YOUNG FOLK'S WEEKLY BUDGET

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

VOL. IX.—No. 291.] "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit."—*Milton.* [ONE PENNY.

"As Tom-Tom's mate caught sight of Arthur and Lilia, it uttered a roar, and clung to Tom-Tom's arm as if for protection."

JEWEL-LAND;

OR, THE

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

BY UNCLE GEORGE.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A TRUANT.

THAT evening, as he had intended, Arthur devoted himself to preparing for his fishing.

This the eagle, who had before seen him fish, watched with the greatest of interest; and when at last Arthur settled himself in the chains of the ship, and determined to have his evening's fishing from there, the eagle perched itself upon the bulwarks.

But before going any farther, Arthur went round to the other side of the vessel, and unfastened a rope that hung long and loose over the side.

This he gave a gentle tug or two at, and directly after there was a commotion in the water, and the elephant-seal's head appeared, the animal making a loud barking noise.

Arthur paused for a few moments, and then went down his ladder, hesitated, but finally drew the rope a little, and the great creature swam quickly up.

"There!" said Arthur, bending down and unfastening the noose; "I am going to give you your liberty—so now come and fish for me."

In an instant—as soon as it was aware that it was free—the seal gave a rush and a bound, and dived down, came up, sported about, and sent the spray flying in all directions, till Arthur began to be afraid that his fishing would be spoiled for that night.

Fortunately, however, all this excitement was not on the fishing-side of the ship, to which Arthur now returned—Lilia bringing her work so as to sew and look on.

"Where's Tom-Tom?" she asked.

Arthur looked round, for he had not noticed the absence of the ape; but Tom-Tom was nowhere on board, and on looking shoreward he was not to be seen there either.

"He has gone to sleep under a tree somewhere," said Arthur, baiting his hook, and throwing out his line, which was carried some distance out by the tide.

In a few minutes there came a tug-tug, and Arthur felt that he had a good fish on—one which played about for some time, and then made a leap out of the water, breaking the hook away, and would have been lost, only at that moment there was a rustle of wings and a rush, and the eagle, which had been quietly watching the whole proceedings, made a sudden swoop, caught the fish, and returned with it to the deck, giving it up at once without resistance.

Arthur caught a couple more fish, and then they ceased to bite, which was all the more vexatious because they were playing about in abundance.

He tried all his different baits without effect, and was about to give up, when there was a little eddying in the water beneath him, and, gazing down, he saw that the seal had come round to that side, and was swimming rapidly beneath the water.

A moment later the silvery fish were flying out in all directions, and as he watched them he suddenly became aware that the seal was swimming towards him with a fish in its mouth.

This it gave up directly on Arthur descending into the dingy; and to his great joy, the huge creature swam off again half a dozen times, and returned with as many fish before it began to take any for itself.

The eagle, too, did its share; so that the net was well-filled, ready for their present wants, and the replenishing of the pool.

Night came, and no Tom-Tom.

The next day, and there was no ape. What had become of him was a mystery.

Arthur went ashore, and called and shouted—looked in every direction; but there was no sign of the faithful beast.

Lilia was quite in trouble when Arthur made this announcement; and now that the ape was gone, they began to find out more and more what a useful companion he had been, and what a great deal he had done for them.

All at once Lilia began to sob bitterly:

"He's killed—I know he's killed, or else, poor fellow, he is wounded, and lying waiting for us to come and see after him. Oh, Arty, let's go and see!"

The same thought had struck Arthur, but he had refrained from speaking. On hearing these words, though, he carefully loaded his gun, went to the grindstone and sharpened his axe and knife, and prepared for an expedition in search of the ape.

To Arthur's surprise, he found that Lilia had also prepared herself, and placed axe and knife in her own little belt.

"But you are not coming?" asked Arthur.

"Indeed I should be very cowardly if I let you go by yourself," said Lilia. "I shall certainly go."

Arthur made no opposition; in fact, he was glad of his sister's companionship. But he determined that he would arrange for her to be out of danger.

So, as soon as she was ready, he placed the giraffe's saddle in the dingy, with a supply of provisions. Water he did not take, because he knew the directions in which springs lay.

When all was ready, he paused for a few moments, thinking; and then he placed the pad-saddle which he had been preparing for the kangaroo also in the boat, and they started for the shore.

CHAPTER XXXII.

POOR TOM-TOM'S FATE!

As Arthur pushed the dingy off from the ship's side, the eagle uttered a loud scream from its perch upon the broken mast, and, opening its wings, seemed to glide down after them, sliding, to all appearances, easily along the air.

Almost at the same moment there was a rush and a swirl in the clear water, and the seal thrust out its proboscis-like snout, and then, in its eagerness of greeting, nearly contrived to overset the boat.

Directly after it began to play and gambol round the boat, raising such a swell that the dingy danced upon the waves, and a little more such demonstrative delight would have ended in a catastrophe.

There was great satisfaction, though, in finding the various animals they had tried to tame become such faithful followers; for the eagle circled gently round them, sending forth his wild cries, and the seal now swam steadily behind, snorting and uttering its barking noise.

On the shore, too, there was the leopard racing about in a state of the greatest excitement, ready to roll about in the sand at their feet as soon as they leaped ashore; while they had not been there many minutes before a head peered over the trees a short distance inland, and the giraffe came trotting up, closely followed by the kangaroo, which came to them in a series of flying leaps that were perfectly wonderful.

Arthur saddled the giraffe, and, placing its bridle and a stick in Lilia's hand, asked her if she could manage the gentle creature herself; and as she seemed fully confident upon this point, he left her and proceeded to saddle the kangaroo.

He had made some alterations in the saddle; but he was not satisfied with it as yet, and he meant the present only as an experimental trial.

The kangaroo, or, as they now christened it, Hopalong, stood perfectly still upon two legs and its tail, as Arthur fixed the saddle upon its back, in what he considered a good position.

Then when its master led it to a stone where he could easily mount, nothing could be more gentle and satisfactory—the animal allowing him to mount, and then ambling after the giraffe, by whose side he progressed in a series of little bounds, whose effect was anything but disagreeable to his rider.

"How do you like it, Arty?" cried Lilia, looking down from her perch high up on the giraffe's back.

"It's capital," was the reply. "Now let's go faster; and mind you keep a bright look-out right and left for Tom-Tom."

As he said these words, Arthur gave the giraffe a touch, and it went off at a respectable gallop; but when he endeavoured to follow suit with the kangaroo, it seemed to give two or three dancing bounds upon its hind legs, and then shot itself off like a piece of steel spring.

Arthur hardly knew how it happened, but the next thing he was aware of was that he was clinging very tightly to the branch of a tree which crossed the track, some twenty feet above the ground, and the kangaroo was verifying its name by hopping along at a tremendous rate, some two hundred yards away.

"This kangaroo riding don't seem to answer very well," said Arthur to himself, as he prepared to swing his legs up into the tree, and then climb down.

He was saved this trouble, however, by Lilia, who came up, anxious lest he should have been hurt; and on being assured that nothing was the matter beyond a few scratches, she guided the giraffe beneath the branch. Then the tall animal stretched out its neck to Arthur, who clung to it with arms and legs, and slid down and alighted safely upon its back, where he seated himself in the saddle in front of Lilia.

There was not much need for consideration as to which way they should go, so Arthur determined to leave it almost entirely to the giraffe and the other animals; for the leopard gambolled on in front, the eagle soared above them, and the kangaroo returned now to hop gently along by their side wherever there was room upon the track.

There were no particularly likely places to visit in search of their friend, after looking at the garden and the fishpool, from whose rocks Tom-Tom picked the limpets; so there was nothing for it but to go gently along. And this they did, seeing, to Arthur's great surprise, the traces of animals in every direction; for he had not heard them lately by night, and he could not help hoping that the creatures which visited this part of the island from their own side had been somewhat startled by the sight of what had been done in the entrance to the cave.

It was a long time since Arthur and Lilia had had an expedition into the island; and now in turn they visited the hot river, the great cascades, the swift river, the grove where the precious jewels were, and the woods where they had seen the flowers of which they made caps, the pitcher plants, and the dell where they had encountered the leopard.

No Tom-Tom—and no signs of him anywhere; so they returned completely tired out.

The next day they resumed their search as before; and this time Arthur alighted, and examined Lilia's drawing-room cave, going in some distance over the golden, sandy floor. But there was no sign of the ape.

He then went into the big tunnel, which was full of the footprints of animals, but no signs of Tom-Tom; so there was nothing for it but to seek further.

They mounted the hill where they had seen the first serpent, and the iguana; and one of the latter came hissing and sputtering out from among the trees; but the leopard took it up by the skin of the neck, and gave it a shake, lay down beside it for a few moments, and pulled it about with its paws, as a kitten might a ball, and then gave it an ignominious toss into the bushes.

Arthur now determined to go up the mountain, where the flagstaff was, thinking it possible that the ape might have gone up there, when just as they turned to descend the hill, where the woods grew dense and thick, and where the most gorgeously-tinted flowers grew, and birds built their nests, the kangaroo, which had been hopping on in front, came back with one tremendous leap.

On the instant the giraffe stretched out its long neck and peered forward uneasily, while a low, snarling growl from the leopard drew the travellers' attention to its actions.

For the hair about its neck began to bristle up, as did that along its back. It seemed to swell out with anger; and with flashing eyes, and teeth laid bare and glistening sharp and white, it began to crawl forward, with the white fur of its under-parts touching the ground.

Such signs of danger ahead were not lost upon Arthur, who slung round and cocked his gun, and then remained for a few moments watching the leopard.

"Let's go back, Arty," whispered Lilia.

"No," said Arthur, firmly, "that will never do. Always face your danger. If we go back, it is like inviting something to spring upon us at a disadvantage."

Lilia said nothing, only crouched closely behind her brother, who gently urged on the giraffe, which slowly followed the creeping leopard.

The trees here were so dense, and their foliage and branches so interlaced overhead, that the sun's rays were excluded, and they proceeded in a green twilight, through which darted golden arrows of light wherever there was a thinner arching. The gorgeous flower bells hung on either side of the track, and beneath their feet the grass was thick and long, sometimes quite hiding the leopard, whose progress was then only marked by the waving tops of the tender blades of delicate green.

Arthur was at a loss to make out what could be the danger ahead, but he had now sufficient confidence in his skill as a marksman to determine to face it out, unless it were a rhinoceros, in which case he would turn the giraffe and gallop off.

On went the leopard, growling and snarling softly, and bravely the giraffe followed, while the kangaroo, profiting by the example, hopped after them, every now and then, though, stopping short and turning round in the most comical manner to deliver a tremendous kick with one of its claw-armed hind legs at an imaginary enemy.

They went so far through the dim arch of the forest, with the undergrowth becoming more dank and the atmosphere more steamy and hot each moment, that Arthur wondered at the power of his dumb companions in detecting danger so far away; and he began to think that whatever was the peril, it had escaped without molesting them, when the eagle came skimming down the avenue over their heads, its great wings brushing the trees, and perching in a mighty cotton-wood tree, in the midst of an opening, where it began to scream, and look down into the thick grass below it, opening its beak and threatening some enemy.

Almost at the same moment, they saw the leopard make a tremendous bound out of the grass on to the trunk of the cotton-wood tree, up which it ran, and then out on to a low branch, where it clung, craning out its neck, lashing its tail, and growling savagely.

Arthur urged on the giraffe once more, and in a few seconds he was looking down upon an appalling sight.

For round about the foot of the great forest tree the grass was all beaten down and laid flat by the passing over it of a great weight; and there lay the great weight, in the shape of the most monstrous serpent Arthur had yet seen.

The creature had chosen for its resting-place the angle between two great buttresses of the tree, and here its hideous but brilliantly-mottled body was lying in wonderful convolutions—so vast and so many, that from where he sat Arthur could not see where the monster began nor yet where it ended.

He soon, however, saw the serpent's head; for, apparently irritated by the leopard's snarls, and the screaming of the eagle, its great body began to be slowly in motion, coil gliding over coil, and the head seeming to be forced slowly up the tree-trunk with a large forked tongue playing and quivering about the hard, horny lips.

As the creature seemed to be crawling up the tree, its rich brown and yellow markings showed off plainly against the ash-coloured trunk. The eagle redoubled its screams, set up its feathers and beat its wings, and the leopard snarled and tore the bark of the great bough.

Arthur felt fascinated. He knew there was danger in staying, but there was so much strange desire to see what would follow, that even Lilia looked on without a word.

The serpent glided about a dozen feet up the tree, with apparently forty feet of its body wreathed about the grass. Then the head wavered to and fro, and balanced in the air for a few moments, after which it slipped sidewise and fell upon the ground.

It was then drawn back, and very sluggishly forced up the tree once more, but only to fall again; and every motion was made so slowly and heavily, that Arthur looked eagerly at the monster's body to see that towards the centre it was enormously distended, and by that he knew that the monster was half-torpid after making one of its hideous meals.

Arthur was so encouraged by this that he urged the giraffe forward once more, till he was within eight or ten yards of the serpent, which was once more trying to glide up the tree to reach its enemies, when, waiting till the great diamond-shaped head stood out well upon a grey patch of moss, Arthur took careful aim and fired.

The eagle flew up screaming, the leopard leaped down with a growl, the kangaroo rolled over in the grass as if shot, and kicked hard at nothing, and the giraffe trembled, while the serpent seemed to quiver and undulate gently from head to tail, as the former fell heavily and inert upon the rest of the body. Then it slowly straightened itself, kept on quivering

The YOUNG FOLK'S BUDGET is now published in every place throughout the United Kingdom on Thursday morning, and is on sale in London on Wednesday evening.

for a while, and then remained still; for the shot had completely destroyed its head.

After a time Arthur ventured down to examine the serpent, which was nearly dead, and found it twenty of his paces in length, while its centre was so distended, that when, close by, he saw a great stone lying, such as Tom-Tom had been in the habit of aiming, a terrible thought crossed the boy's mind.

Poor Tom-Tom had been going to slay another of his enemies, when he had been seized, and after a terrible struggle, to which the trampled and beaten-down grass bore witness, he had been crushed, killed, and buried in this monster's hideous maw.

Arthur did not tell Lilia his fears; but after making sure that the serpent was dead by firing another charge into its head, he slowly remounted, and they returned to the ship.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A VISITOR.

That evening, as the young people were seated upon the deck, watching the wondrous tints upon the water, coloured as it was with gold, and saffron, and lake, like to the gorgeous western sky, Lilia, who had been very thoughtful, suddenly exclaimed:

"I know where poor Tom-Tom is."

"You do?" asked Arthur, starting.

"Yes," said Lilia, nodding her head sadly; "that horrible great snake has eaten him."

It wanted but this confirmation of his views to make Arthur own that such had been his own thoughts.

"Yes," he said, sadly; "I'm afraid so."

"The great snakes must have hated him, because he killed so many," continued Lilia, beginning to sob. "Poor Tom-Tom!—and I did love him so!"

"He was such a faithful beast," said Arthur, mournfully.

"And so beautifully ugly," sobbed Lilia. "I never saw anything so ugly before."

They sat talking till darkness had fallen; and then, with the great mellow stars for lamps burning brightly overhead, they went to rest, to lie listening to the strange sounds which came off the shore.

They were up betimes the next morning, for Arthur had determined to go on collecting pearls, and to add to this a good store of the virgin gold that was waiting to become their treasure.

Lilia gladly helped, and by mid-day they had placed a goodly store of lustrous pearls on board, together with as much gold as Arthur could carry in their journeys to and fro.

That, he thought, was enough gold for one day; and after they had dined off fish, fruit, and delicious vegetables of his own growth, they determined to go as far as Ruby Rock—as Arthur had christened the place where the gems glittered amidst the trailing vines.

Lilia was delighted at the idea, and together they started, taking their time, for the sun was hot, till they were in the jungle, where they were protected from the rays by the broad and interlacing foliage.

They did not get on very fast, for the arms Arthur carried were heavy, and care was necessary lest they should be taken unawares by any dangerous beast.

They were both satisfied now as to Tom-Tom's fate, so made no farther search, but lavished some of their favours upon the other creatures.

These Arthur felt must be great protections—an example of which the leopard and eagle had given them the day before; and now the eagle flapped along before them, brushing the trees with its wings, while the leopard bounded on, and hunted over every foot of ground.

The kangaroo followed behind, and as it did so, Arthur looked at it longingly, and thought of the days when he should have contrived a good saddle and learned to keep his seat upon its back, in spite of its wildest bounds.

That was a glorious walk, with the tempting fruit and brilliant flowers hanging on either side, asking, as it were, to be plucked.

They went then slowly on, Lilia laughingly removing her own little hat to replace it with a thick flower bell, so that she looked like an enlarged edition of a fairy out of some picture of elves, sprites, and fays.

Arthur picked out some new kinds of vegetables, and placed them in a satchel which he had over his shoulder, and then they went onward till they reached at last the beautiful perpendicular rock, with its creepers and vines, from amidst which they had seen the sparkling gems encrusting the rugged stones, over which the vegetation fell like a wonderful green curtain.

To Arthur's great surprise, there was now not a single precious stone to be seen: the plants had grown and twined to such an extent that the face of the rock was one veil of a delicious green that was exceedingly dense, and the boy could not help wondering at the rapidity with which these plants had run.

"What a pity!" exclaimed Lilia. "And I was thinking how nice it would be to collect a number of those beautiful stones for dear mamma."

"Well," cried Arthur, "we are not beaten. Let's see what we can do."

As he spoke, he seized one end of a long trailing rope of vine, and dragged at it so sharply that it broke away some distance up the rock, and a great, thick wreath of vegetation fell at the young people's feet.

On repeating this process two or three times, the face of the rock began to be exposed; but Arthur did not venture near it yet, for his acts had disturbed colonies of birds and lizards, the former of which flitted about uttering their cries, and the latter rustled and scuffled about in all directions, showing their shining, scaly, and plated backs of burnished green, purple, and gold, as they hurried away to find some hiding-place free from danger.

At last Arthur took his satchel, and loosening the axe from his belt, he cut away a few more intervening pieces of vine, and laid bare the wondrous rock, which was literally encrusted with the beautiful crystals we call precious stones. The rock was of different kinds and formations, and it seemed as if several masses of the most rich had been thrust together by the hand of a giant, and then left for the plants to grow over them.

Arthur and Lilia were both literally astounded at the riches before them: rubies, emeralds, and sapphires were there in abundance, with clusters innumerable of the gems of lesser value, such as the topaz, amethyst, garnet, and chrysolite.

It was growing late, though, so Lilia held the bag, while Arthur proceeded to chip off one by one the most beautiful crystals he could reach; and as fast as he secured one there always seemed another more beautiful close at hand.

"There, Arty—there!" cried Lilia, excitedly. "Climb a little higher up—that's right. There's a beauty there!"

Arthur climbed higher up, and then higher; and as he knocked off the crystals, Lilia nimbly caught them in the bag as he threw them down.

The eagle had perched upon the rock and watched them for a few minutes, and then, uttering a discontented croak, it had spread its wings and flown off.

The leopard had darted off in quest of some small animal, and returned for a moment, licking its lips, only to gallop off again; and the kangaroo had hopped gently away, down a beautiful glade, in search of tender shoots.

"Now, Lilia, catch this," cried Arthur, detaching a magnificent sapphire; and he was in the act of throwing it, when there came a roar like thunder from the wood on their right.

Directly after there came another roar, and another, but they were in different keys.

Arthur leaped down from the rock and seized his piece, which he cocked ready, for he felt sure some monster or another was about to attack him.

Lilia stood panting, with her axe in her hand, and then there came a fresh roar, the breaking of branches, a fierce rush, and, to their utter amazement, Tom-Tom, whom they had mourned as dead, bounded clumsily to their feet, apparently wild with delight.

"Why, you wicked old truant!" cried Lilia; and at the sound of her voice Tom-Tom rolled himself frantically about in the grass.

Then he leaped up, drummed upon his breast, stared at his master, and uttered a tremendous roar, one which seemed to be echoed from the depths of the wood into which Tom-Tom the next moment plunged.

"Then he wasn't swallowed by the snake, Arty?" cried Lilia; and then they listened to a roaring and growling and snarling, mingled with the breaking of branches, the result of which was that while Arthur stood ready for a new enemy, Tom-Tom suddenly reappeared, dragging from amongst the bushes what seemed to be his double—another ape—very little smaller than himself, while he bore in his left hand a branch of a tree, laden with great fig-like fruit.

As Tom-Tom's mate caught sight of Arthur and Lilia, it uttered a roar, and clung to Tom-Tom's arm as if for protection.

Then it snarled savagely, and made a bound to attack Arthur, which movement Tom-Tom frustrated, and boxed his companion's ears with a couple of tremendous cuffs.

Lastly, Tom-Tom, grinning and chattering, brought his unwilling companion forward, and Arthur saw that the ape was in high glee; for he was introducing Mrs. Tom-Tom to his young master and mistress.

The young people hardly knew whether to laugh or be alarmed, so comical and yet so tragic was the scene; but in the midst of it Arthur thought the best way would be to put a bold face on the matter, and take the new-comer by the hand. He advanced to do so, but with a savage roar of rage, the ape avoided him by shuffling sidewise, and then made a bound past him, and seized Lilia by the dress.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE APE AND HIS MATE.

Arthur leaped forward in alarm to save his sister, as Lilia uttered a loud cry.

But he need not have troubled himself, for Tom-Tom was quicker, and literally snatched Lilia out of his partner's grasp, dropped her gently on the grass, and then, in the most ungallant manner in the world, took Mrs. Tom-Tom by the shoulders and shook her—chattering and snarling the while—shook her till she began to howl dismally, and threw herself down on the grass, whining as if for forgiveness.

That seemed to be all that Tom-Tom wanted, for he now caught hold by the hand of his unwilling mate, and dragged her once more towards the young people.

Mrs. Tom-Tom bore this very well till she was close to Arthur, and then she began to snarl and chatter menacingly once more.

This was the signal for another sounding box on the ear, which sent Mrs. Tom-Tom over, and she would have been more severely punished but for Arthur's interposition.

Whether the lady was grateful, or whether she was induced to be quiet by seeing how familiar her lord was with what she no doubt looked upon as horribly dangerous creatures, does not signify. Suffice it that in a short time she allowed Tom-Tom to properly introduce her to his patrons, and submitted to have her hand shaken and her head patted.

Arthur gave a finish to the proceedings by regaling her with some of the vegetables Tom-Tom carried on his pole—a great mealy fruit, apparently half-way between a potato and a parsnip.

But now that the alarm was over, Arthur returned to the object of his visit, wondering all the while, though, whether Tom-Tom had been through the big tunnel to fetch his mate.

As soon as the ape had testified to the joy he felt in seeing his young master again, and saw what he was doing, he set to work and tore down more of the vines, laying bare gems brighter and more beautiful than any Arthur had yet obtained.

On seeing Arthur chip them out of the rock, Tom-Tom began to do the same, and dislodged a magnificent ruby. This he fingered, turned over, tasted, bit, and then looked at in disgust, spitting and sputtering loudly.

He was about to throw it away, but Arthur checked him, and the gem was placed in Lilia's basket, and the task of collecting went on.

In the meantime, Mrs. Tom-Tom sat in the grass, staring at Lilia, who hardly liked the appearance of her neighbour; but feeling at last that the way to be friendly with the strange creature was to assume the mastery over it, she made an effort to conquer her repugnance and fear, and advanced, basket in hand, upon Mrs. Tom-Tom.

As Lilia advanced, the dark lady began to snarl and push herself farther away; but as she was going backwards, and could not see, her eyes being fixed on Lilia, further progress was shortly stayed by the rock where Tom-Tom was busy chipping with the axe.

Here, to Lilia's great delight, the new-comer began to show signs of fear; and taking advantage of this, Lilia sprang upon her, caught her great arm, and held her.

It was a critical moment, and Arthur, from a ledge up the rock, watched the proceedings with the greatest interest, ready to lend help if it were needed.

Tom-Tom, too, opened his lips to indulge in a tremendous grin as he saw his lady snarl savagely for a moment, then whimper, and finally, with the great tears running down her hairy cheeks, suffer herself to be dragged away from the rock by Lilia, who looked a mere pigmy by her side.

Once the lady stopped short, and made as if to retreat, but a lump of rock struck her on the back directly, and the chattering noise made by Tom-Tom showed at once by whom it had been aimed.

From that moment Mrs. Tom-Tom was obedience itself. She let Lilia drag her where she pleased, squatted down and submitted to be patted, laying her head on the grass and emitting a sound evidently showing her satisfaction; but it was anything but pleasing to the ear, for the only way to describe it is as a screeching, rumbling jar, with a dash of spinning-wheel and a little saw-sharpening thrown in.

No sooner did Tom-Tom see this satisfactory state of affairs achieved, than he leaped down from the face of the rock, axe in hand, and began to perform a triumphal war-dance, giving a chop at the trees he passed, leaping in the air in a ponderous, elephantine fashion, and sending the birds that had flocked round screeching and circling about amongst the trees.

Tom-Tom's gambols ceased as suddenly as they had begun, and it was quite absurd to see the manner in which he went back, in a sort of shamefaced way, to his work, climbing solemnly up the rock, and laboriously chipping away—the only drawback to his industry being that he chipped out valueless lumps of quartz and threw down to Lilia; and on several occasions jerked sapphires, emeralds, and rubies of great price right away into the jungle.

"Oh, you great goose!" cried Lilia, stopping him in the act of throwing away a great sapphire—the finest yet obtained. "Give that to me this instant."

Tom-Tom stared at her, his great ears working about as he tried to understand her meaning. Then, gaining an insight as she pointed to the gem, he went through a sort of pantomime—tasting, spitting, and sputtering, to show her how worthless it was for eating, and when she insisted upon having it, coming

down and passing it over to her with a strange grimace.

Suddenly the light seemed to break in upon him, and he bounded off.

His mate gathered herself up to follow, but her lord made a rush at her and drove her back, while he made for the nearest tree laden with great scarlet orange-like fruit, tore off a heavy bough, and came back with it in triumph to his mistress.

"Crark!" he cried, which was a word that meant a great deal with Tom-Tom, and here evidently might be interpreted—"See, here's some fruit—ten times better than those stupid stones."

For with Tom-Tom the only things of any value were those that were good to eat, and all the jewels in the world would not have been so satisfactory to him as a nest of soft grass, or sand, in which he could sleep.

Lilia took the fruit with pleasure, and quite finished her conquest of Mrs. Tom-Tom by giving her an orange now and then.

The recovery of Tom-Tom formed the subject of their conversation all the way home, during which journey Mrs. Tom-Tom made two or three attempts at escape.

These were, however, stopped at once by the ape, who, ever on the watch, would catch his lady as she was scuffling off into the dense shades of the wood.

When they reached the shore, the question arose what was to be done with Tom-Tom's mate—was she to be taken on board the ship?

This was solved by the lady herself, who, upon Arthur taking to the boat with his sister, and Tom-Tom, making a rollicking splash in the waves by way of example, hung back, uttered a doleful howl, threw herself down, and began to dash up the sand.

[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 VII.

FOR a whole month the Greeks rested and feasted in the island of Æolus, and during that time Odysseus recounted to his kingly host the story of the siege of Troy. Then he told the tale of his wanderings since they left the Phrygian coast down to the moment when he had left the giant Polyphemus on the beach.

"Ah," muttered Æolus, with a shade upon his brow. "sure as thou hast hurt Polyphemus, so sure will his mighty sire Poseidon hurt thee."

"Alas, I fear so," replied Odysseus, "though as the thing is passed and cannot be recalled there is no need to mourn over it. But say, O king, when may we put to sea again?"

"To morrow, if thou wilt, though I am loth to part with thee," replied Æolus. "The story of Troy's fall, of gallant Hector and wise Æneas, have moved me deeply, and I would fain hear it again. However, thou and thine are anxious to be gone, and so I will not stay thee."

"If ever thou shouldst visit Ithaca, O king, what a welcome should be thine!" said Odysseus. "Here I cannot attempt to repay thee except in words for all the hospitality we have received. Yet there is one thing I want."

"Yes, I know—you would ask a pilot," replied Æolus. "But that is beyond my power to give. No one who dwells within these isles may ever leave them."

The face of Odysseus lengthened with disappointment.

"I had thought"——

"Yes, I know thy thought," interrupted Æolus. "But thou shalt have better than a pilot. The god of the sea is now and evermore thy foe, and thou needest all my help. I will give thee a wind to carry thee to Greece. While it blows even Poseidon cannot hurt thee!"

"O king, thou art"——

"Say nothing. I am but thy friend. And now if thou wouldst sail to-morrow, thou shouldst be at rest. While thou art sleeping, I will work for thee, and catch the fickle winds. Good night."

As the king spoke, he rose to his feet and held out his hand. Odysseus grasped it in silence. Then they parted, one to his mysterious work, the other to his rest.

When morning came, and Odysseus wakened, he found King Æolus standing by his couch. Beside him were some three or four youths carrying each upon his shoulders a leather bag bound with a silver-tasselled thong.

"Now, King of Ithaca," said Æolus, "thy ships are waiting, and all is ready for thy departure. The wind that is to waft thee to Greece is already blowing."

Odysseus sprang from his couch, and flinging on his robe, hastily followed Æolus to the beach. There he found the ships ready and waiting for him, a soft breeze from the west just bellying the sails.

For a moment or two he stood trying to find words of thanks, but before he spoke, Æolus laid his hand upon his arm, and urged him on board.

"Waste not the time in speech! Away!" he cried, quickly. "As you linger, dangers gather!"

Next moment, half by his own will, half-helped by the king, Odysseus found himself on board.

"Now guard safely these bags," cried Æolus, as the youths placed them within the ships. "Make them fast to the mast, and let no man open them till thou art safe upon the beach of Ithaca. Remember!"

While one of the men made the bags fast, as directed, the youths moved away. Then the king lifted his hand and waved it, as if calling on some invisible friend, and next moment the ships swayed off into deep water, their sails filled by the pleasant breeze, and looking gay against the rising sun.

For the first two hours, while the isles of Æolus were in sight, the men on board the fleet busied themselves with talk of the pleasant land they were leaving, or in making fast and "snug" the many presents from their hosts that lay about.

When this was done, and when the last hill-top of the last isle sank down in the west, the men seated themselves to rest.

Alas! then, as now, the devil found some mischief still for idle hands to do.

Scarcely had the men seated themselves, when they began to grumble and debate among themselves. Why had they left the islands in such a hurry? and, above all, what was contained in the bags that were to be looked after so carefully? Were they not full of treasure? and was not their king playing them false, and trying to keep the whole of it to himself?

Presently they became so loud and bold in their speech that they were overheard by Odysseus, who thereupon placed himself close by the mast. He saw that the pleasures of the isle had weakened his men's discipline, and that there was no use speaking or reasoning with them just then.

This action of his, however, only added to the men's suspicions—in fact, confirmed them in the belief that the bags he seemed so anxious to guard must contain wonderful treasures.

Day after day, for nine long days and nights, Odysseus kept watch beside the mast, and day after day the men looked on and grumbled.

On the tenth day a cry from the foremost ship gladdened every heart.

"Our isles at last—our isles! Behold Leucadia's steep!"

Odysseus sprang to his feet, and saw before him, swelling over the blue waves, the promontory of Leucadia. Then looking to the south-east, he beheld in dim outline the hills of Ithaca.

"Æolus, I thank thee," he muttered, with a pleasant sigh, then lay back where he sat, and wearied with long watching at once fell fast asleep.

"Ha!" cried one of the men, as he saw this, "the king sleeps at last. Now is our time!"

"Yes, now is our time!" said another. "For years his chests have burst with Trojan spoil, while we, his partners in everything, are left to return home rich only in fame. And now, at the very last, even Æolus adds to his store. Come, let us untie the bags and take our share!"

"Forbear, ye fools!" cried Lachas, the herald, from the after part of the vessel. "These bags contain the spirits of the winds, all but soft Zephyrus, that blew us hither!"

His words were too late! Before they were half spoken, the men had slashed the thongs with their swords.

There was an instant rushing noise, as of winds clashing together, then from each bag sprang forth a strong figure, that spread abroad a pair of powerful wings and soared aloft.

The men who had wrought the mischief sprang back dismayed, while Odysseus woke suddenly from his short sleep.

"What, what have ye done, O foolish Ithacans?" he cried, in a voice of agony. "Alas! alas! see yonder comes the gale that may yet sweep us far from home."

Even as he spoke, from round Leucadia's steep came a black cloud, before which the sea tossed and moaned as if in fear.

Next moment it was about them, howling and shrieking like a troop of fiends.

At the first stroke the sail burst with a noise like a clap of thunder. Then the vessel swung round like a cork, and plunged away towards the west—away, away, as fast as wind and sea could drive her.

And now, while his men lay down in the ship filled with terror, shame, and regret, Odysseus paced backwards and forwards in an almost maddened state. Once or twice he gazed at the fierce waves that swept past, and felt a wish to leap into their embrace and end his troubles at once.

His was, however, a mind too strong to give way to such folly for long, so presently he regained his courage and cheerfulness, and rousing the men from their despair, made them busy themselves with the ship.

It was well he did this, for the gale continued to blow, mounting now into a hurricane, now shifting so as to make the seas cross each other and break in foam, but ever driving them farther away from the homes that they had just caught a glimpse of.

At last, on the evening of the fifth day, the shores of the Æolian isles appeared in view, and presently they ran into the little sandy bay from which they had started, half a moon ago, with such high hopes and pleasant winds.

This time there was no rush of youths and maids to welcome them, and it was with shame at his heart that Odysseus stepped ashore and made for the well-known grove.

The place was deserted, so leaving his men behind, he hastened towards the palace of the king.

Again things were different from what they had been at first. He found no one at the gate or doors to welcome him; but, pressing in, he soon reached the great hall.

There he found the king, with his sons, seated at the evening banquet; but not daring to draw near them, he paused and stood in the doorway with head bowed in shame.

Before he had stood there many seconds, one of them caught sight of him, and recognized his well-known figure and face.

"Ha!" cried he, as he started to his feet. "What demon hast thou met to bar thy way, and drive thee here again? Did we not give thee all thou couldst desire to take thee home?"

Odysseus stood silent awhile. Then he replied in low tones:

"Alas! O son of Æolus, my faithless men let loose the spirits while I slept in sight of home! But, oh, let us once more find favour in the king's eyes!"

The king started from the banquet couch, and strode towards Odysseus with dark, angry face.

"Begone, vile wretch!—begone!" he cried. "Leave here this instant—thou and all thy fleet. Fate shows that thou art hateful to the gods, and the presence of one whom the gods hate pollutes the isle. Begone—thou and thy accursed friends, begone!"

Odysseus bowed low to the king, and sighing, turned and walked sadly to his fleet. There his men heard his news with low cries of pain, then broke into loud reproaches on themselves for their folly and disobedience.

"Reproach not yourselves," said Odysseus, presently. "I, too, have been to blame. Now again we must trust to our own strong arms and subtle brains. Here we may stay no longer; for see, there come the soldiers of the king to quicken our departure."

Even as he spoke a band of warriors emerged from the grove, and, hastening towards the Greeks, called out to them to leave quickly.

Seeing there was nothing else to be done, the Greeks with a sigh obeyed, and presently the fleet was clear of the little bay, and tossing about upon the stormy waves without. Then the sun went down in the west, and a dark night fell upon them.

When morning came—a morning they scarcely expected to meet—there was nothing to be seen but a leaden sky, and the wild waste of waters tumbling around them. A day of misery followed—a day in which, while drenched with foam, they had only for food a few pieces of wormy cake and an ounce or two of uncooked flesh of goats.

But this was not the last. Another and another and another followed, until, upon the morning of the seventh, they drifted into the Lestrigonian Gulf, now called after Gaëta.

Presently, as they drew near the shore at the head of this gulf, the towers of Formiæ stood up between them and the rising sun.

The Greeks greeted the sight of land and of a city with cries of joy. Then, before Odysseus could give any orders or take any counsel with them, they drove the ships through the narrow entrance to the long harbour within.

"I go not there!" cried Odysseus, as he sprang to the helm and brought his ship up into the wind. "We will make fast to the shore without."

Taught by experience the men obeyed without a murmur. The ship was beached carefully outside the harbour, though within it could be seen the water was smooth as glass. Then two hawsers were run out to the nearest rock, and these once made fast Odysseus and a chosen few stepped ashore.

From the beach they climbed up a steep cliff from which the plains within were to be seen stretching away for miles and miles. At the head of the long, narrow harbour, in which lay all the ships except the king's, rose the towers and domes of the city, but on all the plains no sight or sign of human beings could be seen.

Here Odysseus paused, while Lachas, the herald, and two men went forward to explore.

Presently these as they advanced came across a wheel-made track leading from a wood towards the city, and following this soon found themselves beside a shaded well. Bending over this was a maid with a pitcher in her hand.

The Greeks advanced towards the well to question her, when she suddenly stood up and caught sight of them.

For a moment her face showed nothing but as-

tonishment. Then as the Greeks drew yet nearer, a look of pleased malice shone from her eyes, and gathered round her cruel mouth.

CHAPTER VIII.

"We are strangers, O maid," said Lachas, the herald—"strangers who have been tossed and beaten by the sea and wind for many days, and who need the help of the king of this land. Where does his palace lie?"

"Yonder, close by the city, on the left," replied the maid, with a smile which Lachas long remembered. "He will be glad to see you."

She pointed towards a dome that rose high above the city on the left; then moved to go away, as if wishing to be no further questioned.

"We owe you thanks, O maid. But another word before you go!" cried Lachas. "What is the race which inhabits here?"

The face of the maid grew dark, and she glowered upon him as she replied:

"A race of men and women who are born and live and die—a race that eats when hungry, and feels pain when hurt!"

As she finished this rather strange reply, she turned away quickly, and was almost instantly lost to sight among the trees.

As it advanced towards the Greeks their hearts sank within them. Its size was as a mountain, compared to that of Polyphemus, and its look was even more terrific. Strange to say, though the face of the giantess was so hideous, it had yet in it something of a likeness to that of the damsel by the well.

At first the figure stalked along without catching sight of the strangers. Then suddenly becoming aware of their presence, it uttered a cry of brutal delight, like that of a lion leaping on its prey, and sprang towards them.

A moment of sudden horror, then the three men turned and fled as fast as their feet, winged by terror, could carry them.

"Here! Antiphates!—Antiphates!" cried the giantess, in a voice that echoed round the building like a thunder growl. "Here are three mortals for our mid-day feast!"

A tiger-like cry answered her from within; and presently, as the Greeks passed through the outer gates, and glanced back, they saw a figure larger still, rush forth and bound towards them! It was Lamas, the king and leader of the Lestrygonian race!

"Alas—alas!" cried Lachas, as the giant advanced towards them, with monstrous strides. "One of us must die. Let us then separate, so that while he captures the one whom fate ordains, the others may escape."

At his cry the hitherto quiet-looking walls of the city were covered with a giant brood, that next moment leaped over into the open and burst through the gates shrieking and howling.

Struck with horror, the Greeks hoisted their anchors and leaped to their oars.

Alas! there was no leader to keep them in order, so while they strove to get out of the harbour one ship got foul of another, and they were soon all wedged together in one struggling, heaving mass.

At sight of this, a great roar of delight broke from the Lestrygones, that made the Greek confusion, if possible, still greater.

Presently the sides of the hills right away to the very harbour mouth were covered with the giants, and across the bar at the entrance stood some half dozen of the monsters, with the water scarcely reaching to their loins.

Another moment, while the Greeks broke into a low cry of despair, the whole air was darkened with a shower of rocks and mighty stones, hurled from every side.

Under this shower the water of the harbour broke into spray, and boiled as if a volcano's mouth. Two or three of the heavier rocks lit upon a couple of the

"The men sprung back dismayed, while Odysseus woke suddenly."

"A strange damsel, truly!" muttered Lachas, as he and the two moved forward to the city. "But there are strange folk even in Greece."

"Yet none so strange as her," replied one of the men, with a shiver. "Her face is like that of one of the Erinyes. My heart tells me this is an evil place!"

"Tush!" replied Lachas. "Your heart is cowardly. Let us hasten on."

The man who had spoken bowed his head, as if in shame. Then the three hastened on towards the city.

In half an hour's time they were close by the palace of the king, and were astonished, as they passed through the outer gates, to find no guard or keeper either to bar their passage or welcome them.

At the great door under the dome—a door taller than the tallest mast in the fleet—there was also no guard.

Here they paused a moment; then Lachas stepped in, closely followed by the two men.

A dozen yards along a passage brought them to a door large as the first, and passing through this, they found themselves in a hall of such tremendous size that they paused again, and stood looking round them in silent awe.

"It is no ordinary race of mortals that built these walls," said the herald.

"And no ordinary race that dwells in them," said the soldier who had first spoken. "Would to Zeus we were safely back in our ship again!"

"Pallas protect us! You are right!" cried the herald, as from another door in the farther end of the wall a female figure of enormous size emerged.

"Take thou the hill, then, and strive to reach Odysseus! We will to the fleet," cried the soldiers.

"As you will," replied Lachas, while he turned and fled away by the path towards the well, while the soldiers ran down, past the town, towards the ships.

The advice of Lachas was a wise one, for so soon as the giant noticed that they took different ways he halted in doubt. Then, making sure that he could presently easily capture him who made for the hill-top, and feeling that two were a better prize than one, he dashed after the soldiers.

As the men saw him come on they shrieked out wildly, and redoubled their speed.

But of what use were their puny legs compared with his? While at each bound they might cover a yard or two, his steps were measured by perches.

Still they had had the start, and made good way. They were almost on the beach, and were beginning to hope that they might yet reach the ships, when the hideous laugh of the giant sounded close behind them, and one of his monstrous hands reached out and grasped the hindmost. The very man whose heart from the first had been fearful.

There was a sudden sickening sound as of the crunching of human bones. Then the giant flung his captive, bruised and dead, back upon the earth, and sprang after the other soldier.

He was too late! The Greek had plunged into the flood and gained the nearest ship.

At this the monster stood still in rage a moment. Then he raised his voice and cried aloud, so that the hills echoed it again and again.

"Ho! Lestrygones! Lestrygones! Come forth at once. Here are dainties for our mid-day feast! Be quick! be quick!"

ships, and crashing through their sides as if they were made of parchment, sent them to the bottom.

Quick as thought, another shower followed the first, and when the giants paused to learn the result of their work, the last of the Greek ships had disappeared. Then, presently, as the waves began to grow quiet, the whole face of the harbour was seen covered with the heads of the struggling men—of those who had not the good fortune to go down with their ships.

Another cry of brutal delight broke from the throats of the giants, and echoed round the hills again and again. Then some rushed back to the city, and presently reappeared brandishing aloft great three-pronged spears.

Snatching one of these, the king leaped into the water, and drove its triple points into the back of the nearest Greek. Then lifting it aloft, and holding it with its burden above his head, he cried out:

"A fine fat fish, my friends—a fine fat fish indeed! What a pity our waters do not yield such every day!"

A playful roar from the Lestrygones answered the king. Then every one that held a spear strode into the water, and a scene too horrible for full description began.

Soon all those of the Greeks who were in the shallower waters were speared and brought ashore, but out in the deeper spots some still swam about, hopeless of escape, yet clinging to life as men will cling in the most utter extremity.

But the giant king was cunning as well as brutal, and when his sport began to grow slack for want of victims, he drove a body of his monsters to the town for ropes.

These soon returned, and in a short time to every triple-pointed spear a rope was attached. When this was done, the giants waded into the water till it covered their waists, and the horrible sport began again.

Right and left, while roaring with horrid laughter, the giants flung their spears, and at each time a Greek was pierced, he was drawn towards them by the rope attached to the weapon.

At last there were no more to slay, and the giants gathered together on the beach, pleased with the sport they had had, yet, glutton-like, regretting that it had not lasted longer.

Meanwhile, Lachas, entirely forgotten by the giant king, managed to reached the hill-top where Odysseus stood waiting his return. At sight of him, panting, alone, and almost fainting, the king sprang towards him.

"Well, Lachas, what horror have you to tell us of?—for horror is written in your face," he cried. "Quick—let us hear!"

"O king!—such horror as I never dreamed these eyes should see! The land is a land of monsters more fearful even than the Cyclops. The two soldiers you sent with me are now dead within the giants' hands, while those who entered the harbour with the fleet are—are—— Oh, I cannot tell the tale! Come to the brow of the hill, and see for yourself!"

Odysseus sprang forward to the brow of the hill, and looked down at the harbour.

Not a single ship of all his fleet was to be seen; and of his men, the last remaining few were being dragged to the shore by the giants!

It was a minute or two before he could fully comprehend all. Then he raised his hands to the sky, and burst into tears, hero though he was, and with a heart that had met many a bitter stroke without flinching.

"See, the monsters look this way!" exclaimed Lachas.

It was as he said. The giant king just at that moment thought suddenly of the single stranger that had fled up the hillside, and he sprang forward, calling on his men to follow.

"I care not! Let them come!" replied Odysseus in his despair.

"But I care—we all care!" replied the herald, as he caught the king by the arm and hurried him back.

Presently, while the herald hurried him along Odysseus regained his calmness of mind. He saw at once that now indeed more than ever did it become him to act the brave part. So he quickened his steps, and hurried down the sea side of the hill until he reached the beach.

There he found his men stretched about a fire which they had lighted in hopes that he and his little party would return bringing with them a sheep or a goat.

When they saw his disordered looks and hurried steps they started to their feet in alarm, and were about to ask what evil had befallen him when his words stopped them.

"Quick to the ship!" he cried. "The land is a land of monsters who have slain our friends. We alone are left of all the Ithacans!"

The men sprang quickly on board, and were unfastening the hawsers, when some half a dozen of the monsters appeared on the top of the hill, and came bounding and tumbling down towards them.

At the sight Odysseus drew his sword and severed the hawsers. Then the men bent to their oars, and the ship shot out into deep water just as the giants reached the beach.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

THE MAGIC LEAVES.

ONCE upon a time there was a young girl who, with her aunt, lived all alone. Auntie Louise, the young girl called her aunt. Auntie Louise lived on a nice little farm three miles from the village.

Auntie Louise was not old or cross. Annie was just sixteen, and Auntie Louise was thirty-two.

Auntie Louise had taught Annie how to manage Neddie, the fat little pony; and he was a little flyaway too sometimes, but, withal, the best-natured little fellow in the world.

This particular afternoon Annie was going to the woods, on horseback, to look for autumn leaves—it was a beautiful October day.

Away cantered Neddie, as glad to be out in the beautiful sunshine as Annie herself. When they came to the woods, fastening Neddie's bridle to a low branch of a tree, Annie sat down to rest.

Presently, a dainty little lady stood before her—a dainty little lady, smiling and holding out to her a tiny bunch of autumn leaves, the loveliest she had ever seen. Annie asked her to sit down, but she said:

"No, I must not stay; my friends are waiting for me in yonder dell. Take the leaves; they were gathered on purpose for you. They possess a peculiar power. You have only to wave them three times before Neddie's eyes, and he will instantly become a most polished gallant."

"But I would rather have him as he is," said the astonished Annie.

"You only have to wave them three times before the eyes of your gallant, and he will become Neddie, the fat pony, again; and do you not see that when you and Auntie Louise wish to go out in the evenings, you can drive Neddie, carrying these flowers with you? and when you reach any place, you have only to wave these leaves before Neddie's eyes three times, and you have a gentleman attendant."

"Oh, won't that be nice for Auntie Louise!" cried Annie, lifting her eyes to thank the lady; but she was gone, and the bunch of tiny autumn leaves lay in her lap. They were very elastic and tough, and were fastened firmly in a little silver holder. In examining them, Annie touched a spring, and, lo! a silver leaf sprang out and rolled quickly around all the others, and then they were nicely protected and easily carried in her pocket. She started up, and ran until she came in sight of Neddie.

"Oh, such a secret, Neddie! Auntie Louise shall be the first to try it!" and springing on Neddie's back, she cantered gaily home. Louise was arranging a bouquet of pansies on the porch when Annie came up.

"Oh, auntie, the queerest thing!" she began.

"Why, Annie, where is your hat?—and how warm Neddie is!"

"My hat just tumbled off the other side of the barn. I will go and get it. But just listen, and just see here," drawing from her pocket the wonderful little roll, and touching the spring that unrolled the silver leaf. "We have only to wave this three times before Neddie's eyes and he becomes a fine gentleman, ready to attend us everywhere." Then she told her about the little lady in the woods, and all that she said. Auntie Louise did not seem as much surprised as Annie thought she would. "You are to try it first," she concluded, springing from the pony.

Louise took the mysterious leaves and waved them solemnly three times before Neddie's eyes, and behold! the pony was nowhere to be seen, but there stood an elegant gentleman, with his hat in his hand, politely bowing to Miss Louise and her niece. Annie brought him a chair, and for an hour the learned gentleman entertained them with descriptions of life and travel. Then, suddenly remembering that it was time for Neddie to have his evening meal of hay and oats, Auntie Louise waved the bright leaves three times before the eyes of Mr. Pemberton (that is the name the gentleman gave himself), and there stood Neddie, equipped in saddle and bridle, just as Annie had left him. Annie led him away to the barn.

"Won't it be convenient, auntie?" asked Annie, when she came back.

"Nothing could be more so?" returned Auntie Louise.

After this they drove Neddie wherever they wished to go, transforming him into Mr. Pemberton when they wished an attendant.

What a treasure Neddie was! A gentleman called one day, asking if Miss Louise would sell her pony.

"Did you ever, auntie? Sell Neddie! Sell Mr. Pemberton!" said Annie. "I wonder how much Mr. Pemberton would call himself worth! I'll go this minute to the stables and bring him in."

What is that? Neddie neighing impatiently where he is tied below the hill; Annie just waking under the tree.

"Why! how long *can* I have been asleep?"

Again Neddie's shrill whinny.

"Neddie! Mr. Pemberton! Oh, what a dream!" exclaimed Annie, gathering up her autumn leaves hastily. And this part of her dream came true:

She *did* canter gaily home; she *did* find Auntie Louise on the porch arranging a bouquet of pansies; and Auntie Louise *did* say, "Why, Annie, where's your hat? and how warm Neddie is!"

BLUEBELL VANE'S STORY.

BY LADYE BYRDE.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUNDAY IN THE HIVE.

SUNDAY at The Hive was very different from the same day at Cranefells. On coming down to breakfast I was greeted by Tom with:

"I suppose you'll be put in Lucie's class at Sunday school."

"What! Do you go to Sunday school?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"Why," replied I, "I thought no one but cottagers' children, and ragged boys, and those sort of people, went to Sunday school."

"What put such an idea into your head, you little heathen?" said Lucie, who was busy with the tea-caddy.

"I don't know, only that in books it always tells of those sort of children going."

"Well, unfortunately for us, we don't live in books," said Bernard; "we are flesh-and-blood mortals, and have to learn Catechism, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, not to mention other sundries."

Tom's prophecy proved correct, and when the time arrived, I found myself by Zoe's side, with other children, waiting for Lucie's arrival at the class.

Mr. Carringer was general superintendent. I saw him leave his desk to speak to Bernard, who was in Graham's class, and immediately afterwards the boy rose, though I could see that some arrangement which had been made was highly disapproved by him, and Tom's face was full of giggles.

Bernard came and took his seat as teacher of the A B C set, which was very near ours. One of the children handed him a large alphabetical card, and he was about to proceed to business, when a mite of a boy went up to him, and trying to lift his foot to the new master's knee, I heard him say:

"Please, sir, will you tie my shoe?"

I wondered whether this was part of the duties of a Sunday school teacher; but Bernard was quite equal to the occasion, and disposed of the shoe at once. Seeing the success which had attended the first petition, a second child left its seat, and asked:

"Please, sir, will you lend me your pocket-handkerchief?"

The idea tickled me so much that I with difficulty restrained myself from laughing aloud; but when Bernard said coolly to the applicant, "Perhaps you'd like me to wash your face for you!" I burst into a most indecorous laugh.

Bernard looked up, and, catching my eye, seemed in danger of following my example, when Mr. Carringer crossed the room to reprove me for my improper behaviour. Lucie came in at the same moment, and seeing the ashamed face I wore, apologised so strongly for me, that my uncle left me with a caution to be more careful in future.

Our lesson was upon the character of Jacob, and the teacher waxed eloquent upon his virtues. When it came to my turn to answer a question on the sorrow of the patriarch for his lost son Joseph, I said, with indignant emphasis:

"Yes; but it served him right. He deserved it every bit. I can't bear Jacob!"

The children of the class stared, regarding me as a sacrilegious personage, and Lucie seemed petrified.

Considering it necessary to prove what I had advanced, and feeling annoyed that what I had said should be received with marks of disfavour, I went on:

"Of course he deserved it after all the mean things he did to poor Esau; he ought to have been ashamed of himself. He was an old coward too. I haven't patience with him, the horrid fellow! Esau was a much nicer man. I like Esau."

My uncle, who perhaps now regarded me with some distrust, had hovered near our class, and came behind me in time to hear the wind up. Lucie's face was very red. I think she was trying to stifle her laughter at my bold, independent expression. But Mr. Carringer was quite scandalized; possibly he could not understand that I was speaking from pure conviction, and not in the least for effect, having perhaps never heard an opinion pronounced on the subject. I had read the story to myself again and again, and drawn my own conclusions, headlong and impetuous as a matter of course.

"Hush!" he said, in a grave tone of reproof. "If you, unhappily, have been so badly instructed, I must request, Bluebell, that you do not express your opinions here, and thus poison the minds of other children."

I was silent in a moment, and resolved not to open my mouth again upon the subject, and I kept my word.

My uncle's pew in church was down stairs; a gallery ran along the side opposite us, and right in front of it, occupying a large share of space, was a room, something like a good-sized box at the opera, but without curtains or adornment beyond a sofa, chairs, and fire-grate, though these particulars I did not discover till later. This pew, so Zoe whispered, belonged to the family occupying Bellevue Park—absentees at present. I looked up at the monumental tablets on the wall of my ancestral pew, and thought of the time when my mother must have stood under them Sunday after Sunday, and looked down upon the congregation below. The church was well filled, and Tom, who sat to my left, nudged me whenever any one whom he considered of special note passed us on the way to their seats. During the early part of the service I heard an unusual sound for a church—the poking of a fire—and it came from the large pew in the gallery. I looked up to see it occupied by two persons, and a third, arrayed in loud magnificence, was arranging her silken skirts between them. I forgot all about the service and the holy place in which I stood as I answered with interest the determined stare bent upon me. An instinctive dislike possessed me as I looked at the tall, silken woman with her handsome profile and scarlet lips, and every now and then my eyes wandered from my book to look upward, and Zoe had to impart telegrams from her mother more than once bidding me be more attentive.

One of my strongest feelings just then was to congratulate myself on being respectably dressed, although the plumes were borrowed. Zoe's hat

and frock fitted me very fairly, and, clad in them, I no longer felt myself the despised pauper of Cranefells. I wondered whether they would speak to me. As we were passing out of the church gates a few carriages were drawn up in line. Into the foremost of these the party was entering.

"That woman," said Lucie to me in an undertone, "lives at Bellevue Park. Isn't she a swell? I wonder who those girls are with her? I call the eldest quite pretty. Mrs. Viperr is an awful woman."

As the carriage was driving off, our eyes met. To my infinite astonishment, I was regarded with most friendly nods, smiling faces, and waving of hands.

"What!" exclaimed Lucie, more amazed than myself, "do you mean to say you know that woman?"

"Yes," replied I, "I've often seen her at Cranefells; and those girls are Catherine and Elfrida."

CHAPTER XVII.

CHURCHYARD GHOSTS.

That afternoon being fine and warm, some of us sat in the summer-house at the bottom of the garden, reading and talking. Ion had been enjoying a siesta in his room, I suspect, for when he came to us he had suspiciously-tumbled hair, and a more die-away look than usual.

"Mr. Carringer," said he to me, "has sent you this book. You are to read the first two chapters, and he will question you about it some time this evening."

I took the book, and said:

"I only hope it isn't about good boys and girls. I can't bear books like that."

"What would you have better?" asked Bernard. "Here, I've just finished a tale about a reformed bootblack, who became a shining light in the world. A most interesting story—quite *touchant*."

"I'm afraid those shining lights are all moonshine," said Jack.

"It's always the way in books," observed I; "the naughty children get to be so good at the end if they're ever so bad at first."

"We must put you in a book, then," said Lucie, laughing, "and see whether you can be made into one of these good little girls."

"It's the only chance she'll have of being any better than she is," said polite Tom.

"You can afford to speak," put in Bernard, "seeing you're so super-excellent yourself—an angel in knickerbockers."

"How badly you were behaving in church, Tom," observed Lucie; "such an example for Bluebell!"

"I don't want any example," said I. "Tom didn't behave half so badly as I did."

"True for you," observed Lucie. "I say, Jack, did you notice that Mrs. Viperr has come back?"

"Ah, by-the-bye, Miss Bluebell," drawled Ion, "I must congratulate you on having such a pretty cousin—quite a sweet little fourteen."

"I think she has a beastly face," said Tom, who was not given to mincing his adjectives. "She'll have a good pair of nut-crackers one day, you'll see. A vixen, and no mistake."

"I fear, my dear boy," said Ion, "that you're not appreciative of female beauty. Now, I am a great admirer of sweet fourteens."

"You may eat her, for all Bluebell cares," returned Tom. "There's not much love lost between them."

"What amiable nods and smiles they put on to-day!" said Lucie. "You might have supposed them the best of friends. I thought Mrs. Viperr would have nodded her head off."

"Grinning idiots!" observed Tom, espousing my cause with ardour.

"I think," said Jack, "considering that their father was supposed to be dying only a day or two ago, that it looks rather queer of them to be gallivanting the country with that woman of Babylon, Mrs. Viperr."

"I wish," said I, "that I could see the house she lives in."

"You wouldn't say so," returned Bernard, "if you knew it's haunted with all sorts of horrors. People tell dreadful tales of it."

"Pooh!" said Tom, disdainfully. "I'd scatter all the ghosts in creation with my popgun for sixpence. I say, Bluebell, do you believe in ghosts?"

"I don't know," replied I, meditating. "I think I do."

"Talking of ghosts," said Lucie, "I must tell you all a glorious bit of news. When I had done reading to old Betty after dinner, she told me a wonderful village tale about the spirits, as she calls them. She says that the people in the cottages near the churchyard saw a funeral last night by moonlight; it was all as distinct as possible—Mr. Stewart in his surplice, the mourners, and everything quite plain. She declares the same thing was seen some time ago, and a lot of people died after it."

"I have no doubt of it," observed Ion; "people have an unfortunate knack of dying after everything. But at what hour is this ghostly procession to be seen?"

"Midnight, of course—the magic hour; but I suppose any sort of strong moonlight would do."

"It would be rather jolly to get a peep at this ghostly funeral," said Jack; "one doesn't get such a chance every day."

"Defend us!" cried Ion, in pretended alarm; "pray, don't suggest such a thing! What! leave one's bed to shiver in a churchyard at midnight! Aren't there enough woes in this miserable vale of tears without seeking to add to their number?"

"How do you think Bluebell will be able to read her chapters for father, if we sit gabbling here?" said Lucie. "I must run in to see what mother and Zoe are doing."

"Stop—I'll come too," said Jack.

"Wait an instant," said Ion, "and I'll try to stagger along with you, if some one will kindly help me to my feet."

In a few minutes Bernard sauntered out to look after the rabbits, and Tom and I were left alone. He was kicking his feet vigorously on the floor, and whistling snatches of a tune he seemed to know very imperfectly. All of a sudden he stopped, and said, with a poetical abbreviation of my name:

"Blub, you and me 'll go and see this churchyard ghost—eh?"

"I'd love to go," replied I, seized by a spirit of adventure. "But how can we? We'd be sure to be found out."

"Not we. I can manage the job, you shall see."

"But just think if your father"——

"Oh, bother! No fear of him. I know a trick or two, and we'll do the job in first-rate style, so long as you're not funky. You mustn't scream or yowl, that's all."

"Oh, I won't scream. I don't think I ever do."

"All right; be a good little child, and learn your lesson for to-night perfectly out here; and if anybody asks for me, say I'm gone over to poor old Betty—she and I are awful old cronies together."

CHAPTER XVIII.

BABY'S JOURNEY.

When I had read and digested what my uncle sent me through Ion, I returned to the house, where I found some of the party; and Zoe and Baby engaged in an animated conversation in a corner. Zoe was saying:

"You can't, indeed; you oughtn't even to tell about such a thing—it's naughty."

"I'll take my dolly, if I like," said Baby.

"Oh, darling, you mustn't talk like that," said Zoe, "or perhaps you won't be allowed to go at all. Only good little girls ever go, you know."

"I *am* a dood dirl, and I *will* doe," said Baby, stoutly.

"Indeed you won't; or, if you did, you'd never be happy. Mother says naughty children would be miserable if they went to heaven."

"*You* shan't doe," replied the little one; "I'll tell them to shut the door tight, and to lock you out, betause you're a naughty dirl, and I shall tell Ma."

She ended with a little sob, and Ion, who had ensconced himself in the softest arm-chair in the room, now called out:

"Did they say you mustn't doe, then? Yes, you *shall* doe." (Then to Zoe.) "Where does she want to go?"

"She's angry with me because I told her she couldn't take her doll to heaven," was Zoe's answer.

"How do you know she won't?" asked I.

"What! Take her doll?" asked Zoe, in utter surprise.

"Of course," said I. "I know she can't take this doll with her; but she may have another and a far nicer one up there."

"What! A doll!"

"Yes. Why not?"

"I never heard such a thing," said Zoe. "Bluebell, you are the funniest girl"——

"I don't think I'm a bit funny. I thought heaven was to be the happiest place possible, and I'm sure Baby wouldn't be happy anywhere without her doll."

"Stuff!" said Bernard, "as if there'd be such things as dolls up there! Perhaps you think there are marbles, and ninepins, and cricket-bats."

"I don't know; but I'm sure there'll be everything to make us happy; and children can't live without playing," said I.

"Oh, you stupid!" cried Zoe. "Why, in heaven people sing all day, and fly about with crowns on their heads."

"Or play tunes on harps," said Bernard.

"Or else say their prayers," added Zoe, "or sing hymns."

"Or stand on the sea of glass, bowing down and worshipping," wound up Bernard.

"Well," said I, "I don't want to go there if those are the sort of things they do. I should be miserable, and mope to death."

"For shame!" exclaimed Zoe. "You couldn't mope to death, because people never die there."

"I'd cry my eyes out then."

"You couldn't do that either," said Bernard, "because all tears are wiped away."

"Well, I wouldn't want to go there, at any rate," said I; "but I don't believe one bit what you say is true. That isn't a proper heaven at all, I'm sure."

"My dear child," said Lucie, "you forget that you will be a glorified being then. Your tastes—your very nature will be purified."

"That's all very true," said Ion; "but I shouldn't wonder if Bluebell is not so wrong, after all. I have no faith in the heaven that is too commonly taught to children, I must say. To me it always sounds such idle work, this flying in the air with crown and harp. Heaven is surely not a land of idleness—we shall have abundance of occupation."

"It will be a higher life altogether," said Jack.

"Ah," said Ion, speaking more seriously than I had ever heard him before, "it will be a state of happiness such as we can have no idea of here. Our natures will be raised and purified, and we shall have a thousand pleasures that these wretched bodies can never enjoy, independently of much higher enjoyments. Think of having no pain, no sorrow, no trial, no sort of suffering, and nothing to worry or grumble about."

"Mayn't I take my dolly, when I doe?" asked Baby, going to his knee, and speaking in such earnest, pleading tones that he exerted himself to stoop and lift her to his knee.

Tom came in and cast a look of intelligence upon me as he whispered:

"Come out to the porch for a minute—I've seen old Betty."

CHAPTER XIX.

ARITHMETIC AND RAISINS.

I found my new home a very happy one, and soon discovered the truth of what my aunt had said of there being no drones in The Hive. Lucie, I think, was the busiest bee of all. It was she who cut and put up the sandwiches and sherry for the gentlemen to take to the office; she who packed Bernard and Tom off to school every morning, looking after their mufflers and buttons; she who made the bread and the puddings, cut fresh flowers for the vases, and taught Zoe and myself, besides coaxing baby Gertrude, to learn to read.

It was such a novel way of "having school," as Zoe called it, and very delightful to me, instead of sitting in a regular schoolroom, with forms on either side of a table arranged with slates, copy-books, inkstand, ruler, &c., as we had done at Cranefells, to have lessons in what Lucie called her kingdom—a little offshoot of the kitchen, where were cupboards filled with stores of preserves, pickles, groceries, glass and china lining its walls. Here our instructress reigned supreme, whether in stirring up cakes, weighing out stores, whipping up cream or eggs, rolling out dainty pastry, shelling peas, or any other department of her housekeeping. It was all so different to the usual starch of governessdom to which I had been accustomed in my old quarters, that I thoroughly enjoyed the hours devoted to study now, although I was sadly backward, and, in many branches, much behind Zoe, though some months her senior.

"This is dictation morning," said Zoe, the first Monday after my arrival. Lucie had on her housekeeper attire, and was bending over a large deep pan, kneading bread.

"All right," she said, "bring your slates and pencils and rule lines ready; and if my Baby is very good she shall have a nice bit of dough to make a pretty cake of; won't that be nice? Ready for your first sentence?" she said, presently, kneading away.

"Yes," replied I, expecting a quotation from a copy-book, or some wise maxim.

"I am dreadfully afraid," said Lucie, rubbing some flour off the end of her nose with her arm, and putting a great deal more on without knowing it—"I am dreadfully afraid that the yeast I am going to use for this bread isn't (don't forget your apostrophe, mind) perfectly fresh. Now, Zoe, don't give me such miserable scribble as you did last week, or I shall be obliged to shake you,

or do something terrible to you. There's a sweet little lump of dough for my Baby to make into 'Pat a cake, pat a cake, baker's man,'" she went on, tossing it over to Gertrude's corner of the table.

When the dictation lesson was over, my spelling was highly commended, but the uneven, sprawling writing in which I indulged much censured.

"You'll take more pains next time, won't you, dear?" said Lucie, seeing the downcast look I wore at my shortcomings. "Rome wasn't built in a day, you know; and I'm sure, with a little patience, those untidy-looking letters could be converted into very respectable ones. Now for some sums, while I stone these raisins. Don't you think, my Baby, that pretty little cake is quite black enough from your fat paws for us to pop it in the oven for dolly's dinner—eh? Run and give it cook, and tell her to bake it beautiful and brown, and then come back to help me stone the raisins for our cake."

If there was one thing above another specially distasteful to me it was arithmetic; but Lucie's method of imparting instruction was so pleasant, and made the lessons so easy and interesting, that I almost forgot my dislike to sums.

"Now, children, listen and be ready. Here in this jar I have one hundred and ninety-six raisins. I give twenty-five to Baby, three dozen to Bluebell, and fourscore to Zoe. Well, have you got it all down? My dear child (to Zoe), what a frightful '8' you have made! Pray, rub it out. Don't you know how many go to a score, Bluebell? Baby, darling, I'm afraid our cake will come badly off for plums if you're going to gobble them up as fast as you stone them!"

"I'm not dobbling every one; see there!" said Gertrude, triumphantly, throwing one into the dish before her.

"Well, that's a beginning, at any rate. (To us): Have you set it down right? Fourscore to Zoe was the last. Baby, not being content with what I had given her, came slily to the jar and took out sixteen more (only make believe, you know, little ones); but I snatch hold of her fat little fingers, and take half of them away—not the fingers, only the raisins. Now, find out for me how many I have left."

"What do you think of our Bluebell?" asked Aunt Esther of Lucie, later in the day, when I happened to be outside the sitting-room putting on my hat in the hall—"is she particularly backward in her studies?"

"She's quick enough," was Lucie's reply; "but she needs a good deal of taming and rubbing up. We must give her a very gentle rein."

CHAPTER XX.

CHATTERING TEETH AND QUAKING KNEES.

"Not a sound, for your life!"

"You mind your boots don't squeak. You should have taken them off."

"Don't let the door bang, or I'll never speak to you again."

"Hush! What's that?"

A step sounded on the upper staircase for a moment, as if some one was passing from one room to another; then there was silence, but for the loud ticking of the hall clock. I had reached the foot of the stairs, and stood holding my breath, with a delicious kind of fear tingling all over me—the fascination of a coming adventure and the dread of detection combined. By the dim light of the hall lamp, which was always kept burning at night, I saw a mouse dart across the mat by me, frightening two black beetles, who were holding a confab, out of their wits. If it had been at any other time, I should most likely have called out—not exactly from fear, but from habit. We stole round by the back door, Tom managing bolts and bars in a most masterly manner. We each carried a cloak, more as a disguise than anything else, and stole along in the shadow of the building and shrubs, by a short cut across the fields, to old Betty's cottage. Tom was a great favourite with her, and had played his cards so well that a candle was burning in her window, and at a gentle tap from him she herself appeared in a great frilled nightcap, and handkerchief tied round her head.

"Law gracious, Master Tom, and is it you?" she said, as if she had not expected us. "And the young lady too! Well, I never! You are sure to be dying with the cold, both of you. Come in—come in."

"No, no," replied Tom; "we want to see the ghosts now directly; we can't stop. It isn't too early, is it?"

"Law, bless us!" she exclaimed in a quavering voice; "there's no knowing what this dreadful thing is sent for. Me and Mrs. Batt next door have been quite ill ever since we saw it, and I wouldn't look at again for all the world. A good many of the neighbours are going to look for it to-night; but I'm thinking it's kind of early for the spirits to show themselves yet." She held up her little candle towards the Dutch clock in a corner, and sighed as she said, "It's a bit later than I thought; but ain't ye afraid, sir?"

We were standing inside the door arranging our cloaks so as to disguise ourselves more completely.

"Afraid!" said Tom, contemptuously. "It's all my eye. What's there to be afraid of? I don't want governor to catch us, that's all."

"To hear him talk," said the old woman, admiringly, "he's the spirit of the whole family in him, I declare. But Master Tom, you know, this is sent as a great warning to us all, ye may be sure, as I was a-saying to Martha"——

"Never mind that now," said Tom, "but just tell us which is the best place to go to see it."

"Well, sir, if you must, you must, I suppose. If you wait here for an hour or so, you can see it all from my window up stairs, I daresay; but the moon's only low now, and I doubt if it lights up all the yard yet. Me and Mrs. Batt went down to the stile by the churchyard wall."

"All right; that's where we'll go."

"Ah, take care—take care, sir," she said, shaking her head. "I'd never let ye go alone, but I dursn't go again to look at it for the world, or I might go home and go to bed, and never get up again. Ye'll see the minister himself and his white gownd all complete. Oh, 's a awful, solemn sight, l the moon a-shinin' all over the tombstones, and the white ghosts a-standin' round, and the coffin, and all! Oh, my! Oh, my!"

I was wrought up to a pitch of the highest expectation, as we stood in the shadow of the hedge that fringed a meadow overlooking the church. We stood perfectly still, half-afraid lest our very breathing should betray us. Several people had passed the lane behind us, all talking of the ghostly appearance that was expected; but we were hidden from observation, unless any one should take it into their heads to cross the stile, and take up the same position as ourselves. The moon was completely hidden by a thick cloud; but the silver lining that gilded the edges gave token of a speedy illumination.

The wind was soughing in the trees above us, giving out weird whispers, and an owl flew from a neighbouring barn, with its dismal cry. I was shivering, and Tom ventured to ask, in the softest of voices, "Cold?"

I said "No" in the same tone, although my teeth were chattering. Drawing our cloaks over our heads, we approached the stile and waited. That moon! Would it never show itself? The minutes dragged on like hours, when men's footsteps were heard approaching. Nearer the men came, talking quietly. Suddenly one stopped and said:

"I am determined to sift the matter to the bottom. There's no doubt it's some clever trick; but these things do infinite harm in a parish among the weaker brethren, and I consider it a duty to put a stop to it. That is why I sent the message begging you to assist me."

"Certainly, most certainly," was the reply to this.

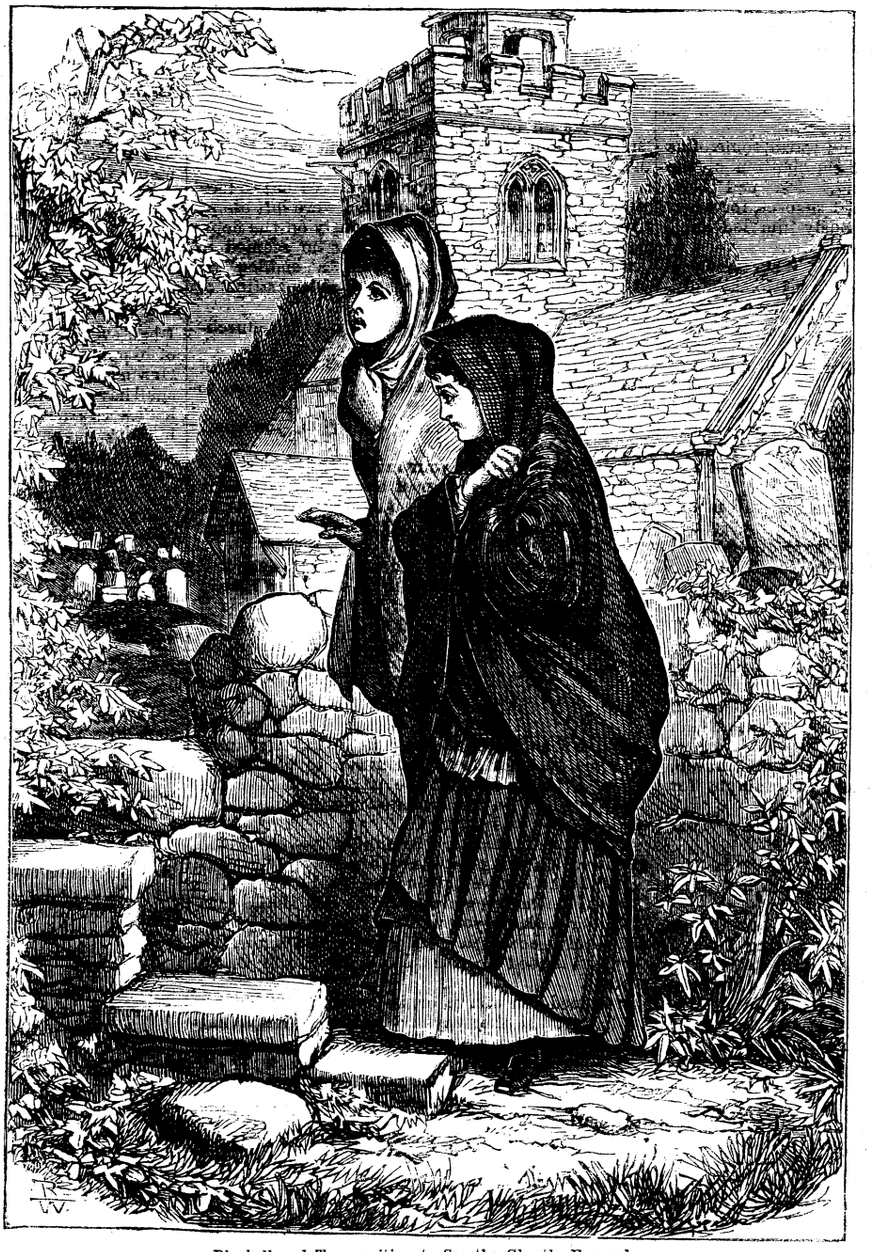
"This would be a convenient situation, I think. We might make our observations from here, under cover of the trees, and expose the whole trick—that is, if it be repeated to-night. We must be cautious, that is all."

"Yes, we must be cautious."

At that instant the moon broke out from the cloud, flooding the scene with brightness, and lighting up the sleeping world below us. My heart beat loudly, and my knees quaked. It was with the greatest difficulty I restrained myself from an exclamation, as my eye fell on two gentlemen, who were gazing intently into the churchyard. One was Mr. Stewart—the other Mr. Carringer!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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



Bluebell and Tom waiting to See the Ghostly Funeral

FRANK HOWARD.

A SEA STORY OF ADVENTURE AND DARING.

By J. A. MAITLAND.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPTURE OF THE LADRONE.

"SHE still seems to be well-manned, though she has lost twenty-six of her crew," said Douglass, looking at the pirate schooner through his spyglass.

"Yes," said I; "and she carries heavier metal than we—six eight-pound carronades on each side, by Jove, and a long gun amidships! I doubt whether she would not have proved an awkward customer had we come across her full-handed."

"She may prove so yet," was Douglass's reply; though he had not a particle of fear in his composition, and really had no doubt of the result of the conflict.

The schooner was certainly a fine-looking vessel—not such a beauty—but considerably larger than the Firefly.

As I have said, she seemed doubtful for some time whether to show fight or to bear away from us. She showed no colours until we drew very near her. Then she hoisted the Spanish flag; but presently, as if her captain had at length fully made up his mind, she came forth in her true colours, hauled down the Spanish, and hoisted a black flag in its place.

The crew of the Firefly gave three cheers, which were answered defiantly by the pirates; but in a feeble fashion—very different from the hearty, rousing, inspiriting cheers that no sailors save those of Great Britain are able to give.

"Silence, men—silence fore and aft!" I cried.

"That flag means defiance, at any rate," I observed to Douglass. "We must run her on board, if we can. It is our best chance. Her broadside is stronger than ours."

I had hardly spoken ere the pirates, believing us to be in range, commenced the conflict by firing their swivel-gun at us. The ball fell short. They had made a wrong calculation.

The quartermaster, who was conning the schooner, came towards me, and touching his cap, said:

"Mr. Howard, beggin' pardon, sir, for speakin', but that chap has made a mistake, and so taught *us* summat as we may profit by."

"How do you mean?" I asked; for, as I have said before, the two petty officers whom I had appointed to do duty on board the Firefly as gunner and quartermaster and boatswain were first-rate, experienced seamen, who, as I well knew, had been sent on board by Captain Barlow that they might advise with us in times of difficulty or danger.

"Why, sir, as you've given me leave to speak out, she've been in such a hurry to begin the fight that she've shown that her long gun ain't got anything like such a range as ours. I'm perfectly sartin as *our* swivel 'ud send a shot clear beyond the brigantine, while her'n hasn't come nigh us. Now, sir, you know as well as I as there be few vessels as can manœuvre so smartly as the Firefly, and I'm sure she can be so managed as to *keep* her out o' range of the pirates' guns, while we can pepper them as we please, till we blow them out of water, or force them to surrender."

"A capital plan, quartermaster," said I, "if our big gun *can* send a shot on board the pirate craft from this distance. What say you, gunner?"

"It's quite right what the quartermaster says, sir. If we can cripple her at this distance, it will be well to keep clear of them carronade guns of her'n, which are most twice as heavy as our'n."

"Let fly at her, then! But be sure and take good aim. Port the helm, quartermaster, and keep her off. If our big gun will serve us now, it would be folly to approach nearer to her—just yet, at any rate."

The instant the gun was fired, the quartermaster obeyed my order, and the Firefly fell off from before the wind. As soon as the smoke lifted we looked anxiously at the brigantine to see whether our shot had done any mischief.

"Bravo, gunner!" cried Douglass. "That shot was well aimed. It has struck the heel of her foretopmast. See, the mast totters, and down come mast and sail! We've crippled her, and can now have our own way with her."

There was evidently much confusion on board the brigantine, whose crew had no idea of the range of our long gun. We could see them through our glasses clearing away the wreck, and I had no doubt that some of the crew were injured by the fall of the mast.

"Try again, gunner," said I. "Take time. There's no need for hurry now. We can play with her; so be sure of your aim."

Our second shot passed through the brigantine's gaff topsail, while another shot from the pirates fell short like the first one.

Seeing this, the brigantine endeavoured to make off; but we bore down upon her directly, and soon let the pirates see that escape was hopeless. Thus driven to bay, they determined to close with us, if possible.

This we could easily have prevented; for now that she had lost her foretopmast, we could have sailed round the brigantine. But I was anxious to bring the fight to a conclusion, and I knew that we might probably fire long shots at her for hours without doing so.

"Load the swivel with grape and canister,"* said I. "We'll pass under the stern of the brigantine, and rake her fore and aft. Then, since she wants to come to close quarters with us, we'll run alongside in the confusion, and carry her by boarding."

The gun was soon reported as loaded.

"Luff up," said I to the helmsman. "Flatten in the foresail a bit. So-o! That's well. Now, as we pass under her stern, take good aim, and fire."

In a few minutes the Firefly was in the requisite position, and so near to the brigantine that the broadsides of both vessels might have taken effect.

"Now let 'em have it!" I shouted.

The gun was fired, and the wild shouts, shrieks and execrations that followed told the mischief that was effected.

The Struggle on the Pirate's Deck.—Hector Saves Frank's Life.

"Now then, steer direct for her stern," I cried. "Boarders stand by. Ease off the sheets a little. So-o—steady. Starboard a bit. Starboard. She's trying to luff across our bows. So—steady again. We've checkmated her at that game. Be prepared, boarders. Mr. Douglass will lead one party—the quarter-master the other. Board on both quarters. Small-arm men be ready to fire at the crash. Starboard again. Hard a-weather! Don't let her sheer off from us. So—jam her close. *Cr-a-sh!*" And the two vessels came together with a force that threatened to part the timbers of both, while they rose and fell in the heavy sea that had now risen as if they would grind each other's sides to powder. The brigantine's foremast, which it now appeared, had been weakened by the shot which carried away her foretopmast, fell over with the shock, killing and injuring several of the pirates, and severely injuring some of our own men—the upper part of the mast falling across our forecastle, and thus locking the two vessels together. Our men had scrambled on board over both the brigantine's quarters (those who boarded on the larboard quarter clambering up from *our* starboard quarter, as the Firefly, after striking the brigantine's stern, bounded off and crossed the larboard quarter, ere she came with a crash alongside), protected by a sharp fire from our small-arm men, led by the two marines, leaving only myself and six men on the Firefly's deck—the small-arm men having followed the rest, after discharging their muskets.

I took the wheel. The conflict that ensued was terrific, as I could tell by the continuous reports of pistols, the clash of steel, and the shrieks, oaths, and groans of the wounded, but the smoke was so dense that I could see nothing.

The pirates were overmatched after the previous loss of twenty-six men; but they fought with the desperation of men who knew that to surrender was to perish beneath the gallows.

No one can form any idea of the feeling which excites men to fury, and to the disregard of wounds or death when all their evil passions are aroused in such a scene as this. I stamped the deck with impatience, until I could bear it no longer.

"Take the wheel here," I shouted to one of the men, who remained on board. "The vessels are locked fast enough; but you, and two hands whom I will leave with you, can keep the schooner alongside should any accident threaten to separate her from the brigantine. The rest follow me!"

* Canister is a quantity of slugs, shot, heads of nails, pieces of lead or iron, &c., which are enclosed in a tin canister, which bursts open with the explosion, and the deadly contents are scattered abroad, doing fearful mischief.

I sprang on board, as I spoke, at the larboard gangway, followed by the four remaining seamen, and by the bloodhound, Hector, who had been barking furiously as if eager to take part in the conflict ever since the fight began.

"Back, Hector—back, good dog," I cried. But the hound for once disobeyed me; and, springing past me, rushed into the thick of the combat.

"Well, well," said I, "perhaps he may be of service. I told Captain Barlow he would be as good as two extra hands."

Little did I think, as I spoke, of the *great* service he would render me.

The deck of the pirate was slippery with blood, and encumbered with the bodies of dead and wounded men, who in the fierce conflict were trampled upon alike by friend and foe. The scene was fearful, had any one had time at that moment to think of it, or of anything else save the desire for slaughter. Soon, however, there were signs of weakness on the part of the pirates, who were reduced to less than a dozen men still able to continue the fight, while the crew of the Firefly had suffered terribly. I received a wound through the fleshy part of my left arm; but I scarcely felt it at the moment, though it bled profusely. Douglass I could not find, and I knew not whether he were alive or dead.

At length the pirate captain, who was almost the only one of the brigantine's crew that was unhurt, hauled down his flag, and cried for quarter. In the mad fury of the conflict, some time elapsed before quarter was given. On both sides the men fought, and tore each other with the savage pertinacity of bull-dogs. In a few minutes, however, I caused my men to desist, and the pirates drew back. I went off to receive the surrender of the pirate chief. But *he* had no notion of surrender. His hauling down of his flag was a mere feint to enable him to gratify his craving for revenge. A fine, tall, handsome young Spaniard, he stood quietly, with his arms folded across his breast, until I was close to him. Then quickly pulling a pistol from his belt, he fired at me, the ball passing through my cap, and actually grazing my skull and partially stunning me, while before I could recover myself, he drew his sword, and saying in broken English through his clenched teeth—

"Dog of one Englize. You tink to make me you prisonier; but, per Dio, first you shall die!"—he would surely have run me through the body, had not Hector at that instant sprang upon him, and brought him to the deck, where the dog and man rolled frantically over and over each other. At length Hector seized the pirate by the throat, and in another minute he would have been a corpse; for I was ready to faint from loss of blood, and was powerless to call the dog off, much less to seize him. However, as I reeled round and fell against the bulwarks, I beckoned to two of the sailors of the Firefly, by whose joint efforts Hector, though not without great difficulty, was drawn off before he had inflicted mortal injury upon the captain, though he left him senseless on the deck and streaming with blood. The rest of the pirates were soon secured. Out of thirty men, but four were unwounded, and eight only were able to stand. Twelve lay dead upon the decks, and most of the remainder were mortally injured.

Of the crew of the Firefly, eleven were slain, and fifteen more were more or less severely—three of them mortally—wounded. Douglass now approached me as I partially recovered from my swoon—though I did not fall to the deck, but lay against the bulwark—with his right arm bound up, and his head bandaged. He had received two cutlass wounds—though, fortunately, neither was very severe. One of my two marines had fallen, and the gunner had received a bullet wound in his shoulder. The quartermaster had escaped unhurt; but of the forty-two men who constituted the crew of the Firefly—not including Douglass and myself—but twenty-eight remained, for the three men who had been fatally injured died soon after the conflict ceased; and of these twenty-eight, six or seven were too severely wounded to be able to perform any duty. And, by the way, I have forgotten to mention the "boy" Cato, who, though eighty years old, had been among the first party of boarders and had escaped unhurt.

"A sharp fight this has been, Howard," said Douglass, shaking hands with me, when he drew near. "They told me," he added with a smile, "that you had received your quietus. I thought *I* was the commander of the Firefly now; but I find myself mistaken. Never mind. Better luck next time."

I knew Douglass was joking, and I replied that I was glad to see that he had got off so easily.

"It *has* been a sharp fight," I continued—"as sharp a fight, considering the numbers engaged, as ever was fought at sea. We have suffered severely; but we have captured the pirates"——

"Whose captain," said Douglass, "deserves to be thrown to the sharks for his treachery."

"He will hang for it, and that will be better," I replied.

The weather now began to look alarmingly threatening. Old Cato and some of our men who had experienced a hurricane in the West Indian seas declared that one was at hand, and Cato's advice was that we should instantly return to port. We were, however, a hundred miles from Port Royal, the nearest port; and to our great alarm and regret, we found that the Firefly had been so terribly shaken in coming alongside the brigantine, that she had sprung a leak below the water-mark, where it could not be stopped at sea, and had wrenched adrift the keel of her foremast, so that it was impossible to carry sail upon the mast unless in very light weather. Except in her spars, the brigantine, a much stronger vessel, was uninjured; and Cato's advice was that we should carry the brigantine into Port Royal, and leave the Firefly to her fate. To this, however, I refused to listen. I resolved to stick to the Firefly to the last; but I determined to send Douglass to Port Royal in charge of the brigantine—whose name we now discovered was the Ladrone—with the surviving pirates and all the remaining crew of the Firefly, except six men, whom I kept to navigate her. The dead of our own men as well as the pirates we threw overboard; but the prisoners, who numbered fifteen, including the captain and the six men we had taken from the boat that contained the females we had rescued, were heavily ironed, and confined below decks in the brigantine. I retained almost all the unwounded men we had left with me, as, having no doctor in the Firefly, it was necessary that our wounded men, as well as the wounded pirates, should reach port as soon as possible. These, therefore, were sent off in the brigantine; also the captain and mate of the ship, whom we had taken on board; and the three ladies, who had remained safe in the Firefly's cabin during the conflict, I intended to have sent into port in the brigantine. But at this moment a ship came in sight, and seeing us apparently in distress, bore down to us; and as the brigantine, with so many wounded men on board, would have poor accommodation for females, the captain of this ship offered to take the women and the master and mate of the ship that had been scuttled by the pirates as passengers to Port Morant, whither the ship we now spoke was bound.

Cato, who was anxious to get home, and whose services as a pilot might be useful to the captain of this ship, was likewise taken on board of her.

The ship then set sail, the captain being anxious to reach port ere the threatened hurricane should break forth. In fact, *he* also advised me to leave the Firefly to her fate, and either go on board the brigantine, or take passage in his ship; but I was determined to remain by the schooner, having little doubt that I could carry her safely into port with the aid of my six men, including the quartermaster, though I took the precaution of removing the box, that contained the thirty-eight thousand dollars in gold, to the cabin of the Ladrone, which then set sail—Douglass and his crew giving us three hearty cheers ere they left us alone, leaky and disabled upon the wide waters of the ocean.

The wind had changed, though it blew hard now from the south-west, and threatened to blow harder. It was, however, a leading wind for the ship and the brigantine, both of which were soon out of sight, though the brigantine was so much the quicker sailer that we lost sight of her altogether long before the ship was hull down.

Then my men and I set to work. We contrived in some manner to stop the leak, though we had to keep the pumps almost constantly going, while those not at the pumps endeavoured to strengthen the foremast, so that it might at least bear some sail. This was no easy task. *I* worked as hard as the rest, taking my spell at the pumps in my turn, though I was much weakened from loss of blood, and the wound in my arm was very painful.

At length, however, we were enabled to set the foresail close reefed, the mast being well stayed, and before nightfall the little Firefly, crippled as she was, was slowly sailing along on her way to Port Royal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST OF THE FIREFLY.

We kept watch and watch on board the Firefly throughout the night. Weak as I was, I worked as hard or harder than the rest. We were but a fair day's sail distant from Port Royal, but in the present condition of the vessel, we could carry but little sail, and the most we could get out of her was three knots an hour, while towards midnight, the wind which had barely permitted us to lie our course during the day, veered further to the westward and compelled us to tack. Thus, in our present condition, we made little progress, and the leak which we had temporarily lessened, though we could not stop it, began again to gain upon us. Still I hoped to reach port in twenty-four hours, and I endeavoured to keep up my own spirits and those of my crew as best I could. At two o'clock a.m. I went below for a few hours, and, utterly wearied and faint as I was, soon fell asleep. I had left orders that I was to be called instantly if any change took place, otherwise I was not to be disturbed till six o'clock. At five a.m. the man whom I had left in charge of the deck came below and awoke me. The weather, he said, looked very squally, and he thought it was his duty to call me. When I went upon deck, I found that it was quite calm. Daylight was just dawning, and not a breath of wind could be felt; but the atmosphere was most oppressive, and the sky presented the most strange aspect to the eastward that I had ever beheld. The sea was as smooth as the surface of a mirror, but there was a heavy swell upon the water as if a gale of wind was blowing at no great distance, and at times there was a strange rumbling sound audible, like the roar of the surf breaking upon a lee shore.

Neither I nor any one on board had ever experienced a hurricane, and on the previous day I had ridiculed the warnings of Cato, the negro pilot, and the men whose long experience in the West Indies had enabled them to judge of the aspects of the weather.

I confess that I was now greatly alarmed, although I endeavoured to conceal my alarm from the crew; and great as was my desire to carry the Firefly safe into port, I now wished with all my heart that I had left her to her fate, and gone on board our prize, the Ladrone. She, I had little doubt, was by this time in port, or, at any rate, close to the land; though I thought the ship in which the master and mate, who had been victimized by the pirates, and the three females, had taken passage, must yet be a considerable distance from Port Morant.

I instantly ordered all sail to be taken in, so that we might be prepared for whatever might happen; and being fearful that we should very soon be compelled to batten down the hatches, I ordered the man who served as cook to prepare a good breakfast for all hands immediately.

We had all breakfasted before seven o'clock, and still there was not a breath of wind; but the sky presented the same singular appearance, and the rumbling noise I have spoken of was more distictly audible. In the east, on the verge of the horizon, a fiery-red line separated the sea and sky. Above this line a mass of black cloud rested, amidst which zigzag lines of forked lightning played incessantly. Above this mass of cloud was a large space in the heavens, presenting a white colour, not like cloud, but of the hue of iron melted to a white heat, which was constantly in motion, as if it were boiling and bubbling like molten lead. Elsewhere all around the horizon the blackness was intense, while immediately overhead, the black, inky clouds appeared to descend almost to our mastheads. More and more oppressive became the atmosphere, until it was difficult to us to draw our breath, while the darkness everywhere, save in the east, increased to such a degree that I was unable to see the time by my watch without a light.

Thus it continued until eight a.m., when heavy drops of rain began to fall, Suddenly the light in the east was extinguished, and we were enveloped in the darkness of midnight. Thus the weather remained for half an hour, when suddenly the sky above split asunder, as it were. Fierce flashes of lightning darted forth in every direction, and rain fell in torrents. Then the wind burst forth from the east in a tremendous squall that would have surely capsized the vessel had we had an inch of canvas spread, and we drifted before the wind as if we were being blown along on the surface of the sea. It was impossible to look to windward and breathe, or to stand upon deck without clinging with all our might to the bulwarks, or to some cleet or belaying pin.

Thus for an hour were we blown along the surface of the water, from which the little vessel seemed actually to be lifted by the force of the wind. I could never have believed that wind possessed such force; while the terrible rushing noise almost completely deadened the sound of the thunder that rolled incessantly, and the only light we had was the lurid glare of the lightning which flashed around us in every direction. We were struck breathless with awe, as the schooner was borne along, we knew not whither, by the mighty power of the elements, absolutely beyond human control. At ten a.m. the fury of the hurricane slightly moderated, and the darkness partially cleared up. With much difficulty, and at the risk of being blown overboard, we got a

tarpaulin spread across the foremast; and, getting the vessel before the wind, were enabled to guide her in some degree with the helm, although the helmsman had to be firmly lashed to the wheel. I then consulted the chart, and found that the hurricane was blowing from the south-east, and that our only hope of saving the vessel and our lives was to run before the wind for Savanna la Mar, on the west coast of Jamaica.

For eight hours the hurricane continued in its force. The entire vault of heaven was of inky blackness, the thunder and lightning were incessant, and the rain fell in torrents. Then the wind partially moderated, and the sea, hitherto kept down by the force of the hurricane, began to rise. Our situation was now worse than before; for the little vessel was in no fit condition to be tossed to and fro by a rough sea. The rain, however, ceased; but the threatening clouds overhead sank lower still, and seemed to boil and whirl in sooty convolutions, like the black smoke that issues forth from the funnel of a steamboat. As night drew near—not known by the increasing darkness, for the darkness had continued throughout the day, but by the time marked by my watch—I began to fear that we were in dangerous proximity to the land; yet I could not have altered our course if I would. Moreover, we had been unable to stand to the pumps; the leak had gained upon us. The little vessel had already sunk to the level of her scuppers, and I dreaded lest she would founder at any moment. Oh, how I cursed the obstinacy and pride which had led me to laugh at the advice of men more experienced than myself, and old enough to have had sons older than I, and to risk not only my own life, but the lives of the men entrusted to my charge!

As if the elements were combined to compass our destruction, a fresh peril now arose. The man at the helm called my attention to a dark column, which descended perpendicularly from the sky, in the quarter whence the wind blew. While I was looking at it, this column bent to its lower extremity, while it skimmed rapidly towards us, as it were, on the surface of the sea. Then the lower portion, which had become straightened, again inclined to an angle of thirty degrees with the horizon, and became denser than before.

In a few moments the whole pillar of water took the same slanting direction, and brightened up like a sunbeam shooting forth towards us.

The effect amid the impenetrable darkness with which we were surrounded was awful to look upon. Then ere it reached us, the hurricane for the moment redoubled its force. A white, fiery line came creeping towards us, winding and undulating like a serpent as it rose and fell, and swerved to and fro on the summit of the mountainous billows; and the ocean all around us suddenly assumed the aspect of liquid flame! Something fleecy white rose, as it were, out of the sea on our lee bow. It was, I knew full well, the foam of breakers lashed into fury by the violence of the wind.

"Look out—look out ahead!" I shouted, though I knew no one could hear me, and that if they *could* hear me, the cry was useless.

Then there came a terrible shock, as if heaven and earth had clashed together. For a few moments I felt that I was struggling for life amid the breakers, and then I knew no more!

* * * * *

It was a calm, starlit night, when waking, as I thought, from a sound slumber, I found myself lying on the deck of a large sugar-drogher, manned by negroes, and bound, as I learnt from inquiry, to a sugar estate about fifty miles eastward from Port Royal. Lying beside me was Hector, the noble Spanish bloodhound, who, on seeing me stir, gave vent to a loud whine, and when I called him by name, sprang to his feet, and licked my hands and feet with every demonstration of canine delight.

"Hi! Massa buckra come to he'se'f, at last!" exclaimed a negro, who was steering the little vessel.

"What is this? Where am I? What has become of the Firefly?" I inquired, as I sat up in the folded sail which had served me for a bed.

The negro master of the drogher came to me on hearing the sound of my voice:

"De Firefly, massa?" said he. "Nebber see de Firefly no more. De Firefly strike on de Pedro bank in de hurricane tree days ago. Him go to pieces. Eberybody but massa drown. Massa *him* drown too, only de hound dar save him."

I felt now that I was sorely bruised, and so weak that I was unable to stand. From the negro crew I learnt all that had taken place. Three days before, when the hurricane which had devastated the coast, and strewed the shore with wrecks, ceased, the captain of the drogher, who had put to see to obtain a cargo of sugar for a vessel lying at Port Morant, saw me floating on a spar, on the Pedro bank, a few miles distant from Port Royal. Near me, resting his fore-paws upon another spar, was the bloodhound, almost exhausted, but still keeping guard over me. Pieces of wreck strewed around told the negroes what had happened, and that his Majesty's schooner Firefly, whose name was painted on one of the pieces of spar, had struck the bank in the hurricane, and gone to pieces. All on board of her save myself and the noble dog that had twice saved my life—for the mark of his teeth was visible in the collar of my jacket, telling how he had supported me, and swam with me to a spar—had perished!

For the moment I wished that *I* had perished too. I had captured a slaver, and I had taken the pirate schooner that had for so long been the scourge of the Antilles*; but at what a cost! I had lost the beautiful little vessel I had been appointed to command; and of the crew of forty-two able seamen put on board of her by Captain Barlow, but twenty-two remained, even if those who had been transferred to the brigantine had weathered the hurricane, and reached the shore in safety!

What would be said of this? I feared that my career in the service was for ever blighted. I should be tried by court-martial for the loss of the vessel—*that* I knew full well. But what would be the result? Should I be honourably acquitted?—or, more likely, should I not be charged with recklessness and incompetency? And would I not bring reproof upon Captain Barlow, who would, in all probability, be blamed and severely reprimanded for entrusting so important a command to a boy of fifteen years, who had been but three years at sea?

In my weak condition, fevered by the wound in my arm, which was terribly inflamed, and so painful that at times it almost drove me mad, I dreaded the worst, and felt half inclined to throw myself overboard, and end my misery. Alas, I knew not yet half the trouble I had brought upon myself, or I believe that, in my half-crazy condition, I *should* have cast myself into the sea!

The negroes were kind and attentive. They had washed and bandaged my wound while I lay unconscious, and now they did gladly all that lay in their power to make me comfortable; but all they did was in vain. I wished to land at Port Royal, and learn the worst at once. I was anxious to ascertain whether the Ladrone had weathered the hurricane and arrived at Port Royal. If not, all the crew of the Firefly, save myself, had perished.

At my urgent request, the negro captain at length consented to go out of his way and land me at Port Royal, and two days after I was picked up on the Pedro bank I was set on shore.

To my surprise and delight, as I wended my way feebly along the quay I met Douglass, who stared at me with amazement, then congratulated me on my safety, and led me away to the hotel at which he was stopping.

"So the Ladrone weathered the hurricane?" said I.

"There she lies," he replied, pointing to the vessel which lay alongside the quay some distance off.

"I feared that you were lost," I continued; "but since you brought the pirate vessel into port, things are not so bad as I dreaded. Has the ship arrived, to which the captain and mate, and the three females we rescued from the pirates, were transferred?"

"No," answered Douglass. "It is feared that she has gone down. The mischief done by the hurricane is terrible. Whole estates on shore are ruined, the coast is strewn with wrecks, and it is feared that eighteen or twenty vessels have foundered at sea. We escaped only by the skin of our teeth."

"And the prisoners—the pirates?"

"Are undergoing their trial at Kingston."

"Then matters are not so bad as I feared," said I, much relieved. "I shall be tried by court martial; but the capture of the pirates will count in my favour, and I shall be acquitted; though I fear that I shall be blamed for having lost so many men. Our seamen who went on board the Ladrone are safe?"

"Yes."

"And the trial—how does it go on?"

"I will not answer another question," replied Douglass, "until you have rested yourself, and had some refreshment. You are scarcely able to stand."

This was true. I suffered Douglass to lead me to his hotel, where, after I had partaken of refreshment, I went to bed, and slept soundly until the following morning. I awoke much refreshed, and breakfasted with Douglass, whom I eagerly questioned as to all that occurred after he parted from me at sea.

"First of all tell me what occurred to *you*," said he, "and how the Firefly and those six poor fellows of ours were lost."

This I did.

"They cannot blame *you* for the loss of the vessel, though she *was* a lovely little craft," said he, when I had ended my story; "nor for the loss of the poor fellows' lives who perished. The hurricane was tremendous. Hardly a vessel that was exposed to its fury escaped. The Ladrone would have been wrecked, without doubt, had we not arrived in port in the very nick of time; and the mischief done on shore is almost as great as that done at sea. But, my dear fellow, prepare yourself for ill news. Do you remember the name of the vessel, supposed to have foundered, to which we transferred the females we rescued, and the master and mate of the vessel that was scuttled by the pirates?"

"I do not," I replied. "In the confusion and the excitement that prevailed, and weak and wounded as I was, I don't think I heard it mentioned, or noticed it. But what of that?"

"I trusted, when, to my great joy, I met you, whom I believed to have perished, this morning, on the quay, to your recollection of the vessel's name," answered Douglass. "But it is with you as with all of us. We were all too excited to think of the name of the ship, or to remember it if we heard it."

"Still," said I, "I cannot see what that can matter."

"I matters this much," Douglass replied. "Those opposed to us affect to believe that there neither is nor was any such ship. They say that we made up the story amongst ourselves, in order to cover our own misconduct."

"Impossible!" I exclaimed.

"You will find that it is both possible and true," said Douglass; and then he explained to me how the pirate captain on his arrival had sent for one of the ablest lawyers in Jamaica, though an utterly unprincipled man, who had visited him in prison, and undertaken the defence of himself and his comrades. "You must know," he continued, "that this fellow (the lawyer) is of Spanish descent, as are many merchants, and other persons of influence on the island, and many of these people sympathize with pirates and slavers. It is intimated that the father of this lawyer made his fortune by slave-ships, and some people say by secret piracy. Well, the pirate captain has sworn that he was following a respectable occupation as captain of a merchant brigantine bound from Porto Rico to New Orleans, when he was fired into, boarded, and captured, after the massacre of several of his crew, by us in the Firefly, who believed, or professed to believe, that the Ladrone was a piratical vessel. He flatly denies that he plundered and scuttled any vessel, or captured any persons, males or females, and he and his men alike declare that the story of the scuttled ship was made up by us to excuse our misconduct, as also is the story of the ship to which the females were transferred—which has unfortunately, as is almost certain, foundered during the hurricane. What gives a colour of truth to this story is the fact of no one of *us* being able to state the name of the ship. Nay, some of our men made matters worse by stating different names, upon which the lawyer called the attention of the judges to this contradiction as a proof of falsity"——

"But," said I, "the trial is not ended?"

"No," continued Douglass, "it has but just begun."

"And the jury—they surely will not listen to such ridiculous nonsense?"

"The jury," said Douglass, "is composed of six Spaniards and six natives of Jamaica, and, with the exception of the English foreman (Mr. Wilson), the Spaniards are much the cleverest, and the most unprincipled of the lot. They can twist the others round their fingers."

"Mr. Wilson," said I, "that is the merchant who was so angry at our conduct when the Firefly lay at Port Royal."

"The same; and though he is an honest man, I believe, and a rich merchant, who would be glad to see the pirates get their deserts, the verdict will be decided by the majority; and if he finds himself compelled to let the pirates go free, he will be all the more embittered against us, as many of the merchants are. It is a pity, Howard, that we conducted ourselves so haughtily."

"That can't be helped now," said I. "But what you have told me perfectly astounds me! If these scoundrels are acquitted, we, or at least the Government, will be called upon to recompense the men who have suffered through their capture by the Firefly."

* A name given to the West Indian islands.

"Certainly it will."

"And that will make matters still worse for us, or for me at least."

"Let us hope that something may yet turn up to prove the case against the pirates," said Douglass. "The ship, with the captain and mate and the three females on board, may yet arrive."

"I fear," said I, "that there is very little hope of that. Good heavens, after all my endeavours to do well, and after all I have gone through, is this to be the end of it? I shall at once quit the service."

"If *you* and *I* be not both dismissed," said Douglass. "One thing is in our favour. It is reported that the war has recommenced more fiercely than ever, and the Government will stand in need of officers. But never mind, old fellow. If the worst comes to the worst, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your duty to the best of your ability."

"Little satisfaction in that," said I, "if one is blamed, and made to pay for so doing."

"Well, well," replied Douglass, "let us hope that something will turn up to alter the present position of affairs, and secure the conviction of these rascally pirates. The trial is postponed until the day after to-morrow, and there is no saying what may occur between now and then. Meanwhile, it is useless to fret about it. So come for a stroll; and you'd better see some doctor about your wounded arm. I'll take you to the doctor who attended to me. Come away."

And buoyed up by that youthful lightheartedness which so quickly banishes unpleasant thoughts and recollections, Douglass and I resolved to cast our cares aside for the time being, and to enjoy ourselves while we were able to do so, trusting that Fortune, however much she frowned upon us now, would favour us in the end.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MILLIE'S FORTUNE.

A FAIRY TALE.

THE day had been very long to little Millie Joyce. She had been left to tidy up the poor little room she called home, and to mind the baby while Mrs. Martin went out to her work, for she was a widow, and supported herself and child by washing, as well as the little orphaned Millie.

Upon this particular day she was away early, and expected to stay late, and Millie did her best to make the room look neat.

She scoured and scrubbed until her little hands and back ached; then rocked the baby to sleep, and seating herself by the cradle, began to think of the wonderful fairy tales she had read.

"Oh, dear," sighed she, "how I do wish there were such things as fairy godmothers nowadays."

"Do you, indeed?" squeaked a thin, sharp voice by her side.

Millie started with a feeling of terror, and glanced hastily around. There, sure enough, in the dim twilight, stood a tiny figure, the exact counterpart of the picture of the old fairy godmother in "Cinderella, and the Glass Slipper"—scarlet cloak, steeple-crowned hat, and high-heeled shoes. Her face was wrinkled, but her beady black eyes were bright and merry. In her very small hand she carried the wonderful wand with which she changed ugliness to beauty.

"Do you, indeed?" she repeated. "Well, here I am, little Miss Millie Joyce. You see I know all about you, and that you are a good little girl—patient, dutiful, and industrious."

"Oh, dear," whispered Millie, rubbing her eyes to see if she were not dreaming, her heart beating loudly beneath her little faded gown.

"Don't be frightened, deary. I will not harm you. I am going to give you a taste of the good things you were born for, and richly deserve. There!"

As she spoke she touched Millie with her wand, and in an instant she was clothed in a lovely scarlet merino dress, richly braided, and with a ruche of soft lace at throat and wrist.

In fact, she was completely transformed into a beautifully-dressed little maiden. Millie clapped her hands in delight as she surveyed the change, and, with tears trembling upon her long, golden lashes, exclaimed:

"How beautiful!"

"I am going to send you now into a grand house, where you will be delighted with everything. Never fear; I will mind baby while you are gone."

Again the fairy touched Millie with her wand. A rose-coloured cloud seemed to float suddenly about and clasp her in, shutting out all her humble surroundings. And presently she felt herself being lifted up and carried swiftly along—so swiftly that it almost took away her breath. But at length her feet touched something solid, yet soft, and the rosy cloud drifted slowly asunder, leaving her standing upon a rich, mossy carpet in a most exquisitely furnished room, one end of which opened into a grand conservatory, where bloomed rare and beautiful flowers, and birds of brilliant plumage sang all the day long, while mimic fountains scattered perfumed waters over snow-white lilies.

Upon a couch of crimson velvet lay a poor little invalid girl whose back was distorted into a huge, unsightly lump. Yet her face was patient and lovely, and her voice sweet.

"So you have come, little girl? Mamma said I should have you for a companion and friend. I saw you one day as I was riding out, and mamma has found out all about you, and that your mamma was an old schoolmate of hers. Aren't you glad?"

Millie was about to rush forward and kiss the sweet face of the sick child, and tell her how thankful she was, when the voice of Mrs. Martin said:

"How the child does sleep! Wake up, Millie. Here is Mrs. Durand, the lady I have been working for, and she knew your ma, and wants you to live with her."

Millie got up, rubbed her eyes, looked at her shabby frock, and whispered:

"Oh, dear, it was only a dream."

But soon she found out it was not all a dream. The lady had really come for her, and did take her to a home very like the one the fairy had shown her, and she became the adopted sister of a poor little cripple, whom she had noticed one day riding past in a grand carriage. And now she is very happy, but not forgetful of poor Mrs. Martin, who had been so kind to her when she was homeless.

THE FAIRIES' REVELS.

WHEN the silent night is spreading
Like a phantom o'er the sky;
When the glitt'ring stars are shedding
Silv'ry light, the fays draw nigh.

When the pale moon passes lightly
On its peaceful, silent way,
Casting rays, which, shining brightly,
Rouse up every slumb'ring fay;

When the nightingale's sweet chanting
Breaks the silence of the night,
And the tree which she is haunting
Shakes its leaflets green and bright;

When the rippling brooks are flowing
Where the water-lilies blow,
And the bulrushes are growing
While the wind sings mute and low;

Then, from out their hiding-places,
Beds of flow'rets, bright and gay,
Charmed by many hundred graces,
Gently trips each graceful fay.

Hark! Sweet music now comes stealing,
Borne upon a zephyr's wings;
And the trees, the strange charm feeling,
Sigh like animated things.

Where the briar, lost in slumber,
Twines about the mig ity tree;
And wild flow'rets, without number,
Form a beauteous canopy;

Where a human footstep never
Stirred the grasses tall and green—
That lone spot which has not ever
By a mortal's eye been seen:

There each night the fays, attended
By their beauteous Fairy Queen,
Revel on till midnight's ended,
Solitary and unseen.

Thus of old they met together
Under night's star-spangled hood,
And, by moonlight on the heather,
Wrought their spells for mortals' good.

Hence the wonders often stated
By belated trav'llers seen,
And the stories yet related
Of the fairies and their queen.

FRITZ BRAWN.

THE LAST WISHES OF A PIG.

BY HENRY L. WILLIAMS.

IT was but lately there was found, among a lot of other old writings, the original—as it is believed to be—of a curious document, which was the amusement of our forefathers as far back as the fourth century. It is written in Latin, and the translation runs as follows, as if the pig himself was tracing it with a brush of his own bristles:

"I, Gruntius Lardelius Porcellus, have taken it into my head to make my last wishes known. As my education has never been begun, I am forced to have my words taken down before I am myself hung up.

"Rostiros the Cook spoke to me thus in a rude voice: 'Come here, you muddy stumbler; a nice mess you have got the marble stones into with your feet fresh from the trough. O thou clumsy, unclean Porcellus! I am going to put a stop to such behaviour this day.'

"To the cook I made this polite reply: 'If ever I have done any harm, if I have swallowed a cup or two which was mixed up with the melon peelings and the rinsings of the stewpans, if I have pulled down the grape vines, and tumbled through the kitchen window when the big dog snapped at the curl in my wee tail, O King of the Furnace, have mercy on your fat but fearful petitioner!'

"To which Rostiros gave me no other answer than: 'Halloa, some of you idlers! fetch me the sharpest knife you have, that I may make cold pork of this impudent hog!'

"Upon which I was seized by the serving-men and bottle-washers, and my execution has been set down before the Greek Calends, when the flowers of brimstone bloom in the tops of the foundation-stones, under the consulship of Never-no-more-see-me and Pipeiri.

"Seeing that there was no hope for me, I pleaded for an hour's respite, in order to let everybody present and absent know how it fared with me. I called my kin around me to share my victuals amongst them, and remarked:

"'*Item.*—I leave to my kind papa, Blanchedus Lardimus, thirty bushels of acorns. To my respected ma, Spara Ribbina, forty bushels of wheat, with the chaff, she never having had any of the latter from me during my lifetime. To my dear, dear sister, Fatti Rondotrotta, at whose wedding I do not expect to be, ten pecks of barley.

"'My mortal remains I leave to the following people, and as follows: To the shoemakers, my bristles; to quarrellers, my teeth; to lawyers and gossips, my tongue; to little boys, my tail, to make a whistle of; to silk purse-makers, my ears; my bones to the knife-handle cutters; and my flesh to those who gave me apples and scratched my back with the rake when I was a pretty little romping porker, and much pleased the ladies with my not unmusical song; and to a certain cruel cook, whose brutal name shall not soil these pages, the rope which I am now wearing round my innocent neck, in the hope that it will fit his.

"'I would very much like a marble monument, in the shape of a pork pie, to be reared in my honour, with some such inscription as the following:

TO THE MEMORY OF THE STOUT AND PORTLY PORKER,
GRUNTIUS LARDELIUS PORCELLUS,
Who would have *Died in his 1,000th Year*, if he had lived 999 years and two months more!

"'*Codicil.*—In case of my masters and friends having a dislike to eat me, I give free permission for my body to be embalmed with sage stuffing, and a spiced lemon to be put in my mouth, a blue ribbon round my neck, and another to my curly tail.

(Signed) "'G. L. PORCELLUS.'"

STORY OF A STAR.

FOR THE YOUNGEST OF OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

BY HARRY HACHE.

"NOW, Aunt Susy, will you please tell us that story you promised?" said little Milly Davenport, one evening after tea.

Aunt Susy was very young to be an aunt; but she was as kind as aunts usually are who have nice little girls and boys for their nieces and nephews.

Milly was sitting on her own little chair beside Aunt Susy's knee. She had just smoothed out dolly's dress and laid it nicely to sleep in her lap, and as dolly lay there very quietly, and did not seem as if it would give any trouble for some time, the wise little woman thought it would be very nice to listen to Aunt Susy's soft, low voice, telling one of those pretty stories of hers. And so she asked the question.

"But you know, Milly, I only promised to tell a story if you were very good," said Aunt Susy, looking into the bright, upturned face, with a serious smile.

"Oh, I have been *very* good, auntie, haven't I, ma?"

"Yes, dear, you have been a very good child, and so has Freddy," replied Mrs. Davenport.

"There, Aunt Susy, I'm sure that ought to be enough," said Freddy; "and now you will tell us a story?"

"Yes, of course; I will keep my promise, and I am pleased to find that you have kept yours. Well, then," continued Aunt Susy, "I will tell you a story of a little girl whom I knew a few years ago."

"Did you know her your own self, auntie?" interrupted Milly.

"Yes, I knew her, but only for a short time. But you must not interrupt me, please, or else I will be a long time getting through my story."

Milly wisely nodded her head, which was as much as to say "very well, aunt," and Aunt Susy went on as follows:

"This little girl was named Jessie. She was a fair child, with bright blue eyes and nice yellow curls like your own, but she met with a sad misfortune when she was only four years old."

Milly and Freddy both looked up, and their faces showed all the pity they felt, but a glance from Aunt Susy, prevented their speaking, and she proceeded:

"This great misfortune was the loss of her parents, who died of fever within a few days of each other, and left little Jessie an orphan. After that she went to live with a distant relation, who was a rude, miserly person, and poor little Jessie at once was made to know how much she had lost in her own tender loving parents.

"This new relative with whom Jessie now lived was named Mrs. Ribble, and she loved nothing in the world so much as money. She did not mind Jessie's beauty in the least, because she had no eye for any beauty but that of gold and silver, and no room in her heart for any soft or tender feeling. She did not think love was of any value at all, although *we* know that it is the most precious thing in all the world. Poor Jessie had nothing but love to give. She would gladly have thrown her beautiful white arms around Mrs. Ribble's neck, and have kissed her skinny lips and shrivelled cheeks, in the warm gush of her loving little heart, if she might have gained only one gentle word or one fond caress in return. But the hardened woman did not understand such actions as these, and the first time little Jessie went up to her in her own loving way, she pushed her back rudely, and said:

"'Get off child; I don't like such nonsense. And if your foolish father and mother spoiled you, you mustn't think I'm going to do the same.' Jessie did not attempt any show of love again.

"The little girl was delicate, and I suppose it was on that account her fond parents had treated her with more than usual tenderness. Mrs. Ribble, however, was

determined to alter all that, and she said that if Jessie must eat her bread, she must also earn it. Accordingly, she was set to do the house work, to clean dishes, to scrub the floor, to carry water, and many other tasks to which she had not been used, and for which her strength was quite unfit. She grew pale, and thin, and weak, day by day, and her poor little heart swelled up with sorrow, and her poor little feet and hands were tired and weary. But Mrs. Ribble did not mind. She thought she was doing the poor child good by making her earn her bread, and she grew more hard and more exacting as Jessie's weakness increased.

"One night, as Jessie lay in her little bed, she could not sleep. She was tired and sad, and she thought of the kind parents she had once, and she wished, so earnestly, that her dear mother could be near her once again.

"While she thought this, she was looking through the window that let light into the little closet where she slept, and she saw a bit of blue sky, in the middle of which appeared a single bright star. There were tears in her eyes, but they only made the pretty star appear still more beautiful; and she looked at it long and earnestly, and wondered whether her dear mother was up there.

"I do not know how long she had continued gazing at the star, when suddenly it appeared to enlarge strangely and to come nearer to her. On and on it came, floating silently through the still night air, until at last it stopped just at her window, a great globe of glorious light, that filled every nook and corner of her little room with its soft radiance.

"Jessie looked in wonder and delight, and presently the bright star seemed to divide down the centre, and there she beheld her mother in the midst of all that glory, looking towards her with the same fond, fond smile as of old.

"'Oh, mother, dear mother!' cried Jessie, stretching her arms towards the lovely vision. She could not say any more.

"The beautiful form came down out of the star, and stood beside her bed. It was really her mother come back to comfort her, or perhaps to take her away. Oh how wildly her little heart beat with delight! The soft hands, whose touch she remembered so well, stroked her forehead, and smoothed her golden hair, and the mild eyes, so full of unspeakable love, looked down into hers.

"'Be good, my little Jessie; be patient and good, and I will come for you soon,' said the mother's voice.

"'Won't you stay with me, mother?' she asked, eagerly.

"'I cannot, my darling. But be good yet awhile, and you will come to me.'

"She pressed a kiss upon her lips and upon her forehead, and turned towards the shining bower that still appeared at the window. She rose into her former place without effort, and as Jessie saw that she was about to depart, she cried out, piteously:

"'Oh, mother, do no not leave me—take me with you.'

"The fond eyes of the mother turned upon her, and her sweet voice fell upon her ears—

"'When the daisies come, in the spring, my child—in the spring.'

"Then the light appeared to wrap her all around, and the shining globe moved away, far away towards the sky, and through the calm night air those words seemed to fall like balm upon the heart of the weary child;

"'In the spring, my child—in the spring.'

"The morning came, and when Mrs. Ribble went to call up Jessie she found her with a serene smile upon her features, the cause of which she could not guess.

"'Come, get up, you lazy girl,' she said. 'You would like to lie here dreaming and smirking all day, I suppose; but I can't allow it. Get up and break the ice on the water-butt.'

"Jessie got up quickly and went about her work nimbly. The sharp frost pinched her hands and feet, and the sharp words of Mrs. Ribble pierced her heart; but she did not now repine. She had a promise that cheered her, and she could now find comfort in the memory of that lovely vision.

"Well, the winter wore on, and poor little Jessie grew more thin and weak as the time passed. At length the rude month of March had reached its last day, and in the morning, when Mrs. Ribble called Jessie as usual, she did not answer. She went to her room, and she was startled by her appearance. The poor child was evidently ill, and Mrs. Ribble was forced to let her remain in bed. Towards evening she grew still more weak, but she did not complain, and when the night came she turned her face towards the window and up to the blue sky, where that one bright star was again visible. Mrs. Ribble now thought she had been too harsh with the child. She had to sit up and watch by her bed during the night, and as the hour of midnight drew nigh she saw that the girl had but a short time to live. She wondered why she kept her gaze so earnestly fixed upon that lonely star in the night sky. She knew nothing of all that was passing before Jessie's eyes. The great hope she had so fondly cherished of late was being realized. The star was approaching her once more, and again it stood at the window. It unfolded, and revealed the smiling form for which Jessie had looked so eagerly; and just as the village church clock struck twelve the little girl thrust out her arms as if to embrace some one, and uttered a glad cry of 'Oh, mother!' and in that cry her spirit departed, and little Jessie was at rest. And thus, my dear children, ends this STORY OF A STAR."

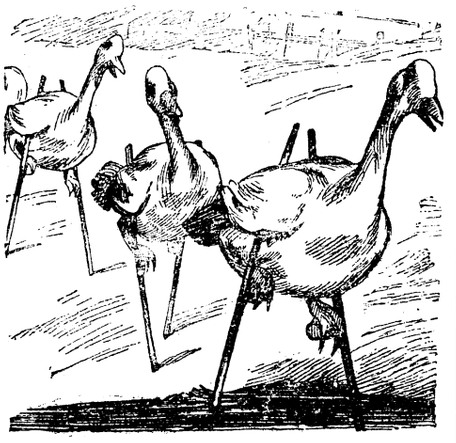
The men that have the most ups and downs in life—Bricklayers' labourers.

What is the worst seat a boy can sit on? Self-conceit.

FUNNY CHARACTERS.

BY S. HOLLAND.

A knowing old camel once, in a high jink,
Just made up his mind that he'd learn how to rink;
To the North Pole he went, so his hist'ry relates,
And there practised skating with four proper skates;
Then he came on to London, and what do you think?
They charged him just double at every rink!
He went home offended; yet 'twas just, and no more,
For rinkers have two feet, but camel had four!



Three comical geese that together had met,
And were highly genteel, and in very fine feather—
All feared that their small, dainty feet might get wet,
So they mounted their stilts, for 'twas really bad weather!
But down they all went in the midst of the stream,
And vowed ne'er again they would rise 'bove their station.
But mounting on stilts isn't merely a dream,
For we all are great geese in a like elevation.

A fat crocodile, that dwelt in the Nile,
Grew tired of his watering-place pleasures;
He came to the land with his music in hand,
To sing some melodious measures!

He made such a noise, that his own girls and boys,
Popped their noses up out of the water:
"'Twas such a good joke to hear their dad croak,"
Thought each *Ean de Nile* cloth'd son and daughter.

Just then a high note stuck fast in his throat—
A *bank-note*, since *banks* were around him;
The note wouldn't pass, so it choked him, alas!
He was laid in his scales, when they found him.

OUR WEEKLY PARTY.

AT our last "Party," dear young friends, we promised you an "outing," in which we would bear you company, and to the best of our ability act as your "guide, philosopher, and friend." At that time, we must confess, we had it in our mind to take a rather lengthy excursion, either by river or rail, but something occurred soon after we made that promise which has caused us to change our plan, and to postpone our country trip for a few days.

"Oh, what a shame!"

Did we hear a number of voices uttering these words in low tones? and did we see a number of bright little faces suddenly looking blank with disappointment, and some bright eyes even flashing with indignation? We hope not; but it looked and sounded very like it. Yet, if you will not be impatient, you will find that we have not forgotten our promise; and though our trip to the country must be put off for to-day, we will still have an "outing" which, we daresay, you will enjoy quite as much.

Do you know what has caused us to change our arrangements so suddenly? No. Well, then, it is that a new and a very remarkable exhibition has been opened in London since we last addressed you. There is an Indian Exhibition in the South Kensington Museum, to which the Prince of Wales has sent all the rare and curious things that he received during his late visit to that land of wonders—our great Indian Empire. This exhibition is the great curiosity of London at present. All the world of fashion is crowding to see it, and we have made up our mind to follow the lead of fashion on this occasion, and go there too. You will come with us, won't you? We have made arrangements for the admission of a very large party, as you may suppose, since we invite all our guests to share in this treat. You are all ready, then; and now let us be off, so that we may arrive early, and have the great rooms all to ourselves for a while.

But how are we to get there? We cannot think of walking, certainly, under this burning sun. Cabs are out of the question, too, and omnibuses cannot accommodate such a mighty host.

Never mind, dears; there will not be any difficulty about that. We will go by rail. The mighty power which the clever Scottish boy, James Watt, first re-

duced to man's control, and the great machine which George Stephenson, a canny north-countryman from the banks of Tyne, first set to work upon the iron lines, will serve us instead of horses, and these combined are so strong that they will carry us all as easily and as smoothly as any little boy amongst you could draw his toy waggon, with no greater burden than sissy's doll, when you take it out for a ride. A wonderful horse is the iron horse, whose food is fire and water, and whose breath is steam!

We will take our train at "Temple" station, which stands upon the magnificent embankment of the river Thames. A short way to this station is through the Temple Gardens. We pass under a low and ancient archway out of busy Fleet-street, and lo! the change is like magic. A moment ago we were in a street where the roar of traffic and the din of hurrying crowds is always heard, and now we are passing by pretty green lawns and beds of brilliant flowers, and the sunlight seems to rest tenderly upon the grey old buildings by which we are surrounded. The law is a grave and decorous profession, and this is the darling haunt of the lawyers. See!—there are several earnest, thoughtful-looking gentlemen, with bundles of papers in their hands, passing and repassing along the walks. They all seem to be in a hurry, and to be driven along by the force of weighty business. Well, let them pass; we have not either the time or the inclination to pry into their affairs; and if we did, it is likely we would gain but little information from them, for lawyers, you know, are in the habit of selling their words at a high price.

But these walks were once trodden by persons of a very different character; and we can never pass through them without letting our fancy turn back to the days far in the Middle Ages, the days of crusades, of knighthood, of chivalry, and romance, when the renowned Order of Knights Templars had here a splendid retreat, when their wealth and power could excite the avarice and awaken the jealousy of kings. How altered is our England of to-day, and how wonderfully altered in their uses and their inhabitants are the halls and the walks where the Knights of the Temple once revelled and mused!

But there is the whistle of the steam-engine, and that shrill note drives all romance from our thoughts. Another turn or two—through this gate—down this narrow street leading to the water-side—and now we are upon the Thames Embankment, and there is the noble river before us, running its ceaseless race to the sea that is fifty miles away. Here is our station close at hand, and in two minutes more we stand upon the railway platform, far below the level of the ground. Our train has just come up, and is now standing still. We take our seats, quickly but quietly—the guard waves a rather dirty-looking flag as a signal to the driver that all is ready—there is a great banging of doors, an ear-piercing whistle; a few deep grunts and puffs from the iron monster in front, and away we go.

How do you like this whirling along underground, young friends? There are lamps in our carriages, certainly, but they only give us light enough to show how dark it is. And the dense, ill-smelling atmosphere is not pleasant either. But there, before we can well express our dislike we are hurried into the light of day again. This is another station. Some passengers get out here, others get in; the signalling and banging and shrieking is repeated, and we are quickly swallowed up in the darkness of another tunnel on another stage of our journey.

Now we have passed through several of these stations, and are entering another. The porter is calling out "South Ken-sing-ton," raising his voice on the last syllable as if he liked it. Now the train is quite stopped, and here we must get out. Hurry, dear little people, or the impatient monster will run away with some of you again. There, that is quite satisfactory. We are all here. Now up the steps, and a short walk through the wide, sunlit street, brings us to the entrance of the grounds in which our museum stands. We have not time to examine the many attractive surroundings of the great building, so let us hurry on and enter—up the broad stairs to the treasures we are in search of; and now we enter the first room.

You seem surprised by the scene that opens before you, and, indeed, we cannot wonder at it. We might easily suppose ourselves in some palace of Delhi rather than in a museum of our own quiet England, when we look round upon all the strange and magnificent things we now behold. See, there upon the left, that case in which gleam a number of golden ornaments. There is a large gold vase and cover, that stands not less than two feet in height. Is it not magnificent? And here is a slender vase, also of pure gold, surrounded by four cups, the graceful forms of which are really beautiful. We will pause just a moment to admire this silver coffee-pot, so richly ornamented, and this tea-service of silver.

Ah, we see you have discovered something that appears more interesting in your eyes. That is something strange, is it not? And it is so *very Indian* too. That grand-looking trophy is made up of two huge bison-horns, mounted in silver, each of which is supported by three female figures that represent idols. What a pity the people who can produce such splendid work should be stupid enough to worship idols!

Oh, here we have come upon a very mischievous-looking case. It is filled with deadly weapons of every description, and the skilful work with which they are covered does not deceive us as to their dreadful character. We know that within that splendid sheath, which is gorgeous with gold embroidery, and which sparkles with gems, a pair of cruel daggers are concealed, that were not made for ornament alone, but to perform deeds of wickedness and savagery. We do not like this case, or rather its contents, so we will pass on and look for something that may be more in harmony with our tastes.

Ah, here it is—a case of Indian jewellery. Look at that great tiger's claw brooch. As the sharp claw glistens there, set in gold and surrounded by gleaming precious stones, you would scarcely imagine that it was once the dreaded weapon of a mighty beast in some Eastern jungle, and perhaps committed many ravages upon the flocks and herds of poor people—nay, perhaps upon the poor people themselves. What a number of rings there are set with diamond and emerald, and of bracelets, in which, to our thinking, the most beautiful stones are those glorious, lustrous pearls. That cigar-case is really fit for a king. It is made of pure gold, and is studded with gems of rare beauty and value. There is a curious necklace, too, which demands a glance, at least. It is made of double rows of gold plates, upon which are worked the figures of several idols.

What have we here? It is a large case filled with those queer pipes, so strongly suggestive of Eastern luxury and indolence. They are called hookahs, and from the great care bestowed upon their manufacture, and the valuable jewels with which they are adorned, we can easily guess that the nabobs of India look upon smoking as a very important matter. The large pipes are studded with various precious stones, and have long, gold stems and jewelled mouthpieces, while the mats upon which they stand are of cloth and gold, and thickly sprinkled with pearls. These must be looked upon as the very Sultans of pipedom. To us, however, they are only things to be looked at, and as we soon tire of looking at things with the uses of which we do not sympathize, we will still pass on.

What a gorgeous collection of shawls, robes, carpets, and other fabrics for which we do not know any English name. The most gorgeous fabrics are the elephant-trappings, glistening in scarlet and gold, and green and gold. See that magnificent cover which is described as a "Jaipur." It is a mass of goldwork and embroidery.

Amongst many other beautiful articles we must not fail to notice this beautiful palanquin, which has been brought from Vizagapatam. Is it not a charming bit of Eastern magnificence? and enough to remind one of the splendours described in the "Thousand and One Nights." Its sides are made of ebony and ivory richly carved, and thickly studded with silver. The top is lighter, both for convenience of the occupant and the bearers. The poles are also of ivory and ebony, ending with elephants' heads in pure gold. We can imagine the charming "Lalla Rookh," of Thomas Moore's pleasing poem, being borne in just such a vehicle from her father's palace in Delhi to the lovely valley of Cashmere.

But we cannot stay to inspect every separate article in this great collection. We have gone through enough to convince us that it affords a very good idea of the wealth, the magnificence, the luxury, and the love of show which distinguish the inhabitants of the mighty empire over which the prowess and the policy of a few great men has extended our sway. This, indeed, was the principal object of our visit, and now that it is gained we will, if you please, return to our homes, feeling grateful to the Prince of Wales for the pleasant treat his generosity has afforded us.

No, not to our homes. We have yet a little entertainment for you before we separate for another week. We will return to our station, and be whirled back to our office, there to preside at a "Party," to which, of course, you are all invited. Come along, then. Away from South Kensington and its many attractions, through tunnels and railway stations once more; again through the quiet Temple, across busy Fleet-street, and, as the clown says in the pantomime, "Here we are again" at the place from which we started.

We like strawberries! We suppose you will say it was scarcely necessary to tell you that, because everybody likes them. But it is not so certain that this delightful fruit always stood so high in favour with persons of delicate taste as it now does. A few days ago we were passing by a large fruiterer's shop, and the sight of a great display of large luscious-looking strawberries set us thinking. We wondered whether the people known as Epicures in ancient classical times had any knowledge of this most dainty of berries, and we were led to believe that they had not. Do you know why? Well, it is because they have not mentioned them in those writings in which they enumerate and praise other delicacies. We cannot but think that if they had eaten them as boys and girls do now, they would have left us a taste of their quality in Greek or Latin verse. In our days, however, the strawberry has admirers who very willingly put their opinion of its merits into words, and amongst others the wise and witty Josh Billings thus writes in its praise:

STRAWBERRIES.

The strawberry iz one of natur's sweet pets. She makes them worth two shillings, the first she makes, and never allows them to be sold at a mean price. Its fragrance iz like the breth of a baby when it first begins to eat lossenges; its flavour iz like the nectar which an old-fashioned goddess used tew leave in the bottom of her cup when Jupiter stood treat on Mount Ida. There iz many breeds of this delightful vegatable, but not a mean one of the whole lot. Cherrys are good, but they are tew much like sucking a marble with a handle tew it. The person that can eat strawberrys besprinkled with crushed sugar and bespattered with kream and not lay his hand on his stummuck and thank the author of strawberries and stummucks, iz a man with a worn-out conscience.

We hope the very queer spelling which the wise and witty JOSH always uses will not puzzle you too much, or prevent you from enjoying this high-flown praise of a thing that everybody loves.

A little information as to the best way to preserve cut flowers cannot but be interesting to many of OUR YOUNG FOLKS at this season of bloom and fragrance. A person who is well qualified to instruct us gives these directions for the treatment of

FLOWERS IN VASES.

It is a common experience that flowers in vases soon perish, and the subject appears to me worthy of a note in the interests of those of your readers who find it difficult to keep their table and mantelpiece flowers in good condition. For my every-day enjoyment I keep filled a large trumpet-shaped green vase, and a pair of be leek vases on the mantel. I used to change the water, and I used also to put lumps of charcoal in it, and yet my flowers soon fell to pieces; but of late years I have found it sufficient to replenish once a week all the winter, and twice a week all the summer, and my flowers keep well. On occasions when I have left home, I have found them still bearable, if not brilliant, after from fifteen to twenty days; but in hot summer weather they would not, of course, last so long. If they last, as a rule, a week, I think it sufficient, for, after all, freshness is everything in respect of flowers. Thus much by way of preface to a practical remark to this effect, that the secret of keeping flowers in good condition is not to disturb them in any way after they are once put up. To give fresh water, to cut off the stalks, and so forth, is really waste of time; for although they will look a little better if carefully touched up and re-arranged, they soon after fall to pieces. As to the use of charcoal, it is quite superfluous. If the water sinks too low, as it will in summer, carefully pour some in by opening the flowers gently with the hand. In keeping cut flowers, therefore, the less that is done to them the better.

We have received many letters from our young friends, in which they express their hearty approval of the short articles we have recently given under the head of

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

This week we continue the subject of

CRICKET,

And as we have already described the usual position and the duties of the players, we now proceed to set down the formal laws which govern the game everywhere. In order to make this list of rules quite complete in itself we will repeat a little of the information given in an earlier "Party."

1. THE BALL must not weigh less than five and a half ounces, nor more than five and three quarter ounces. It must measure not less than nine inches nor more than nine and a quarter inches in circumference.

2. THE BAT must not exceed four and a quarter inches in the widest part, nor must it be more than thirty-eight inches in length.

3. THE STUMPS must be three in number, twenty-seven inches out of the ground, and of equal and sufficient thickness to prevent the ball from passing through; the bails should be eight inches in length.

4. THE BOWLING-CREASE must be in a line with the stumps, six feet eight inches in length, with a return crease at each end towards the bowler at right angles; the stumps must be in the centre of the bowling-crease.

5. THE POPPING-CREASE must be four feet from the wicket, of any length, but not shorter than the bowling-crease, so that the batsman may keep out of the way of the ball when it is thrown in.

6. THE WICKETS must be pitched opposite to each other by the umpires at the distance of twenty-two yards.

7. THE BOWLER shall deliver the ball with one foot on the ground behind the bowling-crease, and within the return-crease, and shall bowl four balls before he change wickets, which he may do only once in the same innings. (Six balls are usually allowed as an over.)

8. The ball must be bowled; if thrown or jerked, the umpire shall call "no ball."

9. The bowler may require the striker at the wicket, from which he is bowling, to stand upon that side of it which he may direct.

10. If the bowler shall toss the ball over the striker's head, or bowl it so wide that in the opinion of the umpire it shall not be fairly within the reach of the batsman, he shall award one run to the party receiving the innings, which shall be put down to the score of wide balls; such balls shall not be reckoned as one of the four or six balls; but if the batsman shall by any means bring himself within reach of the ball, the run shall not be scored.

11. If the bowler deliver a "no ball" or a "wide ball," the striker may make as many runs as he can, and he shall not be put out except by running out. In the event of no run being obtained by any other means, then one run shall be added to the score of "no balls" or "wide balls" as the case may be.

12. At the beginning of each innings the umpire shall call "play," and from that time to the end of each innings no trial ball shall be allowed to any bowler.

13. *The striker is out* if either of the bails be struck off or if a stump be bowled out of the ground; or if the ball from a stroke of the bat or hand be held before it touches the ground, even though it be hugged to the body of the catcher; or if in striking while the ball shall be in play, both his feet shall be over the popping-crease and his wicket put down, except his bat be grounded within it; or, if in striking at the ball he strike down or knock a bail off his wicket.

There are several other circumstances that may arise in the game by which the striker is put out, but we cannot enumerate any more of them to-day. At our next "Party," however, we will return to this subject, and on that occasion we will try to bring our remarks and directions to a conclusion.

In compliance with the wishes of several friends, and in reply to some correspondents, we add a few more items to our already long list of

EXPERIMENTS AND RECIPES.

TO COPY LEAVES OF PLANTS ON PAPER.

Take a sheet of paper, and rub over it the thinnest possible film of oil; then hang it up in the air to partially dry the film. Next cover the paper with lamp-black soot, or soot from a large tallow candle, by holding it extended over a smoky flame, and pressing it gently, but with care, into the flame, in order to cover the paper with smoke, but of course so as not to set it on fire. Having done this, put it into a damp place to take the curl out, and when cold and flat, lay on the smoky side the leaf intended to be impressed or printed; then press with a soft wad every part of it, so as to take up a portion of the black; this finished, place the leaf gently on a sheet of drawing paper, and put a piece of paper and a weight of books, or pressure, upon it. When the whole is removed, there will appear a very beautiful black impression, resembling a lithograph of the leaf so treated, showing its true line, its veins and fibre, quite distinct and true to nature. Fleshy leaves of annuals and similar plants are better to copy than evergreens.

A GOOD CEMENT.

A good cement for mending almost anything may be made by mixing together litharge and glycerine to the consistency of thick cream or fresh putty. It is useful for mending stone jars or any coarse earthenware, stopping leaks in seams of tin pans or washing boilers, cracks and holes in iron kettles, &c. Holes an inch in diameter in kettles have been filled with this cement and used for years in boiling water. It may also be used to fasten on lamp tops, to tighten loose nuts, to secure loose bolts whose nuts are lost, to tighten loose joints of wood or iron, and in a great many other ways. In all cases the article mended should not be used till the

cement has hardened, which will require from one day to a week, according to the quantity used. This cement will resist the action of water, hot or cold, acids, and almost any degree of heat.

TO CUT GLASS WITHOUT A DIAMOND.

Make a small notch, by means of a file, on the edge of a piece of glass. Then make the end of a rod of iron red-hot in the fire. Apply the hot iron to the notch, and draw it slowly along the surface of the glass in any direction you please. A crack will be made, and follow the direction of the iron.

Let us now turn to examine the contents of

OUR YOUNG FOLK'S LETTER-BOX.

What a great heap of letters rises before us. There is real work to be done here; and, therefore, we have not a moment to spare for unnecessary comment. Amongst the first that we open is one from the lovely capital of "bonnie Scotland." We perceive that it is not written by a member of our great family of YOUNG FOLKS, yet it is so cheering, so sensible, and shows such a just appreciation of your journal that we are sure you will read it with pleasure, and therefore we print it without hesitation.

Edinburgh.

Sir,—You deserve a threefold cheer from all the YOUNG FOLKS of your "Weekly Party" for the enormous labour you perform in getting it up; but particularly for the pains you take to point out the beauties as well as the deformities of the rising poets; and for the blunt but friendly counsel vouchsafed to those who, in vain conceit, overreach themselves by displaying incapacity. The youthful songsters whose performances you so plainly criticize ought to esteem you highly for such favours, and strive to please by following your advice. There is not another journalist who deals with the young as you do for their benefit—and, indeed, not many qualified for the onerous task.

All the good, brave, and loving "little folks" in the fairy stories of the *Budget* who overcame and destroyed the huge, cowardly cruel, monsters and giants, are really representations of how an upright, modest, and persevering boy or girl (or man or woman) may defeat the designs of the unprincipled, selfish, and slovenly portion of the world. Hence that class of tales is instructive in the highest degree. So I taught my two children to understand them, for they have been "Budgetiers" from nearly the very beginning.

The age of "Budgetiers" has occasionally been alluded to. I believe many old "grey beards" would do well to read *Our Young Folk's Weekly Budget*. YOUNG FOLKS, read some of the short pieces from the "Party" to your parents while sitting at rest in the evening, and not a few of you will be astonished to hear the praise they will get; and the chance and the hope is that they will extol it to others, and so increase the pleasure it affords by getting additional readers. It is an agreeable *melange* after a day's bustle; and the composition is first class. It is sedate, but not gloomy; cheerful, but not silly; moral, but not ascetic. It has variety for all tastes; and it has much that is useful. Why should it not have a "large party" of regular subscribers added to its already wide circulation, though they should, like the writer of this epistle be absolutely BEYOND SIXTY?

P.S.—This has been written with a view to cheer you on. No favour is asked; no intention exists beyond the expression of pleasure it affords to one, after the young ones have done, who has had to read perforce much—very much—which was drowned in praise, and known poor trash, during the last forty years.

We thank our kind sexagenarian correspondent for this very flattering tribute to the worth of our journal, and we assure him that his letter is indeed well calculated to "cheer us on," to inspire us with still greater energy for the prosecution of our work of love, and to beget a hope that similar sentiments are entertained towards us by many whose experience of life and literature has taught them to know that which is good for the little people whom it is our principal aim to entertain and to please. We have great pleasure in gracing our Letter-box with such a testimonial of esteem from one who evidently has the interests of the young deeply at heart, and we are sure that our YOUNG FOLKS will give him a hearty vote of thanks for his kind and candid letter in praise of their favourite magazine.

Another kind and gratifying letter is this from the pretty little isle of Jersey:

Jersey.

Dear Sir,—I write to express my thanks for the great amusement I derive from the pages of *O. Y. F. W. B.* I was introduced to this charming paper by a friend of mine a short time ago, and I have continued to read it from week to week, deriving great instruction, and passing many a pleasant hour. I always attend—in spirit, of course—the "Party," and enjoy — in spirit again — a friendly chat with you every week. I think the tales are capital, the illustrations superb, and the contributions by my fellow readers A1. Apologizing for intruding upon your valuable time, and wishing lasting success to my newly-made friend, I remain, yours truly,

RALPH CARRINGTON.

Many thanks, dear Ralph; and, as time rolls on, let us hope that you will find your "newly-made friend" still growing in friendliness, and a more entertaining companion from "week to week."

WALTER S. LOCKHART (Wigan).—Many thanks for your kind letter and the pretty verses enclosed. The latter will be used at an early "Party."

W. J. LAWRENCE (Belfast).—The origin of the clown, pantaloon, harlequin, and columbine of our pantomime is to be traced to the old Italian comedy, the conventional plot of which we have not space to explain just now.

Several correspondents, whose letters we would like to answer here, will please to hold us excused on account of the large portion of our space required for

SHORT ANSWERS TO SHORT LETTERS.

DIOMEDE *(Bolton)—Your letter, dear friend, is all that we could wish—kind, considerate, and not a little flattering—but we cannot say as much of the verses, which, indeed, we feel bound to decline. The subject is a good one, but we fear our Diomede will not become the laureate of the holidays this season;* BRUIN *(Plaistow)—Yes, there is such a plant, commonly called Venus's fly-trap, but its botanical, or scientific name is* dionœa muscipula. *Its native country is the Southern States of North America, and more particularly North Carolina. A plant called the sundew, occasionally found in our own country, possesses a similar power, entrapping flies and small insects, and feeding upon them;* A. P.—*After many inquiries, we must give the award to Pickford;* HECTOR OF TROY—*We hope you do not often try to impose upon your friends as you have tried to impose upon us. We can assure you, for all your greatness, O Hector, that it is very naughty;* J. J. WYAND *(Maidstone)—We thank you for the kind letter and cons., and have pleasure in telling you that the latter are passed for insertion;* SILVERSPEAR—*Your kind letter has given us much pleasure. We were sure Uncle George would enlist the favour of all our readers, and a hundred letters similar to yours convince us that we did not make any mistake in our surmise;* GEORGE HAYDEN—*We cannot but feel exceedingly grateful for your earnest efforts to serve us; but we do not like to publish your letter, because it might look like a hint to all our readers to go and do likewise, and this is a thing which we can only expect from our sincerest friends;* E. A. W. ELDRIDGE—*Thanks; but the rebus is not up to our publishing standard;* E. MYDDLETON *(High Barnet)—We are sorry, indeed, for your failure; but you have already seen how very far wide of the mark your solution was;* BLUE BELL—*We appreciate your kindness; but the contribution is not up to our standard;* RICHARD N. *(Leeds)—Thanks for your generous praise. You will find your question answered at this "Party;"* GREY PLUME—*You see we never allow anything in our journal to become tiresome, but keep up a constant round of change and variety. We enrol you in our list of guests with much pleasure, and shall give your con. our best attention;* W. HINDS—*Many thanks for your very gratifying letter, young friend. We are very glad indeed to find that our dear little journal affords you so much pleasure, and to find that you appreciate the efforts we make to keep up a continual variety of attractions in its pages. Your cons. are passed for insertion;* IDUNA *(Blyth)—We are pleased to hear from you, and we assure you that our columns are open to your efforts, as they are to those of all young folks. Of course, we will expect you to comply with the conditions which we feel bound to impose upon all our youthful contributors. These conditions are; That all contributions must be written plainly in ink, and on one side of the paper only; that each separate riddle shall have the answer written underneath it, and shall also bear the signature of the composer; and that all contributions shall be original. Then, if these conditions are complied with, and the offerings have sufficient merit, they will be accepted with thanks, and will appear in our columns when their turn comes round. The present cons. are written on the back of your letter, and are therefore unavailable;* WHITE CHIEF *(South Shields)—We must congratulate you upon the acuteness of your guessing powers. The answers are quite correct. We really have not space to take up such a long and important subject as that of amateur theatricals. Good actors and actresses afford the best models for imitation; practice in elocution is also necessary; and the rest must be left to the natural taste and talent of the young performer. Many amateur actors err by over-acting their parts;* J. P. LEA *(Worcester)—Thanks; your very creditable cons. will appear in due time;* J. BLACKLOCK *(Newcastle-on-Tyne)—We are never more happy than when we find ourselves able to afford useful information in reply to the questions of our young correspondents. We do not think it would serve any good purpose, however, to take up a large portion of our space in giving the information you require, even if we were a professor of fisticuffs, which we certainly are not. We would rather undertake to tell you how you might secure and retain the respect and the affection of your friends and comrades by deeds of kindness and amiable manners, than to instruct you how you might "punch their heads," and so secure their dislike and nothing more. Your cons. are written on the back of your letter;* HEATHER *(Bingley)—Many thanks for your very kind letter, and for the cons. with which you have favoured us. We regret, however, that we must decline the latter, as they are not up to our standard. The first efforts of young contributors are not often good enough to appear in print;* JOHN T. BARON *(Blackburn)—You are a generous friend and an indefatigable contributor, and these are qualities which we must regard as virtues of no mean worth. We thank you for your kindness, and inform you that most of your cons. are filed for insertion;* GEO. F. ADAMS *(West Bromwich)—We return our thanks for your kindness, but we must decline the con., as we do not think it is at all worthy of the subject;* G. F. *(Hornsey)—We assume that your inquiry refers to a bath taken at home; and if so, we reply that you may take such a bath with perfect safety. We only alluded to those accidental and irregular "wettings" to which people so thoughtlessly expose themselves;* L. RUDD *(Newcastle-on-Tyne)—Thank you, young friend. It is very gratifying to learn that you enjoy our "Party" so much;* R. G.—*We are very glad to have had it in our power to afford you so much gratification;* SAM HONIGBAUM *(Hull)—We are glad to learn that our journal affords you so much pleasure, and we very heartily echo your hope that we may long continue to be fast and intimate friends;* HENRY WALTERS *(Cardiff)—Thanks; we fully appreciate the kindness of your intentions in sending us the "tit-bits;" but they have been so long in circulation that we fear they would not now be relished by the guests at our "Party." We think that the art you name can only be practised by persons endowed with peculiar and rare natural powers. We admit you to our "Party" with much pleasure, and trust you will long continue to find it equally entertaining and amusing;* W. E. HARPER *(Liverpool)—Your kind letter has given us much pleasure; but we regret to say that we do not find your contribution up to our standard;* ANNIE SYTNER *(Birmingham)—We are gratified by your kind letter. You will be pleased to hear that your con. is filed for insertion;* S. E. AND T. MYDDLETON *(High Barnet)—You must have forgotten to enclose the tickets; we have just opened and read your letter, but the envelope did not contain anything besides;* ALLAN M. WARD *(Liverpool)—We cannot recall the poem concerning which you inquire. The cons. are not quite up to the standard of merit we have fixed for our columns;* F. POTTS *(Manchester)—You must not have read your "Budget" very closely of late, or you would have seen that we had already explained that matter. We consider your letter rather intemperate, and we can only refer you to the information we gave at our "Party" a fortnight ago;* C. KELLY *(Liverpool)—You have disregarded our instructions in writing your cons. in the body of your letter, and in neglecting to sign each riddle;* THOMAS E. WILLIAMS—*Thanks for your very kind letter. Though the new change is, in some degree, a return to its former appearance, we think it is not the less beneficial on that account, and that it is decidedly an improvement on the recent heading. Yes, the same person has written that department during the last twenty months. We had already heard of the literary venture in which our young contributor has engaged, and we can only say that we wish him every success;* ALEXANDER KEITH *(Glasgow)—Thanks. Your cons. will do, and are already filed for insertion;* F. CARVER—*Not up to our standard, young friend. We can only accept rebuses that are exceptionally good, because we cannot print more than one each week;* A. R. MARSHALL—*Your cons. will do, and will appear when their turn comes round;* T. F. *(Chapeltown)—We thank you for your very flattering letter, and are exceedingly pleased to find that our stories afford you so much gratification. We daresay you will be pleased to hear that two of your cons. are filed upon our insertion list;* CONN, THE SHAUGHRAUN *(Gateshead)—We have read your letter, which we think rather extravagant in its praise. You have not sent the solution to your anagram, and therefore we cannot use it;* J. S. BARKER *(Aspull)—We like your poem very much, and think you have treated your subject with much vigour and strong idealization. At the same time we must decline it, because it is not suited to the tastes of our readers; and it would, in any case, be too long for our "Party." We will hand it to the Editor of the Big "Budget," however, and if he forms as high an opinion of its merits as we have done, it will probably appear in that journal;* WAL KIMPTON *(Leicester)—Thanks for your friendly letter. We regret that you failed to solve the puzzle, but we think you take a very proper view of that disappointment. Your cons. will do;* W. CURRY *(Blyth)—We thank you for your good intentions, but regret that we must decline the cons., as they are not up to our standard;* HARRY DALE *(Hanley)—Thanks. Your cons. will appear in due time;* ROSE HARDING—*You can procure a very good prepared food at any bird-fancier's shop. Peameal fried in lard also makes a good food when the birds are strong, and an occasional snail, or a few crumbs of lean beef will be a luxury which the birds will certainly appreciate;* J. H. H.—*We thank you; but the rebuses are not up to our standard;* J. T. DENNY—*Thanks. The cons. will do;* G. SENIOR *(Wentworth)—We are much gratified to learn that our paper affords you so much pleasure, and we trust you may long find it worthy of the favour with which you now regard it. You send us a charade which is not at all original;* JAMES MURRAY *(Liverpool)—Thanks. Alfonso is the son of the ex-Queen Isabella;* BOW-WOWE—*It was not a mistake, but appeared because it had been in the printer's hand some time before we gave the answer to which you refer. We do not think it would serve any good purpose to give that absurd question in our columns;* C. W. SMITH *(Liverpool)—We thank you, but we cannot entertain your proposition for a moment. Those who aspire to write stories for the entertainment of the public should at least know how to write a short letter without so many glaring grammatical errors as we discover in yours. We would earnestly recommend you to mind your lessons for a long time to come rather than allow your thoughts to run so wildly to waste;* MAN-MOUNTAIN *(Birmingham)—Thanks for the very kind manner in which you refer to our journal. Bathe the eyes frequently in pure cold water. When the letter "I" stands alone in any writing or printed matter, it should always be a capital;* S. A. THOMAS *(Summer Hill)—We have already given all the explanation in our power to give, and if we should forfeit your good opinion under such circumstances, we really cannot help it;* DOT L. R. *(Birmingham)—We are much pleased by your kind and intelligent letter, dear Dot. We think the little story is quite a clever performance; but you do not say that you invented it all yourself. We require all contributions to be original—not in the writing only, but in the invention and composition;* A HIGHLANDER *(Inverness)—Many thanks for your gratifying letter. We are happy to inform you that the cons. will do;* WILLIE ALEXANDER *(Blackpool)—The first volume of "Our Young Folk's" was published at four shillings, and can be sent per post for four shillings and tenpence;* J. F. B.—*The cheapest edition of "Tim Pippin's Adventures" is published at two shillings, and can be sent post free for two shillings and fourpence;* DAUNTLESS—*We are really unable to advise you; and, besides, we do not wish to discuss such delicate matters in these columns. Do not do anything unbecoming a good and modest girl. These things usually adjust themselves;* HENRY J. PRIEST—*We do not know of any means of tracing the defaulter. Perhaps the best plan would be to put the case in the hands of the detectives if you think the sum is worth taking all that trouble to recover. These questions, however, should not be addressed to us, but to "Lawyer" on the "Weekly Budget";* HENRY GLIBBERY—*Many thanks for your kind letter. The best plan would be to send a penny stamp to our office for each index you require, with an extra stamp for postage. We gave directions for making a cheap electric battery in our last number. A lady. Procure Pepper's "Playbook of Science," which we believe you will find both instructive and entertaining;* T. T. FEATHER—*You speak in very flattering terms of our journal, dear boy, and it gives us great pleasure to know that we can afford you so much enjoyment. It would have added to our pleasure if your tickets had borne other numbers which would have entitled you to one of the gifts;* THOS. WILLIAMS—*We thank you for your friendly letter, and for the information it contains. We wish our young friend every success in his venture. An acrostic consists of a number of words or lines, the initial letters of which form another word or words. A double acrostic is formed when the first and the last letters of such words or lines form other words. An arithmorem is usually written as an acrostic, but all the letters in the words of which it is formed that correspond with the Roman numerals are expressed in figures—thus, 500 and go, dog; because D is the sign for 500 in the Roman notation. Metagrams are formed by merely changing the initial letter of a word, so as to give it several different meanings—thus: Pink; change head, a connection—link; change head again, to descend—sink; and so on;* C. BATLEY *(Hurworth-on-Tees)—Many thanks. We have not yet found time to examine your contributions, but they will be duly attended to in the course of a few days;* PONSONBY—*We acknowledge the receipt of your letter and con., but we are compelled to decline the latter, as it is not up to our standard of merit;* PERCY G. GALE *(Liverpool)—No, not at all "cross," dear Percy. We are always pleased to hear from our friends, and we should be very ill-tempered indeed if we could be "cross" with the writers of such flattering letters as we are constantly receiving;* F. W. DANIELL *(Saltash)—We cannot now give you the information you seek, because we have already destroyed all the letters;* SHAFTO J. A. FITZGERALD *(Richmond)—Many thanks for your very gratifying letter. Our new heading is now before you, and we hope you agree with us in thinking that it is more elegant and tasteful than the former one;* PEEP O' DAY *(Hammersmith)—Your flattering comments upon our paper have given us much satisfaction. We regret that we must decline the two anagrams you send us, but they are hardly suitable for our journal;* A. B. C.—*The anecdote you send is not original, and even if it was, we could not use it, because you have written on both sides of your paper;* WILLIAM F. *(Richmond)—We do not regard your letter as a trespass on our time, dear William. We are glad you like our journal so much. Any of the large shipping firms will give you the information;* J. W. S.—*You do not take any unwarrantable liberty in making any inquiry that you think useful or necessary. You will find your question answered in our next number;* JOHN DHONAN *(Woolwich)—You write us a very kind letter, and we regret that we cannot give you the information you seek.*

To-day our riddling friends will appear under the leadership of Master WAL KIMPTON, who contributes a creditable

LOGOGRIPH.

No. 1.

The sun its rays was sending
O'er earth one summer's morn,
When I my way was wending
To yonder field of corn;
But lo! the weather changing
To me 'twas very plain,
My first must find me refuge
And shelter from the rain.

I found no person dwelling
In this, my safe retreat;
But could not then be telling
If here I aught should meet.
I o'er the place was looking,
And saw my second run;
So after it I scampered,
And well enjoyed the fun.

The rain now ceased descending,
And on my way way I went;
But while a hill ascending,
Some sportsmen saw, who meant
To have a day's fine shooting
For my unlucky third,
And they were not mistaken,
At least so I have heard.

Now near my destination,
My legs I quickly ply;
When here—oh, what vexation!—
My fourth is flowing by.
"I must reach home by sunset,
To which it wants an hour,
And crossing all this water
Is quite beyond my power!"

Then I, *Young Folk's* perusing,
Turn to the Riddlers' page,
And find them so amusing
That they my thoughts engage.
I try to solve the riddles,
But 'tis no fifth, I find;
I'm very bad at guessing
Puzzles of any kind.

Now in this puzzle solving,
Here it may be said,
The word which first was written
You must twice change head;
Three words thus obtaining,
Behead the last twice more,
And then you'll view the answer
Of that, I'm very sure.

WAL KIMPTON, London.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

No. 2.

Cross Words.

My first, reversed, is a kind of anger,
To nearly all men it is no stranger;
My next is a near acquaintance or friend,
Who will often in illness you attend;
Third is a kind of paste or thick gum
It may be kept in a mass or sum;
My fourth is true to its sovereign,
To be it rebels often feign;
This is the Christian name of a girl
That to a husband is oft a pearl;
The inmate this is of a convent,
Some of whom are of noble descent;
My last is an Israelitish king
Who before Saul did dance and sing.

Foundation Words.

Primals and finals, if read aright,
Will bring two large countries to sight.

T. H. JACKSON, London.

NUMERICAL CHARADES.

No. 3.—I am a word of eleven letters. My 11, 10, 3, 9, 5, is a point of the compass: my 7, 2, 9, 5, is an insect; my 6, 1, 2, 11, is an adverb; my 5, 6, 3, 8, is a musical instrument; my 3, 2, 7, 8, is an untaught girl; my 8, 2, 3, 4, is a wine; my 2, 6, 4, 5, is a solemn declaration; and my whole is the name of a famous battle of the "Wars of the Roses"—J. GOLDING, Essex.

No. 4.—I am composed of sixteen letters. My 12, 7, 6, 13, 11, 6, is a very important town; my 16, 3, 10, 1, means ease; my 2, 5, 16, 4, 3, is a very useful and hard-working animal; my 8, 5, 10, 4, 14, 12, is a pretty petrified thing dug out of the earth; my 2, 15, 14, 8, 3, 16, is a young cow; my 6, 9, 14, 12, is used by carpenters; my 1, 9, 4, 10, 15, 12, is an ornament much used on umbrellas; and my whole is a *Budget* story.—E. WILLIAMS, London.

No. 5.—I am composed of twenty-two letters. My 9, 15, 10, 7, 1, 21, is a man's name; my 10, 7, 1, 12, 17, 14, is a river; my my 6, 7, 15, 3, 7, 1, 12, is a town in England; my 6, 1, 4, 10, 7, 19, 22, 14, 18, is a town in Scotland; my 10, 1, 3, 5, 15, is a town in India; my 9, 13, 15, 5, 7, is a town in Wales; my 16, 11, 21, 13 is a climbing plant; and my whole is a proverb.—A. S. WARNE.

CONUNDRUM.

No. 6.

What is that a man does not want; but if he gets it, it would cost him his life to part with? F. CARVER.

TRANSPOSITIONS.

No. 7.

If a part of yourself you turn about—
But mind don't spoil the fun—
A refreshment place will then appear
That's known to every one.

G. GRANT.

No. 8.

An ecclesiastic if you transpose,
An infant it will soon disclose.

J. MURRAY, Liverpool.

No. 9.

A certain female animal
If you transpose aright,
You'll bring a certain quantity
At once before your sight.

J. M. SMITH.

CENTRAL DELETION.

No. 10.

Don't speak so unkindly, nor thwart a good wish,
As seen without centre, a nourishing dish.

J. L., Lambeth.

DECAPITATION.

No. 11.

If an adverb you carefully behead,
What's seen in farmyards you'll have instead.

F. W. HOLDEN, Southport.

ENIGMA.

No. 12.

With head and face as bold as brass,
I'm courted by each sprightly lass;
While blooming matrons ne'er refuse
My company to advance their views.

The aged grandmammas as well
My virtues to the young ones tell;
I am by nature rather stiff,
Yet bend when influenced by a tiff.

But now a caution let me give,
For I can pierce sure as you live;
And yet for this I have no will,
'Tis your caprice that guides me still.

Whene'er I'm cast off by a beauty,
A new one undertakes my duty;
And thus, throughout life's various stages,
I'm bound to serve and please all ages.

J. L., Lambeth.

HIDDEN TOWNS.

No. 13.—1. The carpenter made a loo table. 2. The sparrow, hit by a stone from the boy, fell dead. 3. Poor Harry was compelled to remain in bed for days and days. 4. You won't give it to me, Ned? O, very well. 5. Give Bob a thick piece of string, please. 6. Music hath a much greater influence than some people imagine.—W. KIMPTON, London.

CHARADES.

No. 14.

In the palace of the king,
In the cottage small,
First is always to be found,
Giving life to all.

Next is used by cobblers
In their daily work;
Beware of last, for in it
Poison's sure to lurk.

"The Young Knight" is a story
In which we read of whole:
An earl both brave and noble,
He now has reached his goal.

SEMPER IDEM, Belfast.

No. 15.

The mighty orb of golden hue
Is first, so dazzling bright;
A number, then, for second take,
But now to make it right,
Turn inside out, and outside in,
Putting first letter last;
My whole's a piece of water found
Upon the English coast.

F. TEBBS.

GEOGRAPHICAL REBUS.

No. 16.

HARRY, London.

DECAPITATIONS.

No. 17.

A town in England if you behead,
A girl's Christian name you'll have instead.

VIOLETTA VALERY.

No. 18.

An English water if you behead,
An English tree you will have instead.

C. KELLY, Liverpool.

No. 19.

An article if you behead,
A kind of fruit you'll have instead;
Behead again, and then, I ween,
A part of your body will then be seen.

H. POUND.

CURTAILMENT.

No. 20.

What some children are if you curtail,
What means nothing you'll have without fail.

VIOLETTA VALERY.

METAGRAM.

No. 21

A part of your clothing if you change head,
What boys often seek you'll have instead;
Change head again, and you will see
A kind of joke is made of me.

T. F., Chapeltown.

VERBAL CHARADE.

No. 22.

My first is in moat, but not in ditch;
My second's in tar, but not in pitch;
My third is in cat, but not in dog;
My fourth is in marsh, but not in bog;
My fifth is in stout, but not in frail;
My sixth is in shark, but not in whale;
My seventh's in man, but not in boy;
My eighth is in grief, but not in joy;
My ninth is in tart, but not in cake;
My tenth is in river, but not in lake;
My eleventh's in velvet, but not in silk;
My twelfth is in water, but not in milk;
My thirteenth's in ink, but not in pen;
My fourteenth's in Willy, but not in Ben;
My last you will always find in wren.
These letters placed aright by you,
Will bring a *Budget* tale to view.

ETTIE E. WHEELER.

LOGOGRIPH.

No. 23.

Less speed is oft derived from this,
Or so does run the story;
Behead, transpose, in Parliament
Obtained I this with glory.

G. GRANT.

CHARADE.

No. 24.

My first is found in every tribe;
Second a weight will proclaim;
My whole to you will describe
A well-known giant's name.

F. W. WEYER, Dublin.

LOGOGRIPHS.

No. 25.

Intact, I am a jewel; behead,
A title will appear instead;
If you my form will now curtail,
Part of yourself comes without fail;
Replace me as I'm wont to be;
Curtailed, a pleasant fruit you'll see;
Again curtail me, and transpose,
An animal it will disclose.

ROBERTS.

No. 26.

A useful metal if you curtail,
A river in England you'll have without fail;
Transpose, and if 'tis done aright,
A liquor then will come to sight.

ETTIE E. WHEELER.

ARITHMOREM.

No. 27.

150	and shaer	=	A boy's Christian name
50	,, tareb	=	,, ,, ,,
1000	,, ahte	=	An Irish county
51	,, trobs	=	An English town
10	,, grourbh	=	A Scottish ,,
51	,, ayt	=	A country
500	,, ryeb	=	An English town
150	,, srteogue	=	,, ,, ,,
51	,, neg	=	A Scottish ,,

The initials, if you read aright,
An English town will bring to sight.

T. F. COGAN, Drogheda.

HIDDEN BIRDS.

No. 28.—1. What is that flaming on the hill? 2. Either Ernest or Kenneth may go, which you like. 3. Those apples ripen guinea-gold colour. 4. From the chapel I can go through the fields, and so home. 5. My host rich? I guess he is. 6. I saw a bird's nest beneath Rushton's shed. 7. Charles wandered about the fields all the afternoon. 8. We can call for Jack Dawson as we go along. 9. We saw a rabbit as we were crossing the brook. 10. I am going to St. Martin's-le-Grand, I shall not be long. 11. We sailed together on the lake. 12. He is buried in the grave 'neath that tree.—H. PEAKE.

DOUBLE ARITHMOREM.

No. 29.

100	and janoks	=	An American town
100	,, ear	=	An Asian ,,
1501	,, rad	=	A Spanish ,,
51	,, gears	=	An African ,,
501	,, tinc	=	To present for trial
550	,, auet	=	A Spanish town
151	,, lonn	=	An English ,,
1050	,, oa	=	A Persian ,,
101	,, ne	=	A French ,,
550	,, yeud	=	An English ,,

Initials name an author, and finals one of his heroes.

SEMPER IDEM, Belfast.

DIAMOND PUZZLE.

No. 30.

My centra's read,
And with all speed,
There will in them be shown
An artist's name,
Whose wondrous fame
All o'er our land is known.

Now riddler keen,
My first, I ween,
A third of p e will be;
My next will name
What on your frame
You'll most assuredly see.

A useful thing,
To peasant or king,
When they would know the time;
An artist, now,
Who does, I vow,
Draw pictures quite sublime.

A kind of drink
My next, I think,
Will bring unto your view;
What's not high
You'll now descry;
My last's a fourth of true.

F. J. WILSON, Forest Gate.

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

1.—Moss-rose. Thus: MooR, OttO, SeasonS, ScenE.
2.—The air.
3.—Disloyalty.
4.—Wolverhampton.
5.—Cumberland.
6.—1. Because it's an ocean (a notion). 2. When taken by policemen. 3. One sees to the fleet, the other fleets to the sea. 4. Because she is a belle (bell). 5. When he begins to grow sage. 6. Because he keeps many pages. 7. Because they are seldom seen without a cock.
7.—Least, lest.
8.—Norah, Noah.
9.—Mead, meal.
10.—Hezekiah, Jeremiah.
11.—Edwin S. Hope. Thus: ElS, DogfisH, WaterloO, InsteP, NilE.
12.—Skate, Kate.
13.—Drum, rum.
14.—Cling, ling.

15.—
A
A P E
M A R C H
L I E
L

16.—Living-stone.
17.—Newhaven.
18.—Acre.
19.—Meat, team, mate.
20.—Caution, auction.
21.—Slaver, slave.
22.—Deep, Dee.
23.—Star, tar, rat, art, at.
24.—Cedar, read.
25.—Oliver, liver, rive.
26.—Port-man-teau.
27.—Hare-bell.
28.—Teify, Ouse, Tyne, Wear, Ebro, Tiber, Neva, Dwina, Tagus.
29.—Beast, feast, yeast.
30.—Down, Meath, Wicklow, Louth, Leith, Mayo.
31.—London.
32.—Nelson.

33.— C A D I
A C I D
D I V E
I D E A

34.— A N N A
N O O N
N O U N
A N N E

35.— M A S K
A G U E
S U R E
K E E N

36.— The shipboy was clambering up the high mast,
When a glance on the deck far below him he cast;
His head swam with fear, and thick came his breath,
"Look aloft!" cried a sailor, and saved him from death.

Printed and Published by JAMES HENDERSON, Red Lion House, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, London E.C.