YOUNG FOLK'S WEEKLY BUDGET

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

VOL. IX.—No. 293.] "Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds."—*Congreve.* [ONE PENNY.

"Boldwin sprang forward and tore the Icicle-Wand from the hand of the Freezing Witch."

THE UNDER-WORLD

OR,

Prince Boldwin's Marvellous Adventures, Inside the Earth, in Search of the Princess Rosenblume.

BY LLEWELLYN LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER II.

ON "THE THIN EDGE OF NOTHING"—THE IRON GATEWAY—THE FLYING-FISH AND OTHER ODD GUARDIANS OF THE ICE-COLD WITCH—THE TALE OF SIEGFRIED—THE JET OF FLAME—THE SECRET OF THE SNOWBALL.

ON high, before the venturesome youth, the Winged Star glided on, and he no less swiftly shot down the slope, which was but the surface made solid of an arching waterfall. In the darkness, his senses, other than that of sight, gained double strength and fineness, and soon he was horrified to learn how dangerously he was placed.

The frozen path which he followed, and which was at the first a broad stream, had come little by little to be narrower and more narrow.

At the same time that it thus lessened in width, as the probing with his spear but too plainly showed him, the gulf on either hand grew more deep. He could no longer hear, as before, the shivers of ice curling up under his skates, and hurled aside by his rapid feet, rattling on the firm sheet. On the contrary, they fell over the edge of the thin ribbon which still bore him up without the faintest noise of their coming against any other thing in their leap down into an unfathomable void.

Presently he could not strike out to quicken his already fleet pace, which almost took away his breath, and which he could not slacken on so steep a road; and he had to proceed with his feet close together, simply letting himself go.

In this way, on so narrow a thread that he likened it to that "Thin Edge of Nothing," which bridges over the space between the For-

tunate Isles of the North Sea and the main land, in the antique legends, and can be seen only by the much favoured.

"If I had some sight—anything to feed the eyes upon," he murmured; "for in this thick gloom, which can almost be felt, I cannot help fancying many and horrible figures."

In fact, by abrupt shocks given to the air—a cool, damp, earthy air, which tasted of iron rust and smelt of sea-coal—he guessed that huge animals were about him, passed in his swift flight.

At that moment, after he had sped downwards a greater space than he tried to count, he discerned a gleaming point softly glowing like the morning moon of the Arctic regions, with its same ruddy tinge, just the reverse of its hue in a southern clime.

It was of another colour and fixed light, so different from the varying tints and wavering beams of his magic Guiding Star, that he could not confound them.

The light was larger each moment, so that he could think it was coming towards him, as it were, to save him half the journey. As still he neared it, he saw it stretch out and around until he could tell by its own light that it was an immense wall of irregular columns, heated to whiteness.

To the cold and dampness, the heat, radiated from that high and wide barrier, had succeeded.

The strip of ice came to a close on a crust of the frozen black plane at the base of the walls. To keep this ice from melting away under the ardent beams, numbers of shockingly-shaped things were diligently flinging up the water against the iron by stroke of tail and fin, and by rushes forward with their thick heads.

Above them, in the air, half-cooled by the spray, half-singed by the glare, a flock of flying-fish, of unexampled size and sweep of finny wing, swept round and round, making swoops with their moistened pinions at the same object of their enmity, and raining upon it the inky drops.

Between these fireless labours of the main, and those of mid-air, upon the black shore, which defied the heat, a number of snowballs were ceaseless in rolling, and spreading, a coolness which had its effect. Once in a while, some of these also would roll against the walls and melt away in a few drops and a puff of steam. They were of various sizes, but Boldwin, in a glance or two, perceived how this came about—the larger balls being made by several, which the heat had fused together. Above all the mass towered two, both on the bank as far as possible from the wall—one quite still, and so purely white that it was remarkable, and catching the ruddy rays so delicately as to seem to blush prettily as a modest girl to whom sweet praise has been uttered.

The young adventurer felt his heart soften at the sight of this picture of fresh wool-like fleeciness.

The other large, half-ball of a bluish shade, and a long, jagged tube, attached to it by one end, waved to and fro as the "feeler" of an ant does. After a short study, the explorer divined that this directed the marine forces in their assault on the fiery limit, and possessed the mystic gift of not melting, however great the heat around it.

Meanwhile, he had pressed on through the serried ranks of the trolls; for he had to make his way to reach the strand. But since they were eyeless, he found it less hard than might have been thought.

Left for a few instants uncooled in the least by any moisture being applied, the wall had increased in intensity of hotness.

Boldwin was not given much time to take a rest; quite otherwise, for two of the enormous flying-fish, singled out by the ever-busy wand, which he had recognized as that of the Ice-Cold Witch, hovered over him, with many a sharp grunt and gnashing of the jagged teeth in their beaks. So broad was the span of their shining wings, that they cast a shadow on him, and their flapping acted like fans, and cooled his burnt brow and crisping hair.

"Only two!" he mockingly shouted, believing that the Frost Witch was enwrapped in the snow for protection from the glare, and eager to prove that none of these terrors as yet had pared away his courage. "You hold me too cheap, as I shall show upon your subjects, you cruel hag!"

At the same moment, one of the winged fish, having made its swoop, and struck off his helmet with its pinions, he hurled his javelin at it with such resistless force that it pierced it through one wing and the body, where the thong in its shaft prevented its further passage. The mass, carried away by that blow, and the beat of the single wing, whirl d over and over, and was pinned to the wall. Instantly the fish was baked to a small compass; but the spear, before its stout ashwood was destroyed, continued its course, and penetrated the wall with its glowing iron head. Through this small aperture, which, however, began to widen and open out into a broad cleft, so burning a beam shot forth, that everything in its path was blasted and swept away into cinders, as if by a streak of lightning. Snowballs, the crust, flying-fish, and the nearest sea-lion with long tusks—all melted and disappeared. At his feet was left his helmet, which he quickly put on again.

When this new and overpowering radiance shed a perfect light upon the scene, surpassing that of day, he was able to espy and soon to spell out some lines, graven deeply, as with a sharp steel point, in the soft metal. The shadows which rested in these channels rendered them boldly readable.

But his attention was called away by the action of the heat upon the snowballs. They had melted off from about the creatures within, and they, fish or flesh of manifold mould, were floundering on the shore, gasping and parching up. Alone now remained the charming fleecy ball and the cold, bluish mass, which became every second less of a snow-heap, and more of the figure of the Ice-Cold Witch.

Without knowing what impulse prompted him, Boldwin sprang forward over the two or three sere and perished bodies in his way, and tore the icicle from what was beginning to assume the shape of a hand.

It was the Freezing Hag that stood before him, with a screech of misery as she looked upon the scene, the long beam of radiance illumining the gloom, her affrighted and wounded subjects recoiling in the heated lake, and its shore strewn with the drying natives of the stream and sea. She flung herself upon the snowball remaining, and rolled it to the brink of the pool; then, pausing, she shook her bony fingers till they rattled like pendent frost-spikes from the trees in a December gale, and cried mournfully and vindictively:

"Were you as cunning as you are brave, your search might have closed here. But you must be more brave than I am cunning to succeed in your endeavours now. Oh, the pains and perplexities to which I shall put you will be so great that what you have overcome will be rated as trifles!"

The hole made by the spear had long since become a gaping cleft; that mouth had opened out into a wide chasm. On its edge appeared figures something like Runic letters—which he had been taught to read by the learned Skald Transynet; but now, as the lips of the yawning threatened soon to approach them, he was forced to read now or never:

Thus far and no farther SIEGFRIED has gone—
But a man may outdo what man has done.
At these Gates to the Dark and Deep,
Though long and rough the road, and steep,
Make no stay, but haste to view
Marvels glorious and new:
Sweet souls with grimy face;
Fair ones of hateful race,
Wishful to delay,
Turn, baffle, and slay.
But Rosie fair,
So good and rare,
You'll see
And free!

The Witch wept in rage as she heard the boy read this legend so freely.

"Siegfried!" repeated he, remembering that foremost hero of the old Norse tales. "Ah, I can follow no footsteps, go beyond no goal more honourable than his!"

"Then follow me, if thou darest!" screamed the Witch, plunging herself, with the soft Snowball in her embrace, against the iron wall at the base of the ever-opening gulf-hole.

The snowball wasted away into a stream of clear water, crystal with a carnation tinge, and Boldwin beheld for the least moment the figure of the Princess! It was Rosenblume who had been enclosed in the delicious round of snow, and was now being hurled, with the merciless Frost Queen, into the Region of Fire.

After its leader the stream sought to follow, with all her train of creatures; but the boy little heeded this. He bounded forward to try to pierce the brilliant glare which formed a lining to the rapidly-dissolving iron wall; but his vision was useless. He glanced towards the writing to seek some hint—some new hopes; but the wall whereon it had stood was gone long since. But at his feet something gleamed; it was a bugle-horn, mounted in steel carving, and bearing a name of which, like all Northmen, he well knew the story.

"Havelok the Dane's!" cried he, catching it up with eagerness and reverence—"the horn before which towers crumbled and evil things gave way! But," added he, sadly, "no one could sound it who does not come of the race of the great King Gunthur."

Nevertheless—a new thought striking him—he put the golden mouthpiece to his lips, and at the first breath a melodious sound was outpoured. Joyously he blew, and shouted through it:

"Health and good cheer of heart, dear Princess Rosy-bloom! I come!—hurrah!—I come!"

And sending forth another blast, which made the very waves cease seething and the flames to rush and flare, he took three resolute strides in advance. His eyes could bear the light now, and he saw that he stood on the threshold of a novel world—one of unimaginable splendour and superb secrets. He gazed spellbound within the Blazing Gates.

CHAPTER III.

WITHIN THE VOLCANIC REALM—THE IRON IMPS—THE VAST FORGE—SAVING THE SMITHY KING—THE PEOPLES' DWELLINGS AND PRODUCTIONS OF THE IRON LAND—THE GNOME MONARCH THIRSTS TO SEE LIFE IN THE UNDER-WORLD.

At the very first moment our hero found that he held a most potent talisman indeed in that icicle snatched from the Frost Witch. For a refreshing coolness filled him—though, through the more and more widening space, burnt out by the all-devouring rush of flame from below and within, passed such a volume of heat that he saw the Inky Lake licked up almost on the instant.

In other points, there were heard outbursts of sound, as the blaze exploded confined air and gas, till the mountains far and near quivered and shook. A long way off, the sea was tainted with sulphur smoke, and among all the Faroes, the shocks and the waves lifted up by this flow of combustion, caused great terror. The people ran to and fro, and cried out:

"Mount Hecla is broken forth! The Skaptaa Jokul and Skaptaa Syssel are in violent eruption!"

They were nearly right; for it was into the core of the volcanic region where these burning mountains were placed that Boldwin the Brave had pierced.

Finding that the fearful heat did not affect him, his calmness of mind returned, and stepping to the very edge of the opening, although the force of the gust was such that his hair was blown back, and his breath was drawn with an effort only, he gazed inwards.

Across the space which his sight comprised, Boldwin perceived a wide stream of white-hot and liquid metal, raging between banks of slag and half-cooled crust. Thousands of little figures, vaguely human in shape, were busy in mending these banks, and battling with the glowing billows which sought to surmount their dykes.

Opposed as he had been by uncouth and misshapen enemies, he felt a kind of comfort in watching the armies of *trolls*, or dwarfish men, who, he soon observed, were toiling with a clear end in view on the plain.

When they found the river elude its barriers and form a lake, they cut off this lake from the main current, and, thus parted, it would begin to cool. Then they would rush at this pasty sheet with great steel claws and pincers and shears, and carve and tear it into pieces of regular shape and size.

The intruder had not yet more than half feasted his eyes on the incredible picture, before his ears, till then deafened by the medley of noises, became less dull, and began to distinguish something akin to a voice speaking in tones of command.

In truth, above all the din of unseen forges, where ponderous hammers seemed to be at work, the hiss of the flames and their roar, the loud rupture of the rocks from betwixt which the liquid ores overran, there was audible that voice.

Boldwin scanned the country of smoke and flame, till he espied, upon one of those heaps of iron fragments, a figure, small at this distance, which, by the way in which it waved a long arm, appeared to direct the swarms of trolls.

As his gaze was turned thither, he likewise descried a glassy snake—so it looked—winding like a ribbon through the vapour and heated ground, set off by the dim hue of the latter, more especially because its head was white.

"Joy!" shouted he, suddenly. "That is not a serpent, but the rivulet bearing the snowball which enfolds poor Rosenblume!"

The river, which cut like a sword all things down, troll or mound of slag, heap of pumice-stone or crackling seams of coal, threatened to plunge in under the tottering pile of iron plates on which the ruler of the workers was flourishing his arms.

"If it passes beneath that insecure throne," remarked Boldwin, with interest, "I know her evil nature too well not to believe that she will overthrow it; and the chief of these valiant little gnomes will break his neck!"

But how prevent, how hinder it?

The magic wand between his fingers trembled so as to startle him.

"Perchance," thought he, "this is a rod of power, which, even in *my* hands, will act against the Witch! There is nothing like trying—so here goes!"

He unloosed and flung aside the stones which had played the part of skates, and which were split into a thousand fragments the minute they were out of an airy circle of protection which the icicle seemed to have drawn around him.

Before him spread the almost straight up-and-down wall, broken by shelves and ledges, which might serve him as stairs, if he were active enough; and once started, did not pause to attempt to choose his road. He wrapped his bearskin tightly about him, so that it might not impede his movements, and leaped into the gulf, confident that the flame would not attack him. He landed safely as a mountain deer upon the first stage—a slab of iron *nodules*, or knobs, set in an adamantine stone, which defied the scorching. But without delay, he sprang out again and again the instant that he gained a new foothold, and was, ere long, upon the plain.

Rare vegetation here flourished which he had not distinguished from on high, and the ground was still more rugged than he had thought. But he kept his eyes fixed on the pyramidal heap whereon that leader of the trolls was stationed, and pressed on his race.

As he ran and climbed rough ridges, or flew over chasms of unknown depth, he wondered whence he derived the strength which filled him; but each hindrance only the more spurred his energies, and he overcame them all. Once he looked behind him, and above, and on perceiving, not easily in the distance, the gateway in the wall, through which the flames were now less furiously roaring, he doubted that ever he could have come by such an impossibly traversible path, and at such speed.

All at once his hands pressed closely to his sides, and holding his mantle to him, felt the bugle-horn which he had found, and which had sent a cheering call to the Princess. He lifted it to his lips, and, both to warn the chief gnome and terrify the Frost Queen, poured these words through it in one piercing blast:

"Beware! beware! and descend from your lofty stand; for the danger is hastening to plunge under your feet!"

The trumpet-notes rose so sharply and distinctly as to be heard above all the clangour of that immense furnace-land.

Our hero was just then upon a hillock of *scoriæ*, or wasted ore, full of pit-holes and spiky lumps, which made the way painful, and he could therefore clearly mark the abrupt cessation of each gnome's work, and the turning of every one towards their ruler on his mount.

In the dead silence, nothing was audible but the bubbling and gushing of the running metals, and the howling of the flames; but they also became still, and in the midst of a hush, so sudden and so complete as to weigh upon him, the youth arrived at the foot of the iron slabs.

The Witch-river, forced to adopt a course less straightforward than his, to avoid the gnomes and the holes in which it would have been swallowed up, had only just shown its white head at the same spot.

Without any halt, or even a step aside to choose a better fighting-ground, Boldwin flung himself at the long watery ribbon, and tried to cut off the snowball enclosing Rosenblume from the river with one blow of the wand. But the whole turned swiftly away, and, coming upon a long incline, flew down it and disappeared in an opening at its base before Boldwin could utter a sound or lift his hand.

It was there before him but the moment before; now it was not.

He could not follow. It was too late, for he was surrounded by the gnomes, who held back but a little, forming a half-ring, in the open centre of which he stood, resting. Their leader, coming down from his stand, was let pass through their midst with respect. Boldwin, who had smiled on beholding these dwarfish people busy as bees from above, no longer laughed at the near view. They were taller than he had thought, misled by their squat and thick-set frames.

Except that the chief was stronger and more massive than the rest, and wore a longer beard, his description serves for that of all.

He was about five feet in height, very thick and strong, and of a deep rusty iron hue; his beard ran down to his short, squat feet, harsh and strong, like so much curling wire; his hair came to his shoulders in tufts, like shavings of metal, glossy in places, shaggy and rusty in others; his eyes were small, and of a bright, cold steel blue, in deep hollows under beetling brows. His mouth was wide, almost to either small pointed and sooty ear, from which dangled rings of polished and graven steel. That mouth had thick lips, which could be broadly comic in a grin, or terrible when compressed in anger. His cheeks were full, and his head rounded on a short, thick neck.

He wore a jerkin and hose, and breeches of steel-chain texture, as supple as silk, so finely were the meshes made, gleaming in all the shades of azure, and touched up here and there with tracings in nickel, platinum, alumina, and other rare metals. His crown was a masterpiece of forging, being a band of steel, wrought in relief and perforated, and polished so as to reflect the light like the clearest mirror, or purest gem.

In a strong, hearty voice, quite in keeping with his thickset frame, he thanked the youth in the Scandinavian tongue.

"I am the Dwarf Alfrigk," said he—"the blacksmith pupil of Weland the Swordmaker, who was taught to forge and weld by the famous Mimur the Ancient."

Boldwin bowed. These were names renowned in those Norse legends which were the A B C of the dwellers on the Faroes and the mainland.

"Driven from the limits of the Under-World by the inrush of the sea and its people," continued he, leaning with his swarthy arms on the head of a massy hammer, which was his sceptre, "I reign here, and am called by my subjects, these tireless toilers, Ferrugino the Iron Master."

The trolls waved their picks, sledges, and arms, and repeated the name affectionately from one to another until the hoarse cheers died away in the distance, where the farthest of them were grouped.

Boldwin explained the danger which he believed the Iron Master had run. The latter put forth his thick hand warmly, and gave him a grasp which all but welded his slighter fingers together.

"The Ice-Cold Witch!" he growled, angrily. "Was that indeed she in that form, which only for a brief space I spied? Oh, that I had known it! I would have hemmed her in with my many trolls, and with bands of fire and iron disabled her from further witchery."

"Alas, she has escaped! Not that I so much bear her a grudge, but that white ball at the head of the serpent-like strip of water is the casket-prison of the Pearl of the Faroes."

"But *I* bear her a grudge!" said the grim King. "It was she and the Sea Maidens who drove us into these regions, which we have converted into smithies, with what you call volcanoes as our chimneys. When there are rumblings in the earth, it is our bellows that you hear; when there are sudden lights from the burning mountains, it is the flare from our forges, and the hot springs are but the waste water in which we have tempered our steel. We mean no harm to man, in whose image we are," said he, curling his beard with conceited fingers, and holding up his head and black face as if he were seven feet tall, and as pink and white as a Norwegian. "Indeed, we are doing his work herein, where he will not penetrate with ease or in a hurry to the Under-World."

"You are friends of man?" repeated Boldwin. "Then the tales of your enmity to *your brethren* above (he worded it thus cleverly to cajole the Iron Master) are so many lies set afloat by our foes?—I understand."

"We are brothers! You are right, my boy," cried the King delightedly, snapping his eyes in mirth. "The only difference is that we have more of the grand metal, IRON, in our bodies than ye. We are from top to toe ingrained with it. Now it takes some twenty men to provide a dozen pounds of iron from the store of it in his blood, and the three-fifths of a pound in one will hardly forge you a toothpick! But still there is the common link of us all, and"—here he extended his hand again—"you are truly our guest of welcome. Ah, men are valiant and noble-hearted, whatever the sour old witches whisper in the dark corners; and who is not decried, even to the right brave Siegfried," he said, wiping away a tear of sorrow, which ran red and black down his smoky cheeks, "and Gunthur, and King Wermand, heroes all, for whom it was a pleasure to forge armour and weapons? But now we are forced to battle against fire and water and gas, and the other elements of mischief in these profound caves."

He sighed like a bellows, and the red beard rustled ... heaving chest.

"But again welcome!" said he, after a pause in thought, and a fiery glance towards the hollow in which the Frost Queen had been lost to sight, "and come to my Palace. This is but our workshop that you see. There shall be a holiday to celebrate a Prince coming among us, who see not in ages a guest of mortal mould."

"A Prince?" repeated Boldwin, smiling.

"Who else could sound so forcibly the *olifant** of Havelok, the gallant Dane? Who else could support the Dragon-Helmet of Fafnar? But the mere fact of your presence here, so far beyond where any have come but Siegfried the Valorous, sufficiently reveals you as no lowly boy. Come!"

"One moment," replied Boldwin, a hugely humorous idea striking him. "Prince or peasant, I will not accept your hospitality without being let feast your good fellows, so that we all may be plying our teeth at the same time in jollity; only, if I provide meat for all your thousand gnomes, you must offer the liquor."

The Iron Master laughed roaringly, holding his sides.

"You may laugh, but the meat is not only at hand, but ready cooked—meats, fish, rarities from the salmon to the kraken!"

He pointed on high to the gap in the wall, which was cooling to a slaty grey.

"Within there are hundreds of fish and creatures, which I warrant to be thoroughly well cooked and diversely done to every taste—broil, boil, and roast! It will amuse me much to join in the banquet, to eat of what would have eaten me!"

The Dwarf lifted his hammer as high as he could reach. All bowed and regarded him intently. He waved his sceptre, when, with perfect intelligence and discipline, a long column separated from the mass, and scrambled over the ground to the wall. There, obtaining hold with their picks and hammers, they climbed up quickly. Bees could not more rapidly cover a garden of flowers.

"What of Siegfried?" asked Boldwin, seating himself on the iron slabs, and thus placing his head on a level with the monarch's as the latter stood erect. "I read his story on the wall above there, before it withered away under that jet of fire."

"He is no more. But fear you not the same fate. For in his time this was but one sea of fire, which swayed to and fro like the ocean with its tides, and threatened to burst out and ruin the world. But since we are here, we have soothed it, barred it, and using it to melt out the ores, built the dams which repress it, and cut it up into streams that are less harmful."

Already the gnomes had explored the channel, where the marine monsters had perished, and began to reappear in the gateway. With ropes of iron wire, they formed a sliding bridge-like road, over which they made the burnt carcasses glide, and thence distributed the cooked fish and flesh amongst themselves all over the plain.

They whooped with joy. With their mouths full, and each smutted paw brandishing a greasy bone or fat-dripping fin, they waved their thanks uncouthly to Boldwin, as he followed their King.

After a short march the smoke grew thinner, and the fires which flared in iron basins at regular intervals in the vault above were carefully tended, and gave forth a cloudless radiance. The ground was levelled. Soon again the City of the Iron Trolls appeared, huts sheathed in iron and arranged with much care and evenness. As the worst danger was in the fall of the earth aloft, they had rounded roofs of great strength, and would indeed hold up against a land-slide with as much ease as our houses resist a summer shower. One could tell the abodes of the rich (who were here the most industrious) from those of the drones by the bright polish which they bore, and the ornaments in beaten, engraved, and chiselled work, done with their own hands.

From one marvel to another Boldwin was led to the Royal Palace. It stood at least twice as high as any of the others, and was one mass of decoration, such as an art-loving smith would delight in, till it seemed a cage of open-work. It was in two storeys, just lofty enough for Boldwin to be able to enter at the door of sheet-foliage without having to bow his head so as to seem to mock at the Dwarf's want of height. At the entry several urns of steel held curious iron trees, which had stems veined with *oxides*, and branches of *pyrites*, feathery crystals of iridescent hues, while at the tips of the sprigs gently swung in the warm air bell-shaped flowers of the same metal, which tinkled not unmelodiously when they touched.

In the midst of this music the guest stepped over the threshold upon a flooring of iron slabs, roughened so that the foot should not slip. The one room was, for a gnome, what would be esteemed vast, being quite forty feet long and nearly as wide; the walls were delicately treated with acid, which had bitten out patterns of quaint lines upon a smoothly shining surface. There was a table of great length, fashioned of one iron plate so thick and so free from flaw as to put

* The *olifants*, or horns, mostly of ivory, fill an important place in the ancient legends and stories of knighthood. The horn of Roland is the only one still in existence (?), and is kept in the Paris Museum, the Hôtel Cluny.

to shame the mightiest effort ever made by mortal forger or founder in that or later times. Not a speck marred its level face, on which gleamed vessels and platters, with knives of exquisite temper beside each.

At the King's signal, which was the simple clang of his hammer on a globe suspended by a chain, of fine steel like itself, from the ceiling, a dozen little trolls, garbed in plate armour, hurried in, each by a door, and quickly placed the choicest viands on the board. The seats were light but strong wire chairs and stools, on one of which, for the guest, was placed a spring cushion covered with metal gauze as fine as a cobweb. He seated himself, finding it soft as down.

Though every dish and drink had a metallic and a coal-smoky flavour, Boldwin was too polite to make any remark, and the little banquet passed off to the glee of the Iron Master, who even was so inspirited by the new face to break the tedium of his rule that he sang to the music of a band of bellringers and players on anvils, of tapering sizes and dulcet tones. And a very good rollicking song he sang, though so loud as to make the windows of gauze shake and bend.

After having heard the new-comer's tale of the stealing away of the Princess, and nodded assent and admiration at each frenzied praise of her which the devoted youth could but relate, Ferrugino fell into deep thought.

The musicians softened their melody and withdrew. Boldwin silently finished his steel bowl of sulphur water, drawn from such a depth of the geyser, or burning spring, as to be overcharged with gas, and hence sparkling like the finest white wine; and, after the novelty of such a draught was worn off, not at all unpleasant to the taste. Then, leaning back in his chair, and letting his bewildered eyes trace the queer figures of birds and beasts unknown to him upon the walls, he waited for the King to speak. But the latter remained moody, and even closed his eyes as if to repress the tears which oozed out from between the swart lids, and again traced a grey line where they washed away the grime and rust from the cheeks, and danced in and out like scarlet pearls amidst the bristling curls of that formidable beard.

"Ah, me!" sighed the monarch, at last, without lifting his head—"I have a fear that the spiteful hag has cut out the work for you, my boy of bravery, and that long will be the quest, as she herself has said, and direful—since she has plunged, with that unhappy child in her clasp, into horrors of which I can but guess the nature."

"Enough, good friend!" cried Boldwin, springing to his feet impetuously, and pushing aloof his dish and bowl. "I have, then, tarried too long, though grateful for your greeting. I ask but one gift—that of weapons; for the realm of iron and steel must be overburdened with spike and blade and axehead, and I will say 'Good-day, for the last time,' as is our north country parting word."

"Stay!"

The Iron Master smote the globe with his hammer.

"You shall have a weapon—ay, and a matchless one, if you can wield it—as I take it you can, though young your arms."

The attendants appeared, to whom he gave some commands in their own tongue, and they darted up the iron stairs, which wound, like a corkscrew, to the floor above.

"But what is more, so much do I like you, and so eager am I to have the hurly-burly, which I am forbidden to enjoy in the outer world, I will go by your side, or, being less young, at your heels. I am not proud, even for a King!"

Here he laughed frankly.

"And two being better than one, we will play that dreadful old woman some pretty pranks, I wager you!"

The boy stared; but recovering from his surprise, he took the hand offered him, and, to prevent it giving him such a crushing grip as before, squeezed it with all his force, which the tough fingers no more noticed than had they been iron cords.

"Of course, I am willing, and thankful for so priceless a companion," he answered. "If you seek adventure, I agree with you, from the foretastes I have had, that even a glutton would have his fill!"

At this moment the imps came slowly down the stairs, bearing carefully among them several lustrous objects, which Boldwin no sooner recognized the purport than he clapped his hands in joy.

"A sword!" he cried.

"A sword—and no common blade!" added the King, sweeping all the platters and cups off the table with two blows of his hammer, and motioning that the articles were to be set out thereon.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ODYSSEUS:
HIS
WANDERINGS AND ADVENTURES.

BY C. A. READ.

CHAPTER XI.

ODYSSEUS was not one to linger long over anything, so as soon as he saw his newly-restored companions led away towards the bath, there to be refreshed and anointed and decked in purple robes, he took his way to the ship.

There he arrived just as the sun was sinking down behind the sea, and there he found his men stretched out upon the beach, and talking to each other in low, sad whispers.

These were suddenly changed to cries of joy as he stepped among them. Then they sprang to their feet, and pressed round him as full of exultation at his mere return as if he were bringing them all their lost friends again laden with spoil.

"Oh, dear father and leader," they cried, "we feared you were lost. Now what joy can we have greater than your return? No, not the sight of Ithaca again. But tell, tell us of our lost companions' fate."

"Haste and moor the ship," replied Odysseus, with a cheerful voice. "Bring the treasures and arms ashore, and lay the first in yon cave. Then follow me. Your fellows live. Come you and enjoy with them the rest and pleasures of fair Circe's home."

The men sprang quickly and joyfully to their work, but Myron threw up his arms to stay them.

"Where, oh, where would ye go?" he cried. "Will ye taste Circe's wine and food to roar as lions or grovel as swine? Think of the Cyclops, and how our leader's rashness made six brothers die!"

At these almost rebellious words, Odysseus stood amazed. Then he drew his sword and sprang towards the rebel.

Next moment Myron would have felt the weight of his chief's sword, but the rest of the men gathered round him, and implored mercy.

"Give him his life, but leave him here behind who dares to desert his king," cried one. "Let him watch the ship, and eat his own sad heart, while we go with you to Circe's home, or wherever you may lead."

"Ay, would we had always followed your commands, O king," said another. "Then had we reached our home ere this."

"Haste with the work, then," replied Odysseus, as he put up his sword. "See!—it is almost night."

By the time that the last glimmer of the daylight was fading away, the men completed their work, and followed their king by the path up the cliff, which he now knew well. For a moment or two Myron lingered behind; then, either fearing to be left alone, or moved with shame at his cowardice, he followed slowly behind.

Before they had reached the top of the hill, from which the grove hiding the palace was to be seen in daytime, night had fallen completely.

Presently, however, stars began to show out overhead, and a moment later a light flashed from one of the turrets of Circe's palace, showing them the way.

"Yonder is rest and ease for us at last," cried the men, as they pressed forward after their leader, careless of the wild beast cries that filled the woods on every side.

In good time they reached the edge of the grove, and presently, led by the light, found themselves before the door, at which stood Circe herself waiting their arrival.

She received them as gladly as if they had been brothers returned from a distant voyage, then led them to the great hall, where those they had believed to be dead ran to meet them. These they found with faces beaming with joy, and dressed in purple robes. Then the new-comers flung themselves in the arms of their companions, and all wept for joy. Myron, astounded and overjoyed, drew near and joined the rest.

Now the new-comers were led to the bath, and having bathed, and being robed, all were together once more. Then Circe led them to the banqueting hall, and there, till midnight had passed, they forgot their woes in feasting and making merry.

And now day followed day, and full moons came and went till twelve were past, yet still Odysseus and his companions remained in Circe's home. Then all at once, as if rousing from a dream, the men gathered round their king.

"O great Odysseus," cried one, "is this, then, to be our fate? Are we still to stay here and think no more of Ithaca? Shall we never see the dear hills or beloved homes again?"

"Think of your own palace, too," cried another, "lovelier far to us than this enchanted spot. Think that your Queen Penelope sits there weeping and waiting your return."

"The gods forbid that I should forget any of these things," replied Odysseus. "But hence we may not go without her leave. Patience, and trust in me."

That night Odysseus prolonged the feast till late. Then when Circe's footstep was heard outside as she passed to her room, he rose and followed her.

Presently as she was about to enter, he stood before her almost in the doorway.

"O goddess maid," he cried, "have you forgotten your promise, and must my going always be delayed? My sad companions gather round me and mourn for home. If but a moment they lose sight of thee, Ithaca rises before them, and tears fill their eyes."

"Go, go!" she cried, while a look of pain passed over her face—a real look of human sorrow. "It is not Circe, but the fates, that bar your way. Do not think you are yet to breathe your native air—a woful journey must first be yours."

Here she stopped, as if the thought of the prophetic vision was too much for her. Odysseus took her hand.

"Ah, tell me my fate," he cried. "What woful journey is this?"

"A journey even to the shades below," she replied, sadly. "There among the dead you must seek the Theban bard whose mortal sight is gone, but whose soul is full of light. He alone of all you will meet there has yet both soul and body joined entire—the rest are only airy shades!"

Struck dumb with her words, Odysseus stepped aside, and allowed her to enter her room. Then, with a heart almost dead within him, he crept away, and threw himself upon his couch.

There he tossed and complained during the whole hours of darkness, and when morning came he almost cursed the light.

"I hate the light! I hate my life!" he said. "Surely there is nothing but grief beneath the sun!"

However, as the sun rose higher and the day grew stronger, his courage and calmness returned. Then he left his couch, and sought his hostess.

"O Circe, tell me," said he, as he found her silent and depressed beside her loom, "how shall I tread the dark descent to Hades, and who shall lead the way? Can mortal eyes look on these awful realms? And what bark, what wind, shall carry me thither?"

Circe turned and looked sadly in his face a while.

"O great Odysseus, you need no guide upon that fated road," she replied, presently. "Uprear your mast, spread forth your sail, the wind will soon carry you on your way. Before long, then, you will reach the ocean's utmost ends. There, in a lonely bay, where Proserpine's dark woods hang over the water, make fast your ship."

Here she paused again, but Odysseus urged her to proceed.

"When you have landed," she continued, "draw your sword, and with it dig a trench a cubit long on every side. Then pour out libations, strew sacred flour, and bring new wine and milk, honey, and water from a spring. When this is done, call on the shades; then take a black-woolled ram and sheep, and place them over the pit, their faces turned towards Pluto's realm, but thine towards the sea. At this their airy bands shall skim along the dusky air, and while they hover near, haste with the sacrifice. Quick as your hands can do it, fling the victims in the fire. Then let sacred vows and songs to Pluto and his Proserpine be said, and while these arise wave your sword over the pool that opens near. At last, from the shades, the awful form of the Theban will appear, and he will then your future life display, its turns, its end, its length. Have you the heart to do all this and breathe?"

"I have," replied Odysseus. "Why should I fear the awful shades, when I shall yet be one of them?"

Circe looked at him admiringly a moment; then, rising to her feet, flung over his shoulders a robe of silk that her hands had just finished. Another robe, white as snow, that lay near, she wrapped about herself, while on her head she placed a tiara of gold.

"Now call your friends," she said, when this was done. "This moment, while my heart is strong, I will bid them farewell."

At the words Odysseus hurried forth, and roused his men.

"Haste—rise, O friends!" he cried. "The day for our departure is here at last."

Joyful at the news, the men gathered round him quickly, all except one—Elpenor—a worthless fellow, the coward and fool of the band. He overnight had indulged in wine to excess, and to cool his brain slept on one of the turrets. At the noise of the men gathering together he rose hurriedly, started to descend, and missing his footing, tumbled head-foremost to the earth. When they went to lift him he was dead.

The accident cast a sudden chill over the joy of the men, and over Odysseus as much as any. The bright picture that he was about to paint vanished from his mind, and it was with a sigh that he answered his followers' inquiries.

"Ah, friends, you think your toils are over," he said. "In hope you are already in Ithaca; but a far different journey from what you fancy Circe prophesies us. It is ours to tread the realms of darkness, there to seek Tiresias, and from him learn our fate and fortune."

At the words the hearts of the men fell and grew heavy as lead; and while they were in this mood,

Circe, in glorious but sad beauty, appeared before them.

"Farewell, my friends, farewell!" she cried. "We shall never meet again!"

She held out her hand to them, and they grasped it one after another in silence. Last of all she parted with Odysseus, and when this was done, she waved them away, then turned and fled back to her room.

For a moment or two after she disappeared the men stood looking after her; then they began to talk.

"Why need we leave, after all?" said one. "If we go not to Ithaca, had we not better remain here?"

"Ay, surely this place is better than that she promises us," said another. "I will stay. Let those who will seek Pluto."

"I, too, will stay," cried a third. "I, too, will stay," cried a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth. "I, too, will stay," they all cried.

"No, it may not be," replied Odysseus. "So far Circe has kept her oath to me. Now she is no longer bound, and if we stay, to-morrow may rise upon us as beasts. But, beside, sooner or later we must face what fate has in store for us, and I do not choose to hold back for fear."

"The king is right!" cried Myron. "We must face our fate!"

At this there was utter silence. Then presently, with heavy hearts, they turned and loitered sadly towards the shore.

When they reached there, they found the ship loaded and provisioned ready for them. Close beside it, bound together, were a dark-woolled ram and ewe, Circe's last gift.

With a general sigh, the animals were lifted on board. Then, after placing Elpenor in a shallow grave by the sea, the mast was hoisted, the sails spread out, and the vessel launched.

Next moment a breeze sprang up and filled the sails, and while the ship sped away before it, the men stood pensively on the deck gazing sorrowfully back upon the fast receding shore.

CHAPTER XII.

For days after leaving the Circean coast, the ship sped along towards the west without the stroke of an oar. By the evening of the fifth day they were in the Pillars of Hercules, and saw looming up dimly on their right in the dusky air the hill of Calpe. Before morning they had drifted out upon the broad Atlantic, where never ship had been before; and when the sun rose they saw that the wind had shifted to the south, and that they were speeding away northward.

During the whole of that day, as they flew along, they had glimpses of the shore of Spain upon their right; but again, when morning came, there was nothing to be seen but the boundless, trackless waste of waters. Then, though the wind was steady, they saw that the waves of the great ocean were as mountains compared with those of their own often-vexed Mediterranean.

Gradually, as they got northward, clouds and mists began to encompass them, and the days grew shorter and colder. Then on the fourteenth evening after leaving Circe, as the sun sank, they found themselves under the mighty rocks of the land where the Cimmerians dwelt—that land where now, as then, men seek in the bowels of the earth for a wealth the barren soil above cannot give—the land of Cornwall.

To the eyes of the Greeks, accustomed to the bright skies and blue seas of Greece, this land seemed wrapped in almost endless night. The sun, when it did appear, seemed to look down in a sickly manner, that gave no warmth, and the air felt dull and heavy as lead.

It was, however, the land that Circe spoke of, and in the bay where yet St. Michael's Mount lifts up its head, they ran the ship ashore. Close round spread dark forests full of wailing sounds, and on every hill-side yawned great pits and caves, that well might seem grim openings to the black realms of Pluto.

So soon as Odysseus sprang upon the beach, Myron and another soldier grasped the ram and ewe, and carried them ashore.

Then the king, glancing round, soon beheld the very spot pictured to him by Circe. Here was the dark pool, there the grim opening into the very bowels of the earth, while the ceaseless beat of the sea upon the beach without sounded to him as the voices of Phlegethon and Acheron boiling together. The creek, that at one place ran inland, looked foul and dark enough to be the waters of Cocytus rolling slowly from the Stygian lake.

"Surely here is the mouth of Hades itself," said Odysseus, as he drew his sword and began to trench the earth as Circe had directed.

By the time he had done this his men had brought the wine, honey, and milk and water from a pure spring welling out almost on the beach.

These all were placed within the trench, then over them was strewed the sacred flour.

When all was ready Odysseus raised his voice, and called upon the shades.

"Oh, give us winds to take us to our home," he cried. "A barren heifer shall die to you on our return, and on the sacrificial pile a thousand gifts shall blaze. To you, O Tiresias, a black-woolled ram shall bleed."

At this Myron drove his blade to the heart of the sheep, that feel dead without a groan.

Suddenly, while the streaming blood smoked along the trench, the air became peopled with thin airy shadows of what were living beings once.

Here streamed by a band of fair youths, with heads bowed in thought or grief; there floated a shoal of maids, with fair faces yet tearful eyes. Behind spread cloud-like crowds of wrinkled hags and withered men. Full in front, with all their wounds showing ghastly upon them, strode warrior after warrior.

These after a moment gradually gave place to others, who in their turn melted and changed to a thousand different forms that well might make the heart of the stoutest crack with fear.

Worse even than the sight of the dread throngs were the cries and shrieks, the moanings and the wailings, that filled the whole air.

The two soldiers who assisted at the sacrifice fell fainting to the earth, while even Odysseus himself stood aghast. A cold chill of fear ran through him, and held him paralyzed a moment.

A moment only—next instant he called aloud to Myron and his fellow to cast the victims to the flames. Roused by his voice, the soldiers staggered to their feet and obeyed him. Then drawing his sword he waved it quickly over the trench.

With a low cry the ghostly throngs drew back, all save one tall awful figure that strode out from among them.

This figure, as it drew near Odysseus, seemed mightier and more substantial than the rest. Round it was wrapped a thin robe that left the two arms bare. Over its head was cast a corner of the robe that half hid the long floating hair white as snow, and without the corner of the robe was a wreath of laurels. The face was old and sad, yet beautiful, the lower part covered with a flowing beard that streamed down over the breast. In his right hand the figure bore a wand or staff of gold not much unlike that borne by Circe.

Odysseus summons the Shade of Tiresias from Hades.

Meanwhile as the majestic figure drew near slowly, another passed close by. It was that of Elpenor, who had fallen from the turret of Circe's palace.

"Oh, tell me, Elpenor," said Odysseus, sad at the sight of his servant's woful face, "tell me what power has brought thee hither to wander with the dead? How could thy soul outfly the sail and leave the wind behind?"

"Dæmons accursed have winged me here," he said. "But, oh, lend me aid, Odysseus; by thy father's bowed head, by thy son's fair face, by thy wife Penelope's true love, I conjure thee. When thou art back on earth again, and land on Circe's shores, then let my cold remains be laid to rest as should a Greek's. I ask but one tear, a tomb beside the wave, and an oar fixed high above, to show just for a time Elpenor lived."

"Surely, O mournful shade," replied Odysseus, with wet eyes, "these rites are only thy due, and these rites shall be paid. Pass on—farewell!"

The phantom seemed as if it would have stayed, but as Odysseus waved his sword around, it floated away with a bitter groan.

Next moment in its place rose up the pale figure of a woman, a queen, the mother of Odysseus himself!—the loved Anticlea!

Years before, when last he saw her, she stood upon the beach at Ithaca to watch his vessels sail away to Troy. Now all of her his mortal eyes could see was a thin vapour.

Struck at the sight, which told him he should see her on earth no more, Odysseus burst into tears. But the figure seated itself close at hand, and took no notice of him.

Next moment the Theban, full of awful majesty, stood between them, one hand raised half aloft, the other bearing the staff of gold.

"Why, mortal—why art thou wandering here?" said the figure. "What angry god has led thee to these dark regions, and made thee, while yet alive, a dweller with the dead? But sheathe thy sword while I tell thee what is heaven's purpose towards thee—what thy fate!"

Odysseus, who had been kneeling on one knee, sheathed his sword and rose to his feet.

"Proceed, O mighty shade!" he murmured.

"Alas, Odysseus," said Tiresias, "I have no prosperous voyage to your native shores to promise you. New dangers and woes await you. I see your bark tossed by angry Poscidon in revenge for Polyphemus—I see a thousand other dangers. Yet the gods decree an end to thy woes, if thou but please them."

"How shall I please them, then?" asked Odysseus.

"Thus. As you pass homeward by Trinacria's shore you will see great herds of cattle grazing near at hand. Hunger will press you, but touch not a single head of all the herds. Fly from them, for they are sacred to the god of day, whose eye beholds all things. So shall you have fair winds and prosperous gales, and so reach home in peace."

"But if I touch the beasts, or if my men, desperate and rebellious, slay a single head, shall I suffer for it?"

"Then beneath the waves your friends shall sink, and you scarce survive the wreck; and after long passage, when, by strangers led, you reach home at last, it will be but to meet domestic woes. Yet late, and at long last, when every god is satisfied, and all your troubles done, you shall end your days in peace, blessing your people, being blessed by them. These are unerring truths, O man; this is thy life and fate to come."

"If the gods have decreed this, it is but wise to bear it with courage," replied Odysseus, unmoved. "But tell me, ah, tell me, why sits my mother yonder careless of her son? Why is Anticlea silent while I am near?"

"Even this I will tell you," replied Tiresias. "To whoever of the spectres touches thy offering, the scenes of life return, and all that passes on the earth appears. They who touch not, but are repelled, remain unmindful. Now, King of Ithaca, farewell—farewell!"

With a low sound, like the sighing of the wind among the trees, Tiresias glided away and disappeared.

Still Odysseus stood rooted to the spot as if but half satisfied. Then suddenly his mother's shade drew near and touched the blood and wine. As she did so a smile passed over her face, and she recognized her beloved son.

"O loved Odysseus," she cried, while she threw out her arms as if she would have clasped him, "how come you alive to these dark realms from the bright pure day and cheerful sun? A dreadful region is this, and dire is the way that leads to it. Here horrid lakes and floods in fury meet; here the wide sea in tenfold horror roars."

"O mother, who first gave me life, I fly from earth to seek Tiresias, and learn my fate," replied Odysseus. "Tossed from grief to grief, from woe to woe, I find an enemy on every shore. And though proud Troy lies low in dust, these eyes have not yet beheld my native land."

The shade drew a deep sigh, but kept silence while Odysseus continued:

"But tell me, O mother, how you yourself came here?" he murmured. "Was it by slow degrees your life's fair lamp expired, or did it burst in sudden blaze and die? Tell me if old Laertes lives? if Telemachus rules Ithaca for me? Say if my wife, my loved Penelope, keeps firm and true, though tempted, or if, forgetting me, she wails my absence no longer?"

"By day and night Penelope weeps for you," replied the shade. "Telemachus rules for thee over Ithaca; Laertes lives in solitude, and thinks of thee."

"And in the court and palace how passes the day?"

"The court is joyless because you are not there. No luxury is seen on any side. Even in cold winter Telemachus sleeps, but as the slaves. Your father's days consume away in care, and he sinks fast in sorrow to his grave. For thee I wept my life away, O son; it was no disease, but only thy absence slew me. I had lived for thee: when thou didst not return I died!"

At these sad words tears rained from the eyes of Odysseus, and three times he strove to clasp his mother in his arms. Three times his arms came back to him through the empty wind.

"Oh, why do you fly me?" he cried wildly. "Turn to my arms, oh, turn. Is it, O gods that smile at human woe—is it too great a bliss for me to weep within her arms?"

"O son of woe," replied the mother, "we shades below are only as vapour or an airy dream. But haste and fly this place. Go tell Penelope the horrors, woes, and customs of this realm. Stay not a moment longer, for the blackest shades are thronging near to fright you while we speak. Farewell, farewell, farewell!"

Next moment, with a sigh, she was gone; and scarcely had she faded away, when, thick as armed men in a field of battle, a mighty host, the wives and daughters of great kings and heroes, gathered round.

As Odysseus glanced round he saw their faces ranged above each other, tier on tier, as if in some mighty amphitheatre, those behind seeming to press forward those in front, while all fixed their eyes longingly on the sacrificial blood and wine.

Quick as thought he drew his sword and flashed it over the offerings. Then the foremost of the airy host floated up in the air and fell back moaning as if in bitter pain.

As the first rank withdrew the second pressed forward, and as these vanished before the flashing sword the third took their place.

So rank after rank appeared and melted away, till all the women famed in ancient story passed before his eyes. Fair Tyro was there, haughty Antiope, and soft Alcmena; sullen Jocasta and lovely Chloris, swan-like Leda, and mournful Phædra all met his gaze. Procris and Ariadne swept past him weeping.

Suddenly the voice of Proserpine was heard, and all the host with a groan fell back and vanished at her command.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

"YOUR WAY LIES THERE."

A TRUE STORY.

IN Germany, several hundred years ago, on a fine day in spring, a boy was sitting on a stone near a ploughed field, tending his father's cattle. In his hand he held a stout stick, and at his feet lay his good dog Max.

The boy's name was Hermann Billings. As he sat there on the stone, he saw a party of knights on horseback draw near. They were richly clad; and Hermann admired their appearance very much. One of them in particular was of very noble aspect, and seemed to take the lead.

"Let us go to that house," said this man, pointing to the dwelling of Hermann's father.

Now, the nearest approach to the house was over the ploughed field; and, as he spoke, the noble rider turned his horse in that direction, and the other knights were quick to follow his lead.

But Hermann sprang before him; while Max, the good dog, stood by to help, if necessary.

"Your way lies there," said Hermann, grasping his stick, and pointing to a travelled road. "You must not cross this ploughed field; it is private property, and sowed with seed."

"And who are you that would teach us manners, and lay down the law to us?" said the leader of the knights.

"I am Hermann Billings," replied the boy; "and I am here to see to my father's cattle, and protect his ploughed field. No one must cross it; no, not even the emperor."

Then the noble rider rose proudly in his saddle, bent on the boy a stern glance, and said:

"The emperor it is, who speaks to you, rash boy. Make room for him; this jest has gone far enough."

"I can well believe thou art the emperor," said the lad, "for thou dost look it. Yet no, thou canst not be the good E... for Otto, for he stands up for law and right, and sees to it that the strong and proud do not wrong the poor and weak. Wherever his rule extends, there is justice done. But *thou* wouldst tread with the foot of the spoiler on my father's ploughed field, which he has sowed with much labour."

Forth sprang two or three of the knights to seize the bold boy, and punish him on the spot for speaking thus to the emperor; but the latter cried:

"Hold there! Lay not the weight of a finger on the lad."

Then silently turning his horse away from the ploughed field, the emperor took the travelled road, and the rest followed him to the house of Hermann's parents.

When Hermann went home, he found them there, partaking of refreshments. The good emperor, seeing him at the door, drew him in by the hand, and said to the boy's father:

"Send the lad to me, Billings. This Saxon twig I must plant near my throne, so that it shall grow to a noble tree. In this boy I see a man."

And so Hermann went with the emperor, and became one of his bravest generals and most trusted friends. He lost nothing, you see, by standing up boldly for law and right.

"SUPPOSE."

"Suppose," said a little lamb to a big calf that was feeding in the pastures beside her, "that I was an elephant."

"But you're *not* an elephant," said the calf.

"But suppose I was," continued the lamb, "and had ivory tusks."

"But you haven't any tusks at all, let alone ivory tusks," said the calf.

"But suppose I had," insisted the lamb, "and a great long trunk."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the calf.

"And I went off with a menagerie like that we saw going down the road yesterday," said the lamb; "and"——

"You couldn't go with a menagerie. They wouldn't have you," interrupted the calf.

"I could, and they would, if I were an elephant," said the lamb.

"But *you're not an elephant*," repeated the calf, kicking up his heels and jumping about in the most absurd manner.

"Oh, dear!" said the lamb; "I shan't try to play with you any more. How can I, when you haven't the least bit of 'suppose' in you?"

The calf stood still, and looked at her for a moment, with serious brown eyes, and then went off, whimpering:

"Very well; you needn't play with me if you don't want to. So there, now! And I'll go and tell my mother you're mad at me just because you're not an elephant."

And away he ran; while the lamb went on cropping the young grass, and supposing to herself.

BLUEBELL VANE'S STORY.

BY LADYE BYRDE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SINS OF DADDY LONG-LEGS.

THE day following brought the expected travellers. Their return created quite an excitement among us, and the complimentary speeches showered upon their personal appearance by the members of the family were, as Ion declared, touchingly affectionate.

"What colour do you call yourself?" asked Jack, stepping back and regarding the new arrivals with pretended admiration. "You're subjects for a painter, something between gamboge and an American Indian."

"They're just the colour for bronze statues," said Ion. "They should be sent to the National Gallery before their beauty fades, and set upon pedestals forthwith."

"Herbert's handsomer than ever," said Tom, impudently. "He's exactly the colour of an elephant."

"If he only had a pigtail now," quoth Jack, "he might pass for the ambassador of Whangshegang, and be received at Court with the honours befitting a heathen Chinee."

"Horace is an awful swell," said Bernard; "he'll be able to walk on his hair if it grows an inch longer."

"I recommend him to put it in paper to-night," said Tom; "and I promise to do the screwing-up process for him."

"In point of beauty," said Herbert, fingering his chin, "Horace can't come up to me at all. I haven't shaved for three weeks—my stubble is a caution to young ladies. What a pity it isn't mistletoe time now! Isn't there anybody here who'd like to kiss me," he went on, turning round, and pretending to rub my cheek with his beard; but without ceremony I pushed him off with an energy that delighted Tom.

"I'm so glad you've come back," said Bernard to his brother, "because now Lucie will bring out the biggest pie-dishes, and there'll be lots more tart on hand."

"You greedy boy," said Lucie, making a feint of boxing his ears; "for shame!"

"It's always nice to have Herbert home," put in Zoe. "I'm so glad he's come, and I hope he'll come to have tea with us every evening."

Herbert seemed rather taken aback with this demonstration, but matter-of-fact Tom cried out:

"Oh, yes! we know, don't we? Lucie always sends up extra pots of jam when Herbert shews his nose at tea—eh?"

"Affection among the members of a family is ever a refreshing sight," said Jack, solemnly; "but when a reunion is distinguished by such unselfish marks of tenderness, it is blessed indeed!"

"This is a sort of affection," said Graham, "that all the waters of hydropathy cannot quench, and that toffee and pine-apple rock grows upon"——

"Does your affection thrive on toffee and pine-rock?" asked Ion of me. "Do you think you'd like me any better if I presented you with a few ounces every morning?"

"I'm sure she would," said Tom. "Only try her; and try me, too. My affection would grow amazingly."

Lucie's usual merriment seemed to have evaporated. She scarcely spoke while the rest laughed and talked. Tom's sharp eyes soon discovered this change, and looking at Horace, he said, in a pitying tone:

"Lucie's been awfully down in the mouth lately. She and Daddy Long-legs have been comparing notes on indigestion and botany."

"Daddy's a capital old fellow," said Jack. "He's going to give me such a jolly pointer."

"Yes," said Bernard, "and he sends such baskets of grapes and things. I'm getting quite

fond of him, and I know Father thinks no end of him."

"I heard old Daddy telling Mother about his corns the other day," said Tom. "You can't think what an interest she takes in him."

"We've been recommending Lucie to look after his hair and nails," said Jack; "but of course that's all in the happy future."

"Miss Carringer is happy to possess so much influence," said Horace, looking very uncomfortable, but not glancing towards Lucie.

"It's Tom that has the most influence," said Lucie. "I've seen his pockets running over with plums and peaches, not to mention grapes and pears without end. No wonder he's so fond of his Daddy."

It was seldom Tom was at a loss for a reply.

"I do love the Daddy very much," he said, gravely, "because, for one thing, he's my neighbour, and of course it's my duty to love him; but the biggest reason for my love is"——

"Pineapples and melons," suggested Graham.

"Oh dear, no!" returned Tom; "it's entirely for Lucie's sake my"——

He could get no further—Lucie's hand was over his mouth, and a rare scuffle ensued, during which Aunt Esther came in.

"Mother to the rescue!" cried Tom. "I'm being cruelly murdered."

"Here's Lucie visiting the sins of her dear Daddy Long-legs on poor Tom's back," said Jack. "Isn't it a very improper proceeding, mother?"

"There, you bad, bad child," said the sister, giving Tom's hair a last tug. "Mother, dear, you've no idea how naughty he has been. Do scold him a little bit—will you? he'll turn my hair grey with his impertinences!"

"Happily," said Ion, while Tom made an effort to restore some order to his disarranged locks, "there is a remedy for that disease so long as Mrs. Allen's Hair Restorer is extant, so pray, Tom, don't discontinue your impertinence on that account."

"Mummy, dear," said Lucie, "you can't imagine how Ion corrupts Tom; mayn't I thump him just a little?"

"Wait till after dinner then," said Aunt Esther. "We mustn't keep our travellers fasting any longer."

"I vote," said Herbert, "that this present assembly be dissolved, and that it do adjourn in accordance with the sovereign will of our Queen, to perform the ceremony which, in vulgar parlance, goes by the name of tucking in."

He went towards his mother, kissed her hand with the devotion of a loyal subject, and placed it on his arm, leading the way to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XXV.

A GONE COON.

"I say, Blub, do you know what a spoon is?"

"Of course I do. How stupid you are!" I replied.

"You're the stupid. I don't believe you know one bit."

"As if I didn't! Why, we use a spoon at every meal!"

"You old goose! I knew you were as ignorant as you could be! My dear little child, how much you have to learn!"

"You're not so very wise yourself, Tom, I daresay."

"It isn't for me to boast," said Tom, with affected humility; "but I heard our tutor, Scott, tell the governor that I was a boy of good parts; and that goes for something, I daresay."

"Was it Mr. Scott told you the meaning of spoon?"

"He! Oh, listen to this sweet little innocent! Catch him talking about such things, that's all. You'd better go and ask our encyclopedia about it."

"What's that?"

"Why, Graham, of course. He's our walking encyclopedia. He knows everything under the sun, I believe. I never saw such a fellow. You can't stagger him. It's my opinion he knows a lot more than the Prime Minister, whoever he is now."

Said I, not at all seeing the connection between a Prime Minister and a spoon:

"Why can't *you* tell me what a spoon is instead of sending me to Graham—that is, if you know yourself."

"I have an idea, that's all," said Tom, "for I'm a very innocent little boy, and a very good little boy, too, only no one will believe it. Well, listen here, then—a spoon is a—a—Horace is a spoon."

"You don't expect me to believe such rubbish as that?"

"You weren't born yesterday, my dear child; but for all that Horace is a spoon, and Lucie is another; and a pretty little pair they are, too. Fact is, they're spoons on each other."

"You are the stupidest boy! I can't understand you a bit."

"You haven't a spark of patience in you. Wait till I translate *amo, amas, amat*—you know the rest."

And Tom, lowering his voice, unfolded a scheme by which we were to discover for ourselves the truth of his assertion that Horace was a spoon.

"But," said I, "if that's what you call spooning, I don't believe Horace is a bit like that; he never spoke to Lucie. I don't think he even looked at her once, so he can't care much about her."

"You're as innocent as a blessed babby! You should see some of the things I've seen! Why, I tell you Horace is a gone coon! He worships her shadow, and nothing makes him madder than to talk to him about old Daddy Long-legs; he fancies the governor likes Daddy better than him. Horace not like her! Why, I've made him as mad as a hatter telling him she'd gone down with mother to call on the Daddy. And he's given me sixpence lots of times to get toffee and things just for an excuse to have a chance of talking about her. I know what it's all for. My gum! Horace not love Lucie! This child's not so green!"

"Well, so he ought to love her," said I, simply. "I don't see how anybody could help it!"

"Yes, but, you sweet little verdant, don't you see that he wants to marry her; and she can't marry him and Daddy too, can she?"

"Oh, I see what you mean now," said I, daylight dawning on my darkness; "but do you think she will marry? I should hate her to go away; it would be dreadful without her."

"Law bless your little soul, don't be in such a fright! They're not in any hurry. Horace has got to get his degree first, and he's in no danger of it at present. It's my belief he does nothing at college but write sonnets and love-letters. Lucie gets one nearly every day when he's away; and I daresay, if he told the truth, his exam. papers are full of nothing but L. Carringer, L. C., L. C. I tell you, Blub, he's a regular gone coon."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SPOONS.

"I thought you were never coming, my darling. How late you are!"

"Yes; I couldn't possibly get away. Mother wanted me, and it isn't always easy for bees to leave their homes after sunset, you know."

(Passing his arm round her.) "Especially such a busy bee as my Lucie. Ah, my darling, the moments have been hours while I waited for you. Lucie, how I have longed for you while I was away!—yearned for a touch of your hand, and pined for a sight of this sweet face" (trying to kiss it). "Do let me have one! Ah, don't be cruel—think of the long, long weeks that I have had to live without my supply of honey! I must have one" (takes it).

"You naughty boy, you—look how you've tumbled my hair. They'll be sure to notice it when I get in."

"Let me have another before you put it to rights, then; do—do."

"You shall not, sir. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I won't love you one bit if you're so naughty."

(In melting accents.) "Oh, yes, you will! How could I live without love now? I should die—you know I would, Lucie." (Taking her hand, and kissing it between every other word.) "Say something nice to me, my darling—something to comfort me after my long abstinence—just one little word. Tell me you love me—just once, do! Ah, say something that I can take away with me to-night, and dream over it—do, sweetest; it will give me fresh life, my own precious darling. Give me just one little sweet word" (bending his head down till the uncut hair swept her cheek).

The sweet words stole from her parted lips, falling on the dewy air. Still Nature heard them—so did Horace.

"Jam tarts."

Then a musical laugh.

(Starting back and dropping her hand.) "Ah, how cruel you are! You mock my love, Lucie. You can't care in the least for me, or you'd never make fun of me like this."

"Now, Horace, didn't you ask me to say some sweet words? I'd like to know what is sweeter than jam tarts." (With a pout.) "You're always quarrelling! I never saw such a boy!"

(In an injured tone.) "You know what I meant, Lucie; but you love to provoke and tease me. I don't believe you care for me at all; and I'm sure you love that abominable old Daddy Long-legs infinitely more than you do me!"

"You can't, with truth, say that Mr. Archdale is abominable. He is a nice, gentlemanly man, and I certainly do like him."

(Getting up steam.) "Yes, I know you do; and, if I am not mistaken, the feeling is reciprocal."

(Provokingly.) "I do really think he likes me a little."

(Very huffily.) "A little! Why not confess the truth, and say he adores you?"

"I don't know whether his affection has arrived at adoration point; but it may come, of course; one can never tell."

(Satirically.) "Yes, and the mistress of Pine Lodge will be an enviable personage, no doubt."

(Aggravatingly.) "I should think so, indeed! Why, think of his glorious library, his lovely gardens, his hot-houses, and the nice old house! Enviable indeed! I should think so!"

(Spitefully.) "Yes; and pray don't forget his flannels and his rheumatism, his indigestion and his corns!"

(Calmly.) "No, that would be scarcely fair, because they serve to keep the balance a little more even. Though, after all, what are they? You can cure the rheumatism with flannels, I suppose; and as to the corns, why, they can be easily taken out by those clever people who go about. What is it you call them?—chiropodists, I mean. Why, I know an old lady who had ten taken out of one foot, and she never felt them at all, she said. Oh, the corns wouldn't count a bit!"

(With suppressed fury.) "Perhaps you know how to cure his indigestion, and his snuff-taking, too?"

(With sweet amiability.) "Of course I should cook all his puddings and pastry myself, and the indigestion would soon go then; and as to the little snuff business, Ion declares that a good, affectionate, properly-behaved wife would always take care that her husband's snuff-box should be properly filled at all times, if he so wished it; but I have a far better method than that."

(With intense disdain.) "Pray enlighten me."

(With twinkling laughter in every tone.) "I should just go up to him and coax the box out of his pocket; and every time he wanted a pinch, I should offer him a kiss instead."

(Grinding his teeth and stamping his foot.) "I hate him! He's a vile fellow. He's a musty, fusty, cranky old bachelor, that's what he is; and I wish you joy of your bargain."

(With provoking politeness.) "Thank you so much, but"——

"Do you mean to marry him?"

(With a diffident air.) "He hasn't asked me yet."

(With a vain effort to calm the internal tempest.) "Do you intend to marry him when he does ask you?"

"I think I'd better not decide in a hurry" (naïvely). "Next year is Leap Year, you know, and I might stand a better chance."

(Raising his hat.) "Good evening, Miss Carringer."

(Merrily spreading her skirts.) "Good evening, Mr. Mayne."

They separate, and Mr. Mayne proceeds on his way two steps, then looks back. Lucie is plucking a spray off the trunk of the old trysting-tree, humming an air.

"Lucie!"

No answer.

The humming continues.

(Coming nearer.) "Lucie!"

Still no answer. The air is exchanged for another, "The Old Man's Bride."

(Very humbly.) "Lucie, how can you be so cruel to me?"

"Oh, Mr. Mayne, is it you? Why, I thought"——

"Mr. Mayne, indeed! You are heartlessly cruel, Lucie!"

"I cruel? What next?"

(In an agonized tone.) "I shall go mad, I shall! You are tearing my heartstrings!" (Quotation from last sonnet, written at Chamounix after inquiring twice for a love-letter at the post-office and finding none.) "My pain is nothing to you. You have no heart for any one but that miserable old man! You care nothing for all I have suffered during my absence" (forgetting the jolly scenes and adventures described in his letters), "and that dreadful time when I didn't get a letter from you for three whole days and a half! Oh, Lucie! Lucie!" (with a very suspicious tremor in the voice.)

(A whisper among the lower branches of the trysting-tree.) "Don't you call that a 'gone coon?"

"Horace—dear Horace!" (Offering her hand.)

(Seizing it wildly with passionate kisses.) "My own darling—my own sweet Lucie, you don't love him, do you? Say you don't, my queen, my beloved. Say you won't marry him—say the words, my beautiful!"

"Oh, Horace, how can you?"

(With tender energy.) "Promise you'll never, never marry him."

"Now, Horace, listen to reason."

(With the fervour of a loving maniac.) "If you marry him, I'll shoot him—I'll kill him—I'll"——

"I think I'd better go in now."

(With frantic eagerness.) "No, no, don't! I haven't said one quarter of what I've got to say. Lucie, darling, tell me you don't love that horrid old man, and I shall be perfectly happy."

"As if I cared one straw about him!"

"Call him a horrid old Daddy Long-legs, and I shall go home contented."

"It's a pity to abuse such a nice old man."

"He's not a nice old man! He's an abominable, ridiculous old fidget!"

"Well, well, so he is, if you like."

"But say the words, Lucie. Just to please me, I think you might."

"Horace, you are, without exception, the most unreasona"——

"If you refuse to repeat the words, I shall dictate to you about that old fellow. You must give me five hundred kisses instead."

(With consternation.) "Horace, I must go in. I really must. Mother doesn't"——

(With red-hot ardour.) "Give me my kisses first."

"Let me go!"

"My kisses!"

(In a muffled voice.) "I'll say the words—let me off. I will, indeed! Horace, you'll pull my hair down! I declare I'll scream out if you don't be quiet."

(In delirious accents.) "My kisses! Five hundred kisses!"

Convulsive duet overhead, followed by an outburst—a rustling—a creaking—a broken bough—a shriek—and a down fall.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A THOROUGH LITTLE BRICK.

Graham was smoking his meerschaum in the garden as Horace carried me towards the house.

"Who is it? What is the matter? Anybody hurt?" asked he, coming to meet us.

"Bluebell has tumbled out of a tree, and hurt herself," said Lucie. "I'm afraid her foot has come to grief."

There is a certain knack in carrying children and babies which I do not think Horace Mayne possessed; for although I am sure he did his best, my wounded foot hung down, and gave me great pain. Graham was taller and stronger than Horace.

"Perhaps I can relieve you," said he, and Horace yielded his burden gladly enough, no doubt. The change of position gave me much relief, and the sensation of faintness passed away. Lucie ran in to tell her mother of the accident, and Tom walked by my side.

"Very bad, Blub?" asked he, affectionately.

"No; I daresay 'tisn't much."

"Some of your mischief—eh, Tom?" said Graham. "Are you responsible for this little joke?"

"Yes," replied the boy, ingenuously; "but I never thought she'd be so soft as to tumble down. I'm awfully sorry."

"Please don't tell uncle, because it really wasn't Tom's fault a bit more than mine," urged I, to Graham. "We were up in the tree together, and I was laughing so much, or else I'm sure I could have saved myself. You won't tell, will you?"

He stooped and kissed me between the eyes.

"I won't tell anything at all. You shall do all the telling yourself."

On the doorstep stood my uncle.

"There's the governor," said Tom. "Shan't I get scissors!"

"I don't think she's much hurt," said Graham, cheerily. "It's just a little accident they had at climbing—hurt her foot."

"I'm glad it's no worse," said my uncle. "Just take her to her aunt, will you?" Then to Tom: "Are your lessons prepared for to-morrow?"

"No, father, not all."

"Why not, sir? Follow me to the study."

"Do you think he'll beat Tom?" whispered I, to Graham, half crying.

"Beat him!" was the reply. "Mr. Carringer is the most just of men. He won't punish the boy one atom more than he considers right; and as to beating him, that wouldn't do Tom any good, would it? Don't you be afraid; he's in very safe hands. How does your foot feel now?"

"It's very hot, and it aches."

"Poor little one, you are punished heavily enough at any rate. Here we are! I'm quite sorry to put my burden down."

Half an hour later I was lying on the sofa, bathed and bandaged. Aunt Esther, the Hive physician, after examining my troubles, pronounced sentence on the foot, which was badly sprained, prescribed arnica generally, and dressed my bruises herself. She asked very little about my adventure, and I had sufficient sense to hold my tongue.

Now I was the centre of inquiry and sympathy.

"Let me give you a nice cushion for your head," said Jack. "Here, I'll raise it. Isn't that better?"

"Let me move this pillow under your foot a little," said Graham. "There, that'll be more comfortable, I'm sure."

"I think I'd better tuck some of these curls out of the way," said Lucie; "they must make you so hot. Naughty little thing," she whispered softly, bending over me.

I caught her round the neck, and drew her face down to mine.

"You're not angry with me, Lucie," I said, "are you?"

"No, no, you silly child; only of course it was a wicked thing to do; but you've been punished too much already, so I shan't say a syllable more about it."

"What's that you two are whispering about?" asked Ion, from his easy chair.

"Secrets," replied Lucie.

"No secrets from each other in this house," said Jack. "Hallo, what's become of Horace? I heard his voice in the hall a little while ago."

"He's gone home," said Lucie, assuming an indifferent air. "Herbert went with him."

"Ah! I see. What's the row with Tom? He and the governor are squaring accounts finely."

"Is uncle very angry?" asked I.

"I hope not," said Lucie. "Lie still, there's a good child, and we'll soon see how the land lies."

Zoe came in with her hair in curl papers.

"Tom's going to be punished," she said, whimpering; "father's been talking to him in the study—I heard him."

"I'll go and speak to uncle myself," said I, trying to get up. "It was just as much my fault as Tom's; it isn't fair."

Lucie held me down, and Jack said:

"If you've any sense, you won't interfere. Father never allows any one to meddle with his pies, and no one can ever say he acts unfairly. Tom has taken all the blame upon himself, you may be sure of that."

"When little children are naughty," said Ion, "they must be punished. Master Tom is lucky not to have had a sound whipping. I've no doubt he richly deserves one."

"Indeed he doesn't," said I, hotly; "if he does, I do."

"I'm afraid, my dear Bluebell, you are equally deserving; but just now, as you are a poor little stricken flower, and are being punished in another way, we mustn't say too much about it."

"I can't bear Ion," I said to Lucie, as she sat at the head of the sofa smoothing my hair.

"Spare your remarks, Ion," said Lucie. "Bluebell has just confided to me that she can't bear you."

"She'll change her mind," returned the Mogul, philosophically, while I began a vehement scolding to Lucie for betraying my confidence.

"What has happened to Tom?" asked Bernard, sauntering in. "He's in the den, digging away at his lessons; but I can't get anything out of him. He only says he's in punishment, and that he's to go off to bed."

"I'll say one thing for Tom," said Lucie, screwing one of Zoe's curl-papers tighter, "and that is, although he is such an incorrigible scapegrace, he's a thorough little brick. There, Zoe, say good night all round, and you and I will disappear."

"Do let me run down to the den and kiss Tom good night," said the child. "I know I could comfort him."

"As if he needed comfort," laughed Jack.

"Pray what would you say to him?" asked Ion.

"I'd tell him that Lucie said he was a thorough little brick."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

"Lucie ran in to tell her mother of the accident, and Tom walked by my side."

FRANK HOWARD.

A SEA STORY OF ADVENTURE AND DARING.

By J. A. MAITLAND.

CHAPTER XV.

I GET ADRIFT BY ACCIDENT.

WE had a narrow escape. Never was a vessel nearer foundering than was the luckless troop-ship, in which I and Douglass had taken passage, during that awful storm. We had suffered a terrible loss. The vessel was almost a wreck. Seventeen sailors and soldiers were more or less severely hurt by the falling of the masts and rigging. Three seamen and four soldiers were killed outright, and the helmsman, three other seamen, and eight soldiers were blinded by the flash of lightning, which was by far the most vivid that I ever beheld. It lit up the gun-room in which Douglass and I were seated at the time, as if an electric light had flashed through it, and the contrast with the previous darkness was awful. As I observed in the last chapter of my story, the captain of the ship had been blinded by it for a few moments, and so, as I afterwards learnt, had been every officer and man on deck at the time.

Talk of an engagement at sea! We had suffered more during five minutes than we could have suffered had we exchanged broadsides with another ship of our size and weight of metal for a couple of hours; while the awful conflict of the elements was more terrifying to the superstitious sailors and soldiers than the severest battle would have been. Indeed, it was impossible to see the fearful, unnatural flame, which rested upon the stump of the bowsprit, and lit up the darkness with a lurid glare, without a feeling of awe. The boldest on board trembled at the sight; yet there it continued, still constantly shooting forth tongues of white flame into the darkness for nearly half an hour, when it shot up high in air and disappeared.

The first endeavours of the captain and officers, as soon as they recovered from the fright and confusion into which everybody on board was thrown, was to right the ship. This was at length effected by cutting away the foremast, that still stood, and the ship rose to an even keel, a helpless mass, rolling gunwales under. Then the wounded and blinded were carried below and the dead thrown overboard; for there was no time now to devote to the decent burial of a corpse. But while this duty was being attended to, a cry arose that the ship was on fire below! Had this been the case, our condition would have been perfectly hopeless; but the captain and one of the officers, attended by the carpenter and boatswain's mate, immediately went below and thoroughly searched the lower decks and hold, and happily discovered that it was a false alarm.

Heavily as the ship was rolling, it was necessary to get some sail upon her; but her masts were gone, and the first thing to be done was to rig jury-masts,* and all hands that could be spared from other duties were set to work to assist the carpenter and crew in making jury-masts.

Before four o'clock p.m. the fierce tempest had subsided into an ordinary double-reefed topsail gale, though the cross seas still ran high and caused the ship to labour terribly. Order having been in some measure restored, Douglass and I again descended to the gun-room to partake of some refreshment.

I have never yet described the gun-room of a ship of war, and perhaps the description may be interesting to my readers.

The gun-room of a frigate, then—and the ship we were now on board of had been a fine frigate before she was turned into a troop-ship—is a cabin or apartment about eighteen feet long by twelve feet in breadth, and about eight feet in height. It is immediately in front of the captain's cabin, and above the cabin occupied by the midshipmen. It is lighted from above by a large skylight, and is always kept as clean and neat as possible. In the centre is a long mahogany table, on each side of which cushioned seats with sloping backs are ranged, and firmly fixed to the deck or floor. At each side are the "state-rooms," or sleeping cabins of the officers; and the bulkheads, or wainscots, are lined with sextants, quadrants, spyglasses, and other nautical instruments. As is the case in the cabins of all ships of war, guns peep out from the port-holes on either side of the gun-room; but except when the ship is prepared for action, the port-holes are tightly closed, and the guns are made to appear rather ornamental than otherwise. Usually the deck is covered with oilcloth, and in cold weather a highly-polished brass stove affords warmth to the apartment. But this is removed in warm weather to make more room—every inch of space being valuable. Above the table, depending from the upper portion of the skylight, is a thermometer and barometer (the chronometers, or timepieces, are always kept in the officers' cabins), and two or three swinging trays, on which glasses and decanters can be placed without danger of their falling, from the motion of the ship.

Upon ordinary occasions, the gun-room of a man-of-war presents a very lively, cheerful aspect, especially when the officers are seated around the table in full or undress uniform, comfortably enjoying themselves. But an engagement, or an unusually heavy gale of wind, sends everything into confusion; and a more desolate aspect than the gun-room of the troop-ship presented, when Douglass and I returned to it, it would be difficult to conceive.* As I observed in the previous chapter, everything that was moveable had been thrown to the deck, when the ship keeled over in the fearful thunder squall, and the sea that broke on board had poured down the hatchway, until the deck was covered with water six inches deep, in which all sorts of articles were floating, and being dashed against each other. We had rushed upon deck in the terrible, unnatural darkness, without thinking of the confusion, which we could not then have seen if we had thought of it—thinking, indeed, only of saving our lives—for we truly believed that the ship was about to founder.

"The instant that I set foot on the beach I was seized by two French soldiers."

"Oh, lord—oh, lord!" cried Douglass, as we entered the gun-room, shrugging his shoulders. And then he sang—

"Oh, how merrily we live that sailors be!"

"Come, steward," said I, "we are passengers, you know.† We can do nothing upon deck. There are plenty there to do the work—more than enough. They are only in each other's way. I'm as hungry as a shark, and so is my friend here. Make haste and give us something to eat."

"I'm afraid there is nothing but biscuit and cheese, sir," replied the steward. "Everything is smashed to pieces in the pantry. There's hardly a whole plate or glass remaining, and when the water rushed in, it washed away and spoilt all the cooked provisions."

"Well, well," said Douglass, "give us some biscuit and cheese, then, if you have nothing better. I could eat a donkey now, without sauce. I suppose you have some liquors—the bottles are not all broken in the lockers, I hope?"

"No, sir. What shall I give you, gentlemen? Some wine—or do you prefer spirits and water?" asked the steward.

"Bring us some beer, if you have any," said I. "What say you, Douglass?"

"Beer, by all means," Douglass replied. "See here, steward, bring a couple of bottles of bottled porter. *I* can drink a bottle to my own cheek."

In a few minutes the biscuit and cheese trays, flanked with a couple of bottles of porter and two tumblers, were set out on the table, and Douglass and I sat down and made a hearty meal, keeping our feet out of the water as well as we could, though it was really of little consequence; for we were wet to the skin, and our shoes were already full of water. As soon as we had satisfied our hunger, we returned to the deck to see how things were going on.

The decks were restored to some sort of order. The soldiers had been ordered below out of the way, and the sailors were occupied assisting to rig jury-masts, and to bend light sails to the studding-sail booms, which were to serve in the place of yards, and in other necessary duties.

The gale had so much abated, that the ship

* Light masts stepped in place of the proper masts when the latter have been shot or carried away.

* I have omitted to mention that the gun-room or ward-room officers consist of the three or four lieutenants of the ship, the doctor, the purser, the sailing master, and the chaplain—when the vessel carries a chaplain.

† The gun-room officers had given Douglass and I accommodation in the gun-room. The military officers on board had a cabin especially rigged out for their own use, though one or another of them was always invited to dinner with the officers of the ship.

might have carried her topgallant sails had she been in a condition to do so; but the sea still ran high, darkness was fast coming on, and the officers were hurrying the men to get the jury-masts stepped, and such sail set as the jury-masts and studding-sail booms would bear, before night set in.

The ship, which had been running before the wind during the tempest, was now between the island of Majorca and the Spanish coast; but so much nearer the latter that the outlines of the coast were visible in the distance, and the captain was anxious to get such sail set as was possible, so that he might bear away from the coast, where the enemy's ships were likely to be cruising about; for we were in no condition now to go into action. Indeed, had we been attacked we must necessarily have surrendered; and to capture a ship full of soldiers would have been a matter of great rejoicing to the Frenchmen, or Spaniards.

"Bear a hand, gentlemen—bear a hand," the captain kept on repeating to his officers, while he kept his spyglass to his eye, anxiously peering into the growing darkness to make sure that no enemy's ship was in sight. "We'll put her head round to the eastward as soon as we can set sail upon her. We must carry on as much as she'll bear. I shall not be satisfied unless we are well to the eastward of Minorca by daylight to-morrow."

Several of our boats had been carried away during the tempest; but the dingy—a small light boat that was used for running in shore and taking observations—still hung at the davits. The day before the gale, the second lieutenant had taken this boat close in shore, near Cas de St. Jose, in order to survey the coast, and by some accident, or forgetfulness, the chart he had taken with him, and a pair of compasses, and some other small instruments, had been left in the boat.

"Look there. The chart's been left in that boat," said I. "It's a wonder it is not ruined by the water. I'll take it out, at any rate;" and I clambered into the boat.

"Take care," said Douglass. "Although she swings at the davits, the tackles may have become loosened, and if you don't look out, she'll fall into the water, and you with her."

"Never fear," said I, as Douglass turned away to answer some questions put to him by one of the military officers.

Hardly, however, had I set my foot inside the boat when the stern tackles gave way with a run. I had but just time to cast off the bow tackles before she touched the water, or I should have been thrown into the sea. The boat quickly drifted away from the ship, and the accident that had happened was unseen by any one on board. I shouted with all my strength; but I knew my voice would be unheard amid the noise of the waters and the busy occupation of the officers and crew. It was now so dark that I almost immediately lost sight of the ship, and I was sure that no one on board could possibly discern the small boat upon the water. The two oars that belonged to the boat were lashed to the thwarts, and after some time I managed to cast them loose; but I knew not which way to pull for the ship, and if I had known, I could not possibly have pulled against the sea, which was setting towards the coast.

I did pull for some time in the direction in which I supposed the ship to be; but I soon felt convinced that I was wasting my strength to no purpose, and I laid the oars aside and resolved to trust to chance for whatever might befall me.

All through that long and weary night I sat in the stern-sheets of the boat, straining my eyes to pierce through the gloom, to no purpose; and when day dawned, I found that I had drifted within a mile of the coast of Spain. Nothing was to be seen of the troop-ship, nor of any other vessel; but that the boat was seen from the shore was evident from the number of people that came rushing down to the beach. As I drifted nearer in, I could hear them shouting, and see them beckoning to me. To have attempted to escape would have been folly. I could easily have been overtaken by a boat from the shore. I therefore resolved to make the best of a bad job, and to go on shore voluntarily. So, seizing the oars, I pulled for the beach, which I could see, as I drew near, was lined with French soldiers, mingled with the country people.

The instant that I set foot on the beach I was seized by two French soldiers, while several others, who looked on, loaded me with execrations and shouted out:

"*Ah, sacré espion—sacré espion!*" (Ah, vile spy—vile spy!)

I soon discovered that I had landed near Valentia, which was garrisoned with French soldiers. I knew not what would become of me, for if I claimed to be a British officer, they would not believe me. I had lost my uniforms when the Firefly went down, and the garments I now wore—though of good material—were merely the jacket and trousers of a common sailor. The soldiers seized me by the collar, and roughly dragged me away, still repeating their savage cry of "*Espion,*" in which they were joined by the people.

Resistance was out of the question. I therefore quietly submitted to be dragged away, resolved to make no explanation until I should find myself in the presence of an officer.

CHAPTER XVI.

I ESCAPE FROM THE GUARDHOUSE.

I was roughly dragged along a rough country road for—as it appeared to me—more than a mile, amidst the threats of the soldiers and the jeers of the country people. At length I saw a large town not far distant, which I supposed to be the city of Valentia, while, spread over a large plain near the town, were numerous canvas tents, occupied by the French troops.

Towards the largest of these tents I was conducted, and as we drew near, a young officer approached the party.

"Ha! *Qu'avez vous là?*" (Who have you there?) he demanded.

"*Un prisonnier—un espion, mon capitaine*" (A prisoner—a spy, captain), replied the sergeant of the party.

The whole conversation was carried on in French, which language I understood, and could speak passably well; but as yet I had made no reply, for I had not yet made up my mind whether it would be wiser on my part to pretend perfect ignorance of French, or to reply in that language to the best of my ability.

"*Un espion? Ma foi, il est jeune garçon d'etre un espion!*" (A spy! Faith, he is a young fellow to be a spy!) replied the officer.

I said in French, in a low voice, intended for his ears only:

"I am no spy, monsieur. I am an English officer. I speak French a little; but I have kept silent hitherto because I am doubtful whether it would be safe to confess to my knowledge of their language before these soldiers, who have treated me so roughly."

But the sergeant had heard me in spite of the low tone in which I spoke.

"*Pardieu!* There is proof that he is a spy," he said, in French, addressing the soldiers. "He speaks French. The English never speak French but for a vile purpose."

The soldiers hissed their "*sacrés!*" through their clenched teeth; and glared at me like so many tigers. The officer smiled—I fancied doubtfully—while I was speaking to him; but he now ordered the men to stand back, and threatened to punish any one who should illtreat me.

"If he *be* a spy, monsieur the general will find him out, and he'll get his deserts soon enough; be sure of that," he added, with a laugh.

I now recollected that though I had said that I was a British officer, I wore a common sailor's garb, and that that was much worn, and growing shabby, and by no means improved by my late exposure to the tempest. This accounted for the young captain's evident disbelief of my story, and I felt that it would have been better had I held my tongue, or at least concealed my knowledge of French, until I stood in the presence of the general to whom they were about to conduct me.

"*Hé, François.* Is monsieur the general disengaged?" asked the captain of a young lieutenant who stood by.

"He has just woke up, and is as savage as a bear," replied the lieutenant, laughing. "Faith, I would not care to be carried before him just at this moment!"

"*N'importe*" (Never mind), said the captain. "We must do *our* duty. Report to him that Sergeant Durand has captured an English prisoner."

The tent was divided into three or four distinct partitions by canvas curtains, and into one of these partitions, adjoining that occupied by the general, I was carried, while the officer went to make his report.

"*Un espion! Sacr-r-e tonnerre*" (A spy, cursed thunder), I heard the general say, in tones that sounded more like the growling of some savage animal than the voice of a human being. "*Apportez ici le chien*" (Bring the dog here). But wait. I have this report from headquarters to look over."

A savage, growling conversation was carried on for some minutes in an undertone, and now I learnt that the commanding officer, upon whose decree my fate depended, was Marshal Davoust, an able officer, who had risen from the ranks, but who was generally acknowledged to be the most savage tyrant in the French army.

"Monsieur le general doesn't like to move his quarters," I heard a young officer remark to another; "but he'll have to obey orders nevertheless."

"I wouldn't give much for the life of this *pauvre diable,*" said the captain into whose charge I had been delivered, "at such a moment at this. But, *pauvre garçon* (poor boy)—he is but a boy—perhaps the general will forget him in his anger, and I shall not press the charge against him just now."

I mentally thanked the young captain for his sympathetic kindness; but he had hardly spoken when I heard the general growl forth—

"I have no time now to trouble myself with accursed spies. Bring a corporal's guard. Let them load their pieces. We'll soon settle this little affair."

"It is all over with me," I thought; "but little affair as it may appear to *you, mon général,* it is an important matter to *me.*"

At this moment an aide-de-camp, covered with gold lace, entered the tent, and with little ceremony made his way to the general. I heard low, savage growls in answer to the aide-de-camp's remarks, and then came a clash, as if the general had flung his sword from him in a fit of passion, and the next moment the aide-de-camp reappeared, perspiring with agitation.

"*Mon Dieu! Qu'il est sauvage, ce Davoust!*" (My God! What a savage is this Davoust!) he exclaimed, as he threw himself on a camp stool. "I thought he would have run me through. But the Emperor's orders are imperative, and he will have to march hence."

There was a great confusion. Officers were receiving and giving orders on every hand, and in the midst of the turmoil the young captain approached me, and gave me into the charge of a Spanish corporal.

"Take this youngster to the guard-house," he said in French, "and keep sharp watch over him." Then to me—"Go, *mon garçon,* with the corporal: Keep silent, and the marshal in his anger will forget you for the present. Were he to see you just now I wouldn't give a *sou* for your life."

I had no time to thank the captain for his sympathy, before I was hurried away—not unkindly—by the corporal and two Spanish soldiers, who carried me to the guard-house, at the other end of the encampment, and, pushing me into a dark room, left me to myself.

For some hours the camp seemed to be in a state of great confusion. I could hear orders loudly given, and then, apparently, countermanded; and I heard the measured tramp of bodies of men marching and countermarching in every direction. Then silence ensued, and it appeared to me that I was left alone in the guard-house, probably forgotten. I was hungry; but I suffered more from intense thirst, yet no one came near me. Hours passed away: darkness came on, silence surrounded me, and I seemed to have been left alone and forgotten—a better fate than if I had been hanged as a spy, as there seemed every probability that I would be a few hours before, still, by no means a pleasant position when one is suffering from hunger and thirst. At length, about an hour after dark, a Spanish soldier brought me some cold *frijolis* (a kind of bean) and a can of cold water, which he placed in the room without a word, probably because he knew neither French nor English, while at that time I was utterly ignorant of Spanish.

Cold boiled beans, flavoured with garlic, are not very appetizing; nor is cold water an agreeable beverage when anything better can be had. Still, I made a hearty meal, and then composed myself to sleep, and but for the fleas which infested the place, should have slept soundly. Daylight dawned. Not a sound save the chirping of the sparrows in the thatched roof of the guard-house was to be heard. I waited for a long time expecting that my visitor of the previous night would appear with my breakfast; but he came not. It appeared to me that the place was completely deserted. At length an old woman who spoke a little French opened the door of my prison, and handed to me a tin mugfull of soup, and informed me that the English barbarians, under that villain Vellington, were marching against Badajos, and that Marshal Davoust, and all the other generals, had been summoned by Bonaparte to oppose the progress of the accursed islanders.

The old lady, however, seemed to have little better opinion of the French than of the English. Neither, she said, were wanted in Spain; and all that she required was that they would go away, and leave the Spaniards to manage their own affairs.

I learnt from her that her husband was the Mayor of the neighbouring village, and that he was left in charge of the camp during the marshal's absence. "And Santa Josepha (the guardian saint of the village) grant that he may *never* return!" added the good dame.

It appeared to me that I had been quite forgotten, and that there was nothing to prevent me from leaving the guard-house when I chose; and such was really the case.

I told the old lady that I intended to go away; and, from what I could gather from her broken French, she replied that she thought it was the best thing I could do.

"See you, monsieur," she said, "my good man and I would gladly offer you such hospitality as we may; but these French who have come, they say, to protect us, have plundered us of all we possessed. Still, monsieur, if you think there is danger to be apprehended from the straggling French soldiers—the robbers—who remain, you are welcome to stay as long as you please."

I had no idea however, of staying in the guard-house, under the supervision of a rheumatic Spanish soldier and his wife, and I told the old lady that I should depart forthwith.

"'Tis the best thing monsieur *can* do," she replied; "for if that wicked marshal comes back, he will certainly hang you for a spy."

"*Buono journo* (good day), senor," said the Mayor, who was sunning himself on a bench in front of a cottage near the guardhouse.

"*Buono journo, senor,*" I replied; and the old dame calling after me, said in her broken French—"Monsieur will starve if he goes away without food. It is little we have to give; but to such as we have monsieur is welcome."

She handed to me a canvas bag, in which was half a loaf of black bread—about four pounds in weight—some onions, and a melon, and thanking the worthy old couple for their kindness, I accepted the offering, and went on my way.

My intention was to follow the line of coast, in the hope of finding a boat in which I could put to sea, and trust to the chance of falling in with an English vessel, or being picked up by some one or other before I had consumed the small stock of provisions I carried with me. But after travelling two days along the shore, and seeing nothing except some Spanish fishing boats in the offing, hunger compelled me to strike into the woods in the hope of finding some farmer or peasant from whom I might obtain the food I began to feel myself sorely in need of.

In my rough sailor dress, however, I was an object of suspicion, and as I was at that period unable to speak Spanish very intelligibly, I was in constant fear of being re-arrested. At last I found shelter during a heavy shower, in the cottage of an old Spanish peasant-woman, who supplied me with a bowl of garlic soup and some rye-bread, almost perfectly black, but not unpleasant to the taste. Hanging from a nail in the front room of the cottage, in which the old woman appeared to be living quite alone, were some coarse articles of female apparel. Now, my clothes had become very shabby, and were infested with fleas; and my linen and underclothing, after having been worn for more than a week, and having been repeatedly wet through both with salt and fresh water, was horribly dirty, and indeed unfit to wear any longer. The notion struck me that a peasant woman's dress would be a safe disguise, and certainly decidedly preferable to the dress I had on. Pointing to these clothes, and by the aid of broken Spanish and English, I made the old dame understand what I wanted, upon which she set up a loud outcry, and abused me roundly in her native tongue. What she said I could not understand; but I had a few guineas in my pocket, for I had not been searched by the soldiers. The sight of the gold operated like a charm. The old dame ceased her outcries and abusive language, and became eager to bargain.

The Spanish women, however, are generally of low stature, and I, young as I was, had nearly attained to my full growth. The gown I tried on would hardly reach to my knees; but by lowering the skirt I found that I could make it answer its purpose. A gown, an under petticoat, a coarse flannel petticoat, and a chemise, made of linen almost as coarse as canvas, were selected by the old woman, and laid out before me.

"Good—*bon—buono,*" I said; "but you see I need what you call *bas*—socks—stocking. *Comprènez-vous?*"

The old lady brought out a pair of her own stockings, which would barely have covered the calf of my leg. I shook my head.

"*Ah—si—esperár*" (Ah, yes, wait), said the old dame; and she went to a worn chest of drawers, and brought forth a pair of very coarse and stout knit stockings, of Spanish wool, which had probably belonged to her husband or her son.

"Now, *Quanto?*" (How much?) said I.

The old woman held up four fingers. "*Quatro!*" she said, pointing to the coins in my hand.

"Bah!" said I. "Not worth two—*dos,* what you call. You speakee me *ladrone* (thief). I think you *muchas ladrone*—eh?"

After a great deal of clumsy bargaining, however, I agreed to pay three guineas for the garments, which would have been dearly purchased for one.

"Now," said I, "start—pack—be off—*marchéze* (go away). I'm going to change my clothes."

The old dame understood me, and needed no more telling. She was off like a shot, leaving me in the room alone; and in a quarter of an hour I found myself changed in outward aspect, so far as costume was concerned, into a Spanish peasant-girl. My face and hands were sufficiently browned by the sun to make me appear like a Spaniard, and except that I displayed an uncommonly large amount of stocking, I thought I looked the character very well; but the old woman had to let down the skirt to enable it to cover my knees, and *then* it hardly extended an inch beneath them. I left my old sailor garments in exchange for a red cotton handkerchief, which the old lady tied on my head in the proper fashion, and then declared that I looked like a *bonica muchácha* (a handsome girl), which was very flattering, but not quite true.

Soon after this, having purchased a good supply of rye bread, which I carried in an old linen bag that the woman gave me, slung over my shoulders, I sallied forth into the woods.

I found my new dress very awkward; and, now that I was disguised, I was at a loss how to proceed. I kept near the sea-shore as much as possible, and if I had come across a boat with nobody to look after it, I should certainly have made free with it, and put to sea, trusting to chance for what might next befall me. But I had no such luck, and for eight days I wandered about, sometimes along the shore, sometimes in the woods—sleeping at night beneath the trees, or in some old barn or deserted hut—for, fortunately, the weather continued fine and warm.

I began to grow very, very weary, and my feet became blistered with so much walking. It was necessary to take some decided step, and at length I resolved to venture into the city of Valentia, and try what luck fortune would send me there; for hitherto I had avoided all large towns, and even villages, as much as possible. Wandering along northward, I had strayed many miles from Valentia, and I now had to turn back and retrace my steps through the woods and along the shore.

On the second day after I had made up my mind to retrace my steps, I saw, as I was passing through the woods, a man in the uniform of a French soldier coming towards me. It was the first soldier I had seen since my escape from the guard-house, and I tried to avoid meeting this man by changing the direction of my course. To my great alarm, however, it appeared that the soldier was determined to approach me. Whichever way *I* turned he immediately turned towards me. Had I been sure that he was alone, and unarmed, I would not have hesitated to meet him; but I thought, "A soldier is not likely to be without arms of some sort, and it is most likely that he has some of his comrades near him, from whom he has strayed away." The brushwood grew very thick in that part of the wood in which I now was, and there were numerous ravines, and deep dry ditches, so completely hidden by it that it was dangerous to stray from the footpaths. However, the idea struck me that I could safely conceal myself in one of these ditches, so taking a sudden turn, by means of which I was for the moment out of the soldier's sight, I descended into a ravine, and laid me down beneath a thick clump of brushwood.

Presently I heard the soldier approaching. It seemed that he was determined to find me out. He drew near the spot where I lay, and then stood still as if to search around him. At length he came to a halt just above me, and so close to me that I could hear him muttering to himself; and, listening intently, I was able to distinguish the words he uttered. To my astonishment he spoke plain English, and the voice—I could not be mistaken. No. It was—yes, it certainly was the voice of Lord Alfred Douglass!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

A sweet place to live in—The Island of Candy.

Head Lights—Bright eyes.

"I take the lead in government, yet have no part in law; I terminate every undertaking, but am never in action; I am never wanting in guineas, but am always out of cash," said the letter G.

"Some meddlesome idiot has put my spectacles where I can't find them," growled an old gentleman, as he was peering among his books and papers for the missing glasses. "Are you *sure* it was an *idiot,* grandpa?" asked a little girl who was standing by his desk. "Yes, I'm sure it was an idiot. Why do you doubt my word?" "Because your spectacles are now on your forehead, grandpa." "Ah! Humph! I thought so!" muttered the old man.

JEWEL-LAND;

OR, THE

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

BY UNCLE GEORGE.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A ROUGH NIGHT.

THE terrible roar ceased as suddenly as it had come, and then there was a sensible vibration beneath their feet.

Directly afterwards the water in the beautiful lake sank down, leaving it dry. Then it began to rise, till it half overflowed the little vale, and came within a few yards of their feet, and hastily fled right away.

"What is it, Arty?" whispered Lilia.

"An earthquake," he replied, in an awe-stricken tone; and as he spoke there was another awful roar, a crash as of creaking stones and rocks, and then the ground beneath their feet began to tremble, as the rock behind them split from top to bottom.

The silence that followed was almost as awful as the noise. Nothing less than instant death seemed to threaten them; but while they stood clasped in each other's arms, awaiting their fate, they saw the animals, which but a few moments before had stood trembling and drooping, suddenly begin to look about and graze, while the water of the lake resumed its natural level.

The danger was past.

Lilia looked at Arthur, and he smiled reassurance at her; for he could not help placing faith in the dumb creatures, which had been aware of the coming danger long before it had been apparent to him.

"What was it, Arty?" again asked Lilia, wonderingly.

"An earthquake, I am afraid," he said. "But don't be alarmed; the danger is all over now, and we can have a look round."

"But suppose it comes again," whispered Lilia, whose lips trembled, and who looked ready to drop.

"I don't think it will now," said her brother, encouragingly. "The animals are all too quiet and restful."

As he spoke he led Lilia out and passed the kangaroo comfortably lying down and munching the grass. The giraffe was browsing on the tender branches of the trees, and Tom-Tom was squatted down winking, and on nearing the edge of the lake there were the two swans swimming gracefully along with the water flowing clearer each moment.

Evidently there was nothing to be alarmed at any longer, so they returned to the alcove beneath the rocks, and were soon enjoying their meal, forgetful of the dangers they had encountered.

After a rest Arthur and Lilia set out to see what damage had been done by the earthquake, and followed closely by Tom-Tom, axe in hand, they walked round the lake, to find here and there running across the grass jagged rifts, where the earth had cracked and opened, but had not quite closed up again.

In one place the rock was split from top to bottom, where it ran up like a wall from the end of the lake, and in another place a few great blocks had rolled down, crushing the herbage where they fell; otherwise all was peaceful and calm. The birds were twittering about, while others chirped and shrieked and floated about them, glad to see the strangers who had visited their stronghold; and here on the borders of this lake where there was plenty of moisture, the tints of the flowers and the colours on the feathers of the birds seemed brighter than any they had seen before.

They left the upper end of the lake unwillingly, for it was a perfect little paradise, and returned to the alcove beneath the rock, where they were preparing to set off back, when the sky, which had been one delicious blue, suddenly took Arthur's attention.

Down in the south there was a black line of cloud as regular as if it had been cut off smoothly, and this was gradually moving upwards, coming like a black veil.

To attempt to set off now would have meant drenching in a tropical rain-storm; so the young people paused to watch the gradual eclipse of the blue sky, which went on till, on the black line reaching the meridian, one-half was of inky obscurity and the other of a brilliant azure, illumined by the golden sun.

And now the passage of the cloud grew more rapid, the great black veil being drawn over the sky. The valley looked dark, and there was a low hissing murmur heard.

If they had felt in ignorance before, the animals about them gave ample warning of the coming storm, for the kangaroo ceased munching at the grass, and hopped in under the rock; the giraffe stooped its long neck, and bent its knees to get in beside it; the eagle gave a wild shriek, and skimmed in to find a resting-place on a ledge; and Tom-Tom was walking in as well, but he had to pause and pick up the saddles, and carry them into shelter.

Arthur stood with Lilia looking round, and thinking what a change had come about. Not a bird was to be seen saying the two swans, and even they were leaving the lake to come sedately up to Lilia, and on

either side accepting food from her hands, and evidently finding great pleasure in the caresses which she bestowed upon them.

The next minute, though, the black veil was rent from top to bottom by a brilliant flash of lightning, followed by an awful roar of thunder, and Arthur hurried Lilia into shelter, the swans following her, and nestling close to her side as soon as they were beneath the rocky alcove.

It was none too soon, for the rain began to descend directly after like a sheet, and kept on for hour after hour, till it was far into the night before the thunder died fitfully away, and the lightning ceased to flash.

By that time Lilia was sleeping soundly, the swans had their heads nestling in their downy feathers, and Tom-Tom was snoring like the echo of the muttering thunder.

The giraffe, too, had stretched its long neck out in a comfortable position, as it slept at its ease, while the kangaroo seemed to be all awkward long legs where it was not tail.

Lastly, Arthur gave a glance up at the ledge where the eagle rested, to see a dim rough ball of feathers; so he lay down beside Lilia, after carefully covering her over as a protection against the damp night air, and slept till he was roused by a shriek from the eagle, which was preening its feathers just outside the cave.

The swans were dressing their plumage on the border of the lake, Tom-Tom was making a fruit breakfast, while the kangaroo and giraffe were taking theirs off the grass and tender shoots.

All looked bright and beautiful outside, and only that the flowers sparkled with the rain-drops that had not yet left them, there was nothing to show what a stormy night had passed.

Lilia woke up directly after, and while Arthur obtained some refreshments from the bag, she took a cup to go down to the lake for some of its pure water, not forgetting some pieces of biscuits for the swans.

They made friends with her again directly, and as Lilia stood by the beautiful lake, Arthur could not help thinking what a charming picture she made down by the transparent mirror, with its silver lilies and a more silvery swan standing with undulating neck.

After making a hearty breakfast of the remains of their previous day's provisions, supplemented with plenty of the delicious fruit of the valley, saddles were fixed in their places, Lilia said adieu to the swans, and being helped to her seat and reins by Arthur, he mounted his own steed, took a flying leap over a great piece of rock, just to stretch the kangaroo's legs, and then, with Tom-Tom hanging on to the rope which secured the giraffe's pack, they set off.

The ape had tried once to attach himself to his master, but it was impossible to hang on to the kangaroo's tail, and as to the saddle-ropes, they were jerked out of his hand at the first jump; so he contentedly attached himself to the giraffe's side; and with the eagle flying forward to clear the way, and give warning of danger, away they went.

"Stop!" cried Lilia, suddenly, before they had gone many yards.

"What is it?" cried Arthur, turning back.

"Where's the leopard?" exclaimed Lilia.

Arthur had forgotten this one of their companions; but the answer came from the rocks above them, from out of a crevice of which the animal came yawning and stretching like a great cat, after passing the night in a snug hole which it had discovered for itself, and where it had slept through the storm.

The traces of the earthquake were not many. There was a crack here and there across the path, and a few of the greater trees had been uprooted, to fall crashing down.

They reached the sea-shore in safety; but here there were changes that they had little anticipated, and Arthur stood paralysed with astonishment to see how great was the alteration.

For it was evident that the sea had been greatly agitated, the principal shock of the earthquake having been somewhere right out at the bottom of the ocean.

The consequence was that a tremendous earthquake wave had rolled in, to break upon the island, and this mighty wave had lifted the ship from where it had lain wedged in the sand and rock, and borne it right away.

Such a calamity was terrible, for the ship had been to them house, home, fortress, and storehouse, and saving a shed roughly rigged up in their garden, and the drawing-room cave, they were without a shelter.

Besides, there were the dangers to apprehend from the night-prowling animals, and Arthur shivered as he thought of the perils they might have to encounter.

Lilia sat upon her giraffe, looking about at the piled-up sand, the places where trees, shrubs, and grass had been washed away, and the ruin caused by the blocks of rock that had been dislodged and hurled inland.

Many a long day's work had been destroyed, and damage done that seemed irreparable. For instance, Arthur's store fish-pond was swept away; and as for his garden, it lay right in the track in which the wave seemed to have dashed.

"But where can the ship be, Arty?" said Lilia, in a wondering whisper.

"Carried out to sea and sunk," said Arthur, grimly. "Well, Lil," he continued, trying to brighten up, "we ought not to complain, but to set about making a home in the drawing-room cave."

"Well, that will do beautifully," cried Lilia.

"Yes," said Arthur; "only where is our furniture! But then we have had a wonderful escape, dear; we might have been on board, and then we should probably have lost our lives. Let's go a little inland."

There was a broad sand-strewn road for them to follow now, where the trees and undergrowth had been carried in by the wave, and the desolation here was terrible. No delicious greenery, no flowers or fruits—all sand and stones and patches of salt water, which was quickly drying up, to leave the earth covered with a crust of shining crystals.

There was one piece of good fortune for them, though: the rocks which partly surrounded their garden lay a little off to the right of the course of the waves, and they had stood firm, saving the garden from the destruction which was too apparent on either side.

Resolved to see the extent of the mischief, however, they did not pause here, but went on for quite a mile, the giraffe picking its way over the rough road, and the kangaroo leaping all the pieces of rock that stood in its way.

"Oh look, look, look, Arty!" cried Lilia, suddenly, in utter astonishment, as her tall steed ascended a bit of a knoll, and gave her a view of the country in front.

Arthur touched the kangaroo, and in a few leaps the animal placed him by his sister's side, where he stood rubbing his eyes, hardly able to believe that this was not some piece of imagination.

But no; it was solid reality. There was the ship right before them, in a place that they knew used to be wood, but which was now swept smooth as with some great broom.

It was quite true, and nothing more than happens sometimes in earthquake regions. The great ship had been lifted up by the wave and borne bodily in upon its surface as far as it rushed, and then left aground, when the wave retired, to stand slightly tilted on one side, evidently much shaken by the shock, for the planks in the side were yawning here and there, but in all other respects the vessel was perfectly safe.

They cantered joyously on then, for the most terrible part of the calamity was not for them. There was their home and the stores it contained; though Arthur had to set to work, with the help of Tom-Tom, to cut down a tree to lay against the side before he could climb on deck, and let down a rope ladder to replace the one that was swept away, so as to enable Lilia to join him on board.

[TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

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

THE FAIRY'S WEDDING.

FOR THE YOUNGEST OF OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

BY HARRY HACHE.

"NOW, my dear children," said Aunt Susy, one evening, "I am going to tell you a little story about fairies."

"All right," said Master Freddy, her nephew of nine years. "Let it be a funny one, auntie, and then I'll—kiss you."

"Oh, thank you, sir," said Aunt Susy, with a laugh. "You seem to think your kisses sufficient payment for everything."

"Well, I haven't got anything else to pay you with just now, you know. Oh, aye; I'll let you have a spin of my new top when papa buys it," he added, brightening up suddenly.

Aunt Susy laughed still more heartily at this generous offer, and said she would be satisfied with the kiss alone.

"And what will Milly give for auntie's story?" she said, turning to that flaxen-haired little maiden.

"I'll tiss you now, auntie," she said, and climbing upon her knee, she placed her little dimply, pink hands on her auntie's cheeks, and pressed her sweet rosebud of a mouth to auntie's lips.

"There, my darling, you have paid me in advance, and now I'm doubly bound to try to please you.

"Well, once upon a time"——

"That's right, auntie. I like stories that begin 'once upon a time,'" interrupted Freddy.

"An' me too," chimed in Milly.

"Very well, dears; but you must not interrupt me, or else we will not get past 'once upon a time,'" said Aunt Susy.

"All right, auntie; go on," said Freddy, while Milly nestled herself comfortably in her lap; and Aunt Susy told them this story:

Once upon a time there was a little shepherd boy who used to mind a small flock of sheep upon the hills of Cumberland. This boy was not a scholar, as you may suppose, for in those old days very few people knew how to read or to write, but yet he was a bright, intelligent little fellow for such times, and had learned a great deal by constantly observing all that appeared before his eyes, and attentively listening to all that was said in his hearing. At that time the fairies and sprites who loved to frequent the little green glades amongst the hills were very numerous and at the height of their power.

Young Oscar, the shepherd boy, in his wanderings, often found traces of their presence in the small patches of brown and beaten grass, which showed where they had held their moonlight revels on the night before.

Oscar wished very much to see some of these strange little creatures, but as that was a favour only granted to a very small number of people, his wishes were for a long time all in vain. One day, however, when he had wandered far up into the wildest part of the hills in search of a stray lamb, he suddenly came upon a rude-looking little hut, which was built of rough stones, laid upon each other without being fastened together by mortar or cement. There was a hole in one of the walls that served for a window, but it had no glass, for that useful article had not then been invented. There was also a very rough kind of door formed out of a single plank, and hanging upon strips of woolly sheep-skin instead of hinges.

Oscar had not been standing before this queer-looking dwelling many seconds, when the door opened, and a wee withered old woman appeared in the doorway. He knew her at once, though he had never seen her before; but he had often heard of her amongst the people in the valleys below, and he clearly remembered their description of Gwitha the Fairy-woman, and now he felt sure that famous person stood before him.

"Good morning, Oscar," she said, in a shrill but not unkind voice. "I know what has brought you here," she continued.

"I am looking for a stray lamb, that has wandered away from my flock," said Oscar, surprised but not frightened in the least.

"Yes, yes, I know; and I know where your lamb is, too. The fairies have taken it to their secret haunt, where you cannot penetrate."

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" exclaimed Oscar in alarm. "It was the youngest, and the prettiest of all my flock, and I was told to take particular care of it, because it was to be a pet for my master's daughter."

"Do not be distressed, Oscar," said the little woman, "Your lamb is quite safe, and it will be returned to your flock in the morning. They have only borrowed it."

"But whatever can fairies want with a lamb?" inquired Oscar in surprise.

"I will tell you. There is to be a great fairy festival to-night, when the moon is at the full, and they require a little of the finest wool, from a seven weeks' lamb of a flock numbering seven times seven. Now, you know your lamb is just seven weeks old to-day, and your flock numbers forty-nine, which is exactly seven times seven, so as it was just what they required, they have taken it away for this night only."

"Oh, I would so like to see that festival," said Oscar.

"Would you? Well, I can enable you to see it if you will follow my directions," said the little woman.

"I will do anything you wish—that is, if it is not wrong," said Oscar.

"No, I will not ask you to do wrong," replied the Fairy-woman. "Return to your sheep, now, and when you have put them in a safe place this evening, come to me again."

Oscar tended his sheep very carefully during the remainder of that day, and when the dusk of evening descended upon the hills he drove them to a green, well-sheltered little valley between two high hills, from which he knew they would not wander during the night. Then he set off, full of expectation, to the Fairy-woman's hut, and found her standing in the doorway awaiting him.

"You are in good time, Oscar," she said, "but you are not too soon. The moon will rise in an hour, and we have to make a long journey before that time. But come in. We will take a drink of goat's milk, and a little oaten bread before we start."

Oscar went into the hut, and partook of this simple supper, after which the little woman drew her cloak around her, and taking the boy's hand they set out on their journey.

Just as the moon showed the first glimpse of its bright round face over a distant hill-top they arrived in a pretty little glade that was almost surrounded by rocks.

"This is the place," said the Fairy-woman.

"But I cannot see anything," said Oscar.

"Not yet, but I will soon open your eyes," replied the woman; and she began to search about amongst the grass, and in the crevices of the rocks where the moonlight fell. At last she found what she was in search of. It was a very minute plant, and breaking off a portion of it, she squeezed the stem until one small drop of whitish liquid appeared upon its end. This she wiped off upon the tip of her finger, and turning to Oscar, she said:

"Now, be quite still, and be sure you do not speak, whatever you may see." Then she rubbed his eyes with the liquid, and bade him look around. Oscar had much to do to repress a cry of surprise at the scene he beheld. A countless myriad of little creatures swarmed around him on every side, full of life, full of activity and fun. Each one of them appeared to be very busy, and one group he noticed particularly, for they seemed to be weaving a filmy carpet so fine as to be almost invisible, while others continually brought them little bits of pure white wool which Oscar had no doubt his own lost lamb had supplied. Others sat around tiny heaps of the petals of various pretty flowers upon which they were at work, and still more were making up small piles of thistle-down into cushions and pillows of wonderful softness and beauty. All was buzz and bustle, and Oscar felt that he could have watched the funny, busy little creatures for a month and never grow tired.

At last all seemed to have completed their tasks, and at a signal from one who appeared to act as overseer, they all sprang to their feet. A great number then seized the thin, filmy carpet, and spread it out upon the grass. Others carried the little cushions of thistle-

down, and piled them upon it so as to form a kind of throne, with steps leading to the top, and this erection was immediately covered by a swarm of little people, who spread over it the beautiful webs they had made from the petals of flowers. When this was done, the overseer made another signal, and they all rushed into a little cave in the rock, and disappeared in an instant.

Oscar now looked round with the intention of asking his guide what it all meant; but instead of the little withered old woman who had brought him there, he saw a beautiful girl, dressed all in pure white. She smiled, and put her finger upon her lips to enjoin silence, and pointed to the little grotto in which the fairies had disappeared. Oscar looked in that direction, and saw a number of the little people coming out again; but they were now dressed in the gayest and most fantastic manner, and they danced along, weaving a cord of rose-leaves which they held into the queerest forms imaginable. Then six wee fellows appeared, each of whom played upon bagpipes, that were not any bigger than a spider. After them came six fiddlers, whose arms moved up and down with astonishing speed; and they were followed by a choir of lovely little maidens, not more than six inches high, who joined their sweet voices to the sound of the instruments, and made altogether a very delightful though a very strange kind of concert.

All these arranged themselves in rows around the white carpet, leaving an opening towards the grotto. Soon as their song had ended, another strain of music was heard, and another procession came out upon the glade. The first two persons were quite eight inches high. They were arrayed in the most magnificent manner, and bore upon their heads crowns of gold, which glittered with the purest gems. These were the King and Queen of the Fairies, and they were followed by a long train of stately little ladies and gentlemen who must have been the fairy aristocracy. The King and Queen marched straight to the throne, and were assisted up the steps by some of their attendants. Almost as soon as they had taken their seats, the King arose again, and said:

"Our good and faithful subject, Touch-and-go, desires a partner who shall be his and his only for all time to come. Now let the fairies, at our royal court assembled, say whether we shall grant his wish."

"Yes, yes, O royal Fay, do not refuse,
Let sprightly Touch-and-go a partner choose."

replied all the assembled fairies in one glad shout, as they bowed towards the throne.

"'Tis well," said the King, with a smile; "let our brother Fay and subject now appear."

On the instant a tiny little fellow, all glittering in the height of the most gorgeous fairy fashion, sprang nimbly from the grotto, and presently appeared on the snow-white carpet before the King. He plucked off his little plumed hat and bowed until his forehead almost touched his toes.

"Rise, Touch-and-go," said the King. "The Fairy Council are willing that you should take a partner to yourself, and we command you to name the fairy of your choice."

Then Touch-and-go bowed to the fairy circle and again turned towards the throne, upon which the King had resumed his seat. He looked quite like an orator as he waved his hand gracefully, and said:

"Great King, bright Queen, and Fairies all, receive
The warmest thanks your Touch-and-go can give,
No fair request your kindness can refuse,
So for my love fair Lily-White I choose."

The beautiful Queen of the Fairies then rose up from the throne and, in tones of exquisite sweetness, said, "Fair Lily-white, appear," and at the word a lovely little creature skipped within the circle and stood before the Queen upon the snow-white carpet. She was dressed in a robe made from petals of the white rose, and a few lilies-of-the-valley were tastefully twined amongst her flaxen hair. She curtseyed low before the throne, and there was quite a little cloud of delicious perfume cast upon the air by the motion of her dress.

"Does our pretty Lily-white consent to receive Touch-and-go to be her partner and her protector for all time?"

Lily-white cast her eyes down timidly, but she answered thus:

"Fair Queen, great King, and Fairies all,
I come in answer to your call,
To say that Touch-and-go and I
Have long been bound in friendship's tie,
And for the favours he hath done
I take him for my chosen one."

"But will you tell us what are the favours you have received from Touch-and-go, dear Lily-white?" asked the Fairy Queen, smiling kindly.

Lily-white now looked up proudly, and throwing back her beautiful hair, she answered in the following lines:

"He has long been my partner in labour and play—
When I mourned he was sad, when I smiled he was gay;
He has hunted the honey-bee swift as it flew,
And has brought me the sweets of its honey-bag too.

"Oft to light up my cell he the glow-worm has caught,
And to please me the purest of dew-drops has sought;
He has fanned me to sleep with the grasshopper's wing,
And has fought in my cause with the wasp's deadly sting.'

"Enough, fair Lily-white," interrupted the Queen. "Touch-and-go has proved that he loves you, and will make you happy, and we give you to him to cherish and guard."

Then there was such a glad shout of applause from all the assembled fairies, and in the midst of it Touch-and-go stepped over to his beloved Lily-white, and putting his arm around her, they made a low bow to the royal fairies together.

Then the King arose, and standing beside the Queen, cried:

"Let our herald announce this union, and proclaim the wedding of our faithful subject Touch-and-go with her Majesty's handmaiden Lily-white."

A queer-looking little fellow, in a green coat laced with gold, yellow trousers, and funny-looking red cocked-hat, now appeared, and lifting a silver bugle about as large as a watch-key to his lips, blew a ringing blast upon it. Silence followed, and then he cried:

"Know ye all, fairies of the mountains, fairies of the glen, fairies of the woodland, and fairies of the stream, that, by the favour of their gracious majesties, our good King and Queen, our brother Touch-and-go, and our fair sister Lily-white are now declared partners in work and partners in play, partners in joy and partners in sorrow, partners in duty and partners in truth, until the end of time and Fairydom—oh, yes."

As the herald concluded, a shout more loud and more joyous arose from the crowd of fairies, who straightway joined hands and began to dance in a ring around the throne. The band of musicians now began to play one of their liveliest tunes; the King and Queen descended from the throne, and the King, seizing Lily-white in his arms, began to whirl about in a fantastic dance, while the Queen honoured Touch-and-go with her hand. Oh, what a charming scene of merriment it was! so exciting, indeed, that Oscar could not restrain a cry of admiration.

Ah, that unlucky cry! In an instant the whole charming scene vanished, and Oscar found himself quite alone, with nothing around him but the bleak rocks. The old woman who had been his guide was nowhere visible, and the boy was forced to find his way as best he could back to the little hut in which he slept. Here, tired and footsore, yet wondering at the wonderful things he had seen, he flung himself upon his little mattress, and was soon sound asleep. In the morning when he awoke his first thought was of his lost lamb. He hastened out, and there, to his joy, he found it snugly lying down between two large sheep of his flock. He drove them away to a bit of sweet, green pasture; and all the day, and for many days afterwards, as he watched his sheep, little Oscar, the shepherd boy, thought continually of all that he had witnessed at the FAIRY'S WEDDING.

FUNNY CHARACTERS.

BY S. HOLLAND.

Come, roam with me, my turtle love,
Let's wander o'er the seas
To where the skies are almond-rock,
The mountains Cheddar cheese.
Together we will pluck roast duck,
Or cull the blooming pies,
Or gently float on treacle lakes,
Whilst o'erhead boiled beef flies!

We'll dance on plains of ox-tail soup,
Where bright red noses bloom,
Or stray in nooks where blue pills grow,
And breathe their sweet perfume!
We'll wander where baked apple tarts
Above our heads shall shine;
And if we're "peckish," turtle love,
On alderman we'll dine!

Then come with me, my turtle dear,
I'll show thee all things nice;
We'll gather muffins from the trees,
Or rink on raspberry ice!
I'll marry thee, where Wallsends grow—
Our house we'll build of foam;
But if you won't—you won't; and so
You'd better stay at home!

The largest species of ant—The eleph-ant.

What word is that which no one can pronounce, when running, without getting a tumble between the first and the last letter?—S-*tumble*-d.

COMPLAISANCE.—Complaisance renders a superior admirable, an equal agreeable, and an inferior acceptable. It soothes distinction, sweetens conversation, and makes every one in the company pleased with himself. It produces good nature and mutual benevolence, encourages the timorous, soothes the turbulent, harmonizes the fierce, and distinguishes a society of civilized persons from a parcel of savages.

OUR WEEKLY PARTY.

WELL, dear young people, the flight of time, you see, has brought us to another "Party" day. We meet again for our weekly treat, and in the first place we give you our customary cordial welcome.

What shall we talk to you about to-day? We think we cannot do better than to tell you about a mischievous young monkey whom we knew many years ago, and whose pranks afforded us not a little amusement at a time and under circumstances when anything that could cause a laugh was hailed with the greatest satisfaction.

Well, then, you must know that some years ago, just before the Russian war, there was on board the British ship Bellerophon an ape, which belonged to the captain. Like all the rest of his tribe he was very fond of mischief, and, therefore, was kept chained by the waist to a kennel in which he resided. This he used to drag about with him on the main deck, where he was kept, always taking care to hold the chain in one hand to keep the strain off his belt. He was very fond of sitting before the galley fire, warming himself, sometimes much to the inconvenience of the cooks, who, however, were on very good terms with him in general. He saved them a good deal of trouble at last, for one day, finding the galley quite clear, Jacko tried his hand at cooking, and very nearly succeeded in producing a dish of boiled monkey.

A kettle was fizzing away merrily, and, of course, Jacko began to examine it with his hands, and the result was he turned the boiling water over himself. He was on the sick list for some time afterward, and lost a good deal of hair and some skin. He could not bear the sight of a kettle after that, and the cooks found it out; so when Jacko got in the way they used to show him a kettle (full or empty)—this was quite enough to start him off for an hour or so.

He nearly came to grief once with another experiment. One cold night he found the oven door open, and, though the fire was out, the oven was warm. "Oh, ho," thought Jacko, "here are snug quarters, at all events!" so in he walked unperceived, and was soon comfortably asleep. By-and-bye the cook came and lighted the fire, and, not knowing there was a stranger on the premises, he shut the oven door. When the fire grew brisk, a most extraordinary noise emanated from the oven; when the door was opened by the sentry—who thought his sable majesty was in it—out jumped Jacko, grinning and chattering at a tremendous rate, no doubt feeling unpleasantly hot. He never tried that sleeping apartment again.

After a time he hit upon another and safer way of keeping himself warm at night. He discovered that by standing on the top rail of the sheep-pens he could reach the fowl-coops, which were hung to the beams above them. Up he went, and watched till a fowl put its head out between the bars. Jacko at once made a grab, and pulled the unfortunate fowl out by the neck. Finding the fowl was warm, he dragged his kennel back to his place before the fire, taking his game with him, and there he slept all night with the bird in his arms like a baby. Next morning, when the fire was lighted, out he came with his living blanket. He allowed the fowl to walk about; but the moment it showed signs of going out of reach of his arm he pulled it back again, and gave it a fresh start, and so on till the fowl was returned to the coop.

After that Jacko often took a fowl to bed with him, and, strange to say, he never did them any harm, though the process of being dragged through the bars could not have been pleasant for the victims.

The officers used to smoke near the galley, and Jacko was very fond of getting inside our monkey-jackets in cold weather. He was very fond of smoking, too, but we could not teach him to draw the smoke. We used to put the stem of a pipe in his mouth and blow down the bowl, and he would smack his lips over the smoke. You remember we told you last week that monkeys were a tippling race of creatures, and we are sorry to say our Jacko now and then got drunk when the grog was being served out. He was very amusing when in that state, but we think the poor fellow had a bad headache afterwards.

On the whole, he was a good-tempered animal, but he had a great dislike to some of the boys, who, no doubt, had given him a sly blow now and then. By way of revenge, Jacko used to look out under the ladder when the boys were bringing down their hammocks in the evening, and suddenly pounce upon one of the hammocks. The unlucky owner, knowing that Jacko could bite, as a rule would drop the hammock, and thereupon Jacko would sit on it, and grin and chatter and jump till he was tired, when he would give up possession without further trouble.

Of course, now and then he got loose, and then there was a grand hunt. One day he disappeared for some time, and no one knew where he was, as he kept quite quiet, which was not usually the case. At last one of the clerks went into the office, which was under the poop, and no sooner did he open the door than he saw Master Jacko going out of the window, which had been left open, and by which he had got in. He had been making up the ship's books in his own fashion. The ink was splashed about all over the place, and Jacko himself was nearly as black as an Ethiopian serenader. He did not go empty-handed, however, for he took the Articles of War in his hand, and, of course, he took to the rigging.

"Boys, catch monkey!" was the boatswain's mate's pipe; but before he was captured the Articles of War were torn to shreds.

Fortunately for the discipline of the ship, there were other copies on board. We believe poor Jacko was at

last killed in the attack on Sebastopol; but we left the ship, so cannot be sure about his end.

Mirth should be cultivated as a fine art, for it is altogether a fine thing. Who ever knew a mirthful man to be a really bad one? On the contrary, is not he, nine times out of ten, generous, humane, and good? To be sure he is. Mirth is a great thing. It smooths the rough places of life, makes the disposition sweet and rosy, scatters sunshine and flowers wherever we go, gives the world a round, jolly countenance, makes all the girls pretty, and mankind the best of families. Now, we desire to assist you in this work of cultivation to the best of our power, and as one amongst other means of doing so we will take care to relate to you now and then a funny story such as this, which tells

HOW PAT GOT A NICE BREAKFAST.

In the south of Ireland there was an old colonel, who, having grown grey in the service, had retired on half-pay. This colonel, like many old military men, was very passionate, and used to go stamping about, and swearing on the slightest occasion. One morning he called in Pat, his Irish servant, and, in his usual blustering manner, said, as he handed him two eggs, "Th-th-there, you r-rascal, take these eggs, and if you d-d-dare to let them be boiled hard, I'll—I'll—I'll make ye eat 'em."

Pat went out, and in about seven minutes brought back the eggs; and the colonel, with great gusto, sat down to his breakfast. But imagine his rage when he found both of the eggs as hard as stones. He got up, and roared out for Pat, who came in, apparently trembling with fear.

"Why ye—ye—ye infernal sc-sc-scoundrel!" roared he, "these eggs are as hard as bricks; d-d-didn't I tell ye, ye—ye—rascal, you, not to boil them hard? But I'll—I'll stuff every bit of 'em down your r-r-rascally throat."

"Oh, sir," whined Pat, with the tears nearly in his eyes, "I don't mind, if you don't make me ate buther wid 'em."

"Th-th-that's just what I will do, ye—ye—ye ruffian! I'll—I'll make ye eat two whole prints with 'em. I'll t-t-teach ye to boil eggs hard again, ye—ye—villain. There, if ye don't eat every m-m-morsel of those," pointing to two prints of butter and the eggs, "I'll—I'll smash yer r-r-rascally head with my stick."

And the colonel went of the room, blustering and stamping about in a great state of indignation, while Pat, with a grin, sat down and finished the eggs and the "buther."

That was artful, certainly; and we think Pat really deserved his breakfast as a reward for the ingenuity he displayed in procuring it. What do you say, dear boys and girls?

This warm weather does not appear to affect our singers in the least. They are as numerous as ever, and in excellent voice, and we know they will gladly brave any fatigue for the pleasure of contributing to our enjoyment. We have one most prolific young singer, who has long sought to obtain that honour. He has sent us more than a dozen pieces, all possessing considerable merit; but from one cause or another, we felt that we could not permit him to present any of them at "Our Party." To-day, however, we can present you with a sample of his productions in the poetic line, and we have much pleasure in introducing to you a friend not unknown, FRITZ BRAUN, who will entertain us with his thoughts upon

SUNSHINE.

Cheerful, bright, and pleasant sunshine
Stealing through the window-pane;
How you lighten all my labours,
How I welcome you again!

Oft when I am dull and weary
Your bright rays I hold most dear;
For you ease the weight of sorrow,
And the downcast heart you cheer.

How you beautify green nature
With your dazzling golden beams:
Flashing o'er the lofty tree-tops,
Glitt'ring on the rapid streams.

And the song-birds, then rejoicing,
Fill the woodlands with their glee:
Lark and linnet, thrush and blackbird,
Join in merry minstrelsy.

Through the gilded oriel window,
O'er the peasant's humble cot—
All alike you shed your splendour,
Heeding not man's earthly lot.

How I love to see you glitter
On the beads of morning dew!
Like so many sparkling diamonds,
They attract our eager view.

How I love to gaze in rapture
At the rainbow's colours fair—
Beauteous arc of heav'nly splendour,
Looming through the balmy air!

Your fair tints are soft and rosy
When they wake the earth from rest;
Rich and fiery are your colours
When the sun sinks in the west.

FRITZ BRAUN.

Many thanks, young friend. The verses you have lately sent us display sufficient merit to warrant us in advising you to go on in the same course. We need not say that you have our best wishes, and that we will be happy to do whatever we can to help you upon the path to fame.

We believe there are a few people still living who think that every work of fiction must be a snare and a temptation. Such people, however, we are happy to say, are becoming every day more scarce, and we may feel sure that in a short time those absurd notions, founded in ignorance and fostered by fanaticism, will be totally cast away. The much-talked of "march of enlightenment," of which we dare say you have heard, will do that good service for us at least. The narrow prejudices that have long bound the minds of our elders will disappear, and they will take a broad and liberal view of things, and learn to see men and books as they really are, to judge them upon their merits, to condemn what is bad, but, at the same time, to praise what is good. We know that there are works of fiction which deserve nothing but condemnation; but it is surely not just to condemn all because some are bad. If the bad books that ignorant or evil-minded people produce have done harm, the books that have been written with proper motives, and for a high object, have produced more than a counterbalancing good. Works of fiction—that is, tales and stories—are amongst the most powerful agents of civilization we possess, because they are the most popular, the most interesting, and, therefore, the most effectual teachers. The good effects of proper stories are many and striking, but we shall content ourselves with naming two persons to prove what we have said on the benefits to be derived from

BOOKS OF ENTERTAINMENT.

Hannah More traced her earliest impressions of virtue to works of fiction; and Adam Clark gives a list that won his boyish admiration. Books of entertainment led him to believe in a spiritual world, and he felt sure of having been a coward, but for romances. He declared that he had learned more of his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself from "Robinson Crusoe" than from all the books, except the Bible, that were known to his youth. Hannah More's and Adam Clark's experiences are daily repeated, yet there are those who think a novel the concentrated essence of abominations. Such people deserve pity rather than censure for the great mental pleasures they deny themselves in deference to a mistaken idea.

When you meet with an interesting story, in which there is nothing to offend delicacy, or to injure morals, read it, and you will be the better for it.

We would not even hint that any of you, dear children, would ever be wanting in duty to your parents, and especially in love for mother. It would pain us very much indeed, could we believe such a thing possible, not only because we should feel that you were not good children, but because we should also feel that you could never make good or honourable men or women. The boy or the girl who appears indifferent to the care, the love, and the counsel of mother is one whom we would not care to know, and with whom we certainly would not associate. The youthful heart that is not softened to tenderness by the very name of mother is, in our opinion, already tainted with vice, and must be devoid of one great virtue at least, which even the most savage and ignorant people cultivate and cherish. That virtue is gratitude. No matter what our obligations may be to others, none can have such a claim upon our gratitude as mother, and that boy or girl will be most likely to be truly grateful for the favours of others who most freely tries to discharge, in the first place,

THE DEBT TO MOTHERS.

Mothers live for their children, make self-sacrifices for them, and manifest their tenderness and love so freely that the name, mother, is the sweetest in the human language. And yet sons, youthful and aged, know but little of the anxiety, the nights of sleepless and painful solicitude which their mothers have spent over their thoughtless waywardness. Those loving hearts go down to their graves with those hours of secret agony untold. As the mother watches by night, or prays in the privacy of her closet, she weighs all the words she will address to her son in order to lead him to a manhood of honour and usefulness. She will not tell him all the griefs and deadly fears which beset her soul. She warns him with trembling, lest she should say overmuch. She tries to charm him with her cheery love while her heart is bleeding. No worthy and successful man ever yet knew the breadth and depth of the obligation that he is under to the mother who guided his heedless steps at the time when his character for virtue and purity was so narrowly balanced against a course of vice and ignominy. Let the dutiful son do his utmost to smooth his mother's pathway, let him obey as implicity as he can her advice, let him omit nothing that will contribute to her peace, rest, and happiness, and yet he will part from her at the tomb with his debt to her not half discharged.

Very many of our young readers have written to us asking for directions to make some of those drinks which are so cool and so agreeable at this season. To-day we reply to those questions by somewhat increasing the length of our weekly instalment of

EXPERIMENTS AND RECIPES.

CRANBERRY WATER.

Upon one quart of bruised cranberries pour three pints of boiling water. Let them stand for four hours, then strain off the liquor, and sweeten to taste. This forms a very agreeable drink for invalids.

CRANBERRY JELLY.

To one quart of cranberries add one pound of sugar and half a pint of water. Simmer them together for half an hour, strain through a fine sieve, and when cold put away in pots.

CURRANT WATER.

Squeeze a pound of currants into a quart of water, put in four or five ounces of powdered sugar, mix well, boil, and let it stand till cool. This beverage, when iced and served up in glasses, forms a very wholesome and delicious summer drink.

CURRANT WINE.

Those who have a large quantity of currants may be pleased to know how to make currant wine. To every two gallons of water put five quarts of currants and a pint of raspberries. Let them soak for twelve hours, then squeeze and mash them thoroughly. On the following day rub them well on a fine wire sieve until all the juice is obtained, and wash the skins again with some of the liquor. To every gallon of this juice put four pounds of Lisbon sugar, put in a cask at once, lay the bung lightly on, and allow the liquor to ferment. In two or three days add half a pint of brandy to every gallon of the liquor, then bung it close, but leave the vent-peg out for a few days; keep it in the cask for six months, then bottle it off.

GINGERBEER.

There are several recipes for making this beverage, but we will content ourselves with giving two. 1. Take of lump sugar, one pound; Jamaica ginger, well bruised, one ounce; cream of tartar, three-quarters of an ounce; two lemons, sliced; and upon these pour one gallon of boiling water. Macerate, with frequent stirring, in a covered vessel until barely lukewarm, then add two ounces of yeast, and keep it in a moderately warm situation, so as to excite a brisk fermentation. The next day rack the liquor, and strain it through flannel; work for another day or two, according to the heat of the weather, then skim, or again strain, put it in bottles, and wire down the corks. 2. Pour a gallon of boiling water over three-quarters of a pound of loaf sugar, one ounce and a quarter of sliced ginger, and the peel of one lemon. When milk-warm, add the juice of a lemon and a spoonful of yeast. Allow it to ferment, and then strain and bottle.

GINGERBEER POWDERS.

Take of powdered loaf sugar, four ounces; carbonate of soda, five drachms; powdered ginger, one drachm. Mix these ingredients well together, divide into twelve equal parts, each of which put up in a blue paper. Then take one ounce of tartaric acid, which divide into twelve parts, and put each into a white paper. Dissolve the contents of one of the blue papers in half a glass of clear water; dissolve the contents of one of the white papers in another half glass of water, then pour one upon the other and drink while effervescing.

TO STUFF BIRDS.

An incision is first made in the skin down the breast of the bird, and through this opening the body is extracted. The skull must be left unremoved, and the thigh bones must be broken just above the joint that connects them with the legs, care being taken not to detach the legs from the skin, which must then, to insure preservation, be rubbed over within with arsenical paste—a paste composed of boiled flour and water, to which has been added a small quantity of arsenic. The body, when dry, is stuffed with tow or cotton wool. Glass eyes are inserted in the head, wires are passed through the head and legs to keep the bird in the desired position. The feathers are carefully arranged, and if the bird be standing on the ground, or perched on the branch of a tree, packthread is bound round the wings to keep them in proper position. In taking out the body the pinions and the bones that connect them with the principal bones of the wings should be left untouched; and if the bird is represented flying, wire must be passed through the wings to keep them in extended position. When the whole is stiff and firmly set the wires are cut away close to the feathers, which are neatly turned over to hide them. The wires passing through the legs serve to attach the bird to the branch or bottom of the case on or in which it may be placed.

We will seek our next entertainment amongst the wonders and the mysteries of the great ocean. We have been fortunate enough to alight upon an excellent article which describes some of the strange sights to be seen in distant seas in a very pleasing and vivid manner, and as we lay all the literature of the world under contribution for our pleasure, we will not hesitate to give you this account, which we think will be both instructive and highly entertaining.

FLYING FISH AND THEIR FOES.

One dark night, far out in the Indian Ocean, we were treated to a series of highly-effective illuminations. It seemed as if all the finest stars in the firmament had fallen down into the sea, and after sinking somewhat had been arrested in their descent by an under current which took them in slow procession past us. We could see them luminously pale half a fathom beneath the surface floating solemnly on in never-ending numbers. The large lights—the planets, so to speak—shone gloriously when not too much submerged; the ordinary constellations glowed in meeker but not less enchanting measure. These were Medusæ—if the metaphor must be dropped—and the ocean was full of them. By-and-bye the vessel steamed through what I presume must have been a dense field of spawn; dazzling cascades of silver were cast off from her sides, and for a few minutes we were ploughing through a lake of living fire. This peculiar condition of the water revealed to us something of the dolphin's philanthropic quality. Abreast of the ship, and not far removed from the weather-bow, a shoal of small fish could be descried scudding along after the manner of foam. At first it was believed to be foam, but a moment's reflection showed that the white mass would in that case be moving in an opposite direction. Further watching convinced me it was a shoal of flying fish. Soon there was a racket below and a pyrotechnic discharge—the fish had broken cover and flown out of the sea. After a short flight they settled again, and then I understood the secret. A couple of long, luminous bars appeared in rear of the shoal—dolphins, beyond a doubt, hotly chasing their prey. They do not often venture so near a steamship as this, but at this moment they were reckless—angry may be that the flying fish should still keep out of their clutches. The dolphins raced mostly neck-and-neck, but the outer one sometimes sheered off, and increased the distance between him and the ship. As the flying fish flew out of the sea, the dolphins would put on a spurt, and, literally side by side, shoot ahead with the evident intention of catching the quarry as it touched water. So they disappeared—the dolphins very confident, the flying fish wary, but alarmed. It was an exciting race, though the odds were not by any means even.

Some people are always speaking and thinking about their luck. They say it is "better to be lucky than rich," and they sit down idly waiting for a "turn of luck" until at length they begin to perceive that they are not either lucky or rich. We are not believers in luck ourselves. We think it a far nobler doctrine to believe with Tennyson that

"Man is man, and master of his fate."

Yes, and boys, too; why not? There is no reason, that we can imagine, why our brave, sturdy lads should not have a control over their own destinies. Do not be content to wait for luck, dear boys; set to work and *make* your luck, for it *can* be done. But, there, we did not intend a lecture. All this was suggested by the following little anecdote, which, notwithstanding all our raillery against luck, we cannot do better than style

IN LUCK.

A poor man named George Brownless, who had hardly a shilling in the world altogether, including the value of the clothing upon his back, was struggling across a field in an old pair of boots, nearly soleless, the castaways of some one more fortunate than himself, when he stopped upon the sharp point of something which nearly pierced the flesh of his foot. He stooped down to see what had caused the hurt, and gradually unearthed a nugget of gold weighing one hundred and eleven ounces, four pennyweights. The man was overjoyed, of course. He had long desired to obtain the means to return to his family in England, and here was independence at once, on a moderate scale. Nine pounds of gold! He kept his good luck as quiet as possible, receiving from the agent of the mint nearly six hundred pounds for his nugget, bought himself a respectable suit of clothes and other personal necessities, paid his passage to Liverpool, and when he landed in England, doubtless had about five hundred and fifty pounds. While we congratulate Mr. George Brownless upon his good luck, we do not advise our readers to go to Australia, nor to wander about the fields in soleless boots.

No, we should think not. The chances are that they would get more broken toes than nuggets of gold.

We have just found a little essay, which we are sure OUR YOUNG FOLKS may read with pleasure and profit. We can say that the sentiment expressed in it is quite in accord with our own, and we should be happy to think that similar feelings were entertained by our friends. It is very appropriately called

SUNSHINE.

Do what you can to make sunshine in the world. Lift up the curtains. We do not mean the curtains to the room, but the curtains which darken the spirit of your brother, your

friend, your neighbour, or even of a stranger, if the curtain strings are within your convenient reach.

Lift up the curtains and let the sunshine in! Light is better than darkness, and how cheap it is! A kind and cheering word to one who is in trouble, and is perplexed, and almost discouraged; a word of heartfelt sympathy to the afflicted; a word of assurance to the doubting; a "soft word which, though it butters no parsnips, turneth away wrath," to the prejudiced and unreasonably provoked. All such words as these are sunshine to those to whom they are spoken.

"I have never found anything else so cheap and so useful as politeness," said an old traveller to us once. He then went on to state that, early in life, finding how useful it was, frequently, to strangers, to give them some information of which they were in search, and which he possessed, he had adopted the rule always to help everybody he could in such little opportunities as were constantly offering in his travels. The result was, that out of the merest trifles of assistance rendered in this way, had grown some of the pleasantest and most valuable acquaintances that he had ever formed.

How many great men have testified that their whole lives have been influenced by some single remark made to them in their boyhood? And who cannot recall words spoken to himself in his childhood, to which, perhaps, the speaker attached no importance, but which sank deep and immovably into his memory, and which have never lost their power over him?

Make sunlight—the world at best is dark enough! Do what you can to make it more cheerful and happier.

We know we have many old and faithful friends "beyond the Tweed," and to them we need not offer any excuse for introducing at our "Party" a little story related in the dialect of their own land, but we are just a little bit afraid that some of our readers in the south may find some difficulty in clearly understanding it. Yet we are determined to give it, because it is really too good to be lost. We are sure that very many of you have received and are still receiving lessons in music, and you will naturally be interested in any instructions that may help to make your remembrance of those lessons a matter of less difficulty than it may be at present. What, then, do you think of this story, which describes

MUSIC MADE EASY.

A Highland piper, having a scholar to teach, disdained to crack his brains with the names of semibreves, minims, crotchets, and quavers. "Here, Donald," said he, "tak' yer pipes, lad, and gie us a blast. So, verra weel blawn, indeed; but what's a sound, Donald, without sense? You may blaw for ever without making a tune o't, if I dinna tell you how the queer things on the paper maun help you. You see that big fellow wi' a round, open face (pointing to a semibreve between two lines of a bar): he moves slowly from that line to this, while ye beat ane wi' your fist, and gie a lang blast; if, now, ye put a leg to him, ye mak' twa o' him, and he'll move twice as fast; and if ye black his face he'll run four times faster than the fellow wi' the white face; but if, after blacking his face, ye'll bend his knee, or tie his leg, he'll hop eight times faster than the white-faced chap I showed you first. Now, whene'er you blaw your pipes, Donald, remember this—that the tighter those fellows' legs are tied the faster they'll run, and the quicker they're sure to dance."

Very good, indeed! If this little lesson does not increase your knowledge of music we think it can hardly fail to produce another good result, and that is a hearty laugh. It has done so for us at all events, and after laughing we could not but admire the piper's very simple method of teaching what has been called the heavenly art. We hope, though, that you have rightly understood every word.

Amongst the many varied kinds of amusement that we endeavour to provide for our "Party" guests there are few, if any, which we think more proper and more pleasing than song. It is a great pleasure to us to know that you, young friends, share this opinion with us, as your frequent remarks on the talented young singers who appear at our weekly entertainments sufficiently proves. Since, then, we are all agreed on this point, it would, we think, be ill done of us to interrupt a practice that affords you so much pleasure, and so, notwithstanding the great demands upon our space, we afford room for a few pretty little verses from the graceful pen of a Manchester contributor.

THE LITTLE FOLKS.

By the window there they stand,
Such a happy, little band—
One, two, three—
Gazing through the evening shades,
Waiting, as the twilight fades,
Just for me!

Such a pattering of feet,
Then from rosy lips so sweet,
Many a kiss.
Now the slippers, now a chair;
Welcome from such faces fair
Who would miss?

As they gather all around,
Sweet their little voices sound,
Talking fast;
Never music's grandest strain
Echoes such a fond refrain—
Too soon past!

Do they bother—never mind;
Love so boundless, if you're kind,
Will they give;
And they creep within your heart,
Nevermore from thence to part
While you live.

Join them in their little pleasures,
Let them bring their tiny treasures,
And you'll find
That their joyous, merry faces
Quickly hasten gloomy traces
From your mind.

FRED PRATT.

Many thanks. We cannot doubt that OUR YOUNG FOLKS, who are, indeed, a very critical though a very young "Party," will appreciate your pleasing verses, and thank you for the entertainment they have afforded.

We have now to devote our attention to the contents of

OUR YOUNG FOLK'S LETTER BOX.

Amongst the many letters with which our box is crowded to-day, we find but few that we could print; but from those few we will select one or two, which we will read to you as a fair sample of the whole. First is this, from the historic region of Spennymoor:

Spennymoor, July 7th, 1876.

Dear Editor,—I beg leave to hand my first attempt at puzzle-making for your consideration. Your paper seems to have a good sale in this district, and I am glad to say that it is worthy of it. It is both a useful and beautiful journal, teeming full of good sound morals, amusement, and instruction. I have taken it from its commencement, and am quite satisfied that I have got good value for money and time spent. Hoping that it will go on prospering, I remain, dear Editor, yours, &c., M. BURNETT, jun.

This is cheering and gratifying. We thank our kind correspondent for the welcome news he communicates, and for the good wishes he so cordially expresses.

The next is written in a similar strain, and this circumstance of similarity must be our excuse for not printing more of our letters in full.

Liversedge.

Dear Editor,—Do not be angry if I trouble you with a few remarks in commendation of *Our Young Folk's Weekly Budget*. I have read a good many letters that have appeared from time to time in my favourite journal, and I have to say (or rather write) that since I knew anything about reading I have never found any to equal it, either in the stories which it contains, or in the good advice which is always given cheerfully and freely. I have also to add that I have been a "Budgetier" since the early days of gallant Tim Pippin. I believe it was where Uncle Two-heads jumped in the quicksand, and I have continued taking it ever since. I recommend it wherever I go, and have been the means of adding some loyal Budgetiers to our "Weekly Party," who never would have been there but for the influence I brought to bear on them, and I am happy to say that they are good and true to the cause, which we all do our best to maintain. Faithfully yours, PRINCE GOODWILL.

Many thanks, dear PRINCE. You are quite an old friend, we perceive, and also a true one. You have rendered us important services, which we can fully appreciate, and which we gratefully acknowledge. May we not hope that you will continue to serve us in a similar manner, and that all our young friends will try to imitate your generous example?

LUIGI BERNARDO.—Your remarks on "Achilles" are as just as they are flattering, and we are sure you will find "Odysseus" equally worthy of your praise. The second of the authors you name will soon reappear. Thanks for your good wishes and for the cons., which will receive our best attention.

ISABEL LEATON.—This young lady sends us a very kind and flattering letter, and she also furnishes the following replies to queries by our correspondents:

To "Thomas E. Dutton."—Mix the best English ground white lead with spirits of turpentine to the consistency of treacle, add a little oil, and wash the millboard with the mixture. When dry it will be quite ready for painting upon.

To "Tim Pippin's" query about glass. Take one ounce of resin, melt it in an iron vessel; when all is melted, let it cool a little but not harden; then add oil of turpentine sufficient to keep it in a liquid state. When cold, use it with colours ground in oil.

SHORT ANSWERS TO SHORT LETTERS.

C. A. W. ELDRIDGE—*Thanks; but we are reluctantly compelled to decline your cons.*; VICTORIA—*We are thankful for your kind little letter; but the cons. are not quite up to our standard*; PERCY HAILEY (*Birkenhead*)—*Thanks. We are glad that we can afford you the gratification you seek on this occasion. A selection from your cons. will appear in due time*; WM. COYLE (*Londonderry*)—*We will make use of your contributions; but as our files are already heavily laden, some weeks must pass before they can appear*; WAL. KIMPTON—*In reference to our remarks on some verses formerly received you write, "I ask you is it justice to condemn that piece, cast it in the waste paper basket, refuse it insertion, because you have serious doubts of its originality!" We reply that we think it is quite just to do what you have described on suspicion of the genuineness of an offering. We do not like "The Brooklet" so much as the piece you blame us for suspecting*; W. F. E.—*We have no doubt that our readers would respond to such an appeal; but we do not wish to make any demands upon their generosity*; THOMAS ROBSON (*Newcastle-on-Tyne*)—*Many thanks for your kind letter. We cannot recall the names of such towns, and we have not a document at hand to which we might refer. The 2nd of October, 1860, fell upon Tuesday*; JOHN GALLAHER (*Derry*)—*We are much obliged by your kind offering, and accept the cons. with thanks*; ARTHUR DALE (*Leicester*)—*Thanks for your kind letter. We are much pleased to learn that you approve of the alteration recently made. We agree with you in thinking that the plainer heading is the best. The cons. are very fair, and will be duly inserted*; H. J. REYNOLDS (*Dublin*) *Your kind letter has given us much pleasure, and we hope long to retain your favour. A bundle of tow lighted at the mouth of the balloon rarefies the air within, and so causes it to rise. When the heat expires the air becomes cool and dense again, and the balloon descends. We do not find the cons. quite up to our standard*; FRED HISCOE (*Hunslet*)—*Thank you. We cannot accept short stories for a long time to come. The riddles will receive our early attention; but the sacred poems are declined as unsuitable*; H. M. DONNER (*Bowdon*)—*You have written us a kind and gratifying letter; but as you have disregarded our oft-repeated rule concerning the manner of sending contributions, we are compelled to decline your riddles. They should not be written on both sides of the paper, nor should they be mixed up with your letter*; COUNT UGOLINO (*Boyle*)—*Your kind letter has given us much satisfaction. In reply to your query, we would advise you to procure Dr. Beard's "Lessons in Latin," published by Messrs. Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill, London*; A. B. Z.—*We must again ask you to remember that answers cannot appear in less than three weeks. We are much pleased to learn that our journal stands so high in your favour, and we trust you will find the new story quite up to your expectations*; BRAS DE FER—*Thanks. It is exceedingly gratifying to learn that our stories are so highly appreciated by our young friends. Such testimonies as these repay us for the labour and trouble we cheerfully incur to secure your favour*; DORA ELVINA LESLIE—*Thanks. We admit you to our "Party" with much pleasure. We have already published riddles on those two words, and if we had not we would be compelled to decline them because you have written on both sides of your paper*; BERNARD (*Leicester*)—*A great number of our readers have given a similar vote, so we must, we suppose, admit him very often in future. Only one gun of that bulk has yet been made in England*; A. H. BARNETT (*Liverpool*)—*We thank you for your kindness; but we are unable to use the con., as it is not up to our standard. We trust, however, that you may be more successful on another trial*; WILLIE ALEXANDER *It really pains us, dear Willie, that we must so often decline your contributions. We are pleased to know that you approve the change in our front page, and hope you will like the new story*; MARIE MARGOT—*Your verses, dear Marie, are better than many of the poetical offerings we receive; but they are not quite up to our printing standard, and therefore are declined with thanks*; FRED HISCOE (*Leeds*)—*Thanks; but the verses are not suitable to our columns*; ARTHUR BERNARD GILL (*Lewisham*)—*Many thanks for your kind letter. Your best plan would be to apply at our office for the back numbers you want*; AMY WALLWORTH (*Dulwich*)—*We are much pleased by your nice little letter, dear Amy. We must decline your cons. because they are mixed up in the body of your letter, and we have repeatedly informed our contributors that they should not do so*; A. HEDGES (*Herts*)—*Your kind letter has given us much satisfaction, dear boy. We are glad to learn that you are happy in your school, and we think that the boy who is content in the class-room will derive most benefit from his studies, and will enjoy his holidays more thoroughly*; ACHILLES (*Edinburgh*)—*The volumes are on sale in a few days after the appearance of the concluding number. We are much pleased to learn that you like our journal so well*; F. A. CARTER (*Eastbourne*)—*No, you have not intruded upon us in the least. We are always pleased to hear from our friends, and especially when their communications are so gratifying and so flattering as yours*; KING OF BALLYSHANNON—*Give your young rabbits plenty of beans and oats, with some cabbage leaves and a few slices of carrot occasionally. Good food and sound sleep are the things most requisite to increase your bulk, and frequent practice will do the rest*; F. W. CARVER—*Thanks. The cons. will receive due attention*; KING OF THE CANNIBAL ISLANDS—*We really do not know the name of that peculiar monarch. The cons. are not up to the mark*; JEAN JEUNE—*Many thanks, young John. We will use your acrostic*; MISS GWILT—*We are pleased to learn that our journal affords you so much pleasure. We have returned the portrait*; BELLE OF THE RINK—*We are somewhat surprised to learn that the soil in your garden is poor, and that it is infested with swarms of worms. Those undesirable creatures are usually most numerous in rich soil. Copiously sprinkle the garden with water in which lime has been dissolved, and give a thick dressing of rotted leaves, or such soil improver as you may purchase of a gardener*; DADDY LONGLEGS—*We are pleased to hear from you again. We do not consider ourselves quite at liberty to condemn the paper you mention, though we think you have formed a correct opinion of its merits. We are sure you must like "Odysseus" as well as you liked its great predecessor "Achilles." Both stories have gained a very flattering degree of popularity. The 13th of August, 1861, fell upon Tuesday*; G. DUNNE—*Many thanks. We require and can only accept original contributions. Your replies are correct, but we no longer publish the names of those who answer riddles*: JOHN GOLDING (*Stratford*)—*Thanks for your kind communication. Cons. to hand, and will be attended to in due time*; ROBERT S. (*Belfast*)—*You need not hesitate to address us whenever you please. We will always be glad to hear from you; but we cannot promise to print your letters*; HERMIONE *We regret that we do not know of any process for the purpose which we could recommend with perfect confidence. Place a few sheets of thick blotting paper under the material, a few more over it, and press with a hot iron. The paper should absorb the grease*; F. W. CARVER—*Thanks; but we regret that we must decline the cons.*; THE COON—*No, not at all offended; on the contrary, we are pleased to hear from you. We must, however, decline the cons.*; THOMAS INGLY (*Aston*)—*We are thankful for your kind letter; but the cons. are not quite up to our standard*; WALLACE HARVEY (*Howden*)—*We could not have answered your question in time, as answers cannot appear in less than three weeks after we receive letters. You should not mix up contributions with letters, as they are then of no use to us. "Giant-Land" is published at two shillings, and can be sent per post for two shillings and fourpence*; A. W. OAK *We thank you for your good intention; but we do not find your cons. up to our standard; and, besides, you have written them in the body of your letter, which is against our rule*; E. FRANCES P. (*Birmingham*)—*We did not make such a promise as that which you charge us with having broken. The dispatch of prizes is conducted in another department, and we are not at this moment able to inform you whether many were sent to your town*; THE GIPSY QUEEN (*Penhow*)—*We are much gratified by your pleasant letter, which is the first we have received dated from the famous neighbourhood of Caerleon-on-Usk, where King Arthur and his celebrated Knights of the Round Table anciently held their gay and chivalrous court. We will endeavour to make room for your gipsy majesty amongst the entertainers of our guests*; FRED W. WEYER (*Dublin*)—*Thanks. We cannot promise to insert our answer to your letter in any particular place. You will see the name you most admire in our columns at an early day, we hope. The cons. will be duly considered*; H. D. S. CORRY (*Belfast*)—*We thank you for your flattering letter. Your favourite author will soon appear, and introduce a great new character. We do not find the cons. up to the mark*; ADA SHEPPARD (*Ross*)—*Your little story is a very fair production when your age is taken into consideration; but, as you might suppose, we require something considerably better for the entertainment of our young readers*; A WHITEHAVEN LAD (*Whitehaven*)—*We admire your candour, and we thank you for your kindness; but we can use only original contributions*; POLLY CLINTON (*Hanley*) *Your kind and flattering letter has given us much pleasure, and we have given your "love" to the authors named. We will try to lure your favourite back to our "Party"*; F. H. OAKLEY (*Egremont*)—*Thanks, young friend. You are quite at liberty to write to us whenever you please. We have passed your puzzle stanza for insertion*; W. J. LEE *Thanks. The riddles are not quite up to the mark*; KNIGHT OF THE GARTER—*We do not think your verses rubbish by any means. Indeed, we would give them a place but for their exceeding length. No poem intended for our "Party" should exceed forty lines*; A HIGHLANDER (*Inverness*)—*Thanks for your capital letter. We are glad that our "Party" affords you so much entertainment. We do not think directions for making a cage would be of sufficient general interest to warrant us in giving so much space to the subject as it would require*; JAMES GRIFFITHS (*Dublin*) *We do not intend to publish the story in book form just yet, but will probably do so at some future time*; L. GRAY (*Ripley*)—*You are quite eloquent in your praise, dear boy; but we can scarcely echo your hope that our "subscribers may, like an overflowing river, increase until it empties itself into the sea." No, no, we do not desire any such catastrophe. We hope our subscribers may increase, certainly; but we also hope that they will not empty themselves into the sea, but remain comfortably on dry land, to attend our "Parties" and to read our pleasant journal. Your cons. are written on both sides of the paper, and are therefore unavailable.*

Our riddling band will be pleased to observe that they are to-day under the leadership of S. CLARKE, who will open with a good

ACROSTIC.

No. 1.

Cross Words.

Gladly I sprang from first pillow this morning,
Just as the east became rosy and bright,
Out peepod the sun, and his triumphal dawning
Banished the lingering shadows of night.

A jubilant lark from next its nest fluttered,
Then on buoyant wing was soon soaring in glee;
And, oh, the sweet song the glad minstrel uttered,
Awakened my soul into wild ecstacy.

I whistled and sang, for my heart knew third sorrow,
O, youth, sunny youth, is e'er blissful and gay;
I never thought of the coming to-morrow,
Sufficient for me the rose-coloured to-day.

Each blade and flower with bright fourth was gleaming,
As the sun hastened his work to fulfil;
Bejewelled and fair, the earth was all seeming
As though pearls were scattered in vale and on hill.

Nimbly I ran from my cot and leapt over
Stile after stile fifth I hastened along,
And soon I stood in a field of rich clover.
Where the air trembled with many a bird's song.

I laid me among the grass and sweet flowers,
Daises and sixth cups, and lilies so fair,
And sang in my glee, for this great world of ours
Seemed beautiful, smiling, and bright everywhere.

Foundation Words.

Dear reader, come list for a moment, I pray you,
Read down the words for which figures are seen.
And when done with care, my friend, I will say, you
Can tell me the day I went to the fields green.

S. CLARKE, Oldbury.

CHARADES.

No. 2.

Hard by a streamlet's side,
Close underneath the bank,
By chance my first I spied,
'Midst water-weeds so rank.

Around the mall ws bright,
The eglantine so red,
Kissed by the warm sunlight,
A sweetest second shed.

The sun went down and set
Behind the purple hills;
Whole, through night's robe of jet,
The air with radiance fills.

C. J. ADAMS, Dulwich.

No. 3.

While walking in the fields one day,
I gave a sudden start,
Because a first so loudly roared,
Tremors ran through my heart.

Away I ran, like one possessed,
O'er hedge, and ditch, and field,
Until by awkward last I fell,
And then my doom was sealed.

I tumbled in a dirty well,
Of nasty water full;
And every stitch I wore was wet,
And I looked like a gull.

But I did hie me home as fast
As e'er my legs could go;
When I got home, to change my clothes
I was by no means slow.

But now the adventure's past and gone,
The clothes I wear are new;
But in these lines I've named a flower,
So fetch it out to view.

The object of this story, then,
Ought surely to be done;
So I will bid the Ed. farewell,
And you, and everyone.

SEMPER IDEM, Ballymena.

HIDDEN GIRLS' NAMES.

No. 4.—1. I have had a nice drive. 2. I have lost my coral necklace. 3. I shall never go again. 4. We saw Ben in a field. 5. I do not want to mar your character. 6. No, Ralph, you must not go. 7. Did we walk more than a mile, Nat? 8. The largest of my rabbits is dead.—AMY.

HIDDEN RIVERS.

No. 5.—1. Tom, you must not leave the house before father comes home. 2. I went to Cambridge yesterday. 3. Ted, enquire how much they are, please. 4. We are going to the Polytechnic to-morrow, Harry. 5. Bobby, come with me for the *Budget*, will you? 6. Don't you think that was rather dear honey? Yes. 7. Just put the poker in the fire, please. 8. Do you like playing at the grand mufti, Bertha? 9. That gang escaped yesterday, Tom. 10. My boots always get dusty in dusty weather.—H. F., Dulwich.

ENIGMA.

No. 6.

I'm in the baron's stately hall,
Where noble knights abound;
And in the peasant's lowly hut
I likewise shall be found.

When your *Budget* you are reading
Of an evening, you will see
'Twould be impossible without
An artificial me.

In short, dear riddling reader,
Wherever man doth dwell
You cannot fail to find me;
So now I say farewell.

F. WILSON, Forest Gate.

DECAPITATIONS.

No. 7.

If you something that grows on your body behead,
What you cannot see you will have instead.

NO NAME.

No. 8.

A boy's Christian name if you twice behead,
Another one you'll have instead.

T. WILLIAMS, London.

METAGRAM.

No. 9.

Whole, I am sure to you will bring
A useful but destructive thing;
Change head and you will quickly see,
Part of your toilet it will be.

G. GRANT.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

No. 10.

Foundation Words.

Primals and finals, read aright,
Will bring two English towns to sight.

Cross Words.

A plaything this, as you will see;
A medley this is sure to be;
This useful is for giving light;
An island this will bring to sight;
A Yankee State now bring to view;
This will a hero show to you
Who for old England fought and died,
His name is still his country's pride.

J. GALLAHER, Derry.

ACROSTICAL CHARADE.

No. 11.

Deep in the mines of whole,
My first lies hid from view;
And next a French word is,
Called town by me or you.
Research has proved my whole
Of large riches possessed.
Seek quickly for this place,
Then tell the answer—guessed.
In Leicestershire is it?
Every one should know it.

F. TEBBS.

VERBAL CHARADES.

No. 12.

My first's in wood, but not in cork;
My second's in chatter, but not in talk;
My third's in fault, but not in sin;
My fourth's in nail, but not in pin;
My fifth's in hail, but not in snow;
My sixth's in Arno, but not in Po;
My seventh's in gin, but not in ale;
My eighth's in bucket, but not in pail;
My ninth's in hop, but not in jump
My tenth's in pond, but not in pump.
These letters placed aright by you,
Will then a general bring to view.

IMPRIMATUR.

TRANSPOSITION.

No. 13.

The name of a bird if you transpose,
A wild beast's den it will disclose.

J. M. SMITH.

PROVERB REBUS.

No. 14.

S. F. BASKERVILLE, Belfast.

REVERSIONS.

No. 15.

A mechanical power; turn it round,
And a noisy feast is sure to be found.

THE YOUNG KNIGHT.

No. 16.

This word for attire is widely known;
Reverse, and boasting then is shown.

C. J. P. HANDEY.

LOGOGRIPHS.

No. 17.

What you eat, if you behead and transpose,
What you drink it will quickly disclose.

H. POUND.

No. 18.

A well-known poet behead and transpose,
A far-famed city it will soon disclose;
Next transpose, and then, I trow,
What means greater it soon will show;
Again behead, and then, I ween,
A kind of mineral will be seen;
Transpose again, and if guessed aright,
Part of a fish will come to sight.

W. E. HARPER, Liverpool.

PUZZLE.

No. 19.

One-fourth of time, one-fourth of lime,
And then one-fifth of fight;
One-fourth of zeal, one-fourth of heal;
A girl's name will come to sight.

C. KELLY, Liverpool.

ENIGMA.

No. 20.

Sometimes I am in motion
Upon the vast blue ocean,
In a terrific storm;
Also on each forest tree
You at any time may see
My well-known useful form.

G. RATNAGE, Ilford.

METAGRAM.

No. 21.

The reverse of bright if you change head,
Part of a ship you'll have instead;
Change head again, and you will see
What means to draw it will then be.

R. GROSS.

CENTRAL DELETION.

No. 22.

Of a bishop's cap the centre delete,
And soft, wet earth you'll have complete.

T. U. OPENSHAW.

ACROSTIC.

No. 23.

Cross Words.

This was an English king, I ween;
A female name next is seen;
Third is a noble princess, I trow;
Another king is fourth, I know;
Next is a boy's name fit for a king;
This person did noble Shakespeare sing;
And last's a daughter of a "bluff old king."

Foundation Words.

My whole a puzzler bard will proclaim,
Well known to you, and so, perchance, to fame.

SILVERSTAR.

CENTRAL DELETION.

No. 24.

On me you oft travel one after another
When I'm placed, as is common, with more than one brother;
And now let me tell you the way you get through it—
You take out my centre, or else could not do it.

J. L., Lambeth.

SQUARE WORDS.

No. 25.

A Latin poet of great renown,
Whose works are eagerly read;
A bane, a curse, which fills the world,
I have often heard it said;
In summer weather, hot and dry,
These things give great delight;
A sort of box which people use
To lean on when they write.

LUIGI BERNARDO.

No. 26.—Tall; land surrounded by water; a small valley; domestic fowls.—L. WAINWRIGHT.

No. 27.—A luminous body in the heavens; a modified sound; quickly; to tear asunder.—D. WALES, Pyle.

DIAMOND PUZZLES.

No. 28.

Foundation Words.

Angels of heaven, take pity and shed
Blessings abundant on every head;
Guarded by naught save the fostering sky—
Living 'mid poverty, early to die.
Beautiful ministers, angels of love,
Look with a pitying eye from above;
They are abundant as flowers in May—
Guide them to realms that are brighter than day.

Cross Words.

I'm circular—in nothing found,
Though in the seasons I abound.

You will find the works of me
In the college and museum;
People often pay a fee
Ere allowed to go and see 'em.

I should fancy at no distance
You at present look on me;
And without my great assistance
O. Y. F. you'd never see.

Fatherless, motherless—
Earth is a wilderness.

Oft these flow abundantly
When I dream of days gone by.

I am the first of all my class:
If you can't tell we'll let it pass.

For next reveal a letter.
I've ended; all the better.

CHILD OF THE SUN.

No. 29.

Should this fall upon you now
You will surely happy be;
But that it's a fickle thing
You will say for certainty.

If you would now social be,
A consonant please choose for me.

By this man we'll pass unheeded;
Pity for him is not needed;
Drink has brought to him its sorrow—
As to-day he is to-morrow.

How sweet 'tis to sing
Of the pleasures of spring—
Of these and the fields so green!
As we wander through life
Let's away with all strife,
And say that we happy have been.

With happy smiles upon her face,
Comes this lady, false and gay;
You most probably can trace
Wherein her great delusions lay.

This a most delicious fruit,
I am sure, will constitute.

A place of entertainment this
Most surely gives to you;
'Twas known in ancient times, but now
'Tis fading from our view.

To bring this puzzle to an end,
You a vowel will now append.

G. GRANT.

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

1.—Catsup.
2.—Alexander Pope. Thus: Amazon, Laurel, Egg, Xebec, Author, Nero, Date, Emerald, Robbery, Poetry, Owl, Pagan, Ell.
3.—England.
4.—Ouse, Forth, Ebro, Esk, Arun, Tone, Trent, Don.
5.—Brighton, Ballarat, Madrid, Reading, Paris, Perth, York, Dover, Warsaw.
6.—Table.
7.—Clarke, Croger, Pinder. Thus: CatChuP, LaitRapmI (impartial), AbdOmeN, RearGuard, KeEvE, ErRoR.
8.—Bear.
9.—Swallow.
10.—Tea, eat.
11.—Lamp, palm.
12.—Huntingdon.
13.—Gig.
14.—Night-hawk.
15.—April, pair.
16.—Table, able, bale, ale.
17.—Augustus, August.
18.—Inquirer, inquire.
19.—Forget-me-not, pink, verbena, bluebell, wallflower, lilac.
20.—Frederick.
21.—Milton.
22.—Goldsmith, Shakspere.
23.—A letter.
24.—Sail, kail, pail, nail, wail, hail, mail, rail.
25.—Hock, rock, cock, sock, lock, mock.
26.—
A D E N
D I V E
E V E R
N E R O

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