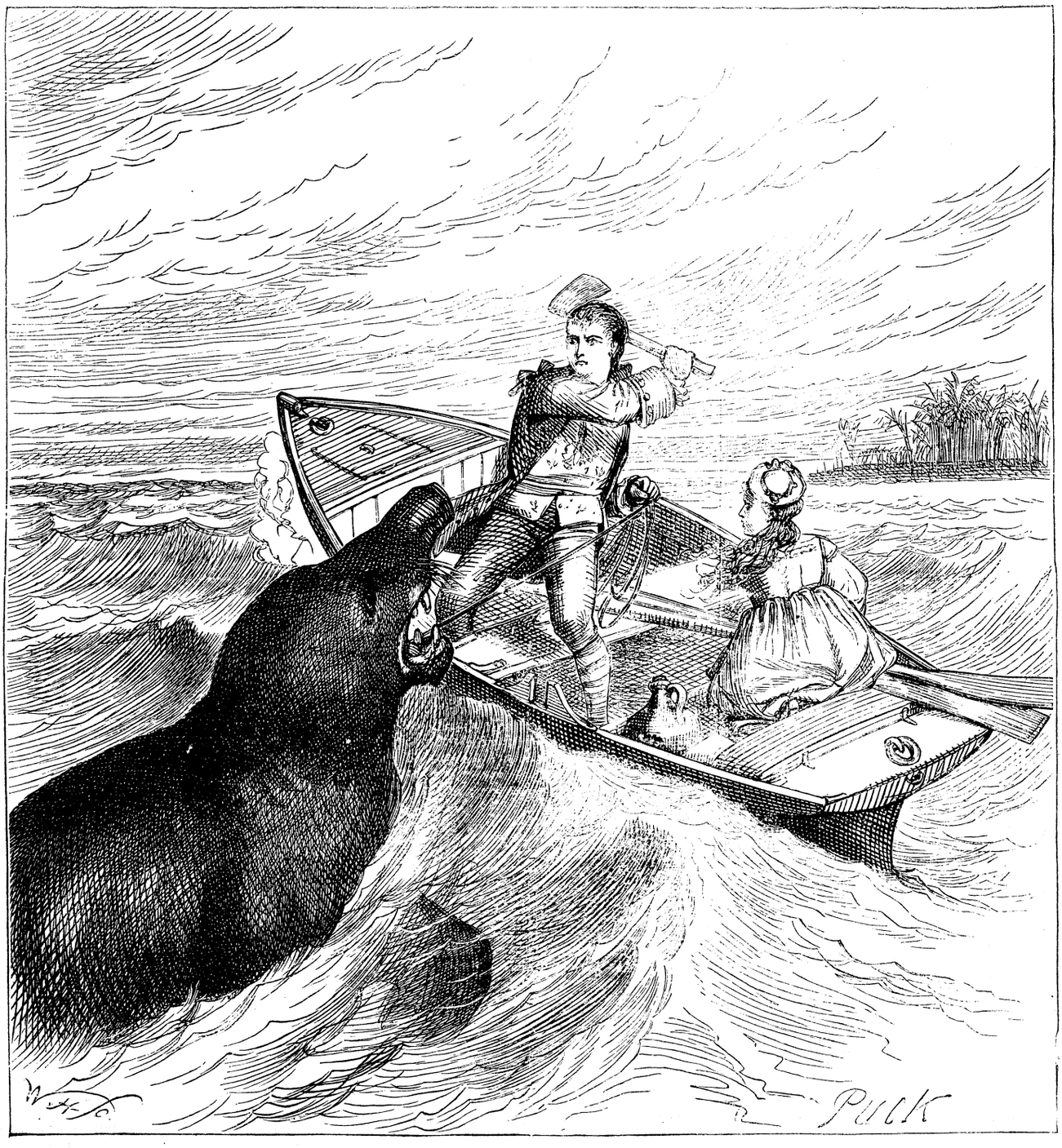
YOUNG FOLK'S WEEKLY BUDGET

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS OF ALL AGES. TO INFORM. TO INSTRUCT. TO AMUSE.

VOL. IX.—No. 289.] "I have gained golden opinions from all sorts of people."—*Shakespeare.* [ONE PENNY.



"With a loud barking noise, the elephant seal made for the boat. Arthur grasped his axe, sprang to his feet, and stood ready to strike his furious foe."

JEWEL-LAND;

OR, THE

Marvellous Life, Adventures, and Discoveries of the Young Lord Luton and his Sister, Lady Lilia.

BY UNCLE GEORGE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SAVED FROM DANGER.

ARTHUR struggled to his knees as the leopard made his bound, and Tom-Tom uttered a fresh roar as he shuffled along in an ungainly gallop, like a bear. Rescue seemed close at hand in response to Lilia's pitiful wail; but the boy uttered a groan of misery and disappointment as he saw that the leopard missed his aim, in consequence of a movement on the part of the kangaroo, and alighting on the grass, stood growling and lashing his tail.

Meanwhile, still holding tightly to its captive, the kangaroo bounded gently away, in a series of what would have seemed to Arthur ridiculous leaps but for the terrible agony he suffered.

Rousing himself as the kangaroo went off, topping bush and rock with ease, Arthur limped to the leopard, which still stood growling and lashing its tail, disappointed in its leap, and after the fashion of its kind, giving up after making one miss.

"Seize him, then!" cried Arthur, patting the leopard, and pointing to the kangaroo, now a hundred yards off, where it had stopped to gaze at them, and where Lilia was still holding out her hands for help.

This roused the little spotted beast on the instant, and running by the side of Arthur for a few moments, it then stretched itself out, and made a series of astonishing bounds, ending with one that would have landed it upon the kangaroo's back.

But the cunning creature made a side leap, letting

the leopard pass it, and began to go off at right angles to the course it had before pursued.

Arthur panted off in pursuit, and agonized as he felt, and angry that he had no gun, he still could not help feeling that if he had had one, he dared not have fired.

There seemed no help, for the leopard, after missing its leap twice, turned away growling and sulky, utterly refusing to try again, in spite of all its master's coaxing; and feeling that he was wasting his breath in talking to it, Arthur once more started in pursuit of the kangaroo, which, now apparently satisfied that it could not be caught, went leaping easily over the bushes that lay in its way.

Even Tom-Tom was out of sight now, and Arthur felt that he was alone to follow his own devices.

Save Lilia he must somehow. To attempt to catch the kangaroo by running after it was so much folly, he knew; but for all that, he panted on, with his mouth getting dry, a strange sense of burning at his heart, and a feeling of dizziness coming over him.

Just then an idea came to him: if he could turn the beast, or work round it a little, he would have it hemmed in on two sides; for on one would be the hot river, and on the other the sea.

That would be better than allowing the animal to go off into the wilds.

Acting on this idea, Arthur made a fresh start, running as if to get beyond the kangaroo in another direction.

The animal, which kept looking back and watching him, stopped short on the instant; and then, to Arthur's great delight, after a few moments' pause, it set off towards the sea, making a series of the most astonishing bounds for two or three hundred yards, when it paused again and watched the pursuer.

Arthur repeated his manœuvre twice, and the result was that in its efforts to escape him, the kangaroo acted in precisely the same way as an ostrich would; for believing it was going to be cut off, it bounded away in precisely the direction its pursuer wished.

That meant very little, though, after all; for as Arthur toiled on, hardly able now—so exhausted was he—to get one foot before the other, he knew that when driven close up to the spot of sand where the hot river ran into the sea, a bound or two would put the creature out of his reach.

In fact, over and over again the kangaroo had taken flying leaps of at least forty feet, clearing stumps six or eight feet high; and what could he do under such circumstances?

"If that wretch of a leopard had only been true to me!" groaned Arthur—"or that miserable ape! Oh, Lil, what shall I do? I"——

Here he caught his foot in a running vine, and fell headlong, hurting himself a great deal, so weak and exhausted was he.

But he staggered up once more and continued the pursuit, half blind, his face bleeding, and the great drops of perspiration running from him.

There was the kangaroo still in sight, gently leaping over the bushes, with Lilia tightly held, and, to Arthur's horror, the beast now seemed to have a suspicion of danger ahead; for it turned in quite a fresh direction, and in spite of every effort, Arthur fell upon his knees exhausted, and uttered a sob of despair.

He was powerless to do more, and he only watched the leaping creature now going in easy bounds over the bushes, when, just as all seemed over, and the trees began to swim round the despairing boy as his vision failed, he uttered a cry, leaped up once more, and then sank again to the earth with a cry of thankfulness.

For just as the kangaroo was taking an easy leap over a clump of bushes, preparatory to going straight off into the wilds, Arthur saw something dark rise beneath it, and, as it were, bound up towards it, evidently striking a blow. Then all was still: there was nothing to be seen but the bushes. The kangaroo leaped no more, and Arthur knew that Lilia was saved.

"And I was blaming poor old Tom-Tom!" he panted, as he slowly made his way through the bushes in the direction where he had last seen the kangaroo—feeling at the moment that his sister was safe, at another that the perfect stillness that reigned was a sign of some sad misfortune.

He hurried on, then, till the ground grew more open for a few yards, but only for it to become more thick with shrubs and tangled with creepers, which, in his weary state, tripped him up, so that twice over he fell headlong down, too tired to save himself.

As he came nearer to the thick clump where he believed Lilia to be, his heart failed him; for the silence was now broken by a dismal howl.

Arthur stopped short, not daring to proceed. His heart beat furiously, and he stood there, feeling an intensity of despair such as he had not known since the night when he awoke to the fact that Lilia was missing.

His courage came back as he recovered his breath though, directly after; and hurrying forward, he came suddenly upon Tom-Tom, squatting closely down in the grass beside Lilia, who lay there with her eyes closed, and her sun-browned cheeks turned of a sickly pallor.

"She is dead!" groaned Arthur, as Tom-Tom caught sight of him, threw up his ugly head, and howled dismally.

Arthur caught his sister in his arms, and kissed her again and again, while Tom-Tom looked wonderingly on. Then remembering that the cavern, with its spring of fresh water, was close at hand, he forgot his own troubles and uneasiness, as he strode out into the open, and then plunged into the thick bosky wood, with Tom-Tom following close behind.

Laying Lilia on the green, soft moss close by the cave, Arthur fetched water in a great leaf, and bathed the poor girl's face, with the result that the colour gradually came back, and after a time her eyes opened, and stared wonderingly into his.

It was some minutes before recollection came back entirely, and when it did, it was with a kind of leap; for Lilia suddenly burst into a violent fit of crying, threw her arms round her brother's neck, and hid her face in his bosom.

With a little caressing and a few tender words, Lilia's sobs ceased, and she sat up and laughed, saying:

"Oh, Arty, I'll never go about without you any more. That dreadful thing!"

Her sobs recommenced, but she soon checked them, as Arthur asked her:

"Are you hurt?"

"N-n—no, not much—only the dreadful thing pinched me very hard. What should I have done if it had not been for Tom-Tom?"

"Did you see what he did?" asked Arthur.

"Oh, yes," was the response. "He jumped up and hit that creature with a big stick, and it dropped me," sobbed Lilia. "Oh, Arty, don't let me go away again without you!"

Arthur smiled as he promised, but he did not tell his sister that it was her own fault that the accident had occurred; and then they returned towards where the dingy lay.

Tom-Tom suddenly turned off, though, to the left, and he kept turning back, grinning and chattering, and evidently wanting his master to follow.

Arthur hung back for a moment or two, and then seeing that Lilia did not seem to mind, so long as she had her brother's hand in hers, he followed Tom-Tom, who led him in the direction from which they had come; and then passing a clump of bushes, they came suddenly upon the ape, grinning tremendously, as he picked up a stout staff, like a branch of a tree, and then leading on a few yards farther, Arthur saw, peering out of the grass, the deer-like head of the kangaroo.

The animal made a motion as if to rise, but it rolled back on its side with a moan of pain; and Arthur saw that the blow that fell upon it from the ape's stick had broken one of its hind legs, leaving it perfectly useless.

The animal grew so excited on Arthur going a little nearer, and Lilia trembled to such an extent, that in spite of pity for the suffering creature, Arthur was unwilling to slay it, and at the same time he felt that he could do nothing to help it; so he hurried Lilia down to the boat, and once more on board, they forgot their troubles in the rest and refreshment that followed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ARTHUR'S SURGERY.

Far from finding life on the island dull, Arthur thought the days passed too quickly, there were so many things to do.

The hard work he did, with the help of Tom-Tom, was something astonishing. On board there were casks of provisions to examine on deck, and lower down again into the hold. Then there was gardening work to do on shore—hunting, fishing, and the preparation of food and clothes.

For Arthur soon found that their own delicately-made, fine material clothes wore out quickly; so he contrived, with Lilia's help, to make stout leggings of antelope-skin for himself, and for Lilia a kind of outer skirt of the same material—for it was soft, light, and resisted the thorns and bushes famously.

But to return to the day after the encounter with the kangaroo.

Arthur went ashore with Tom-Tom, armed with some lath-like pieces of wood, and plenty of strips of thin canvas, to where he had left the kangaroo on the previous day; and on reaching the spot, he found that the poor creature had not moved, but lay there, with its great eyes dim and misty with pain, and its tongue lying out of its mouth.

As the boy approached, the kangaroo made a feeble effort to get up and show fight.

The pain, however, was evidently so intense that the poor animal subsided again with a moan of pain, and lay there, apparently resigned to its fate, expecting, as it did, that it would be killed.

"If it kicks me," thought Arthur, as he stood looking at the prostrate animal, "it will half kill me, unless I avoid it. Poor beast, though—what fearful pain it must be in!"

These thoughts drove before them any selfish fears of danger, and Arthur walked quickly round to the back of the kangaroo, which made a feeble kick at him with its uninjured leg, armed with a great claw which was formidable enough to destroy his life.

Arthur stood looking down at the kangaroo's head, thinking.

"If I can save your life, I daresay you will be very useful," he said aloud. "At all events, in spite of yesterday, I don't feel disposed to kill you."

The kangaroo feebly turned up its head at him, and uttered a plaintive bleat; then let its head fall back on the grass to moan with pain, as its protruded tongue looked dry and white, and the great soft deer-eyes more dim.

A rustle behind him just then took Arthur's attention, and turning sharply round, like one accustomed to danger at any moment, he found Tom-Tom grinning hugely as he came forward, armed with a great stone, whose purpose was evidently to crush the kangaroo after the fashion of a serpent.

"No, no—put that down, Tom-Tom!" cried Arthur, in a commanding tone; and the great ape dropped the stone, and stood shivering, as if expecting to be punished for doing something wrong.

Arthur then bent down on one knee, and raising the head of the kangaroo, poured from the bottle he carried slung over his shoulder a small quantity of water into the animal's mouth.

The effect was almost electrical.

The animal swallowed the first few drops with an effort, and evidently with great pain; but the next it took eagerly, and then it drank with avidity, and made its tongue lick eagerly up the drops that fell about the grass.

Its eyes lost their filmy, glazing look, and brightened up, gazing at the giver of the water in a wondering manner; the parched tongue was withdrawn, and another hasty movement was made to rise, but only to produce a fresh moan of pain, and the kangaroo lay with its head in the grass, watching the lad as he bent down.

"Now, look here," said Arthur, after a few moments' thought; "I'm going to see if you have any gratitude in you. I'm going to play the surgeon; but I warn you, my great grasshopper, that if you play any tricks with me at kicking, or get trying any of those bear-hugs of yours, I shall let Tom-Tom kill you."

"C-r-r-r-r-ark!" cried Tom-Tom, in a state of excitement; and he seized the great stone he had been compelled to drop.

"No, no," cried Arthur, astonished at the sense displayed by his great companion; and Tom-Tom dropped the stone once more, and looked miserable, as if afraid of being punished. "Here, hold those splints, sir," Arthur continued, "while I play the surgeon."

He expected that the kangaroo would become violent on its broken leg being touched; but to his great surprise, though the animal moaned piteously at the first touch of its self-constituted surgeon, it made no effort to move, and Arthur proceeded with his examination.

He found that the bone of the lower part of the animal's leg was broken, and the injured limb lay now almost at right angles to its proper position—the bone having been snapped clean in two by Tom-Tom's blow.

This fact of the bone being a clean fracture simplified Arthur proceedings. He knew that if he could get the bone in its right position, with the broken edges together, and confine them there, Nature would do the rest.

But how was such a leaping creature as this to be kept quiet while the new bone material was joining the broken parts together? That was the question.

Arthur did not attempt to solve this, but set to at once—partly out of kindness to the injured animal, and partly thinking of how splendid it would be if he could thoroughly tame this creature, to contrive for it a saddle, and mounted thereon, to career over the island in a set of the wonderful leaps which the kangaroo could take. With a little difficulty he placed the broken edges of the bone together, and had the satisfaction of feeling them fit in their places, just as would the pieces of a broken stick.

The kangaroo moaned and tossed its head about, but it made no farther movement; and with trembling hands, Arthur proceeded to place bandages round the leg. Over these he put pieces of wood, and then bound these round and round, as tightly as he could, till the joint was perfectly firm.

"There," he exclaimed, as he jumped up more than satisfied—for he had not anticipated that his patient would be so quiet—"now, my fine fellow, if you keep that leg still, you will soon be able to hop over the bushes again; but if you move it, all my trouble has gone for nothing. Come along, Tom-Tom."

The ape followed him quietly enough, and they were going back towards the ship, when there was a rustling in front, and the great eagle made a rush out of some bushes, and beat and flapped its way along in front of them.

It was evident that its wing had been injured sufficiently to prevent its flight; but if it had been broken, Nature had been the surgeon to set it right, and the bird would evidently soon be able once more

to soar on high. At the present time, however, its actions puzzled Arthur, for it kept waiting till he got close up, and then hopped away, watching him curiously the while.

Arthur went round by his fish-tank, meaning to take a couple out for Lilia to grill for breakfast; and on doing this with a large net at the end of a pole—a contrivance that had cost him many hours to perfect—the eagle hopped up to within twenty yards, perched on a rock, and watched his movements.

At the same time the giraffe came slowly up to pay its morning salutations, and rub its soft nose up against its master's hand; while with a roar and a series of bounds, up came the leopard to rub itself, cat fashion, against his legs, and then stand writhing its tail about like a serpent, purring loudly as it was rewarded with a few friendly pats.

Arthur secured a couple of fine fish at the first dip of his net, killed them, and dressed them ready for taking on board, when, to his utter surprise, the eagle darted forward and seized the heads of the fish, which had been cut off, to devour them with avidity.

"That's it, is it?" exclaimed Arthur. "I see the reason of your tameness now, my fine fellow. Why, you have been starving ever since I knocked you down with the boat-hook. Come here!"

He dipped in his net once more, brought out a rather large fish, and held it out to the eagle.

The great bird stood gazing at him—first with one flashing fiery eye, then with the other, its overhanging brows giving it a fierce and angry aspect; and after hesitating a few moments, it came nimbly up, snatched the fish from the hand that offered it, and devoured it voraciously.

"Why, you must have been starving!" said Arthur; and he made another dip into his net, brought out a fresh fish, which the eagle came and took without hesitation, allowing our hero to pass his hand over its head and neck, and giving a shrill scream, evidently of satisfaction, as it finished the second fish.

"Well, if you become tame too," said Arthur, "you will have to catch fish, sir, as Puss here does the antelopes."

"C-r-ark!" exclaimed Tom-Tom, giving himself a shake, and looking as if he understood every word, and was thinking of the famous feeds he would have in the future on the result of the bird and animal hunting.

Lilia was making signals on board the ship; so, leaving his dumb friends, Arthur returned on board, closely followed by Tom-Tom, who was now quite a shadow to him, though certainly of a very solid nature.

There was a good merry scolding for both because they were so late, and then Lilia had other fish to fry—in fact, those for the breakfast.

Over this meal Arthur found himself gazing again and again at Lilia, and thinking how great a change had taken place in her since they had landed. She was stronger, stouter, and her cheeks and eyes shone and glittered with health.

She caught him looking at her after she had handed Tom-Tom his portion for breakfast, which the ape always waited for with the greatest of patience, and as she caught her brother's eye—

"Do you know what I was thinking of, Arty?" she exclaimed.

"Of scolding me again for being so late back," he said, merrily.

"No," cried Lilia, shaking her head, and making the sun glisten in her long bright hair.

"Of what, then?" said Arthur.

"I was thinking," replied Lilia, "that we ought to do something to be ready for the time when we are fetched."

"Indeed!" said Arthur, gravely.

"Yes," replied Lilia, seriously. "Do you know, Arty, I feel sure that some day papa and mamma will send a ship for us to fetch us away; and then, as there are so many wonderful riches about us, we ought to have boxes and chests full of presents for them."

"What would you do then?" said her brother.

"Do!" cried Lilia. "Why, I would collect plenty of those beautiful pearls, and chests full of the gold, and fill another box with the precious stones that we saw shining in the rocks."

"Yes," said Arthur, thoughtfully. "Perhaps it would be well to do so, Lil. But of late I have been trying to think that we ought to be contented here, and work at preparing such things as are necessary, in case"——

"In case what?" asked Lilia, opening her bright eyes wide, and staring at him.

"In case—in case," said Arthur, gravely, "we are never fetched."

"Oh, Arty!" cried Lilia.

"I think sometimes," said he, sadly, "that papa and mamma must think us dead."

"Oh, no, Arty!" cried Lilia, bursting into tears. "Don't say so. Oh, no! They don't think that. They'll come some day and fetch us."

"Do you think so?" said Arthur, assuming a tone of belief in her words, for the sake of comforting her, for she was sobbing now bitterly.

"Yes, yes, yes," she cried; and then, on seeing her brother's face, she smiled at him through her tears.

"Oh, yes, Arty," she went on, "they'll come some day, and it would be so unkind if we did not have some presents for them when they came."

"Then we'll have some grand ones," said Arthur, merrily, "and set about collecting them at once."

Lilia clapped her hands joyfully, and directly after breakfast, she prepared to go ashore with her brother to gather pearls.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN EVENING'S FISHING.

These words of his sister set Arthur thinking, and he could not help blaming himself for not having taken some steps to free themselves from their strange position.

Certainly, he argued, it was not very likely that their parents would come in search of them, for they must long enough ago have believed the vessel lost with all on board. But other ships might pass that way; and if they did, and saw a flag flying on the highest point of the island, they would answer the signal by coming ashore, and taking them, at all events, to some civilized country, from whence they could take ship to England.

Acting, then, upon these thoughts, he looked out one of the ship's colours from the locker, and then selected a nice light spar—one which had been evidently meant for a spare maintopgallant mast; and this being, with Tom-Tom's help, placed in a convenient position, he sawed it into a portable length, and laid it aside ready for carrying up the mountain.

Lilia was by this time ready, and showing him the basket to hold the pearls.

Provided, then, with this, and taking his gun and axe ready in case of emergency, he rowed Lilia ashore, with Tom-Tom gambolling after them through the water, and trying to catch the fish, which were too quick for him; and making the boat fast, they went to the hollows amongst the rocks, where the great oysters had lived for generation after generation, till the land had altered in level, and left them high and dry.

Here, on raking about in the sands, they found pearls beyond their wildest anticipations.

Arthur smiled, and felt very careless about them, as he turned over broken and worn shells, and watched Lilia's delighted face; while, poor child, she brought the tears in his eyes more than once, as, on finding some beautiful lustrous gem, she held it up to him, crying—

"Oh, how delighted mamma will be with this!" or—"Look, Arty! This is the same size as the others. What a splendid necklace it will make for dear mamma!"

"Yes," said Arthur to himself, rather gloomily; and then, trying to be hopeful, he set to work, and made large contributions of pearls of all sizes to Lilia's basket, from the tiny seed pearls to lustrous gems far larger than peas.

Just as they were busiest, Lilia uttered a cry of fear; for there was a shadow came between her and the sun, which proved to be the eagle—the great bird coming and perching on a rock, and watching them evidently expecting a share of something to eat.

The fierce-looking hooked-beaked creature was not disappointed, for Arthur fetched a fish from his pool, and held it out, saying:

"There, old fellow; let's see if we can tame you. But I must replenish the pool."

As he spoke, the eagle gave two flaps of its wings, hopped forward, took the fish, and then hopped back to eat the present at its leisure.

"Why, what a collection of tame things we shall have, Arty!" cried Lilia, rising, basket in hand, tired of working in the hot sun.

"Yes," said her brother; "and we must make them useful."

"But of what use will the eagle be?" asked Lilia.

"To catch fish for us, even as the leopard—Master Puss there—catches the small deer. But I've got another tame creature to show you."

"What's that?" said Lilia.

"The great kangaroo," replied Arthur.

"Oh, Arty, I dare not go near that!" cried Lilia, in alarm.

"Don't be afraid, little one," said Arthur, taking her hand. "Come and see him; he's my patient now. Look here—pick some of this sweet, fresh grass, and you shall feed him. Don't be frightened."

"I won't, if you tell me not to be, Arty," said Lilia—trembling, though, all the while, as she recalled her terrible fright; and she suffered herself to be led right up to the place where the kangaroo was lying, perfectly still, just as it had been left in the morning.

"Oh, Arty, let's run!" cried Lilia, as, leaving its injured leg quite still, the kangaroo raised itself somewhat upon its side, and watched the visitors to its shady bower amongst the bushes.

"Well, sir," cried Arthur, going up to the injured animal, holding out a bunch of fresh, moist grass; and the kangaroo took it and began to eat, while its doctor tightened the bandages a little, and saw that the leg was perfectly secure

"Now try if it will eat from your hand, Lil," said Arthur.

Lilia shrank back for a moment; but she was accustomed to obey her brother, and taking a handful of the grass, she tremblingly approached the animal, held out the grass, and felt less afraid as it turned its gentle eyes upon her, and ate quietly from her hand.

They soon bade the sick kangaroo farewell, for Arthur had to make preparations for an evening's fishing, to replenish his pool, and get a good supply of fish; for Tom-Tom consumed no small quantity, though he was quite content with the coarser kinds, and did not object to having them raw.

After laying in a store of baits, then, Arthur helped Lilia to place her pearl treasure on board in safety—a chest in the inner cabin being appropriated for the purpose, as it was full of drawers, and already held a few pearls that had been previously collected.

Then after dinner, and when the hottest part of the day had passed—a heat so great that the young people were glad to get beneath the shelter of a sail Arthur had rigged up as an awning, just where they could catch the most of the sea breeze—Arthur got his lines ready, and prepared for his fishing trip.

Tom-Tom knew directly what was on the way, and watched with eagerness the making ready of lines, tying on of hooks, and placing of bait in the boat; but he did not understand this latter.

Heretofore Arthur had fished off the ship, but this evening he had determined to row a little way out, where there was a deep channel amongst the rocks, and where he had seen the great fish leaping and playing about evening after evening, while he on the ship's deck was impatiently waiting for a bite.

Arthur had intended to make this first fishing trip alone, but Lilia begged so earnestly to be allowed to accompany him, that he consented to take her, and they left the vessel's side chatting merrily about the fish they were to bring back, and in a few minutes approached the place which he had decided on trying.

Arthur was provided with a small grapnel and a long rope, and as he came near where the fish were playing, he laid down his oars, lowered the grapnel softly over the bow, and allowed the boat to float with the current; then he baited his hooks, and let the line run over the side.

He was not disappointed. Hardly had the bait floated down the current many yards before there was a vicious tug, and he was fast to a good-sized fish, which, after a sharp struggle, he drew on board, to gaze in wonder at its beautiful scarlet scales.

The evening came on so quickly, though, that he could not afford to lose time; so he baited again, and allowed the line to float down with the current, as before, leaving a plentiful reserve to run out in case the fish should prove a large one.

He had not many moments to wait, before—tug, tug—there was another bite, and on striking, he found himself fast to another and a larger fish, which pulled fiercely in its struggles to get away.

Turning it and playing it for a few moments, he began to draw it gently in, when—rush—some larger fish treated his captive like a bait, seized it, and began to run the line rapidly out.

Arthur pulled as hard as he dared, Lilia watching his proceedings with the greatest interest, but it was like pulling at some heavy inert mass; and he was beginning to be afraid of the line breaking, when there were three or four angry tugs, and he knew that whatever had taken the fish had gorged it.

"Oh, my poor line!" thought Arthur; and he began to pull at it steadily once more—a proceeding which made the new captive give a furious rush through the water; and, to the fisherman's horror, in place of an ordinary fish, he found himself fast to a huge elephant seal, which suddenly raised its head from the water, saw him, and then, with a loud barking noise, made for the boat.

Arthur grasped his axe, sprang to his feet, and stood ready to strike his furious foe.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 28). Back numbers can always be had.)

Why is a railroad train in motion a safe place in a thunderstorm? Because it is furnished with a conductor.

What portions of the body are the best travellers? The two wrists (tourists).

Is it any proof that logic has legs because it always stands to reason?

PERPETUAL MOTION.—Many men have wasted a great deal of time fruitlessly trying to invent something that once set in motion should never stop. They might have saved themselves the trouble, for nature is ahead of them in the matter. In all the universe there is nothing that is ever quite still. I hardly believed this at first; I supposed that I had often stood quite still myself. But no; though I was not thinking about it, I was all the time silently growing. The doctors say that every particle of a living human body is changed in the course of every seven years. The change is brought about very quietly and gradually. Now that can't very well happen without constant motion of some sort—can it? Even the big rocks that seem to lie motionless for hundreds of years are, in reality, slowly and silently increasing in size, or moving, particle by particle, toward decay. Then I said to myself, "At least, some of the stars—those we call fixed stars—are motionless. But no, again. They only seem to be so because they are so very far off. In reality, they, too, are ceaselessly moving. Nothing, big or little, in all the wide universe, can ever be quite still.—J. P.

THE LITTLE DOG UNDER THE WAGGON.

"COME, wife," says good old Farmer Gray,
"Put on your things; 'tis market day;
Let's be off to the nearest town—
There and back ere the sun goes down.
Spot? No, we'll leave old Spot behind."
But Spot he barked, and Spot he whined,
And soon made up his doggish mind
To steal away under the waggon!

Away they went, a good round pace,
And joy came into the farmer's face.
"Poor Spot," said he, "*did* want to come;
But I'm very glad he's left at home.
He'll guard the barn, and guard the cot,
And keep the cattle out of the lot."
"I'm not so sure of that," growled Spot,
The little dog under the waggon.

The farmer all his produce sold,
And got his pay in yellow gold;
Then started home, just after dark—
Home through the lonely forest. Hark!
A robber springs from behind a tree:
"Your money or else your life!" said he.
The moon was out, yet he didn't see
The little dog under the waggon.

Old Spot he saved the farmer's life,
The farmer's money, the farmer's wife;
And now a hero grand and gay,
A silver collar he wears to-day!
And everywhere his master goes,
Among his friends, among his foes,
He follows upon his horny toes,
The little dog under the waggon!

M. A. K.

HANS SACHS.

HANS SACHS was a brave little fellow when I first knew him, though he was anything but clever or a beauty. His face was too big for one of his age and size; his nose was rather flat till it came near the end, when it ran up into a kind of knob; his chin and under lip were too prominent to be pleasant.

Who Hans had for father no one ever knew, and few even guessed at his mother. How he came by his name was a perfect puzzle, and how he managed to live was often a still greater. No one in all Westheim was better known, though he had neither houses or lands, or a hole to lay his head in. The fact is, Hans Sachs was a town waif, a gutter child, as we would call him in. London, and if he starved to-day or overfed to-morrow no one cared.

As Hans grew up it began to be known that he might be trusted, and so he got many little jobs to do for the town folk. Now he would be set to knife and boot cleaning, now to draw water, but chiefly to run errands. In all this he was ever ready and earnest, and his head, which was uncovered in all weathers, never seemed to grow sleepy over his work.

Among the people of Westheim one person would not believe in him—Herr Vogel, the apothecary. Whenever he heard any one say, "Oh, send Hans Sachs for so-and-so," or whenever Hans appeared in his shop on some errand, he always shook his head like the old doubter that he was.

"I tell you what it is, my dear sir," he said to me one day, "he's like all the rest of his sort, only a bit wiser. Wait till he's got something bigger than a thaler to tempt him."

"I'd trust him with a score of thalers any day," I replied, rather hotly. "You believe in nobody, Herr Vogel."

"Not much," replied the old man, with a grin, as I swept out of his shop, and left him pounding away at his mortar.

A few yards down the street, who should I run against but Hans himself.

"Hallo, Hans," said I; "why, you've got a new suit of clothes. How's that?"

Up to this Hans's feet had always been bare like his head, and the clothes he wore pinned and tied together in a thousand places. Now his feet were cased in a rough but useful pair of shoes, while a stout pair of trousers and clean, thick waistcoat and jacket covered his legs and body. His head was, as it had always been, free to the wind.

"Oh, sir, Herr Ebel, the professor, has given me these," cried Hans, while his face put on such a look of pleasure and gratitude as to make it almost well-looking. "He's promised to teach me to read and write."

"Herr Professor is a good man, and you must never forget him," said I.

"I'll never forget him as long as I live," said the boy, solemnly. "Oh, I wish I could do something to thank him."

"You may yet some day have the chance," said I. "Oh, by the way, will you run along to Herr Vogel's, and get this prescription made up for me? I forgot it when I was there just now."

As I spoke, I handed Hans a Frederich d'or, and the paper on which the prescription was written.

"It's a Frederich, sir," said Hans, as he held up the piece; "how much change am I to get?"

"Oh, the medicine will cost about ten silver groschen," I replied. "Herr Vogel will be sure to give you the correct change."

Hans nodded, and was about to trot off when he suddenly stopped and looked up in my face.

"You know Herr Vogel very well, sir?"

"Yes, Hans. Why do you ask?"

"Because Herr Vogel does not like me, sir, and I thought you might know why. Herr Ebel says it's because I'm so like him."

"Ha, and so you are," said I, as I noticed the fact for the first time. "But how do you know he doesn't like you?"

"Because he holds his lips so tight, and looks so sharp whenever I go into his shop."

"Well, well I can't tell you the reason, Hans," I answered. "You must find it out some other way. Now, off with you."

Hans nodded again, and trotted off.

"Hans is not so stupid as he looks," I muttered to myself, as I walked towards my lodgings. "He's been able to read the apothecary's feeling towards him. I wonder now if that Frederich is likely to tempt him?"

Presently I reached my lodgings, and very soon Hans entered with the medicine, and the amount of change I expected. The Frederich had not been too great a temptation for him.

"Thank you, Hans, you are a good lad," said I, as I handed him a couple of silver groschen. "Will you come to-morrow and look over my row of boots?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," replied Hans, as he hurried away with more eagerness than usual. I noticed, too, that he never once lifted his eyes to mine.

"There's something wrong with Hans," said I to myself. "I wonder now if he has kept back a groschen or two. I'll go and see Herr Vogel after awhile, just to set my mind at rest."

Having decided on this, I lit my pipe and lay back to enjoy my evening smoke.

Somehow it did not soothe me as usual. In every wreath I saw the face of Hans Sachs, and strive how I might I could think only of him.

"Tut, tut," said I to myself, after awhile, "this is all nonsense. What have I got to do with the little waif?"

"Eh!—what!" cried the old man, as he let the bottles fall.

Still I could not get the lad out of my thoughts, and presently, rising with a growl, I laid down my pipe and rushed out of the room.

Once in the street, I hurried away to Herr Vogel's, and found him as I left him, busy with pestle and mortar.

"What! has the Frederich been too much for your favourite, Hans?" asked the old man, with a grin, as I entered the shop. "I'll be bound you got neither change nor medicine. Eh! now am I not right?"

"You never were farther wrong in your life," I replied. "I got both change and medicine."

"Eh? Ah—hum!" cried the apothecary, in a tone of wonder. "I could have sworn, when Hans left here, that you would never see him again. He looked as if he had something on his mind."

"Strange," I replied, thoughtfully. "I, too, fancied he looked as if there was something wrong. By the way, Herr Vogel, what did you charge for the medicine?"

The old man loooked down in thought a moment.

"Um, ah—ten silver groschen, I think. But I can soon tell you," he replied, as he took up a little book lying behind his scales and opened it.

"Yes," he continued, when he had found the entry, "it was ten silver groschen."

"Then I have had the proper change from Hans. But did you give it to him correctly?"

A quick look of alarm passed over the old man's face.

"Eh? Ah—surely I must have given it to him correctly," he said, more to himself than to me. "But let me see."

He drew out his money-drawer quickly, and scooped out its contents with his hand on to the counter.

After a few minutes' scramble through the coins, he stopped suddenly, and looked me full in the face.

"I'm a fool, an ass, a dolt!" he cried, quickly. "I've given him the Frederich back again with the change. I remember it now, though I was too busy watching his queer face to attend properly to my business then. But, but—perhaps he's given it to you, and you've come here to try me?"

"He has not given it to me, Herr Vogel, I am sorry to say," I answered, as my heart fell at the thought of the little wretch's guilt. "Poor devil, he's ruined now for life; and we've done it between us, Herr Vogel."

"We've done it! We've done it!" echoed the apothecary, fiercely. "What do you mean?"

"Why, I sent him here with the money just to try him, and you, through your negligence, tempted him still worse. Poor wretch!"

"Poor thief!—poor gallows bird!" cried the old man, in a rage. "But—eh, ah!—hush, here he comes! Into my room, mein herr!" And the apothecary shoved me through the door into his little room, and closed it to quickly. Then he sprang behind the counter with the agility of a youth, and peered out of the door and down the street.

Next moment the rough head of Hans appeared at the door, and Hans himself crept into the shop, slowly, and with downcast face.

The excitement of the apothecary was here something wonderful, if not comical, to look at. He leaned over the counter, grasping a couple of bottles that lay on it as if for support.

Hans raised his eyes, and met the eyes of the apothecary peering sharply at him over a pair of heavy spectacles.

"Well, what is it now, my dear? What do you want now?" asked the old man, in as civil a tone as he could manage.

He was evidently of the old belief that to get your head out of the lion's mouth you had better deal gently with him. Hans held the gold piece—Hans was, therefore, to be treated kindly till it was recovered.

"Oh, please, Herr Vogel," said Hans, with the tone as of one confessing a shameful deed, "you gave me the Frederich back again, and here it is!"

"Eh!—what!" cried the old man, in such utter astonishment that he let the bottles fall, and the contents of one ran all over the counter. "And you've brought it back again? Well, I"——

He stopped speechless a moment or two, then held out his hand and took the coin.

Hans turned to go, when the old man called him back.

"Here, stop a minute, Hans Sachs!" he cried; "I want to speak to you."

Hans turned and came back, looking much as if he expected a whipping.

"Why did you not give this back to me when you found it among the change?" asked the old man.

"Because I knew you hated me, and—and"——

"You thought it good revenge to make me lose it. But why did you not give it to Herr Englander?"

"Because it tempted me," replied the lad, slowly. "But oh"—growing quick and eager in his talk—"it has been like a hot coal in my hand ever since, and I'm glad I'm rid of it."

The old man turned and looked out of the window away at vacancy for a moment. Then he bent over the counter and laid his hand upon the lad's head.

"Hans Sachs," he said, solemnly, "you're the bravest creature—man or boy—I ever met. You've not only brought the money back, but told the truth when you might have hid it. As long as I live you shall have a home! Sit down now, and cry your fill."

Hans did exactly as he was told. He seated himself on a box, and burst into tears. While he was in this state I crept from the room and stood before him.

When he began to dry his eyes after awhile, his glance met mine, and he started up in alarm.

"Oh, sir, you will forgive me, too?" he cried.

"Hans, I'm proud of you," I replied, earnestly; "and if ever you want a friend, come to me."

* * * * *

Before that day was ended Hans was standing behind the apothecary's counter, busy learning how to use the pestle and mortar—two articles the apothecary had grown tired of. For years he pounded and compounded, growing every day more and more like his employer in face and manner. When at last the old man died, all he possessed in the world was found to have been left to his shopman and friend.

If any one wishes to test the truth of my story, let him take a journey to Westheim, where he can yet see behind the counter of the old apothecary the ugly pleasant face of good Hans Sachs.

Every household has its acrobats—the pitcher and tumbler.

Can a lamp be said to be in a bad temper when it is *put out?*

"I'll blow you all up," as the trumpet said to the regiment.

"You are too pointed," as the muffin said to the toasting-fork.

If a clock were to speak to a parrot, what would it say? Poll I ticks.

Why is the letter "s" like a lamb? Because it is the beginning of "sheep."

What kind of sweetmeats were there in the Ark? Preserved pairs.

FACTS ABOUT WATER.

THERE cannot be anything more interesting than the study of the common objects by which we are every day surrounded. There are different sorts of study, to be sure; some kinds we can enjoy without any other aids than those of our eyes and simple intelligence, and others which we cannot so well prosecute without the aids of scientific knowledge and delicate instruments. We do not pretend to say which of these two kinds of study is the most entertaining. There can be no question as to which is the most difficult, and we think the little essay we are about to give you will suggest a thought that the great amount of knowledge it contains could only have been gained by very learned persons, and with the assistance of very wonderful scientific instruments. However, as the knowledge is gained and as the facts are now established beyond all dispute, they become part of the world's property, and so we are quite at liberty to make whatever use we can of these curious facts about water.

The extent to which water mingles with bodies apparently the most solid is very wonderful. The glittering opal, which beauty wears as an ornament, is only flint and water. Of every twelve hundred tons of earth which a landholder has in his estate, four hundred are water. The snow-capped summits of Snowdon and Ben Nevis have many million tons of water in a solidified form. In every plaster-of-paris statue which an Italian carries through our streets for sale, there is one pound of water to every four pounds of chalk. The air we breathe contains five grains of water to each cubic foot of its bulk. The potatoes and the turnips which are boiled for our dinner have, in their raw state, the one seventy-five per cent., the other ninety per cent. of water. If a man weighing ten stone were squeezed flat in a hydraulic press, seven and a half stone of water would run out, and only two and a half of dry residue remain. A man is, chemically speaking, forty-five pounds of carbon and nitrogen, diffused through five and a half pailsful of water. In plants, we find water thus mingling no less wonderfully. A sunflower evaporates one and quarter pints of water a day, and a cabbage about the same quantity. A wheat plant exhales, in a hundred and seventy-two days, about one hundred thousand grains of water. An acre of growing wheat, on this calculation, draws and passes out about ten tons of water per day. The sap of plants is the medium through which this mass of fluid is conveyed. It forms a delicate pump, up which the watery particles run with the rapidity of a swift stream. By the action of the sap, various properties may be communicated to the growing plant. Timber in France is, for instance, dyed by various colours being mixed with water, and poured over the root of the tree. Dahlias are also coloured by a similar process.

Now who would have thought of such things! It appears that when we stand in a field of wheat we are actually in the midst of a dense vapour bath, and this will explain why it is so dangerous to be in the fields at night when the sun is not up to evaporate all this moisture.

THE DEAD MOUSE.

BY PAUL SMITH.

THEY were a noisy, naughty crowd, the mice at our house, and no mistake. They wrought mischief and ruin from garret to cellar, from parlour to kitchen. They were a thievish crew, too; never working, or even asking for anything they wanted, but taking it without "leave or license;" and worse than that, whatever they came across and could not carry to their nests, or devour on the spot, they ruined. They were wicked, wicked little grey-coats as ever lived—stirring the cream, nibbling the cake, eating the cheese, gnawing holes through the doors and walls, instead of rapping and asking for admittance to the various rooms as good, honest mice would have done, breaking the dishes, and doing as many other things as it is in the hearts of naughty mice to do.

All the night long they scampered over the attic floor, making such ghostly noises among the old papers and rubbish that one could scarcely sleep for it. Although we don't believe in ghosts, my dears, when one is put in a great chamber by himself to sleep, and the moonlight shining in through the window makes weird shadows on the carpet, and the mice "carry on" overhead, he just wishes that somebody was with him, or that morning would come, and is very apt to shudder a little as he covers up his head with the bed-clothes.

You must remember that I am still a boy, and I experienced these very same sensations last night, and mice do make some very queer noises.

Yesterday mother put a pie in the pantry to cool for dinner, but when she went to get it she found it completely spoiled. The mice had been at it. From the strange marks and the little hollows in it, one would think the little scamps had been having a game of tag, or an old-fashioned wrestling-match upon it. We'd borne their mischievousness as long as we could, and now we resolved to set a trap for them. We hated to do it, but naughty mice, like naughty children, must get punished some time—when one's patience wears out.

We baited the trap with toasted cheese, and placed it on the pantry floor beside a cut pumpkin, upon which they had already commenced depredations, and then I hid behind a board to watch.

Presently a little grey-coat came scampering down the pumpkin after a seed and smelled the cheese. He jumped down beside the trap and looked in at one of the holes for an instant. Then he made a dive for the cheese, when snap! went the wire, and poor grey-coat was soon choked to death. He hadn't had his cheese either.

Very soon after this sad episode, grey-coat number two came out from behind the pumpkin, almost stepping upon his unfortunate brother without seeing him. Then when he did see him, he started back with a little squeal, just as I've seen little children jump and say "Oh!" when their big brother looked at them from behind the door.

But mousey recoverd almost instantly from his fright and surprise, then jumped upon the back of the dead one and bit him so severely, that I am sure had he been alive, he would have squealed with the pain.

Mousey number two looked at his fallen friend very intently for an instant, then scampered off among the stones and disappeared.

A moment later he returned, accompanied by four other mice, each of whom by turns jumped upon the dead one and bit him, each squealing loudly as he did it. They tried to extricate him, dragging the trap, mouse and all, several feet in their vain efforts. Finding that it was useless to work longer to release him, they abandoned the project and ran away.

What do you suppose made them act so savagely towards their unfortuuate little brother? It made me think of the old saying about kicking a man when he's down, but I never knew before that animals did that.

AN OFFENDED ELEPHANT.

EVERYBODY has heard of the sagacity of elephants; the writer, having been in India for years, had many opportunities of judging of it. One day, two ladies were watching some elephants being fed near their camp in the jungles of the Central Provinces, when the elder of the two unfortunately took it into her head to offer one of the elephants a very hot chapatti, which is a cake made of flour and baked on the fire, over a thin plate, and consequently when fresh made is burning hot. Elephants are usually fed with these twice a day, but they are always allowed to cool before being given. This one was still so hot that it hurt the beast's trunk, for he dropped it with the quickness of lightning, and with a shout, at the same time striking a blow on the hand of the lady, whom he, of course, considered had meant to hurt him intentionally. Had she but been a little nearer, and the beast not at the full length of his chain, the same blow on the head would certainly have killed her on the spot; as it was, her hand was in a most painful state for weeks afterwards. Next morning, when it was time to start for the next encampment, this same lady, who usually got up the ladder first, and sat nearest to the elephant's head, proceeded to do as usual, but as soon as she approached the elephant he began to trumpet and throw water over her. This he did several times, till at last she had to give up trying to ascend, and another lady took her place. The elephant, however, permitted her to sit near his tail; but he remained cross all day, and subsequently showed that justice is not as invariably developed in the elephantine character as supposed.

FRANK HOWARD.

A SEA STORY OF ADVENTURE AND DARING.

BY J. A. MAITLAND.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIREFLY GOES ON A CRUISE AFTER PIRATES.

HOW proud, how glorious was my position! Here was I, a boy not yet sixteen years of age, and hardly yet three years at sea, my own master, in command of a beautiful little vessel that everybody admired, with upwards of forty able seamen and marines, subject to my authority, and with nobody to control me; for before the Spitfire had been a week at sea, not a single ship of war was left on the coast of Jamaica—all had been recalled to England.

How proudly I trod the quarter-deck of the Firefly! It was but "two steps and overboard," as sailors say, in allusion to the quarter-deck of a small craft. But then it was *my* quarter-deck, and *I* was lord and master of the little vessel!

With what contempt I looked down upon the masters of the merchant ships, in Kingston harbour, though some of these vessels might have stowed away the little Firefly in their holds, under hatches, with the utmost ease!

No sooner did a merchant ship come to an anchor off the port, than I ordered my gig to be manned, and was pulled alongside of her by four stout seamen, clad in white frocks and trousers and straw hats—myself steering, attired in full uniform, with as much pomp and parade as if I had been a post-captain or an admiral. For was not I the only naval officer in command in port? And had not I a right—nay, was it not my duty, as the representative of my sovereign—to know all about the newly-arrived vessel, to demand to see her papers, to satisfy myself that all was right concerning her? Generally I was received by the masters and mates with the greatest civility, and politely invited into the cabin—where, I am afraid, I put on great airs, while my every demand was promptly complied with. Some masters of vessels, however, thought proper to treat me very cavalierly, and, though they were compelled to show me their papers when I requested to see them, treated me as if I were but a boy, and showed little respect to my midshipman's uniform. How I wished that I had the right to sport an epaulet on my shoulder that I might give these gentry a bit of my mind!—though, as it was, I made those fellows who tried to look down upon me suffer for their incivility. As a naval officer in command, I had the right to issue orders with regard to the mooring of vessels in a British port, to give directions as to the loading and discharging of ballast and cargo, and to compel all lights and fires to be put out on board the ships at certain stated hours; and I harassed these surly gentry to my heart's content.

One day the master of a large vessel in Kingston harbour had a large party on board, consisting of most of the planters of the neighbourhood, and their wives and daughters, and some of the military officers in garrison. He had not thought proper to send me an invitation, and I resented what I regarded as an insult. Nine o'clock, when the company were just beginning to enjoy themselves, was the hour at which lights and fires on board the vessels in port were ordered to be put out—though, on the occasion of a party on board any of the ships, it was customary to allow lights on board till midnight, or, for that matter, throughout the whole of the night. But I was offended, and I determined to exercise my authority; and Douglass upheld me in so doing. No sooner had the clocks in the city of Kingston struck nine, and the vessels in the harbour struck "two bells," than I despatched Douglass to the Martha Carey—that was the name of the vessel—with directions to order the *master*—I specially charged Douglass *not* to say the *captain*—to extinguish immediately every light on board. When the Firefly's boat got alongside the ship, the company were dancing on the quarter-deck of the Martha Carey to the music of a band engaged from the shore, and the stewards were busily laying out a grand supper in the chief cabin. Douglass mounted the vessel's side, and issued the order to the chief mate, who reported it to the captain, who, on his part, advanced to the gangway, and asked by whose authority the order was sent.

"By the officer in command of the Firefly," replied Douglass.

"And pray, sir, what rank in the navy does that officer hold?" asked the captain.

Douglass was compelled to reply that I, his superior officer, was a midshipman.

"Then, sir," said the captain, "please to return to your cock-boat and tell Mr. Midshipman Howard that such an order would never be given on such an occasion as this by a captain or a lieutenant, and that the *master* of the Martha Carey intends to keep his lights burning until midnight, or as long afterwards as he chooses."

With this insolent message, Douglass returned to the schooner, feeling as angry as if the insult had been offered to himself. In an instant I was flaming with passion. I ordered our largest boat, the cutter, to be brought alongside, and ordered my two marines, and twelve of the seamen, to enter the boat, I myself intending to steer her to the ship, which lay about half a mile distant. The marines were armed with their muskets and bayonets, and the sailors with pistols and cutlasses. I knew that I was exceeding my authority as a midshipman to board a vessel in port with a body of armed men, merely to carry out an order. But I did not at the moment care for that, nor for the results, whatever they might be.

"Shove off!" I called to the men; and in a quarter of an hour the cutter was alongside the ship.

I immediately ascended the side, and, strutting to the quarter-deck, where the dancing was still going on, asked for the *master* of the ship. A stout, rather elderly man came forward, saying:

"I, sir, am the *master* of this vessel. You, I presume, are the *midshipman* in command of that schooner?"

"I am, sir," I haughtily replied. "You have once refused to obey my orders, issued in accordance with the regulations drawn up by the admiral of the station when he was last in port. Now, sir, I repeat my order in person. Instantly put out every light on board this ship, and re-light them at your peril. If you again refuse to obey, I will order my men to come on board and execute the order. If you resist, the consequences be on your own head."

Again the captain refused, and threatened to write to the admiral at Bermuda.

I stepped to the gangway.

"Come on board, marines, and eight seamen,"

said I. "Bring your arms with you, and put out every light on board the ship. If resistance is offered, seize the master, put him in the boat, and I will carry him on board the schooner."

The men liked no better fun. In an instant ten of them stood on deck—the two marines with their muskets and fixed bayonets, the sailors with unsheathed cutlasses—leaving four men in the boat. At my command, they advanced to the quarter-deck, and at once commenced to extinguish the lights. The captain of the ship called upon his mates and men to resist. I dared them to do so. The ladies screamed, the gentlemen guests blustered, and took the part of the captain; but no one dared offer resistance to armed men, and in a few minutes the ship was in perfect darkness.

"Now, sir," said I to the captain, "if you had sent on board the Firefly to ask permission to burn your lights until a late hour, or until daylight, it would have been granted; but as you have chosen to treat with contempt the instructions of the admiral, I have thought it my duty to compel you to obey those instructions."

The captain fumed with rage, and many of his guests were still more furious. "What insolence!" said some. "What impertinence!" cried others. "Such abominable insolence—and from a mere boy!" growled the colonel of militia, who was a provision dealer at Port Royal.

"I would complain to the admiral at Bermuda, and get the young upstart broke, if I were you, captain," said others. I heard all they said quite calmly. However uncourteous my behaviour might have been, I knew that I was only carrying out the admiral's written orders to the masters of the merchant vessels in port.

"I wish you good-night, ladies and gentlemen," I said at length; and descending to the boat, I returned to the Firefly.

I felt proud in the consciousness that I had done my duty; but the *true* reason wherefore I conducted myself so harshly was because the master of the Martha Carey had not been polite enough to send an invitation to his party to "Frank Howard and Alfred Douglass, Esquires, midshipmen, in command of his Majesty's schooner Firefly." The masters of the vessels in port for some days afterwards threatened terrible things, and some of the newspaper editors wrote angry articles about naval impertinence and tyranny, and the evil consequences of giving important commands to mere boys; but in a short time the excitement died away. Some time afterwards, when I again met Captain Barlow, I told the story to him, and he told it to the admiral of the station. The admiral laughed heartily.

"The youngster did no more than his duty," he said; "but I think if I had been master of the ship, I should have been strongly inclined to throw him overboard."

For two months the Firefly remained at Port Royal, only occasionally taking a trip along the coast. Douglass and I got along famously together, and thought as much of ourselves as if we were both post-captains. I had no trouble with my crew, and all went well; but I was anxious to do some thing more. "I was not put in command of the Firefly," I thought, "merely to cruise about the coast in the neighbourhood of Port Royal;" and Douglass and I, and all hands on board, were right glad to hear, one day, that two or three pirate vessels had been seen off Montego Bay and Falmouth, on the north coast of the island.

It was reported that a merchant ship had been boarded off Falmouth, and her crew treated with shocking cruelty, and I resolved to sail round to the north coast, and cruise about in the hope of capturing the piratical scoundrels.

To hunt after pirates with any chance of success, however, requires the officers in command to have a thorough knowledge of the coast, and the depth of water in the bays and inlets. Pirate vessels are generally small, drawing very little water, it being their object to escape the men-of-war in search of them, by running into some inlet whither no man-of-war can follow them. The Firefly, however, drew so little water that I was confident that *she* could enter any inlet in which a pirate vessel could float; but then it was necessary that *I* should know the soundings all along the coast. As I have said in a former chapter, I had taken great pains to acquire a knowledge of the south coast of Jamaica; but I was not so well acquainted with the north coast, and I thought it advisable to carry a pilot with me during the cruise.

Now, the old negro pilot, of whom I spoke in the previous chapter of my story, knew the soundings all along the coast, north and south, thoroughly; but he was *too* old for the purpose for which I required him; besides, the old man was too fond of having his own way. Then, again, except it was to pilot a man-of-war in or out of port, the old man now didn't care about putting himself to any trouble. But his sons were almost as good pilots as he, and I determined to engage Cato, the old man's eldest "boy"—a negro of seventy years of age—to accompany us in the Firefly.

With this object in view, I went on shore, and walked to the old man's house. When I reached the house, or hut, I found only Susanna, the old pilot's daughter, at home.

"Good morning, Susanna," said I.

"Marnin', massa," replied the negress; "you please step in, take lilly rum—lilly beverage—what massa please, dis marnin'—quench him thirst?"

"No thank you, Susanna," said I. "I wish to see your father. That is why I have called; but I see that he is not at home."

"No, massa, he about sunnin' heself somewhare. Please wait lilly. P'raps by'm-by he come in."

"No, never mind. Your brother will do as well—Cato, I mean. Is he anywhere near about?"

"Iss, massa. You catch him down in de garden. He gone down to de arbour. Dar he sit, mendin' him breeches. You sure catch him."

I thanked Susanna, and strolled through the garden which surrounded the house until I came to an arbour at the bottom, where I saw, through the leaves of the creepers that covered the arbour, the old negro, holding up a terribly ragged pair of canvas trousers to the light, as he sat cross-legged on the seat that ran across, while opposite him sat a big monkey, busily employed in cracking nuts.

"Nebber see de like ob de ole man," said Cato, whose own wool was as white as snow. "Him nebber tink young folk want new clothes. See here now, Quacco (to the monkey); nebber can tell which is patch and which is de proper clof ob dem breeches (the negroes of the West Indies always speak of trousers as breeches). Dem is all patch, I tink, fo' true. Well to be like you, Quacco—hab nuts to crack, eat plenty, nebber hab 'casion for mend you clothes. Dat berry fine life, Quacco—eh? Bodder dem breeches—I can't mend 'em no more, nor shirt neider. All is tore de same. Old fader mus' gib me new suit. Him got plentee; nebber wear 'em."

I now stepped into the arbour.

"Good morning, Cato," I said.

"Ha! Marnin', massa. You come catch me berry busy mend dem clothes, what *so* torn dey won't bar mendin' no more."

"Why don't you buy new ones?" I asked. "You should earn plenty of money in the pilot boats."

"Ah, massa," replied the negro, "dem pilot boat all b'long to ole fader. We hab to gib him de money we arn. He treat we all same like when we was lilly childer—fo' true."

"And you are seventy years old?"

"So dem say, massa. Me not sabby (know), fo' true. Hab got no recollection of de time when I was born, massa."

"Well, suppose I put you in the way of earning some money for yourself—what would you say to that?"

"I say berry good, massa—s'pose you not want me for work *too* hard. Nigger like monkey—like Quacco, dar—he no lub (love) too much work; only monkey more *clebber* den nigger. Nigger 'peak, den makee work. Monkey no 'peak; den no can makee work—eh, Quacco?"

"Chic-chic-chic-chic," cried the monkey, grinning, and showing his sharp white teeth.

"Ah, chic-chic-chic. Dat all you will say—not all you *can* say. You berry cute and clebber, purtend you no can 'peak. But, massa, midshipman buckra (turning to me), what 'bout dis work you 'peak of?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIREFLY'S FIRST PRIZE.

I told Cato what I had come for.

"Massa, s'pose I go in de Firefly, I bring Quacco wid me?" he replied.

"Yes, yes; take him on board with you if you like," said I. "But why can't you leave him at home?"

"'Cause dem tease him too much, massa. Dem jealous ob him—buckra, and nigger too sometimes."

"Well, well, come away, then. The Firefly is ready for sea, and I'm anxious to be off."

"Mus' wait lilly bit, massa—mus' wait while me finish sew de patch on de knee ob dese breeches. See, he most done;" and Cato held up an old pair of canvas trousers for my inspection, and then sat himself down very coolly to finish his task.

I knew enough of the negro character to be aware that a free negro will have his own way, and that he only becomes more obstinate if you oppose him; so I waited as patiently as I could, and amused myself with watching Quacco's antics. Cato sat humming, or crooning, a negro song while he plied his needle. At first I could not distinguish the words; but presently he sang:

"Oh, buckra* was de first man,
Nigger was de oder;
Buckra big story tell,
When him call de nigger brudder!
Monkey was de third man,
Dis I tell you true;
Monkey was a better man
Den de oder two."†

"Berry good song dat, massa," said Cato, looking up from his work.

"Yes," said I. "I've often heard the negroes sing it. But what do you mean by saying that the monkey is a better man than the other two?"

"Nebber you *hear* dat story, massa?" replied Cato. "Wait, den—I tell him. I yerie‡ (heard) the story from Obeah-man§ long time ago. Obeah-man berry clebber—oh, too much clebber! Make you well, s'pose you sick. Kill you, s'pose you well, and you 'fend (offend) him. Obeah-man nebber can tell lie, and one day him go tell niggers de story ob de creation.

"Yerie dar, you black niggers?" him say. "I go tell you de true story ob de creation, and s'pose you not keep still and hold your cuss tongue, s'help me, I break dis sugarcane ober your woolly pate. Dis de way it come about. First dem make buckra-man. Good! Like him well, lilly while, but soon he grow bumptious. Tink too much ob himself. Besides, his skin show de dirt too much. He got no mout (mouth) to speak of, and him nose too long. And den him har! It hang down ober him eyes and ears. 'Mus' try again,' dem say. So den dem make nigger. 'Ah, dat better!—good colour—no show de dirt. Hab nice flat nose, big lips, woolly har—eberyting proper. But he too much fool. Let buckra-man catch him, make slave ob him—call him brudder, all same time him flog him!

"'Ah, dis nebber do,' dem say. 'Mus' try once more.' Den dey make monkey—like Quacco, dar. (Why you no laugh, Quacco, when you yerie dis story? You greedy. Too busy crack your nuts—eh?) Well, massa, Obeah-man go on for tell how dem make monkey, and tink him *berry* good. Can climb tree—can swing by him tail. Hab har on him back, so no want bodder wid clothes. And den he so clebber dat he no speak, 'cause if he 'peak, den buckra go make him work!"

"Chi-chi-chi!" chattered Quacco, grinning, and showing his teeth.

"Ah," said Cato, "I thought *dat* make you laugh. Monkey always laugh when he tink how clebber he cheat de whitemans! But monkey hab him fault too. Dere ain't noting perfect on dis airth. Him too greedy for yam (to eat.) He steal cocoa-nut, and sugarcane, yam all day long, and dey catch him in traps and make fool ob him. Still he better and more clebber den de buckra and de nigger, 'cause he no 'peak, and so dem no can make him work. Dat de story de Obeah-man tell, massa, and berry good story too. And now dat I have sew de patch on my breeches, I am ready to go board de schooner."

Cato followed me to the wharf, Quacco trotting after him like a dog. We went on board the schooner, and in half an hour the little vessel was under weigh, with her ensign flying, and her man-of-war pendant trailing from her mast-head as proudly as if she were a first-class frigate.

"They won't do us the honour of firing a salute from the fort," said Douglass, laughing, as he and I paced the narrow quarter-deck together.

"No," said I. "I expect the fellows on shore, and the merchant skippers, will be heartily glad to get rid of us; for, to tell the truth, we *have* carried things with a high hand since the sloop of war sailed. We've insisted upon the regulations being carried out to the letter with respect to the shipping in the harbour, and given as much trouble as possible."

"They should have been more civil, then," replied Douglass. "If they'd invited us to their balls and parties more frequently, we wouldn't have been so strict. But no; they thought they could overlook a couple of young midshipmen, and make us do as they pleased, and they've found out their mistake. We've taught them a lesson which they'll remember another time."

"I've a great mind to salute the shore," said I; "and by George, I *will*. We'll give them a roarer that will rouse them up a bit," I added, laughing.

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* *Buckra*—West India negro term for whiteman.

† Jamaica negro song.

‡ The word *yerie* has several meanings. It is used by the negroes for "Do you hear?" "I hear," "I heard," and so forth.

§ *Obeah-men* are negroes who pretend to a knowledge of medicine, and to prophecy and magic. They are much feared by the more ignorant negroes, and are often held in considerable respect by the most intelligent.

The little vessel was sailing between the fort and the shore about a mile distant from either. I brought her to as she was, and ordered the carronades, or short guns, of both broadsides to be loaded with a double charge of powder, but without shot. She had swung round with her starboard bow towards the town, and I then ordered the swivel-gun to be loaded in a similar manner, and pointed towards the store of a merchant, who had been loudest in his complaints against us.

"Now, men, to your guns," said I; "and when I give the word—'Fire'—bang all together."

The gunner's crew went to their several stations, full of fun, and laughing at and joking with one another. I had appointed the two petty officers, whom Captain Barlow had sent on board the schooner, to act, one as gunner, the other as boatswain and quartermaster. The gunner approached the quarter-deck, and touching his cap, said:

"Beg pardon, Mr. Howard; but don't you think it is dangerous to discharge the guns so heavily loaded—though it be only with powder?"

"Go to your post, sir, and attend to *your* duty," I replied. "*I* command this schooner, and I want no advice from any one."

"Beg pardon, sir," returned the man; "I didn't mean no offence. But I thought, p'raps, being a young officer, you mightn't give a thought to the power of so much powder."

"The guns are well secured," I replied, more gently; "and they're nearly new. The metal's good. There'll be no harm done, I'll warrant;" and the gunner went to his station without reply.

"Ready, men?"

"All ready, sir."

"Then fire!" I shouted.

By Jove, what a roar! "Bang—bang—bang!" went gun after gun, though as nearly at the same instant as possible, and "boom!" went the long swivel-gun with a noise louder than thunder. In an instant everything was obscured in smoke, and the smell of gunpowder was stifling. The noise was absolutely deafening. I and Douglass and several of the men put our hands to our ears to deaden the sound, and it seemed as though the little vessel had actually jumped out of the water. Luckily I had ordered all the glass doors to be opened, or every pane of glass on board would have been smashed to atoms. As it was, several panes were broken, and several tumblers and wineglasses were smashed to pieces.

When the smoke lifted a bit, it was seen that four of the guns had burst their stout lashings with the recoil, and had leaped nearly to the opposite side of the deck, though fortunately no harm was done—the men, expecting such a catastrophe, having jumped aside out of the way the moment they pulled the lanyards. It was some time before the smoke cleared away in the bay, and allowed us to see the town again; and then there was ample evidence that the tremendous fire had caused great alarm. The officers and soldiers were all gathered together on the parapets of the fort, and the streets of the town were thronged with people of every class, all hastening as fast as possible to the wharf, while from time to time they cast a glance at the stores on each side of the streets. They, and the soldiers also, believed that the schooner had blown up, through the powder magazine taking fire, and I heard afterwards that several windows were blown in on the fort and in the town, and that several tiles, and in some instances whole chimney-stacks, were blown down. The vexation and anger of the merchants when they found that the Firefly was *not* blown to atoms into the air were very great; and I was told some time afterwards that Mr. Wilson, one of the leading merchants, vowed that he'd write to the admiral, at Bermuda, and demand that Douglass and I should be disrated, and that if the admiral would not punish us, as we deserved to be punished, he would write to the *Times* newspaper, and insist upon the affair being laid before Parliament! Of course *we* only laughed at these threats when we heard of them, and nothing ever came of them; though at a later period, as my readers will learn by-and-bye, I made the acquaintance of Mr. Wilson, and found him a very good fellow.

Douglass and I were delighted at the alarm we had occasioned, and to finish off the joke, I ordered the two marines, who formed the marine-guard of the Firefly, to stand on the quarter-deck and fire their muskets, loaded with blank cartridge, at the wondering crowd, as we sailed swiftly out of the harbour.

We had a fair westerly breeze, and before morning we had rounded Morant Point, at the east end of the island. The wind then, of course, was foul, as our course was nearly due west; but the gallant little Firefly lay close to the wind, and by taking advantage of the land and sea breezes,* we arrived off Falmouth harbour three days afterwards.

We cruised to and fro between Falmouth and Montego Bay for eight or ten days, sometimes running into harbour at night, but heard of nothing worth recording until the fortnight had expired, when the master of a merchant brig, bound to Falmouth, from Liverpool, informed us that he had been chased for twenty-four hours, a few days before, by a small, low-sided craft, felucca-rigged, and evidently well armed, and full of men. He had escaped from her during the darkness, but he said that he had been told by the negro crew of a fishing-boat that a large ship had been boarded and plundered, and then sunk by pirates a week previous, off Port Maria, and that it was supposed that the pirates had murdered all on board.

This was enough for Douglass and I, and we set sail immediately for Port Maria.

For three days we run down the coast before a fair breeze, with fine weather, but sighted nothing except a few fishing-boats and sugar-droghers.† The third evening the weather became gloomy, with every appearance of a westerly gale.

"Sail ho!" cried the man on the look-out forward, shortly before dark.

"Where away?" cried Douglass, who had the watch on deck.

"Away on the weather bow, sir."

"What does she look like?"

"A small vessel, sir, though I saw her but a moment before she was hidden in the bank of fog to windward."

I had heard the cry, and had come on deck.

"She's a schooner, sir, on the same tack as we," said the man, presently. "I see her now, close hauled to the wind."

At this moment the Firefly was caught by a squall, which buried her lee side under water to the hatchways. It passed rapidly away to leeward, fortunately without carrying anything away on board—for we had not time to lower our large mainsail, and the mast bent and sprung like whalebone; but the instant the squall passed away, the weather to windward cleared up, leaving the sea and sky bright and clear to the very verge of the horizon.

I then saw through the spyglass that the sail to windward was a low-hulled, fore-and-aft rigged vessel, scarcely larger than the Firefly, answering in every respect to the description given of the pirate craft—though, in answer to our ensign, she hoisted the Yankee stars and stripes. For some time she seemed doubtful how to act, and appeared to be hesitating whether to bear down to us, or to start off before the wind. However, she chose the latter course, sailing from us close hauled to the wind.

This was just the Firefly's best point of sailing, providing that it did not blow too hard. The little vessel sailed swiftly *before* the wind, but I never saw any vessel, large or small, that would sail so swifty close hauled to the wind, and *that* without making any leeway to speak of.

We braced sharp up, and went after her—after firing a gun as a signal to her to lie-to for us, which signal she disregarded.

The boatswain and quartermaster, an elderly and experienced seaman (who, as well as the gunner, had, there is little doubt, been sent on board the Firefly in order that, in times of peril, they might offer advice to the youthful officers in command of the latter vessel), was standing at the wheel when I gave the order to chase.

"If I might venture to offer my advice, Mr. Howard," said he, "I should say that, looking at the signs of the weather, it would be safer to run the Firefly into port, more especially as yonder schooner, if she runs out to sea, will surely put back in a day or two, and if she hangs about this coast looking after merchant ships, we're sure to come across her again, sooner or later."

"I think that's good advice, Howard," said Douglass, who was standing by my side. "I've been longer at sea than you, my boy, and I've been on a cruise among the West India islands before now. The weather *does* look threatening, and I think the Firefly had better seek a snug berth in harbour."

It would have been well if Lord Alfred had held his tongue. He and I agreed together very well, as a general rule; but to tell the truth, I was jealous of his longer experience at sea, and I thought that he sometimes interfered with the conduct of the vessel when he had no right to do so. So I replied:

"If that schooner can stand out the gale, quartermaster—should we *have* a gale—so can the Firefly. I'm not going to seek shelter while a pirate vessel keeps the sea;" and I gave orders to set more sail, though we already had more canvas spread than the little craft could safely carry.

For some time the weather rather improved than otherwise, and we all believed that the threatened storm would pass over us. Douglass and I had gone to dinner, and returned to the deck. The schooner was still about the same distance from us to windward, staggering under all the sail she could carry. Night had come on, but the sky was clear, the moon and stars shone brightly, and we could see, with the aid of our night-glasses, almost as far around us as if it had been noonday. The land was already out of sight to leeward, and as Douglass and I walked the quarter-deck together—both of us too anxious to go below—I said, after taking a long look through the spyglass:

"I don't think she (meaning the chase) gains on us. Indeed, I rather think we are creeping slowly up to her, though a stern chase is always a long chase, even when the pursuer has a great advantage in her sailing powers."

We examined a chart of the coast, Douglass and I, with the aid of a lantern—the chart being spread open upon the cabin skylight—and I was still poring intently over the chart, when the quartermaster silently drew near to me, and whispered in my ear:

"Just cast a glance across the lee bow, Mr. Howard."

I raised my eyes from the chart. In the direction pointed out by the quartermaster, a thick bank of cloud was rising, as it were, from the ocean—so rapidly that even while I gazed upon it the whole sky in that quarter of the heavens had become obscured. The black shroud crept gradually towards us, until we were, in the short space of a few minutes, surrounded by darkness. Then a streak of bright red light, of a livid appearance, appeared on the lower edge of the bank of clouds, which increased in brightness every moment. Suddenly it fell quite calm. Some heavy drops of rain fell upon the deck, there was a swell upon the water, though there was not a breath of wind, and a low, moaning sound was audible in the air.

"We're going to catch it, sir," said the quartermaster.

I knew, from what I had read of the signs of the weather within the tropics, what these signs portended, and instantly I called all hands to shorten sail.

"Forward, there!" I shouted. "Man the fore clew-gurnets. Hands stand by to douse the foresail. Start the gib downhaul. Clew up—clew up the mainsail. Let go tacks and sheets, with a run. Quick, men—quick! And some of you settle away the main gaff."

In less time than it has occupied me to pen the orders I gave, every inch of canvas on board the little vessel was furled. It was still calm, though the sea was rising rapidly. Ten minutes more, during which period the darkness increased until one could not see one's hand held close to one's face. Then the heavens opened right above us, as though the firmament were suddenly divided by a fearful chasm; a blinding flash of lightning issued forth from the opening, which was instantly followed by an awful clap of thunder. The rain poured down in torrents, as if the sluice-gates of the heavens were opened, drenching us to the skin, and flooding the vessel's decks in an instant, and then the wind burst forth from the south-west with terrific force.

We squared our foreyard, got up a tarpaulin in the rigging to keep the vessel steady, and scudded away right before the wind, cleaving the water with marvellous swiftness. A succession of squalls, frightful in their fury, and attended with thunder and lightning, followed; but after a while the gale became more steady, though it still blew with tremendous force.

I would have given a great deal now if I could have accepted the quartermaster's warning, and run safely into the shelter of St. Anne's or Port Maria harbours; but that was out of the question. The wind blew direct from the land, and there was no recourse but to run before it out to sea.

We had for the time being altogether forgotten the supposed pirate schooner; but when the weather cleared a little we discovered her, through our night-glasses, running dead before the wind under bare poles, like ourselves, but to all appearance labouring much more heavily.

"Keep that vessel in sight!" I shouted to the men on the look-out. "Do not let her escape us in the darkness. Do not lose sight of her for a moment, if you can help it."

"All right, sir," answered the men from their different stations; and though the Firefly rolled so

* In the West India islands a land wind blows from the shore every night, and a sea breeze sets in shore from soon after sunrise till sunset. Small vessels, that are able to keep close in shore, take advantage of these breezes.

† Large boats employed to carry hogsheads of sugar from the different estates along the coast into the ports, where the sugar is hoisted on board the ships as cargo.

heavily that it was difficult for any one to keep his feet on her deck, and though, by reason of her low bulwarks, whole green seas repeatedly washed over her, sweeping away everything that was not firmly and stoutly lashed, and rendering it necessary for the men to cling with all their might to some rope or belaying-pin to save themselves from being swept into the sea, I do not think the chase was lost sight of for an instant during the hours of darkness.

With the dawn of day the wind moderated somewhat, though the gale still blew savagely. The schooner had kept her distance from us throughout the night; but it was evident that we were now overhauling her, though so slowly that our gain was almost imperceptible. Still, ere darkness again set in, we were certainly much nearer to her than we were in the morning.

Throughout the next night the gale continued to blow heavily, though we were enabled to set the reefed foresail which steadied the little vessel considerably.

The chase also set her foresail, but soon took it in again, leading us to infer that she had sprung her foremast, and was unable to carry sail upon it.

The result was that before nightfall on the second day, by which time the gale had sensibly diminished in force, we had gained upon her considerably—so considerably that she was, in my opinion, within the range of our swivel-gun.

So rapidly, however, had we scudded before the gale, that we had run a distance of nearly three hundred miles since its commencement, and the high land off Cape Dame Maria, in the island of St. Domingo, was in sight. If we continued to run, it was evident that before morning we must run the vessel on shore near the Cape.

The chase, however, kept on, and contrived by some means to strengthen her foremast so that she was able to carry her foresail. It was evident that she was running for some anchorage or harbour, where she hoped to escape us.

I called for Cato, who had sat shivering and moaning under cover of the aft-deck during the gale, and asked him whether he was acquainted with the coast of St. Domingo.

"Depend upon what p'int ob de coast, massa," said the negro pilot. "Tell you, fo,' true, I nebber bargain for dis, when I leave my snug home in Jamaica to come aboard dis 'bominable Firefly, what sail under water de whole time, I do believe! I wet mos' through to de backbone, and poor Q acco, him mos' dead wid fright. Please, massa, get me lilly brandy, so dat I can collect my thoughts."

"Cato held up an old pair of canvas trousers for my inspection.

Cato drank his brandy, and then said:

"Is I 'quainted wid dis coast? Well, I guess I *is;* and bad coast it be. Mus' raise de price ob pilotage, massa; 'cause I tell you I no bargain when I leave Jamaica to pilot de Firefly 'long de coast of St. Domingo."

I assured the old man that he would have no reason to complain of his payment if he did his duty properly, and then he told us that there was anchorage-ground behind the Cape, to which that vessel was running.

"And I tell you, massa," he added, "s'pose him get dere before you, you no able to make prize ob him."

"Why not, Cato?" I asked.

"'Cause, massa, dat schooner no pirate, as you *tink*. He slaver; I know him well. S'pose you catch slaves on de open sea, berry good. You make prize ob him. S'pose you catch him in Cuba, or St. Domingo, whar dem buy slave when dem can catch dem. You no able to touch de vessel, 'cause you got no authority in dose islands."

"Very good logic, Cato," said I. "Now tell me—is it your opinion that that schooner has slaves on board?"

"Sure he hab, massa," replied Cato, "else why he run from you? S'pose hab no slaves on board, he wait; you go aboard, find noting. Him go free."

"Better logic still, Cato," said I. "If that be the case, the slaver shall not escape me, if I can help it. She is not within St. Domingo waters * yet, and I believe that a shot from our swivel can bring her to before she reaches them. If so, and if she have slaves on board, I shall claim her as my prize."

Cato did not appear to approve of this plan.

"What you want catch slaves for?" he asked. "S'pose you catch him, what you do with him? S'pose you fire at de vessel whar he is, you kill slave more likely den you kill de slave crew! What right you got for do dat? You tell poor nigger—'You is a man and a brudder.' Den, dat he shall not be slave and eat and drink plenty, dough he work hard, you shoot him! You go *kill* de man and brudder! What sort of ting you call dat, massa—eh?"

I was unable to answer the pilot. But I told him that it was my duty to prevent the crew of a slaver from landing slaves, if it lay in my power, whatever might be the result.

"You do your duty, and carry the Firefly into safe anchorage-ground, Cato," said I. "That is all you have to look to. I am answerable for all else that may occur."

I called the gunner, and asked him whether he thought the chase was within range of our swivel-gun.

"Yes, sir," said he, "well within range—though with this heavy sea running, it will be no easy job to take correct aim at her."

"We'll try it, at any rate," said I. "The pilot assures me that the schooner is a slaver. If we can capture her with slaves on board, she will prove a good prize."

The gun was carefully loaded and pointed. The gunner himself discharged it, and the shot aimed at the schooner's rigging flew over her masthead and fell into the water some distance ahead of her.

"Well aimed," said I, "but pointed rather too high. We'll try again, gunner."

Again the gun was loaded and pointed with the greatest care.

"Wait for the word," I said; and I watched an opportunity when the Firefly had risen to the summit of a lofty billow. "Now fire!" I shouted. The shot struck the foreyard of the chase in the slings, bringing the yard and sail and the mass of rigging to the deck, and causing her to fall off from the wind and roll helplessly in the trough of the sea.

"She is ours!" I shouted. "Give her another taste of the swivel, and then if she do not surrender, we'll run close into her, and give her our broadside."

Again the shot did much damage to the schooner's rigging, and seeing us still intent upon doing her mischief, the captain of the slaver first hoisted and then hauled down the Spanish flag in token of surrender.

Thus I had taken my first prize, and I was highly elated in consequence. The sea was still so rough that we were unable to board the schooner that night; so I ordered the captain to heave his vessel to, and the Firefly being also hove-to, we slowly drifted towards the land together.

By daylight the wind and sea had both gone down; but before dawn the captain and crew of the slaver took to their boats, and pulling for the land, got safely to the shore, leaving us to do as we pleased with the vessel. On boarding her, I found that Cato had predicted the truth. Only two or three of the slaver's crew had been injured by the fall of the yards and rigging, as we learnt from a Spanish sailor, who, being too severely hurt to be removed, had been left on board by his shipmates. But ten poor slaves had been crushed to death, and several others were severely hurt.

"No I tell you dat ting?" said Cato. "Dat de way you go free de poor slave! Dat de way you sarve de mans and brudders!"

The prize, however, was a valuable one. The schooner had two hundred slaves on board, for each of whom we were entitled to head-money from the Government, and in her cabin we found forty thousand dollars in Spanish gold. Then the vessel and her stores and provisions would, as I knew, fetch a considerable sum of money.

We took the schooner in tow, and under Cato's pilotage, carried the Firefly and the prize into a snug cove, sheltered from almost all winds by the high land of Cape Dame Maria.

"Pretty well for our first prize—eh, Douglass?" said I, when, our anchors having been let go, and the schooner having been safely moored, we calculated the probable value of the schooner and her stores. "Altogether, we shall share among us little less than a hundred thousand dollars!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* All nations have jurisdiction over, or, in other words, hold authority over, the waters within a league of the land. If a slaver, chased by a cruiser, can escape into the waters within a league of the land of any nation that holds slavery lawful, she is safe.

BLUEBELL VANE'S STORY.

BY LADYE BYRDE.

CHAPTER IX.

DOCTORS.

BY ten o'clock that night, Sam Ashley had left Cranefells by the way he entered. I had summoned Barnet the butler, and was on the way to my own room. Some hours later there was a great noise throughout the house—bells ringing, people rushing up and down stairs, Elfrida and Catherine in dressing-gowns crying over the banisters, and Miss Churchill trying to persuade them to return to their rooms.

Putting on my clothes in haste, I found my way down, and inquired of Miss Churchill the reason of the disturbance.

"Dreadful, dreadful!" she said, and then whispered something in my ear.

"What!" I exclaimed, scarcely believing I could have heard aright.

"It's quite true," she said. "But hush! Don't talk so loud, or they'll hear us. Yes; they say he's been in a kind of fit for ever so long, and that he was trying to shoot Barnet with a pistol when it came on."

"Good gracious!"

"There are two doctors in the house, and another has been sent for."

"Do Elfrida and Catherine know about it?"

"They only know their father is very ill; but the doctors won't allow them to go down to him. It was Davis who told me."

"How do people look when they're in a fit?" asked I, wondering.

"Oh, I don't know—very pale, I daresay, or else all purple. I never saw any one, only a baby in convulsions once."

It was quite cold, so after a time we retreated to the schoolroom, and a servant came to light the fire.

About an hour had elapsed when some one entered with a message:

"Is Miss Bluebell here? She's wanted down stairs directly."

"Why mayn't *we* go?" asked Catherine, who had been crying bitterly. "I don't see why Bluebell should go and not us. She's not papa's daughter."

Thankful, indeed, I felt that I was not. Elfrida turned upon me with a scowl of hate. Her face was far more eloquent than words. I followed Davis, the schoolroom maid. She ushered me into the library, where I found two gentlemen near the fire. The one who was airing his coat-tails called me to him, and both spoke kindly, as they asked many questions as to the state of mind in which I had found my uncle on the previous evening, whether he had been excited or angry. Barnet, whose arm was conspicuously bandaged, and carried in a sling, entered with a tray, and officiously put in a word whenever he had a possible chance, appearing to know much more about the matter than I was supposed to. Although I felt obliged to tell them that a man had forced himself through the study window, they did not ask me much about it.

Just as my examination was over, some one tapped at the door. Barnet went to open it.

"Mr. 'Opkisson's a-coming to himself, sir," he said. "Will you please to come and see him?"

I was allowed to retire, while the medical men hurried to the sick chamber.

CHAPTER X.

THE QUEEN BEE.

"Your father is better," I said to Elfrida, meeting her on my way to the schoolroom.

Her eyes were red, and she looked cross and sullen rather than anxiously unhappy.

"What's that to you?" returned she, snappishly. "I daresay it was you that made him ill last night, and I shall tell the doctors so too."

But the news was very welcome, for she went to her sister and told it her at once.

What had happened on the previous night weighed heavily upon me. I kept expecting some catastrophe to fall upon the house, and the feeling seemed to be shared by others. Miss Churchill drew me into her room, and fastening the bolt, said:

"What are they doing down stairs? Tell me all about it."

I explained.

"And now, what about last night? I'm sure there's some mystery in it all."

"Elfrida and her sister were on the landing, probably waiting to see me off."

I don't think I could have possessed the proverbial trustfulness of children, for I had not the smallest desire of making her my confidante. Besides, I did not dare to talk to her of Sam Ashley's visit to the study; it seemed to me then too dreadful a thing to speak of unless it were forced from me. But I told her of the skeleton closet, and that I had seen it open at last; and after this she went on to speculate on the possibility of Mr. Hopkinson dying, and of her having to leave Cranefells.

"And what will become of *you*, child?" she said. "You'll have to go away from here, you know."

"Oh, I don't know," returned I. "Anything will be better than staying with these people."

A dark cloud hung over the house that morning; the girls did not attempt the usual routine of lessons, but sat or wandered about from room to room, though forbidden to go near the apartment where their father lay. For myself, I sat in what I called my corner of the schoolroom, and, with a book in my hand, looked out of the window or tried to read. I had seen two carriages drive up to the house, and another could be seen winding up the avenue, when Catherine came bursting into the room.

"Oh," she cried, "there's such a dreadful fuss down stairs! Do come and listen. I heard some man say he didn't care whether Pa was ill or not—he'd have him taken right off to prison; and they're making such a row. Oh, listen!"

Through the open door we could hear a loud disturbance below, and, above all, Elfrida's voice screaming angrily.

We made a rush to the stairs, and looked down into the well beneath. I recognized Sam Ashley at once. He was talking loudly, and gesticulating with vehemence. A bedroom door above closed, and Barnet joined the group. We could hear the tones of his voice in expostulation, though the words were lost. Then Ashley ascended the stairs, attended by Barnet and one of the doctors. I heard him say:

"I believe it's nothing but sham. I'll soon find out, and if it's all humbug, I'll drag him down stairs double quick!"

Several voices cried "Ssh-sssh," some doors were unclosed, and the sounds ceased.

The front-door bell rang as we stood waiting for the next act.

"Some more policemen, I believe," cried poor Catherine, turning white. "Oh, what *can* Pa have done? I'm sure it's some horrid mistake!"

The visitor was admitted. We could see it was a lady. Elfrida now joined us—she had been down gaining information, I suppose. Up came a messenger.

"A lady to see Miss Bluebell."

I was amazed.

"To see *me!* I don't know a lady in the world!"

"A *lady!*" sneered Elfrida. "*She's* no great shakes, that's certain! Some old beggar or other, I daresay."

Catherine was too full of her own troubles to heed me, or she might have added a pretty speech to that of her sister.

Miss Churchill, afraid of my retort, said:

"Come along, Bluebell; you must brush your hair before you go. Here, my room is nearest."

Once more I went below—this time to the drawing-room.

Sitting on the sofa was a pale, gentle-looking lady, with a face that looked at me as faces you have loved look at you in dreams. I stood spellbound at the door, and then a crowd of half-forgotten memories rushed upon me. The face smiled, and I cried, in a voice that didn't sound in the least like my own, "Aunt Esther!" and then ran across the room, not to kiss her, but to bury my face in her lap, and sob without tears.

She let me alone for a few minutes, but I felt her hand on my head as I knelt, and I could hear her say, in a half-whisper, "Poor little one! Poor child!"

Soon I was lifted up. "My little Bluebell!" she said with a something in her voice that reminded me strangely of my father. "What! not one kiss for me!"

I flung my arms round her neck, and laid my cheek on hers. She folded me closely to her, and the sweetness of those few moments almost repaid me for the years of unhappiness and neglect I had suffered at Cranefells.

You children, who have the kisses and caresses of fathers and mothers day by day, can have but little idea of the sense of happiness that overflowed me. I, who had scarcely heard the voice of kindness for years—who had been ill-treated, neglected, snubbed, at best pitied—to feel the

arms of love around me, to hear words of affection breathed, and, above all, to know that I was no longer a friendless being in the world—my cup of happiness was full to the brim. What more could I want?

Time went by, and we talked on—there was so much to say to each other. My aunt had only lived some eighteen months in Mr. Stewart's parish. During my father's lifetime she had resided abroad with her husband and family. I had often wondered where she was, and why she had never written to me, or made any inquiry about me, so far as I knew. I had supposed she must be dead to have so entirely allowed me to pass from her mind. Once I had asked information of Mr. Hopkinson, but he professed entire ignorance. Now, however, all was explained. At the time of my father's leaving England, my aunt had offered to receive me into her family, and her brother had fully intended to avail himself of her proposal, when, most unfortunately for me, scarlet-fever broke out in their home, and several of the children became dangerously ill. Mr. Hopkinson, who appears to have possessed much influence over my father, had more than once offered to receive me, and now came forward to renew the invitation, promising that so long as I remained under his roof, I should receive, with his daughters, every advantage of education, and be, in all respects, treated as they were. The offer was very reluctantly accepted (what else could be done, as I had begged not to be sent to school?), the understanding being that as soon as the present domestic trouble should have disappeared, I should go to live abroad with my aunt. But after my father had sailed, she received a letter from Mr. Hopkinson, saying that at the very last moment something had occurred which altered my father's plans materially, and he had sent requesting that I should at once join him at Southampton, from which port he was to sail for the West. This letter contained many affectionate messages from me to my cousins, and a great deal of fictitious grief which Elfrida and Catherine were supposed to have expressed.

The next news that came was that we had both been drowned, and the vessel completely wrecked—which last was perfectly true. The fact was accepted with much sorrow, but without suspicion. The family went into mourning, and we were considered among the dead; nor had our relatives any idea of my possible existence until Mr. Stewart called upon them to tell of a little girl named Bluebell Vane, whom he had accidentally met at Cranefells, and who had spoken of a Mrs. Esther Carringer as her aunt.

In spite of the strange coincidence, it was with but a faint hope of seeing her niece that my aunt came to Cranefells that morning. It was, indeed, to each of us as a resurrection from the dead; and to myself, I suppose, the most perfect pleasure I had ever experienced in my young life.

In the course of the revelations that were made, my natural, unrestrained temper could not but show itself, for I made no attempt to conceal my feelings; and more than once my aunt had to lay her hand on my shoulder to stem the torrent of abuse I was heaping on the head of the hapless Mr. Hopkinson.

"I only wonder he's been allowed to live so long," I said, in one of my outbursts. "Such a horrid old man—he ought to be hung, and have his head chopped off afterwards! Ugh—how I hate him! I hope he'll get well enough to go to prison, so that he may be punished well after it—don't you?"

"My dear child," remonstrated my aunt, "this is not a Christian spirit to indulge in. We must try to forgive him, although he has sinned so deeply against us, especially against you; but I know it is a very hard thing to do this."

"I can never, never forgive him!" I cried. "I shall always think it was his fault that mamma and papa died, and I'm sure I shall hate him for ever. Look!" I went on, starting up, and drawing my aunt by the hand towards the fireplace. "Come and see this picture of my mother—oh!"

It was gone—its place filled by another. I stood staring at the new picture—a miserable representation of "Guido's Cenci," and then I said angrily:

"He's taken it away—the wretch—the old thief! It was here only the other day, and it's my own picture, my very own. What business has he to take it away? He stole it from me—he told me he did. Aunt, aunt—isn't it a shame!"

It was sometime before I could make her understand it all; then she thought it might, perhaps, have been removed owing to some accident—not by design, as I supposed. But I would not hear of this charitable idea, and blurted out:

"You don't know him, aunt. He did it on purpose—I know he did. I don't believe there's a wickeder man in the whole world than he is! What do you think he did one night? He made me stop down here alone with him after he had sent the girls away, and he made fun of poor mamma, and said he hated her; then he got up and turned her picture to the wall, and banged me against the door when I was going out, and bruised my arm and shoulder. Do you know, aunt (I lowered my voice as I said this), that sometimes I hate him so much that I believe I feel like Cain did, just before he killed Abel."

"Hush, hush, my child," she said. "I know it is all very hard to bear, but we must leave him to be punished by a Judge who will do it far better than we can. The man's punishment has begun already—he is much to be pitied. I am very sorry, dear, not to see the picture of your mother. She was very dear to me, but we shall see it again some other day, I hope, when Mr. Hopkinson gets better."

"I hope he'll never get better," I began; and then changed it into, "I may always hate him, aunt, mayn't I?—because *that*, you know, can't hurt anybody, can it?"

Mrs. Carringer saw, I suppose, what an unreasonable little being she had to do with; so, instead of trying to convince me how wrong I was then, she quietly began to talk of something else.

"And will you be willing, Bluebell, to leave this fine big house, and come to live with us at Pinebridge?"

My only answer was a frantic hug.

"We are not rich folk, you know," she went on, smoothing my hair, "and our house is small compared with this; and none of us are allowed to be idle. One of my boys (you remember Tom) has christened our home 'The Hive.' I am the Queen Bee, he says. I am sure Bluebell won't be one of the drones."

My aunt's voice was so quiet and soothing, there were tones in it that reminded me of a silver bell, so clear and soft. She was so motherly and kind in her manner, that I took her largely into my heart at once, and rejoiced in the thought that I was to be near her always, and to leave Cranefells behind in the miserable past.

CHAPTER XI.

GOOD-BYE.

"And now, my child," said my aunt, "supposing you run up stairs and make yourself a little more respectable, while I see one of the gentlemen, and arrange about taking you from here."

I ran off to find Barnet, whom I sent into the drawing-room. Mrs. Carringer made known her errand, and requested that one of the medical men would give her a few moments, as she wished to be assured whether Mr. Hopkinson was really too ill to see her or not.

I danced up to Miss Churchill as she sat alone in the schoolroom working, and astonished her by capering round the schoolroom in a style that caused her to drop her crochet needle, and exclaim:

"Bluebell, are you mad?"

"I believe I am," replied I, capering on, and singing to an impromptu tune. "I'm going away—I'm going away!"

"For shame, child! Have you no more feeling than to make this noise when your uncle is perhaps dying?"

"Pooh! he can't hear all this way off. And supposing he did?"

In spite of my assertion I calmed down, and told Miss Churchill, in as few words as I could put it, of the arrival of my aunt, and of her intention to carry me off. The governess expressed much astonishment and some sorrow at my leaving Cranefells, though she acknowledged it would be an excellent thing for me. For her own future she felt much uncertainty; and while she helped me to change my frock, and to put together the two or three little trifles I prized to take away with me, she told me that Elfrida and Catherine had been admitted to their father's room. "If I were you," she counselled, "I would go and say good-bye to him before you go. Remember, you may never see him again."

I made a note of her advice, and, hurrying through my preparations, kissed her farewell, and descended.

That butler was certainly an ubiquitous personage. Go where I would, he was sure to turn up; and now he was coming to meet me on the stairs.

"So you're going to leave us, missey?" he said, in a tone rather more respectful than that in which I had been generally addressed by the servants. "I 'ope you'll be very 'appy, I'm sure. Master was a-speakin' of you a minute or two ago—maybe you'd better see him. But I wouldn't let him know as you was a-going away for good, or it might kind of hexcite him; and the doctors all says it's the worst thing that can 'appen to him now is hexcitement."

"I'll leave my hat outside here, then," said I, stepping to a dressing-room close at hand, while he drew aside a heavy curtain that hung before Mr. Hopkinson's door, and disappeared.

The two girls stood leaning against a bureau inside the dressing-room.

"Good-bye," I said. "I'm going away."

"Where are you going?" asked Catherine, in a surprised voice.

"I'm going off with my aunt."

"Who?"

"My Aunt Esther."

"And who is she? I never heard of her before."

"She's my father's sister, and I'm going to live with her."

"What!—always?"

"Yes, always."

"And pray who gave you leave, madam?" asked Elfrida, coming a little nearer.

Her manner nettled me.

"I've taken French leave," replied I. "My aunt wants me."

"And where is your beautiful aunt, pray?"

"My beautiful aunt is in the drawing-room. Perhaps you'd like to see her?"

"*I* see her indeed! No thank you. I wouldn't lower myself to do it."

I laughed in a provoking way. It was not kind of me to do this, or to have returned evil for evil, particularly at such a time; but I was an untamed little monkey, and had very much to learn in the way of Christian kindness and forbearance.

Elfrida was by no means a repulsive-looking girl when she was pleased and in good humour; on the contrary, I am sure many people would have called her pretty. But her general expression spoilt all—it was so forbidding. Somehow, I could never look at this girl but she made me think of the wicked daughter in the fairy tale who, every time she opened her mouth, brought out frogs, toads, and snakes. Elfrida looked so like my ideal of that girl just now, that I couldn't help telling her so."

"You're a hundred times more like her yourself, you ugly thing!" was her answer. "I don't believe an uglier child than you are ever lived. I'm glad to get you out of the house—you nasty little thing, you! It's every bit your fault that Pa is ill. He said just now it was you that did it."

I was quite taken aback at this accusation.

"Me!" I replied. "Why, what did I do?"

"Do!" retorted she, with suppressed fury. "Didn't you bring him the letter that night, and wasn't that the beginning of all our trouble—you hateful old thing, you! If it hadn't been for you, pa wouldn't be in this trouble."

"As if I could help"—— I began.

"And if those horrid men in there (pointing towards the bedroom) take Pa to prison," she went on, interrupting me, "I'll go and tell the judge it was all your fault, and you shall be put in prison instead for bringing that letter to the house. I believe you knew all about it, and I daresay the men are some friends of yours, perhaps relations. I wish you were dead, I do!"

She had worked herself into such a rage, that she scarcely knew what she said. Instead of flying at me, as was her usual practice, she turned hastily away, and I saw her fling herself on the floor behind her sister, crying passionately.

I supposed she meant the man who had given me the letter in the park, although she had spoken of more than one, so I said:

"I never helped him at all. I don't know one bit who he is. How was I to know what was in the letter?"

Catherine stood by, the picture of misery.

"Oh, Bluebell," she said, bitterly, "how could you have been so unkind! You have ruined us all. Pa says it's all through your bringing that letter."

"I don't believe it; he's only making up," said I.

"No, indeed he's not. He says he got such a shock when he was reading it, that it made his heart go all wrong, and it's been bad ever since. And he says, too, that if it hadn't been for that, he would have been able to take us from here in time, and save all the trouble we are going to have. Pa's very angry with you, and declares it's all through you."

"It's all very well to talk," said I; "but I know a good deal more than you do about it, and he's only telling stories. I know better, and so do other people. I saw a man in the house this morning who knows too."

"Ah, you mean that horrid man in the bedroom. He says Pa is nothing but a beggar now, and that this house doesn't belong to him at all, and the furniture's all to be sold; and as soon as ever Pa is well enough to be moved, he is to go to prison—the policemen are to come for him; and

Barnet believes, too, that it's true, every single word."

It was on the tip of my tongue to twit her with my prophecy of her father's beggary; but my good angel prevented me, and I said instead:

"And what's to become of you and Elfrida?"

"Ah, that's the worst of all," she replied. "We shall have to go to the workhouse, he says; and there are dreadful creatures in workhouses—Davis says so. They all have to dress like charity people, and have to eat oatmeal and gruel for dinner, and that sort of thing—oh, dear, oh, dear!"

If Catherine had called me names, or said harsh things of me, as her sister had done, I should have hardened my heart, and very likely rejoiced in her misery. But she was so different to her usual self, so subdued, and so hopelessly wretched, that I longed to comfort her, though I didn't know how.

On my way up stairs I had pictured to myself the way in which I should crow over the two girls, and hold my head up high if I was obliged to see their father. Now the picture had faded, and I could nearly have cried myself. If, as Catherine had said, I was so much to blame for having been the bearer of that letter, what could I do now to undo the mischief I had unwittingly done? I felt I was powerless; and somehow I wasn't half so unhappy for them as I ought to have been, although I really felt sorry, especially for Catherine. Poor girl! She stood swaying herself backwards and forwards, her hands under her apron, and the tears chasing each other down her cheeks.

"I know I haven't always been kind to you," she said; "but you needn't have been so spiteful as this to us. How would *you* like to go to a workhouse, and wear a checked frock and a frightful poke bonnet without any ribbon on it, and to have all your hair cut off? You know you wouldn't!"

She evidently thought much more of her future personal appearance than of her father's shame.

Barnet now came out of the sick chamber, and called in an undertone to me to enter.

As I went in, a smell of tobacco smoke saluted me, and the first thing I saw was Sam Ashley, sitting in a corner of the room behind a table covered with bottles and glasses. Another man sat near him. Both were smoking short black pipes and drinking something that smelt strong and unpleasant. They took no notice of me, and I, a little frightened, but with a calm front, looked towards the bed, expecting to see the sick man lying there; but he was seated in a deep chair, propped up by pillows. The change wrought in his countenance within the last few hours was startling, and quite shocked me, prepared as I was to see something unusual and distorted—his head bound up with a large white handkerchief, and a long plaistered wound by the left eye, for it seems he fell heavily forward against the sharp edge of some furniture when the fit seized him, and cut himself badly. His face was contracted, and so altered, the mouth being drawn to one side, and the eye that had been so brilliant and searching now dull and heavy, its glitter for ever gone; the figure bent, the hand feeble and restless—one had lost its power altogether. When he saw me, the blood mounted to his cheek, and he uttered an oath and clenched his fist. He seemed trying to get out of the chair, but found himself powerless. His face grew purple—his speech became thick and indistinct. Not one word could I understand.

And this was William Hopkinson, the man whom I had been obliged to call "Uncle"—he who had been the tormentor of my life during the past years, whose studied unkindness had wrought me infinite harm, frozen much that was good and kindly in my nature, and sown seeds that were to spring up in my future, bringing me many a pang and struggle—he who had boasted of his hatred to my dead mother, and of the revenge he had and still intended to perpetrate upon myself—here he sat, helpless, completely forlorn, and struck down with a dire disease, so entirely in the power of others that the mere raising his hand was an exertion;—the house he was in no longer his own, himself and children beggared, and a prison cell looming in the distance. Retribution indeed! At that time I was too young to altogether understand the terrible situation of this unhappy man; but I knew enough to be sure he was greatly to be pitied.

And where were my feelings of revenge now—my determination never to forgive, but to hate him for ever?

He saw that I could make no sense of his words. It made him furious. He absolutely writhed in his chair, and foamed at the mouth, raising his left hand to shake his fist at me. I was very frightened, and didn't know whether to go or stay. The butler went to re-arrange the pillows, although his master seemed most unwilling to be touched by him. And Sam Ashley's derisive laughter rang through the room at the vain efforts of the sick man to make himself understood. This infuriated Mr. Hopkinson so much, that Barnet at length interfered, and declared that another fit would be the consequence if the raillery were persisted in. At this the laughter grew louder, and I, perceiving that my presence but excited the patient, being moreover possessed with a fear lest he, in spite of his apparent weakness, should make a sudden spring upon me, kept edging my way backward towards the door, rejoicing that I was hidden from Ashley's view by the heavy bed-curtain.

When within safe distance from the sick man, I turned a last look upon him. He was feebly trying to push back Barnet, who, with no gentle hand, was wiping the perspiration that had gathered on his master's face.

"There, there—it ain't no use, sir. You only 'urt your poor 'ead, you know," he was saying.

I slipped out while he was talking, and, putting on my hat again, began my way down stairs.

Elfrida and her sister were on the landing, probably waiting to see me off.

"Good-bye, again," I said. Neither offered a hand. I had scarcely expected they would—certainly not Elfrida.

It was very unfeeling of me to skip down the stairs three at a time, as I did, holding on to the banister, and, if truth be told, longing to slide down the whole way; but now that the last adieux had been spoken, and the clouds were breaking, showing fair scenes of liberty, and a fairyland peopled by a loving aunt and merry cousins, I could scarcely restrain a shout of exultation in my sense of freedom, though I knew that the hearts of those I left behind were heavy with grief.

And now I was in the carriage with my aunt. As she gave directions to the man on the box, I looked up at the house I was leaving.

Above it hung a threatening sky, thunder rolled in the distance, and already rain-drops were falling; trees waved with sad whispers, and withered leaves were blown hither and thither by the rising wind; the rooks flew low, cawing and circling as before a storm; a dog howled dismally in the courtyard; blinds were down in many of the front rooms, giving the house a dreary aspect, as if it had been the abode of death.

Elfrida and Catherine stood at a window looking at us. Our eyes met, and I waved my hand. Catherine nodded, but Elfrida turned her head away.

Thus I parted with Cranefells.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 285. Back numbers can always be had)

ODYSSEUS:

HIS

WANDERINGS AND ADVENTURES.

BY C. A. READ.

CHAPTER I.

SO, after ten long years of war and watchfulness, the stratagem of Odysseus was successful, and Troy fell a prey to the Greeks. Soon the walls that had withstood every open attack were levelled to the ground, and temples and palaces, as well as the humbler dwellings of the people, were left but heaps of smouldering ruins.

When all this was done, and the captives divided among the chiefs, the Greeks entered their ships once more, and set their faces towards home. The oldest of all, Nestor, the wise king of Pylæ, was first to reach his native land. After him, Agamemnon only touched the Argive shore to meet death by the hand of the treacherous Ægysthus; while Diomede and others found but a cold welcome at their household hearths.

Among the last, if not the very last, to leave the Trojan shores was Odysseus. Little did he think, as a soft cool wind from the hills pushed his ships gently out into the deep, that many years must pass before he should look upon his beloved Ithaca.

As the last point of the Trojan shore gradually faded away, his heart bounded within him as lightly as the ship beneath him. He was going home full of wealth and spoils, with a name as famous almost as that of Achilles himself. Around him were his brave men, ready to die for him if necessary. If some of those who followed him from Ithaca lay beneath the Trojan soil, their memories were still present to cheer and animate the living.

"Ah," thought he, "how will Penelope leap to meet me as I pass under the beloved dome! And Telemachus—he who had not learned to lisp my name when last I held him in these arms—how he will dance down towards the beach when the first of the white-winged ships are seen!"

Busied with such pleasant thoughts, Odysseus seated himself upon the prow of the vessel and took no heed of sky or sea.

Presently they had passed and left behind the last of the western capes of the island of Tenedos; and one of his men drew near to ask for orders as to their future course.

He answered the man like one in a dream, and with his hand pointed out the way towards the south. Then the pleasant visions of home made him again forgetful of all else for a time.

The time was not long, however—for scarcely had the ships in the fleet altered their course, when the sails flapped against the masts, and a sudden calm left them rocking idly on a swell that seemed to roll to them from the south.

Starting to his feet, Odysseus glanced quickly round, then riveted his gaze on the horizon to the south.

"Ah," said he, in an undertone, "that dark bank of cloud rising up so quickly will stop our flight for home awhile, I fear."

"Yes, O king," replied the pilot, who was near enough to hear his words. "Yon cloud is full of trouble for us. Would that we had sailed a day earlier, or had not sailed yet at all."

"Why, what dost thou fear? An Ithacan, and frightened at a storm!"

"Our ships are frailer than they look. Ten years of rest upon the Trojan shore have made them like the wicker boats of our fishermen. And see how quickly the cloud rises! It will be on us in a moment."

"Down with the sails!" shouted Odysseus, in reply. "Quick, that all the fleet may see in time, and follow our example!"

The pilot had made ready for what he knew the order would be, and almost at the word the sail dropped down on the deck.

Then, with wonderful quickness, far and near, ship after ship followed the example set by the leader.

This done, the great banks of oars flashed out, and every ship's head was set towards the coming gale.

The preparations to meet the storm had not been a moment too soon, for scarcely had each ship gained its position when the dark cloud, full of fog and rain, enveloped them.

Then with a roar, like the noise of some mighty cataract, the storm burst upon them, sending the sea flying in foam to the mast-heads, and tossing the ships about like corks upon a mountain torrent.

Odysseus put his mouth to the ear of the pilot, and shouted some new command.

The pilot shook his head. The voice of Stentor himself could not be heard amid the roar of wind and wave.

Next moment a mighty hill of water appeared, and broke right before them. Then the greater part, running to starboard, swept away the ponderous oars at that side, as if shearing them with a giant scythe.

The vessel quivered at the stroke like a living thing, then swung round, and lay broadside on to the next wave.

With scarce a breathing pause this fell upon them—a green monster, snake-like in wrath, mountain-like in size.

Under its weight Odysseus was flung on his face, while the ship groaned in every timber.

When he staggered to his feet, blinded and dazed, the vessel had righted herself, and was running before the gale; but he and the pilot were the only souls on deck! The bank of oars on the left had also disappeared.

The king made a gesture full of grief and distress, then sprang towards the helm, and joined his strength to that of the pilot.

Hour after hour they drove before the gale, death staring them in the face every moment.

At last, as they knew that night had fallen upon them, a rift appeared in the thick cloud overhead, and a single star looked pityingly down upon them. Then the noise of the wind seemed gradually to grow less and less, though the sea tossed as wildly as at first. The rift in the cloud grew wider and wider, and presently a ship appeared, phantom-like, through the thinning fog on either hand.

"Zeus be praised!" shouted Odysseus in the ear of his companion. "Two more ships, at least, have outlived the storm!"

"Ay, more than two," replied the pilot, as ship after ship began to appear on every side. "The gods have surely saved us; for never has the Ægean been torn by such a storm before."

"Zeus, and thou, O great daughter of Zeus, I thank thee!" cried Odysseus, as he lifted his hands to the sky. "But grant me one more favour. Let me see now if all my ships are safe, or what are lost."

As he spoke, Odysseus lifted the hatchway that led to the lower parts of the ship. Then he plunged below to find the slaves who had charge of the oars huddled together in a terrified heap. The greater part of his soldiers, those who were not on deck when the storm burst, he also found safe in their part of the vessel.

So soon as he appeared, these last gathered round him with cries of joy.

"The king is safe, Pallas be praised! The king is safe!" they cried. "But what of the fleet, O king?"

"Many, perhaps all, are yet afloat," replied

Odysseus. "But let us make signal to them. Here, Myron, get ready a flaming light to burn on deck."

At the word, a soldier sprang towards a row of jars securely fastened to the sides of the ship. Unlashing one of these, he next provided himself with a shallow basin and a handful of pieces of linen.

Placing the pieces of linen in the basin, he completely soaked them with oil from the jar, while another soldier took a light from the lamp that swung overhead.

Odysseus hastened to the deck, the soldiers following. Then, just as the soldiers were about to gain the open air, the light was applied to the basin, and the flame sprang up fierce and strong.

With a beating heart, Odysseus watched as light after light began to flare out in answer on every side. Then, when these ceased to increase, he began to count, and presently he uttered a cry of joy.

"Safe! safe! They are all safe!" he exclaimed. "Of all the vessels, not one is missing."

Scarce had the words escaped his lips when the lights began to die out, and very soon all was darkness as before.

All that night the sea tossed heavily, breaking over them again and again, now in snowy clouds of foam, now in green, heavy masses, that threatened every moment to engulph them.

This, which on any other occasion would have terrified a good many, was now, after what they had passed, looked upon as more unpleasant than dangerous. So, though no eye closed in all the fleet, the most coward heart in it had ceased to fear.

When morning began to break through the masses of clouds to the east a cry arose from some of the vessels on the extreme west, and looking hastily in that direction Odysseus saw towering through the haze a mountain top.

"What place is this?" cried the king.

"That is the hill of Saoce, on the island of Samothraki," replied the pilot. "Once more have the gods been with us. Had we drifted but a little more to the west every ship in the fleet must have been lost on this, or Imbros."

"And now that we have escaped these dangers, what new ones lie before us? Had we not better take shelter under this island, and wait till we can sail southward again?"

"It is now too late," replied the pilot; "for see, we are already past it. The coast of Thrace lies before. We must run for it, and try to gain the harbour of Ænos."

"Then let whatever we do be done quickly," cried Odysseus. "Ho, there; up with the sail again!"

At the command the men sprang to the sail, and unbound it, and in a few minutes it was bellying out before the southern breeze.

The change on board was a pleasant one. It was much like that of a person who, after hours of stumbling over rocks and mounds, suddenly finds his path lead through a smooth meadow. One moment they were drifting along very slowly, now plunging into the trough between two waves, now riding on the top of a watery hillock, the next they were scudding before the breeze with something of steadiness in their motion. They had also regained a certain power over their vessel, which before seemed utterly at the mercy of the waves.

By this time the sun came out, and the clouds drifting away before them, left the sky comparatively clear, except to the north.

Gradually the thickness in that direction grew less and less, or more and more distant, and before midday they beheld the coast of Thrace dead in front, not five miles distant, the Gulf of Ænos opening a little to the right.

In a few minutes, by a slight change in the course, the vessels were bearing up the gulf, looking as proud and brave in the new sunshine as if they had but just returned from some voyage of pleasure.

Presently the towers and walls of the city came in view, and half an hour later the vessels were abreast the harbour mouth.

As the ship of Odysseus, leading the way, was about to round to and pass in, a sudden shower of arrows from the walls close at hand rained down upon the deck. One of these gashed the leg of the king, another laid a soldier dead at his feet, and several lodged in the sail and hung there.

"Ha!" cried Odysseus, "is this the hospitality of the Cicones? Quick to your arms, my men! We must enter here, though all the force of Thracia tried to bar our way!"

In a few minutes a wall of shields surrounded the pilot at the helm, and every soldier stood arrayed and ready for fight.

Then the ship swung round, and, though the arrows still rattled thick as hailstones on the shields and deck, glided calmly, and with a kind of graceful majesty, into the inner harbour.

Close behind came the rest of the vessels, the deck of each covered with men ready for fight.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, foolish Cicones!" cried Odysseus, as he glanced round and saw that all his ships were ranged beside him. "What misery have ye brought upon yourselves! It was not my wish to do ye hurt; but now ye have brought destruction on your city. Let your fate be a lesson to all time!"

For a moment or two he paused and gazed at the peaceful-looking city lying before him. Then he gave the signal, the sail of every ship dropped quickly down to deck, and their keels grated on the sandy beach.

"Now, men of Ithaca!" he shouted, in a voice that sounded clear on every deck. "Follow me!"

Next moment he leaped lightly ashore, closely followed by all his men except the slaves and those left as a guard. At the same moment from every ship a band of warriors poured forth, and soon all the beach was covered with the array.

For a minute or two they paused to close their ranks and listen to the orders of the king. Then with a wild shout—the shout of men who had been victorious in the ten long years of war with Troy, they swept like a torrent towards the city.

As they began their advance, the gates of the town facing the harbour were thrown open, and a motley crowd—a rabble of fighting men rather than an array of soldiers—poured out upon the open space.

Of these some were giant-like in size, and bright with armour; others, almost naked, carried but a single spear or sword, while those who possessed a shield in addition, held it proudly above their heads.

Contemptible as this array might appear in the eyes of one trained to solid ranks and close discipline, it was yet far from being worthy of scorn. While proud armour might cover a coward heart, there was not one of these naked bodies but contained a soul as brave as Hector's.

So, with a fierce shout, they replied to the Greeks, and ere its last echo died away, the wild bands of the Cicones and the close ranks of the Ithacans clashed together.

Scarcely, even at Troy, did the men who followed Odysseus find sterner work. The Cicones were hurled hither and thither—were slain in hundreds—but still they hung on to their enemies. Whatever of array they had might be broken, but still like bees they kept close around, stinging and enraging on every side.

Slowly the Greeks pressed their way towards the gates, galled on every side, the naked men springing upon them careless of death, if only a foe might die.

The face of Odysseus began to grow grim and full of care. How was it possible to overcome such enemies? As well try to conquer a wave by striking through it. The wave may be split, but it closes again as dangerous as at first.

Their numbers, too, oppressed him. Should he slay three Thracians for each Greek that fell, still, in the end, the invaders must fail. And should his men lose their close order for a moment, no power could save them.

He had almost decided to give the signal for retreat, when at that moment, from the gate right in front, a glittering band of warriors rushed forth. At their head, in a chariot gleaming with gems and inlaid gold, rode a youth in the full flush of his beauty and strength.

His appearance was greeted with a shout of joy from the crowd of fighting men.

"Phocus is with us!" they cried. "Phocus, the king's son. Way for the prince!"

Instantly the crowd swayed back to either side, and left a way open for their prince.

"Death to the Greeks, the robbers of Troy!" cried the young prince, as his charioteer whirled his lash, and the chariot thundered along towards the King of Ithaca, closely followed by the glittering band.

"Poor youth, I would save thee if I could," muttered Odysseus, as he stepped forward a pace or two before his men, and waited the onset. "But I feel thy death is on my spear."

Next moment the foes were so near as to see the fire in each other's eyes. Then the young prince launched his spear.

It was well thrown, but the tough bull's hide and plates of brass upon Odysseus' shield were too much for it, and it fell ringing to the ground.

"Ha! but my arm is weak!" cried the prince, as he drew his sword, and, while the chariot swept on, lunged fiercely at Odysseus.

"Thou art not a Greek; how, then, expect to pierce a Grecian shield?" cried Odysseus, as lifting his spear above his head, he brought it downwards with all his force.

The head of the spear just touched the shield of the youth, glanced off, grazed his fair chin, soft as woman's, then buried itself in the upper part of his breast beneath the throat.

"Oh, God, I die!" cried the youth, as he threw up his arms, and fell back dead in the dust.

"The fault is thine or thy people's, not mine," cried Odysseus, as he sprang into the chariot, and plunging the still bloody spear into the charioteer, hurled him dying beside his master. Then at a sign one of the Ithacans sprang forward quickly, and leaping up beside Odysseus, grasped the reins.

For an instant the whole force of the Thracians stood inactive, as if utterly confounded. Then with a wild cry, "The prince is dead—the prince is dead!" they turned and fled towards the city.

And now a fearful massacre ensued. The crowd, so brave a moment before, seemed utterly cowed by the sudden death of their prince, and each one thought of nothing but how to escape into the city.

Outside every gate they crushed and pressed, actually slaying and trampling each other to death to gain admittance. Close round them like wolves tearing a flock of unresisting sheep pressed the Greeks.

Again and again the guards within tried to close the gates; but the mere weight of dead and dying, of frantic, struggling men made it utterly impossible.

A heap of dead soon half-choked up each entrance, and over these the Greeks presently pressed in after the last of the Cicones.

Within the city, for full an hour, scenes even more terrible than those without continued, Soon flames began to rise from temple and palace; and presently the whole of the city, that had looked so sweet and calm in the morning air, was but one fiery furnace, belching flame and smoke.

By this time the Ithacans began to pour out towards the beach, each man laden with spoil, and the whole driving before them a cloud of captives—weeping wives, mothers and daughters, now widows, childless, and orphans.

On the beach, before the sun went down, Odysseus divided the spoil, giving to each soldier—those who had fought and those who had kept guard on shipboard—an equal share. Then the captives were divided by lot, and placed on board the ships, far down among their fellow-slaves.

"Now," said Odysseus, when all this was done—"now let us hasten to gain the open gulf. This is but one small city of the Cicones. If we wait to-morrow's sun a bloodier fight than even to-day's may be in store for us."

The soldiers answered him with cries of discontent. They were excited with their sweeping victory, and flushed with the raw wine they found in every house. Why were they not to have the usual feast that waited on victors? Why should they fear the naked barbarians? and, above all, why should they go to sea again while yet the wind was against them, and the waves were not stilled? They had come in here for shelter and rest; they had been forced to fight for both. They had won, and shelter and rest and a feast they would have, even if all Thrace, joined to the Cicones, poured down on them to-morrow.

It was in vain Odysseus stormed at and reasoned with them. Feast they would and feast they did; and as the sun sank down in the west he looked upon a hecatomb of Thracian sheep and bulls smoking over the Grecian fires.

Far into the night the smell of the feasting rose up into the sky, and the noise of the revellers drowned even the voice of the sea on the beach.

Towards morning all but a faithful few that obeyed the orders of the king sank into a heavy sleep, lying stretched about the half-dead embers of their fires.

Shortly before the sun showed his face the few that kept the watch heard the murmurs of a mighty host drawing near them on every side. The sound was at first like the far-away moan of the sea upon the beach, or the sighing of the wind in the tree-tops of a forest; but presently it grew louder and more definite, and the cry "To arms!" was at once raised loudly by the watchers.

Half dazed with the foolish excesses of the previous night, and but half slept, the soldiers stumbled to their feet, to find a forest of swords and spears hemming them in on every landward side.

Next moment the voice of Odysseus rose above all else.

"To arms, Ithacans!—to arms!" he shouted, as he leaped into the captured chariot, swept across their front, and dashed into a band of Thracians farther advanced than the rest.

His voice seemed to give strength and courage to his men, who formed up instantly. His charge also gave them time, for, but for it, the foremost Thracians would have been among them before they had arrayed themselves.

For half an hour the chariot of Odysseus tore along the front of the advancing foes, retarding them very much, while his spear and sword were dyed again and again in the blood of the bravest.

Gradually, however, the semicircle grew narrower and narrower, and at last closed in so much that Odysseus found no room for the proper movement of his chariot. Then he leaped to the ground, and the vehicle was hurried down to the ships, and placed on board his own. The horses were loosed, and sent flying back, half-maddened with the lash, among the ranks of their friends.

When Odysseus found himself on foot, he drew back into the ranks, and began to survey his position.

Should he advance and break through the centre of his foes, he feared that the two wings would close in and capture the ships behind him. Should he attack either wing, the centre might carry out the same movement. If he divided his band into three parts, they would each be too weak to cope with their opponents. If they stood merely on the defensive, they must in the end be gradually destroyed. To gain the ships under the first rush of the enemy was utterly impossible.

He could see but one course open to him—to

gradually draw in his men closer and closer, deepening the ranks until the proper moment arrived for a charge, when he could spread them out forcibly to all sides, much as a fan is opened quickly.

So soon as he had decided on this, he ran from rank to rank, giving the word in a low, eager voice.

It was quickly, yet calmly, attended to; and as the Thracians closed in, the Greeks fell back, showing a front every way, and galling the enemy by flights of arrows.

Presently a cry was raised in the Thracian ranks, the centre gave a mighty heave, then flung itself forward on the Greeks.

The weight of the force that bore down on Odysseus and his men was something tremendous, yet they scarcely gave way before it an inch, even at its first sledge-like blow.

Next moment it recoiled from the Greek ranks much as a wave falls back from a rock, but leaving behind it a wall of dead and dying.

"Now," thought Odysseus, "now is the moment for our charge."

Giving the word, the Greeks spread out suddenly, charging at once the centre and wings of the mighty host.

At first it almost seemed as if their utmost efforts could make no impression on the heavy mass, the men in the far rear pressing forward against those in front, and holding them in their places. However, as the first two ranks went down utterly before the Ithacans, the next ranks recoiled, and by sheer force pressed back for dear life through the mass behind.

A minute more and the whole array was but a crowd of shouting, struggling men, on which the Greeks dealt death and destruction, almost without meeting a blow in return.

This, however, did not continue long. The Greeks dared not follow up the advantage they had gained by spreading their ranks out too thinly, or by charging too far from the ships. So, when the ranks, by their wide-spreading out had become so thin as to be dangerous, Odysseus gave the word, and his men fell back to their former position.

Then the flying Thracians paused, gathered breath, and faced round once more.

For a time they contented themselves with making their array more solid and regular than it had been before. Then, from several places in their ranks, appeared the smoke and glare of torches, a sight welcomed by the men with a shout of delight.

"To the ships! To the ships!" rose the Thracian cry. "Let us but once make them blaze, and no Greek shall ever leave Thrace alive. To the ships! To the ships!"

CHAPTER III.

Just before the cry of the Thracians burst upon the air, Odysseus, with the calm quickness that was always his, detected that the wind from the south had almost died away, and that a northern breeze was fast coming towards them from the hills behind the city.

The discovery was pleasant to him, and he hastily ordered nearly one-half his men on board to hoist sails and launch out a little.

Scarcely had he done this, when the enemy, still crying out "To the ships! To the ships!" flung themselves upon him with terrific force.

The shock was so great, and the spirit of the Thracians so fierce, that on every side the thinned ranks of the Greeks gave way before it.

For a moment it seemed as if all was lost, but as the Greeks fell back and became more solid, the Thracians closing in from a wide circumference so pressed upon and incommoded each other that they could scarcely wield their weapons. Gradually, from this cause, the front ranks found themselves so jammed together and pressed forward from behind as to be practically at the mercy of the momentarily defeated Greeks.

Then ensued what had occurred before. The front ranks, refusing to die uselessly, flung themselves back upon their friends behind, and fought and struggled with them till the whole mass was as before, a howling mob.

"Now," thought Odysseus, "one last charge, then aboard. If we stay much longer we shall only be

"Odysseus let fly the last of his arrows, and laid another Thracian in the dust."

teaching these Thracians how to fight with more wisdom, and to conquer us."

Then aloud, in his old hoarse voice of battle, "Follow me, Ithacans, and show these Thracian dogs that we are Greeks indeed!"

A sudden sharp charge threw the mass of Thracians into still greater confusion, but scarcely moved it back a yard. Then Odysseus gave the word for retreat.

"Now, back to the ships! Back quickly, and let me be the last to leave the beach."

At his word the Greeks fell back quickly, yet in order. When they reached the beach, however, they broke up, and began to scramble on board as if defeated and pursued.

At the sight the Thracians again recovered themselves, and the centre, raising a cry of fierce delight, charged down upon the flying men, waving torches aloft, and sending a shower of spears at every step.

Under the storm of darts Greek after Greek tumbled, dead or dying, on the strand, and only Odysseus and two faithful men, Myron and Phorminx, stood up to face the rushing torrent.

They too, as the last of the soldiers began to scramble on board, fell back slowly; but, like the Parthians, sending death behind them at every backward move. Here and there, like lightning flashes, the arrows of Odysseus struck down the foremost of his foes, while the spears hurled by the two soldiers who held by him laid many a Thracian low.

At last they reached the very water's edge. As Myron hurled his last spear, and sprang on board with his companion, Odysseus let fly the last of his arrows, and laid another Thracian in the dust. Then he too sprang on board.

Next moment, aided by the wind that was gradually growing stronger, the latest of the ships, that of the king, gave its last grind upon the beach, and floated free.

As the vessels surged away, a shower of arrows, darts, and burning torches lighted on every deck, and a wild cry of disappointed rage rose from the Thracians.

And well might they cry out with a bitter cry. There before them were the Greeks sailing away free, if not victorious, with wealth and captives thronging every ship. Behind them lay the ruins of Ænos, that but two days before shone bright as a gem upon the waters of the gulf.

The thought maddened the most thoughtful of them, and these with a low groan of rage flung themselves into the water, and laid hold of the ships with their naked hands.

They sealed their devotion to their country with their lives. No man among them reached the shore again alive, but every one of them fell dead beneath the swords and spears of the Ithacans!

A few minutes more, and the ships passed out through the entrance where they had been welcomed by a shower of arrows at first. Now not a single weapon attempted to molest them, and presently, with what seemed a happy gale, they floated down the gulf.

Then on board every ship, when the soldiers had time to look round and learn their loss, rose cries for the dead. Then too they began to see how foolish they had been in not obeying their king's orders and advice over night.

"He is wiser than us all together," said Myron to the band that gathered round him; "and he is also as wise as brave."

"Well, yes," said one of the men; "he is both wise and brave. But we shall not need either much longer. This wind will soon carry us to beloved Ithaca."

"We are further from Ithaca now than when we left that weary Troy," replied Myron; "and the gods only know what storms and dangers we yet may meet."

"Thou art right, Myron," replied a solemn voice at his elbow—the voice of the pilot, who had left the ship in the charge of other hands for a time. "This wind is not so friendly to us as it looks. Wait till we are in the open, then ye will know what a blusterer rude Boreas is."

"But yet he blows us home."

"Or to the depths!" replied the pilot, with a kind of solemn cynicism. "See!—have I not spoken truth?" he added, as he sprang to the helm. "Yonder he comes himself! These gentle puffs were but his vanguard playing with us!"

The soldiers glanced round, and saw a dark cloud bearing down upon them from the direction of the

Ciconian city. At the same moment the sun dipped behind the western horizon, and the whole of the coast, and especially the point at the mouth of the gulf where they were just passing, grew suddenly gloomy and cruel in look.

"A wild sea before us, a cruel land behind," murmured the pilot. "Pray heaven this be not a worse night than that the gods helped us to outlive." Then looking round quickly at the rapidly-nearing cloud, he cried out to the men, "Down with that sail!"

The men rushed to the sheets and halyards, but before these could be undone the cloud was upon them. Next instant, with a noise like that of a thunder-burst, the sail split into a thousand shreds, that fluttered about the yard and mast in wild confusion.

"Out with the oars!" cried Odysseus, as he sprang on deck from his own part of the vessel, and rushed below among the slaves.

In a few minutes the new banks of oars that had taken the place of those carried away in the previous storm flashed out. Then gradually the ship's head was brought round and faced the storm.

For awhile, during which the full fury of the gale lasted, all their efforts to gain the shore just outside the gulf were in vain. The slaves strained every nerve, and the soldiers for once helped them, fruitlessly. The dimly-seen and gloomy shore grew gradually dimmer, and they felt that every minute was drifting them out farther and farther into the open, where the waves were already tossing like monstrous horses in cruel sport.

"Pallas, forsake me not," cried Odysseus, when he had left his people after one of their unavailing struggles, and came on deck. "Surely Odysseus is not to sink on this wild coast—unmourned, unsung?"

"Fear not," said a soft, clear voice in his ear; "thy name shall be sung through all the ages, with that of Achilles himself. And thou art not to die here. Thou must yet visit many lands, and pass through many dangers!"

Glancing round quickly, Odysseus beheld the figure of a glorious woman before him. Her eyes were blue and deep as the Ægean when at peace; her hair floated gently behind her, as if the wind dared not to blow so rudely where she stood; round her shone a sort of halo of rose-like light.

"Pallas herself!" cried Odysseus, as he bowed his head in reverence.

When he lifted his eyes the place where she stood was vacant, and she was nowhere to be seen! The wind, too, had fallen almost to a sudden calm.

"Oh, blue-eyed daughter of Zeus, I thank thee," cried Odysseus; "and when I reach Ithaca again shall I not build thee the fairest temple ever built to thee!"

Next moment the king sprang down to the rowers, and urging them to their work once more, the ship began to move as they wished it, and soon its keel grated on the sandy beach of a little bay. A minute or two more and all the fleet was safely drawn up on the strand.

Scarcely was this done when the wind, which had lulled as if only for a moment in which to take stronger breath, burst forth again in all its fury.

All through that night the storm lasted, but the men crouched down in the ships, and comforted themselves with the thought that they would be still more miserable at sea.

The day that followed showed no sign of improvement, and the night following that was as miserable and wretched as it is possible to conceive. When yet another day dawned in wrath, the men began to grumble and speak bitterly of their leader, as if the fault were his.

Before nightfall anxiety was added to discontent. Some of the men venturing a little inland found that the people of the country were aware of the presence of the Greeks, and that armed men were gathering round them.

The night that followed this discovery seemed a long and was a weary one. In the coming day they felt sure they would have again to fight with the thousands they had fought with at Ænos. That feast after the capture of the city was like to have cost them dear.

Before morning came, however, the wind, to their great delight, seemed to blow itself out, and to gradually shift towards the east. Then, as the sun rose, they saw that the murky clouds that had covered them so long had vanished, and sky and sea were bright and clear.

No sooner was this state of affairs apparent, than the voice of Odysseus was heard calling upon them to launch their ships.

The discontent and grumbling of the day before instantly disappeared, and they sprang gladly to obey his bidding.

Before the task was accomplished, another addition was made to the quickly-changing incidents.

One of the men glancing backward on the land, suddenly burst into a cry of alarm. At the cry the Greeks paused a moment and gazed round.

On every hill-top gleamed spears and shields, and down each hill-side poured great waves of armed men.

"Quick, for your lives!" cried Odysseus; "there is not a moment to be lost. If we fought with thousands at Ænos, we should have to fight with tens of thousands here!"

The men answered with a low groan of consent, and every shoulder pressed with a will to heave the vessels into the deep.

This time the wind did not help them as at Ænos, and it was only after some minutes' labour that the ships began to heave and sway upon the water. Even then they were not all quite afloat, and it was with ever-increasing anxiety Odysseus gazed from the rapidly-nearing enemy to the ships, and from the ships to the enemy again.

At this moment the heavy masses pouring down towards them caught sight of their efforts to launch the vessels.

At the mere thought that the Greeks might escape them once again the thousand-voiced array burst into a wild cry of passionate rage. Then clashing their weapons together savagely, the whole mass broke into a run, each man thinking only of how to gratify his thirst for revenge.

The Greeks were too quick for them, however, for as the first of the bands reached the beach the last of the ships, lifted by a friendly wave, floated clear of Thracian earth.

At this the Greeks gave a loud shout of delight, the Thracians a yell of disappointed rage. Then for a moment the air was darkened with a flight of spears and arrows, and even stones hurled after the enemy that had done them so much hurt, yet had escaped now for a second time.

For full an hour the Thracians stood upon the beach watching the Greek ships disappearing statelily in the distance. Broken cries of impotent rage filled the air, and many a spear and arrow were flung out over the water even when the ships were miles away.

But the Greeks cared for none of these things. The sun shone bright and clear, the wind was pleasant and fair, and the Ægean had begun to put on its loveliest look.

The men sat or lay about the decks in groups laughing and making merry. Even Odysseus himself felt the influence of sea and sky so much that he stretched himself near to the pilot, and dreamily watched the light clouds float lazily overhead.

On the evening of the second day they were among the ever-smiling Cyclades, and strongly were they tempted to glide ashore on some of the lovely islands to meet the feasts and welcomes that would be theirs. The wish for home, however, was stronger in every heart; they sailed on, and on the third evening the isle of Cithera, with the promontory on the main land, rose before their gladdened eyes.

Then the men burst into a cry of joy, and the ships' heads were quickly turned to pass through the famous strait.

They were never destined to make the passage. So soon as the headland was cleared the north-east wind failed, and a gale from the north-west blew down upon them from the Laconic gulf. By the time night fell, they were blown past the coast of Cithera, far out towards the trackless southern sea!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OUR WEEKLY PARTY.

PARTY'S open, dear boys and girls, and all is ready for your entertainment.

We can fancy we see you all standing before us on the tiptoe of expectation, as the poet says, and eager to be admitted to share in the good things we have been able to provide. Well, we will not keep you a moment. Do you remember what a celebrated spider is reported to have said to an equally celebrated fly? We dare say you do, for the history of that artful, cruel spider and his innocent victim is deeply impressed upon nearly every youthful mind. "Will you walk into my parlour?" he said, in his most coaxing manner, and putting on a smile of hospitable welcome to hide his savage design. The poor pretty little fly was, no doubt, agreeably surprised to receive so kind an invitation from a creature who bore so bad a character amongst the buzzing millions of Flydom, and, probably, thought him a decent enough sort of fellow, who had been wickedly misrepresented. If he did think so, we must not call him silly, because we know that many other creatures, who are supposed to have more sense, are very often deceived by soothing words and false pretences. Well, we suppose the fly was a little flattered and a little fluttered, and finally accepted the invitation, and "walked into the parlour." Ah, the poor confiding fly! No sooner had he set foot upon the spider's floor than he found himself a prisoner, and then the true character of his host became apparent. He did not run to help him out of his difficulty, and release his poor feet from the fetters in which they were bound. He no longer smiled a welcome, but grinned a horrid grin of malice and triumph, which struck terror to the poor fly's heart, and the struggling prisoner learned too late that one "may smile, and be a villain still!" Then the treacherous monster rushed upon his guest, and in defiance of all the laws of virtue and hospitality barbarously murdered him. He then dragged the lifeless body into the fatal "parlour," which apartment he at once converted into a dining-room, and proceeded to feast upon the creature he had so cruelly deceived. Oh, treacherous spider! Ah, ill-fated fly! It is a sad story, and it has a moral, but that we will leave you to find out for yourselves.

Now, we are about to give you just such an invitation as the spider gave to the fly. There—there, you need not scream and look horrified, little ones. We are not going to treat you in such a cruel manner. Instead of feasting upon *you*, we will do what every proper host ought to do—entice you to feast with us. We will not put you in fetters. Not at all. We certainly wish to bind you to us, but the only chain we would think of using for the purpose is the silken bond of love. We think you are all satisfied of our sincerity and our friendship, and therefore we always expect to see a hearty rush and a good-natured push when we address you in those historic words—Will you walk into our parlour? We have never yet known one boy or girl who heard them refuse to accept the invitation, and we are happy to find that those who once come are sure to come again. So we may reasonably conclude that you have confidence in us, and that you do not fear your trust will be abused as in the case of that unfortunate fly. Well, then, we cordially invite you all to walk into our parlour.

Well, we are in, and now in the first place let us ask you how you like our new heading? It is an improvement, isn't it? Yes, we thought that would please; and, do you know, we are now more than ever convinced of the truth of the old saying that "two heads are better than one." Nay, we will even go farther than the old saying, and give it as our fixed opinion that four heads are better than either one or two; or, indeed, both put together, which make three. Do you want to know why we say this? Well, it is because there were just four heads engaged in bringing this change about, and each and every one of those heads gave the matter serious thought before the present happy alteration was decided upon. Every alteration is not an improvement, we know; but this alteration *is* an improvement, and this truth we are ready to maintain against all comers who have the bad taste to doubt it. You will second us and support us in this opinion we feel sure; but yet, so as to leave not the tiniest little shadow of a doubt, we ask you all to write and tell us so. That is the way to set a point quite at rest, for we would like to know who would question the taste or the propriety of anything in our journal which we, in all our thousands, had stamped with our approval. Oh, we are a great power, and there can be no doubt that if we are only determined to stand by each other and our own little journal, we can cause that power to be felt, and to be respected through all the British dominions:

And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time.

There, that speaking of footprints just reminds us that we are striding along the sands of Time at a tremendous rate. Last week we completed our eighth volume, and this week—with this very number—we commence our ninth. That is going along, certainly. We will not stop to consider how many have started in this great race since we began our career, and have sank down faint or quite beaten out after the first few paces. No, we will not do that. It is enough for us to know that we are now more hale and vigorous than when we started. We have only gained new strength on the way, and the longer the journey is, the stronger we become. We do not say this boastfully, but thankfully, and we are quite aware that we could not have gone on so vigorously and so victoriously but for the hearty loyalty with which you have always supported us. At the same time, we cannot but think that we have done something to deserve your support. We need only look back upon the path we have travelled to be quite satisfied of this, and to learn the reason why we have been able to stride along triumphantly, and to keep the flag of OUR YOUNG FOLKS flying, while others have failed and fainted by the way. Well, we begin a new volume with this number, and so we begin another great stride upon the sands of Time. Each weekly issue may be regarded as a step in advance, but these volumes mark such gigantic strides, that we are forced to pause a moment, and wonder at the rate we are going. The stride we this day begin will carry us up to the year 1877. Only think of that! It will reach over six months—over *half of the earth's course around the sun*. There is a stride for you! No seven-leagued boots that ever we have heard of could make such an amazing stride as that. We do not like to tell you how many millions of miles it represents.

In this number, as we promised last week, we commence a new story from the vigorous pen of C. A. READ. You who have received "ACHILLES" with so much favour will be delighted to hear this. The new story will be even more stirring and more deeply interesting than the last, and it will also help to make you acquainted with the lives and the wonderful actions of a great number of heroes whose names are familiar as household words to all schoolboys and schoolgirls. A cheer of welcome, then, for the great new story of "ODYSSEUS" and his wonderful WANDERINGS AND ADVENTURES. Spread the good news far and wide, and bring up a vast array of your friends and companions to welcome the famous Grecian hero.

With regard to the gift distribution, we have a few words to say. All who have sent us their tickets bearing the proper numbers have already received their gifts of five shillings each. We find, however, that all the gifts have not been claimed; but as there was no time fixed when the value of tickets should expire, we dare say the remaining gifts will have been applied for before you see this notice. We may here repeat what we said in our last "Party," *i.e.*, the first cipher upon tickets bearing six figures is not to be taken into account when comparing them with the list of numbers. The last five figures only are to be regarded in the comparison.

Some one is knocking at our door.

"Come in."

Ah, it's only the printer's boy, looking flushed and a little grimy.

"Well, Bob"—we call one of our boys Bob, you must know; and he is a smart little fellow, as becomes a printer's—imp; yes, imp is the word—"well, Bob, what is it?"

"Please, sir, Mr. —— says as the 'Party' must be short this week, 'cause the tales is long."

"Tut, nonsense! We *must* have our 'Party.' Tell Mr. —— to cut off the tales and make them short."

"He can't make 'em any shorter, sir, he says; an' they'll go over more'n a column into the 'Party.'"

Now, what are we to do in this case, young friends? We must submit to have our "Party" premises invaded, you see, and to give up a couple of our columns to accommodate the continued stories. Well, let us do so with a good grace, and console ourselves by reflecting that we are not often called upon to make such a sacrifice. But we will not be deprived of our space without having some compensation. We know there is a spare column in another part of the paper, and we will secure that for a few of the little articles we might have introduced at our "Party." So you see we will not lose so very much after all. This is just what we will do.

"Well, Bob, tell Mr. —— that we will make our 'Party' short to oblige him on this occasion; but he must let us have a column in another part of the paper."

"All right, sir!" and off Bob goes to deliver his message.

Now, in the new turn affairs have taken, you will excuse us, we are sure, if we reserve the remainder of our space for the Letter-box, which, you know, must not be neglected, and for another subject that we are compelled to carry on from week to week. We now turn to our weekly instalment of

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

Under this heading we continue our articles on

CRICKET.

This week we will give a few words as to the arrangement of the players and their several duties. But it must be remembered that the positions of the field may be varied according to the opinion of the bowler, and it will greatly add to the efficiency of the fielding and to the success of the players if each person strictly performs his own proper duty, and interferes with that of others as little as possible.

THE WICKET-KEEPER.

The duties of the wicket-keeper are to stop the balls when missed by the striker, to stump him when off his ground, and to catch the ball and knock the wickets down before the striker when running can ground his bat over the popping-crease. Since the introduction of fast bowling, this position has become the most dangerous in the field, and a wicket-keeper seldom gets through a well-played match without receiving some bruises. He should always wear pads and gloves. Some people recommend a guard for the lower part of the stomach, and we think it would be very useful, but it is scarcely ever used. The wicket-keeper should, if possible, be captain of his eleven. As he is behind the striker, he can, by a motion of his hand, move any of the field closer or further unknown to the batsman. This naturally requires great tact, and is often the means of saving a run, or of getting a wicket. He should stand in a stooping position, his left leg well forward, and his hands close together, while his eyes should watch every motion of the ball. He should be very cautious about taking leg balls, as, if he gets too near, he is likely to receive a blow from the batsman. As soon as the ball is thrown to him from the "long-stop," when the batsmen are not running, he ought to advance two or three yards, and send it gently into the bowler's hands. The moment a hit is made, he should stand on that side of the wicket farthest from the ball, and wait quietly till it is thrown in. The ball should be thrown in by one pitch, and not in a series of hops, as is often the case among bad players. Above all, he should knock the wicket down as seldom as possible, but content himself with striking a bail off when he thinks the batsman is out of his ground.

LONGSTOP.

This player stands behind the wicket-keeper, in order to prevent "byes." He must be careful not to be too far away from the wicket, or else the clever players are apt to steal a bye before the ball has reached him. The moment he gets the ball he should return it sharply into the wicket-keeper's hands, and scarcely ever throw it over to the bowler. He should also assist in backing up "short slip," and try to save runs on the leg side. When slows are put on in a match, the longstop is usually changed to a position about twelve yards behind the bowler.

POINT

Stands in a straight line with the popping-crease at a distance of about twelve yards on the off side, for fast bowling. The faster the bowling, the sharper he should stand. He should commence at this distance, and approach when he sees the player about to strike. This position is rather dangerous in fast bowling, but it is, at the same time, one of the most important in the field. For slow bowling he should come in to about five yards, and stand at a sharper angle than when the delivery is very swift. A sharp point may often stop a hard hit to "cover point."

As our space is so greatly curtailed this week, our readers will excuse us if we omit our usual list of *Experiments and Recipes*, and one or two correspondents, whose questions were to have been answered under that head, will kindly favour us with a week's grace.

With this little apology, which we hope will be accepted, we proceed to deal with

OUR YOUNG FOLK'S LETTER-BOX.

Although our little space is so fully occupied, we must find room for the following pleasant letter by a good and faithful friend, who writes from the busy capital of the Midland Counties:

Birmingham.

My dear Editor,—Will you please thank Mr. C. H. Bott, of St. Helier, on my behalf, for the trouble he has taken in looking for the meaning of the name "Malvina," and also inform him I have been told it means "handmaid." But, while thanking that gentleman, I must not forget to thank you as well for your trouble. You, no doubt, remember me telling you I sent a small quantity of *Budgets* through the post to some little friends of mine. Well, since I last wrote to you, I have had the pleasure of seeing one of them, and I am happy to let you know there is another added to the ranks of your youthful army. "Achilles" was a soul-stirring tale; and I can assure you I read it with just as much enthusiasm as if I were one of the opposite sex. It was doubly interesting to me, as I had lately read "The Iliad." "Hettie's History" ended just as one might wish. "Bluebell Vane's Story" is charming; but so much is being continually said about the good qualities—bad ones it has none—of the little *Budget*, that I think all I can say is "it recommends itself." I have not seen "Frederick Julian" present at "Our Weekly Party" lately. I don't suppose he has been letting his muse lie dormant all this time, but is getting something ready for us. I expect to see him come to "Our Party" one of these days, with his usual vivacity. Accept my kindest regards and believe me to remain, dear Editor, your loving reader

PEARL LA PRINCESS.

Excellent! We are much obliged to our charming PRINCESS for her very gratifying letter, and we are sure it is scarcely necessary to inform her that we are deeply grateful for the many kind services she has rendered us. Ah! if all professed friends were as sincere and as loyal as our Lady Pearl, what a happy world this would be, and what a happy being the Ed. of *O. Y. F. W. B.* might become! We are glad to learn that our stories afford you so much pleasure; and as to the truant *Croger*, we can only indulge a hope similar to your own. We shall be very happy to renew his acquaintance whenever he feels an inclination to amuse himself and us by appearing at our "Weekly Party."

J. L. (Lambeth.)—Many thanks for your kind letter, and the contributions. We are sorry to hear of your indisposition, but trust that your health may be completely restored before this answer reaches you.

SAM VELLER (Hapton).—We are much gratified to learn that our stories give you so much delight, and thankful for the kind and flattering terms in which you express your approbation of our journal. The cons. are accepted with thanks.

J. B. AND A. ANGORE (Newbottle).—These correspondents write us a very short but a very pithy letter. They say: "We live here in a small colliery village far from the busy cities of our land. We descend into the dark coal-mine to earn a livelihood, but we can enjoy the *Y. F. B.* even here." That is all the letter contains, but to us it appears singularly eloquent. We are proud of such YOUNG FOLKS, for it is from them that the sturdy independent manhood of England is formed. We are also proud of our journal, and we think it fulfils a noble mission in affording innocent amusement and pleasant instruction to such working boys as these. We are happy to inform you, young friends, that your cons. will find a place in our columns.

ISABEL GRACE (Derby).—You are a philosopher, dear Isabel; but you are a very kind and flattering one. We thank you much for your pleasant and well-written letter.

T. H. JACKSON.—Many thanks for your kind letter, and the large batch of cons. you so kindly send. With a few exceptions the latter will appear.

FRITZ BRAUN (Formby).—You are so very kind to us, and you try so very earnestly to improve yourself, that we feel it our duty to notice your productions at some length, and as our space is somewhat scanty this week we must ask you to hold us excused until our next number.

THOMAS E. DUTTON (Nottingham).—This correspondent will be grateful to any of OUR YOUNG FOLKS who will tell him "how to prepare millboard for oil-painting?"

SHORT ANSWERS TO SHORT LETTERS.

S. A. H.—*We thank you for your praises of our journal, and for the batch of cons. you so kindly send. The anecdote, however, we must decline; but one of the others is passed for insertion;* ETTIE E. WHEELER *(Brixton)—You are very kind to us, dear Hettie, and in return we will endeavour to find room for one of your cons.;* TIM PIPPIN *Thanks. We hope to number you amongst our friends for many years to come. Perhaps some of our clever boys or girls who read this will be able to tell you how to paint on glass;* LOYAL BUDGETIER—*You and all our friends are quite welcome to write to us whenever you please, and we will be happy to give your suggestions and inquiries our best attention. We regret that we have not been able to find such a recipe; but it is probable that some of our readers may be able to tell you how to keep bladders permanently soft;* W. NELSON *(Culnafay)—We thank you sincerely for your very generous letter; but for reasons which we are sure you will recognize, we think any further allusion to that subject should be avoided. We must therefore decline your ingenious contribution;* A READER *(Macclesfield)—Many thanks. We can, at least, truly boast that we spare no pains or labour to make our journal one of the most attractive publications in existence. We are pleased by your approval, and we hope to enjoy your favour in the future as fully as we have enjoyed it in the past;* W. E. B. *(Wavertree)—Thanks. We have a vast number of numerical charades on hand, yet, if at all possible, we will try to make room for yours when its turn comes round;* H. ST. GEORGE *(Parsonstown)—No, dear Helen, you should not have thought we would laugh at your attempt. We are sorry that we were compelled to disappoint you; but you must know that if we broke the rule in one case, we might be charged with injustice by all the other thousands of our readers, and the charge would be reasonable. You can see this, we are sure. We thank you much for the kind things you say of our journal, and we rest secure of your favour, notwithstanding this disappointment;* THEODORE CLARK *(Chatham)—It gives us great satisfaction to know that our journal contributes so materially to your happiness. We return your good wishes, and we hope the good understanding which now subsists between us and our young friends may ever continue;* STEPHEN W. HAYES *(Worcester)—Good works on the steam-engine are now pretty numerous, and they vary in price, from one shilling to five guineas. Any bookseller will procure one for you. We have not the recipe at hand just now; but will give it at an early "Party." We do strongly approve of such societies;* H. WEBSTER *(Brixton)—Thanks for your pleasant letter. We will furnish you with the required information at an early "Party;"* J. W. THOMPSON *(Goole)—We are sorry for your failure; but you see you are not worse off than others. Let us hope you have had a lucky number;* WATTIE *(Aberdare)—We thank you and your friends very sincerely for your favourable opinion. The answers correct;* JAMES MURRAY *(Liverpool)—Yes, undoubtedly he did exist. His proper name was Robert Fitzooth. He was Earl of Huntington, but being despoiled of his property by a greedy clerical relative, he threw up his title and became an outlaw and freebooter, under the name of Robin Hood. He was born at Locksley, in the county of Nottingham, about* 1160, *but the precise period of his death is not known;* J. T. BARON *(Blackburn)—Thanks for your kind and appreciative letter. We are resolved not to fail in the struggle for universal favour, if care and enterprise can secure success. Thanks for the cons.;* J. LEA—*Contributions to hand, and will be duly attended to;* FRED LANCASTER *(Birmingham)—Thanks. It gives us pleasure to inform you that more than one of your cons. will find a place in our columns;* RACHEL PRINCE *(Lower Norwood)—You have written us a nice letter, dear Rachel, and it would have given us much pleasure could we have given you a place in our "Party." Your lines, however, are not up to the mark; but as this is your first attempt, and you are only ten years old, there is reason to hope that you may some day produce verses which shall deserve the desired honour;* QUEEN OF THE BALL—*Really, we do not know why we should think your majesty silly; and if we did think so, do you imagine we would dare to express our thoughts to such an august personage? Oh, no. Your royal ladyship might not like our candour, and we almost fear to think what might be the consequences of your anger. We hope you do not think there is any flattery in all that, or that we intend it only as a set-off against what we must now say—with all due respect we must decline the con. with which your majesty has favoured us;* T. M'MULLEN *(Dublin)—No, we find a pleasure in our work, and perform it as a labour of love. Try a little ammonia in the water. Hot water poured into the vessel also has a reviving influence. Many thanks for the really valuable service you have rendered us. We would have sent the numbers immediately on receipt of your letter; but you forgot to send us your full address. Please forward, and the numbers will be dispatched per next post;* H. W. VERNON—*We have very respect for your opinion, dear boy, and we always defer to the wishes of our readers when we find them generally entertained; but this is not the case in the present instance, and if we were to act upon your suggestion, we would be treated to an outcry of indignation from all sides. The 4th July,* 1861, *fell upon Thursday;* CHARLES NEVILLE—*We are unable to answer the question about the auctioneers. That fact never arrested our attention before. The stories are published in book form, price two shillings each. Thanks for your praise of our journal;* G. DUNNE *(Manchester)—Thanks, The cons. you send for insertion are not original. The answers are correct;* FEE FO FUM *(Glasgow)—We have not yet had time to read the story. There is a right jubilant ring in your verses, but one or two of your metaphors seem to us overstrained and meaningless. It is too extravagant to say that the lark "reigns the prince of heaven," and we know not what you mean when you say "the dimpling burnies sing music is the merry ring." But for these faults we might have presented it to our "Party" guests;* KNIGHT OF MALTA—*We welcome you to our "Party" with much pleasure, and we are pleased to learn that you like it so well. Your con. will do;* JOHN GRUBB *(Hythe)—We regret that we must decline; but we do not think it advisable to introduce a new feature such as your question might initiate into our journal;* F. G. TILLMAN—*Many thanks for your kind and cheering letter. We are at all times pleased to hear from our friends, and to learn how they enjoy the "Parties" at which we preside every week;* KING PIPPIN *(Chesterfield)—Your question as to the engine should be addressed to some mechanical journal. The 6th of April,* 1860, *fell upon Friday;* BRIDGET EGAN *(Carrick-on Suir)—Many thanks. Your kind letter has given us much pleasure. We welcome you to our "Party" most heartily, and hope we may long have the gratification of meeting you at our great weekly re-unions;* ANNIE MATTO *(Bristol)—Very far from a bore, indeed, dear Annie. You are one of our pleasantest correspondents, always natural, fresh, and unaffected. As to the query about the writing, we are really unable to give you any information. All letters are destroyed as soon as answered, and we can remember the style of only a few out of the many hundreds we receive. But even if your suspicion were true, we do not know why we should be annoyed by so harmless a "game" on the part of the young lady. We are sorry that we cannot recommend anything for your poodle. He seems to thrive very well upon his present diet, since you say he is so fat as to suggest fears of apoplexy. We do not think dogs are subject to that serious disease, and as he appears to enjoy his present condition, we hope you will excuse us if we decline to say anything which might have the effect of abridging his pleasures. Poor dog!* THOMAS DAVIS *(Pyle) Thank you, young friend. You will be glad to learn that we have rescued two of your cons. from the dreaded W. P. B., and filed them for insertion;* T. F. *(Edinburgh) We regret that we could not answer you earlier; but you may have noticed our oft-repeated statement to correspondents, that answers to letters cannot appear until three weeks after the receipt of the letters to which they refer. Of course it is now useless to enter into any explanations of the matter in question;* MINNIE *(Dalston)—The picture is the portrait of the gentleman who utters the words. It could not have been the portrait of a son of his, because it would not then have been of his father's son, but his grandson. We are quite of your opinion that the picture must have been a wretchedly bad likeness, or the questioner must have been in want of a pair of good spectacles;* KING OBERON—*We are sorry that any delay should have taken place in our answer to your letter, and our acknowledgment of your contribution. We have a distinct recollection of both, and, indeed, we are inclined to the belief that we noticed them, though the reply may have escaped your search. A large portion of the present batch of cons. are filed for insertion;* G. F. LEATHERS—*Some of the cons. will appear in due time;* LIGHT HEART *(Dundalk)—The best test is in the fineness of the edge it will take. Another is to breathe upon the polished surface, and if the vapour rapidly disappears, it is most probably steel. No, we have not heard from F. J. Croger for a long time; but we have no reason to believe that he is otherwise than well—at all events, we sincerely hope so;* IVY *(Killarney)—Yes, we are, indeed, glad to hear from you, dear Ivy. We are sorry that we must decline the little contribution; but do not be disheartened, and try again;* PERCY F. HARDY *(New Cross)—Dogs should have plenty of exercise, and should not be overfed. Once a day is often enough to feed a dog, and horseflesh or sheep's offal boiled, and the water thickened with barley or oatmeal, is an excellent food. You see that we have already started a new sea-story. We admit you to our "Party" with much pleasure;* G. G. HARWOOD *(Manchester)—We thank you for your letter, which is very kind and flattering; but we must decline the con., as we do not think it would at all interest our readers;* DAISY KELBY *(Brighton)—As all the secret is out long ago, dear Daisy, we need not enter into explanations in reply to your letter;* AZILA *(Bath)—Before this can possibly reach you, the whole secret will have been divulged;* WM. E. MANLEY *(Dublin)—You are a very enthusiastic friend; but, of course we think enthusiasm quite a virtue when it is aroused in our own favour. Now, do not think us vain;* JOHN GLEDHILL *(Manchester)—Dilute sulphuric acid means sulphuric acid which has been diluted or made weak by the addition of five times its quantity of water. We gave a recipe for taking out grease stains from drawing paper only a short time ago.*

Our good masters the riddlers will please to step forward and give us a specimen of their skill. By the way, we miss several well-known names from this page lately —amongst the most notable, those of Pinder, Croger, Hope, and Clarke. We shall be glad to hear from these young gentlemen whenever they find themselves under the inspiration of the Sibylline muse. Our constant friend SEMPER IDEM will take the lead to-day with a

CHARADE.

No. 1.

A pretty young lady for first, please, put down.
Full many are found both in country and town;
Myself you will please to write next;
A very small word this will be;
And now if a sign is annexed,
In the zodiac it you will see—
A word will come before your ken
Which meaneth earnest, prayerful men.

SEMPER IDEM, Belfast.

ACROSTIC.

No. 2.

Foundation Words.

If you the initials trace with care,
A famous tale they will declare.

Cross Words.

A bird of prey for first put down;
For second, a Christian name;
Next, you'll find, is an English town;
And fourth a hero of fame.

For fifth, a useful metal find out;
Sixth a kind of tree:
An author's name, without a doubt,
For seventh you'll surely see.

To stop, I know, my eighth doth mean;
I'm using this to write;
A foreign precious stone, I ween,
My next will bring to sight.

My eleventh's a friend of *Y. F. B.*;
Next grows in a foreign clime;
My thirteenth's a bird, you must agree
That always comes in winter time.

Which is the reverse to nay
My last will bring to view;
Now as I have no more to say,
I'll bid you all adieu.

ETTIE ELEANOR WHEELER.

NUMERICAL CHARADES.

No. 3.—I am a word of nine letters. My 2, 3, 4, 5, is a scheme; my 1, 7, 9, is a girl's Christian name; my 7, 5, 9, is a river in England; my 7, 1, 2, is a small horse; my 9, 3, 4, 5, is a title: my 2, 5, 4, is a precious stone; 8, 4, 5, 2, 1, is the last Greek letter; my 8, 4, 5, 7, is a prognostic; and my whole is a character in Achilles.—D. WALES, Pyle.

No. 4.—I am a word of eleven letters. My 4, 6, 8, 2, is an expression of love; my 1, 8, 4, 5, 6, is a sign; my 7, 10, 8, 11, is a river; my 3, 4, 6, 8, is a thought; my 9, 2, 3, 6, 4, means attempted: and my whole is an English town.—W. D. TODD, Sunderland.

No. 5.—I am composed of eight letters. My 3, 4, 2, 5, is a kind of meat; my 7, 6, 2, 5, is a useful mineral; my 2, 5, 4, is a beverage; my 7, 5, 6, 7, 8, is a time-piece; my 5, 2, 3, 4, is to wash; my 1, 2, 5, 4, is healthy; and my whole is a noted general.—IMPRIMATUR.

METAGRAMS.

No. 6.

A word of letters four please take,
Its meaning—to be still;
Change head, and see an animal
The butchers often kill;
Change its great head, and then a bird
You'll surely bring to light;
Again, and then, upon my word,
A town will be in sight;
This town's head change, and then you'll see
An island in the north;
Again, and this will surely be
Quiet, and without mirth.

F. TEBBS.

No. 7.

I contain but three letters, but nevertheless
I once held more things than you're likely to guess
If now a few letters you kindly will add,
You'll find me so changing you'll think I am mad;
Having told you thus much, you must find out my name,
And then, as I change, you must still do the same.
Place first, at my head, the first part of a pie,
You'll find I'm a landscape that pleases the eye;
Now change my new head for the head of a dunce,
I describe the condition the earth was in once,
And nowadays even old women can't see
Their needles to thread when the sky is like me;
Now place for my head the first part of a ham,
If you want one to listen, you say what I am;
Now remove this new head and try that of a lass,
I'm a bird that doth make its soft nest in the grass;
Replace this last head by the head of a man,
I'm something to shoot at, deny it who can;
Now give me for head the first part of a sheep,
I'm a ravenous monster that lives in the deep.

H. GOLBORNE, Manchester.

ARITHMOREM.

No. 8.

2051 and cene	=	A female Christian name		
52 „ eat t	=	„	„	„
1051 „ ye	=	„	„	„
151 „ ae	=	„	„	„
1001 „ an o	=	„	„	„
57 „ oa	=	„	„	„
150 „ hare	=	„	„	„

Primals will form a female Christian name.

MARS.

REVERSIONS.

No. 9.

A number if you just turn round,
An article will then be found.

H. POUND.

No. 10.

A foreign town please take for whole;
Reverse, and then you'll see
A name for Jove, chief of the gods,
Well known to history.

F. TEBBS.

CURTAILMENTS.

No. 11.

An Asiatic country of tail bereft,
Part of your face will then be left.

T. H. JACKSON, London.

No. 12.

Whole, I am an animal very fond of play,
Curtail me, and I am what you oft to baby say.

H. COCKING.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

No. 13.

Cross Words.

A poet here you may behold;
Fatigue I plainly thus unfold;
A continental city here;
This properly describes a sneer;
One of the quarters of our chart;
Of which this forms a certain part;
'Tis truly royal as you see;
A Biblical name this sure must be.

Foundation Words.

My initials down peruse,
Finals also, and amuse
Yourselves by finding mentioned here
A statesman who does oft appear.

E. T. RIMMER, Chester.

ENIGMA.

No. 14.

When angry passion rules the breast,
And war's alarms forbid our rest,
I then sad havoc oft produce,
But this is not my only use.

To playful youth I mirth convey,
A favourite on a summer day;
Men, too, with me their hours will share
When they have leisure time to spare.

Again, when earth with snow is clad,
And all around is drear and sad,
Some ruddy boy will pleasure take,
And make me just for mischief's sake.

Then, through the circling hours of night,
Beneath grand jets of dazzling light,
At me, for what they pleasure call,
Are found the rich in stately hall.

Enough of me has now been heard,
But pray excuse a parting word:
My name in prose or verse please send,
And thus oblige a country friend.

H. DRIVER, Canterbury.

CENTRAL DELETION.

No. 15.

Show what produces an effect,
A joyous or a sad sensation;
My centre then you may reject,
And nouns appear in variation.

J. L., Lambeth.

PROVERB REBUS.

No. 16.

R. Q.

CHARADE.

No. 17.

My first is sought with eager hands
Through mountains, vales, and foreign lands;
Alive, by almost every way,
I'm sought through each succeeding day.

I hold men's hearts with wondrous spells,
Their every thought upon me dwells;
In fact of some I am the god,
My name they worship and they laud.

My second worketh in my first
(For which most men so greedily thirst),
It having been of yore his trade
By which he then his living made.

My whole's a poet of great fame,
All are familiar with his name;
Therefore we'll end this short charade,
Which I enclose now to the Ed.

W. NELSON, Culnafay.

LOGOGRIPHS.

No. 18.

Madam, although strange I look,
A shorter term is used by cook;
Behead, I am a Christian name;
Curtail, I still remain the same;
My centre you will find down here—
The answer now, I think, is clear.

ADA.

No. 19.

Transpose my first, and then I shall
A useful metal show;
My second's a large animal;
And third's a number low;
What animal comes next, I ask?
You know it very well,
I'm sure it is an easy task
For any one to tell;
In last, transposed, a drink you'll scan
That's proved to be my whole,
And often changed a happy man
Into a wretched soul.

E. GRIMSHAW, Swinton.

VERBAL CHARADE.

No. 20.

My first is in fish, but not in cow;
My next's not in then, but 'tis in now;
My third is in large, also in rent;
My fourth is in go, but not in went;
My fifth is in mule, but not in ass;
My sixth is in tin, but not in brass;
My seventh's in man, but not in girl;
My eight is in silver, also in pearl;
My ninth is in no, but not in yes;
My tenth is in thought, but not in guess;
My last is in Tom, I must confess.
And now, dear friends, if this you read aright,
A very pretty flower 'twill bring to sight.

BLUEBELL.

DOUBLE ARITHMOREM.

No. 21.

51 and nsg	=	To hurl
550 „ ere	=	A tree
6 „ tas	=	A view
1001 „ pnug	=	To contradict
50 „ ae	=	A meadow
1001 „ gnea	=	A riddle
552 „ qu	=	A flowing substance

Initials and finals read downwards give the names of two Spanish towns.

A. E. C., Deptford.

DECAPITATIONS.

No. 22.

To look at slightly whole will be;
Behead, and then you'll quickly see
A weapon used in days of old
By soldiers brave and warriors bold

F. TEBBS.

No. 23.

Behead a bird, and you will view
What men on the river often do.

BRUIN.

No. 24.

An English town please twice behead,
Another town you'll have instead.

T. H. JACKSON, London.

No. 25.

A northern river if you behead,
A useful organ you'll see instead.

J. G. HENDERSON, Newcastle.

No. 26.

People cannot do without me,
This you soon will see:
Decapitate, then I'll be, without a doubt,
What you possibly couldn't do without.

T. U. OPENSHAW.

No. 27.

A never homeless insect please behead,
Part of your finger you will have instead.

F. WAKE.

PUZZLE.

No. 28.

One-fourth of leap, one-fourth of deep,
And then one-fifth of thing;
One-fourth of card, one-fourth of lard,
Will show a Saxon king.

J. MURRAY, Liverpool.

TRANSPOSITIONS.

No. 29.

Said Tom to his sister—"I plainly declare
You must give me two-thirds, keep the rest as your share;"
But by transposition at once it is seen,
Just the opposite side, you must guess what I mean;
Transpose but once more now, and then you will find,
Worse than ever, a sentence excessive, unkind.

J. L., Lambeth.

No. 30.

I am a useful metal;
Transpose me, if you please,
Now I'm a lovely valley,
Refreshed by many a breeze.

Transposed again, fair riddlers,
The fir tree me contains;
I think you now can solve me,
If you will take some pains.

FAIRY STARLIGHT, Leeds.

VERBAL CHARADE.

No. 31.

First is in evil, but not in good;
Second's in acre, but not in rood;
Third is in bread, but not in meat;
Fourth is in bed, but not in sheet;
Fifth is in shoe, but not in boot;
Sixth is in hand, but not in foot;
Seventh's in day, but not in hour—
Whole is the name of a pretty flower.

J. GOLDING, Essex.

DIAMOND PUZZLES.

No. 32.—A vowel; a numeral; an Asiatic prince; a country; a colour; a conjunction; a consonant. Centrals will give two countries.—T. H. JACKSON, London.

No. 33.—Sign used by bankers; a seaman; a grand duchess; a word of endearment; a well-known surname; what we all must do; a note in music. The centrals read down and across give the title of many who attend "Our Weekly Party."

PARK HOLME.

ANAGRAM.

No. 34.

Rehte aws na lod mowan gade xits, heter
Woh dais seh loudw og ot a nellipsg ebe;
Hes tenw dan ti si tsmo ads ot beerat,
A rowd lezupzd erh adn hse deckrac het samn peat.

J. MURRAY, Liverpool.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, &c., OF LAST WEEK.

1.—Earth-quake.
2.—Wane, lane, Dane, pane.
3.—Manchester.
4.—Gloucester.
5.—Landseer.
6.—Primrose. Thus: Paisley, Rachael, India, Mouse, Rabbit, "Orlando," Schooner, Ease.
7.—Fire, fir.
8.—
A L E
F E W
N I P
C A T E C H I S M
L E I C E S T E R
S A L I S B U R Y
S T Y
R E D
A R K
9.—Awl, law.
10.—Desire, reside.
11.—Note, Eton.
12.—Bluebell.
13.—Alice.
14.—Thames, Witham, Trent, Avon, Frome, Ouse, Cam.
15.—Bright, right.
16.—Fearless.
17.—Bull-rush.
18.—Those that make war ought to fight.
19.—Mouse, Ouse.
20.—Orange, range.
21.—Hasp, asp.
22.—Martin (arm, tin).
23.—Maria, air.
24.—Stone, ton, tone.
25.—A flag.
26.—Rome, home, dome.
27.—Newspapers. Thus: PeNce, grEat, toWel, biSon, maPle, stAin, caPer, frEak, moRal, eaSel.
28.—Ned Stanley.
29.—Andrew.
30.—
S
A P E
W R A T H
W A R R I O R
S O R R Y
R O C
W
31.— S A I L
A N N E
I N T O
L E O N
32.— G I M P
I D E A
M E A N
P A N T
33.— O A T S
A R E A
T E A M
S A M E
34.— A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken,
And made a friend sincere.

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