a magnificent brooch of huge diamonds, in the shape of a star. The dress is fastened in front with diamond buttons, and the overdress is looped up, on the left side, with a magnificent diamond pin. Her hair was dressed in curls and loose loops with flowers (roses and camelias) between, the whole surmounted with a noble diadem. She looked every inch a queen, and, as she made her appearance, a murmur of applause greeted her. She and the emperor bowed gracefully to the French Ambassador, and, saying a few words, repeated the same to the others; then they walked the entire length of the double line, returning on the other side of the hall, the band, in the meantime, playing national airs. This ceremony ended, the Imperial Guard band struck up Strauss's beautiful piece, "L'Invitation à la Valse," and couples began to form, the emperor taking for partner Lady Elphinstone, a young and lovely countess, and a relation of the British Ambassador. The sets being formed the emperor opened the ball by dancing with his fair partner "La Varsoivienne," followed by the empress with the French Ambassador, and the grand duke with Mademoiselle Von Manteuffe, the daughter of Marshal Count Von Manteuffe, the hero of Amiens, and the grand duchess with Count Grachioli. Next followed Gounod's "Marche Romaine," in E flat, and next Beethoven's beautiful waltz, "Le Rêve de Gertrude," in B flat, after which groups began to form in the various halls. Tables had been set in the *Salon de Réserve*, where the elderly gentlemen sat down to a game of whist or *écarte*, while the hall of Peter the Great was reserved for the matrons and dowagers. The young ones of both sexes who did not choose to dance made for the Winter Garden, and there, amidst the luxuriant ex-

otics and in the soft twilight, told to each other the old, old story. There was no formality, no pride or haughtiness—all were equal. The young lieutenant of artillery elbowed a mighty prince, and the daughter of the academicien the grand duchess herself. The emperor went from group to group, and talked pleasantly to all, and joined in the hilarity, while the lovely empress and the grand duchess fitted from one hall to the other, talking, smiling, and nodding to every one. What a contrast with the stiff and formal balls at Buckingham Palace or Windsor! There one must always be on the look out not to turn his back to the queen, for it would be an unpardonable sin to do so, and no one dares to presume to address that haughty personage, lest he might get kicked out by some flunkey in red and gold. But here, at the Winter Palace, the emperor and empress, and the grand dukes, can be addressed by any one, and they do not care or notice whether one turns his back to them or not. After the opening waltz I went to meet my fair friend and found her, and she introduced me to her father, who was at that moment talking to General Kauffman. The count was very civil, and, in his turn, introduced me to General Kauffman. "Oh," said he, "I believe I have heard of you, Major. Are you not the author of that monograph on the geology of the Province of Daghestan?" I told him I was. "Then," said he, "I knew your father. I served under him as lieutenant when he built the bridge at Tulla. I am happy to meet you." But the band was beginning to sound the invitation to "Gertrude's Dream," so I asked the honor of dancing it with Mademoiselle Paskevitch, which she graciously granted. As we went back to St. George's Hall, she asked me, "Do you see that old gentleman near the sea fight at Revel? That is Prince Demidoff, and that general who speaks to him is General Ignatieff." "Who is that lovely lady by the caryatide yonder?" I asked. She smiled and said, "Oh, she is a friend of Edhem Pasha, a bearish looking Turk." We soon reached St. George's Hall, and were soon whirling around. The waltz over, I conducted her to a seat, and we were soon joined by a young nobleman, who came to claim her for the next. "You must excuse me, Major," said she; "but I promised to dance the next with Count —; but I will find you a partner." So saying, she left me with the Count, and then returned with a friend of hers, Mademoiselle Orloff, to whom she introduced me. We had just seated ourselves, and were drinking a sherbet, when the emperor passed, and stopped. "Ah! Mademoiselles," said he, "you seem to be enjoying yourselves." And then turning to me, who had risen, "Pray sit down, sir. I see you are a stranger here," and pointing to the Cross of the Legion of Honor on my breast, "and a Frenchman, too." "Your majesty must forgive me," said my fair friend, "for neglecting to present Major R. to you." "No apologies to me," said his majesty; "but you owe one to the Major."

He smiled and bowed, and went to the next group. The next dance on the programme was a polka mazurka, and I led my new partner on the floor. We danced as freely as in

a private hall, and constantly elbowed some great gun. At twelve, supper was served in St. Andrew's and St. Michael's Halls. In the former were laid out *parterres* of delightful verdure, and exotics, and fruit trees, while a double row of tables extended down the hall, each overshadowed by a beautiful tree in full leaf, under which the ladies and their dutiful knights, in groups of eight, partook of an elegant supper. The table services were of sterling silver, and of the most exquisite designs. At the upper end, raised on a dais, stood the imperial table, which commanded the whole view. Champagne and other wines were served *ad libitum*, and justice was done to them by all. After supper the "Mazepa Galop" in E flat, by André Quidant, was started, in which all joined, then Gottschalk's "Rayon d'Azur Polka" in F sharp, and next, Wehli's "Marche Cosaque" in B flat, after which their majesties retired, and dancing flagged for a while, the young ladies and cavaliers preferring a ramble in the Winter Garden, or a *tête-à-tête* in some window recess. But toward three, it recommenced with vigor, and was kept up till five.

It would require a volume to do justice to this charming *soirée*, and a dozen to describe the various elegant toilets of the ladies. I have seen balls at the Tuileries during the empire; balls at Buckingham Palace, in the salons of Prince Metternich, at Vienna, and in Devonshire House, but the Grand Imperial Ball of the Winter Palace beats them all, not only in the richness and gorgeous appointments of the halls, but in the wonderful display of feminine beauty. Nowhere have I seen such an immense number of lovely faces and graceful forms assembled, and for richness and beauty of dresses, and grand display of noble jewels, it stands *ne plus ultra*. During the whole night, two regiments of the Imperial Guards are on duty in the adjoining halls, and their martial bearing and fine discipline attract the attention and command the admiration of all who are *connoisseurs* in military affairs. By half-past four, people began to leave, and long lines of sledges moved up to the *Perron des Ambassadeurs* as their respective numbers were called out by an imperial crier. Having danced the last two polkas with my fair young friends, I followed the crowd, and went down stairs, escorting them to the ladies' dressing-room, from which they soon emerged wrapped up in furs to the nose. I would surely not have recognized them if they had not called me, and we got into the count's huge sledge, and drove to his magnificent palace on the Nevski Perspekt, where he insisted on my coming in to "warm up," as he said. This kind hospitality to strangers is one of the admirable traits of all Russian noble families. They seem to take delight to make a stranger feel at home, and will suffer considerable inconvenience and loss of time to show him around. I have found the same warm-hearted hospitality in all classes: the middle, and even the poor and humble peasant will put the best of his humble and scanty fare on the table, and will give him the best bed and best room, if he has it.

Thus ended the most fascinating and brilliant *soirée* that I ever attended.

PLAN OF ST. GEORGE'S HALL, WINTER PALACE, showing the stations of the various Ambassadors, Nobles, Military and Naval Officers and others, while in line during the progress of their Majesties. From the *Imperial Court Manual*.

Scale 14½ feet to the inch.



EXPLANATIONS.

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 French Ambassador.       | 21 Artillery Officers.        |
| 2 British " "              | 22 Infantry " "               |
| 3 Prussian " "             | 23 " " "                      |
| 4 Austrian " "             | 24 Cavalry " "                |
| 5 Italian " "              | 25 Engineer Corps.            |
| 6 Turkish " "              | 26 Naval Officers.            |
| 7 American " "             | 27 " " "                      |
| 8 Spanish " "              | 28 Judges of Imp. Courts.     |
| 9 Swedish " "              | 29 Counts.                    |
| 10 Portuguese " "          | 30 " " "                      |
| 11 Dutch " "               | 31 " " "                      |
| 12 Belgian " "             | 32 Barons.                    |
| 13 Danish " "              | 33 Academy of Science.        |
| 14 Swiss Chargé d'Affairs. | 34 " of Belles Lettres.       |
| 15 Princes.                | 35 Corps des Mines.           |
| 16 " " "                   | 36 " des Pontet Chaussées.    |
| 17 Ministry of Foreign " " | 37 Ecole de Médecine.         |
| 18 " " War.                | 38 Imperial University.       |
| 19 " " the Navy.           | 39 Members of the Bar.        |
| 20 " " Interior.           | 40 Plebeians and ragamuffins. |

- A Door by which the Emperor enters.  
 B " opening on Corridor.  
 C " by which the Emperor leaves.  
 D " " he re-enters St. George's Hall.



New Years' Receptions.

(Large Spread.)

- SANDWICHES.  
 (Chicken, Ham, and Tongue.)  
 BONED TURKEY. PICKLED OYSTERS.  
 SARDINES.  
 CHICKEN SALAD. LOBSTER SALAD.  
 FRUIT.  
 (Apples, Oranges, Grapes, Figs, Nectarines.)  
 ICE CREAM. CHARLOTTE RUSSE.  
 CAKE.  
 (Assorted.)  
 MOTTOES. CONFECTIONERY.  
 JELLIES.  
 NUTS AND RAISINS. COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE.  
 LEMONADE.

NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION.

- SANDWICHES.  
 (Tongue or Ham.)  
 SLICED MEATS. SARDINES.  
 CHICKEN SALAD. PICKLED OYSTERS.  
 FRUIT.  
 (Apples, Oranges, and white Grapes.)  
 MOTTOES. NUTS AND RAISINS.  
 CAKE.  
 CONFECTIONERY. ASSORTED CAKES.  
 COFFEE AND LEMONADE.

Salads are garnished with egg-rings, olives, and celery hearts.

Sliced meats with parsley.  
 Sardines with parsley and sliced lemon.

**SMALL SUPPER (for party.)**

**SANDWICHES.**  
**PICKLED OYSTERS.** **SARDINES.**  
**CHICKEN SALAD.**  
**HAM, TONGUE, AND CHICKEN SLICED,** for side dishes.  
**ICE CREAM.**  
**ASSORTED CAKE.** **MOTTOES.**  
**NUTS AND RAISINS.** **CONFECTIONERY.**  
**CHARLOTTE RUSSE.**  
**FRUIT.**  
**COFFEE.** **LEMONADE.**

**SUPPER (for large party.)**

**OYSTERS.**  
 (Raw, Pickled, Fried, and Stewed.)  
**CHICKEN SALAD.** **LOBSTER SALAD.**  
**SANDWICHES.**  
 (Chicken, Ham, and Tongue.)  
**SARDINES.** **CHICKEN CROQUETTES.**  
**SLICED HAM, TONGUE, AND CHICKEN.**  
**LOBSTER PATTIES.** **OYSTER PATTIES.**  
**JELLY.**  
**CHARLOTTE RUSSE.** **BLANC MANGE.**  
**ICE CREAM.**  
**COMPOTES OF FRUIT.** **WATER ICES.**  
**DISH OF FRUIT.**  
 (Oranges and Grapes.)  
**NUTS AND CONFECTIONERY.** **COFFEE.**  
**LEMONADE.**

**Chicken Croquettes.**—Mince very fine some cold chicken, put it in a pan with a little stock, a table-spoonful of cream, a little salt and nutmeg, and the right thickness of flour. Let it boil well, then pour it in a deep dish, and put it aside to get cold. Divide it into parts, form them into small balls or cylinders; roll each in fine bread crumbs, then egg over with the yolk of egg beaten. Roll again in bread crumbs and fry not too brown. Serve ornamented with parsley.

**Lobster Patties.**—Line the patty pans with puff paste, and put into each a small piece of bread. Cover with paste, brush over with egg, and bake of a light color. Make as much minced lobster as is required, and add six drops of anchovy sauce, lemon juice, and cayenne to taste. Stir it over the fire for five minutes, remove the lids of the patty cases, take out the bread, fill with the mixture, and replace the covers.

**Oyster Patties.**—Scald two dozen oysters in their own liquor, beard them, and cut each one in three pieces. Put two ounces of butter in a stew pan, dredge in sufficient flour to dry it up. Add the strained oyster liquor with the other ingredients. Put in the oysters, and let them heat gradually but not boil. Make the patty cases as directed for lobster patties. Fill with the oyster mixture and replace the covers.

**Chicken Salad.**—Cut cold boiled chicken in bits about the size of a shelled almond. Have twice as much celery as chicken, clean it thoroughly and leave it in ice-water for an hour or more. On taking it out, wipe, and cut it about as thin as cucumbers are sliced. Mix it well with the chicken. Cover with mayonnaise and garnish with lettuce leaves, egg-rings, beet-stars and olives.

**Mayonnaise:** One table-spoonful of dry mustard, two even tea-spoons of salt, a small pinch of cayenne, half a gill of vinegar, half a pint of sweet oil, one raw egg. Mix the mustard, salt and pepper with one and a half tea-spoonful of vinegar in a large bowl, add the egg and beat well. Pour in the oil, in a continuous thread-like stream, keeping up a brisk beating. When well beaten and like a thick batter, add a gill of vinegar slowly.

**Lobster Salad.**—Pick the meat from the shell, cut into nice square pieces, cut up some lettuce and mix together. Make a dressing of four table-spoonfuls

of oil, two of vinegar, one of mustard, the yolks of two eggs, and cayenne and salt to taste. Rub smooth together, forming a creamy-looking sauce, and cover the lobster with it. Garnish with sliced cucumber pickle, egg-rings, parsley and cold beet cut in fancy shapes.

**Pickled Oysters.**—Place the oysters in a saucepan, let them simmer in their own liquor for about ten minutes very gently. Take them out one by one, place them in a jar, cover them, and when cold add a pickle made as follows:

Measure the oyster liquor. Add to it the same quantity of vinegar, one blade of pounded mace, one strip of lemon peel, and cloves, and boil five minutes. When cold pour over the oysters and tie them down very closely.

**Macaroons.**—The whites of three eggs beaten to a stiff froth, add half a pound of desiccated cocconut, half a pound of rolled and sifted cocoa, and an even tea-spoonful of extract of bitter almond. Drop them upon a greased paper, in a dripping pan, and bake a light brown.

**Geneva Kisses.**—Beat the whites of four eggs until perfectly stiff, then stir in very gently nine ounces of granulated sugar. Have ready a board about an inch thick, and about the size of a dripping-pan, cover the top with paper; then, with a table-spoon, put on the board portions of the white of egg and sugar, the shape you desire; place them in a slightly heated oven, and when a light brown cover them with paper. They require to be in the oven an hour, or until quite hard to the touch. Take them off with a knife, putting them together in pairs. A little vanilla flavoring is an improvement.

**Walnut Wafers.**—Half a pint of brown sugar, half a pint of walnuts, taken from the shells, three even table-spoonfuls of flour, one third of a tea-spoon of salt, and two eggs. Beat the eggs, add the sugar, salt, and flour, then the walnuts. Drop the mixture on buttered paper, and bake till brown.

**New Year's Cake.**—Three and a quarter pounds of flour, one of butter, half a pound of sugar, one pint of milk, two tea-spoons of cream of tartar, one of soda and caraway seeds.

**Plum Cake.**—Take two cups of sugar, one of butter, one cup of milk, one tea-spoonful of saleratus, a tea-spoonful of essence of lemon, and sufficient flour to make a stiff batter. Beat this well together, add half a pound of chopped and stoned raisins, half a pound of currants, washed and dried by the fire, and one quarter of citron, and bake in a brisk oven.

**Hickory Nut Cake.**—One pound of flour, one pound of sugar, three quarters of a pound of butter, six eggs, two tea-spoonfuls of cream of tartar, one of soda, and half a cupful of sweet milk. Beat the cake thoroughly, and then stir in a small measure of hickory nut kernels, bake in a steady oven.

**White Cake.**—Four ounces of butter, three gills of milk, one and a half pints flour, one pint of sugar, one and half tea-spoonfuls of cream of tartar, three quarters of a tea-spoonful of soda, two eggs, the whites whisked to a stiff froth, bitter almonds to the taste. Beat the butter and sugar together, add the yolks and beat until very light, then stir in the milk, in which the soda is dissolved, the flour with which the cream of tartar is sifted and the whites of the eggs, alternately. Add the almonds and bake in paper-lined pans.

**Mountain Cake.**—Four ounces of butter, one gill of corn-starch, one gill of sweet milk, three gills of fine sugar, three gills of flour, one tea-spoonful of cream of tartar, sifted with the flour, half a tea-spoonful of soda dissolved in the milk, one tea-spoonful of vanilla, and the whites of five eggs.

Cream the butter, add the sugar, milk, and corn-starch, and the whites, beaten stiff, alternately with

the flour, lastly the vanilla. Use a thick custard between the cakes and a white or chocolate icing over the loaf.

**Jelly Cake.**—Make "Drop-Cake" as follows:—Take one pound of flour, lacking three even table-spoonfuls; one pound of sugar, quarter of a pound of butter, two gills of sweet milk, one and a half table-spoonfuls of baking powder, and five eggs.

Mix the baking powder and flour thoroughly together. Cream the butter, and add the sugar with enough of the milk to make them mix easily. Add the yolks of the eggs, and beat well, then add, alternately, the milk, the beaten whites of the eggs and the flour. Butter the jelly-cake pan, drop the batter in one-fourth of an inch thick. Put them in the oven and watch closely. They should bake in a very few minutes. Put jelly between the cakes, and cover the top with plain icing.

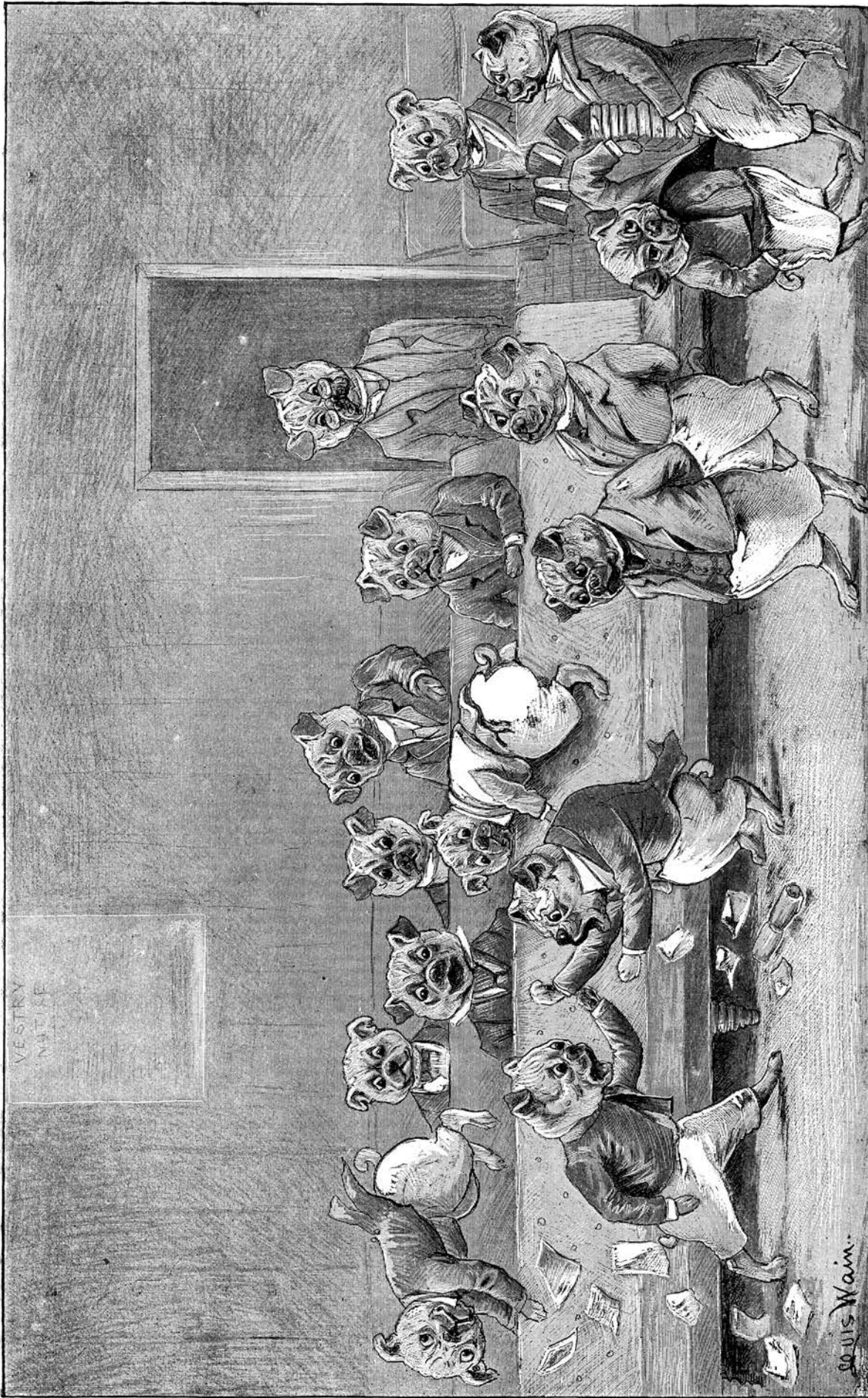
**Compote of Oranges.**—Peel six oranges, remove as much of the white pith as possible, and divide them into small pieces, without breaking the thin skin with which they are surrounded. Make a syrup as follows: to every pound of sugar allow a pint and a half of water. Boil the sugar and water together with the rind of an orange cut into thin strips. Carefully remove the scum as it rises. When the syrup has been well skimmed, and is quite clear, put in the pieces of orange, and simmer them for five minutes. Take them out carefully with a spoon, without breaking them, and arrange them on a glass dish. Reduce the syrup by boiling it quickly until thick. Let it cool a little, pour it over the oranges and when cold it will be ready for table.

**Charlotte Russe.**—Cover an ounce of isinglass with cold water, place a weight upon it to prevent its floating, and soak two hours. Line molds with thin strips of sponge cake, sticking the edges together with white of egg. Scald one pint of milk over boiling water, beat the yolks of four eggs, and add six ounces of sugar, pour the hot milk on them; take the isinglass from the water, lay it in the hot custard, then stir the whole over the boiling water until a little thickened, and put aside to cool. Whip one quart of cream in a deep bowl and lay the froth on the shallow side of the sieve. Return to the bowl the cream that has drained through the sieve and whip as much of it as possible. What cannot be whipped may be added to the custard.

When the custard is cool and quite thick, beat it very thoroughly with the whipped cream, then pour it in molds and place on the ice.

**Boned Turkey.**—After the turkey has been drawn and singed, wipe it inside and out with a clean cloth, but do not wash it. Take off the head, cut through the skin all around the first joint of the legs and pull them from the fowl to draw out the large tendons. Raise the flesh first from the lower part of the backbone, and a little also from the end of the breast bone, if necessary. Work the knife gradually into the socket of the thigh. With the point of the knife detach the joint from it, take the end of the bone firmly in the fingers and cut the flesh clean from it down to the next joint, round which pass the point of the knife carefully, and when the skin is loosened from it in every part cut round the next bone, keeping the edge of the knife close to it, until the whole of the leg is done. Remove the bones of the other leg in the same manner. Then detach the flesh from the back and breast bone sufficiently to enable you to reach the upper joints of the wings. Proceed with these as with the legs, but be careful not to pierce the skin of the second joint. The merry thought and neck bones may now be cut away, the back and side bones taken out without being divided, and the breast bone carefully separated from the flesh. After the one remaining bone is removed turn the fowl right side outwards and fill with forcemeat.

The Strand, 1892



A VESTRY MEETING.



## AN HOUR BY SEVEN DIALS.



SEVEN DIALS has almost achieved a respectability of squalor. For so long past has its name been associated in our minds with all the worst vices of lower London life—with overcrowding, dirt, disease, drunkenness, poverty, and crime—that it seems to be entitled to a feeling of veneration on account of its extremely long service in the cause of pauperism. It is such a very hoary-headed

sinner. Most Londoners know its grimy main thoroughfare well, and country visitors shun it, or pass through it with ill-concealed trepidation. Rural clergymen steering southward from Oxford Street to the Strand find themselves wandering in its unsavoury ramifications, and then, seeking the assistance of the law—as represented on the spot, in a blue coat and a helmet—escape from the neighbourhood, and are inclined to regard themselves as somewhat of adventurers: as, indeed, they are to some extent; for “The Dials,” as its population term it, contains some highly irregular characters. Ever since the reign of King William IV. it has been inhabited by the dregs of the London population—the lawless, the drunken, and the immoral.

But they are not always fighting. There has been a disposition amongst some writers on this and similar neighbourhoods to keep up an idea that the inhabitants are always tearing one another to pieces, and a treatise on Seven Dials has never been complete without its pair of viragoes, with clenched fists and streaming hair. We think the public have been rather overdosed with these illustrations of the bellicose nature of the Seven-Diallers. It cannot be denied, indeed, that they have a habit of carrying their domestic differences into the streets for settlement, and that logic is less relied on than bad language. But the police are never very far off, and, abandoned and reckless as some ladies of the

Dials may be, they do not relish a night in the police-station. Fights are, on the whole, exceptional, and arise from public-house influence, and a disinclination to confine domestic troubles to the family circle—a difficult thing when that circle is restricted to the use of one room. When persons who quarrel cannot get away from one another—cannot go and sulk in different parts of the house—it is very apt, indeed, to lead to consequences we deplore.

The chief articles of commerce dealt in by “The Dials” are ballads and birds. For the first-named it has been famous for many a long year. Here were manufactured the “last dying speeches and confessions” of all the unfortunate criminals whose names swell the annals of the Newgate Calendar. Look at this dirty little shop, with its mud-spattered window full of roughly-printed old-fashioned ballads of “The Farmer’s Boy” and “The Bailiff’s Daughter,” topical catchpenny songs upon great lawsuits or social scandals, dismal accounts of great disasters at sea, which are readily bought and then howled dismally in the streets, as you, my London reader, have doubtless heard them, and wondered where and how the rhymes were strung together. Listen to this account of himself by one of the local poets: “The little knowledge that I have, I have picked up bit by bit, so that I hardly know how I have come by it. I certainly knew my letters before I left home, and I have got the rest off the dead walls and out of the ballads and papers I have been selling. I write most of the Newgate ballads now for the printers in ‘The Dials,’ and, indeed, anything that turns up. I get a shilling for a copy of verses written by the wretched culprit the night before his execution. I wrote Courvoisier’s sorrowful lamentation. I called it ‘A Voice from the Gaol.’ I did the elegy, too, on Rush’s execution; it was supposed, like the rest, to be written by the culprit himself, and was particularly penitent. I didn’t write that to order, but I knew they would want a copy of verses from the culprit. A man read it over and said, ‘That’s the thing for the street public.’ I only got a shilling for Rush. Indeed, they are all the same price, no matter how popular they may be. I wrote ‘The Life of Manning,’ in verse. Besides these, I have written ‘The Lament of Calcraft, the Hangman, on the Decline of his Trade,’ and many political songs.”

Although the trade in birds hardly seems so exten-

sive as it used to be, one has only to walk through the central thoroughfare and look to the right and left, to see what a number of feathered songsters are imprisoned in this grimy neighbourhood. It is one of the remaining scandals to the metropolis that such a large trade on Sunday morning is done here. Any Sabbath day, about eleven or twelve o'clock, the streets are as full as if a fair was going on. Crowds of mechanics, costermongers, labourers, and "roughs" loiter and lounge about the pavement, while vendors of penny ices, penny tarts, penny combs, penny watch-chains, penny toys, and many other articles which that puissant coin the penny commands, endeavour to cultivate a trade in the roadway. Amongst other odd things, a brisk trade is being done in penny glasses of sarsaparilla, working men in numbers swallowing the frothy black mixture as an enterprising herbalist draws it from an engine in his shop. The bird-shops are all open and in full swing. Above the noise of footsteps and voices, the constant "click-click-click-click" of the unfortunate little prisoners of the cage is heard, as they hop unceasingly from perch to floor, and from floor to perch. "Sixpence a cock lark," cry the dealers, "ninepence a cock linnet, and a shillin' a cock goldfinch!" while pigeons, cockatoos, parrots, and poultry appeal in turn to the taste of the intending purchaser.

But where do all the little birds come from? You doubtless have met, reader, in one of your suburban walks, a couple, or perhaps a bevy, of somewhat ill-conditioned fellows clad in inconsistent garments, and carrying in their hands little square parcels, tied up in perhaps an old check pocket-handkerchief. You may have caught sight, too, of a stuffed goldfinch or linnet protruding from the pocket or parcel of one of the party. The behaviour of these persons is (unless they are very drunk or very tired) rather "rowdy," and their conversation, if you should chance unfortunately to overhear any, is anything but select. These are the merchants who supply Seven Dials with its staple article of commerce; these are the bird-catchers by whose devices the little warblers of our woods and gardens are captured and transported from freedom and their native home to captivity and St. Giles': for which we cannot help thinking the public, which keeps up the demand for these little prisoners, is in some measure responsible; for if no one bought them there would be no inducement to the populace of Seven Dials to leave their beds and sally forth on a Sunday morning to ensnare their feathered victims, and bring them to this grimy neighbourhood—fit only for human beings to breathe. But we are getting sentimental. Ahem! "Sixpence a cock lark, ninepence a cock linnet, and a shillin' a cock goldfinch!"

And this place was once a village near London—St. Giles'-in-the-Fields is its parish church called to this day. There was a time, in its very earliest days—that is, nearly 200 years ago—when Seven Dials had a decidedly respectable character, but it possessed, unfortunately, a sort of halfway house between Newgate and Tyburn Tree, and here the wretched felons condemned to public execution used to stop and be presented with a bowl of ale. This custom was the

beginning of the fall of St. Giles', for it gave the neighbourhood a stigma and a taint from which it may date the decline of its respectability. Previously, the stern Puritans of Cromwell's time had looked most strictly to the morals of the place, and inflicted fines—and got them, too, as the parish register testifies—for offences, which if paid for now in the same way, would go far to relieve the anxieties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Look on this picture of the times:

"1641. Received of the Vintner at the Catt in Queene Street, for permitting of tippling on the Lord's Day, £1 10s.

"1645. Received of John Seagood, Constable, which he had of a Frenchman for swearing three oathes, 3s.

"1645. Received of Mrs. Thunder, by the hands of Francis Potter, for her being drunk and swearing seven oathes, 12s.

"1646. Received of four men, travelling on a fast-day, 1s.

"1646. Received of Mr. Wetherill, head-borough, which he had of one for an oathe, 3s. 4d.

"1652. Received of Mr. Huxley and Mr. Morris, who were riding out of town in sermon-time on a fast-day, 11s."

The "Vintners" nowadays, who "permit tippling on the Lord's Day," are in much less danger, we are afraid, than in 1641. Mr. John Seagood's toll of a shilling an oath if now enforced would fill the parish coffers to overflowing, while as to Mr. Wetherill's penalty of 3s. 4d. for the same peccadillo, it would necessitate the largest and most reliable security for Mr. W. as collector. And what shall we say of the two gentlemen who were caught riding out of town on a fast-day? There were no excursion-trains in those days, or what harvests of fines would have been gathered!

In spite of these vigorous efforts to reform Seven Dials, it kept its head obstinately turned in the direction of gin and squalor. The Doric column with the dial-stone, from which the district took its name, was set up in 1694, and is thus spoken of by Gay—

"Where famed St. Giles' ancient limits spread,  
An inrailed column rears its lofty head,  
Here to seven streets seven dials count their day,  
And from each other catch the circling ray;  
Here oft the peasant, with inquiring face,  
Bewildered, trudges on from place to place.  
He dwells on every sign with stupid gaze,  
Enters the narrow alley's doubtful maze,  
Tries every winding court and street in vain,  
And doubles o'er his weary steps again."

A very good authority, however, declares that there never were seven dials at all, but only six, as two of the streets faced into one angle. The column kept its position about eighty years, and then there got into circulation a report that beneath its base was concealed a treasure. Great curiosity and excitement thrilled through "The Dials," and the pillar was pulled down. Whoever would have been the owner of any treasure-trove was grievously disappointed, for nothing was found; and no one seems to have had the courage or spirit to replace the column. It was afterwards taken to Weybridge Green, and, surmounted with a ducal

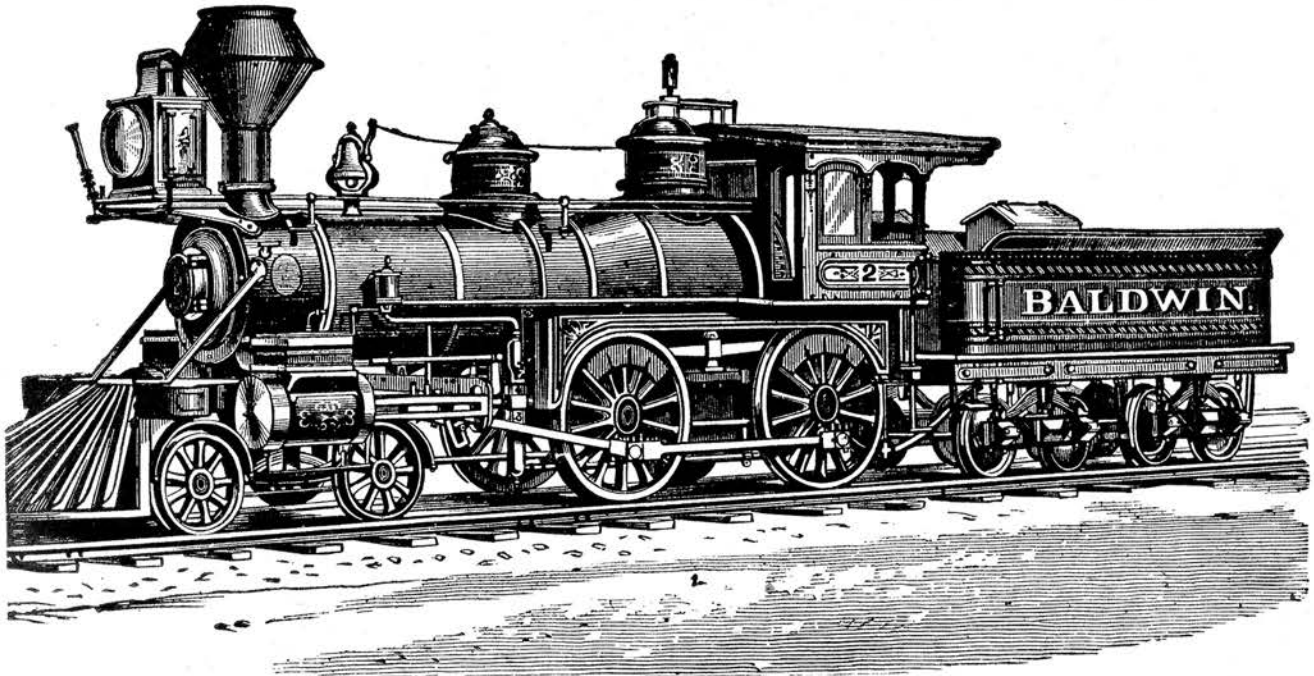
coronet, served for a memorial to the Duchess of York.

And "The Dials" sank lower and lower in respectability. It became an assembly of the idle, the drunken, fugitives from justice, political refugees, &c., and atheism held there its headquarters as of right. It may be imagined what condition of public morality existed, when it is stated that in those days, before the existence of licensing Acts, nearly every house sold gin.

But sulky and Bohemian as Seven Dials tried to be, it could not resist the touch of nineteenth century

civilisation, and the influence of true Christian philanthropy. The Rookery, which was a mass of vile courts, alleys, and houses, has been entirely demolished, and a large set of new industrial dwellings erected in its stead—while a ragged-school, Sunday schools, and missions work profitably in the district. As we have before hinted, some of the worst features of the Sunday trading are dying out, in deference to the slow but resistless power of public opinion; and it is certain that, even for Seven Dials, there is a good time coming.

A. H.



### A FEW SAMPLES PER RAIL.



N old gardener of our acquaintance was sent up to town in charge of a horse. He received many directions from his master as to his route; his mistress went with him to the station, and bought for him a return ticket. The distance from London was only twenty miles, and William returned in safety in the evening.

The next morning, when accounts were being inspected, an item for "My train" attracted attention.

"What is this?" inquired the mistress.

"That be for my journey home, missus."

"But I gave you a 'return.' Did you lose it? Half of your ticket should have been given you in London."

"Lor-a-mussy, mum! be this it?" quoth William, pulling from his pocket the missing half. "I did wonder at he for giving of it back to I."

There are not many so untravelled nowadays as that William. A different company pass us by as we stand for a few minutes on the platform at Charing Cross or Victoria, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, to watch a few trains go out, laden with their human freight. By far the largest number of passengers are men. "Paterfamilias" may be labelled at once, from his habit of carrying to the nest some morsels for the fledglings, or for the mother bird—a basket of fish, some blue-enveloped fruit or dainty



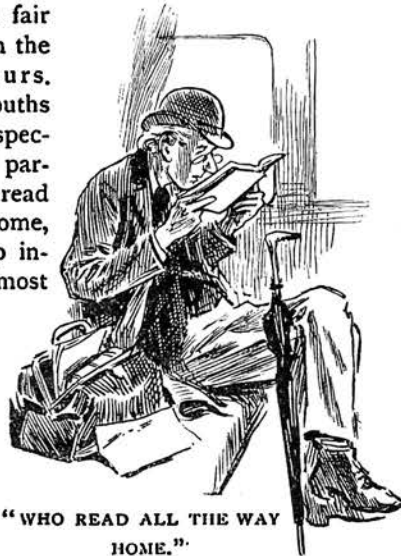
vegetable, a long brown paper parcel from the draper's, a very bulky toy, and the like. Newspapers and books too, he invariably purveys. Young men in



"PATERFAMILIAS."

a violent hurry are numerous; they scrambled in the morning to catch the train, they rushed through their work all day, and now they dash along the platform as the guard holds the whistle in his hand. The slow ones are not missing; they have spotless shirts and collars, unspotted gaiters, and glossy hats. They are *never* in a hurry—it is "bad form"; and though they may be annoying to their quicker brethren, it is not

certain that they fail to get through a fair amount of work in the twenty-four hours. There are some youths (usually wearing spectacles) who carry parcels of books, and read all the way home, others who gossip incessantly, but most who smoke—and think. The ladies form a large contingent: they have been shopping, or lunching out, or servant-hunting, and are occasionally as



"WHO READ ALL THE WAY HOME."

fractious as children, with fatigue and the rush of the hours in town; generally however, they greet their Adolphus or Henry with a smiling face, having bought "bargains" or met pleasant friends, and go to the

suburban home with him, pouring their happy experiences into his attentive (?) ear.

"A day in town" is a more important part of life in the outskirts than most of us recognise. How anxiously materfamilias inquires about trains and distance from stations, before she will consent to look at the house in the suburbs pater declares to be the "very thing." Can she get up to her favourite shop? Will she be able to pay her calls on town friends? Can she go to the picture galleries? If not, it is useless to talk to her; a Paradise would not suit the mater.

But the travellers whose ways are most engaging are those bound on long journeys, and who take their places in club trains or Pullman express. One man will lounge carelessly down the platform to find his traps well placed by the porter who knows his ways, and before the engine has cleared the station he is ensconced with the latest paper well in hand, the



"HE HAS LOST HIS TICKET."

rug disposed comfortably, and "a few hours' quiet" the uppermost thought in his mind. Another will have a hundred questions to ask at the moment of starting; he wishes to show his ticket—he has lost it; he hunts in every pocket, his eye-glass falls on the window-rim and smashes, his cap tumbles off between the carriage and the platform, and as the train goes the final glimpse the porters have is of a bareheaded person wildly waving something in his hand, as the engine slows round the curve.

"My lady" is interesting to watch. John Thomas and Perkins have been on the platform some time, having come down in a cab with the luggage. Perkins will not quit her hold of the dressing-case until she can place it beneath the feet of her mistress; she forgets that her evident anxiety about the square leather-covered package labels it as containing valuables. My lady comes, with a tall daughter, perhaps, and takes

her place in the comfortable arm-chair: for her, travelling brings no annoyance, and very little fatigue. She has only to take her place, to quit it, to go into



“THE MUCH-TRAVELLED LADY.”

rooms at delightful hotels, to find all her accustomed knick-knacks in their usual places about her, to see the sights, admire the views, and come home again refreshed.

The young lady who is travelling on business starts in quite another fashion. She is dressed in a quiet ulster, with a hat to match; she looks rather sad and harassed; the friend who comes to see her off plagues her with inappropriate questions, perhaps; and the society of John Thomas and Perkins will not much amuse her. We wish her *bon voyage*, and a happy home in whatever situation she is going to undertake.

Then there is the much-travelled lady, who has patent contrivances for all kinds of “usefuls.” Not content with a “hold-all” like a mammoth bolster, she has a bottle of eucalyptus, another of eau-de-Cologne, a compressible bonnet, a writing-desk five inches square, a stylographic pen, a small case of homœopathic medicines, a filter, an enamelled tumbler, cases for scissors, needles, cotons, pincers, tweezers, tickets, stamps, passport and letter of credit, a candle in a silver tube, a luncheon basket, and a box of matches. These odds and ends she strings about her person or disposes in the carriage netting, to be “handy.” Small wonder is it that, when wanted, a special article is not to be found.

There is the talkative traveller, who, whether man or woman, is usually a woeful bore. To see his fellow-passengers is at once to make him long to know *all* about them; whence they came, whither they are bound, whether they have a family, and many other things, actually seem to interest this voyager. He tells his companions the name of every station, the history of every place of note within ten miles of either

side of the line, and his talk is generally in large capitals, interspersed with notes of admiration.

The silent traveller is another variety. The man who will go from London to Edinburgh without once letting his voice be heard is, perhaps, an extreme example, but there are many whose motto seems to be, “Be check’d for silence, but never taxed for speech.”

Then there are those as to whom one wonders why they travel. Nothing amuses or interests them. They gaze with vacant stare on renowned rivers, historic castles, glorious woods, town and country, as they pass by. They never know whereabouts they are, and the only thing of which they are sure is the name of the home they left. We once sat next a lady at a *table d’hôte*, of whom we asked “whether she had been at Bologna?”

“Oh no,” was the answer.

Her husband remarked, in an audible whisper—  
“That is where we came from yesterday.”

“I forgot,” she amended; “we were there yesterday, and we are going to Turin to-morrow.”

This stopped the conversation, as we were in Turin at the moment!

We came up from Scotland one year with three ladies, who had joined company for “mutual help and comfort.” One of these was wearing a handsome silk dress, and a velvet mantle that was positively magnificent. Will she lean back? we thought, as Carlisle was passed, and she sat upright—immovable. At Lancaster the ladies descended in search of tea, and she of the gorgeous raiment was the last to return.

“Do you see how uprightly she sits?” inquired one

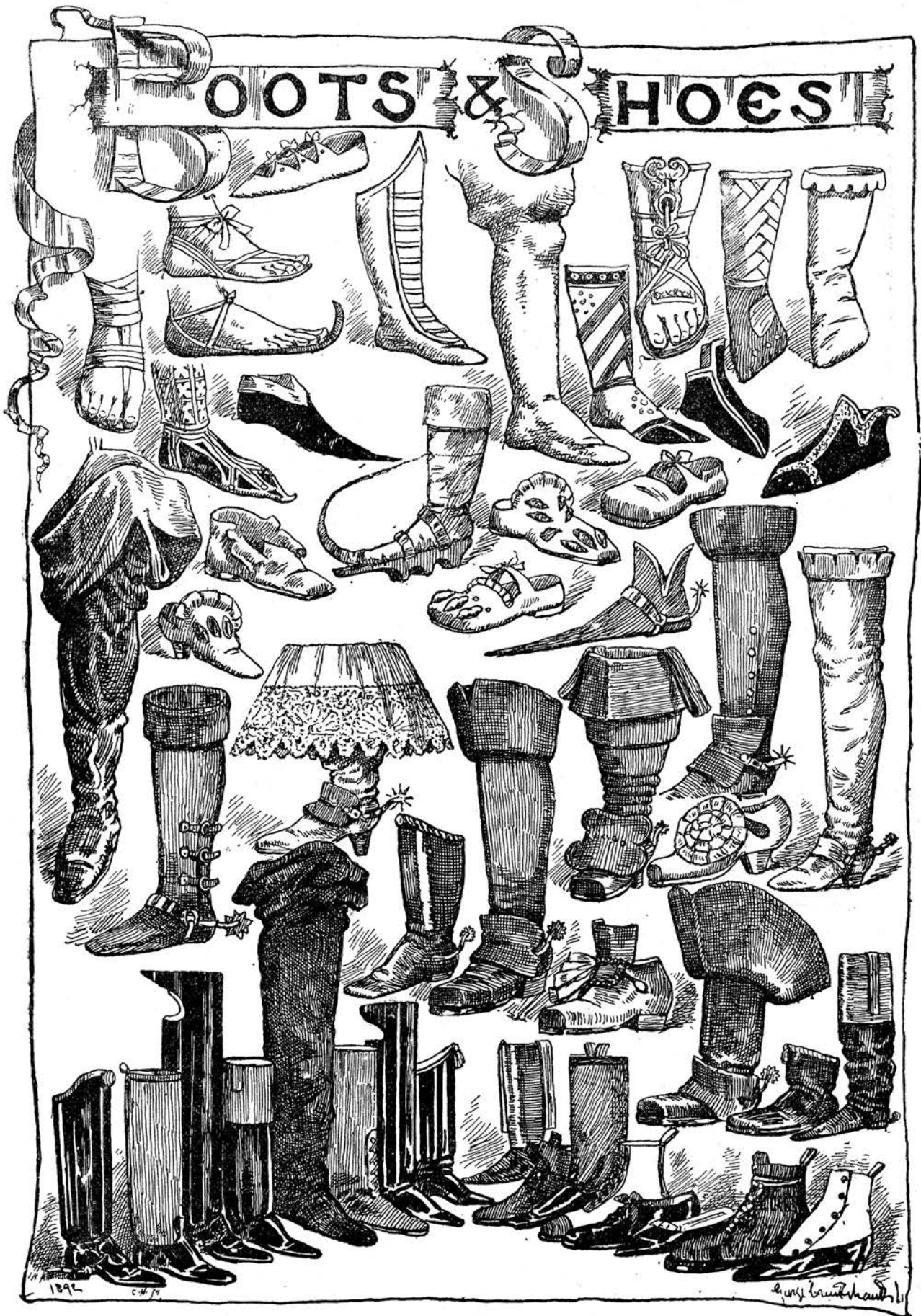


“WILL SHE LEAN BACK?”

of her friends of the other. “It makes one ache to see her. Why does she do it?”

“My dear,” was the reply, “can’t you see she is afraid of spoiling that mantle?”

IVOR MERLE.





## A PAINTED SILK OR SATIN PIANOFORTE FRONT.



THE want of designs among amateur artists is so often felt that this one, which would do admirably for a pianoforte front, may be helpful to some readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*.

There are two ways you can enlarge it if you do not wish to do so merely by the eye. The first is by the "pentagraph," which can be purchased for a few shillings. This is entirely a mechanical method, and as the design is a long one, you would have to enlarge it in sections.

Another plan is to divide the design up into say one quarter or one third of an inch squares by drawing lines lengthways these distances apart and then crossways. If you want to enlarge it to say three or four times the size of the original, you have only to make corresponding squares on fine paper three or four times the size of those dividing the design and then fill these in with the corresponding portions in the original design. This method of "squaring" guides you in getting your proportions correct, but you must go over it afterwards, trusting more or less to your eye if you would avoid the "wooden" appearance the enlargement will have if you merely fill in the various squares purely mechanically.

Having obtained a drawing the size you wish to paint it, you must transfer it to the silk or satin, and as we propose to paint on a very delicate colour, this must be done carefully. The ordinary carbon paper would do provided you do not press your hand on it as you follow the design over with a hard point. A piece of tissue-paper rubbed over with a little ordinary stove black-lead, which must be well rubbed in so that no loose black-lead remains on the surface of the paper, would do almost better, as you only want a delicate outline just to guide you in the painting.

The first thing to do now is to outline the design, and I think diluted Indian ink is the best thing to use, as it is easily applied and is indelible. But it must not be used too strong, as on white silk or satin your painting should be delicate. It should be thinned down to a grey. Use a fine sable rigger for outlining, following the design with feeling and with a certain freedom, as the merit of your work will not lie in a slavish adherence to the original, but in a spirited and spontaneous rendering which is much more to be considered than painstaking accuracy.

The Japanese paint silk in a delightful way, and if my readers could refer to some Japanese paintings it might give them some valuable hints very helpful in their own efforts.

Water-colours are the best for silk painting, as they are more easily handled and are more delicate than oil. Advantage should be taken of the transparency of water-colours, so as to obtain the maximum of fair effect with transparent washes: in fact, treat water-colours as though they were dyes. The grey for white flowers could be obtained by cobalt blue and yellow ochre put on highly diluted, leaving the silk untouched in the lights, which can be heightened if desired with a little Chinese white. The flowers of the may might be very pale rose madder, with deeper rose madder for stamens. The yellows of the polyanthus narcissus should be aureolin for the petals, and Indian yellow for the centres. This colour would also do for centres of ox-eye daisies. The wild anemones should have pinkish stems and pinkish buds.

The leaves of the narcissus in both cases should be glaucous or grey-green, made with cobalt green toned with yellow ochre, and even a little pure cobalt made very thin might be used in the lights. The flower-stems themselves should be dark green, viridian, and Indian yellow. The pansy and anemone leaves should be a cold green, say Prussian blue and raw sienna, while the grass should be varied, washes of yellow ochre, gamboge, cobalt green, blended or glazed one over another, gradually getting lighter and greyer in the distance, so as not to interfere with the positive greens of the foreground. The greens in the hawthorn and ox-eye daisies should be juicy, gamboge and Prussian blue, viridian and aureolin, cobalt green and Indian yellow affording good tones which can be varied infinitely.

The colours should be applied with camel-hair brushes, and should be floated on, as it were—i.e., the brush should always be fully charged with colour; but, of course, be very careful not to drop colour where it is not wanted, for nothing will take the stain out of the silk.

The birds are bullfinches, and it would be as well to refer to some stuffed specimens if possible (if live ones are not to be seen) for the colouring. Many amateurs make the mistake in getting birds too gaudy in colour. They are sufficiently emphatic in the design as not to need having attention called to themselves by garish colour. Warm browns made of burnt sienna and black with yellowish grey for the under side of wings should be the tone aimed at; but do not get them too heavy in colour. Keep the whole scheme light and delicate rather than strong.

Cobalt used very thinly might be painted on the plain portions of the design instead of leaving it white; but this would require to be done very carefully, as it should be perfectly even and show no brush-marks. It would perhaps be advisable to slightly damp the silk with perfectly clean water where this blue is to go. Then have plenty of the tint, which must be very light, in a saucer, and put it on evenly with a largish camel-hair brush. If this were done, then there would be no necessity to use Chinese white for the lights in the white flowers. The leaves might be touched up in the light parts with a little opaque colour made by adding Chinese white.

If a dark silk, such as dark indigo blue or black, be used, then the colours must all be mixed with Chinese white to make them opaque; but even then it would be well to glaze over the solid colour with transparent washes of colour. Only so much white should be used as will make the colours solid.

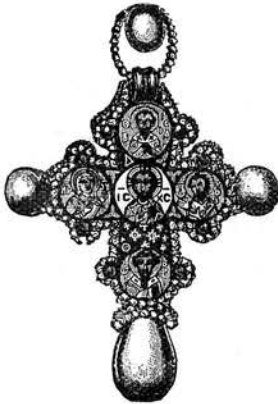


## PRECIOUS STONES; THEIR HOMES, HISTORIES, AND INFLUENCE.

By EMMA BREWER.

### INTRODUCTION.

"Dumb jewels often in their silent kind  
More than quick words do move a woman's  
mind."—*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*



Of the many exquisite things nature turns out from her laboratories, precious stones carry away the palm both for beauty and fascination.

The mystery of their origin, the peculiarities of their native homes, their special characteristics, their medicinal qualities, their rarity and great value, the romances and tragedies in which they have played conspicuous parts, together with their marked influence on the lives of individuals and nations intensify our interest in them and sharpen our curiosity concerning them.

Beautiful and wonderful specimens as they are of nature's handiwork, they do not as a rule shine in all their splendour until they have passed through the hands of man; but this we shall see for ourselves as we follow each gem from its ancient home until, in its perfection, it adds fresh grace and beauty to the persons of the rich and the great.

All through the ages the method adopted by nature to form and perfect these gems has been enveloped in mystery, and, notwithstanding the intellect and knowledge which have been brought to bear upon this subject by successive generations, nature still manages to baffle us, and she has evidently no intention of gratifying our curiosity as to her process of manufacture.

One or two facts, however, the genius of

man has wrested from her, for example, that she carries on her work in a particular class of rock and mountain, and that the materials she uses are quite of a common kind such as carbon, alumina, clay, and silica, with which we are all acquainted. A French scientist, Mons. Babinet, noting this fact, says, "It would seem as though the mighty creative and organising Power had chosen to manifest its omnipotence by producing the most valuable substances from the most ordinary elements."

But, when we come to the detail of nature's work, we are brought to a standstill, for she has not yet informed us how she brought together the elements of the stones, nor how she solidified the liquid or vaporous matters, for they could not have amalgamated in a solid state, nor even in a powdered form. Scientific men believe that she employed one of three means—volcanic heat and pressure, the aid of foreign material to dissolve the solution, or the slow decomposition of vegetable matter, but which they cannot decide. Nor do we know how long she takes to form and complete these gems.

One thing, however, is quite evident, *vis.*, that no workshop on the earth's surface has ever produced such treasures as the laboratories beneath it.

Pliny said "that in gems we have all the majesty of nature gathered in a small compass, and that in no other of her works has nature produced anything so admirable." Yet considering her boundless wealth of material and working power, it is surprising how small a number of precious stones have found their way into the world. Of course there may be many waiting and in readiness to be discovered, either by the skill of man, or by the freaks of their "Mother Nature," for her method of dealing with them is often curious. She produces them with the utmost care, sparing neither skill nor time to render them the most perfect of her treasures, and, when at length there is nothing more to desire, she wraps them round with quite common garments, which hide from view their exquisite form and colour, and with scant courtesy starts them on their career.

Not till the hand of man has touched them, and with skill removed their coverings do they stand forth in the light pure, transparent, splendid, fit emblems of all heavenly graces.

The object in writing these articles on precious stones is to introduce the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER to their "habitats" or native homes, whether in mountain, rock, sea, or river, and to bring before them their

characteristics and influence, and lastly to gather up their histories, which are often stranger than fiction.

The study is one of fascinating interest, and could we trace the individual career of some gems we should understand many an enigma in the history of nations, and gain a deeper insight into the mysteries of the human heart.

Not only have precious stones been favourites of wealth and fashion, but they have been studied with passionate devotion by men of science, and Mons. Babinet says that "the study of gems, which may seem frivolous when looked upon as mere ornaments, appears in another light when considered with regard to important questions of trade, and as connected with the two sciences of minerals and optics."

It would be of great interest if we were only to study under what conditions of soil, climate, and labour nature forms them; indeed, those who bestow upon precious stones the attention they deserve will be gradually led to acquire some knowledge of the geography, mineralogy, physics (natural objects) and chemistry of the countries which produce them.

It seems to us that everything that brings before us the treasures of Nature and the exercise of the genius of man upon them must be a healthy and interesting study, and one which lifts the mind above the petty cares of daily life.

In the study of precious stones, our thoughts go at once to the diamond as the king of them all, and as the most valuable; and yet this is not exactly correct, for the ruby has ten times the intrinsic worth of the diamond. But I do not purpose to commence with either of these, but rather choose the pearl as being specially the ornament of unmarried girls, for it is of all gems the most fitted to represent purity, grace of form, and exceeding worth.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PEARL.

"As the rain from the sky  
Which turns into pearl as it falls in the  
sea."—*Thomas Moore.*

"Ocean's gem the purest of nature's  
work."—*Dryden.*

PEARLS are the only gems that derive nothing from art, and any attempt to improve them or increase their worth often turns out a complete failure.

Unlike other members of the aristocratic family of gems and precious stones, they are, as a rule, perfect in their native condition both

as to form, colour, and purity. Their home or habitat is altogether peculiar to them, for while other gems are formed and brought up within the mine, pearls are born and bred beneath the water. Their origin is surrounded with mystery and has afforded matter for the imagination and poetic fancy in all ages of the world, for as we all know from experience, whenever a thing is incomprehensible it gives occasion to the wildest conjectures.

An idea very widely accepted was that pearls were the tears of angels captured by the oyster; while another equally popular was that they were formed of drops of rain falling into the open shell. This last is expressed in a quaint Oriental fable which runs thus: "A drop of water fell one day from a cloud into the sea; ashamed and confounded on finding itself in such an immensity of water it exclaimed, 'What am I in comparison with this vast ocean? My existence is less than nothing in this boundless abyss.' While it thus discoursed of itself, a pearl shell received it into its bosom, and fortune so favoured it that it became a magnificent and precious pearl worthy of adorning the diadem of kings."

An ancient writer expresses this same thought in the following words: "On the 16th day of the month Nizan, the oysters rise to receive the rain-drops, which are afterwards made into pearls." Again, "Columbus must have been astonished when he and his mariners, being in the Gulf of Paria, found oysters clinging to the branches of trees, their shells gaping open to receive the dew which was afterward to be transformed into pearls."

All these ideas are quaint and pretty, but alas! not at all like the real facts.

We feel almost angry when we hear naturalists describe these most costly of products as mere deformities, and yet there is truth in the statement, for there is no doubt that pearls are formed by the oyster for the purpose of rendering harmless to itself the intrusion of any irritating substance, by coating it with successive layers of matter, like to that with which it lines its shell, or it may be an effort of the oyster to mend its shell from within after some injury done to it.

A very interesting example of this may be seen in the following incident related by Mr. Streeter.

"A shell was lately left at a jeweller's containing a fine pearl valued at £200. The owner thinking it would be more valuable if removed from the shell, gave the order for this to be done, and a piece of rotten oak was found at its base."

Two scientific French gentlemen being very curious as to the origin of the pearl, opened several of them and invariably found in the interior some foreign body like a small grain of sand, and were satisfied that this accounted for the formation, though not of course for its size, shape or beauty.

Linnæus believed that the pearl had its origin in a hurt received by the oyster, and it was this belief suggested to him the idea of creating the disease in the fresh-water mussel of Sweden, and thus manufacture pearls at will, but the attempt failed.

The Chinese, however, have been successful up to a certain point; for instance, they insert tiny leaden images of their deities within the pearl-bearing oysters which gradually cover them with nacre.

But for whatever reason or purpose pearls are formed there is no doubt that they excel in value and surpass in beauty the choicest gem of rock or watercourse. They were valued by the Persians more highly than gold or any other article of adornment, and the Egyptians have always regarded them as the most precious gift of the ocean in which they have their origin, and worthy of the honour of decorating their deities.

Among the Romans they were regarded as

symbols of beauty, purity and nobility, and as emblematic of marriage. There is a celebrated engraving on a sardonyx in Rome representing the marriage of Cupid and Psyche, who are joined together by a string of pearls, the ends of which are in the hand of the god Hymen.

The passion for pearls and other gems was carried to such an extravagant height in Rome that even Julius Cæsar thought it time to curb it. He issued an edict prohibiting the use of pearls to all persons who were not of a certain rank, and unmarried women were forbidden to wear precious stones or pearls. The consequence of this was that marriages increased considerably throughout the empire, for on no account would they be deprived of their ornaments.

Pierre de Rosnel, writing in the seventeenth century, shows how highly pearls were appreciated even then by the Romans. "The pearl," he says, "is a jewel so perfect, that its excellent beauty demands the love and esteem of the whole universe."

Among all Eastern nations they are supposed to be possessed of the power of preserving the virtue of their owners, and as an emblem of maiden purity, it is the custom still at weddings in India to present a pearl to the bride.

It is believed that pearls were among the earliest substances ever employed as ornaments, and as far back as we can look into antiquity they occupied the highest rank among them, but by what nation or individuals they were first worn cannot be definitely stated, though every circumstance points to India and the Hindoos. It is to the East we invariably turn for every rare and beautiful production of nature, whose office it is to charm the sense of man or gratify his vanity. An old historian says, "The beds of the rivers of India are of gold, and the waters flow calmly as though unwilling to disturb their rich sands; the sea also casts up on its margin an abundance of pearls and precious stones, and herein consists the greatest wealth of the inhabitants."

In the Hindoo mythology gems play an important part. Vishnu is represented in the form of a handsome youth blazing with light; in one of his four hands he has a shell, in another a lotus flower, in a third a club, and in the fourth a ring—a sudarsim—which, with the precious stone on his breast, sends forth a light that illumines the whole of the Divine abode.

The high honour in which precious stones and pearls have always been held is shown in the Bible, where we find them used to denote the highest degree of excellence and perfection. For example, the new Jerusalem was revealed to St. John under the figure of an edifice whose foundations were of precious stones, its walls of jasper, and each of its twelve doors formed by a single pearl.

The parable of the "Pearl of great price," and the phrase "casting pearls before swine," show that in our Saviour's time it was recognised as costly.

The pearl, with its unpretending and quiet lustre, its chaste loveliness and elegant simplicity of form has been a greater favourite with Easterns than even the diamond. "It has," says an old writer, "a fairness which so well befits and adorns the ladies who wear them that it would seem as though nature had made it on purpose for them." It has been said that there is only one object in nature more beautiful than a pearl, and that is a beautiful woman. The Talmud illustrates this by the following story: "On approaching Egypt, Abraham locked up Sarah in a box that none might behold her dangerous beauty. But when he was come to the place of paying custom, the collectors said, 'Pay us the custom,' and he said, 'I will pay the custom.' They said to him, 'Thou carriest clothes?'

and he said, 'I will pay for clothes.' Then they said to him, 'Thou carriest gold?' and he said, 'I will pay for my gold.' On this they further said to him, 'Surely thou hast the finest silk?' He replied, 'I will pay custom for the finest silk.' Then said they, 'Surely it must be pearls that thou takest with thee?' and he only answered, 'I will pay for pearls.' Seeing that they could name nothing of value for which the patriarch was not willing to pay custom, they said, 'It cannot be but thou open the box and let us see what is within?' So they opened the box and the whole land of Egypt was illumined by the lustre of Sarah's beauty far exceeding even that of pearls."

Beautiful and marvellous as these works of nature are, I think the most wonderful thing about them is the common material of which they are formed. Twenty-three parts of their composition are carbonate of lime and water, and one part of some gelatinous matter which serves to bind the whole together. As a rule these are the same materials of which the shell of the pearl oyster is formed, only that in the latter there is a little more vegetable matter. Although there is so great a resemblance between the pearl itself and the shell of the creature producing it, yet while the former is of surpassing value, the mother-of-pearl shell only fetches from £100 to to £200 per ton.

So although we cannot fully and accurately answer the fool's question in King Lear, "Can'st tell how an oyster makes his shell?" we are able to say of what it is made, and Mr. Streeter, who has had a pearling fleet for many years in the eastern seas, with scientific men on board, says that it is absolutely certain that the shell grows from within and not from the outside, and he gives the following as a proof. "There was found by our fleet in 1884 a shell that at a certain period of its growth had been broken, probably by a turtle, but the oyster had succeeded in secreting fresh layers of nacre within before harm came to it, and the old accident was only detected by the fracture at the back of the shell."

The oyster, although making use of the same materials for the forming of pearl and shell does not build them in the same way. In the first the layers, which are very thin, are concentric, that is having a common centre like an onion; while mother-of-pearl has its layers more or less parallel, so that the latter can never have the same optical effects as the former. The outer layer of the pearl is friable; the second is full of little cells in which the colouring-matter is deposited, and the inner ones are of a more foliated character. The peculiar lustre of the pearl is not derived from the substance of which it is formed, but by the varied reflection of light from the soft and gentle unevenness of its surface. I asked one of the greatest authorities on pearls what caused the variety of colour in the pearl, and I give you his answer. "The pearl, when taken from a healthy oyster, is everything one can wish; if, however, the oyster goes out frequently to dinner and gets bilious, its pearl becomes yellow, and if it has fever its pearl is blackish." Many shells in sea and river produce pearls, but the finest called Orient pearls are found in a peculiar oyster, the best of which are known as the *Meleagrina Margaritifera*.

This high class pearl-bearing oyster differs greatly from the common oyster in that its two valves are equal, also that it has the power of spinning a kind of web which it can cast off and re-form at pleasure, enabling it to attach itself to bank, stone, or any other object; it has also in a small way a power of locomotion, none of which characteristics are to be seen in the common kind. The *Meleagrina*, like all other oysters and mussels, produce a very large quantity of spawn, but so much is swallowed by its enemies that only a small portion

succeeds in settling in its submarine habitat which is generally at a depth of from 36 to 48 feet. The pearl is generally found in the soft part of the oyster or attached loosely to the shell, and to be in really good condition the oyster should be at least three or four years old.

The pearl-bearing oyster is very much tormented by a little creature called the *honey*, which is very fond of feeding on it, and makes an entrance for itself by piercing the shell. The oyster resents this and rolls the pearl up out of the way of mischief, and uses against the intruder a little bag of acid which it carries in its beard, in the meantime making for itself a fortification with the over-flow of milk. And now it is time to enquire in what parts of the world we are to look for the habitats or homes of pearls, and by what process they are conveyed to ours.

In ancient times the principal fisheries or homes of pearls were in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and Ceylon. These are still flourishing, but we have now additional ones in North-West Australia and America all well inhabited. As the methods of fishing are, in the main, the same, we will look into the pearl's home at Ceylon, because it was not only well known to the Phoenicians who traded here for pearls, but is even now one of the most prolific owing to the great care with which the fishery is conducted.

The special habitat of the pearl-bearing oyster is in the sand-banks off the west coast of the island in the Bay of Manaar about twenty miles long. These banks are favourites because they are sandy and interspersed with small patches of madreporite—a submarine substance like coral—to which the pearl-oyster attaches itself. They are arranged in seven lots which are worked in succession one every year. Should a portion of the bank be left longer than seven years it is thought that the pearls would so inconvenience the oysters that they would void them.

Early in the sixteenth century people of all classes collected here to the number of fifty or sixty thousand all intent on obtaining pearls, or at all events interested in the pearl harvest. In the seventeenth century the Dutch made this a very popular fishery by allowing the divers twenty alternate days to fish for themselves, and as many as two hundred thousand people assembled here at the fishing-time.

In the eighteenth century, owing to some quarrel between the Dutch and the Rajah, the beds were left untouched for thirty-six years, from 1760 to 1796, at which time the English gained Ceylon and reaped the benefit of the rest, which resulted in 1798 in a net profit of £140,000.

The fishing commences in February and continues until the middle of April, and great are the preparations made for it. The fleet consists of a hundred and fifty boats, each being from eight to fifteen tons burden, without decks, and with a stage on each side from which the divers descend.

The crew of each boat includes a master or head pilot, ten divers and ten other men who manage the boat and look after the divers, and last, not least, a shark-charmer, without whom the men will not stir. The distance between the shore and the banks is about twelve miles, and the time of departure is ten o'clock at night, the signal being the firing of a cannon.

The obtaining of pearls is a very difficult and dangerous operation, and those whose occupation it is submit themselves to long and severe training; they are restricted to a particular diet, and for some time previous to the fishing season their limbs are rubbed daily with oil.

When the day arrives for the fishing to commence, the divers meet on the shore and offer up their devotions, fee the shark charmers, and on reaching the banks strip themselves of

their dress, except a cloth round their loins, stop their ears with cotton wool, compress their nostrils by means of an instrument made of horn, and bind over their mouths a sponge soaked in oil which resists the water for a certain time. A net is fastened round their bodies, a heavy stone of reddish granite and of certain shape, weighing from twenty to twenty-five pounds, is hung on their feet for the purpose of hastening their descent, and in their right hand a knife. So furnished the divers throw themselves down the pearl bank, five at the time. As soon as they are down they cast off the stone from the feet, and with the knife loosen the oysters from the bank and collect them in the net; the average time of remaining under water is a minute or a minute and a half, in which eight or ten oysters are obtained. A signal is given and the men are at once drawn up, and while they gain breathing-time the other five divers go down. Native divers will descend forty or fifty times in the day, but the effect of this constant submersion and the strain on the nerves is seen in the faintness and bleeding from ears, nose and mouth of the men at the end of the season. The enemy most dreaded by them is the shark, and if alarmed at the near approach of one a diver signals to be drawn up to the surface, none of the others will go down on the same day. Few of the men engaged as pearl seekers live to old age, but while they can work they receive good and fixed wages. I hear that the majority of the divers in Ceylon are Roman Catholics and Hindoos. A peculiarity of the divers, and one that often stands them in good stead, is the dexterity and skill with which they use their feet; they can pick up the smallest thing from the ground with their toes just as easily as we can with our fingers.

On the return of the boats, they are unloaded and deposited in heaps as they are brought ashore, and left until they become putrid, when the pearls are easily removed from the tough matter surrounding them. The heaps are sold, as a rule, unopened, and their contents being unknown to both buyer and seller, the transaction is not so much one of commerce as a lottery. Many oysters contain no pearl, while others may produce one worth £200 or £300. Great care and vigilance are exercised during the washing which takes place for the separation of the pearls; but, notwithstanding, pilfering goes on more or less, the pilferers generally choosing the best pearls. These they often swallow for safety, but if suspected, the delinquent is placed in solitary confinement, and drenched with emetics.

Shells having pearls attached are handed to clippers, whose business it is to disengage the pearls by means of forceps. The part which adheres to the shell is polished by a powder made of pearls. In the year 1825 Captain Stewart related having seen ten pearls and some crushed oyster shells taken from the stomach of a fish called chartree.

The modern pearling fleet which fishes in the Indian seas, and off the western coast of Australia, uses the diving dress most successfully, and during its twenty years of existence the fleet has not lost a man to the sharks. The peculiar dress used by the divers has a little pocket at the side, easily reached by the man. When he notes the approach of a shark, he presses the bag, and out comes a certain acid, which, coming into contact with the salt water, illumines it, and frightens the shark, who is only too glad to escape.

The scientific men on board have made some interesting discoveries about the daily life of the oyster as lived in its submarine home. Some of these I am allowed to mention through the kindness of the owner of the fleet.

In order to keep a roof over its head it has to work incessantly to repair the mischief done

to its shell by the force of the currents swaying it to and fro, causing a constant wear and tear of its shelly home, which admits of no delay in mending.

When quite at its ease, and in good form, it opens its valves to survey its surroundings, and lays its beard wide open in perfect enjoyment; and wonderful to relate, it extends nearly a yard, and is of the most exquisite magenta colour.

Again, it is not generally known that each oyster keeps a general servant or scavenger, but so it is. In the Torres Straits the oysters employ lobsters to do their dirty work, while in Raeburn, Western Australia, they employ crabs.

There have been very good pearls found in our own rivers, especially in the Conway in North Wales, and in the rivers of Cumberland and Scotland; but the pearls of the Canadian rivers excel ours.

The number of famous pearls which have helped to make history is not large—seventeen or eighteen would include them all. Among these stand the "Cleopatra Pearls," one of which the Queen of Egypt dissolved in acid, and drank at a feast which she gave in honour of Antony. The second fell into the hands of the Roman Emperor, and was subsequently sawn asunder, and made into earrings by Agrippa for the statue of Venus in the Pantheon.

Then about the same period, B.C. 44, there was the "Servilia Pearl," valued at £35,600 of our present money. It came to Julius Cæsar as part of the spoils of war in the East, and was given by him to Servilia, the mother of Brutus, A.D. 50.

The "Lollia-Paulina Pearls." This lady was the wife of Caligula, and possessed pearls and emeralds to the value of £400,000. These she inherited from her grandfather, "who," said Pliny, "became possessed of them by robbing and spoiling whole provinces." She appeared in public literally hung about with pearls.

Among those with a history is the "Sassanian Pearl," A.D. 500. It was considered a miracle of nature. The Sassanian monarch ruled Persia from A.D. 226 to 641, and the portraits of these kings always represent a huge pearl in the right ear. It seems that a daring diver obtained it by the sacrifice of his life from the custody of a shark. King Perozes lost it while fighting with the Huns. He was lured by the enemy into a pitfall, and, seeing his position, he tore the pearl from his ear and cast it before him. It was never found, although a large reward was offered for it.

The "Gresham Pearl." Sir Thomas had often refused £15,000 for it, but in order to prove to the Spanish Ambassador that his Queen and country were richer than the King of Spain and his subjects he foolishly ground this beautiful pearl to powder and drank it in a glass of wine to the health of Queen Elizabeth.

Another interesting pearl was "La Peregrina," A.D. 1579. It was pear-shaped, and pronounced to be beyond price. It came from the Panama fisheries, and the oyster from which it was taken was very nearly thrown away. The shell was so small that the fishermen considered it of no value, and were about to cast it back into the sea, when second thoughts prevailed, and on opening it, to everyone's surprise this magnificent pearl was discovered.

Another large pearl was brought from India and sold to Philip IV. of Spain for a sum equal to £18,000. It is pear-shaped, and believed to be in the possession at the present time of the Russian Princess Youssouppoff.

The "Shah Pearls." One of these was bought from an Arab at a cost of £56,000. Its shape was an almost perfect heart, which



would detract from its value at the present time.

The "Hope Pearl," 1839. The late Mr. Henry Hope, of Piccadilly and Betchworth, took great pleasure in collecting pearls. The largest was a baroque, a very fine specimen of an Oriental pearl of an irregular pear-shape measuring two inches in length, four inches and a half in circumference, and weighing three ounces or 1800 grains. It was detached from the shell, but it was deemed necessary to leave a small portion of the shell adhering to it, but which is of so fine an orient and so well polished that it is not distinctly perceived to be of the nature of shell. This mass of pearl must surpass in size the fish which formed it.

The "Russian Pearl" has a peculiar story attached to it related by the traveller J. C. Kohl, and which occurred about fifty years ago. He says, "There died in a convent, whither he had retreated after the manner of the wealthy pious ones of his nation, a rich merchant. Feeling the approach of age he had by degrees given up the toils of business to his sons. His wife was dead, and the only beloved object which even in the cloister was not divided from him was one large beautiful Oriental pearl. It had been purchased for him at a high price, and so enchanted was he by its water, magnificent size and colour, its perfect shape and lustre, he would never part

with it however large a sum was offered for it. He fairly worshipped the costly globule. While he himself inhabited an ordinary cell in the convent, this object of his love was bedded on silk in a golden casket. It required very powerful recommendations to obtain a sight of it. No one ever dared touch this pearl of pearls. During the last illness of the old man he never let his pearl out of his hand, and after death it was with difficulty removed from his stiffened fingers. It found its way afterwards to the Imperial Treasury.

The "Southern Cross Pearl" is perhaps the most remarkable production of its kind that nature has ever produced, and it is by Mr. Streeter's kindness I am able to give an account of it. It consists of a group of nine pearls; seven compose the shaft, one and a half inch long, and the two arms of the cross are formed by one pearl on each side. The pearls are of fine orient, and would be of good shape if they had not become slightly flattened at the back. This cross of pearls was discovered by a man named Clark while pearl-fishing at Raeburn in Western Australia. The owner of the boat was a Roman Catholic, and both owner and finder were struck with awe and amazement, looking upon it as a heaven-wrought miracle, and with superstitious dread they buried it, for how long it is not known. It was discovered in 1874,

since which date it has changed hands many times, and was exhibited in the Western Australian Court of the Indian Exhibition of 1886. It is valued at £10,000.

No one has been able satisfactorily to explain the regular grouping of these pearls; but it has been suggested by Dr. MacSarty that a fragment of serrated seaweed may have gained access to the shell, and that the succession of teeth along the margin of the frond may have determined the deposits of nacre at regular intervals so as to form a string of pearls running in a straight line. As this cruciform group of pearls was found in the Southern Hemisphere it has received the name of the southern cross, from the famous constellation so called.

The necklace of the Empress Eugénie contains a row of matchless black pearls.

There was in the market lately a round black pearl of surpassing lustre weighing sixty-seven grains; \* the value of this has been increased by finding another exactly like it.

It is computed that out of twenty million oysters four million or one-fifth contain pearls.

The medicinal qualities of pearls will be shown later.

\* Over twenty grains the pearl is equal to the diamond in value.

## THINGS IN SEASON, IN MARKET AND KITCHEN.

### JANUARY.

By LE MÉNAGÈRE.

THIS is one of the coldest, if not the coldest, months of the year; the time when we most need to put on our thinking-cap in order to provide such things as will best supply that extra consumption of fuel that goes on in the human engine. Some star-hy foods we must have and a goodly proportion of fats and oils—more than at any other time of the year. Now we find both these elements in grains and "pulse," peas, beans, lentils, etc., and we can supply the necessary amount of fats by good wholesome puddings that contain a little suet, and home-made cakes, also in eating a fair amount of nuts.

For breakfast every morning we might begin with a plateful of Quaker oats, "H. O.," or any other kind; these are splendid food, and however small the portion, everybody would be the better for having some. Some people like sugar with their porridge, but it is a fact that sugar does not help the digestion of oatmeal—rather retards it in fact.

Coffee is better for breakfast on winter mornings than tea, for all who can take it: not because it is more nourishing, but because it possesses staying qualities, and so is more satisfying.

Eggs, bacon, fish, or a well-cooked sausage should be ready to tempt the appetite of the older members of the family, but a little stewed fruit and brown bread and butter would be better than these for children. Say stewed Pears, figs, or prunes, and a cupful of milk or coffee.

Cheese is a good and nourishing food for cold weather, perhaps because it contains so much of that essential oil that we need. Toasted cheese should never be given to anyone of weak digestion, however, for it is one of the most difficult of all things to deal with. As an experiment in the line of "savories," I would recommend the trial of grated cheese with a plate of oats; it is by no means to be despised.

A typical menu for January would be the following—

Chestnut Soup.  
Fried Lemon Soles.  
Ragout of Mutton.  
Creamed Potatoes and Jerusalem Artichokes.  
Roast Snipe on Toast.  
Chelsea Pudding.  
Cheese. Butter. Biscuits. Coffee.

*Chestnut Soup.*—Boil a pound of chestnuts until they seem tender, peel off the shell and brown skin; return the white part to the stewpan and cover with water, add a finely-minced onion, an ounce of butter, pepper and salt. Let this simmer for an hour or more, then rub all carefully through a sieve, add a pint or rather more of boiling milk and a dessert-spoonful of cornflour previously mixed smooth with cold water, and stir this again over the fire until it boils. Serve fried croutons with this soup.

*Lemon Soles* should be filleted before frying them, and they should be dipped in beaten egg and fresh crumbs of bread and sprinkled with seasoning. Fry them to a golden brown in boiling lard or beef dripping, squeeze a little lemon juice over them and serve garnished with fried parsley.

*Ragout of Mutton.*—A piece of the middle neck, or the shank half of the shoulder, the meat taken from the bones and trimmed into neat pieces, is the best for this. Flour each piece lightly, lay in a stewpan with thinly-sliced onions, sliced turnip, a few sprigs of savoury herbs and seasoning. Pour over all a teacupful of water and cover tightly. Let this simmer in a corner of the oven for about two hours, and then arrange the meat on a dish, add a spoonful of mushroom ketchup to the gravy, with more water if it seems too thick, and pour over the meat.

Mash the potatoes and beat them up with milk till like thick cream; pile this up in

a buttered pie-dish, and put the dish into a quick oven to brown the surface.

Mash the artichokes also and press them into a shallow dish, sprinkling breadcrumbs over the top and a bit of butter, and brown these also.

*Snipe* require a very quick hot oven for their roasting, and about fifteen minutes is long enough to allow. Place them on a strip of crisp toast, and some tiny frizzles of bacon with them, and sprinkle fried crumbs over. No sauce will be needed.

*Chelsea Pudding.*—Shred and chop very finely two ounces of suet, add to four ounces of flour into which a teaspoonful of baking powder has been rubbed, also a pinch of salt and two ounces of castor sugar, the grated rind of a fresh lemon or a pinch of spice, mix well, and make into a soft dough with a beaten egg and a teacupful of milk. Grease a shaped pudding-basin and sprinkle the inside with brown sugar, pour in the pudding-mixture and bake until it has risen well and is of a rich brown colour.

The sauce for this pudding is made by placing half-a-pound pot of plum or currant jam in a saucepan, with a few lumps of sugar and an equal amount of water. Let this boil for a little while, then strain it through a tamis and pour over and around the pudding when that has been turned out.

Suitable dishes for the dinner-table in cold weather are the following: Beefsteak pudding, Irish stew, stewed steak, sea pie, camp pie, haricot mutton, liver and bacon, etc.—very homely dishes, it is true, but good and nourishing for all that.

Avoid having large joints that would leave much cold meat on hand in cold weather. Not many families care much about cold meat when the thermometer is near freezing point, and twice-cooked meat is not nearly so nourishing as fresh, however savoury it may be made.

## POOR JOSIE:

### THE STORY OF A RESCUED STARLING.

**U**NCLE ALFRED'S home was in the country. My little sisters and I lived with our parents, in the very heart of a great, busy, bustling

were trained. There was a summer-house, too, with creepers trailing over it; so that upon the whole we might have been worse off. It was very pleasant in



"THERE WAS AN UNUSUAL UPROAR AMONG THE STARLINGS"

manufacturing city. Our house was a very nice one, it is true, and although a narrow strip of garden with a strong iron fence was all that separated it from the street in front, behind was quite a large lawn, with shrubs, and trees, and flowers, and a high brick wall round it, against which apple, pear, and plum-trees

spring-time to find the crocuses and snowdrops peeping up through the brown earth, and the trees all bedecked with blossom and leaves, that for weeks to come the smoke and the grime of the city did not seem to soil. But notwithstanding all this, we thought about the country as a kind of far-off

fairy land, and our annual summer visit to Uncle Alfred's great farm was something to look forward to months before the time came round, and to talk and dream about months after it was past and gone.

Uncle Alfred was a bachelor, but he dearly loved children, and was so good-natured, and pleasant, and nice, that we used to fight for places on his knee, and those of us who couldn't get up hung around his easy-chair, or squatted on his footstool beside him. It was so delightful to hear him telling stories about all our country friends and favourites—of course I mean the live stock about the farm, not human friends. We never failed to inquire about each and all of them every time he came up, and used to ply him with questions that few save Uncle Alfred would have taken the trouble to answer.

"Oh yes!" he would tell us; "old Dobbin the mare was as motherly-looking as ever, and would be delighted to carry four of us on her back when we came down again; and the filly, oh! it was growing, to be sure, though as yet it looked nought but legs; and Jemmy the donkey seemed to be getting wiser-like every day; and the brown cow that cropped the lawn still licked the milkmaid's hair, and it was the cow that had sent us the cream and the sweet butter, to show she hadn't forgotten us; and the game-cock was more impudent and independent than ever; and the big sow, that always said 'Yes,' when spoken to, and threw herself down to be scratched, wasn't a bit altered; and Bruce, the Highland sheep-dog, cocked his head and barked whenever any of our names were mentioned." And so on.

But one winter I fell ill of whooping-cough, and did not seem to get easily over it.

"Send him down to the country," said Uncle Alfred, who paid us a visit one fine day in spring; "that'll make him all right in a month or two."

So it was arranged that I should go with uncle.

Oh, didn't my brothers and sisters envy me! they thought it quite hard that they hadn't had the whooping-cough as badly as I.

I promised to bring them something nice when I returned, but at the time I had no idea what it would be.

Now, it is no part of my intention to tell you how I enjoyed myself in the country, at dear old uncle's farm. Suffice it to say I did enjoy myself, as only a town boy could have done, and I seemed to get better every day, and in less than a month could boast of a pair of rosy cheeks and a sunburnt brow, that said well for the way I fared. There was not an animal about all the place I did not make friends with, and even the wild birds that built in the tree-tops and hedgerows never seemed the least

bit in the world afraid of me. It is somewhat strange, though I am very glad, that it never occurred to me to get a young bird, and try to rear it. It was great fun to watch the lovely creatures, however, and listen to their songs.

I was an early riser, and one of my chief delights used to be watching the starlings. There was a cottage on the farm in which, I dare say, somebody at some time or other had dwelt, but which was now given up to the rats. Not that these busybodies occupied the whole of the cottage, for the starlings had taken possession of its chimneys: there they built their nests and brought forth their young, and there on sunshiny mornings they were in the habit of holding high carnival.

I used to laugh as I looked up at them, for although they made plenty of noise, and were evidently impressed with the idea that they were singing most melodiously, there was no more music in it than you could get out of the frying-pan by scraping it with a knife.

One day there was an unusual uproar among the starlings. One of their young ones had fallen down the chimney, and I believe I entered only just in time to prevent it from being devoured by the rats.

What a beautiful, funny little innocent it was, to be sure! Not a bit like the old ones, with a broad yellow mouth, which it gaped when I went to pick it up, and no tail at all worth mentioning. If I could have done so, I should have placed it back in the nest to which it belonged; but this I knew I could not do, as I did not know from which one it had fallen.

So I thought, "Oh, if I could only keep it, and tame and rear it, what a nice present to take home to my brothers and sisters!"

I was more successful than I could have dreamed of being.

I placed it in a tiny wire cage in my bedroom window all day, and, strange to say, its parents came and fed it. I took it in all night, and it screamed so early in the morning that I had to get up, and feed it with peas-pudding and worms, that I had gathered the night before, and then go back to bed again.

I have kept many strange pets since poor Josie died, but never one whose whole life and history formed a better example of the power of kindness, and to this day I have a soft heart towards starlings.

My Josie never had any fear. He was the boldest, not to say the most impudent, bird ever I had.

Why did I call him Josie? I did not name him so. He himself fancied the name, and took to it.

There was at my uncle's a horse called Josie, and when I hung the bird's cage on a nail outside the window, which I did every morning at four o'clock, for peace sake, he used to listen to all the sounds about the farm, and soon learned them.

In less than four months Josie not only could pipe a simple tune, but he could talk, and did talk constantly all day, except when doing mischief: then he was so very quiet that some one always went to see what he was about.

He was never confined to his cage, but slept there, and could retire whenever he wished. He used to follow me about the garden, and if he did not know the ins and outs of every shrub and flower in it, it was not for the want of examining them, and in about six months he was a very good linguist.

He was very fond of the old horse called Josie, whose name he had adopted. He would sit between his ears, and call out, "Gee up, gee up, Josie!" most clearly.

Then he would whistle on the dog, then crow like the game-cock, or mew like the cat, then pipe a bit of a tune, and finish off by pecking the horse's brow, and crying, "Gee up, Josie, gee up!"

My uncle was delighted with him, and after one of Josie's little performances would nearly always say to me—

"Well, well, isn't it funny?"

Josie soon learned this, and though he never laughed himself, whenever any of us laughed Josie would cock his eye, and inquire with such a knowing air, "Isn't it funny?"

I could not attempt to describe the delight and wonder of my little sisters and brothers when they became acquainted with Josie, on my return to town.

They had read of birds that talked, but had never seen one before, and were at first a little afraid of him.

As soon as Josie got out of his cage, he flew straight to the fender, very much to the surprise and alarm of pussy. But Joe perched there, turning his back on her, and spreading out his wings to the kindly blaze.

Pussy eyed the bird with her ears back, but when he coolly remarked, "Joe's cold, poor Josie's co—co—cold. That's it, co—old. Isn't it funny?" then pussy flew out of the room, and we did not see her again for a week.

But pussy and he got good friends at last, and it was highly amusing to see them both eating out of the same dish.

Sometimes he used to peck at her in mere wantonness; then pussy would hit at him with a

gloved hand, on which Josie would back a step or two, and say—

"Oh! you rascal! you ra—ra—rascal! Me—aw—me—aw. Come on, come on. Poor Josie. Isn't it funny?"

Whenever Josie got a little excited he suffered from a nervous impediment in his speech. But at all times his speeches were about the most ridiculously amusing pieces of oratory ever anyone listened to. Simply a jumble of nonsense. Here is one, so you can judge for yourself. It began with whistling, and the words that followed were brought out with surprising rapidity:

"Whew, whew, whew. Me—aw—meaw, call the cat, call the cat; pretty, pretty, pretty cold, call the cock, call the cold, gee up, poor Jo—Jo—Jo—Josie, whew, whew, whew, isn't it funny?"

Josie soon became perfectly at home in town; he used to fly about the garden with us children, often perched upon our heads, more often on a bush, or even on the wall. Sometimes he used to fly up to the house-top, and have a little conversation with the sparrows, but suddenly he would startle them all with a wild "me—aw!" and thinking the cat was after them, off they would fly. Then Josie would look all round in astonishment, and finding himself alone down he would come again, and settle with us perhaps, saying to himself, "Poor Jo, Jo, Josie, isn't it funny?"

Poor Josie indeed! I cannot tell you how very much we all loved him; even the servants were fond of him, although he was constantly doing mischief of some kind in the kitchen. He was so inquisitive, he must see into everything. His beak did duty for a chisel and hammer both. He opened or bored through every little parcel that came in; he was never tired of examining the servants' straw bonnets, ribbons, and hats, and that did not at all improve them.

When any of my sisters got a new doll, Josie was never content until he had seen the sawdust; and all the satisfaction my sisters got from Jo was this remark, "Isn't it fu—fu—funny?"

Alas for our pet! a strange cat one day laid his back open with her claws.

We bore him in, and laid him tenderly by the fire. But he never rightly rallied.

And about the third day he staggered on to the fender.

"Poor Jo," he said; "Jo is co—co—cold. Isn't it —"

He never spoke more. We buried him under an apple-tree on which many a song he had sung, many the laugh he had given us. Then we placed him in a cigar-box. And in the bark of the tree I cut the letters—POOR JOSIE. ARION.

# The Battle of Ispahan

By Adda Palmer Roberts

Illustrated By  
Charles Speland

The children played and prattled away,  
They had heard of some far-off Eastern fray:  
One boasted of glorious Suakan,

Another of beautiful Ispahan -  
Two cities that stood within the gates  
Made up of chairs and books and slates.

A citadel each city near, (spear,  
Armed well with battle-ax and  
Brooms, and bats, and various things)

Then forward marched two warlike Kings  
Such valiant soldiers Kate and Fred,  
With baby Tloy, and little Ned,  
(Cat and Kittens, and old dog Tray:

A bugle-blast announced the fray.

(Twas a dinner-korn but what of that?)  
It frightened the dog and ruffled the cat  
Loud beat the drum! ('twas an old tin pan)  
On to the storming of Ispahan!

Skriell the deafening cry arose,  
The sharp "huzzah" of rallying foes,  
Then quick! o'er the ramparts leaping high  
Went traitor dog, and feline spy:  
Down fell the crumbling castle walls,  
Mid sundry bumps, and shrieks and falls,  
Alas! for the glory of Suakan,  
And the vaunted beauty of Ispahan.





## AMERICAN WOMEN.

BY AN ENGLISHWOMAN.

**B**OTH in England and in America there are numbers of women who have had no systematic training in youth, have never learned a single thing thoroughly, who have, perhaps, small mental power, yet who, through adverse circumstances, are thrown on their own resources, and have to maintain themselves. Such women are to be pitied, and their parents are to be blamed. Riches, even the greatest fortunes, do sometimes make for themselves wings, but that middle-class girls may some time in the course of their lives have to earn their own bread is an idea that seldom seems to enter the head of middle-class parents. But the American woman has not the double misery to contend against that her English sister has. Wealth is as powerful, and as much sought after, in the States as in the United Kingdom; but one erroneous, baneful opinion concerning it does not exist to the same extent. So long as the opinion exists in England that the only standard by which men and women are to be adjudged worthy is the standard of wealth, so long will English women in reduced circumstances have a harder lot than American women similarly situated. This baneful opinion does exist in England as it exists nowhere else in the world, one result of the enormous and rapid development of wealth and mistaken teachings of parents, especially some of those belonging to the middle-class.

Before saying anything about the avenues of employment open to educated women in America, it may not be amiss to compare the position of English and American women. All over America women enjoy an amount of consideration which strikes everyone, and which they do not enjoy to the same extent in England. This is especially true of the

lower and lower-middle classes. How often the English workman looks upon his wife as a sort of slave; how rarely the American workman does so. How often the English workman answers for his sin in this respect before a magistrate; how exceptional is a similar case in America. It was John Stuart Mill who gave it as his opinion that "the subordination of one sex to the other was wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement, and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side or disability on the other." Time has shown that John Stuart Mill was right. The tendency in England, so far as women are concerned, is admitted to be a "levelling-up" tendency, but Englishmen are far behind their American brethren in this respect. Both socially and legally women occupy a higher position in both the United States and Canada than they do in England. Those among them who are compelled to earn their own livelihood, those who have met with adverse fortune, and from leaders in society have become dependents upon it, have not the same buffets to contend against or the same coldness shown them as their sisters in similar circumstances have in England. The writer is well aware that the conditions of society in the New World are different to what they are in the Old, but this is no adequate reason for the greater respect shown to women in the one place than in the other. In the western portions of the American continent women are comparatively few; in some communities, such as Salem and Lowell, Massachusetts, they outnumber the men by five or six to one, and yet their great preponderance in the New England States

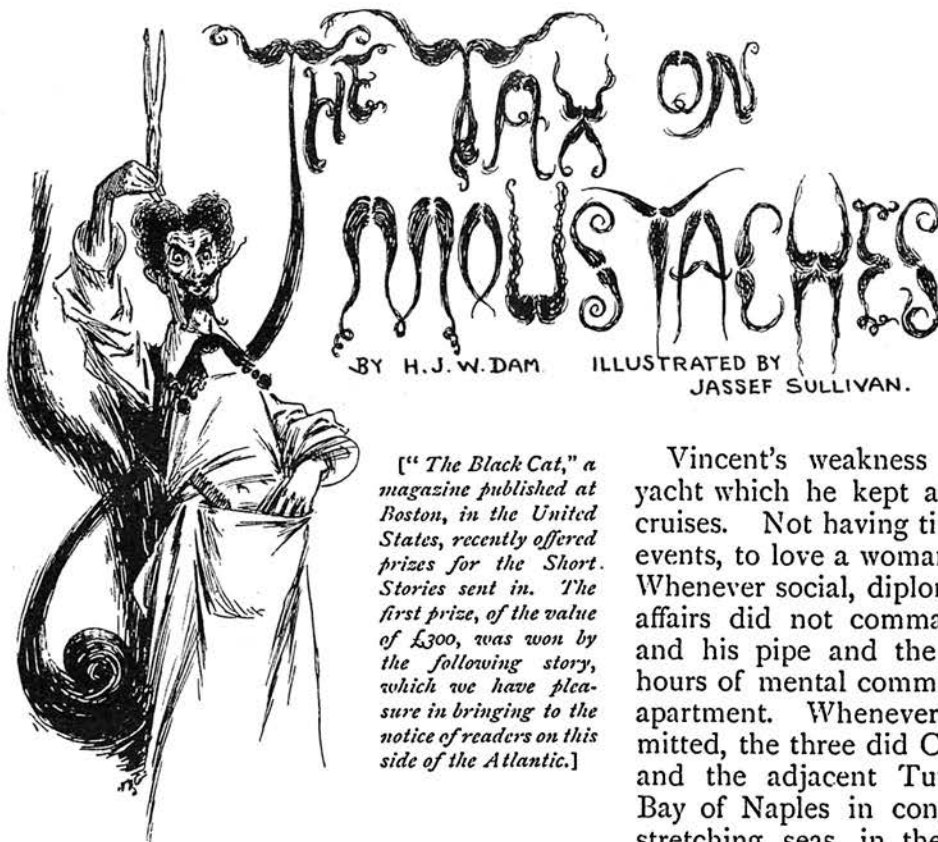
does not lessen the respect and consideration shown them by men. Perhaps the greater respect shown to women in America and Canada is due to the women themselves. They are certainly not more ladylike than English girls, but the writer believes they are more inflexibly obstinate, and look for and demand a homage which would be abhorrent to an English girl. The average girl in the new world knows perfectly well how to take care of herself, and rather prides herself on the possession of a stiff neck instead of a manageable spine. If her moral courage is not greater than that of her English sister, her independent will certainly is, and, having made up her mind and put her foot down, it is no trifle will make her budge. The phrase "bread and butter miss," which one hears in England, is never heard in America. There may be nothing very grand in this female tenacity—nothing heroic—and men may prefer that gentle pliability and timidity which they expect to find in women; but in the battle of life—the battle for existence—it is the bending, weak, and supple who go to the wall.

The education of women in America is far more utilitarian in character than is the education of women in England. It is surprising that this should be the case when it is borne in mind that one of the results of English modern forms of life is, that there are far more marriageable women than men, and that, polygamy being out of the question, many women will never attain their ideal, and will consequently have to labor and earn their daily bread. What appears to be the aim and end of a girl's boarding-school education in England? Simply marriage, and how to become most attractive with a view to promote marriage.

There are many situations in life which unmarried women can usefully fill, yet how little they have been educated to fill them. Adverse fortune comes, the unforeseen and the unexpected happen, the most rigid economy has to be exercised, and the girls in the family find themselves compelled, without any previous training or experience, to shift for themselves. The American young lady is not handicapped in a similar manner. Her tastes and her habits may in many cases be such as could be dispensed with, but, compared with her English cousin, she is far

better adapted by experience and education to fight her own battles. She may dress more "loudly" than the English lady, may have a liking for chewing gum, and may be fond of pickles between meals; she may address young men by their Christian names before she has known them a week; but with all her eccentricities, sent to the public schools of America at an early age, where she meets all sorts and conditions of young people, she acquires a practical knowledge unknown to girls of her own station of life in England. Precociousness may not be a thing to admire, and a little of it satisfies. Many American girls would be more lovable if they possessed less of it, but when stern necessity drives and a young woman has to do what she never expected to do, and has to face a cold, harsh world, precociousness is better than timidity.

Both in England and America there are two kinds of young ladies to meet in society. There is the girl born with a gift for system and administration, unselfish, industrious, quick to learn, or, as they say in America, "smart." There is the other girl who is sometimes slangy, generally careless, frivolous, and dressy. It is the former of these two types of young lady who feels the altered circumstances of life the more keenly. The latter may or may not lose her womanly refinement and attributes amid lowered surroundings. The former never will. No matter how bitter the task, how coarse her companions, how hard her toil, she will bravely struggle on, retaining as brightly as ever all that makes woman lovable. Surely such women are too good to be cast upon the world totally unprepared to meet what may possibly be the experience of all. Previous training can do much to ameliorate a condition which, unhappily, is the lot of many, but which training is greatly neglected in England. And this is the more surprising when the fact is remembered that a very large number of women seem to have roused themselves, and are willing to apply themselves heart and soul to all studies that may be set before them, and are open to them. In America, as well as in England, a great movement is going on among women for the amelioration of the condition of women. It is to be hoped that it will continue in ever-widening circles until all women are brought under its influence.



[*"The Black Cat,"* a magazine published at Boston, in the United States, recently offered prizes for the Short. Stories sent in. The first prize, of the value of £300, was won by the following story, which we have pleasure in bringing to the notice of readers on this side of the Atlantic.]



HE rivalry between Vincent and Halladay was bitter enough before Miss Belmayne appeared. It then assumed an aspect almost Corsican.

Vincent was the Rome correspondent of the London *Thunderer*. Halladay was the Roman representative of the London *National*. Vincent was an Oxford man; Halladay's intellectual credentials were dated at Cambridge. Vincent was of middle height, dark, lithe, and athletic. He had an electric energy, and quick, penetrating brown eyes, with a merry light in them that was attractive; also a brown moustache that approached the feminine ideal. Halladay was of stouter and flabbier build, with a blonde, sharp-pointed beard, and a face like Lord Salisbury's. Lord Salisbury was, in fact, secretly his model. He was the cousin of a peer, but notwithstanding this drawback had managed to develop a value of his own, which shows his great force and determination. He was also five years older than Vincent, who was only thirty-one; and in the game of life, if not of love, years have a distinct value of their own. Both men drew lavish salaries, moved in the highest society of Rome, and were polished carpet cavaliers and very popular. Both, too, had weaknesses which revealed their temperaments and are correlated forces in this narrative.

Vincent's weakness was a small sloop yacht which he kept at Naples for vacation cruises. Not having time, in the pressure of events, to love a woman, he loved his yacht. Whenever social, diplomatic, or international affairs did not command his attention, he and his pipe and the yacht had charming hours of mental communion together in his apartment. Whenever leave of absence permitted, the three did Capri, Sorrento, Ischia, and the adjacent Turner paintings of the Bay of Naples in congenial company. On stretching seas, in the calm and gorgeous afterglow, he dreamed of a possible fair one in the nebulous future. This showed his temperament to be romantic.

Halladay's weakness was "The War Cloud in the Balkans." Whenever other news failed he would knit his editorial brow and use his portentous ink and see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces. One can always see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces, and they make an excellent frame on which to hang long and sweeping periods dealing with possible international complications. From which it will be seen that Halladay was ambitious. He always used the most majestic polysyllables that fitted, and these won him the reputation of a powerful and far-seeing correspondent, which reputation he confidently believed that he deserved.

These diverse temperaments caused the two men to secretly scorn each other, and this feeling was not diminished by their alternating newspaper triumphs, important bits of news from the Quirinal or the Ministries, which fell now to one and now to the other, and caused the usual variations of anger and delight.

Thus it was when Miss Belmayne and her parents arrived at the Grand Hotel for the winter. Parents are, of course, of no importance, but it may be mentioned that Mr. Belmayne had made stoves, and incidentally



accumulated two millions, on the shore of Lake Michigan. Miss Belmayne was one of those girls who, without effort, bowl over unprepared Englishmen like ten-pins. She had style, Paris style, and this, when the dressmaker is driven with an intelligent curb, is very fascinating. She was fairly tall, blonde, had ideas, dark-blue eyes, and a frank, sympathetic nature. All these exercised a novel and powerful influence on the two men. They met her on the same evening at a diplomatic reception. The charms mentioned were quite enough for Vincent. He went home, lighted his pipe, put on his slippers, looked at the fire, and said, "By Jove!" He said nothing more to the fire or anything else for two mortal hours. Then he said "By Jove!" again and went to bed. The same charms sufficed to stagger Halladay, but to them he added the two millions. He was older and more practical. He wrote his cousin the peer and told him to be sure to come to Rome that winter. Then he mentally watered his genealogical tree, resolved to lay siege to the beautiful Vicksburg with the firm patience of a Grant, and absently took a cold bath. This chilled him, at midnight, but did not check his ardour.

Miss Belmayne took Rome and the Forum and the Coliseum very seriously. This was a novelty to Vincent and Halladay, so they awoke to its grandeur, and took it very seriously indeed. They sent her books, and bronzes, and prehistoric pavements, and fragments of ancient palaces by the cartload. Papa Belmayne, who was indulgent, said he didn't particularly care for a macadamized drawing-room, and engaged another room to hold the ancient architecture. The attentions of the two men soon became constant and very marked. And through archæological mornings and afternoon drives, on the blocks of the Forum and the steps of the Coliseum, on the Pincian Hill and the roof of St.

Peter's, they fell deeper and deeper in love, but kept their own counsel. The dear girl was as yet unconscious of it, but they hated each other with the hate of the 1850-60 dramas. It was anything—all—to win the adorable beauty and sentence the other fellow to life-long despair.

The primal cause of all the subsequent trouble was Vincent's yacht. He had, on various occasions, shown Miss Belmayne the high responsibility of his position as correspondent of the *Thunderer*. Now and then he wrote his despatches at her hotel, after dinner, and two days later would read her the powerful, ponderous *Thunderer* editorials, which, telegraphed all over Europe, were based upon the despatches sent by him. This interested her tremendously. Like every true American girl of nowadays—in her ante-matrimonial, ante-babies - of - her - own period—she secretly longed to sway nations. To write despatches which set Europe and America in a ferment, which caused Salisbury, the German Emperor, and the Czar to instantly buckle on their skates, as it were, and dash off to do something final, seemed to her the only occupation worthy of woman or of man. She found

nothing so delightful as helping him, and he knew nothing so delightful as her help, notwithstanding that the hotel note-paper was scarcely the proper stationery to bear this freight of heavy thought. When the *Thunderer* arrived she would read the despatches with a thrill of interest born of her indirect connection with the great newspaper. Finally she wanted to write a despatch—just a little one—all by herself. He, reserving rights of correction and revision, consented. It was a safe contribution, not at all sensational, about the returns of the olive crop. She wrote it. She also read it, word for word, in print two days later. That experience was a crisis in her life. Destiny opened out its arms to her as a woman of might and power. Halladay lost ground visibly after that, and



MISS BELMAYNE.

had emotional neuralgia of the most torturing kind.

The cause of the trouble, as before stated, was the yacht. A dirty steam trader from Marseilles, while coming to anchor, had taken off the bowsprit of Vincent's secondary idol, together with a large slice of her peerless nose. It was like an accident to a highly esteemed female cousin. The best medical attention was instantly necessary. Vincent knew the Italians. He knew that, if he did not personally arrange the contract for repairs at Naples, the contractor who did them would afterwards own the yacht, bring suit against his personal fortune, and hold his family responsible for the balance of the money. In short, he had to go to Naples for two days. Miss Belmayne, strange to say, received the news with joy.

"I'll look after things. I'll send anything that's necessary to the *Thunderer*," she said.

He stared at her in astonishment.

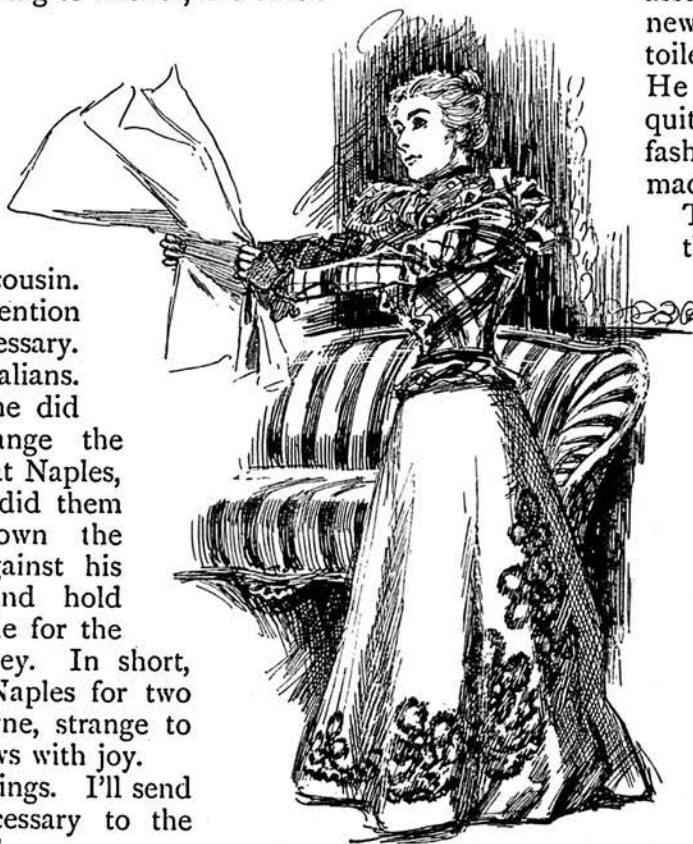
"Oh, do let me! Please do! I want to show you the breadth of my mind."

Events were very dull, journalistically. And when a beautiful girl wants to show you the breadth of her mind it is not only dangerous to say "No," but wise to say "Yes," that is, if you are as much in love as he was. He finally consented and she radiated enthusiasm. "Just read the papers if you *do* send anything, and be guided by them," said he. "But don't—er—don't send *too* much, and nothing that isn't important." Then he went away to single combat with the contractor. She couldn't do him any harm. If what she sent was bad it wouldn't be printed. And his consent to the proposal would certainly do him infinite good in connection with another proposal. Thus he mused, in love, and in the train to Naples.

Now, it is doubtless fully understood by all adult persons that when an American girl desires to show the breadth of her mind she is destined to show it at all hazards. The responsibility of her position weighed heavily upon Miss Belmayne. She came down to

breakfast next morning with a far-away look in her eyes and two brown prima-donna hair-curlers still nestling in the soft silken hair above her forehead. Papa Belmayne at first assumed that this was a new style in breakfast toilets, and said nothing. He could never keep quite abreast of the fashions, and he had made mistakes before.

Then he conceived that it might possibly be an evidence of strong, disturbing emotion, and ventured to inquire. She gravely removed the hair-curlers, and after striking her hair three skilful taps put them in her pocket. Then she cautiously whispered to him the news. She, SHE, was the Acting Rome Correspondent of the *Thunderer*! Papa was startled.



"SHE WOULD READ THE DESPACHES."

It flashed instantly upon his practical Chicago mind that with a wire like that something might be done in wheat. But, no—on second thought—that wouldn't do. Still, he was proud, very proud, of his daughter. He proceeded to like Vincent amazingly.

"We'll give the old *Thunderer* a lift, my dear, if anything happens. I'll furnish the statesmanship and you look out for the spelling and punctuation," said he. Halladay he had never liked. That gentleman's family tree and its luxuriant foliage had been exhibited several times in his presence, and it annoyed him. Not having dealt largely in trees in his career, he didn't believe in them. So Vincent stock rose clear above the hundred mark in the Belmayne family, and Halladays fell steadily to zero, with no offers.

Halladay knew this and fumed in secret. He also guessed at once from Miss Belmayne's words and questions the foolish thing that Vincent had done. He saw in it not only a clever move of his rival, but also an opportunity to spoil Vincent's chances and win Miss Belmayne with a single safe play.

He was devoted but thoughtful all that afternoon. Then he went away and meditated.

At ten that evening he entered the Belmayne drawing-room, sharp-pointed, immaculate, and smiling with a visible air of conscious triumph.

"Ha, ha, ha! Sorry for Vincent. Pity he's away," he said.

"Oh, what has happened? I've read all the evening papers," said the Acting Correspondent.

"Can't say, you know. Must keep a good thing to myself when I get it."

"Is it a very good thing?"

"Very."

"Is it a *big* thing?" This with fear and trembling.

"Biggest in months. May cause a rebellion in Italy. You know these Italians. Hair-trigger sort of people when anything happens that they don't quite like."

"Oh, Mr. Halladay, please tell me!"

He proceeded not to tell her, for the next half-hour, in the cleverest way possible. He dangled the bait before her and cruelly enjoyed her attempts to seize it. He saw with concealed fury, however, that her anxiety was the tender anxiety that he most greatly feared. This armed him in his resolve, and having excited her curiosity till it was painful, he went downstairs.

"What is it, my dear?" said Belmayne.

Miss Belmayne was dumb with disappointment. She loved Vincent—she knew it in that moment—and he would be dreadfully beaten, without excuse, and perhaps lose his position. Because of their compact he had even failed to notify the *Thunderer* of his absence.

"I've missed the greatest news of the year," she said, sharply. "Do go down to the smoking-room. They're sure to be talking about it. Follow Halladay, and see to whom he speaks. We *must* get something about it."

Papa Belmayne was stout, vigorous, fifty-five, and came from Chicago. His hair was curly and showed only a few white lines.

Spurred by parental love and a desire for something to do that was slowly undermining his constitution, he followed Halladay like the species of hound which is called sleuth. His eyes twinkled and his blood was up. He had always known that anybody can be a newspaper correspondent, and he enjoyed trying it. He quickly found Halladay in the smoking-room and kept his eye on him. Halladay observed this and was deeply glad. It was as he had hoped. Belmayne had fallen heels over head into his trap.

Halladay was in earnest, low-toned conversation with Sir George Perleybore, a tall, thin, white-haired, perfectly groomed baronet, of any age above sixty-five, the kind of lay figure met everywhere in the best hotels of the south of Europe during winter. Sir George was astonished. Papa Belmayne saw this plainly, and lay low like Brer Rabbit. Halladay finally went away. Papa then greeted Sir George carelessly and proposed a whisky - and - soda. Also cigars. Sir George said:

"Most extraordinary! Wouldn't have believed it. What'll these beggars do next?" Papa swelled with repressed eagerness. Then it all came out. He got it — every word of it — and chuckled at his own diplomacy.

Then he flew to the elevator.

"Now I know what I'm talking about, my dear," he said, when her burst of joy was over. "I understand these things and you don't. I haven't been a State senator two terms for nothing. You sit down and take your pen and I'll dictate."

Papa expanded like a balloon, walked the floor, and dictated. He measured every word by cubic measurement. He dictated the short despatch four times and half of another time in all. She wrote and scratched out and turned the dictionary pages feverishly, and thought how clearly Edward would see the breadth of her mind.

And neither Edward nor the *Thunderer* knew the doom that was impending.

When the despatch was finally completed she knew that she could have expressed it much more elegantly, but papa was inexorable.



HALLADAY.

He'd tell the story in America, by jiminy, and he wanted to read his own despatch in the London *Thunderer*. So she copied it in a bold, round hand, signed Vincent's cipher, gave it to Vincent's commissionaire, who

columns which were held to be as infallible as the multiplication table itself. This was the despatch:—

#### ITALY.

[From our own Correspondent.]

I saw Signor Crespo this evening, and learned from him that the new and important item in the Budget, the new source of revenue which has been promised and upon which great hopes have been based, will take the form of a national tax upon moustaches. In his Bill, which he will introduce in the Chamber to-morrow, it will be provided that every citizen of Italy wearing a moustache shall pay a sumptuary tax thereupon of one lira yearly. In the ordinary course this tax will yield the twenty million lire per annum which are so greatly needed and whose source up to now it has been impossible to discover. Of course a certain amount of opposition from the Left is confidently to be expected. The tax on moustaches will undoubtedly afford an opportunity to the Socialists to champion individual rights and protest against interference therewith; but on the other hand, the Clerical wing are certain to view the innovation with favour. The popular acceptance of the measure is, however, difficult to forecast.

This was probably the most nonsensical despatch that has ever appeared in any newspaper, great or small. The editor had looked at it, incredulous. The

leader writer said, "H'm, it's neck or nothing with Crespo." Only Vincent's cipher and the condition of Italy made belief possible; but it was believed. This was the leader:—

The extraordinary course which has been adopted by the Prime Minister of Italy in order to replenish the national treasury is so radical an extension of the general principle of taxation that neither its wisdom nor its result can yet be declared with any degree of certainty. Statistics do not, unfortunately, furnish us with the number of Italian citizens who at the period of the last census were wearing moustaches. It is a well-known fact, however, that the custom of cultivating hair in an ornamental form upon the upper lip is, perhaps, more firmly established as a national habit in Italy than in any other country of the world at the present time. The first lesson of this proposed legislation is its certain indication of the extreme, if not hopeless, financial straits into which the monarchy has fallen. The second is the very doubtful character of the tax itself as a reliable source of revenue, when viewed from the standpoints of expediency and of successful enforcement. It will be necessary for legislation to establish with perfect clearness not only what a moustache legally is, but



"PAPA EXPANDED LIKE A BALLOON."

called at eleven, and both she and papa went to bed feeling very well indeed.

At ten o'clock the next morning—Roman time—the face of Europe wore a fearful geographical frown. Consternation, perplexity, and uncertainty ruled in five empires. From Downing Street the news went under the Channel to the Paris Elysée and overland to the winter palaces of Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. In her honest attempt to sway nations, the dear girl had succeeded. The Thrones sent messengers to the Foreign Offices; the Foreign Offices wired the Ambassadors, and neither wire nor cable could work half fast enough to please the respective senders. When the Stock Exchanges opened, Italian Rentes fell six points, and their allies weakened in proportion. The smash had come. Italy was bankrupt and the Triple Alliance would fall to pieces. It all arose from a despatch and a leading article in the columns of the London *Thunderer*, those

also at what age, both of the wearer and of the moustache itself, it becomes taxable; and in these two directions, to say nothing of the popular acceptance or rejection of the measure, the visible difficulties are both many and great, etc., etc.

On that very afternoon a man in a yachting suit went over the side of a yacht at Naples and was rowed to the pier. He was happy and buoyant with the buoyant happiness of the man who loves and is loved. Upon reaching the pier he bought the second edition of the *Corriere di Napoli*, and glanced at the telegraph columns. The *Thunderer* despatch had been cabled back to Naples, and under sensational headlines was the first to meet his eye.

His first thought was that he was losing his mind and inventing the telegram. Then something flashed upon him, and his heart seemed to stop beating. He staggered to the curb of the pier, sat down, and shut his eyes. He was never sure afterwards whether he fainted or not. For five minutes he knew only the silent whirl of agonized thoughts. He grasped at once what had happened. It was Halladay's work, and Halladay had ruined him. The *Thunderer* was the laughing-stock of Europe, and he, as the responsible sender of that despatch, was journalistically done for. Ambition spoke first, and the pain was of the bitterest. Love spoke next, but with all his rage and despair he could not find the power to be harsh to Miss Belmayne. "The dear girl!" he said. "She did her best, and that scoundrel fooled her completely. Oh, oh, oh!" And he squeezed his head with his hands as if to shut out the thought of his position and the inevitable consequences that he must face.

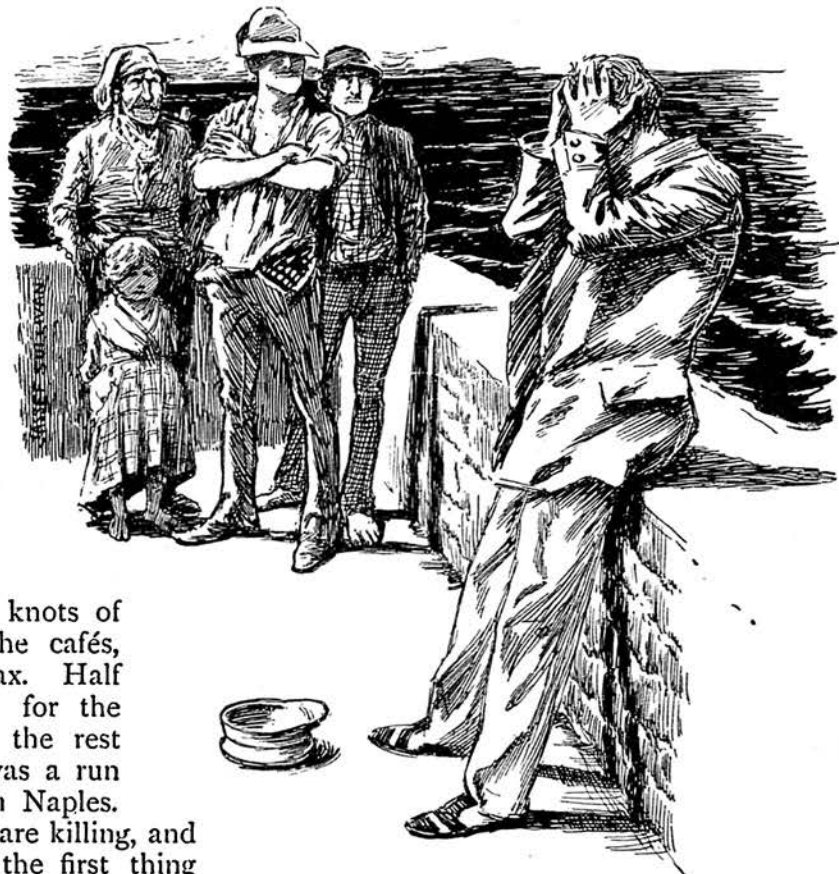
A little knot of loungers had gathered, his evident pain exciting their sympathy. This recalled him to himself, and he took a cab and drove away. Little knots of men stood in front of all the cafés, excitedly discussing the new tax. Half of them were clean-shaven for the first time in their lives, and the rest were about to be. There was a run on every hairdresser's shop in Naples. The Italian is poor, the taxes are killing, and the art of dodging them is the first thing taught to children. Vincent still held the

paper, and now read its comments on the tax. They combined a scream of sarcastic laughter with a howl of furious rage. Italy had been touched on the spot that was tenderest. But—and here was a gleam of hope—the reputation of the *Thunderer* was so high that the despatch had been taken seriously. The "sell" had not yet been exposed. If only Crespo would save him—but, no! Crespo's position, already imperilled by a crisis, was worse than his own. Crespo would want to shoot him on the spot.

He caught the 2.40 train and rode to Rome in a state of numbness. What he would do to Halladay he did not dare to think. He was a man in a rage, a hungry, thirsty rage, that threatened to overpower him. Nor did he dare to go to his apartment. There lay the telegram dismissing him in derision and contempt. In his sorrow his heart turned to love for consolation. Arrived at Rome he drove to the hotel, entered Miss Belmayne's drawing-room with a white, sad face, and sat in the shadow.

The Acting Correspondent came in radiant, beaming with pride and pleasure over her shrewdness and success.

"Have you seen it? It's in the Roman papers. You didn't get beaten. Oh, I was



"A LITTLE KNOT OF LOUNGERS HAD GATHERED."

so worried, and so happy when I knew you were safe!"

She stopped, mystified at his silence. Then she saw his pallor and his expression.

"Are you ill? What is it? What's the matter?"

He tried to spare her; tried to pass the matter over lightly. But the moment she knew that the despatch had caused his trouble all subterfuges were useless. Her face, too, grew white, and she kept on asking him question after question, till she fully understood the effect of what she had done. His ruin was certain, but his replies were gentle, quiet, and full of sympathy. Then the society girl known as Miss Belmayne disappeared, and the woman in her came out. His career was ended, and through his love for her. The big, beautiful girl stood up, tried to say she was sorry, but couldn't. Her lips only quivered and wouldn't work. Then she sat down, bolt upright on the sofa, and the tears came first creeping and then tumbling down from her eye-lashes as she cried, broken-hearted, without a word or a handkerchief. He tried to soothe her, to say it was nothing. "Oh, Edward!" was all she said.

In spite of his grief he observed the word "Edward."

Upon this interesting and unconventional social tableau bustled in Papa Belmayne, of Chicago, millionaire and newspaper correspondent. He saw a white young man and a young person bathed in tears.

"Wha—what's the matter?" said he, starting and peering over his eye-glasses.

"I'm done for, but it's all my own fault," said the young man.

Papa inquired and was told. He sat down suddenly in a state of collapse.

"If that sneak comes here again, I'll cowhide him," he said, exploding. "I'll thrash him anyhow. Anyhow!" he roared, with the rage of an honest man who has been beaten at his own game.

Then several minutes of sad, solemn silence ensued, each trying to find a ray of light in the gloom.

"Why don't you see Crespo? He's a friend of yours, isn't he?" said Belmayne.

"He has been."

"Then come on. Laura, you come with

us. We did it. We're responsible, and we'll take the blame. Crespo is the only man that can save you. Here! Order me a carriage!" he shouted to the maid.

The combative financier, who had faced and won a hundred battles that were real battles, was not to be daunted by a Prime Minister and a newspaper and a little thing like this. His courage, of course, infected his daughter. With father at the helm everything would, of course, be all right. It must be all right. So she hoped once more, and darted away for hat-pins. While waiting for her and the hat-pins at the elevator another thing occurred. Belmayne put his hand in a friendly way on Vincent's shoulder and said: "Young man, don't you worry. If you have to give up journalism, you may possibly do much better than that. I know you, and I like you." Vincent nodded quietly. The implied promise was well meant, but it did not appeal to him just then. They drove to the Quirinal Hill in silence. The Acting Correspondent merely asked her father if her hat was on straight. She secretly proposed to take the Prime Minister by storm.



"OH, EDWARD!" WAS ALL SHE SAID."

Now, during all these woful occurrences Chance, which, as everybody knows, is the prime minister of Providence, was playing tricks upon another Prime Minister, the temporary ruler of Italy. Signor Crespo was at his wits' end over the new tax measures. In order to pass them he had to yield to the demands of the Socialist-Anarchist wing of his party, and if he failed

to pass them he fell from power. One alternative was as distasteful as the other, and he was rapidly growing grey in his efforts to find a way out of the dilemma. When the *Thunderer* despatch was brought him he jumped to his feet in amazement. Then he scratched his head and said, "Ah!" Then he smiled a smile of joy. He foresaw something.

Two minutes afterwards the double doors of his private room were burst open and a portly marquis, one of his enemies in the Cabinet, rushed in and said: "Crespo—for Heaven's sake——"

The Prime Minister said nothing.

Other high politicians of his party, rivals and enemies, rushed in and cried: "Crespo—for Heaven's sake——"

Signor Crespo said nothing.

The King sent a noble duke hot-footed to say: "Crespo—for Heaven's sake——"

The Prime Minister still said nothing, but in different words.

In half an hour they were all on their knees, all the opposing elements he had spent months in trying to combine. They accepted the tax on moustaches as a fact, and saw that, in revenge on them, he was going to ruin the party. They begged him not to propose it. He consented—on conditions. They agreed abjectly to his terms, told him to count on their votes, and, when the Chamber met, passed his Budget, which they had previously agreed to defeat, by a huge majority.

This is why the Prime Minister, who had made inquiries, was also eager to see the Acting Correspondent who had sent that despatch. Being a devout man, however, he looked upon the real sender as Providence.

The carriage party entered the Ministry. To Vincent it seemed to be wrapped in accusing gloom. It was his farewell to the Prime Minister, both as friend and correspondent. Nevertheless, he wrote on his card: "With Mr. and Miss Belmayne to explain that despatch."

They were silently ushered in and stood in the great man's presence, three drooping figures, guilty and downcast. Belmayne was not happy. He was not used to cringing

before anybody. Laura's eyes were full of new tears. She would sway no more nations, whatever the temptation. Vincent was pale and grave.

For some reason the Prime Minister began to laugh. He had not felt like laughing for three months, and he enjoyed the feeling. He laughed till the tears came into his eyes.

Vincent was angry.

"Does it strike you as comical?" said he.

"Comical? It's providential. See here," said Signor Crespo, pointing to a pile of at least a hundred telegrams. "All Europe wants information about your despatch. I mean Miss Belmayne's despatch," he said, bowing gracefully.

"Then you—you understand how it happened?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, you—you've exposed it?"

"Oh, no. They thought I meant it. It has saved the situation."

"What?" said Vincent, thunderstruck.

"And in return, my friend, I have saved you. The *Thunderer*, unable to get an answer from you, telegraphed me for indorsement. I sent this:—

"The *Thunderer*, London.

"In consequence of concessions from opposing elements I shall not present my proposed tax on moustaches. "CRESPO."

"BY JOVE!" said Vincent.

"EDWARD!" screamed somebody.

"Hurrah!" said Belmayne.

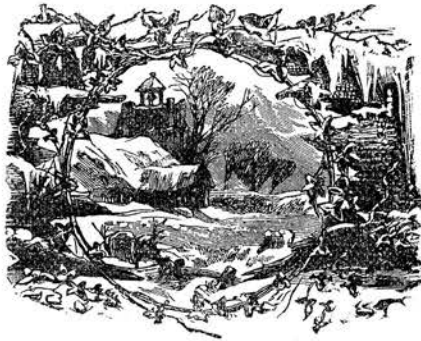
And Edward's arms were filled with sudden millinery, and two hearts were filled with deepest joy.

Two events of different kinds succeeded.

Halladay was abused by the *National* for missing the most important news of the year. When he gave a true explanation of the matter he was scoffed at. It was visibly false. He then proceeded to turn to a pale but not unbecoming green colour. The doctors said liver; the cause was unrequited love.

The other event was a social function of a happy, even hilarious, character, at the Grand Hotel. This is not of importance, however, in a country where orange-blossoms are indigenous.





## USEFUL HINTS.

Two recipes given for removing spots of mould on fabrics—one by first rubbing them over with butter, and afterwards applying potassa moistened with a little water, and then rubbing the spot, when all traces of it will disappear. The other method directs that the mark be first wet with yellow sulphide of ammonia, by which it will immediately blackened. After allowing it a minute or two to penetrate, the excess of sulphide is to be washed out, and the black spot treated with cold diluted chlorohydric acid, by which it is at once removed. Finally, wash well with water. This method is said to avoid the serious objection of weakening and rotting the fibre.

**COPYING INSCRIPTIONS FROM MONUMENTAL STONES.**—The copying of monumental stones is a pleasant and interesting amusement. Lay cartridge paper on the stone you wish to copy and rub it with heel-ball, which is to be got at any shoemaker's. The most perfect impression of any stone will thus be obtained. In a few instances, where there is a good deal of incised carving, such as coats-of-arms, floriated work, &c., or where the stone is much jagged and broken, substitute thin, white, glazed calico for the paper, the latter being liable to be torn by the rubbing.

**HOW TO KEEP BOUQUETS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL.**—There are many ways of preserving bouquets, some being pretty successful in keeping the flowers for a long time in all their beauty. Here is a new method we have recently met with: perhaps those of an experimental turn of mind will give it a trial. Sprinkle the bouquet lightly with fresh water and put it in a vase containing soap-suds. Each morning take the bouquet out of the suds and lay it sideways in clean water; keep it there a minute or two, then take it out and sprinkle the flower lightly by the hand with water. Replace it in the suds, and it will remain as fresh as when first gathered. Change the suds every three or four days. This method, it is said, will keep a bouquet bright and beautiful for at least a month.

**FOR GIVING A FINE GLOSS TO LINEN CUFFS, COLLARS, &c.**—Add a teaspoonful of salt and one of finely-scraped white soap to a pint of starch.

**TO CLEAN BLACK RIBBON.**—Boil an old black kid glove in a pint of water, and let it cool sufficiently to be held in the hand without burning it. If the ribbon is very dirty rinse it two or three times in clean water, then use the glove as a sponge, well washing the ribbon with the liquor in which the glove was boiled. Iron the ribbon when partly dry, placing paper over it instead of a cloth.

A kind reader sends us the following; the result, he says, of fifteen years' experience:—**RECIPE FOR "MEDIUM" FOR PAINTING ON CHINA.**—An excellent substitute for oil of turpentine, and answers equally well;

the only difficulty with it is that it takes longer to dry, which, in my opinion, is an advantage, as it enables the colours to be blended into one another more easily, and for a longer time. Dry the painting slowly before the fire, or in a cool oven, as soon as finished. By so doing the colours are less liable to attract lint or dust. By using this medium it is possible to do much more work, by painting the second time if the first painting be dried very slowly, so as not to burn the nature out of the colour. Half an ounce balsam of copaiba, twenty drops of oil of lavender; keep free from dust. Mix your colours same as usual.

**LEMON MARMALADE.**—Peel and quarter the lemons; soak the peel in water, with a pinch of salt, twelve hours; boil the same four to six hours, till quite soft; take out the peel and drain; scoop out the white, and cut rind into thin threads; divide the fruit, take out pips and white, and soak both the latter in the hot water in which the peel was soaked previously; then strain. Weigh the fruit and the peel; add an equal quantity of sugar to them; and to every 3 lbs. of fruit, peel, and sugar (all together), put  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint or (if you like it liquid)  $\frac{3}{4}$  pint of the strained water in which the peel and pips were soaked. Boil the whole together one hour, gently stirring and skimming. The above is also a good recipe for orange marmalade.

**RECIPE TO CLEAN SILKS, SATINS, AND RIBBONS.**—Take of honey quarter of a pound, soft soap quarter of a pound, soft water quarter of a pint, mix thoroughly. Apply it to the material to be cleaned as it lies on a table, and well brush it, more especially in the soiled places, with a nail-brush; rinse it then by dipping it in cold water, having provided two or three basins for the purpose, and dipping in each one after the other so as to cleanse it thoroughly; then hang it on a line to drain. As soon as the dripping has ceased, iron it on the wrong side. After this treatment it will not be found to look greasy or become stiff after the ironing.

**FURNITURE POLISH.**—Equal parts of oil and vinegar mixed. It cleans, in addition to giving a polish

**STAINS ON GOLD LACE.**—Remove the lace from the uniform and boil it (the lace) in hydrochloric acid slightly diluted. The acid will dissolve and remove the verdigris and leave the gold uninjured.

**JOHNNY CAKE.**—Take of Indian meal, three cupfuls; flour, two cupfuls; sugar, one cupful; carbonate of soda, one teaspoonful; mix all with buttermilk and bake.

**RAT EXTERMINATOR.**—The latest expedient for ridding a house of rats is furnished by a writer in the *Scientific American*, who says:—"We clear our premises of these detestable vermin by making whitewash yellow with copperas, and covering the stones and rafters in the cellar with a thick coat of it. In every crevice where a rat might tread we put the crystals of the copperas, and scatter the same in the corners of the floor. The result was a perfect stampede of rats and mice. Since that time not a squeak of either rats or mice has been heard about the house. Every spring a coat of the same yellow wash is given to the cellar as a purifier as well as a rat exterminator, and no typhoid, dysentery, or fever attacks the family."

**THE BEST POUND CAKE.**—Beat one pound of butter to a cream, one pound of eggs—weighed before broken—beaten till they froth for about twenty minutes; one pound of raisins (if desired), and one pound of sugar. When well mixed, add half a teaspoonful of milk, and work that in before putting it in the oven.

## A Play in Three Acts.

### ACT I.

A HOTEL at the seaside,  
Some music, and a ball,  
A partner for the lancers,  
A smile, and "Come and call."

### ACT II.

A row upon the harbor,  
A stroll a-down the pier,  
A "Call on me next fall in town;  
Now won't you, that's a dear?"

### ACT III.

A lofty brown-stone mansion,  
A richly furnished room,  
A servant-girl who comes anon  
And tells you, "Not at home."

George William Ogden.



## NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE VOSGES.

ALL over the world New Year's Day is a season of rejoicing; but in these prosaic times of ours there is not the same complete yielding up of families and nations to festivity as prevailed in a former age. Many good old customs have been left far behind in these locomotive, progressive, go-ahead days of ours. We give parties, and trust to creature comforts for the remainder of the entertainment. We have a little quiet dancing—not in the least like old-fashioned dancing; a little singing, perhaps with a conversational accompaniment by everybody in the place; a little charade acting. This is not the way our ancestors welcomed the new year; they were hearty and earnest, and meant to be merry, and not particularly "genteel." "Why are you not out a dancing with your mates?" said Jonas Hanway to a little chimney-sweeper, one fine May morning. The child of soot looked upon him with pity, and answered, "'Cause master says it ain't genteel!" The eyes of other people ruin us. What will Mrs. Grundy say? Over the way and next door are looking on; we must preserve the conventional forms of our order; we must not do as we like—we must do as our friends like.

Therefore is it many good old customs have been given over, and you only find them observed in out of the way places, where they have lingered for a while, but from which they will be finally swept away. Down in the country, at some old farmhouse, you have made merry at Christmas and New Year in a manner totally incompatible with the received notions of Gulliver Square and Lilliput Crescent. You know you have! Just because there were no prying eyes to watch you, and nobody to cry "Fie!"

It is precisely the same with our friends on the other side of the Channel. It is only in country parts that good old French customs are preserved. In the Vosges, for instance, the old and new year are still celebrated very much in the same way as they were centuries ago, when the Maid of Orleans fought with the sword of Deborah, and that "dove-feathered raven," Louis XI., plotted wickedness with his iniquitous barber.

Towards the close of the old year in the Vosges, specially in the festival of Saint Sylvester, troops of children parade the villages, singing an old song with the well-known burthen, "*Au gui l'an neuf*." The expressions in this song are varied, but the theme is invariably the same, indicating a common origin modified by the provincial dialect.

On New Year's Day all the children are accustomed to offer their congratulations to their parents, usually presented in the traditional mode, namely, wishing them long life and happiness in this world and the next. The youngest child is generally the mouth-piece of the rest. After the oration all the children embrace their parents and each other, and little cakes, called *vecks*, are distributed amongst them.

The grown-up folks, dressed in their Sunday clothes, and brave in ribbons, then march off to pay their respects to one another, or to take their children to visit their godfathers and godmothers, to whom they address similar compliments and good wishes to those which they have already offered to their natural parents. Each child receives a cake, called a *courrier*, and generally a piece of money, varying in





CELEBRATION OF NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS.

amount according to the wealth or generosity of the giver.

The out-door fête, which is the most interesting feature of the occasion, is usually celebrated near a fountain.

Part of the night preceding the dawn of the new year is devoted by the girls to preparing a sort of Maypole, or, rather, a gigantic Christmas tree. They produce for this purpose a young pine, or a young holly tree full of scarlet berries; this they decorate with ribbons, coloured eggs, little figures representing an amorous shepherd with a bouquet in his hand; a bad husband thrashing his wife; a trooper of ferocious aspect; or a village coquette in gala costume. Thus decorated, the tree is planted near the fountain, and the girls emulate each other in their efforts to make it as beautiful as possible.

During the day the villagers come to present their

homage to the tree, which is to occupy the same place for the whole year, and is regarded as a symbol of Heaven's protecting care over all those who shall gossip under its branches, or fetch water from the fountain.

When the evening sets in, the snow is carefully swept away from the roots of the tree, and the girls, forming a circle, sing and dance round it, the young fellows looking on, but not allowed, without special permission, to join in the amusement.

As the children's songs—to which allusion has already been made—differ in different parts, and at different times, but still bear marks of a common origin, so the girls' songs of the new year's tree are not always exactly the same, but are invariably of the same description. A verse or two of one of these Christmas songs most popular in the Vosges may be thus freely translated:—

We have planted the new year's tree,  
Its boughs are gaily dressed;  
But here no flower will blossom—  
No bird will build its nest.  
We love the tree as a sister,  
Our love is not in vain;  
The tree we'll guard all through the year  
Till Christmas comes again.

Lal! la! the new year's tree we raise,  
And dance a measure in its praise.

We have planted the new year's tree,  
Exerting all our powers,  
That it may bless us through the year,  
And prosper us and ours.  
For this tree is our sister  
So tender and so dear;  
As we go dancing round her now  
We christen the new year.

Lal! la! the new year's tree we raise,  
And dance a measure in its praise.

## Odds and Ends.

STILL another occupation for women; and to Miss Campbell, sister of Sir Guy Campbell, belongs the honour of its discovery. This is the selection of wedding and birthday presents. People who live in the country sometimes find it very difficult to run up to London, or to their nearest large town in search of presents, and it is for these people, and for those who would rather delegate the bewildering work of choosing presents to another's taste, that the ladies who take up this new occupation will work. A certain amount of knowledge and taste are required.

"ARE you aware that life is like a railway? One gets into deep cuttings and long dark tunnels, where one sees nothing, and hears twice as much noise as usual; and one can't read, one shuts up the window, and waits, and then it all comes clear again. Only in life it sometimes feels as if one had to dig the tunnel as one goes along, all new for oneself. Go straight on, however, and one is sure to come out into a new country, on the other side of the hills, sunny and bright."

A GLOUCESTERSHIRE gentleman is the owner of a watch of great historic value. It is one hundred and seventeen years old, and was carried by members of his family at the battles of Waterloo and Trafalgar, as well as through the principal battles of the Peninsular War. It also indicated the time to later descendants at Chillianwallah, and during the whole of the Indian Mutiny. Its owner generally wears it at the present time, and it is still in excellent preservation.

THE following is a little bewildering at first sight, but its truth is self-evident.  
"He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool—hear him."  
"He who knows not and knows that he knows not, is a child—teach him."  
"He who knows, and knows that he knows, is a king—follow him."

A LITTLE time ago the governor of an English county prison was much perturbed by the discovery that the female criminals managed, by some means that he could not fathom, to ascertain the presence of every individual male prisoner sitting on the other side of the high wooden barrier that separated the two sexes in the prison chapel. One day one of the women made an exclamation, showing that she had suddenly become aware that her husband was in the prison, although, according to all established rules, his presence should have been utterly unknown to her. This incident caused considerable dismay amongst the officials, who were quite at a loss to account for the means by which the recognition had been made. Then a most careful examination of the chapel was made, and the mystery was solved. Although the men and women sat apart, and were divided by the high wooden barrier over which it was impossible for them to see, they all faced the communion-table, above which was a large brass ornament. This was so highly polished that it formed a mirror, and consequently the women saw the reflection of every man's face as he passed to his seat. Needless to say the ornament was at once removed.

"GOOD-NATURE gives a certain air to the countenance which is more amiable than beauty. It shows beauty in its fairest light, takes off in some measure the deformity of vice, and makes even folly and impertinence supportable"—Addison.

CRUDEN, the maker of the famous Concordance to the Bible that bears his name, spent nineteen years in this gigantic undertaking, and so great was the strain that upon its publication he was removed to a lunatic asylum suffering from a mental disease from which he never entirely recovered.

CLEAN linen seems to be one of the difficulties of life, both at Cape Town and Johannesburg. Some time ago a laundry firm in Cape Town imported a number of laundry-maids, and their handiwork was at once the joy and pleasure of the inhabitants. Johannesburg, however, suffered acutely from the lack of good washing, and the laundry-maids, attracted by the high wages offered them in the city of gold, have departed to the Transvaal. English girls, anxious to go to the Cape, and equally anxious to work, might do worse than take up laundry-work.

APPLES are amongst the most health-giving of fruits, since they contain more phosphorus than any other, or than any vegetable. An apple should always be eaten before going to bed at night, as it induces a more quiet sleep than either chloral or opium. The fruit also gives relief in cases of neuralgia and muscular rheumatism.

A MOVEMENT is on foot to cultivate tea in Brazil. Experiments have been made on a very large scale in that country, and it has been found that both the soil and the conditions of labour are peculiarly favourable to the cultivation of the plant, three of the provinces producing tea equal in quality to that of Ceylon.

"WE should not preach so much to people; we should give them an interest in life, something to love, something to live for; we should, if possible, make them happy, or put them on the way to happiness, then they would unquestionably become good."

"I AM convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime, if we live simply and wisely; as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial."—Thoreau.

"SELF is the point from which all our power must be drawn; but its effects are beyond our sight or ken, reaching to family and friends, to all those who profit by our abilities and labours, to those whom we influence consciously or unconsciously, both near and far away."

IT is very satisfactory to learn that the number of seals slaughtered last season is considerably less than it has ever been before. The cruelty and brutality of the sealers in obtaining the skins upon which so many people set a high value as an article of dress are being perpetually exposed, and it would seem that the efforts of those who wish to put an end to this barbarism are taking effect. It is a matter for marvel that any woman, knowing the real facts of the capture, should be willing to clothe herself in a cloak or jacket that is made up of the skins of harmless animals that have been ruthlessly butchered. This decrease is a good sign, and it is earnestly to be hoped that it will continue until it is no longer worth while for ships to ply this trade.

MRS. MARGARET HOBBS, who died recently at the age of 103 years, married a Captain of the 92nd Highlanders, by whom she had fourteen children. Following in their father's footsteps, many of these became soldiers, and at the present time five of her sons are still serving the Queen. Mrs. Hobbs had forty-four grandchildren, four of whom are officers in the army, and two others are preparing to join it. And it is more than probable, seeing the military bent of the family, that out of the thirty-two great-grandchildren and the two great-great-grandchildren that the old lady left behind, some, at least, will enter the service, and so maintain this curious family history.

IT is not generally known that Queen Victoria escaped absolute financial ruin by the merest chance some years ago. A Scotchman dying, left some shares in a great banking concern to the Queen, and the matter was brought before Her Majesty's advisers, who, after considering the question for a long time, decided that it was incompatible with her dignity for the Queen to hold shares in a commercial undertaking. Very shortly afterwards the bank, which was of unlimited liability, failed for a sum of between six and seven millions of money. This unlimited liability meant hopeless ruin for every shareholder, as each one was liable to be called upon for money until the entire debts of the bank were paid off. The first call swept away the smaller shareholders; then came those slightly richer, and finally the great capitalists and millionaires holding shares were left penniless. It is impossible to imagine what would have happened had the Queen's advisers counselled her to accept the legacy of the loyal Scotchman.

SPEAKING of age, an ingenious person has invented a means by which elderly people and invalids can be saved the fatigue of climbing stairs where there is no lift. It is really an electric stair-climber, consisting of a car running on two rails fixed at the top and bottom of the balustrade of the staircase and a box upon which the person stands. The car is moved by an electric windlass through a steel cable which is guided by rollers, and only occupies about twelve inches of the breadth of the steps. It is controlled by the person standing upon the box by means of a lever, going either up or down as may be desired, and stopping automatically at each floor; but it glides on again directly the lever is moved.



Belford's Chatterbox, 1885

## January.

**E**VEN in January there are days of sudden relenting, when the frost's icy grasp upon nature seems to relax. Days that rightfully belong to Spring drop down upon us with birds that have come before their time. But such days may end in a northeast snow-storm and the birds perish.

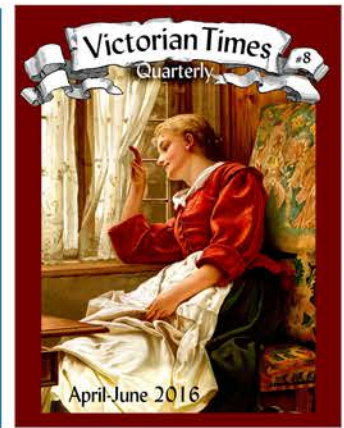
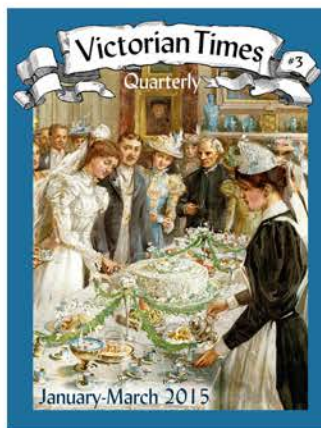
*E. P. Roe.*

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