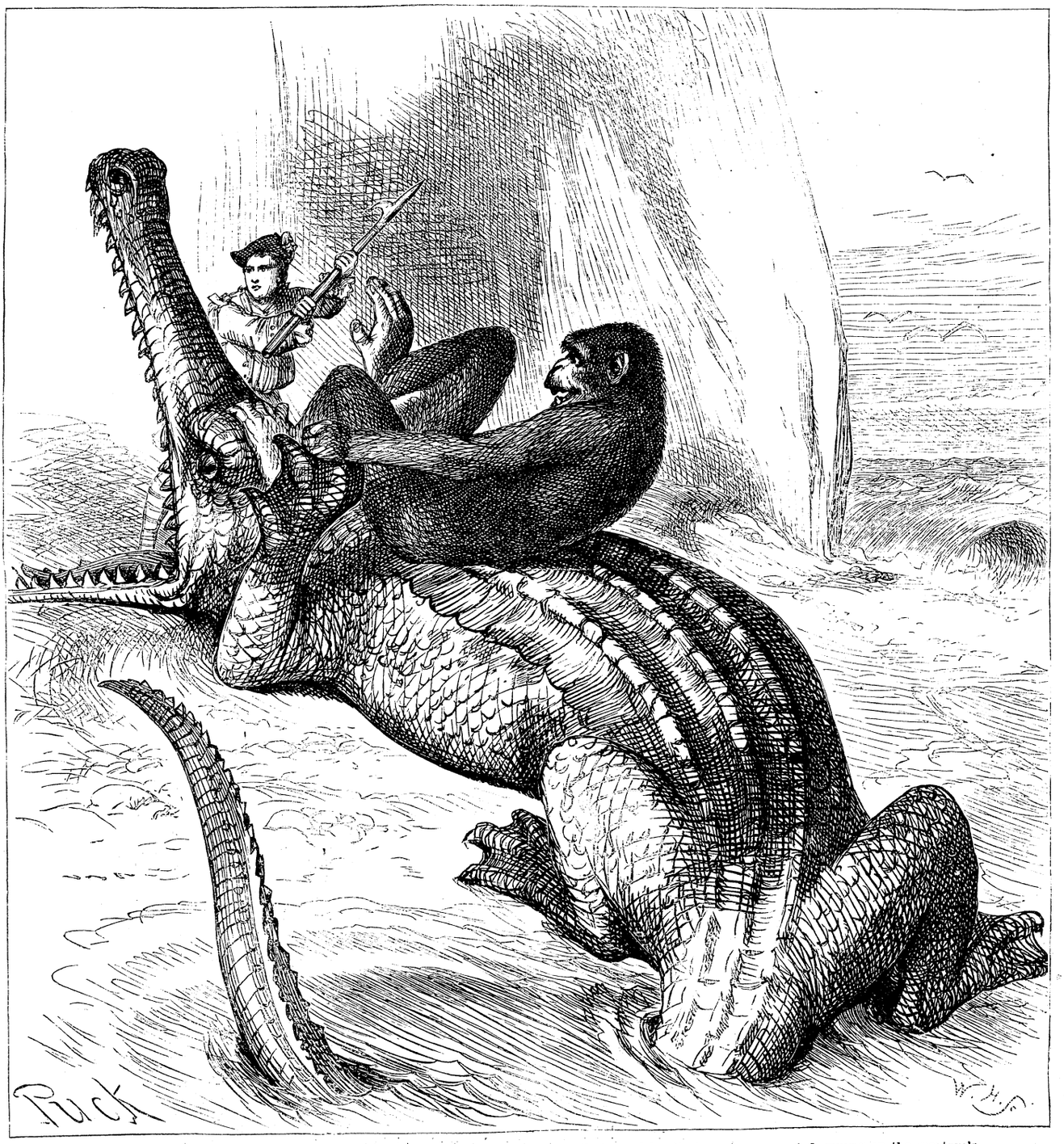
YOUNG FOLK'S WEEKLY BUDGET

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

VOL. IX.—No. 290.] "They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts."—*Sir P. Sidney.* [ONE PENNY.



"The crocodile's bound was stopped by the ape, who, with a display of activity that could hardly have been expected, sprang on the creature's back, seized its fore-paws, and giving them a wrench, dragged them back right over its shoulders."

JEWEL-LAND;

OR, THE

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

BY UNCLE GEORGE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CATAPULT AND BALL.

FINDING itself fast to the line, the huge elephant seal, with a dreadful roar, made a rush at the boat, nearly upsetting it. Arthur was almost knocked off his feet; but, instantly regaining his footing, he struck the huge creature a sharp blow just as it was getting one of its flippers over the boat, which it would have capsized in an instant.

The seal was, however, so dismayed by the blow it had received, that it turned again, and dived down through the clear water.

The wisest thing would have been to let it go, but the whim seized Arthur that he would like to conquer this strange beast; so seizing a rope from the bottom of the boat, he made a running noose and turned it into a lasso, for he knew that at any moment the longer line by which the seal was held might break.

Just at this moment Tom-Tom came swimming up, after amusing himself with a limpet feast on a rock hard by, and Arthur wondered whether he could make the ape of any avail.

Up came the seal just then, barking loudly, and without a thought as to the consequences, Arthur threw his lasso over the creature's head, drew it tight, and then held on; for with a shrill cry of rage and fear, the seal turned and swam off, dragging the boat after him, making the water surge up on either side, and threaten each moment to come over the gunwale.

If the seal had dived, Arthur must either have loosened his hold, or have been dragged down; but

it fortunately kept to the surface, swimming very swiftly straight out to sea, leaving Tom-Tom paddling about in the distance, perfectly astounded at that which had taken place.

"Oh, Lil," said Arthur, "if I could only tame this creature, and train it to draw our boat about, we could travel by sea as easily as we do by land!"

As he spoke he gave the rope a sharp tug, with the effect that the seal stopped short to turn its head and stare at him wonderingly, and then, in a fresh access of fear, started off in a fresh direction, this time along the coast parallel with the shore.

In time, however, the efforts of the seal to escape became more feeble, and far from attempting to seek safety down in the depths, it kept upon the surface, while by varying the way in which he tugged at the rope, Arthur soon found that he could guide the creature anywhere he liked; and now it was with a strange feeling of exhilaration that he steered it towards the ship, sending up Lilia to make fast a thin rope to a pin, and then throw the other end down to him.

A minute later he had tied the rope to the piece of which he had made a lasso, and secured the seal, which, now thoroughly tired out, lay quite still upon the water, watching him as he climbed to the deck.

"Oh, Arthur," cried Lilia, "what are you going to do with this creature?"

"That is to be our sea-horse," he said, smiling; "and the dingy will be our chariot, in which we two can ride, some day, all round the island, drawn by that seal, or sea-elephant, or whatever he calls himself."

One of Arthur's next visits was with Lilia to the kangaroo, and they were followed amongst the trees by the giraffe, the leopard, and by Tom-Tom.

The great bounding animal lay very still, and, apparently, quite contented where it had been left, and it uttered a low, moaning noise as Arthur approached.

"Oh mind, Arty!" cried Lilia. "Take care that it don't seize you, and jump away."

"It will be a good many weeks before that leg will allow it to play any of those grasshopper tricks," said Arthur, smiling; and then, while Lilia shrank back and caught hold of Tom-Tom for protection, the boy stepped boldly forward and patted the creature's soft deer-like head, and played with its ears, which it rubbed against his hand.

"Now let me have a look at the broken leg," said Arthur; and as soon as he laid his hand upon the bandages, the kangaroo lay perfectly still, evidently having some dawning sense that it was going to be cured.

These bandages were soon tightened up and placed right; and with all a surgeon's satisfaction, Arthur found that the swelling had gone down, and that the broken limb was cool.

They left the injured animal apparently quite at its ease, nibbling away at the food thus provided, and then, having taken Lilia on board, Arthur set to work vigorously to take any further steps that might be necessary to attract the attention of a passing ship.

In addition, then, to the flagstaff, which he set up on the mountain and secured with great blocks of stone, he picked out a clump of cocoa-nut trees growing on a point of land, which stood out well into the sea, terminating in a line of low rocks, which made a dangerous shoal, round about which the water raced and eddied.

Walking round by the coast, then, with Tom-Tom, he climbed to this point to find that there were quite a dozen of these beautiful cocoa palms, the centre one towering up to a tremendous height.

It seemed a pity, but there was such an important object in view that Arthur stripped off his coat, picked up his axe, and then, pointing to one tree, and setting the example, Tom-Tom—who was now quite clever in that way, and enjoyed his work—set to, and began chopping at one of the palms, while Arthur cut at another.

Long before Arthur had cut through his, Tom-Tom began to grin and chatter, and down went his tree with a crash.

Arthur's soon followed, to the amazement of the birds, which came shrieking and whistling round in flocks to see the meaning of this strange proceeding.

One flock of lovebirds seemed quite to enjoy it. They were tiny parrots of a most dazzling green, which literally swarmed in some parts of the island. They were lovely little things, with their orange beaks, and patches of delicate azure in their wings and cornelian red in their tails; and when not sitting in groups, huddled together as if for warmth, their habit was to flock into the branches of some tree, where they kept up an incessant piping and twittering, as they climbed up and down the leaves and twigs, their favourite position being upside down, or hanging by one claw.

A perfect swarm of these appeared as soon as the two first trees went down, and they began to crawl over the prostrate leaves more like fat green caterpillars than anything else, so unbirdlike were their actions.

A fresh flight seemed to arrive as every tree went down, and then came a band of flamingoes and cranes, to stand upon one leg and watch the proceedings.

Soon after, a hoarse, loud croak and a whistling in the air announced a fresh comer, which proved to be the eagle, whose wing was apparently well, for it used it freely.

Arthur half thought that the eagle came as an enemy; but on the contrary, after alighting on one of the tree stumps, it proceeded to leisurely fold its wings, stretch its tail, and rustle its feathers, after which it gave two or three awkward hops, and alighted close by Arthur, in whose hand, by way of friendliness, it laid its hooked beak, and then stared at him with its wonderful eyes—looking down at him, it was such a monster.

Our hero had now grown so familiar with the animals, and had found bold, fearless behaviour answer so well, that he proceeded to treat the great eagle as if it had been a cockatoo, rubbing and scratching its head—a process which the king of birds seemed thoroughly to approve.

The remaining trees soon fell, and Tom-Tom was for making an attack upon the tall veteran of the little grove; but here Arthur stopped him, and, taking up a flag which he had brought rolled up tightly, he spread it out, and saw that there were pieces of line at two of the corners.

"Now, sir, up you go!" cried Arthur; and in obedience, believing that it was for the sake of some nuts growing in the crown, the ape began readily to climb.

The process was precisely the same as when Arthur sent the ape up so as to obtain fruit; for as it climbed higher, the tree began to bend slightly, and then more and more, till up in the thinner part Tom-Tom, who kept on grinning and chattering, weighed it down almost to the ground.

At last, when he reached the green crown of leaves, he had bent it into the form of an arch, and root and top both touched the ground.

"Now, sir, hold on tightly," cried Arthur, straddling across the tree, and lopping off a few leaves, with the effect that, relieved of their weight, the long, lithe trunk seemed to become more springy, and Tom-Tom danced up and down upon it.

Then throwing down the axe, and taking up the flag, Arthur tied the lower corner by its line to the thin trunk, and then getting into the crown, he proceeded to tie the top corner.

"Ah!" thought the boy; "now this single tree will stand out with the flag fluttering so that it can be seen for miles."

Poor Arthur! He had taught Tom-Tom to be very clever and handy, but he had not been able to invest him with reasoning power, and he was so intent upon his work, that he paid no heed to the ape.

But Master Tom-Tom was very busy. He knew nothing about signal flags or devices to get away from the island. How should he, when the island had always been his home? So while Arthur was tying the last knot, Tom-Tom, who believed that the tree was pulled down for the sake of its cool, delicious, pulpy nuts, took his axe as he sat in the crown, now made steady by the addition of Arthur's weight, and proceeded to knock off nut after nut in its great husky covering.

As a matter of course, this lightened the head of the tree a great deal; but Arthur was too intent upon his work to notice this, and it would have made no difference save for an accident which occurred.

It has been said that the cocoa palms were growing on a point of land jutting out into the sea, and just where the palms grew this had been steep and narrow; so that while Tom-Tom was busy knocking off the nuts, one of them fell heavily, and began to roll down the declivity into the sea, which ran so swiftly here that it would have swept the nut away on the instant.

Tom-Tom uttered a howl of anger, dropped his axe, and made a bound out of the tree crown after the nut, and then paused, perfectly astounded at what followed.

Well he might be; for the tree, suddenly released from the heavy weight of the huge ape, sprang up like some mighty spring, or a huge catapult.

Arthur's weight was as nothing now, for not only was the ape's weight gone, but that of great leaves and nuts to the amount of many pounds, and like a stone from a sling, the boy was sent flying. For in an instant the tree gave a mighty *whish!* like a whip-thong recovered its perpendicular, and sent Arthur describing an arc in the air.

The birds shrieked and darted away in all directions, perfectly panic-stricken, and among them the eagle rose with a mighty flap-flap of its great wings, to begin to glide round directly after, while Tom-Tom howled hideously, and began to make a noise like a monstrous watchman's rattle.

Meanwhile, projected, as it were, into space, Arthur naturally drew himself together into a ball, as if taking a leap. The air whistled past his ears, and he felt himself turn over and over like a ball; and then a long space of time seemed to elapse, though it was only a second or two, ere he fell into the water with a tremendous splash, and it closed over his head as he went down into its cool depths like a stone.

It was a miracle almost that he had not fallen on one of the many rugged pieces of rock that showed their heads in all directions; but fortunately he fell clear into a deep part, where the sea raced round in quite a whirlpool.

The water gave him quite an electric shock as he fell; and then he seemed to be sucked down, down, down an interminable depth, while it grew darker and darker each moment.

Then he felt himself swept along at a tremendous rate, with seaweeds brushing against him and entangling him.

More than once, as he was carried on, it seemed to him that he should be strangled by the cold, slimy fronds that wrapped round his neck and arms; but by an effort he freed himself, and struck out to try and reach the top.

This, however, he could not do, for the water seemed to suck him down; there was a horrible feeling of suffocation upon him; a terrible ringing in his ears; a general sense of drowning; and with it came thoughts of Lilia and home. How would she get on without him? Would she be rescued? Would Tom-Tom get her food to help out that on board?

A hundred such thoughts, mingled with dreamy feelings and recollections of home and those he loved, seemed to flood his brain. He felt no particular pain; and though he knew he was drowning, he felt powerless to do more than feebly move his arms as if swimming.

Consciousness was fast leaving him, for in spite of his efforts he was still sucked down by the eddy, when suddenly he was shot up by a swirl of the current, and he gasped and panted for breath as he felt himself once more on the surface.

His hopes rose high as he took in two or three heavy panting breaths of the pure fresh air; but as the dizzy beating and throbbing in his head passed off, it was for him to find that his troubles were not yet passed, inasmuch as he found himself in a rushing, swirling eddy on the far side of the point of rocks, under which he must have been driven by the current.

It was only with great difficulty that Arthur could keep himself afloat, but he did manage it, and as he was driven out to sea, a feeling of despair crept over him; for there, far above him, was the tree, with its flag waving boldly in the breeze, and Tom-Tom sitting perched upon one of the fallen trunks, staring evidently in another direction.

Arthur took a last look at the point, with its waving flag, and prayed that some ship might soon draw near, for its crew to see that signal and take off poor Lilia. As for himself, he felt that it was all over, and that his brave efforts had been all in vain.

He ceased struggling, and the swift waters, apparently finding him in their way, swept over him; and as the water closed over his eyes, it seemed as if a dark shadow had passed by.

This nerved him to make a fresh struggle, and he rose once more to the surface, throwing up his arms in the effort, when it seemed to him, in his misty state, that something scratched one arm roughly.

He made a fresh effort, and now there came the dark shadow again, accompanied by a whistling of wings, and he made a snatch at two hanging claws, one of which he caught, and the next moment he was being dragged over the surface of the sea by his eagle, which had stooped to seize him, after soaring round and round in search of him ever since he had disappeared.

The eagle went onwards with a slow, heavy *flap-flap*, the points of its wings beating the water at every stroke; but it seemed no effort to it, as Arthur clung to its legs, holding tightly just above the claws, and in a very short time it drew the boy right over the whirlpool where he had been sucked down, and then lightly over the shallow water on to the soft warm sands, where Arthur loosened his hold, and lay, panting and exhausted, while the eagle shook the water out of its wings, folded them, hopped on to a piece of rock, and uttered a hoarse scream, which brought Tom-Tom to his master's side.

CHAPTER XXX.

A ROCKY SEAT.

It was some little time before Arthur, thankful for his escape, could get up and wring the water out of his clothes previous to making his way back to the ship, with Tom-Tom gambolling about him with delight, and the eagle uttering croaks and screams as it hopped along by its master's side.

Lilia had been as busy as a little bee, and was quite in ignorance of the risks Arthur had run; so he said little about it, only pointed proudly to the flag he had now flying on the point, and that high up on the mountain.

During the next few days Arthur's elephant seal grew very tame, and after being fed a few times, would draw the dingy easily over the water in any direction in which it was guided with a long wand.

Then they had an expedition, taking the eagle to catch fish for them, which it did with ease.

The days glided rapidly by with the busy life they led; the garden flourished, and they had vegetables and fruit in abundance; and what delighted Arthur was, that they had of late very rarely seen any of the great serpents.

Of the larger beasts there had been very few visits, and Arthur could not help feeling a longing to pay

another visit to the other side of the mountain, taking with him the elephant seal to draw the dingy, the leopard to help protect them, along with the eagle and Tom-Tom. He would gladly have had the giraffe and the kangaroo, but he saw no means of getting them round.

For the kangaroo's leg had rapidly knit together again, and before Arthur could believe it possible, he found the great animal bounding along over the trees and bushes with the greatest ease. But with its returning strength it showed no desire to go back into its wild state, but readily became one of the tame companions of the young exiles.

And so the time glided on, Arthur often looking wonderingly at the pretty, slim, brown girl who grew so rapidly beneath his eyes.

For all Lilia's old delicacy of habit had passed away, and she was now light, active, and full of health as her brother could wish to see. So light and merry-hearted was she, that Arthur's trouble was to keep her out of danger, as he always dreaded such another adventure as that which he had had with the kangaroo.

As to this last addition to their servants, it became one of the most gentle and docile of the set; for when Arthur had contrived, with a good deal of scheming, a saddle or pad upon which he could ride, the long-legged creature was as quiet as could be, and rather seemed to look upon the fastening on of the saddle as an honour.

Lilia stood by when this was first done, and then exclaimed, with an air of disappointment:

"Why, Arty, there will not be room for both of us there!"

"No," he said, laughing, as he took off the saddle, "there is no room for you, Lil; and you did not expect I was going to take you on such a dangerous ride."

"Aren't we going for our ride then, Arty?" asked Lilia, in a disappointed tone.

"Well, no," said her brother. "Let us put off our journey till another day."

"Well, then, let's go in the grove where those beautiful flowers grow, Arty," said Lilia; "or—no—let's get some more pearls for mamma."

"Good; we'll do that," said Arthur; "and I can get some bait for fishing at the same time. We want some more fish for the pool. Wait till I get my pike."

Arthur fetched his pike from the boat—for it was handy for dislodging the mussels and oysters from the rocks—and then they went along the sands.

"How the sea has washed up the sand!" said Arthur, as they walked down the soft edge of the tide, their feet sinking in at every step; for the sand was loose and wonderfully fine.

"What a curious-looking ridge that is!" cried Lilia, suddenly, as she pointed towards something lying in the sand, some distance ahead.

"It's some of the rock laid bare by the tide," said Arthur.

"Rock—laid bare—Arty!" exclaimed Lilia, wonderingly. "Why, you don't think that there's rock underneath us, do you?"

"Yes, if you were to scrape the sand away," replied Arthur.

They soon reached the grey rugged piece of rock, half-buried in the sands. It lay some forty or fifty feet from the water-side, and had Arthur acted with caution he would have noticed something between the rock and the water's edge; but as it was, he walked quietly up to the piece of rock, upon which Lilia plumped herself down, exclaiming:

"Oh, I'm so tired, Arty; let's rest a bit."

"With all my heart," he said, seating himself by her, while Tom-Tom took his place close by Lilia's feet.

And so they rested for half an hour, with the sea lapping on the beach hard by, and the soft wind playing in Lilia's hair, and cooling Arthur's brown cheeks.

Tom-Tom nestled down into the sand and went off to sleep; and presently, so soft and enervating was the warm and perfumed breeze, Arthur began to nod.

"Only fancy! And in the middle of the day, too, with endless work to do—pearls to gather, and bait to collect for fishing. Come, Lil!" cried Arthur, jumping up and seizing his pike.

This roused Tom-Tom, who jumped up, ready and eager to do anything he was told.

"Come, Lil—get up!" cried Arthur; for his sister had taken no notice of him.

"Oh, do wait a little while, Arty! I'm so tired and sleepy!" cried the girl.

"Not a moment," cried Arthur. "Come and collect your pearls, or I'll hoist the rock over."

"You can't," said Lilia, drowsily.

"Can't I?" exclaimed Arthur, laughing. "You shall see."

Taking a piece of stone for a fulcrum, he placed it close up to the rock, and then, using his pike as a lever, he pushed one end down close to the rock.

"Now, look out!" cried Arthur; and he began to heave.

It was "look out" indeed; for at the first heave of the lever, it seemed as if an earthquake had come upon them.

There was a tremendous convulsion: Lilia was sent flying—Tom-Tom was knocked down—and there, roused from the sleep which it had been taking, half buried, was a tremendous crocodile, furiously lashing its tail in the midst of a cloud of sand.

Lilia ran behind a projecting rock, fell upon her knees and shrieked, for the monster was making, open-jawed, at Arthur, when Tom-Tom, who had now somewhat recovered from his astonishment, came to his master's aid.

It was none too soon, for the monster was about to seize the lad as he stabbed at it with his pike. However, the crocodile's bound was stopped by the ape, who, with a display of activity that could hardly have been expected, sprang on the creature's back, seized its fore-paws, and giving them a wrench, dragged them back right over its shoulders, where he held on to them as if they had been his reins.

Tom-Tom was possessed of gigantic strength, but a crocodile between thirty and forty feet long, with a backbone like a steel spring, was an adversary of too great power for the ape.

The great reptile was very stiff, and its motions were anything but those of a snake, but it could writhe and lash its tail in a wonderful manner, beating up the sand in a cloud; and as Tom-Tom held on tightly to his novel seat, the crocodile urged itself forward with its hind legs, its throat and chest ploughing through the sand, while its great teeth-armed jaws kept snapping together like some vast pair of shears.

All this time Arthur kept stabbing at the reptile with his pike, but only once did he make any impression, and draw a little blood—for the pikehead of hard steel only rattled and slipped about on the horny scales and plates; and, dangerous enemy as it was, Arthur shrank from stabbing at the monster's eyes.

To Arthur's horror, the crocodile, in its half-blind rage, now began to thrust itself along through the sand in the direction of Lilia, and he struck and stabbed at it with redoubled fury, exposing himself to the terrible armed jaws in the most reckless way.

This had its effect, though; for it altered the direction in which the reptile was urging its way, and it now scuffled and writhed through the sand parallel with the breaking waves.

Tom-Tom had hard work to retain his seat for the time he did, and, snarling and chattering the while, he occupied himself with biting savagely at the crocodile's toes, his last bite being so effective that the monster, in its agony, gave a writhe and a bound, rolled right over and over, Tom-Tom being dislodged from his seat; and then turning upon its two assailants, and furiously snapping its jaws, it made for them as if about to attack. But the next moment it had altered its mind, if mind it had, and writhed and crawled rapidly to where the waves broke and plunged into the sea.

In his excitement Arthur ran down after it, and for a time he could trace its course, as it swam rapidly, by means of its undulating tail, through the clear water.

In addition, he could see a regular line of air-bubbles rising to the surface—a very sufficient indication of the creature's course, which was evidently along the coast, until it had reached the mouth of the crocodile river, from which it had probably come.

Arthur returned panting to his sister, who, however, was not so much alarmed as he had expected to find, constant acquaintance with danger having somewhat inured her to its presence.

Instead, then, of clinging to him shivering, she burst out laughing.

"Oh, Arty," she cried, "did you ever know anything so stupid? How absurd to take that creature's back for a piece of rock! And it never moved."

"Till it sent you flying," said Arthur, smiling in his turn; for he saw no advantage to be gained by magnifying the dangers they incurred.

This was a new thing, though; for so far no crocodiles had been seen on their side of the island, and Arthur was surprised to find that they would enter the sea and make such long journeys as this monster must have taken, right past the mouth of the hot river, which sent out its steaming waters far into the sea.

Tom-Tom had by this time pretty well cleared himself of sand, shaking it out of his hairy coat, rubbing it from his eyes, and spitting and sputtering in the most absurd way, as if he had swallowed a mouthful of the gritty particles.

Every now and then he showed his teeth, and snarled angrily, giving vicious snaps, as if at imaginary flies in the air, and was evidently in the very worst of tempers.

At last, however, he seemed to calm down. He gave his skin a final shake, and then turned to Lilia and smiled after his fashion—which smile was performed by his drawing back his lips from his great fangs, and opening his mouth wide, in a way that suggested to the person the amiable look was intended for, that the ape intended to devour him or her off-hand.

Arthur hastily scraped together a basketful of bait—mussels and limpets, and then they returned to the boat, satisfied with their excursion on shore for the day, and feeling more than ever how satisfactory it was to possess the ship for their home, as there they could sleep in security, unvisited save by Tom-Tom and the eagle, which had followed them on board, crossing the short width of sea with a few flaps of its monstrous wings, and settling on the stump of the mainmast, which he seemed to prefer on account of its ragged, awkward splinters, and general uncomfortableness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 280. Back numbers can always be had.)

ODYSSEUS:

HIS WANDERINGS AND ADVENTURES.

BY C. A. READ.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR nine days the fleet of Odysseus tossed about on the wide Mediterranean, the wind blowing now from one point, now from another, but always more or less boisterous. On the morning of the tenth there came a sudden lull, the sun shone out, and there before them on the south, and spreading away to west and east, lay a lovely coast.

With joyful cries, the ships were run ashore, and the soldiers sprang on to the beach.

In a few minutes, springs of fresh water were found welling from under high rocks, and running down to the sea over meadows green as emerald.

Here a hurried repast was soon spread out for all, and presently, when nature had been satisfied, a herald and two soldiers were sent forward to view the place.

As these advanced inland, they found the country grow more and more lovely, and a kind of heaven-given satisfaction began to fill every vein, and occupy every thought.

Presently, while the steps of the three men grew slower and slower—not from weariness, but a pleasant yielding to repose—they came across two strange-looking beings stretched in balmy sleep under a spreading tree.

As they drew near, the three men could see that the figures under the tree were slightly smaller than the usual run of Greeks, that their forms were as perfect as it was possible to conceive, and that a strange beauty shone from each face and every limb. A sort of thin gossamer dress floated over them, half-hiding, half-revealing the figures beneath.

The herald stooped and laid his hand upon the shoulder of one of the men.

With a sigh of most intense enjoyment, the man moved his head and opened two great liquid eyes. Then, as he saw that strangers stood before him, he rose to his feet with a wavy motion that seemed the very perfection of ease, with complete absence of labour.

"You are strangers, I see," he said in a voice full of that enticing music given only to women in these days. "What shall I do for you? Will you rest or eat?"

"We would do both," replied the herald.

"You shall do both, then. But first, do you know the land where you are now?"

"The land is strange to us, and it is such a land as we have never seen before."

"It is the land of the Lotophagi," replied the man, "that heaven on earth that the men of Greece have seen in dreams. Who eats with us never again longs for other food; who sleeps with us thinks no more of home or friends, of wife or child. He knows pain and labour, sorrow and weariness no more. He never hungers, for the lotos that shades him from the sun is his unceasing food. Now will you eat and rest with us?"

The herald paused, but the two soldiers cried out eagerly:

"Yes, we would taste the heavenly food and rest with you."

"And I, too—I will eat and rest with you," replied the herald, presently.

The lotos-eater put his hand above his head and plucked from between the leaves of the tree a fruit unseen before. It was of the colour of gold, and soft, and warm-looking.

The herald held out his hand, and the fruit dropped into it with a low, soft sound. Next moment he put it in his mouth, where it seemed to melt away without any effort of his.

Suddenly a strange sense of lightness, of vigour, without any desire to be busy, ran through all his frame. He felt as if he would fly, as if unbounded strength had all at once become his. He did not feel inclined to use it, however, but sank down on the grass and stretched himself out with a moan of delight.

With the two soldiers the result was the same, and presently five figures instead of two lay stretched under the trees, wrapped in that half-sleep, half-waking state which is full of happy dreams.

For hours they lay thus, only rising now and then to pluck and eat.

Meanwhile Odysseus wondered at their delay. "Were the people of the land cruel and inhospitable?" he asked himself. Perhaps even now the lives of his three followers were in jeopardy.

So soon as this thought entered his mind he called Myron to his side.

"We must seek our three friends," he said. "You and I and twelve of our bravest must go to their relief."

Myron bowed and hurried away among the soldiers. Presently he returned, accompanied by twelve chosen men. Odysseus gave a few words of advice to those left behind, how they were to keep watch and guard in his absence, then with his little troop started off by the way the three lost men had gone.

As they advanced inland Odysseus and his men marvelled at the beauty of the country, as his three first followers had done. Over them, too, that strange sense of satisfaction, of delight in merely living and being, began to steal.

"It is an enchanted land," murmured Odysseus, as evening began to draw on. "We must go back at once, or else be lost."

Scarcely had the words escaped him when his eyes caught sight of the figures stretched in the spreading shade.

With a low cry he sprang forward, and touched the sleeping herald.

"Awake, awake, awake, O Lachas!" he cried.

"I am not asleep," replied the herald, as he rose to his feet with the same wavy motion as the lotos-eater. "I am resting—resting. But you are strangers. What shall I do for you? Will you rest or eat?"

A sudden desire for both seized hold of Odysseus; but by a mighty effort he put it aside.

"I am no stranger to you, Lachas, and I will neither rest nor eat in this fearful land!" he replied. "Waken, and come with me."

At this answer the four other figures started to their feet in astonishment.

"This is the land of the Lotophagi," said the one who had first spoken to the herald—"the heaven on earth the Greek poets have sung of. It is the one land where man may forget his sorrow and pain."

"And wife and child and the gods as well!" cried Odysseus. "Pallas protect me, and help me to escape its wiles."

"And you will not eat and rest?" said the man, as he seemed about to sink down on the grass again.

"Yes, we will eat," cried the soldiers. "We will eat and rest with you."

"Who does shall die! By Zeus himself, I swear it!" exclaimed Odysseus, as he drew his sword and flashed it before the eyes of his soldiers. "Myron, are you, too, foolish as the others?"

The soldier addressed drew himself up, uttered a low sigh, then stepped forward and stood beside the king.

"I long to rest, O king," he said, in a low voice; "but while I can hear thy voice I will stand by thee."

"Draw forth thy sword, then, and score thy arm—the pain will waken thee. And we need to wake, for we are in the land of the lotos-eaters, where all is forgot."

Myron drew his sword slowly and scored his arm, the king doing the same.

At the first sign of blood the two men felt the terrible longing leave them, and in a few minutes they became as they were before setting foot in the enchanted shades.

"Pallas be praised, we all may yet be saved!" cried Odysseus, as he sprang among his men with naked sword, striking right and left as if at an enemy.

Myron followed him quickly, and presently there was not a single unwounded man in all the band. As with Odysseus, so it was with them. Their longing left them, and they were free men once more.

At the sight of the blood, the second lotos-eater started to his feet. Then over the face of both passed a strange look of pain, and presently they turned and fled away with steps so light that they seemed scarcely to touch the ground.

At this the herald and the two soldiers would have fled also; but Odysseus and his men sprang upon them and hurled them to the ground.

The strength of the three men was at first something terrific; but after a struggle they were securely bound, the soldiers using their belts for the purpose.

Then each man was lashed firmly to a couple of spears, and lifted from the ground. Under each spear point and handle a soldier placed his shoulder, and thus, four men carrying each captive, they turned and made for the ships.

A short walk, though a weary one, soon brought them there. Then the men were placed on board, and the vessels shoved off from the enchanted shore.

Scarcely had the water lifted the vessel that held them, when the men, uttering a low cry of pain, woke shivering from their enchanted sleep.

A few minutes more, and a wind from the land sprang up, and drove them away to the north. Then the sun sank, and the shore was soon hid from their sight—never to be seen again by any Greek.

Now as the night closed darker and darker round them, and as the wind began to rise, the men who had not faced the enticing dangers of the lotos groves began to grumble and complain.

"Does Odysseus wish to destroy us all, that he puts out to sea on such a night as this?" they asked, rebelliously.

"Slaves!" cried the herald Lachas, now once more wise, if not wiser than of old, "ye know not the danger ye have escaped. Better a grave in this wide sea than a life of bliss in that enchanted land. But would ye go back—see," pointing to the driving storm, "the very gods prevent ye."

At that moment the last gleam of light in the sky faded out, and the very blackness of darkness fell upon them. The storm, too, increased with a wild shriek until it blew a perfect hurricane.

For an hour longer this lasted, then all at once the sea around became almost smooth, and the wind, though it roared and raged as before, seemed unable to come near them.

"We are in shelter at last," cried Odysseus, joyfully. "Let the anchors be flung over. We will rest here till morning."

With joy the men rushed to obey his order, and the anchors were flung over the side. A minute more and the ship swung round, and was at rest—at rest all but the gentle rise and fall to the soft waves on which they rode.

CHAPTER V.

When morning came the Greeks were delighted and astonished to find themselves securely anchored in a harbour almost completely surrounded by land. At the head of this harbour, where the rocks stood steep, a stream gushed out, and fell down in cascades to the beach of sand below. On each side the ground rose up rather quickly, thickly covered with alders and undergrowth, through which only narrow paths fit for the wild goat were to be seen.

In a short time Odysseus and his people dragged the vessels ashore, and landed.

The air of the place was very pleasant to them—not full of languor, like that of the country of the Lotophagi, but fresh and sweet as that of their own rocky and beloved Ithaca.

Presently, as if to make the likeness greater, the wild goats flocked to the stream for their morning draught.

"This is a gift given us by the gods," said Odysseus, as he pointed to the bounding animals. "Here is food to serve till we reach Ithaca again. Haste to your ships and bring your weapons."

The men hurried away to obey him, and before long over a hundred of the fattest of the flock fell beneath the darts and spears. A share was carried on board each ship; then with the rest a banquet was prepared, at which the joyful people sat till evening drew near.

During this time, however, the eyes of Odysseus wandered again and again to a coast that rose opposite the little island in which they lay. Now and then, as the voices of his men were still for a while, he could hear, faintly borne to him on the breeze, the noise of bleating flocks, and on the hill-sides he could see the wreaths of smoke that rose up as if from human dwellings.

Throughout the night that followed, while the men lay round their fires on the shore, his eyes were constantly turning towards the opposite coast. He could not sleep or rest, so he rose to his feet and paced about, watching the lights that shone out here and there up to the very mountain tops.

Soon as morning appeared he called his men around him.

"Oh, friends," he said, "I would fain see what that land holds that lies beyond this narrow strait. Rest here and recruit yourselves, while I, with a single ship, explore its coasts."

The men answering him with a cry of pleasure, he climbed into his ship; then taking with him those on whom he could most rely, they pushed off from the shore of their little harbour, and soon were breasting the waters of the strait that separated the mainland from the friendly isle that had given them refuge.

Presently, as they drew near the shore, Odysseus caught sight of the mouth of a lonely cave close by the beach. The entrance was wide and high, bordered about with dark laurels, and shaded by tall, gloomy trees. Behind rose a wood, thick and dark.

Here Odysseus gave the word to land, and when this was done, he divided his followers into two bands. One, the strongest, was to stay and guard the ship; the other, formed of Myron and the twelve who had escaped the Lotophagi, was to accompany him.

On the back of one of the twelve was placed a goatskin of the purest wine, while another carried with him sufficient food to last a day or two.

Scarcely had they entered the cave a dozen yards, when they found that it was the habitation of some human being. Here were shelves bending beneath loads of cheeses, while far back in the cave, which was vast as a forum, were several pens filled with sheep and lambs. The whole air was full of the cries of dam and kid answering each other.

"O king," said Myron, after they had gazed round for a while, "let us not linger here, but be quick and carry off what fresh store we may for the ships. Some monster surely lives here, and if we stay, we stay to be his slaves, or else to suffer death."

Though Odysseus was the first to fear, he had now so completely forgotten it, and curiosity had laid hold of him so fast, that he laughed at Myron's speech.

"Nay, let as wait and see this monster, if there be one," he said, with a smile. "And while we wait, we may as well enjoy our morning meal. Let a fire be lighted."

Myron bowed in silence, and turned and lit a fire. In a few minutes a meal was prepared, and the Greeks, making free with the dainties about, enjoyed themselves to the utmost. Then they sat back satisfied, and waited in foolish confidence for the arrival of their host.

Presently a tread as of a whole army sounded without, and peeping forth Odysseus beheld a monstrous thing of human shape, but giant size, draw near. Over the shoulder of this creature was flung a tree, with roots and branches entire, as it had been torn from the earth.

On reaching the cave the giant threw down the tree, that thundered as it fell, sending a thrill of fear through the heart of every Greek. Springing to their feet they fled back in turn to the farthest and darkest corner of the cave.

For a moment or two the giant stood without, while a great flock of ewes and female goats passed in. Then he followed them, and lifting a great rock that lay within, rolled it to the door of the cave.

From their hiding-places in the rear of the cave the Greeks watched in fear and trembling, while the giant sat down, and began to milk his flocks. This fear changed to complete terror when the giant, setting fire to a great pile of wood in one corner, a sudden blaze lit up the cave.

Next moment the Greeks were discovered, and the giant, leaping to his feet, stood before them in the light of the fire a thing almost too monstrous to conceive. The red glare of the flames playing about his limbs made them look even more terrible than they were. Falling on his face it showed every line and wrinkle in their greatest deformity, and changed to the colour of blood the one eye that looked at them in rage from the centre of his forehead.

"Who and what are ye who make yourselves my guests?" he asked in a voice that echoed round the cave like distant thunder. "What brings you here, across the broad waters?"

For a moment or two no tongue attempted to reply, so completely terror-stricken were they all. Then Odysseus recovered himself, and found speech.

"We are Greeks, O stranger—the last relics of that famous host that fought at Troy," he replied. "We have been tossed hither and thither by various winds, and have at last been forced upon your coast, far from our native land. Of late we were victors, now we bow before you as humble suppliants. Respect and relieve us, O stranger, for the gods require it of thee—the gods who make the poor and the distressed their constant care."

"Fools that ye are," cried the giant, "to bid me reverence your gods! We Cyclops are a race that care not for your goat-nursed Zeus and his airy troop. To you and yours I act as I may choose, and not as he directs. But tell me"—trying to speak softly—"where lies the ship that brought you here—near or far off the shore?"

"Ah," thought Odysseus, "the monster thinks to seize our ship. I must meet fraud with fraud." Then aloud: "Alas, our vessel broke against a rock close by, and I have only escaped with these few."

The monster answered with a grunt, then reached forward, and grasping two of the men, dashed them fiercely on the rocky floor. Then grasping the lifeless bodies, he tore them limb from limb, as one might a sparrow, and flung them on the blazing coals.

At the sight the Greeks sickened and sank back on the floor, and even Odysseus could not keep strength enough to stand.

Presently the monster snatched from the fire the limbs and flesh that so short a time before was living and breathing.

Placing this in a great vessel, he feasted on it with horrible delight till not a scrap remained. Then swallowing a mighty pailful of milk, he stretched himself along the floor, and soon was fast asleep.

Sinking back upon his rocky couch, Odysseus joined in the hopeless grief of his men—a grief made worse for him by the thought that his rashness had caused it all.

The night passed away very slowly, but at last the morning came. At its first peep through the narrow slits round the edge of the great rock in the doorway, the giant wakened.

Then he lit his fire, milked his flock, and stretching out his hands snatched two more of the little band.

When he had dealt with these as he had done with the first he gave a grunt of satisfaction. Then whistling, as one who has done a pleasant thing, he lifted the rock away from the door and drove out his flocks. This done he rolled the rock back again into its place and stalked away into the forest, while the sheep and goats spread hither and thither.

So soon as he had gone the subtle mind of Odysseus recovered itself, and he glanced round the cave to see if it contained anything to aid in their escape.

Presently his eye rested upon the giant's club, a tall, straight tree, fit for a mast. It was almost fresh from the wood, green and undryed, and with some of its branches not yet lopped away.

At once he set his men to work at this, clearing

and shortening it, while he himself formed the smaller end into a tapering point a fathom long.

When this was done they placed the sharpened end in the fire and kept it there until its point was hard as iron. Then they laid the club away in one corner and covered it with dust and garbage from the floor.

Scarcely were all arrangements made when the giant returned, and lifting away the stone, admitted his flock as before. When the door was closed, the fire lit, and the flock milked, the horrid scene of the night before was repeated, and two more Greeks were murdered and devoured.

As the giant ceased from his feast Odysseus advanced towards him, holding in his hand a vessel full of wine.

"Oh, mighty Cylcop," said he, "let me offer you this draught to make you digest your human feast. This will tell you what treasures were lost in our ship, and what glorious drink our native land can boast. Send us home, and we will bring you as much of it as might float our ship."

The giant looked at Odysseus in doubt a moment, then grasping the vessel, poured the wine down his throat. A sudden look of delight overspread his face.

"More, more; give me more!" he cried. "Then tell us thy name, and ask of me what thou wilt."

Pleased at his success, Odysseus filled the vessel again and again until the giant sank down half sleeping on the floor.

"Now, Cyclop, now I claim a boon," cried Odysseus. "My name is Noman."

"Yes, yes, you shall have a boon," replied the monster, in a half-dreamy way, yet with a cunning leer upon his face. "When all these wretched friends of yours have met their doom, Noman shall be the last that I will eat."

As he finished his speech he uttered a half-idiotic, half-brutal laugh. Then, stretching himself out at all his length, he fell into a drunken sleep.

Odysseus stood by him till not even the prick of a sword point could move the monster to a lazy grunt. Then he stirred up the embers of the fire, laid on more wood, and placed the point of the club within the coals again.

While it glowed there Odysseus cheered the heart of the men yet left to him, and by the time the point was fiery red they were prepared to do or dare anything he chose to order or advise.

CHAPTER VI.

With beating hearts, Odysseus and his men drew the pointed club from the fire and held it aloft, while they gathered round the giant's head in a close semicircle. Odysseus himself clambered up the rocky side of the cave, till he stood some feet above them, so that he might the easier guide the weapon to its work.

Presently, when he had brought the club perfectly erect, with its point exactly over the eye of the monster, he gave the word, and it descended with all its weight full upon the massive eyeball.

For an instant, during which the Greeks whirled the wood round within the eye, there was nothing heard but the sickening plunge of the weapon, followed by the fizz-fizz of the scorching flesh. Then as the blood spouted up in a perfect fountain, the giant gave utterance to such a roar that Odysseus and his men dropped their hold of the weapon, and fled back among the flocks.

With a frantic bound the monster sprang to the door, dragged back the rock as if it were a finger-stone, and rushed into the open air. There, while he bellowed forth his agony so that the rocks echoed it again, he tore the yet-hissing stake from his eye, and dashed it to the ground.

"Now," thought Odysseus—"now is the time to escape."

But even as he said so, the ground round the cave shook with the tread of a dozen monsters of the one-eyed race.

At this the Greeks drew back, all but Odysseus, who perched himself on a ledge of rock in the wall, near the door, and peered out at the giant brood.

"What ails thee, Polyphemus?" cried one of the monsters, in a voice like the tumbling of a torrent over the rock. "What fright or dream has made thee wake us from our sleep? Has any mortal tried to hurt you while you slept, or have thieves attempted to surprise your flocks?"

"Oh, brother Cyclops, Noman hurts me," cried Polyphemus, in agony. "Noman steals upon me in my sleep to kill me!"

A loud laugh, that made the earth rock again, answered him, and one of the crowd replied, when this had ceased:

"If no man hurts you, then why waken us? If you wake us again, you shall suffer for it."

At this, heedless of the giant's moans and cries, his brother monsters turned and strode away, while within the cave Odysseus smiled to himself with joy at the success, so far, of his cunning scheme.

Presently, however, he had to slip from his perch and herd with the flock, for the giant, raging with his wound, plunged into the cave again, searching round the walls and floors of the passage with his hands, lest any of his puny enemies should escape.

Finding none of them, the monster seated himself in the passage, and stretched his arms across as a gate.

While the giant sat thus, moaning, and breaking now and then into a louder howl, Odysseus was busy within.

Searching about fearlessly with a lighted brand, he found the giant's monstrous bed—a heap of leaves and branches, tied with osier bands.

In a few minutes, with the help of his men, he had dragged this to pieces. Then, with the bands, he went to the pen that held the rams, and bound them three and three together. Under the belly of each middle one he bound a man.

By the time all this was done, the first gleams of morning began to enter the cave, and presently the bleating of the flock almost drowned the moans of the giant.

For a time he took no notice of this; but after awhile, as if fretted with their constant cries, he staggered in and opened the pens. Then seating himself in the passage again, he stretched out his arms as before, and ran his hands over each animal as it passed out.

Last of all the rams, bound three and three, came past. His hands wandered over each head and woolly coat, but not once did he suspect the precious burden that was borne beneath.

When the last of the trios were just about to pass under the hands of the giant, Odysseus flung his arms about the neck of the master ram that brought up the rear. Then round one hinder leg he wound his own, and waited the fate in store for him.

Slowly, and half borne down with its burden, the ram staggered along.

"What," said the monster, as he felt the well-known head of the leader of his flock—"what makes the chief the last of all the band? Do you feel for your suffering master? Oh, would that you had speech, for then you might tell me where Noman lies trembling with fear."

"Half borne down with its burden, the ram staggered along."

As he spoke, the giant lifted himself with a groan, and let the ram pass on.

Once in the open air, Odysseus sprang to his feet, and in a few minutes had released his half-smothered friends. Then choosing the fattest of the sheep and rams, they drove them down before them to the shore.

There their friends guarding the ship hailed them with cries of joy—joy that was changed to tears when they learned that six of their friends had gone to fill the hungry maw of Polyphemus.

Some who had not seen the monster would have had Odysseus go back with them to the cave to be better revenged; but he checked them, and pointed to the sheep and rams.

"Heave these aboard, take your oars, and let us fly from here," he cried. "Polyphemus does not rule alone among these hills. A dozen such as he are round about."

At this the boldest quailed. Then they grasped the oars and pushed off into the deep.

When they had got well clear of the land, and of the rocks and shallows, Odysseus raised his voice to its highest pitch, and cried out to the giant:

"Come forth, oh, Cyclop! Fool—come forth!" he shouted.

The giant heard the cry, knew the voice, and rushed forth into the open air, full of baffled rage.

"Poor Cyclop!" cried Odysseus, scornfully, "if any one asks who it was that spoiled thy one-eyed face, say 'twas Odysseus—Odysseus of fair Ithaca, son of Laertes—Odysseus, famed in war, before whose arm Troy fell!"

"O gods!" cried the monster with a roar of

astonishment. "O Telemus, the prophecy has come true, though it is long since you threatened me with this Odysseus' name. But I thought to see some giant like a god, some haughty hero; not this weak puny wretch, who conquers not by strength, but wine and fraud!"

At this the giant made three or four great strides towards the beach, as if he would have followed the Greeks into the very water.

But Odysseus' men strained at the oars, and the ship shot away towards the island where the rest of the fleet lay.

Here they soon arrived, much to the joy of all. Then the sheep were landed and divided, as spoil taken from an enemy, the master ram being voted to Odysseus by all.

"He has saved my life, and I devote him to great Zeus himself," said Odysseus.

In a few minutes the ram was sacrificed, and the soldiers began to prepare a banquet.

At this, which consisted of the flesh of sheep and goats, of cakes baked in the wood ashes of their fires, and of wine, they sat till evening fell. Then where they sat they lay down and slept till another morning wakened them.

By the time the sun had lifted himself above the sea, the ships were launched, and moving out upon the tide.

Which way to steer they scarcely knew; but so well as they might they kept an eastern or north-eastern course, as they thought that the likeliest to bring them back to Greece again.

For a couple of days the wind favoured them, and they kept on this course, catching now and then glimpses of the high hills of a land upon their right—a land that in this day is called Sicily.

On the morning of the third day the wind shifted, and they were blown out of sight of the great hills, and away towards the north.

Scarcely had they lost the Sicilian mountains when they found themselves among a cluster of islands that shone as fair out of the deep blue waves around as any of their own Cyclades.

On the largest and most central of these, now called Lipari, Odysseus decided to land. A little sandy bay close by seemed to invite them, and into this they sailed.

As the ships touched the sands, a crowd of youths and maidens burst from a grove close at hand, and danced down towards them.

"Welcome, strangers! Welcome to the isle of Æolus;" cried the foremost of the band, as the Greeks leaped on to the beach. "Our king has told us of your coming days ago, and sent us here to meet you."

"Pallas be praised!" cried Odysseus, as he lifted his hands to the sky. "This is the famous isle whose king gives prosperous gales to whom he chooses. Here, here at last shall we have the help we need."

"But here you rest awhile, O stranger," said the foremost youth. "No foot must leave these isles without the feast and dance. Hark! there go the cymbals calling us to the grove with you."

"Lead on; I follow," said Odysseus. "Here, surely, our trouble ends, and here we may rest and feast awhile."

He then stepped forward, and led the way towards the grove, now full of music and the sound of singing.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 289. Back numbers can always be had.)

THE DEAREST SPOT ON EARTH.

A restless youth, whose thoughts, on travel bent,
Gave to his mind a sullen discontent—
Whose visions ever prompted him to roam
From the plain precincts of his family home—
Once found four travellers at a wayside inn,
Whose wanderings in many climes had been,
And them besought to quiet his unrest
By naming the one spot supremely blessed
Beyond all others that their steps had found,
In traversing the green earth round and round.
One said: "Ay, such a spot there is, my boy,
Whose faintest recollection is a joy
Beyone all others—north, south, east, or west—
By years of varied travel proved the best—
The worth and goodness of whose humble name
Are seldom sounded by the trump of fame."
Another: "Comrade, by thy glistening eye,
And trembling lip, and soft, regretful sigh,
I know the spot thou dost in joy recall,
And likewise deem it the most blessed of all."
The third, though travel-worn for many a year,
Vouchsafed no other answer than a tear
And an unbending of his wintered head,
In mute assent to that which had been said.
The fourth, a bronzed and gloomy-mannered man,
Said: "Comrades, in my wide and varied span
Of weary wayfaring, that spot of ground
Which ye describe so well, I too have found—
The Eden—gem of all this human whirl—
Of every clime the jewel and the pearl;
And would that thither I might turn my feet,
To live, to die in its serene retreat."
Breathless, the youth, with rising colour, cried:
"Name me that spot, of every land the pride,
That I may straightway seek it o'er the wave,
And thus much fruitless toil and wandering save."
"To find that haven, so supremely blessed,"
The elder answered, speaking for the rest,
"There is no need o'er land or sea to roam—
'Tis here—'tis everywhere—its name is HOME!
Oh, youth, believe not that long seasons spent
In restless wandering can that content
And rest and comfort and sweet peace supply,
Which that loved name must ever signify
To him who hallows in his inmost breast
Country and kindred over all the rest!" N. D. U.

BLUEBELL VANE'S STORY.

By LADYE BYRDE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT MOGUL.

"AUNT, am I very ugly?"

We were nearing the station from which the train started for Pinebridge, some fifty miles from Cranefells.

"Ugly!" was the astonished reply. "Why, what makes you ask such a question?"

"Only," said I, "because everybody at Cranefells used to think me so hideous. Elfrida and Catherine were always calling me ugly."

"That was only a little spiteful way they had, I suppose; they didn't mean it, I am sure!"

"Oh, yes they did; they were always saying it! I don't think I'm much uglier than other people are—am I, aunt?"

My appealing look amused her; she touched my upturned face, and said:

"I'm not a flatterer, but I don't see anything particularly ugly about you, dear. A Bluebell, you know, couldn't be ugly; and, after all, there are many things that are of far more importance than beauty. You must try to make people love you for your merits, not for your good looks."

"It is so disagreeable," said I, with a sigh, "to feel that people can't like you because you are ugly. Elfrida always told me I was too frightful for any one ever to care for me. I hope," I added, in a shamed sort of voice, "that my cousins won't hate me like Elfrida and Catherine did."

My aunt laughed. "I'm sure I hope not," she said. "I don't think you need be at all afraid of that. You are not unlike your cousin Zoe, only that she has red roses, and yours are pale ones. You are pretty much of an age, and will, I hope, be very good friends. She has gone to spend to-day with a little neighbour; but you will see her after tea. Do you remember her at all?"

"I think I do a little bit; but I nearly forget all about my cousins. How many are there of them?"

"Well, we are quite a large party just now. Herbert, the eldest, is at college; Jack, the next, is in the office with his father; Lucie is the eldest girl; Bernard and Tom go to study with the clergyman's sons at the rectory every day; and Zoe and Gertrude are the little ones of the party. Besides these, we have the two sons of a very dear friend of your uncle's with us; their father died six months ago, and they have been with us ever since. Your uncle is their guardian."

At the station we were met by a tall, dark youth with a swaying figure and budding moustache. He greeted my aunt, and gave me the ends of his fingers when she said:

"This is the little Bluebell. You see, Ion, we were right, after all."

He had a pleasant, languid smile, and looked kindly enough, as he said, "How d'ye do?" but I set him down as proud and cold, in my usual impetuous fashion.

"Any luggage?" he asked.

"Well, no," returned my aunt; "I brought her away just as she was, without even a change. Mr. Hopkinson is dangerously ill, and the house in all sorts of confusion. If there is anything to send after her, it is to be forwarded; but I expect her wardrobe is rather limited. I must manage with some of Zoe's things till we can get others."

The house was not far from the station, so we walked.

"All going on well?" asked my aunt of Ion.

"Yes, I believe so; excepting that just as I came away I met Tom on his way home from the Rectory."

"Was he ill?" asked the mother, quickly.

"Oh, dear, no!" was the answer. "He was taken suddenly with a severe headache and sore throat, and the tutor had allowed him to come home an hour before time—that's all."

"But, my dear Ion," said my aunt, quickening her steps, "severe headache and sore throat are often the beginning of a bad illness."

"Yes," said Ion, speaking in the slow, drawling tones that he affected when he was humorously inclined; "but Tom's headaches are not of the ordinary kind. They come and go according to circumstances; and in this case I suspect the arrival of a certain little girl has a great deal to do with it. He has a heavy bet (three weeks of pocket-money) on it; and I suppose his impatience got the better of him, and he found it impossible to wait till school was up before finding out whether he had lost or won."

Mrs. Carringer could not help laughing, although she said:

"The naughty boy! He knows his father never allows him to bet."

Soon we passed the Rectory, enclosed in a garden that looked to me like a paradise. I caught a glimpse of French windows and a velvet lawn, enclosed in iron gates, and my aunt said:

"Bluebell, that is where Mr. Stewart lives, the clergyman who found you out at Cranefells."

If we had been alone I should have said something in reply, and perhaps launched into some invectives against my old quarters; but somehow I felt shy before this pale, self-possessed youth, who stalked on as if he thought we all had legs as long as his own.

"Do you see that house over there amongst the trees, with the woods beyond?" asked my aunt of me.

I looked and saw a large square building, very clean and white, half hidden by its surrounding foliage.

"That house was once your mother's. It was old family property, and had belonged to her people for many generations; but somehow, when your father got into difficulties, she was persuaded to part with it, and Mr. Hopkinson was the purchaser. A great deal of land belongs to it, and, indeed, he is one of the richest landowners in our parish. It was a fine old house, but he has modernized it very much, and made so many alterations that it doesn't look like the same place now. The very name is altered; it used to be Woodlands, now it is Bellevue Park."

My indignation had been rising while my aunt spoke, and now it burst forth.

"Mr. Hopkinson is an old thief; he's no business to go buying my mother's houses. I daresay he never paid for it, any more than he did for my picture; and when I'm grown up, I shall just buy it back again, and go and live there."

"First catch your hare," laughed Ion; and Aunt Esther said, "Well, we won't discuss that now, for here we are at The Hive. Look, Bluebell, there is your future home!"

CHAPTER XIII

SOME OF THE HIVE BEES.

I saw before me a low, straggling, old-fashioned house, with quaint-looking, ivy-clad gables and tall chimneys, rose-trees climbing over trellis-work, well-clipt hedges, neatly-trimmed borders, and a smoothly-mown lawn.

The gate swung on its hinges, and a tiny child, about four years old, came out with a large doll in her arms. She ran up to her mother, and said:

"Have you dot de Boobell?"

"Here's the Bluebell," said Aunt Esther; "come, give her a nice kiss."

I scarcely expected the little girl to obey, for I remembered too keenly Elfrida's prediction; but baby put up her plump cheek to my lips as I bent down to kiss her.

"You must tiss dolly, too."

I had no objection, though I had the bad taste to dislike dolls intensely.

Ion had taken himself off to the house in most unceremonious fashion, leaving us by the gate. The front door was open; we went through a good-sized hall, where the first things I took in were a pair of huge antlers, some tiger-skins, and a rocking-horse.

At the foot of the stairs stood a boy about twelve years old, his head tied up with a handkerchief, and his throat wound round with a great woollen stocking. He kept his face turned from us until his mother went up to him, turned him round by the shoulders, and, looking straight at him, said:

"Tom, Tom, you're a fine actor; but it won't do, my boy." Then turning to me, she went on:

"Now, Bluebell, I must introduce you to your cousin, Mr. Tom Vernon Carringer, the greatest scapegrace in Pinebridge—a young man who has sudden attacks of headache and sore throat on account of a certain lady's arrival, and who is obliged to leave his studies to look after his debts. Tom, I'm ashamed of you!"

The lad had expected sympathy, and black currant jam for his throat possibly, and to receive raillery and reproof instead was mortifying; but he bore it bravely.

"Come here and shake hands with your new cousin," she said, "and give her an opportunity of getting new ideas of a necktie and head-dress from your ornamental costume."

He tugged at the stocking round his neck, but not finding the pin readily, came to me blushing, but with a boyish grace, and put out his hand, saying to his mother, as he gave her a roguish look:

"Anyhow, I've won my bet, mother, and Bernard 'll have to shell out! Hallo! there he is!"

He darted off, and we could hear a rush and

tussel between them; then Bernard was dragged in by the collar, struggling and laughing, his school books hanging by a strap to his shoulder. As soon as he caught sight of us, he yielded to circumstances, and came forward to be presented.

Bernard was quite different in appearance to Tom; one was light, with merry blue eyes and short curling hair; the other sallow, with heavy eyebrows and massive forehead, large dark eyes, and a square-built frame. Tom was all life and agility, spirit and animation; Bernard of a more quiet, studious temperament, with slower movements and a self-contained manner that reminded me of Ion.

"Where's the Bluebell?" called a voice belonging to a tall girl, who came tripping down stairs.

She was like Tom in feature, and wore her fair hair plaited, with a long curl hanging down at the side. This was Lucie. She singled me out of the group, and said:

"Welcome to our hive, little cousin. What a lot of honey we shall get out of our new Bluebell, shan't we?"

Not one word said of my ugliness!—no repulsiveness shown at my "goggle eyes," my "snubby nose," my "great mop." What an exceeding comfort this was! And they all seemed to be glad of my coming! How happy I was!

Lucie took me up stairs to Zoe's room, where I found two neat white beds, one of which I was to occupy. She stayed with me, and helped to arrange my hair.

"What a quantity of curls you've got, child," she said, trying to unravel some of its tangles.

"I know," said I, sighing, and half expecting a depreciatory remark. "Elfrida and Catherine used to make fun of it, and call it a mop."

"Those were Mr. Hopkinson's daughters, I suppose. Well, all I can say is that it's a mop nobody need be ashamed of. It's just like silk, and a poet would talk of its rippling waves and all that sort of thing. Do you never put it in paper?"

"No, never."

"Lucky for you! Poor Zoe undergoes tortures every night with her paper screws. You haven't seen her yet; she'll be home by dusk. Come, we must be quick, for I'm tea-maker."

"Will my uncle come home to tea?"

"No, he has dinner when he comes. Graham, Jack, mamma, and Ion too. Sometimes I go in; but I generally don't, for I see after putting our baby in bed."

"Who is Graham?"

"That's Ion's brother. Ion met you at the station, didn't he?"

"Yes. What a funny name Ion is."

"Yes; it's Greek, I believe, and means—— I don't remember what it means now. Graham is quite different to his brother. Tom calls Ion the Great Mogul, and the name suits him capitally, I think. Ready now, dear? Then we'll trot down stairs."

The party was assembled in the sitting-room. Tom had discarded his costume, which change decidedly improved his appearance. He seemed brimful of fun and mischief, and was teasing Bernard near the window.

"Take your seats, good people," said Lucie, "and somebody look after our baby's chair."

"May I be allowed a cup of tea before dinner?" asked Ion, putting his head in at the door.

"The Great Mogul," said Tom, in a whisper to me, as he placed a chair for me by him. "Just look at his long legs."

"Certainly," replied Lucie; "come along, and sit by our new Bluebell in Zoe's chair."

He came swaying himself along, and making quite a fuss of disposing of his legs under the table, drawing his chair close to mine.

"Are Bluebells fond of tea?" he asked me, bending his head so close that his nose nearly touched mine.

He didn't wait for an answer, but tasted his tea, and then said:

"Please L., give me half a dozen more lumps of sugar, and a lot more milk."

"Ah, I forgot your sweet tooth," she said. "Hand your cup."

"Do have a little jam," he suggested, pushing a pot towards Tom; "it will be so good for your sore throat."

"Thanks," returned Tom, gravely. "I think I will."

"Is your throat really bad?" inquired I, seeing they spoke as if in earnest.

"It's awful bad," was the reply. "I think I shall have to finish the pot before it can get better. I say, Lucie, shan't I show Bluebell the rabbits after tea, and the swing, and our new hedgehog?"

"By all means," said she; "but let me suggest, Tom, that you don't get her into any mischief."

"Mischief!" quoth Tom, indignantly—"as if I would!"

"As if he could!" put in Bernard.

"He is incapable!" said Ion. "Look at him! Innocent as a lamb!"

"You shut up!" said Tom. "I'm as innocent as anybody at this table."

"Innocent as a babe!" said Bernard, helping himself to honey.

"I'll tell you what it is, sir," said Tom, pretending to turn fierce, "if you don't look out, I'll settle your hash for you!"

"How can you boys use such vulgar slang!" exclaimed Lucie. "You know it's very ungentlemanly. You're enough to shock our new Bluebell!"

I wasn't shocked in the least, and I didn't know what slang meant; but as I had made up my mind to take Tom under my protection, I said:

"Oh, no; I'm not shocked one bit. He doesn't mean any harm."

"Hurrah!" said Tom; "some one understands me at last! Consider yourself patted on the back, my child! Three cheers for Bluebell!"

"Look out for your teacups!" cried Ion, in his slow drawl, "or we may have a few dozen catastrophes in the general demonstration. Tom will be making a speech after this."

"May I doe with the Boobell, too?" asked baby Gertrude.

"No, darling, you stay with me. I'm going to be very busy; you must help me. Besides, mother wants you to carry the keys for her to-night, and you might lose them in the garden, you know."

To carry the household keys was an honour never despised by baby, who was at once reconciled to remain indoors. She turned her chubby face to me, and said:

"Boobell, you may doe with Tom; baby not want to doe."

"Tea is over," pronounced Lucie, and there was a general movement.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PEA-SHOOTER.

Tom ran to the window, flung up the sash, and leaped out into the garden below, calling to me to follow. I picked up my hat and obeyed, but being unprepared for the three feet I should have to clear, came down rather ungracefully on my hands and knees. Tom was at hand to help me up, and led the way to the shrubbery, where there was a famous swing; then he showed me their own pets, and we fed the rabbits, and poked the hedgehog's nose into the milk because he declined to drink it otherwise.

"You haven't seen the governor yet," said Tom; "he's a whopper, and no mistake!"

"Who's the governor?"

"What! don't you twig? You haven't been half educated, I'm afraid. I mean father, of course."

"What a funny name to give him. I say, Tom, is he very cross? Aunt says he is severe."

"I should think he is—as cross as two sticks, and another into the bargain. But, after all," he added, after a pause, "he's a very good old buffer, if you don't make him cranky; and he's no end of a brick on birthdays and holidays."

This language was highly enigmatical to me, but I was ashamed to confess my ignorance. Presently, he said:

"Can you keep a secret?"

"I don't know. I think I can."

"Well, I'm going to try you, and if you can't, why, I won't tell you another, that's all. Come along this way."

He opened the gate of a small paddock, and crossing it, we gained a wood.

"Now," said Tom, turning to me, "you must know that the governor very often comes out here for a smoke, especially on Saturday evenings, when he goes the whole round of garden, stable, coachhouse, and all, to see if everything's in order, as he calls it; so this being Saturday he's sure to come to-night. The next part of the secret is—Have you ever seen a thing like this?" (producing a pea-shooter).

"No. What's it for?"

He explained, and showed me how to use it. I thought it a wonderful invention.

"Do you know how to climb?" asked he.

"I can climb a thin tree, if it's pretty straight."

"All right: we've got lots of those sort of fellows here, and I'll see how you can tackle one. Oh! here's a jolly one that'll suit you, and this next will do for me. I tell you what—I wouldn't have the governor catch us here for a kingdom, or he'd pack us off to learn Latin or catechism, or something or other. Go ahead now, and keep a sharp look out."

I began the ascent of the tree, and it being comparatively smooth and slim, I found little difficulty in clambering up. I was a born climber; climbing came naturally to me, and a scratch or two in its accomplishment made little difference. I looked towards Tom: he was seated astride a stout limb, arranging his legs so as to leave his arms free. I placed myself in a similar position though a more feminine one, and held on with both hands.

"All right?" inquired he. "Stick on. Are you funky?"

"I'm afraid to turn round to sit comfortable," returned I, "or I shall tumble."

"Not a bit of it. Can you see anybody coming?"

From my position I could see farther down the path that ran through the wood than he could, though it was already growing dusk.

"No; I can't see anybody."

"Well, wait a bit. I'm getting my ammunition ready. I say, do you know the name of this place—this wood, I mean?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, I'll tell you, for the information is very valuable. It has several pretty names—Lovers' Walk, Lunatics' Lane, Spoon Grove, and a lot more."

"What funny names! Listen! There's somebody coming."

"Hush! Don't breathe."

The sound of a gate opening and shutting we heard. Then there was silence; but shortly after, when I began to be tired of my position, and to feel cold, we both heard voices approaching. We were completely hidden from any passers-by, and partially so from each other; but I could see Tom cocking his pea-shooter ready, and in my secret heart I couldn't help longing to possess one myself.

Nearer came the voices, and the scent of a cigar on the air.

"Who is it?" asked I.

"Hush for your life. It's the governor, to a dead certainty!"

Two gentlemen approached, talking earnestly. When they came near enough for our observation, I could see that one was my old friend, Mr. Stewart; the other a tall, grave-looking man, who walked with his thumbs in the breast lappets of his coat. He was saying:

"It is incredible that the man could have played the hypocrite so long."

They came close to my tree, and I began to speculate internally as to the chance of my being seen.

"It is a bad business," he went on, "and I shall wash my hands of such a client. Cranefells will pass into"——

I held my breath. They were talking of Mr. Hopkinson, when—pop went Tom's gun, and a pea hit the hat of the speaker with a rap.

I was much too frightened to think of laughing. One of them said:

"What can that be?"

"It sounded as if a pebble hit your hat," suggested the clergyman. "Could there be anybody behind the hedge, think you?"

"It may have been fancy, perhaps, but"——

Off went the gun again; and this time the pea hit Mr. Stewart's face. We only knew this by the way the reverend gentleman hastily put his hand to his face, and exclaimed:

"Good gracious me! What is that?"

Both turned to look about them, and Master Tom, again seizing his opportunity, shot a third charge.

This time it took effect on his father.

"There's an absolute shower of pebbles from somewhere," said Mr. Stewart. "It seems to come from the clouds. If it were not too wild an idea, I should say my young friend Tom was peeping through the hedge yonder, and playing us a trick. I was positive I heard a chuckle from the neighbouring tree;" while the other gentleman said, sternly:

"What! Tom! He would not dare! If he should presume—— But his mother told me he had taken his new cousin off to show her the children's pets."

"Ah, that little girl I saw at Cranefells? Poor child! An extraordinary circumstance, that—remarkably so!"

That daring boy Tom, not content with the success he had won, must needs perpetrate another shot; and this time it again hit one of the hats.

I began to fear we should be detected, and made a nervous movement with a branch.

"It strikes me," said Mr. Carringer, "that the stones come from the trees. Is it possible there can be any one secreted over us in this quarter?"

My heart jumped into my mouth. It seemed that its thumping must be heard by every one

around. I looked for nothing but detection and an ignominious retreat.

"We are allowing our imagination to play us a trick," said Mr. Stewart, and soon the other put his cigar between his lips again, and they slowly passed on, continuing their conversation. They were barely out of sight when Tom swung himself out of his tree, and called to me to be quick, or they would return and find us before we could be beyond pursuit. In my hurry I tore a long slit in my frock, and scampered after Tom, who led the way by a short cut across a hedge, through a meadow, and gate at the end, when we found ourselves in the garden.

"Mum's the word!" said Tom in my ear. "Don't breathe a syllable of all this; a dead secret, mind. Did you hear the peas rattle on the governor's hat? Oh, what a lark! I shall split! Let's get into the house by the back way; it'll be all right."

"Oh, look how I've torn my frock!" groaned I. "Such a tremendous slit!"

"Whew!" whistled Tom, "that *is* a bad job; but never mind, we'll cobble it up, somehow. Let's go straight to Lucie; she'll sew it up for us in less than no time. Lucie's a famous hand to help one out of hobbles."

CHAPTER XV.

We found Lucie most discreet. She ran up the long seam without asking any questions, and then said:

"Now, Tom, take her into the drawing-room while I run up stairs to see about letting down the tuck in one of Zoe's frocks for her to-morrow. You'll find mother there with the boys, but father has gone to take Mr. Stewart on his way home."

Tom gave me a sly pinch, and said, "Oh, has he?" and then demurely led me to the drawing-room, throwing wide open the door with the announcement, delivered in a most pompous voice:

"Miss Bluebell Vane."

My first impulse was to run away, my second to rush at Tom and pound him well for his impudence; but I managed to control both, and went in sheepishly enough.

"Ha!" cried the Mogul, who was lying full length on the sofa, speaking before any one else had time to utter a word, "here's a good little Bluebell come to shed the light of her smile upon our circle."

"Is this my new cousin?" asked a young man who was sitting near my aunt, to whose side I at once had gone for protection. "Come and give me a kiss, Miss Bluebell. I'm cousin Jack, and you know one may kiss flowers any hour in the day, mayn't we?"

His face made me think of Lucie's, and yet in a curious way it at once recalled to my mind a pretty greyhound puppy that I used to play with at Cranefells.

I submitted to have my cheek touched by his young moustache, and Aunt Esther said, smiling:

"You will get bewildered by so many introductions, I am afraid."

"May I introduce myself?" said a tall, manly, stalwart-looking fellow, with a beaming expression of goodwill and contentment, and a dark eye, full of intelligence and fire. "Unfortunately, I can't claim a cousin's privilege; but I am a great lover of flowers—Bluebells especially. My name is Graham Spencer." And he took my hand in his.

An unusual fit of shyness came over me as he held my hand, and Ion called out, from the sofa:

"He's my brother, Miss Bluebell; and that's a passport to your good graces, I'm sure."

"And how do you like your new home?" asked Jack, when I had settled myself on a stool at my aunt's feet.

"I love it," was my reply.

"What, better than the old one?"

"I couldn't bear the old one. 'Twas horrid."

"Perhaps you will find The Hive horrid after a time?"

"Oh, no. I'm sure I shan't. Besides, everybody doesn't hate me here like they did at Cranefells, and I'm not called a beggar."

"It isn't pretty to call names," observed Jack; "and we must be careful here, I see. Come now, what's your opinion of us here—eh? Aren't we all extra superfine?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Well," returned he, putting himself in an attitude to be personal, "what do you think of me? You see I'm a remarkably nice young man of eighteen—good-looking, and all that. This is *my* opinion, now let me hear yours."

"The gate swung on its hinges, and a tiny child came out with a large doll in her arms."

He leant back in his seat after delivering himself of the above, and put on a most self-satisfied air. Without meditating for an instant on what I was about to say, the words came out:

"You're very like one of the greyhound puppies at Cranefells—the black and tan one; but it was the prettiest of the lot."

There was a shout at this, Tom and Bernard clapping their hands. I had no idea of the rudeness of my speech, and was quite abashed at its effect.

"You're a young lady of penetration, I see," said the Mogul, when the uproar had subsided. "Tom, give her a lump of sugar."

Lucie now came in with Zoe, and I was glad to change the subject in recognizing a new cousin, and in listening to the praises of a big doll she carried in her arms, clad in night-gown and cap.

When she had gone off to show her pet to Graham, I asked my aunt, with burning cheeks, why they all had laughed at me.

"It was scarcely a polite speech for a little girl to make," she said, speaking very kindly, and rising to leave the room in answer to something Lucie whispered in her ear.

"Aunt, I didn't know. I didn't mean to be rude, indeed I didn't; but really he is very like Flora's puppy."

She patted my cheek as she passed me, and Jack said:

"Cheer up, little coz; I forgive you with all my heart. But I shouldn't wonder if you're right after all, and that I am a good bit of a puppy."

"I'm sure you're not," I began vehemently; when Ion broke in with:

"Don't they say that everybody—man, woman, and child—is like some brute or other, bird or reptile? I think I'd as soon be a puppy as anything else."

"Mr. Hopkinson was exactly like a snake," quoth I.

"Did you ever see a snake?" asked Ion.

"No; only in a picture."

"A most conclusive argument," said he.

"I know some one who is uncommonly like a donkey," observed Bernard from his corner in the window seat, where he and Tom had been making a great parade of learning some lessons.

"You've pretty long ears of your own," said Tom, giving out a poke with his arm. "You needn't talk!"

"Fie—fie!" said Lucie. "'Birds in their little nests agree.'"

"Don't you believe it," said Tom. "I never saw a bird yet that wouldn't pitch into another, and peck its very eyes out for a worm or a grub."

"I'm afraid Dr. Watts was not well up in natural history to have made such an assertion," said Jack. "He must have referred to Lucie's pet canaries."

"Or more likely to some stuffed birds in a museum," said Ion.

"What rubbish one has to learn," said Tom, sagely. "People cram all sorts of rubbish into our lesson books. In my Catechism for to-morrow I'm to learn to love my neighbour as myself. The very idea—as if anybody did it! Why, I don't love mine at all. Those Fosters next door are the greatest Goths in creation, and never gave me back the football that I kicked through their greenhouse window, and I'm sure I'm not going to love *them*. Then there's that old skinflint Martin, on the other side, making me pay for firing peas at his pigeons. Love your neighbour, indeed! I'd like to know who does?"

"Lucie is very fond of her neighbour," said Jack.

I saw the blood rush to Lucie's neck as she bent her head.

"Do you love your neighbour as yourself, Bluebell?" asked Tom of me.

Zoe had been sitting on Graham's knee while he read a book, she nursing and petting her doll. Now she jumped off, and running up to me, threw her arms round my neck, saying, with much warmth:

"I love *my* new neighbour. I've got a sister to-night!"

My heart was full of a new feeling of happiness as I laid my head on the pillow.

When Zoe and I had talked ourselves to sleep, and I was in the first stage of a delicious dream, I became conscious of a shaded light held over me, and two persons standing at my bedside. One spoke very softly:

"She is marvellously like her mother;" and another voice said, in a man's tones:

"God grant that this poor child's fate may be a far happier one than hers!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 286. Back numbers can always be had.)

FRANK HOWARD.

A SEA STORY OF ADVENTURE AND DARING.

By J. A. MAITLAND.

CHAPTER IX.

"JIGGERY JUNCUM POODLE!"

I DARESAY that many of my young readers will be aware that the large island of Hayti, or St. Domingo, in the West Indies, is ruled over by negroes. It was formerly a French possession; but towards the close of the last century, the negro slaves—taking advantage of the war between France and England, and conscious that, if necessary, they would be aided by the British naval force in the West India seas in establishing their independence—rose in rebellion, and under the leadership of a highly intelligent and educated mulatto, named Toussaint L'Overture, took possession of the island, massacred, or sent away, all the French inhabitants, and claimed and have ever since held possession of it as their own.

Hayti, or St. Domingo, is, next to Cuba, the largest, and is also one of the richest and most beautiful islands in the West Indies. Considerably larger than England, it might, under proper government, become as wealthy a country as any upon earth; but the natural indolence of the negro race, and continuous quarrels and wars between the negroes themselves, on opposite portions of the island, have ever kept the country poor, and the inhabitants in a state of contented poverty; since, as a very little labour will enable them, in consequence of the fertility of the soil, to supply all their simple requirements, they do not care to labour to procure anything better, or to make themselves more wealthier.

Cape Dame Maria—the western extremity of St. Domingo—is far distant from any of the more populous settlements on the island—a few scattered negro huts and a miserable fishing village being the only signs of human habitation within several miles of the Cape. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it was a small cove near Cape Dame Maria into which Cato piloted the Firefly and her prize, the Spanish schooner El Hidalgo.

Perceiving that there was no chance of doing anything with our prize where we were, I consulted with Douglass, and we came to the conclusion that it would be our best plan to repair the schooner's rigging, which had been much injured by our shot, and then put a prize crew on board of her, and carry her, with the negro slaves found on board of her, to some port in Jamaica, where she could be legally condemned and sold as a prize for the benefit of her captors.

For the time being, we landed the poor negroes, who had been closely confined in the schooner's hold, on the shore, putting a guard over them so that none of them could stroll away, and so cheat us out of our head-money.

Hardly, however, had the negroes been landed, ere we were visited by a very pompous personage in the form of a burly negro, as black as jet, who wore a gold-laced cocked-hat, set athwart ships, or crosswise, on his woolly head, and who was attired in a soldier's coat, a check shirt, and a pair of very dirty canvas trousers. This important personage, who wore neither shoes nor stockings, informed us in broken French that he was the captain-general and chief magistrate of the district, and demanded from us five hundred dollars for permission to refit our vessels in the harbour where they lay.

I politely requested this gentleman to go about his business, and leave us to manage our own affairs as we chose, upon which he blustered considerably, and threatened to complain of us to the negro king, his master, who would send his army to seize our vessels and convey us to prison. But finding us determined to do as we pleased, he gradually lowered his demands, until he humbly begged us to give him five dollars and a bottle of rum—assuring us, with blubber tears in his eyes, that he had received no pay for the last six months, and that his wife and children were starving.

I gave him the five dollars he asked for, and sent him away happy, with as heavy a load of ship's provisions as he was able to carry, and from that time we were no more troubled by any of the high officials of the island.

Six of the poor negroes who were injured by the fall of the yards and rigging of the schooner died shortly after they were landed, and were buried by us on shore. The others we allowed to roam about as they pleased, so long as they did not go beyond the limits where we had stationed our sentries.

We found that there were among them several males and females, who, although as black as the rest, and possessed with quite as ugly negro features, were taller and stouter, and better formed, and who seemed to be of a superior race or tribe. These had not only been separated by the Spaniards from the other negroes, but the males and females of this race or tribe had been kept apart, and had not seen one another from the time when they were carried on board the schooner, in Africa, until we sent them on shore in St. Domingo.

Pedro, the Negro Sailor, explaining to Frank and Douglass the cause of the Excitement among the Slaves.

It was almost dark when we first landed the negroes, and after they had eaten their allowance of food, they went to sleep almost immediately—the fresh air, after having been so long confined in the ship's hold, having apparently had the effect of making them feel drowsy.

All remained quiet until daylight in the morning, when Douglass and I, who slept in cots slung beneath a canvas tent we had set up on the beach, were aroused from a sound slumber by what seemed to be a most terrible row.

The negroes were not quarrelling, but they were all jabbering together in a language not one word of which could we understand. Some were leaping into the air, some were rolling on the grass, some grotesquely dancing in a circle, some rubbing noses together, some laughing hysterically, some weeping—all alike appeared to have gone crazy! After a while, however, we discovered that this excitement had arisen among, and was chiefly confined to, the superior class of negroes to whom I have alluded, and that the others were only moved to act as they were doing through sympathy. Still we were unable to make out the cause of this excitement, though one tall young negro, and a rather good-looking young negress, appeared to be objects of great attention.

At length I bethought me of an African negro among our crew, who was one of the smartest seamen belonging to the Firefly, who spoke more than one negro dialect, and claimed to have been the son of a king in his own country, and who, good-humoured fellow as he was, sometimes gave himself ridiculous airs in consequence of this claim, when, as was sometimes the case, his white shipmates jeered him.

So we sent on board the Firefly for Pedro, who presently came on shore.

"Pedro," said I, when the sailor, hat in hand, stood before us, "listen and let us know whether you can understand what these people are saying."

Pedro listened awhile.

"To be sure, massa," said he, grinning almost from ear to ear. "Dem speak de Coromantee language, what is de mos' bootiful and mos' purlitest ob all de languages dem speak in Africa."

"Then try and find out, Pedro," said I, "what all this confounded uproar is about."

Pedro went among the negroes, and we saw him conversing with some among them. Then he returned to us.

"Well, Pedro," said I, "what have you learnt? What's the row about?"

"It a berry interestin' subjec', massa," replied the negro sailor. "Dat tall, 'andsome young nigger dar, when de day break dis marnin', find him sweetheart—what him hab nebber see since him leave Africa—'mong de female slaves. Long time he tink she los' to him for ever. Dat she, sah—dat 'andsome young negress dar. . . . You mus' know, massa officer, dat de young nigger is prince in him own country"——

"Hillo!" interrupted Douglass. "Another African prince—eh? *You* are the son of a king, Pedro—ain't you?"

"Yes, massa, dat fo' true—dough I noting but common sailor now," replied Pedro, drawing himself up proudly.

"Well, then, go ahead, your highness, and tell us all about the other highness."

Pedro appeared to be half-offended, but he dared not speak disrespectfully to his superior officer, so he went on:

"Dis marnin' before de nigger gal, what is bootiful princess in her own country"——

Douglass and I burst out laughing together.

"What! *another* highness?" exclaimed Douglass—"and a charming princess this time!"

"S'pose massa officer keep make fun, nebber can tell de story," said Pedro, in an offended tone of voice.

"Let him alone, Douglass," said I. "Pedro, go on and explain matters in your own way."

"Yes," said Douglass, "it is really interesting! Let us hear what happened to the charming princess before she awoke from her slumbers this morning."

"*Dis* what happen, sah," said Pedro. "De nigger gal sleep. Dream ob her home far away in Africa, what she nebber shall see no more. Presently while she dream, she hear gentle, well-known woice, what whisper in her ear, slow, soft, and sweet—'*Jiggaree juncum poodle!*'"

"*What!* Whisper *what* in her ear?" cried Douglass and I in one voice—unable, notwithstanding our endeavours, to prevent ourselves from roaring with laughter.

"Massa officer," said the offended Pedro, "'tis noting to laugh at. De woice say gentle, soft, and sweet, '*Jiggaree-juncum—poodle!*'"

"And what in the name of all that's wonderful is the meaning of 'Jiggaree juncum poodle?'" asked Douglass.

"Massa," replied the negro sailor, "dat true Coromantee language. What I tell you is de mos' purlitest language ob Africa. It means 'My dear lub, once more I find you.'"

"How *very* expressive!" said Douglass, as serious as possible. "It says so *much* in a few words. Well, Pedro, go ahead, old boy. What did the charming princess say in reply?"

"Massa, him open him eye. Him start wid surprise. Him lift him clasped hands to heaven, and him cry, '*Oh, Mumbo Jumbo! Quack ee doodle dum!*'"

It was impossible to refrain from laughing, serious as we strove to appear.

"*Oh, Mumbo Jumbo,* Douglass!" said I. "*Quack ee doodle dum,* Howard!" said Douglass. "What *is* the meaning of that, Pedro?"

"*Mumbo Jumbo,* sah," replied Pedro, "all same like when white folks say, 'Oh, good heaven!' and '*Quack ee doodle dum*' mean 'What! Do I hear de woice ob my lubber once more?'"

"*Lubber* indeed!" said Douglass.

"Massa," said Pedro, "when de nigger gal 'peak ob him lubber, him mean de lubber ob him heart, not de long shore lubber."

"Well, go on, Pedro," said I.

"Den, massa, de nigger gal rise up, and she say in de Coromantee tongue, and in de berry words ob de great African poet:

> "'Tis de voice of my lubber—
> I hear him complain;
> You hab wake me too soon,
> I mus' slumber again.'"

"And then she slumbered again, I presume?" said Douglass, almost bursting in his endeavour to repress his laughter.

"Not so, massa," said Pedro. "Dem spring up, dem embrace, dem rub dem noses togedder, and den dem laugh and cry, all same time, till dey tumble down wid joy cause dey no can stand any longer."

"And the other negroes—what had *they* to do with this joyful meeting?" I asked. "It seemed to me that they were *all* laughing and weeping, and dancing, and singing, and rubbing noses, and tumbling down, and rolling in the grass together."

"Dat for joy, massa," said Pedro. "Nigger mans reelly got *too* much feelin'. Dey see dis meetin' ob lubbers, and dem cry '*Jibberty joram pop!*'*—dat mean, 'What a happy meeting!'—and all laugh and cry, and dance and sing wid joy togedder."

"And how came this lovely princess to be carried off as a slave?" I asked.

"Her was stole from her fader, all same like her lubber, massa," said Pedro.

"And what is her father's name?" Douglass inquired.

"Him name, massa? Him name is Hokey-Pokey-Wanky-Fum," replied Pedro.

"What! the King of the Cannibal Islands?" asked Douglass.

"De berry same pusson, massa," replied Pedro. "You know him, massa?"

"Not personally," replied Douglass; "but I have often heard a song sung in his honour in England."

"Ah, sah," continued Pedro, "fo' true, him berry great king! Ebery time he go make fetish (that is, worship his God), him kill tree hunderd slaves! Ebery time him make custom (holiday), him kill twenty, forty, fifty! Oh, he berry great king, fo' true!"

We dismissed Pedro to his duty, and by this time the excitement among the negroes had somewhat cooled down. They sat in groups chatting together, or strolled about the beach, or stretched themselves to sleep in the shade of the trees—the newly-restored lovers sitting by themselves at a distance from the rest, relating to each other, as I supposed, everything that had happened to them since their separation.

The work on board the Spanish slaver-schooner went on rapidly, and in a couple of days she was again fit to go to sea. The negroes were once more put on board, and the gunner, with a prize crew of ten men under his command, set sail, and accompanied us in the Firefly to Montego Bay, where we arrived after five days' sail, and reported our capture to the authorities of the district.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHASE.

I kept the Firefly no longer in port than was necessary to make the necessary arrangements concerning our prize, the Hidalgo, and on the fourth day after our return to Falmouth, I again put to sea.

Both Douglass and I were pleased at the thought of having captured a slaver, and all hands were in good spirits at having secured so much prize-money; for the value of our prize, together with the forty thousand dollars found in the schooner's cabin, and the head-money we should receive for the slaves, amounted to nearly one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, or sixteen thousand pounds, of which my share, as commander of the Firefly, would amount to nearly two thousand pounds—pretty well that for a midshipman but three years at sea, and not yet sixteen years of age!—while Douglass and the two petty officers—the quartermaster and the gunner—would share two thousand pounds between them—Douglass of course, as my lieutenant, receiving the largest amount! But I was not satisfied. I knew that Captain Barlow had put me in command of the Firefly, and left me at Jamaica, in order that I might capture, or drive away the pirates who had plundered so many merchant ships in the West Indian seas, and committed so many horrible cruelties. Besides, as I said in a former chapter, Douglass and I had behaved ourselves so haughtily at Port Royal, that we were regarded with no great favour by the white inhabitants and the merchant captains, who called us a couple of boys, and said it was a shame that two youngsters such as we should be entrusted with so much authority, and I longed to capture the pirate, so that I might be able to say to these people:

"There is the schooner and her pirate crew, who were the terror of your coast, and of your ships, and whose presence on the coast made your merchant captains dread to put to sea, captured by a crew of men-of-warsmen, commanded by a *couple of boys!* What do you think now of our being entrusted with an important command?"

However, for several weeks we cruised along the coast to and fro to no purpose. The only event that occurred to break the monotony of our cruise was the loss of poor Quacco, the pilot's monkey, which had become quite a pet among the sailors, for the lack of any other pet to amuse themselves with—for Hector, the bloodhound, was too dignified a dog to be played with. The loss of the monkey came about as follows.

One morning the schooner lay becalmed off Port Morant. The sun had but just risen; yet, in consequence of there being no wind, everybody was oppressed by the intense heat, although canvas awnings were spread over the decks fore and aft.

So intense was the heat that the woodwork of the vessel was blistered all over, and both the wood and ironwork, where exposed to the sun, were so hot that it was impossible to keep one's fingers upon it. Presently the cry of "Sharks!" was heard. That cry stirs sailors to exertion at all times, no matter how wearied they may be, and all hands were immediately gazing over the bulwarks of the vessel. At least a dozen large sharks were alongside, basking lazily in the sunshine, their hideous, glassy eyes seeming to gaze tauntingly upon us. The gunner asked permission to bait the shark-hooks, which permission I readily granted; and a four-pound piece of salt pork having been cut into quarters, four hooks were over the side in a few minutes. For once, however, the sharks refused the bait. They took no notice of it, though it was trailed close to their noses. One might have imagined that they were as much oppressed by the heat as ourselves. They all remained motionless save one, the largest of the lot, which slowly stirred its fins until it reached the vessel's bows, when it again lay still directly beneath the cutwater. Now, the vessel's head was Quacco's favourite spot. Here he would amuse himself for hours in calm weather, sitting beneath the knight-heads, and looking down upon the reflection of his own form in the smooth, clear water. He was thus occupied when the shark appeared a few feet beneath him, when all at once the poor animal seemed to have become fascinated by the monster's gaze, as birds are said to be fascinated and rendered unable to move by the gaze of the rattlesnake, until at length they drop into the reptile's extended jaws.

Cato saw the peril of his favourite.

"Come here, you Quacco—yerie (do you hear)?" he cried. "You no see shark look at you. Ky'm-bye him catch you for him breakfast."

But the monkey did not stir, and Cato crept out into the head to bring it in. The moment, however, that he extended his hand towards it, the monkey dropped, as if it had been struck powerless, into the sea, and was instantly caught by the large shark; while the smaller ones, which had hitherto remained motionless, darted forward as if to claim their portion of the prey. One fearful shriek, terribly like the shriek of a child in agony, the poor monkey uttered, and the next moment it was seized by one shark after another, until its limbs were torn asunder, and its body divided into a dozen pieces. It was a fearful sight, and it was terrible to hear in the still, calm weather the bones of the poor animal crack, as they were ground to atoms by the teeth of the sharks. It was the work of a minute. The next minute the monsters disappeared, leaving the smooth, calm water faintly coloured with the blood of their hapless victim; and, as if this sacrifice were wanted to bring back the breeze, they had scarcely left the vessel before the surface of the sea was ruffled by the wind, and in five minutes the Firefly was gliding along before a fresh breeze at the rate of eight or ten knots an hour; but in a short time it fell calm again.

Never shall I forget the grief of Cato at poor Quacco's terrible death!

"Oh, what for I leave Port Royal?" he cried. "What for I such cuss fool for bring him Quacco board dis 'fernal (infernal) hooker—what you call man-o'-war! Ah, nebber see de day I get 'noder monkey like Quacco. He hab more sense den all de buckras in Jamaica."

All this time the tears were coursing down the negro's black cheeks, and his bosom was heaving with intense grief.

"Never mind, Cato," said I, when he grew a little more composed. "Only let us get hold of that pirate vessel that is doing so much mischief, and we shall return to Port Royal, and you shall be well rewarded, over and above your pay as a pilot. I promise you that, though I am but a *fool of a boy!*"

A negro's grief is usually as brief as it is violent. Cato started, and stared into my face.

"Ah!" cried he. "What, massa, yerie me say *dat?* Massa mus' not be affront at what poor nigger say in him grief. Nebber *mean* what I say, massa; and den fo' true Quacco was such good clebber monkey. . . . But massa spoke ob go back to Port Royal. Better him make *haste* go back too. Dese de hurricane months; and I tell you, massa, de signs ob de weather look berry treatenin'."

"A strange sail to leeward, sir," said the gunner, coming aft to the quarter-deck, and touching his hat.

"Ah!" said I. "What is she like?"

"A large ship, sir, seemingly," was the gunner's reply; "but she's acting very queer. I only made her out just now. She was hidden by the haze, and she but showed herself for a moment, and then the haze closed over her again."

"In what direction is she?"

"There away, sir," said the gunner, pointing to the eastward, in which quarter the haze that so often shrouds the horizon in the tropics in early morning rises thickest, till it is dispersed by the sun.

Nothing of the ship was now to be seen; but the sky to windward, or rather in the quarter whence the wind *should* blow, looked squally, and a ripple began to appear on the water.

"I think we shall have a breeze soon," said I.

"And enough ob him too, massa," put in the pilot.

"There, sir—there's the ship again," said the gunner; and looking in the direction he pointed out, I saw what appeared to be a large vessel looming in the mist, like a phantom-ship, her yards and sails apparently all awry. I saw her but a few moments ere the mist again closed over her.

"Here comes the breeze," I cried. "We shall see her plain enough presently. Douglass, look

* I particularly wish my readers to understand that in writing down these beautiful sentences in Coromantee, I do not warrant their exact correctness. I don't understand the language myself, therefore I write the *sound* of the words as nearly as possible as they sounded in my ears. The sound was so droll that I could not help laughing; and I think had my young readers been present, and heard the words as pronounced by Pedro, *they* would have laughed as heartily as I did.

to the sails, will you? Steward, bring me up both the cabin spyglasses."

I handed one of the glasses that the steward brought to the gunner, keeping the other myself.

"Go aloft, gunner," said I, "and see what you can make of that vessel when the haze lifts. To me she has a very suspicious appearance." And I applied the other glass to my own eye.

"Here comes the breeze with a vengeance!" shouted Douglass. "Look out there for'ard. See to the jib, lest we should be taken aback. Hands stand by the topsail down haul. Look out here, aft, to the spanker brails!"

"Keep sail on her, Douglass, if she'll bear it," said I, still keeping my eye to the spyglass.

"All right. Trust to me not to shorten sail too soon," replied Douglass. "But we don't know how the squall will strike us, and the Firefly—little beauty as she is—is, like some other beauties, rather a cranky craft."

"Massa Douglass speak fo' true," put in Cato.

"There she fills!" cried Douglass, as the sails bellied out with the wind. "Keep all standing; but stand by to douse the canvas in an instant, if it be necessary."

"There's the ship, clear enough now," said I, as the little vessel keeled over for a moment, then righted, as she was put before the wind, and skimmed over the surface of the water like a dolphin.

"Do you see the ship now, sir?" sang out the gunner, from aloft.

"Ay, ay!" said I.

"Her fore yards are apeak, and her main yards square. I don't know what to make of her," continued the gunner.

"Nor I," I replied. "Come down from aloft. The breeze is fair. We'll bear down to her."

"There's a boat just left her side, sir," shouted the gunner. "And there follows another—and, by Jove, another! Ha! They're pulling away towards a schooner—away on the verge of the horizon!"

I could not discern the boats from the deck; but I could see the sails of the distant schooner, and I guessed at once what was the matter.

"Come down, gunner," I repeated. "That ship's been boarded by pirates, and that's the pirate craft away in the distance. Come down! By George, if the breeze holds, the pirate will soon be ours! How does she head, quartermaster?"

"West south west, sir," was the reply.

"Good," said I, putting up my hand to feel the breeze. "Steer direct for yonder ship. We'll see what's the matter on board, and then bear down for the pirate."

"S'pose him *be* de pirate, massa?" put in Cato.

"What other vessel can she be, old man?" said I. "That ship has evidently been boarded by three boats, and the men are leaving her in a state of the utmost disorder. How can you explain it any other way? Do you know the pirate schooner?"

"Know him captain once, massa," replied Cato. "See him at Demerara, whar he make fool ob de people, who tink him one great genelman wid him pleasure yacht. Afterwards he rob dem and laugh at der folly. Nebber see vessel one time I not know him again."

"Well, take this glass, and see what you make of the schooner?"

The negro pilot looked carefully through the glass for a full minute. Then he returned it to me.

"You right, massa, for one time. Dat vessel de pirate, sure as I lib. But my advice is dat you better leave him alone."

"Not if I know it, Cato," said I; and I busied myself in seeing that all the sails drew, and were trimmed to the best advantage. The wind was steadily increasing, though it was not strong enough to prevent us from carrying whole canvas, and in half an hour we were within hail of the ship, on board of which not a soul was visible.

I hailed her, but received no answer, and then I brought the schooner to, and ordering a boat to be lowered, went alongside of her.

What a sight met my eyes when I got on board, which I did by clambering from the boat into the main chains, and then climbing over the side! Six seamen lay dead, and weltering in blood upon her decks; and another man, who I afterwards learnt was the chief mate, was gagged, and bound firmly to the fife-rail. While I was unbinding this man, who was severely wounded, one of my boat's crew, who had followed me to the deck, called out that four more men were lying dead on the forecastle.

"One of them is the second mate," feebly said the poor fellow whom I had released. I led him forward.

"That is he," he said, pointing to a fine young man who had been shot through the head, and then stabbed several times. "Poor Waldron! He was the captain's nephew, sir, and he fought bravely to the last."

"Where *is* the captain?" I asked.

"He is below, sir, in the cabin, bound hard and fast, if they haven't killed him."

I descended to the cabin, and there found the master of the ship severely wounded, gagged, and bound, on his back across the table. The lazerette hatch* was open, and boxes and barrels were thrown about in disorder, showing that the cabin and store-room had been plundered, though nothing had been removed from the ship's hold—the hatchways upon deck being all still fastened down. That a desperate struggle had taken place in the cabin was manifest from the blood which stained the deck, as well as from the general confusion that prevailed. I released the captain, who for some minutes was too much excited to explain what had occurred. The poor man was, in fact, almost in a state of madness. At length I learnt from him that the pirates had boarded his vessel, soon after daybreak, and while he was still in bed—they having pulled alongside in their boats in the calm, unseen, until they gained the deck, by the officer and seamen of the watch.

They had carried off the captain's young wife and two female passengers, beside thirty-five thousand dollars in gold, and all the instruments and valuables in the cabin, and a large quantity of provisions and other stores—three boats having made two trips to and fro between the two vessels; but the ship being in ballast, they had not troubled themselves to open the hatches.

"But my wife—my wife!" cried the poor man. "I was only married to her just before I sailed from London this voyage. (He was quite a young man.) They had better have killed *me*—better have killed *her*, and the two lady passengers for whom I am responsible!"

It was all that two of my men whom I ordered to look after him could do to keep him—wounded as he was—from throwing himself overboard.

The mate—though weak from loss of blood—was better able to explain what had occurred, and he told us that he and the captain were the only individuals of the crew left alive. There were ten men he said in two of the pirate's boats, and six in the third, and from what they said before they left the ship, he believed that they had left nearly as many men on board the pirate schooner.

The Firefly lay to windward of the ship, which was the Miranda, of London, so that she could not be seen from the schooner, and it was my opinion—nay, I was certain from the appearance of the schooner—that the pirates had not yet seen my vessel. Her three boats—the foremost one a long distance ahead of the other two—were still very much nearer the ship than the schooner, which was lying-to for them.

"In which of the boats are the women?" I asked the mate.

"In the foremost boat, sir," he replied.

"You are sure of that?"

"Sure, sir. The first boat had ten men on board, and the other two each had eight, but four of the first boat's crew changed into the other boats on their second trip, to make room for the three ladies and the box of money, and the other valuables they had taken from the cabin."

"Ha! Then the money, as well as the three females, is on board the foremost boat?"

"Yes, sir; I am sure of it."

"Better still," thought I to myself. Then I told the mate that I should leave him and the master on board the ship while I went in chase of the pirate schooner, and that, on my return, I would put eight of my own men on board the ship to carry her into port.

"If I had a surgeon on board the Firefly," I added, "I would carry you and the master on board; but as I have not, and as your wounds, though severe, do not appear to be dangerous, you had better remain in the ship. A few days' sail will carry you into port."

"Never, sir," replied the mate. "The villains scuttled the ship before they left her. She is sinking."

This altered the case. I sounded the pump-well, and found that the mate told the truth. There were five feet of water in her hold. At this moment, too, Douglass hailed me from the Firefly, and cried out that the ship was sinking fast.

I now hurried the master and mate into my boat, and shoved off as quick as possible. None too soon; for ten minutes after we got on board the Firefly, the ship foundered, carrying her murdered crew down with her.

It takes a long time to write down what occurs in a few minutes. Hardly a quarter of an hour had elapsed from the time of my boarding the ship until our boat was again hoisted on board. I conducted the wounded men to the cabin, and then conferred with Douglass after having carefully looked at the schooner and her boats through the spyglass.

"I don't think they have seen us yet from on board the schooner," said I. "At all events, whether they have or no, they must wait for their boats or lose their men, and the boats are yet much nearer the Firefly than their own vessel. So far, the calm has been lucky for us. But for the calm, the schooner would have come alongside the ship. Now, if fortune favour us, we may overtake and capture or sink the boats and half the pirate crew before they can regain their own vessel."

I then told Douglass that the mate of the ship was certain that the three females that the pirates had carried off, together with the money, were on board the foremost boat.

"We must spare *her*," I said, "and, at the same time, prevent her, if we can, from gaining the schooner; but I shall not hesitate a moment to sink the other two boats, with the villains who form their crew. Nothing could be better. The pirate crew will be so weakened that they will fall an easy prize to us, while, were we to attack her with all hands on board, she would be as strong, perhaps stronger than ourselves, and might give us some trouble."

I then busied myself in seeing that every sail drew, and in preparing the Firefly for action.

"Keep her full," said I to the quartermaster, who was at the wheel.

"Ay, ay, sir," he replied; "but that gaff topsail is too much for the slender spar, sir, if I might advise. The mast springs terribly."

"So I see," I answered; "but we'll carry on. Everything depends upon our speed. We mustn't let those boats get alongside the schooner. If the mast *will* go, it must. But I'll hold on to the last."

Douglass and I were both looking through our spyglasses.

"The mate spoke the truth," said I. "I can see the flutter of the women's dresses in the foremost boat. What think you, Douglass—are the hindermost boats within range of our swivel yet?"

"I should say they are," replied Douglass; "but I think, to make sure, we'd better draw a little nearer. They see us in chase. By Jove, how they're pulling! They've double-banked their oars."

"I should say that we could send a shot into the hindmost boat now," said I. "I'll try, at any rate."

The swivel was already loaded with ball and canister, and pointed over the larboard bow.

"Be ready there, gunner," said I. "Quartermaster, stand by to sheer off a couple of points. So-o! That'll do. *Fire!*"

As the little vessel swerved round, the gunner pulled the lanyard, and the long gun sent forth its storm of nails, grape-shot, and slugs, amidst which we could see the ball flying swiftly through the air in the direction of the second boat. The ball fell into the water between the two boats, and *ricochetted*, or leaped, twice or thrice, until it sank for ever near the foremost boat, without doing any harm. But the grape and canister took fearful effect, as we could tell from the swerving round of the hindmost boat, and the yells of pain which sounded across the water.

"They have it!" I cried. "Load again, gunner, and give them a second dose of pills if they don't lie to. No mercy to pirates. They show none to their victims."

The second fire proved even more effective than the first. The ball struck the sternpost of the second boat, and split her completely in two, while the grape-shot struck several of the men in the hindmost boat, as we could tell from their dropping their oars, and letting the boat fall away into the trough of the sea.

"They're ours," I cried; "and the schooner is minus twenty of her crew, at any rate."

"Shall I fire at the foremost boat, sir?" asked the gunner. "I think I could hit her."

"No, no," said I. "There are females on board, man. Poor creatures, they're carried off from the ship. Besides, they've thirty-five thousand dollars in gold in that boat—so the mate tells me. We mustn't lose the money if we can help it. You may fire a shot ahead though, just as a polite hint for them to bring to."

Once again the gun was fired. The shot fell far ahead of the boat, for the Firefly was rapidly overhauling her, but the men did not cease pulling. They well knew that English sailors would never fire *upon* a boat in which there were women, and they only redoubled their efforts to get on

* The lazerette is the store-room in merchant ships, beneath the cabin, and entered by a hatchway under the cabin table.

board the schooner, leaving their shipmates—whose boats had sunk, and some of whom were floundering in the water, struggling for life—to their fate. But all attempts to escape now were vain. The Firefly would be up with them in ten minutes. Perhaps they thought that we would heave-to, and send a boat to pick up the drowning men—most of whom, however, had sunk before we came abreast of them.

But in that they were mistaken. If sailors have feeling and pity for women and children, they have no mercy for pirates, sharks, and lawyers. The few who were still struggling we left to the fate they merited.

In five minutes more we were close to the foremost, and now the *only* boat, for the other two had sunk.

"Heave-to!" I shouted. "Lay down your oars, and come alongside, or we'll run you down."

The men saw that escape was impossible, and they obeyed.

The sea, however, was by this time so high, that there was great danger of our sinking the boat as she came alongside; but we hove the schooner to, and with no little difficulty got the women on board, to the great joy of the captain, who, wounded as he was, came upon deck to receive his young wife. I told him to take all the women into the cabin, and make them as comfortable and as safe as possible, for I had no time to look after them then; and having secured the six men of the pirate crew, who were in the boat, we thrust them into the hold, threw a round shot into the boat, and sunk her—having, in the first place, taken care to secure the money and other valuables which had been carried off from the ship, and then squared away again and bore down to the pirate schooner—the captain of which, having lost so many of his men, seemed doubtful whether to await our coming, or to take to flight.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 286. Back numbers can always be had.)

THAT BOY BENJAMIN.

BY HARRY HACHE.

WHAT a queer boy he was, to be sure! I remember him very well. He was a bright-eyed, red-lipped, curly-headed little fellow, and his age was only eleven years. He was not big for his age, either, but had a slight, compact form, which looked as if it never could grow any bigger, because it had been too tightly pressed in the mould where it was made.

But you must not think that because he was young and small he was an insignificant boy. If you should think so, you would make a great mistake, for we can assure you that boy Benjamin was looked upon as quite a wonder in his native village of Daisynook. His fame was in all the men's mouths, as the saying is; and it was still more loudly trumpeted by all the women.

But great fame is sometimes a very inconvenient thing to possess; and so, I am sorry to say, our little Benjamin found it on many occasions. That, of course, very much depends upon the kind of fame a person enjoys, and, unfortunately, Benjamin's was not of a kind to bring him much honour. He was generally known to the good women of Daisynook as "the little wretch," while most of the men spoke of him as "the young rascal;" and others, more charitably inclined, perhaps, were content with calling him "a rum 'un."

Now, a boy—a small boy, too—of eleven years must have done something out of the common order of boys' doings to have gained such a great reputation. Some people, we know, win a great name by one notable action; but our Benjamin did not gain his reputation as "the greatest little wretch in Daisynook" so easily. He had done many remarkable things before his genius was fully recognized and his character firmly established.

I think it was Sally Soapsuds, the washerwoman, who first brought him under the notice of all Daisynook.

There was a broad, swift, but shallow stream that ran close by the village, and in this stream Sally always washed her tubs. She had one huge washing-tub of large circumference and little depth, which was the pride of her heart, because such another specimen of perfect cooper's work had never been seen in Daisynook. She had also a pretty little blue-eyed daughter, only four years old. Our Benjamin didn't care a pin about the beautiful tub, but he cared a great deal for little Sally, and used to walk the whole length of the village street to play with her. One day they were near the edge of the water, throwing pebbles into it, when Benjamin's bright eyes fell upon the large shallow tub, standing in the water only a few yards away.

"Oh, Sally, shall we have a sail?" he cried.

Little Sally's eyes danced at the thought, and Benjamin at once flopped down on the sand, took off shoes and stockings, thrust the stockings into the shoes, and then rolled up his little trousers to the knee.

"Now, come on," he cried. "You carry my shoes and I'll carry you," and in a moment after little Sally was seated in the great tub, and Benjamin was pushing it towards the middle of the stream. When it was almost afloat he said to Sally, with the air of a real navigator:

"Now, you sit against that handle an' I'll sit against this one; then I'll push it off, an' we'll go right across to those blackberries, and then come back again with a load—eh?"

Sally was delighted.

Little more effort set the tub afloat, and away it went towards the middle of the stream, with a lurch which made the little girl almost scream. But Benjamin was a hero, and he at once fixed himself so as to balance the tub.

Instead of going across the stream, however, the tub began to twirl round and round in a most bewildering manner, and to drift away with the current. Round and round they went, farther and farther from the blackberries. Round and round, faster and faster, and Benjamin looked frightened, and Sally turned pale; and then there was a loud scream upon the shore, which caused them to start, so that the tub lurched over and emptied them into the water, then righted itself and spun away, with no other burden than Benjamin's shoes and stockings, into the deeper part of the stream.

In an instant half the population of Daisynook were rushing into the water.

"What's the matter? What's the mischief?" was the general cry.

"It's that boy Benjamin," was the immediate answer, and that seemed to satisfy everybody.

Sally's mother was the first on the spot where the "spill" had taken place, and with one brawny hand she lifted poor little Sally by the arm, and with the other brawny hand she seized poor Benjamin by the hair, and led them to dry land. Benjamin had to walk it, you see, but the stream before the village was scarcely two feet deep in the middle. Soon as they reached the shore, the washerwoman shook Benjamin viciously.

"Ugh, you little wretch!" she said. "Bin at yer mischief again. You'll come to bad, some day, see if you don't;" and with a final shake she cast him from her, only to be caught in his mother's arms.

The first agitation over, the washerwoman thought of her tub.

"Where is my tub?" she cried in alarm. All eyes turned upon the stream, but it was nowhere visible. It had long since been carried round a bend of the stream, and was now in a deep and dangerous part of the river, whirling on its way to a still larger stream. She sought to intercept it, but in vain; and never did that peerless tub gladden the eyes or the heart of Sally Soapsuds again.

It was nearly a week after this that Benjamin distinguished himself again. He was walking through the street of Daisynook innocently amusing himself by trailing through the dust a piece of iron chain about two feet long. When he came opposite Mrs. Barnet's door, she called to him.

"Benny," she said, "will you mind the house for me just a minnit? I want to run up to Smith's."

"Yes, m'm," replied Benjamin immediately, for he was a good-natured lad, and always willing to oblige.

"Very well. Come and sit down and be a good boy," said Mrs. Barnet.

Benjamin said he would, and sat down by the fire. Mrs. Barnet gave him a slice of bread and jam.

"Don't shake that chair, Benny," she said, pointing to one near the fire, on which stood a large earthen crock full of flour and barm left there to "rise." For Mrs. Barnet, who kept the neatest and cleanest house in Daisynook, always baked her own bread.

"Oh, no, m'm, I won't go near it," answered Benjamin, as plainly as he could through a mouthful of bread and jam.

"That's a good boy. Play with pussy. I won't be gone long," she continued, just as she went through the door.

Benjamin soon disposed of his bread and jam, and then went to play with "pussy" as he had been told. Pussy was blinking and purring lazily on the clean hearthstone, and Benjamin stroked and patted her for some time, all which Miss Puss seemed to take in good part. But there was no fun in this for Benjamin, who was a lively boy, so he thought he would turn pussy into a horse and drive her round the floor. With this harmless intention, he gently drew out the tail of the unsuspecting cat, quietly slipped its end through one link of his piece of chain, and then rolled a bit of twine around it several times, and finally drew it tight in a knot. This was to be his reins. But the tightening of the string suddenly aroused pussy's suspicions, and it sprang up with a howl. The rattling of the chain still further alarmed it, and it sprang upon the white cloth which covered the crock of flour and barm. This it sank into, and the clanking of its chain against the crock terrified it still more. It sprang out wildly, and the chain catching in the back of the chair, brought it down, smashing the crock, and scattering its contents all over the floor. Then the cat, more frightened than ever, sprang upon the dresser and broke a plate, when it tried to spring down again. But a hook of the dresser had caught a link of the chain, and then, as pussy leaped away, the dresser, with all Mrs. Barnet's darling crockery, followed after, and lay in shapeless ruin on the floor. Then the cat, completely maddened, sprang through the window just in time to fly into the face of Mrs. Barnet, who was returning to her home; and while Mrs. Barnet screamed murder, and the cat spit and bit savagely, Benjamin ran from the house in a state of terror almost frantic, but still wondering how it had all come about.

The neighbours were upon the spot just as Mrs. Barnet had released herself from the embraces of her favourite cat.

"Lauk o' me! Gracious goodness! Whatever is it?" they exclaimed; and Mrs. Barnet screamed through her tears:

"It's THAT BOY BENJA-MIN!"

But we must stop. All the doings of little Benjamin cannot be told here, for they would fill a book. These instances will show you how he won his fame, and became more celebrated at eleven years old than many big men are at forty.

WHAT SALLY SAW IN FAIRY-LAND.

A STRANGE STORY FOR OUR VERY YOUNG FOLKS.

BY JACOB MELON.

"OH, DEAR, I *would* so like to see some of them!" said little Sally Jenkins, very earnestly, as she raised her eyes from the big pretty picture-book she had been reading.

"Some of what?" asked her brother Frank, who was sitting on the floor giving the last touches to a fine new kite which he had made.

"The fairies," replied Sally, quite seriously.

"Fairies!" repeated Frank, with a look of lofty disdain. "Now sis, how can you be such a little goose as to talk like that? Don't you know they're all dead hundreds of years ago? It's only 'kids' that believe in fairies now."

Master Frank spoke with the greatest contempt of the "kids" who believe in fairies. Of course he would not be such a "goose," because you must know, Master Frank had completed his ninth year several days before this conversation took place. He was a very wise boy was Master Frank, and he looked down upon all who were not old enough to make a kite and to play at "rounders" as "kids," a term by which our slangy little friend meant children.

Sally thought her brother almost as clever a boy as he thought himself, but for all that she did not share in his opinions on the subject of fairies. On the contrary, she was a firm believer in the existence of those queer little people, and since she had first heard of them she had always desired above all things to see them.

"But, Frank," she said, "I'm sure there must be fairies, or else how could all the nice stories be made about them? and I don't believe they're all dead a bit."

"That's because you're 'soft', sis," replied the rude boy. "I think girls are all 'soft,'" he continued with the air of a philosopher. "You must be 'soft,' or else you wouldn't go on making a fuss with that old doll all day—talking to it like as if it was a baby, and pretending to feed it with bread and milk and sugar, when it can't open its mouth. I'll tell you what, Sally—you're only a little goose;" and by the time he had finished this very wise speech he had also finished his kite, and immediately after went out to fly it.

All his talk, however, had not shaken Sally's belief in fairies, and when he was gone she sank down in the cushions of mamma's easy chair, and went over, in her mind, all that she had ever heard or read about them.

"I wish I could see them," she whispered again, all to herself.

Just then a sharp clicking sound caused her to look around, and there, standing upon the rose that was painted on the coal-box she beheld one of the queerest little creatures you could ever imagine. He had on a tight-fitting suit just like what the harlequin wears in the pantomime, only that they were all a bright green, and on his head he had a little red cap, made exactly like the old-fashioned knitted nightcaps you may have seen. He was a funny-looking creature.

"Oh, well, I never!" exclaimed Sally, with wonder and delight. "Are you a fairy?" she asked.

The funny-looking little fellow bowed his head until the tassel of his cap almost touched his toes. Then he straightened himself and answered:

"Yes, Miss Sally, I am one of the people you big human beings call fairies."

"And are there any more like you?" she said.

"Oh, a great many," he replied. "We're having a holiday, and if you'd like to see how we enjoy ourselves, I'll take you to our people."

"Will you? Oh, that would be nice! But is it far?"

"No, Miss Sally. If you come with me we can be there in a minute," he said, with another low bow.

"Very well, I'll go," said Sally, and she got down from the chair, while the funny little fellow threw a double somersault off the top of the coal-box, and stood beside her in a twinkling. He then took hold on the corner of her pinafore and led her out of the house. Soon as they were in the open air they appeared to go along with wonderful speed and in a very short time they stood upon a little green mound in the midst of some trees.

"Here we are," said the lively little guide. "Stoop down and let me touch your eyes with this key, and then we'll be in Fairyland in a jiffey."

Sally saw he had a tiny gold key in his fingers, and when she stooped down he rubbed it over her eyes very gently once or twice. When she opened her eyes again she could not see anything at first; but the dimness gradually wore away, and then there appeared before her the most beautiful scene she had ever looked upon. Everything around her appeared to be swimming in light, but it was not like any light she had ever seen before. There was no glare to distress the eyes, but a soft, tender radiance, that seemed to be made up of the most delightful tints of rose, gold, and amber. The flowers around her were the simple buttercups, cowslips, daisies, and bluebells; but they now looked more beautiful than ever they had looked in the fields around her home in Daisynook, and a little stream that rippled along close by was as pure and bright as if its waters had been formed out of liquid crystal. Sally was looking at all these things with delighted eyes, when suddenly a burst of fairy music fell upon her ears, and the funny little guide cried out,

"Here they come!" and tumbled across the green mound in a series of quick somersaults, and left her standing alone.

The sweet music grew louder and louder each moment, and then there suddenly appeared before her a troupe of tiny little creatures, surpassing in loveliness all that she had ever read of in story books, or dreamt of in dreams. They were little wee women and little wee men, dressed in the queerest of styles, and as gorgeous in colours as a bed of variegated tulips. They were very beautiful, and they seemed to be very merry, for they ran and laughed and skipped with the greatest glee around a little group of musicians who were in the middle.

"That's our band," said a sharp voice beside her; and looking down, she saw the funny little fellow in green who had been her guide.

"But how can they get so much music out of those little things?" said Sally.

"Ay, they may seem little to you, Miss Sally, but they don't to us. See that chap with the yellow jacket and the red nose, how he staggers under the big drum."

"Big drum! Oh, my, do you call that a big drum? Why, I could put it in mamma's thimble!" exclaimed Sally.

"Oh, I daresay you could," replied the man in green. "But look at our fiddler; isn't he a beauty? We're quite proud of our fiddler, Miss Sally. He has won a medal for his skill, and he's willing to play a match against any fiddler in Fairyland; yes, or or any other land. Just listen to him."

Sally did listen to him, and thought she had never heard such delicious music in all her life. Still, it puzzled her to know how he could get so much sweet sound out of a tiny little instrument that was not any bigger than the stone of a damson. But while she was puzzling her brain over this wonder, she was aroused by a sudden blare of many trumpets—oh, such trumpets! and again the chatty little fellow in green tumbled away over the mound and out of sight.

At the sound of the trumpets all the other music ceased, the laughter was hushed, and every one stood very still. Then Sally looked in the direction in which all eyes were turned, and saw something so surpassingly beautiful that words are not eloquent enough to describe it. Just coming into the open space from the shelter of some tall ferns was a long procession of the most charming little creatures that ever the mind could imagine. They appeared to be all ladies, and they were as beautiful as primroses or violets. Their robes were of the finest silken gossamer that ever the field spider wove, and they glimmered with every motion so as to reflect all the most delicate tints of the rainbow. They had tiny fillets of golden tissue around their heads, and on each pair of shoulders there was a pair of wings as transparent as those of a fly, but as rich in colour as those of the brightest butterfly you ever saw.

In the front of this procession appeared one lovely creature who was distinguished above the rest in height, beauty, in the richness of her dress, and because she bore in her hand a tiny wand, no bigger than a bodkin. On the end of this wand something glittered like a star, but it did not seem to have any substance. It was, indeed, a spark of pure light.

"That's our queen," said a sharp voice close by Sally's side, and looking down, there she saw that comical little fellow in the green tights once again.

"Oh, how lovely!" exclaimed Sally, fervently. "I wish Frank was here."

The Fairy Queen turned towards her with a sweet smile.

"That is a kind and a good wish, dear Sally," she said, "but it is also a vain one. Only those who believe can see. Only those who firmly believe in the existence of goodness and beauty in your own world can ever have the happiness of feeling, and sharing in, the pure influence of one or the other. And only those who believe that there are more things existing in the world and around it than the eyes of proud men have ever yet seen can have the privilege you now enjoy. Return to your world, dear Sally, and still believe that goodness, and truth, and beauty are always in existence even when they are not visible, just as we exist, though unseen and disregarded."

As she uttered the last words, she waved her sparkling wand slowly around, and Sally found the whole charming scene fading from her view. She then felt herself being whirled rapidly away as if through the air, and then she found herself once more sunk deep in the cushions of mamma's easy-chair. Frank was just coming in, blustering and angry, because some boy had thrown a pebble through his kite; and when she went to tell him of the delightful adventure she had gone through, he only said:

"Oh, bosh, Sally! Do get me some paste to mend my kite!"

Poor Sally felt that Frank was an unbeliever, and she waited a more happy moment to tell him what she had seen in Fairyland.

Pleasure, like quicksilver, is bright and shy. If we strive to grasp it, it still eludes us, and still glitters.

A good opportunity never waits. If you are not ready, some one else will be.

Silent gratitude was well exemplified by the little boy who, when asked whether he thanked the lady for the stick of candy she had given him, replied, "Yes, but I didn't tell her so."

Would you be exempt from uneasiness, do no one thing you know or suspect to be wrong. Would you enjoy the purest pleasure, do everything in your power you are convinced is right.

FUNNY CHARACTERS

BY S. HOLLAND.

A poor organ man who had but one leg,
Didn't want to work much, and was too proud to beg;
He'd supported his organ, until in the end
'Twould not *support him*—what an ungrateful friend!
So he sold it, and bought a young porker instead,
That would do a good turn, and perhaps stuff *him* with bread;
No *solo* 'twould sing, and *so high* were its cries,
A "bobby" said threateningly, "Sausage and pies;"
And moved not a bit by the pig's "moving *tail*,"
Took it up, "ran it *in*"—I mean *ate it*—in gaol!
So the man left off *playing*, and—what d'ye suppose?—
Took to working, and soon earned both victuals and clothes!

A fine cock-a-doodle, of famed Cochin breed,
Went out in the rain as you see;
This "stuck up" young "fella" took out his umbrella,
For very best china was he;
But he got his feet wet—had so many foul (fowl) shocks,
That he died the next day of real *chicken* pox!

MORAL.

It's surely not strange my rhyme should end so,
Since dying's (*dyeing's*) the end of a cock's tale (*tail*), you know!

A hare and a haress picked up, one fine day,
Two horns that the hunters had dropped on the way;
They sat down and blew them, and tootled and whirr'd,
Gave "a good blowing up," such as seldom is heard!
They puffed and they strained, till their eyes ran with tears,
So foolish, considering the length of their (y)ears!
They failed and gave up; now the haress declares,
"As they've *hairs* without number, *hares* ought to play *airs!*"

OUR WEEKLY PARTY.

OH, this warm, glorious, sunny, summer weather! Do you know, dears, what we were thinking of as we came to the RED LION HOUSE this morning to prepare our entertainment for this "Party?"

You do not? Well, then, we were thinking of a holiday. You must not imagine, though, that we had any thought of taking a holiday to-day, and running away from our post as the conductor of this "Party." Oh, no; we could not entertain such a thought for a moment. No holiday could afford us so much pleasure as we derive from these weekly meetings, with all the tens of thousands of our young friends. Still, we must candidly confess that our thoughts did run upon holidays very much this morning. We could not avoid it, do what we would; and we are sure it was all owing to a pretty scene we had witnessed on the previous evening. What do you think it was? We chanced to be out in the country, a few miles from London, and as we sat under the boughs of a young chestnut tree, reading Charles Lamb's beautiful essay on "Dream-Children," we were very pleasantly interrupted by the sound of sweet young voices singing in the distance. We closed our book and listened. The sound of song quickly grew louder and more distinct; then there was a clattering of hoofs and a rumbling of wheels, and immediately after there came dashing up the white, dusty road four great omnibuses crowded within and without by the children whose singing we had first heard. Oh, it was a pleasant sight! The 'busses were decked with green branches and bunches of flowers, and fresh leafy plumes nodded gaily upon the heads of the horses, and were fixed, here and there, in different parts of the harness. But it was the children—the cheery, merry young folks—whom we chiefly observed and most admired. They had been out for a holiday, and were now returning to their homes in some one of the crowded districts of London. How happy they were! They had evidently enjoyed their outing—there could not be any doubt of that—and we could not but think that they were all pretty well prepared to enjoy the rest to which they would soon retire after stay-at-home fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters had been told over and over again of all the sports, and all the frolics, and all the adventures of that memorable day. Our heart swelled up, and we

seemed to share in their happiness. "Bless the dear children!" we exclaimed, not loudly, but with heartfelt earnestness, and at the same time we could not but add with equal fervour, "and a hundred blessings attend the heart and the hand that prepares such pleasures for a child!" Nay, we did even more.

We really think we ought not to tell you what else we did on that occasion, lest you might take it into your wise heads that your grave and serious ED. was too easily carried away by his feelings. Yet we will take our chance of that. Well, as the 'busses went by the spot where we were, we stood up and waved our *book*—we had not a hat convenient, and so we waved our volume of "Elia" over our head, and all the children at once returned our greeting in that boisterous and hearty manner that we like so much. Some who had green boughs waved them joyously towards us, others waved pocket-handkerchiefs, a few pelted us with flowers, and one or two, we must confess, took deliberate aim at our head with pieces of orange peel. Then all broke into a ringing cheer, which was at once echoed by a few little people who were standing on the roadside. The 'busses rolled on and disappeared in a cloud of dust far down the road; but the cheers still rang musically in our ears, and as we sat down again we thought how vain would be the efforts of those wise persons who can tell us the weight of a world or the depth of the atmosphere to fathom the happiness which those four great vehicles were bearing rapidly away to the great city.

We did not read any more of Charles Lamb that evening. Our thoughts were sent off in a new channel, and we could not do anything but reflect how very "jolly" holidays are. Soon as we stepped out of our dwelling this morning and saw the green trees and the bright garden-plots, and the glorious summer sunlight, the same thoughts recurred to us, and we could not get rid of them until we had made up our mind to take a holiday ourself. Yes, we are determined on doing so, but we will not go alone. We will take you with us—in fancy, at least—and will introduce you to every object of beauty or historical interest that we may see.

But where?

Ah! that is our secret. We intend to surprise you, and so we must ask you to wait patiently until we call for you next week. We will not go very far from London for our first trip; but before the season is spent we may take other and more extensive journeys together. What do you say to this, dear young people? Will you go with us? and would you like to be in our company on a few excursions? Tell us if you would, and we may be able to organize a series of "outings," which will afford us pleasure and improvement.

Have you read the grand announcement which precedes "Our Party" to-day? But, indeed, it is almost needless to ask such a question. We are sure you must have read it, and we are quite as sure you must have been astonished by it. We do not think it necessary to repeat here all that is said in that announcement; but we may inform you that this new story which is coming is one of an entirely new and wonderful kind. You have never read or heard of anything like it before. We have been favoured with a "peep" at some of the advanced sheets, and we can promise you a rare, an unrivalled treat. It is wonderful. It is, indeed, a marvellous story, and will reveal to you some most astonishing secrets of "THE UNDER-WORLD." All the countless mysteries so long hidden in the bowels of the earth will be laid bare to you, and the light of a keen intellect will be flashed upon scenes on which no pen has ever before been engaged. Look out, then, for this great new story, which will record the astonishing adventures of the gallant young Prince Boldwin in search of the charming Princess Rosenblume in regions that have never before been explored by the most daring fancy. We call upon you all, as true friends and loyal Budgetiers, to make this great announcement known, and to prepare all your friends for the appearance of this wonderful romance.

"THE UNDER-WORLD"

will begin in our next number but one. Look for it; expect it, dear YOUNG FOLKS, and we are sure that your curiosity will be amply gratified and your expectations more than fulfilled.

But there, we have had enough of this desultory gossip for one day, and it is now time to introduce our customary round of varieties.

We are going to tell you something about snow. You may, perhaps, wonder how ever we could think of such a thing in this broiling weather. But it is not so wonderful, after all; for when we go about now with the beads of perspiration standing upon our forehead, longing for the lightest breeze to cool our relaxed frame, we naturally think of the things which we would at present consider most agreeable. Our great Shakespeare said:

"In winter I no more desire a rose
Than look for snow 'mid May's new-fangled shows."

or something very like that. We are not like Shakespeare, however, and so we may be allowed to say that we would not at all object to a slight sprinkling of snow this very hour. Of course we cannot expect to get all that we desire, and we daresay it would not be at all well for us if we could; but since we cannot have snow in reality, we may be permitted to cool our thoughts, at least, by thinking of it. We fear we may have said some hard things last winter about Jack Frost. If so, we really beg dear old Jack's pardon; for now our opinion of him is altered very much, and we think him a very worthy fellow. As a proof of our sincerity in this, we choose for the first scrap at "Our Party" to-day this little notice of

RED SNOW.

This is a phenomenon which is frequently observed in the Polar regions, and has occasionally been met with in the Alps and in Scotland. Captain Ross discovered, on the shore of Baffin's Bay, a range of cliffs extending for eight miles' which were covered with red snow of a brilliant hue, and sometimes as much as twelve feet in depth. The cause of the appearance was a puzzle to men of science, as well as to the observers, until careful examination with the microscope revealed that it was due to the presence among the snow of a very minute plant, which has been called by Sir William Hooker *Palmella nivalis*.

That is a curious fact, and we cannot help thinking that we would, just now, like to be collecting a great lot of specimens of that very minute plant which has been called by Sir William Hooker *Palmella nivalis*. What do you think, dear boys and girls?

But if that would be pleasant, we will just ask you to say how much more "jolly" it would be to share in the cool luxuries enjoyed by

BABIES IN LAPLAND.

To take a baby to church is in bad style; but Lapp mammas don't stay at home with their babies. The Lapps are a very religious people. They go immense distances to hear their pastors. Every missionary is sure of a large audience, and an attentive one. He can hear a pin drop—that is, should he choose to drop one himself—his congregation wouldn't make so much noise as that upon any consideration. All the babies are outside, buried in the snow. As soon as the family arrives at the little wooden church, and the reindeer is secured, the papa Lapp shovels a nice little bed in the snow, and mamma Lapp wraps baby snugly in skin and deposits it therein. Then papa piles the snow around, and the dog is left to guard it, while the parents go decorously into church. Often twenty or thirty babies lie out there in the snow, and yet they never suffocate or freeze—the hardened little creatures! Our own soft little pink-and-white atoms would hardly fare so well.

Just fancy being buried over head and ears in delicious snow! But then there is a drawback, you see. It might not agree with us, or with the wee, tender little morsel which mamma kisses and fondles so lovingly. Indeed, we wonder how it is that colds and rheumatics, and a great many more of the ills that flesh is heir to, do not make baby-life in Lapland far more uncomfortable than it is.

We daresay some of you YOUNG FOLKS in your play hours have witnessed or taken part in a scene like this:

PLAYING HOUSEKEEPING.

"Jack," screamed a bright-eyed, golden-haired, fair-faced little girl of not more than six summers, to her younger brother, who had dumped himself under the wall, where he was digging sand with a strip of shingle; "Jack, you good-for-nothing little scamp, you are the torment of my life! Come right into the house, this minute, or I'll take the very hide off'm you! Come in, I say!"

"Why, Totty," exclaimed her father, who chanced to come up at that moment, "what in the world are you saying? Is that the way you talk to your little brother?"

"Oh, no, papa," answered the child, promptly, and with an innocent smile. "We were playing keep-house, and I am Jack's mamma, and I was talking to him just as mamma talked to me this morning. I never really beat him, as mamma does me sometimes."

There is more than mere amusement in that little story, because it conveys a lesson which mothers or other people who have the charge of children would do well to remember. Do not speak rudely or harshly to the little ones. They will copy your language and your manners, and if these be faulty they will reproduce your faults.

Several of our friends have written to us asking for information on various subjects; and as we found that the replies required would take up too much space in our Letter-box, and as they may be of general interest, we give them under the head of

EXPERIMENTS AND RECIPES.

TO MAKE A CHEAP GALVANIC BATTERY.

An outer cell of glazed earthenware must be procured (an ordinary gallipot will do). Within this must be placed a cylinder of amalgamated zinc, within this a pot of porous earthenware, and lastly a rod of carbon, which can be obtained at any respectable optician's. The porous cell is filled with strong nitric acid, and the outer glazed cell with dilute sulphuric (six volumes of water to one of sulphuric acid). A copper wire connected to the carbon rod will form the positive terminal, and a copper wire connected to the zinc will determine the negative terminal. When high battery power is desired, any number of these elements may be joined together, taking care to connect the carbon of one element with the zinc of the next, and so on. To amalgamate zinc, the metal should be dipped in muriatic acid, and rubbed with mercury.

TO TAKE GREASE FROM THE LEAVES OF BOOKS.

After having warmed the paper stained with grease, wax, oil, or any fat body whatever, take as much of it out as possible by means of blotting paper. Then dip a small brush in the essential oil of well rectified spirits of turpentine, heated almost to ebullition (for when cold it acts very weakly), and draw it gently over both sides of the paper, which must be kept warm. This operation must be repeated as many times as the quantity of the fat body imbibed by the paper, or the thickness of the paper may render necessary. When the greasy substance is entirely removed, recourse may be had to the following method to restore the paper to its former whiteness, which is not completely restored by the first process. Dip another brush in highly-rectified spirits of wine, and draw it in like manner over the place which was stained; and particularly round the edges, to remove the border, that would still present a stain. By employing these means with proper caution, the spot will totally disappear, the paper will assume its original whiteness, and if the process has been employed on a part written on with common ink, or printed with printer's ink, it will experience no alteration.

We have here a little scrap that conveys some information which we are sure will interest our little lady readers a great deal. We cannot give it a better title than that of the

LANGUAGE OF COLOURS.

The French hold that violet is analagous to friendship, blue to love, as suggested by blue eyes and azure sky. A bunch of violets would, therefore, tell a lady's suitor that friendship is all that he has a right to expect. Red figures ambition; indigo, the spirit of rivalry; green, the love of change, fickleness; white, unity, universality; black, favouritism. In addition to the seven primitive colours, grey indicates power; brown, prudery; pink, modesty; silver-grey (semi-white), feeble love; lilac (semi-violet) feeble friendship; pale pink, false shame.

Under the head of

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

we continue our papers on

CRICKET.

We have already described the duties of the wicket-keeper, long-stop, and point, and we will now briefly describe the parts which the remaining eight members of a full cricket team should play in the game.

SHORT-SLIP.

This player stands a few yards behind the wicket on the off side. This position is usually given to the bowlers, because it does not require much running. The balls come in very sharply when the bowling is swift, and the person occupying this position has to watch very attentively, or he runs great risk of receiving the ball in his face. It is also his duty to back up the wicket-keeper, and to take his place at the wicket when that functionary is running after the ball.

COVER-POINT.

This player stands some distance behind *point*, to prevent a second run. The sharper the bowling is, the squarer he should stand. He must also be particular in backing up, as it lies in his power to prevent many an overthrow.

LONG-SLIP

Performs the same duties and occupies the same position with regard to *slip* as the last-mentioned field does to *point*. He should, when he can, back up *long-stop*, and save a second run.

LONG-ON

Stands deep on the on side. When the bowling is very swift, he can take the place of mid-wicket-on, as a ball in such a case is seldom hit fair, either on the on or off side. He should be a good catch, a good thrower, and very swift on his legs.

LEG.

This player stands about the same distance behind the wicket on the on side as *long-on* does before it. He should possess a quick eye and a great deal of activity. Leg-hits, after touching the ground, usually turn off in quite a different direction from what one would expect. *Leg*, should, therefore, try to get them before they pitch, or else be careful in running to meet them.

MID-WICKET, ON AND OFF,

Stand half-way between the long-fields and the striker's wicket. As many catches come to these parts of the field, they should be very sharp and active, and try to prevent the ball going past them.

THIRD MAN UP.

In very swift bowling the *long-on* often takes this position. He stands between *point* and *short-slip* in a direct line with the bowling-crease, and at a distance of about twelve yards.

And now, having described the position and the particular duties of each member of the eleven, we must leave the subject for the present. At our next "Party," however, we will return to it, and give the principal laws by which this excellent game is governed.

Once more we turn to our young poets for relief from the fatigue of our position. One of your favourite "Party" minstrels will kindly take the post of entertainer for a while, and will engage our attention with a wise little song, which he has fantastically addressed

TO THOSE WHOM IT FITS.

Ah, deem not friendship all is false,
Because some friend untrue may prove.
As well condemn the homestead fire
That, crackling, cheers the hearth of love,
Because that element can spread
Death and desolation dread.

As well condemn that plant as vile,
Which can a deadly poison free,
Forgetting that the self-same flower
Gives also honey to the bee.
All those who thus probe joys for woes,
Grasp the thorn, but leave the rose.

EDWIN S. HOPE.

Thank you, dear EDWIN; but there is an error in this little piece which, we trust, you will not be angry if we point out. The leading idea expressed in the first and second line appears to have been forgotten in the remainder of the piece. You should have returned to it in the second stanza instead of pursuing your similes so far that at the conclusion of the poem it requires an effort of the mind to discover to what they refer. For lyric poetry, study and analyze the most polished of our lyrists, Thomas Moore.

OUR YOUNG FOLK'S LETTER-BOX

Now calls for attention, and it is so crowded with correspondence that we cannot afford to waste any of our space in unnecessary comments upon its contents. Let us then get to business at once. Our first letter is good enough to be read aloud:

London, June 17, 1876.

Dear Editor,—I have been a reader of the *Budget* for about three years, and have never yet met with *any* periodical that can be compared to it—*i.e.*, of the same kind.

The stories are excellent. "Bluebell Vane" has already roused my curiosity (I own it does not take much to do that), and "Frank Howard" has done the same. "Achilles" especially I like, and am ready to welcome his successor, "Odysseus."

The "Party" is "stunning." Messrs. Clarke, Pinder, Croger, Hope, and Co. are really very clever, and deserve the praise they get. I do not seem to be possessed of a "poetic genius" myself; however, I may *still* live to be a "shining star" in that line. Who knows?

Will you be so good as to tell me (1) on what day of the week the 12th April, '61, fell; (2) what is the difference between epic and lyric poetry; and (3) to which class does Pope belong?—Fare thee well, dear Editor,

VINCENT MORENO.

Many thanks. That is a candid and sensible letter, dear VINCENT, and it gives us pleasure to observe how cheerfully you recognize the merits of our young contributors. If your ambition aims at poetic fame, we assure you that you have our good wishes, and we will be very happy indeed, to hail the first ray of the future "shining star." The 12th day of April, 1861, fell upon Friday. Epic poetry is lofty, high-toned, heroical, and an epic poem is one in which a great story is told, as in the "Paradise Lost." Lyric poetry is so called because it was formerly chaunted or sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, and it is that which is composed so that it may be adapted to music. Moore and Burns are good exponents of lyric poetry. Pope has written both epic and lyric, but the character of his genius, in our opinion, is decidedly lyrical.

Our friend CROGER sends us another of his quaint communications—

Dear Editor,—Whilst routing out my books
And odds and ends, to clean them from the grime
Which, tho' you hide them, in the course of time
Collects on such, I pulled from out their nooks—
Where they had lain for many years—a lot of
Greasy scraps, which I did never wot of.

Some, of course, I threw upon the fire,
As they were most disgraceful 'tempts at wit;
But one on which my critic gaze alit
Was worthy of a fate a little higher—
At least, I thought so, when I did remember
I was fourteen when my poetic ember

Was fanned into a flame just bright enough
To make me pen the few lines that
I now enclose for you; but at
My present age the merit were not quite enough
My tetchy satisfaction's face to earn—it
Were more likely I should promptly burn it!

Yet still I think there might a little benefit
Be gained by some one if they could peruse it;
Therefore it is I hope you'll not refuse it,
But give it your best thought. Yet then, if it
Should not prove worthy, why, I will not ask—it
Were just as like to help fill your waste-basket.

And now, I think, enough of this I've written,
Wherefore at once I will my length diminish;
But I must yet, ere I proceed to finish—
One word pronounce just like a true-born Briton:
Ta-ta, cher Editeur! Je serai toujours
Votre grand et petit ami, F. J. CROGER.

What do you think of this correspondent, young people? Is he not incorrigible? Well, we suppose we must let him follow the bent of his nature, which is to be odd—decidedly odd, and, at the same time, strikingly original. That last character is the grand recommendation of all this correspondent's productions, and a more rare or more valuable quality they could hardly possess in these days of universal imitation and intellectual servility. Thank you, FREDERICK J. The verses alluded to in your letter are declined, because, in their present state, they are unsuitable. That exclamation in the fifth staza is too suggestive of profanity. You may think we are over-fastidious; but remember that our paper is prepared with a view to the entertainment of YOUNG FOLKS. If you alter or re-write that stanza, we will use the piece with pleasure. The first word in the double acrostic on "Sphinx" is misspelled. The rhyming preface is, of course, useless, since without the book for which it was written it has no meaning. "Nothing in Particular" is declined. Why not try something new, rather than re-write the old pieces? Your fertile fancy is not exhausted, we are sure. But, remember, we cannot use anything, however good it may be, which is not also fit to be placed in the hands of a child.

R. BROWN.—Thanks. We would gladly have used your letter had your information been a little more clear and more practically useful. You tell a boy or girl who desires to possess a fresh-water aquarium to "procure some fresh-water plants—such as cress, pond-weed, duck-week, water-thyme, forget-me-not, stone-wort, and awl-wort," to which you add, "procure some minnow, gudgeon, snails, and shell-fish. If you like you can get some small water-beetles, water-spiders, eels, caddis-worms, small lizards, tadpoles, frogs, stickle-backs, and gold-fish." There is not a particle of instruction in all this, young friend; and there is a considerable deal of nonsense.

FRITZ BRAUN (Formby.)—We have carefully examined your contributions, and we have great pleasure in bearing our testimony to the very unusual merit they possess. Yet we fear that many of them must be excluded from our pages for no other reason than that they are too long. "The Fairies' Revel" is a pleasing bit of descriptive writing, but it is not so vigorous as "The Wind," nor so fresh in conception as "The Letter-box." The little poem entitled "The Old Oak Tree" is filed for insertion; but the fate of the longer pieces must be decided by the demands which our weekly programme will make upon our "Party" space.

We must request the great bulk of our correspondents to seek replies to their favours in

SHORT ANSWERS TO SHORT LETTERS.

FRANK TEBBS *(Kingston)—Many thanks for your kind letter, and for the batch of useful contributions with which you have favoured us. We purpose using your article on the "Sphinx," although it is scarcely consistent with our usual practice to introduce pieces of such length at our "Weekly Party;"* A. M. *(Glasgow)—We are deeply gratified to learn that our dear little journal affords you so much pleasure. We have already given directions for the cleaning of kid gloves; but as the recipe appeared some considerable time ago, we gladly repeat it for you: First run a strong thread through the opposite sides of each glove, close to the wrist binding, and leave it about a quarter of a yard long in a loop, by which to hang the gloves up to dry. This done, prepare a strong lather of curd soap with milk; water will do, but milk is much better. A very small quantity of liquid will suffice. Having prepared the lather, put one glove on the hand, and apply it by means of a shaving brush or a piece of soft flannel, carrying the strokes downwards, from the wrist to the tips of the fingers. Continue this process till the dirt disappears, then dab the glove with a clean soft towel until all the soap is removed. Take off the glove, blow into it to open all the fingers, and by means of the loop already made, hang it up to dry in a shady but airy place. The loops should be fixed on two pegs, or by strings fastened to a line in such a manner as to keep the sides of the glove apart while drying. Pursue the same course with the other glove, and when dry, they will have regained their original colour, and be smooth, glossy, soft, and of the proper shape. We hope other readers who read this answer, and to whom this information may be useful, will bear these directions in mind, as we cannot often afford space for such long replies;* A. SUTCLIFFE *(Todmorden)—Thanks, your cons. will do very well; one of them will immediately appear;* T. DAVIES *(Pyle)—We are obliged to you for several favours, and though we cannot accept all your contributions, we can appreciate the friendliness which prompts you to offer them. Your acrostic is passed for insertion;* W. F. BERNTSEN *(Cardiff)—We thank you, dear boy, for your friendly letter, and for the large batch of contributions you so kindly send. We have not yet had time to read your riddles; but they will receive our best attention in a few days;* JOHN GRUBB *(Hythe)—There certainly is not any harm in your writing to us, and therefore you have not done anything for which you need apologize. We are always pleased to hear from our friends, and we can only repeat to you what we have already said to thousands—i.e., write to us freely and without restraint whenever you think it advisable or necessary to do so. We need not, we are sure, tell you that this permission does not give our correspondents a license to consume our time by sending us meaningless and frivolous letters;* CHARLES A. ELDRIDGE—*You see another story by the same favourite is now in progress. No, we do not think there will be a sequel to that story, and we fear your suggestion about a re-issue of the "Young Folk's" from the very first number is altogether impracticable. We regret that we must decline the present batch of cons. You should be more particular in your spelling, and you should also write the letter I as a capital when it stands alone;* WALTER LYNCH *(Dublin)—From all, or we might better say from the little we can learn on the subject of your question, we are inclined to believe that the poem is wholly imaginative;* YOUNG CARDIGAN *(Birmingham)—You have written us a very flattering letter, young friend, and we have also to thank you for your suggestion; but we do not think it would be advisable to act upon it. We do not like to make our stories of merely local interest, but to have their scope so general, and so inclusive, that all may find in them something to enlist their sympathies. Any honour done to our English youth is no less done to the Welsh, as members of the same great family;* TRIO *(Sunderland)—We thank you for your good intentions, dear boys; but you have much to learn before you can write a story we could print in "Our Young Folk's:"* J. B. MULLIGAN—*Thanks. Your cons. will be duly attended to;* WAL KIMPTON *(Leicester)—We sincerely thank you for the services you have rendered us, and we beg you to convey our acknowledgments to your young friend. As to the verses, we must say that we like them very much, and if they are* extempore *lines, as we understand you to say, they are singularly meritorious. Of this, however, we entertain serious doubts, and somehow, they appear to us like an echo of something we have heard before, though when or where we cannot tell;* AGAMEMNON—*Thanks, but the anagram is not up to our standard;* CHILD OF THE SUN *(Manchester)—We cannot but admit that your persistent efforts deserve success; but we must also say that the merit of your productions is not equal to the energy and industry expended upon them. "A Faded Leaf" is declined because it is marred by faults which we have already particularized, and which we really begin to regard as characteristic. "Pleasuring" is the best thing you have sent us for a long time, and that piece stands some chance of obtaining a place. That story of the furniture is even better, because it is told with greater simplicity and ease; but you should have known that it was utterly unsuitable for "Our Weekly Party." The same objection holds against your prose contribution, and we may here remark that several of our young contributors fall into a similar error. We frequently receive contributions which are, in a literary view, as good as we require them to be, but we are compelled to decline them because the writers seem to forget that they are writing for a journal which is, before all else, a young folk's magazine. As we know you to be an old and true friend, however, we will try to procure a place for "Too Bad" in another publication. We have some influence with the editor of the "S. P.," and we will recommend the trifle to him;* JAMES MURRAY *(Liverpool)—Thanks, dear James. You have long been admitted to the fellowship of our "Party." Two of the cons. are passed for insertion;* PRINCESS BUTTERCUP—*Your diamond will do, fair Princess;* PETER WRIGHT *(Glasgow)—We thank you very much for your suggestion, dear Peter, and we will urge its adoption with all our power when anything of the kind is proposed again. We quite agree with you in thinking that it would give more general satisfaction;* KING PIPPIN—*Your letter got into the wrong hands by some means, and was answered in the* BIG *"Budget," a fortnight ago;* JOSEPH T. COX—*One so young should not be troubled with neuralgia. We think it is due to the east winds which prevailed so much at the time you wrote, and we think the advance of finer weather will have removed the pains ere this;* A. LONERGAN—*Many words in your contribution are mis-spelled, and we must therefore decline it with thanks;* S. LAMBERT—*We thank you for your very kind letter, and regret that the puzzles are not up to publishing mark;* SUBSCRIBER *(Manchester)—We are sorry that we could not have acknowledged your letter earlier. Your question should be addressed to "Weekly Budget," the correspondence editor of which paper would give it immediate attention;* BLUEBELL—*Thanks for your kind letter. We think the verses are very creditable to a young lady of your age; but they are not quite up to our standard for publication;* E. R. BERESFORD—*We have a letter on hand which gives a little information on the subject, and we publish it in the present number;* C. H. GREY—*We are glad to know that there is now no reason why you should fulfil your threat. We cannot send gifts unless the tickets which alone can give any person a title to them, are sent to us. Whoever sends us the ticket bearing the number you name, will receive a gift of five shillings;* JOHN BANKS *(Morecambe)—Many thanks for your kind letter, dear John. We regret that we cannot use your verses, as they deal with an anecdote which is well known to almost everybody. They must, therefore, go to feed that terrible monster which appears to have gained a very bad character of late;* A. I. S. M.—*Thanks; we will endeavour to find a place for your puzzle on our back page;* CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER *We are really unable to spare a column for such a purpose. We think you are likely to grow a couple of inches yet. The best way to improve your writing is by constant and careful practice, and the imitation of good models;* AMELIA M. V. *(Cork)—Many thanks, dear Amelia. We will try to make room for one of your cons. in an early number;* C. LOVELL—*Thanks. The rebus is not good enough; but the other con. will obtain a place;* JACKDAW *(Dublin)—Although we have a great number of verbal charades upon our file, we will try to make place for one of those you send us. We are thankful for your kind letter, and you may be assured that we will do all in our power to retain the good opinion with which you have already favoured us;* WATER-SPRITE *(Gt. Grimsby)—We thank you for your kind letter, and we cannot but admire your philosophy in looking upon your disappointment as you do. We cannot think how your former letter came to be overlooked; but, as you say, we do not think a single omission like this should expose us to much blame when it is remembered how many letters we have to read and answer each week;* R. R. VARRAN *(Forest Hill)—Many thanks for your very pleasant and gratifying letter. It gives us great satisfaction to know that you enjoy our "Parties" so much, and we trust you will never find them less agreeable than they now are. We do not know the price of such a bicycle. We enrol you amongst the number of our friends with great pleasure;* R. BATTY—*Thanks. The story, or the bit of a story you send is not good enough for our columns; and, besides, we cannot entertain contributions written with a lead pencil. You should always use ink when writing to us;* JOHN S. HENDERSON *(Fermoy)—The verses you send us, and to which you attach your name, were composed by Mr. Thomas Pinder, and appeared in our "Party" only four weeks ago. This is the most impudent plagiarism, or piece of literary theft, that has come under our notice for a long time. Forsake such evil ways, young man;* PRINCE CHARLIE—*Many thanks for your kind letter and the cons. you enclose. The latter will be attended to in due course;* OCCASIONAL READER *(Edenbridge)—We thank you for your evident desire to serve us, and we admire your candour in telling us that some of your cons. were not original; but we must decline them for that very reason. We require all the riddles to be composed by those who send them;* VIOLET *(Goose Green)—Many thanks for your nice little letter, dear Violet. We have added your name to the long list of our "Party" guests, and we hope you may continue to enjoy the entertainment we provide for many years to come. Your cons. are accepted, but as we have such a large number on hand, several weeks must pass before any of them can appear in print;* DON QUIXOTE *(Edinburgh)—We regret that we cannot at present afford space for the proper treatment of such a subject; but when the present great pressure upon our columns is somewhat lightened, we may take up that matter for your information. Your cons. are under consideration;* JAMES RICHARDSON *(Liverpool)—Your cons. are to hand, and are accepted with thanks;* JACOB VALENTINE—*We are glad to learn that our journal affords you so much pleasure. The answers are correct;* H. A. BAKER *(Hoxton)—You have quite mistaken the meaning of the puzzle, although we took great pains to put it in the clearest possible language;* THOS. TYSON *(Renishaw)—We thank you for your kind and gratifying letter. As to the subject referred to in the latter part of it, we have but to say that we must bear the brunt of people's opinion. We are confident in the rectitude of our own deeds and intentions, and therefore will not be likely to sink under the unjust suspicions of narrow minds;* BESSIE *(Brentwood)—We thank you very much for your kind letter, and we are, indeed, sorry that you have not gained a prize. We must be just, however, and if we had awarded a present to any person for a solution that was not entirely correct, our readers might fairly charge us with showing favour to one more than to others. This we cannot do, for we consider ourselves under equal obligations to all our readers;* J. HINDLE *(Lancaster)—You will already have seen that your solution of the puzzle is far from being correct;* C. W. BURRILL—*Thanks for your approval. We do not find the cons. up to our standard. Give your rabbits plenty of bran and oats, a few cabbage leaves, and an occasional piece of carrot. They should do very well on this diet, combined with cleanliness;* VIOLETTA VALERY—*You can write a cryptograph in a variety of ways, and the particular plan must depend upon your own taste and ingenuity. Fix upon a number of signs to represent the letters of the alphabet, and write your words in these signs instead of the ordinary. If you wish to correspond with any person in cryptography, your correspondent must have a copy of the characters in which you design to write, which will serve as a key to the mystery. A single sign might be made to stand for some words of frequent occurrence, such as* and, but, the, *and others;* JOHN SMYTH *(Rutherglen)—a selection from your cons. will appear in due time; but we must request your favourable consideration if they do not appear for some weeks, as we have a great number already on hand;* JAMES F. MARR *(Newcastle-on-Tyne)—Thanks; the con. will do very well;* FLORA—*We hope you read the little paragraph in our last "Party" but one, in which we explained about the numbers. We cannot afford space at present for the information about the flowers; but we will probably make it the subject of a short article at an early "Party;"* ANNA L.—*We thank you for your kindness in forwarding us your little composition; but we are compelled to decline it, as it is not quite up to our standard;* HARRY F. W.—*We will do our best to oblige you; but we have a great number on hand;* SPARTAN *(Worcester)—Many thanks. We do not find your rebuses up to the mark, but the other con. will find a place sooner or later;* W. L. WALKER *(Belfast)—We thank you much for your very kind letter. The verses, however, are not up to our standard. We like the second best, and we cannot but think that you are more familiar with the appearance of summer in the town than in the country;* H. E. ODLAM *(Bath)—Oh, no, you have not said anything at all wrong. Yes, all the poetry in the "Party" is really composed by our readers, and we think with you that it does them great credit. We cannot encourage you to hope that we would accept a story from you. We are sorry you were not one of the successful ticket-holders;* JOSEPHINE F. *(Liverpool)—We do not think you at all tiresome, dear Josephine, and we do, indeed, thank you for the services you have rendered us. We would have thought that a person who sells so many of our papers weekly would not have been compelled to spend the very last penny of her pocket-money in order to procure a copy—eh, Josephine?* L. WAINWRIGHT *(Worcester)—Thanks for your kind letter. We will try to save some of your cons. from that dreadful fate;* ALFRED GREENFIELD *You are quite an old friend, dear Alfred, and as we always like to hear from old friends, of course we are glad to hear from you. It is gratifying to learn that our stories afford you so much pleasure;* WILLY DAVIS—*You will have read the explanation given a fortnight ago;* PATRICK DRISCOLL *(Cardiff)—The preceding answer applies to your query;* ANOTHER LOYAL BUDGETIER *(Stepney)—Your letter is very kind and flattering, and we thank you for it accordingly. We cannot accept such a signature as that you have chosen, and to such of your cons. as we may find worthy of publication, we will append the word "Loyalty;"* STANLEY *We hope you have already found reason to alter your opinion;* CONSTANT READER *(Uppingham)—A mistake, as you have perhaps learned already;* ELAINE MARIE—*Accept our thanks for your kind and very intelligent letter. Our authors will be gratified by your approbation, we are sure, and for ourself we can at once declare that it gives us great pleasure indeed. We think we will not publish any more such stories, for we find they create more dissatisfaction than anything else;* E. E. BURRILL—*You should write to the secretary of the institution, who would reply to you, or send you their circular;* T. GOSS *(Birkenhead)—Any chemist will supply you with spirits of wine, or you may procure it at an oil and colourman's shop. We do not know the exact price; but it is not dear;* PELICAN *(Wisbech)—As it is not our fortune to be a mechanic, we have not a practical knowledge of the subject, nor have we been able to glean the information from any of the sources at our command. We will bear your question in mind, however, and should we acquire the knowledge within a reasonable time, we will communicate it under the head "Experiments and Recipes;"* LACROSSE *(Belfast)—We are unable to inform you with certainty, but from the rapidly-increasing popularity of the game, we are led to believe that all implements required in it might be obtained in either country, and of any tradesman dealing in the materials of out-door sports;* EVIE AND ERNEST *(Brighton)—We are sorry to observe that you have not yet learned the art of being original. We hope you will bear your promise in mind, and, acting up to your resolution, do better next time;* T. U. OPENSHAW *(Oakencleugh)—We are sorry to inform you that we have found it necessary to reject by far the greater number of your cons.*

Now for our riddlers; a first upon the list we are glad to hail our clever young friend F. J. CROGER.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.
No. 1.
Cross Words.

Out in the sweet sunshine—the warm, bright rays—
I wander me across the breezy first;
As with my flutt'ring hair the zephyr plays,
And on its wings each streaming tress is nurst.

The air is laden with a sweet perfume—
The zephyr breathes abroad the cool, fresh scent,
Which seems the second of each vernal bloom
That blossomed when the king hibernal went.

'Tis summer—sweetest season of sweet third—now,
And blossoms bloom upon each fruitful spray;
All bright and beautiful glad Nature's brow,
No more's the fourth in niveous array.

Foundation Words.

Down in the dell the clove-pink's winsome face
Cheers with its hue and soft ambrosia sheds,
That, roaming with the zephyr through the place,
The sweet aroma of the second weds.

The downy first collects around each stem,
So as—when naught the tender blooms can save,
And winds hyemal visit each of them
With ruthless death—to form a gentle grave.

But now the season estival doth reign,
And cheers to gladsomeness the drooping soul;
It bids each bud to blossom forth again,
And welcome its princess—the lovely whole.

F. J. CROGER.

ENIGMA.
No. 2.

I'm neither flat nor round nor square,
In fact, no shape at all;
Yet here and there, and everywhere
I dwell with great and small.

I'm held within a narrow space,
Yet free from all restraint;
Am often subject to disgrace,
But never make complaint.

By nature gentle as a lamb
I soothe the fever'd brain,
Kissing the cheek that's pale and wan
Till vigour comes again.

Yet there are times when I am forced
Into a furious rage.
Then few, however they may boast,
Dare war with me to wage.

I am a universal friend,
Though made by man a foe;
And could my being have an end,
To ruin all would go.

I'm often poisoned, yet not killed,
Though others then I kill;
But even thus, I'm not self-willed,
The fault is with man still.

As long as heaven o'er earth shall reign,
'Tis certain I shall live;
But now, already made too plain,
No more description give.

J. L., Lambeth.

NUMERICAL CHARADES.

No. 3.—I consist of ten letters. My 1, 7, 4, 8, 10, is to jest or play; my 9, 5, 7, 3, 9, is a favourite article at the tea-table; my 8, 7, 1, 6, is a title of courtesy; my 4, 2, 8, 6, is a sweet-smelling flower; and my whole is a word meaning Republicanism of feeling.—ANON.

No. 4.—I consist of thirteen letters. My 13, 12, 6, 11, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 2, 13, is in English town; my 8, 11, 7, 3, 2, 13, 5, is an Irish town; my 3, 5, 12, 13, is a Spanish province; my 2, 10, 2, 6, 11, 2. is a town in Portugal; my 7, 8, 13, 12, 4, 5, 6, is a German state; my 4, 5, 13, 11, 13, 2, 6, is a town in the Isle of Wight; and my whole is an English town.—G. WEBB.

No. 5.—I am a word of ten letters My 7, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, is rubbish; my 1, 8, 4, is a vehicle; my 3, 8, 4, 5, 7, is a girl's name; my 1, 2, 6, 7, is a lock of hair; my 7 2, 9, 5, is a river in England; my 4, 2, 6, 9, is to consume by fire; my 10, 8, 6, 9, is to mend; my 4, 5, 8, 6, is a wild beast; my whole is a county in England.—LILLIAN E.

CONUNDRUMS.
No. 6.

1. Why is an idea like a large expanse of water?
MURACS MURAH.
2. When can whiskey be said to be in trouble?
3. What is the difference between an admiral and a sea gull set at liberty?
4. Why does a fashionable young lady attract the attention of the people?
5. When does a foolish gardener become wise?
6. Why is a bookseller well attended to?
7. Why are a number of hens like barrels of ale on draught?

W. J. B. ROSCREA.

CENTRAL DELETIONS.
No. 7.

Begin with the smallest, progress then unshaken,
But take out my centre for fear you're mistaken.
J. L., Lambeth.

No. 8.

From a woman's name the centre take out,
And a man's name you'll have without doubt.
H. POUN., Chippenham.

OMEGRAM.
No. 9.

As wandering through a charming whole,
Its beauties burst upon my view;
Change tail, and you at once discern
In what is oft indulged by you.

G. GRANT.

DOUBLE VERBAL CHARADE.
No. 10.

My firsts are found in Jericho,
As you will plainly see;
My seconds in all people are,
Whoever they may be;
My thirds are found in zebra,
Of this I have no doubt;
My fourths are always found in beer,
Though they never are in stout;
My fifths are in the market seen,
I would have you understand;
My sixths are in the hillside,
Though never in the sand;
My sevenths are found in Canada,
The truth to you I'll tell;
And my eighths are found in Hannah,
But never in Isabel.
Now from these words the letters take,
And quick y write them down:
Two Christian names you then will find
Of Biblical renown.

A. SUTCLIFFE, Todmorden.

ACROSTIC.
No. 11.
Cross Words.

These fish, when stewed, are very good,
And very often found in mud;
Another fish this is, you'll find,
A fish most vicious of its kind;
Of this battle you must have heard,
In 1815 it occurred;
Now put this down in the next place,
Part of the foot you then will trace;
Last is a river all should know,
For in Africa it does flow.

Foundation Words.

Read the primals and the finals
Of the cross words above,
A riddler they will show to you,
Whom all of us should love.

J. RICHARDSON, Liverpool.

DECAPITATIONS.
No. 12.

What's used on ice if you behead,
A Christian name you'll have instead.
H. POUND.

No. 13.—I am a musical instrument; behead, I am a strong drink.—FIRE EATER, Essex.

No. 14.

The ivy round the noble oak
Does fondly this around;
Behead and you will quickly see
A seafish will be found.

G. GRANT.

ACROSTICAL DIAMOND PUZZLE.
No. 15.

Ever in this a vowel you'll view;
Same as a monkey is this to you;
However, third's a month of the year;
Oh! how can you this, without much fear?
Put a consonant for last, I wis—
Enjoy yourselves now in guessing this.

J. RICHARDSON, Liverpool.

CHARADE.
No. 16.

My first, I am unlike my last;
My whole among great men is classed.
S. W. G. ADKINSON, Hull.

GEOGRAPHICAL REBUS.
No. 17.

X. Y. Z., London.

PUZZLE.
No. 18.

Join half an acho and half a cure,
And get a well-known land measure.
F. TEBBS.

TRANSPOSITIONS.
No. 19.

A piece of flesh if you transpose,
Five or six horses it will disclose;
Transpose again, and you will see
Your companion, in verity.

H. COCKING.

No. 20.

What means prudence, transposed by you,
A public sale will bring to view.
D. WALES, Pyle.

CURTAILMENTS.
No. 21.

My whole over the sea has sailed
Bearing itself, when once curtailed.
F. TEBBS.

No. 22.

When whole, a small word I am,
Oft used in measurement;
My last letter take away,
I'm a river—not the Trent.

H. COCKING.

LOGOGRIPHS.
No. 23.

High up in the moonlit sky
On any cloudless night,
My whole you'll easily see—
So small, and yet so bright.

A kind of liquid pitch
You'll see, if you behead;
'Tis not so dear as paint,
And is therefore used instead.

Reverse, and 'twill, I think,
A kind of vermin show;
It is the farmer's plague,
For it spoils his corn, I trow.

Transpose, and a name for science
Will be at once proclaimed;
Transpose again, and then behead,
And a preposition's named.

F. J. WILSON, Forest Gate.

No. 24.

A tree of fragrant smelling
In whole comes to your view;
Behead, transpose, and surely
You will find the *Budget* do.

G. GRANT.

No. 25.—Whole, I am a name; behead, and I'm part of the body; again behead and transpose, and I'm to split.—SEMPER IDEM, Belfast.

CHARADES.
No. 26.

A kind of wine for first put down;
The lord of creation second;
My third will be a little tea;
Fourth is a vowel reckoned.
My whole is a bag you may not possess,
Dear riddler just try the answer to guess

C. BATLEY, Hurworth-on-Tees.

No. 27.

Look!—look! in yonder meadow, bright and green,
My first, gay, shy, and active, may be seen;
He gambols over hillock, rock, and plain,
Just stays awhile to rest, then off again.

Hark!—hark! my second sounds far o'er the earth,
To tell a tale of sadness or of mirth;
It tells us when the glad New Year appears,
Or when a soul has left this vale of tears.

'Neath hedgerows prim, or in the open ground,
My whole, a pretty fragile flower, is found;
On stem so slender, and with petals blue,
Its name, dear friends, is to be told by you.

MURACS MURAH.

HIDDEN RIVERS.

No. 28.—1. Kate, if you go, I will go too. 2. Thou sendeth rain upon the earth. 3. "Our Weekly Party" needs no recommendation. 4. How earnestly he prayed. 5. He brought some flowers to us. 6. Where is Hayti, Bertie dear? 7. The lane vaulted over the wall. 8. Did Ned win a prize? 9. That hat a gust of wind blew away.—IMPRIMATUR.

METAGRAM.
No. 29.

In forests dense you this may find,
To tame ones, please, be ever kind,
They deserve all the kindness they get;
Stubbornness to them is sometimes assigned,
But I've e'er found them docile as yet.

If now a banquet you would see,
Rehead me, and I will be
One where there's good eating and drinking;
And that you like you'll all agree,
At any rate, so I am thinking.

Now change my head again, dear friends,
And you will see at once what lends
To dough the quality of rising;
But with that change my riddle ends,
And indeed that's not surprising.

SEMPER IDEM, Belfast.

HIDDEN IRISH TOWNS.

No. 30.—1. She has been a widow nine years. 2. Will you lend me a thimble? 3. We were about to start for Keswick; lowering clouds, however, warned us to put off our departure. 4. Take Mabel out, Helen, and show her your pets. 5. It is a mile, I think, to Bradford. 6. Mamma, you have torn your dress.—LILY A., Wigan.

VERBAL CHARADES.
No. 31.

I am in gold, but not in brass;
I am in horse, but not in ass;
I am in lane, but not in street;
I am in cold, but not in heat;
I am in goat, but not in deer;
I am in brandy, but not in beer—
If you place these all aright,
An English city will come to sight.

T. F. COGAN, Drogheda.

No. 32.

One-fourth of line, one-fourth of nine,
And then one-fifth of stile;
One-fourth of post, one-fourth of host,
And last, one-fourth of Nile—
These letters, when placed aright, will name
A hero who fought for his country's fame.

F. W. WEYER, Dublin.

SQUARE WORDS.
No. 33.

A Turkish magistrate is this;
And something sour is next I wis;
We do this when to bathe we go;
And this, the last, is a thought, I know.

J. RICHARDSON, Liverpool.

No. 34.—A girl's name; midday; part of speech; a girl's name.—T. H. JACKSON, London.

No. 35.—To disguise; a chilly fit; to be certain; sharp.—H. ROSE, London.

ANAGRAM.
No. 36.

Het isphoby aws bcmnrlgaie pu teh ihgh smta,
Ehwn a egcnla no teh ccdk afr wbloe ihm eh scat;
Ish haed wmas iwht aref, dan otkih ecma shi tbhare,
"Okol fotal!" idrce a laaiso, dan vsdre imh rofm adhet.

W. W. F. AND D. M. D., Sunderland.

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

1.—Miss-I-on-Aries.
2.—"Hettie's History." Thus: Hawk, Edward, Tewkesbury, Tim Pippin, Iron, Elm, S. Holland, Hinder, Ink, Sapphire, T. Pinder, Orange, Robin, Yes.
3.—Agamemnon.
4.—Bridgewater.
5.—Havelock.
6.—Lull, bull, gull, Hull, Mull, dull.
7.—Ark, park, dark, hark, mark, shark.
8.—Eleanor. Thus: Emmeline, Letitia, Emily, Alice, Naomi, Olivia, Rachel.
9.—Ten, net.
10.—Suez, Zeus.
11.—China, chin.
12.—Boy, Bo!
13.—Benjamin Disraeli. Thus: BarD, EnnuI, NismeS, JceR, AmericA, MainE, ImperiaL, NaomI.
14.—Ball.
15.—Cause, case.
16.—Look before you leap.
17.—Gold-smith.
18.—Madam (ma'am, Adam, Ada).
19.—Intoxicating (tin, ox, I, cat, gin).
20.—Forget-me-not.
21.—Seville, Granada Thus: SlinG, ElderR, VistA, ImpugN, LeA, LiquiD, EnigmA.
22.—Glance, lance.
23.—Crow, row.
24.—Andover, Dover.
25.—Wear, ear.
26.—Brain, rain.
27.—Snail, nail.
28.—Edgar.
29.—Reserve, reverse, severe.
30.—Lead, dale, deal.
31.—Verbena.

32.—
E
O N E
M O G U L
I R E L A N D
B L A C K
A N D
D

33.—
D
T A R
M A R I E
D A R L I N G
S M I T H
E N D
G

34.—There was an old woman aged sixty-three,
Who said she would go to a spelling bee.
She went, and it is most sad to relate,
A word puzzled her, and she cracked the man's pate.

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