# YOUNG FOLK'S WEEKLY BUDGET

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

VOL. IX.—No. 295.] "Extends the scope of wild amaze and admiration."—*Kirke White.* [ONE PENNY.


"Prince Boldwin saw, beside the form of the Princess Rosenblume, who now knelt on her stony couch, the shadowy form of the Ice-cold Witch, whose blanched hand was raised to strike the girl into silence."

## THE UNDER-WORLD

OR,

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

BY LLEWELLYN LONGFELLOW.

### CHAPTER VI.

CONFLICT WITH THE QUICKSILVER MEN—THE STORM-WIND OF SALT—THE GIANT RAT AND THE FLESH-EATING PLANTS—THE CATARACTS—THE HIDEOUS LIZARDS.

THERE was nothing to admire in the solid troop ready to attack those who had but just escaped from their treacherous circle.

They varied in size, these figures of mercury, but in shape were the same grotesque copies of man—cumbersome, ponderous, dull, and scowling. The light itself glanced off their smooth but unpolished sides in faded flashes.

In fury, that they should have transported him on their metal sheet afar from the straight course by which Rosenblume would have been reached ere this, Boldwin sprang at the foremost and bulkiest, sword in hand.

This one had no more of a weapon than his followers, trusting all as they did to their weighty fists. But the magic blade, impelled by a sure and wrathful hand, mocked at his extended arm, cleft it, and severed him in twain from the neck to the armpit.

The two pieces fell quickly to the ground, and shivered into countless pellets. Some of them spattered as far the Iron King, speeding to share in the fray.

In another second the pair were surrounded by the metal figures, whose arms were brandished furiously around their heads. Against them the hammer and flint sword rose and fell briskly.

Soon the plain was strewn with the broken and detached trunks and limbs of the quicksilver foemen; whilst the remainder, convinced that

they were no bar to the resolute advance, began to beat a retreat.

But Boldwin had been given a rest, and his face was turned towards the hill-top, where the girl remained quiet, in full sight, under the sheen of the great suns and stars of that earthen sky. To cut his way thither, he continued to chase the enemy. Their retreat became a flight. But that the pursuers were angered and flushed with the combat, they must have laughed at the awkward trundling gait of the unshapely beings.

At length the victors halted—not so much because the heat of the passion had died away as that the ground had changed from a hard stone to a soft white substance, in which they sank to the knee.

Over this snowy field the quicksilver figures, flinging themselves down at length, sprawled away rapidly. To add to the obstacle of so false a footing, a high wind sprang up.

"This storm is due to the Witch, I warrant," said the youth, making a wry face as the bitter dust filled his mouth; "for all is calm on the plain and on those hills beyond, where that slight form of the Princess ever peacefully reclines."

"But what is this strange sour stuff?" asked Ferrugino, making mouths, and wiping his eyes.

"It is salt," answered Boldwin, tasting it at leisure.

Indeed, the whirlwind was sweeping a cloud of the salty dust upon the adventurers. But they were not to be checked so easily. They covered their faces, one with his beard, the other with his mantle, lowered their heads so as to pierce the blast, and still plunged forward. The dragon crest of the enchanted helmet seemed to direct its wearer truly; for, spite of stumbles and turns, they came through the drift out upon land where the wind was not blowing in the least.

"Safe!" shouted the boy defiantly, as he turned and gave his comrade a helping hand.

They shook off the salt heaped on them and sifted into the folds of their garments, and wiped one another's face, for it had crusted on their brows and around their mouths.

"Hurrah!" cried the youth without a look behind at the peril which they had overcome; the dry salt lying smooth and immovable, the wind having died out as mysteriously as it had arisen.

"The female form is and can be no other than the peerless Princess at last!" he exclaimed with a tear of gratefulness. "At last I see her again!"

"Stop a bit," said Ferrugino, less warmly; "though in a straight line we are not so far from that sleeping girl, there is this thicket in the hollow, and who knows what not besides still between."

"What matter! Enough that we are near her! Oh, that she could hear my bugle; but she seems, alas, devoid of life!"

Impulsively seizing his ready companion by the arm, he hurried him on at their swiftest pace.

But the Iron Master was unfortunately right, and the thicket was of broader extent and less quickly traversed than had at a distant glance appeared.

It was one entangled mass of vegetation, each tree and plant struggling with one another to rise from the shadowed earth, and dragging each other down with the weight of their luxuriant leaves.

"Nothing can cross a skein so closely interwoven," sighed the Iron King, looking in vain for anything like a pathway amidst the green, blue, and yellow cords of bark and sap which barred their road.

"You forget my sword," rejoined Boldwin, promptly, and making an onward step.

"Nay; but I meant any living thing. Who knows what awful creatures must alone live in the hollows of that vale—great reptiles with teeth of steel to snap such ropes and bend back those sturdy stems?"

"I do not know," said the boy. "But hark! by that clattering on the ruby stone yonder we are not alone at the edge of this wilderness."

They were not alone.

Without heed of such mites as they, a colossal rat, with side-tusks instead of whiskers, edged so as to cut his way like scythe-blades, his eyes protected by thick hide, which flapped noisily, sprang up out of a cranny by the salty plain, and approached the thicket.

"Look!" said Boldwin, startled into seizing his comrade's arm again by his excited attention. "The plants stand on their guard like living things!"

The rat, whose bulk equalled that of a bull, and whose tail would have matched the largest alligator's, flung itself at the tall blades of herbage, and with his tusks hewed them down. After each rush he would draw back to clear himself of the falling branches, but constantly return to the charge.

But there were other plants than the grass. The lookers-on marked that the rat's inroad must take it near one high vine, which bent its flowery head so low as to rest it on the ground. Its lustrous green stalks resembled a serpent in strength, size, and suppleness. A tremor perpetually ran through it, as if it quivered with hunger or anger. The cup of its flowers opened its leaves, and presented an opening like the gateway of a church—a man could have stood up in it, and not touched any side with his outstretched hands. The unfolded leaves spurned from their midst the half-digested limbs of animals of no mean size, which it no doubt had seized and slain. All was now clear within the hollow, inviting with a sugary sweetness at its core and with the perfume spread around.

"My mouth waters," declared the boy, who had followed the rat into the opening which it had mown, and stood by Ferrugino, both all attention.

The rat stopped, sniffed with its cavernous nostrils, and turned a little so as to step upon the leaves, which trailed on the ground and formed platforms leading to the centre of the enormous blossoms. When his four feet and tail were upon the velvety carpet, the animal perceived its error, but too late. The heart of the flower shrank from it, while a dozen sharp spears shot out all round it. The leaves closed rapidly like the fingers of a giant's hand. A sticky fluid streamed down within, and glued the rat's paws fast. In vain his struggles. His head slashed the leaves with those trenchant teeth, but only to hang out of the gap between two of them. The flower was shut like a ball, and then the stalk straightened itself till the bulb was held up loftily in mid-air, with the squeezed rat's last groans smothered in the fatal embrace.

"All is over with the huge thing," said Boldwin. "But let us profit quickly by the cutting it has made."

They darted on, their weapons ready, and keeping a wide space between them and the fatal flowers.

When they came to the scene of the strange action, they saw the ground sprinkled with drops of the rat's life blood mingled with those of the slimy fluid upon the petals sliced away by its tusks.

The surrounding plants of that or other species were inspired by the same instinct to make intruders a prey. They saw the stalks twine and bend about like snakes, and the flower-heads open like mouths to engulf them. To pass through a host of boas would not have been more arduous.

"Beware!" cried Boldwin, dragging his less cautious companion aloof from one yawning cup with waving leaves and long feelers. "Strike at that stem which has evaded my sword-cut!"

Some of the tough branches bristled with thorns as long and sharp as his own sword blade. Others had saw-edged leaves, which would have divided them like apples under a knife had they not eluded them.

"But I shall not flinch!" repeated Boldwin. "To think that only just beyond us the dear child is alone in her death-like stupor, from which perhaps our coming alone will awake her. Oh, we must not turn back."

"We cannot," said the Iron King, dealing a tremendous blow at a long bough, which had struck at him with its cluster of hard buds, and which he shattered like a dry bone.

"You are right."

For the forest had closed behind them, the branches which they cut or snapped uniting, or sending forth fresh shoots, that soon attained the thickness of the main stem.

"But which way?" asked Ferrugino, at last.

The dense foliage roofed over them, so that they could catch but a feeble glimmer of the lamp-lit vault.

"Hark! There is the sound of falling water! The Witch has drawn a river's circle, perhaps, around the prize. In that direction, then!"

"Very likely, my friend; for where there is a danger, she no doubt abides. I am with you!"

Redoubling their exertions, they perforated the thicket at last, and came out upon a sloping bank. Before them raged a torrent in the depths of a vale, or rather two fierce rivers leaped down a series of rocky steps in cascades, to mingle in the depth between. On the other side, upon the mound, like a recumbent statue, still reposed the spell-bound Princess.

"At this nearer view I cannot doubt it is she," said Boldwin, sinking on his knee in a prayerful attitude, with his eyes upon the object of his journey.

He rose and put his bugle to his lips. But before he could sound a note, the cataracts increased their clamour, and so deafening a roar resounded, that he felt his strongest call would not be heard, and replaced the horn, unblown, at his side.

"We must cross these raging waters," said he. "But how, my friend—tell me how?"

The Iron King looked in vain for the wire which had till then remained attached to his apron-strings.

"I have lost the cord that binds me to my people," said he, heaving a sad sigh. "It must have been snatched from me by some of those plants. With it, I might have made a cast across to a rock, and so formed a bridge-line."

"An idea!" said Boldwin. "Some of these long creeping plants may serve as well."

"To be sure," added the other, delightedly. "They are strong as they are long. But what are these large newts which come up out of the water, with ferocious hisses and flashing eyes?"

"More of the Witch's messengers, I have no doubt," said Boldwin, calmly, without taking his gaze off the sleeping Princess—in a direct line with his eyes, but not yet to be reached.

But on coming to scan and understand their unusual mode of offence, his first and scornful opinion of the reptiles was changed into something which would have been terror in one less brave than he.

They were hideous, and had a horribly strange weapon with which to attack them.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE SHOOTING REPTILES—THE BOILING SPRING—THE ROPE BRIDGE—LOSS OF THE FRIEND—THE CRYSTAL PRISON—THE GOLDEN GENII—TRANSFORMATION OF THE ICE-WITCH.

None of the lizards were less in length and girth of body than a crocodile. They had filled the ugly bloated pouch under their throats with water; and even before they climbed up to the crest of the bank, showed what they could do with it. Their lips were lengthened out over two yards, and being hollowed, formed, when pressed together at the edges, a tube like an elephant's trunk.

Through this pipe they could shoot out the liquid with good aim and great force. Only the broken ground and their own savage haste foiled their design; for the two who ejected the streams sent them over the heads of their two enemies. A few drops fell upon them from the arching spout, and scalded the smith's naked leathery arm, though others that reached him were not felt by our hero through his coat of mail.

"The water is scalding!" was drawn from him by surprise.

"Yes; it's a geyser, or boiling spring, which feeds these torrents. The old hag has changed her dishes, and sends up this drink warm!" said the Iron King, lightly.

It was useless to await the herd of reptiles prepared to deluge them with hot water.

"Let us fall back to the skirt of the wood," said Boldwin. "With the broad green leaves we can weave a shield or two, and guardedly advance against them. Once they shall have emptied their mouths, they will be but common creatures, and we will tumble them back sharply into the boiling stream!"

The leaves of the nearest ferns were of rare dimensions. The fibres of the bark furnished the thread, and the straight and flexible branches were easily converted into frameworks. Upon these, the broad leaves being sewn thickly, two bucklers were formed, which covered the bearer from chin to toe. They were doubled back at the top with a hanging flap, like little roofs from which water would pour off.

They retraced their steps thus defended. To the number of fifteen, in two rows of seven, with their largest as the leader on one side of the first line, the lizards were slowly crawling over the top of the bank.

That was the moment, if ever, to make the onset.

The two ran forward. On seeing them return, the reptiles in the lead reared themselves on their short forelegs, levelled their long snouts, and ejected the steaming water. The green leaves were scorched and wasted where they met the shock, but they repelled it none the less. In an instant the two foemen were in their midst.

The massy sledge dashed one against another, and toppled both over upon the slope. On their way down, rolling over and over, with their helpless claws in the air, they upset three others. In their surprise the latter spouted their pouches' contents amongst their own ranks, and increased the confusion into which the smith's first blow had flung them.

In the meantime the boy had cut off two of the long trunks, and so rendered a pair of antagonists harmless. At a third he dashed himself, and pinned him to the rock with a forcible thrust.

The leader floundered forward, and was about to drench the youth with his boiling-hot discharge, when the Iron Master leaped at the long trunk, and, with a turn or two of his hardened hands, tied it into a knot hard to unloose. The

beast, now forced to swallow the scalding fluid, or choke, writhed painfully, with many a woful groan and smothered cry. Then, receiving in the side so smashing a blow of the hammer that the scales split off, it lost its balance, and slid down the incline. There the halves of a companion, cleft by the flinty sword, hurriedly joined him, and sank with him in the foaming waters.

"They turn tail!" shouted Boldwin, quickening the retreat of the last defeated by a touch of his blade-point. "We can set about our crossing now without stop or stay."

In vain were all the attempts of the vines to elude their eager hands. Though they twisted and recoiled, wound themselves back or waved themselves on high, somehow they were seized and cut off near the ground. Thus were obtained several cables of three or four hundred feet in length.

The gnome tore from the ground a round rock of great weight, through which the irresistible sword bored a hole. With this attached to one end of the united rope the Iron King stepped to the brink of the bank. Heaving the stone high in air, and out from his hands with all his might, he succeeded in hurling it all the way across. Its descent was so violent as to almost bury it in the other bank, though that was composed of jasper. Splinters flew about in a perfect shower; but the stone, on the cord being drawn tight, held staunchly.

"As the lighter weight, you must go first," said Ferrugino; but really he wished to guard and guide his friend in the passage in case of any impediment.

The boy sheathed his sword, pulled his casque down tightly on his forehead, and swung himself over the abyss, upheld by his hands alone to the rope. It swayed down a little in the centre, but he crossed safely and without a qualm, though the steam rose from the hollow suddenly and densely as if to blind him and make his brain dizzy.

It was hard for him to delay, now that above his head was the Princess, with nothing visible between them but the hill to climb and a narrow valley to pass. But he was bound to wait till Ferrugino should be by his side once more.

The valiant Troll had made fast the farther end of the rope to a point of rock, pulling it all so tight that it hummed like a fiddle-string on his applying his weight.

With a misgiving, for which he could not account, our hero watched him climb along with his strong arms busily at work. He gained a third of the way quickly. But there he paused. It was not fatigue, but an alarm.

The steam had not merely rendered the green vine slippery, but so relaxed it that each filament yielded more and more, and threatened utterly to give way. The Smith resumed his course. At half-way he hung in a loop, so far had it sunk down. His active motion had imparted to it a swinging, increased by some unseen impulse. No doubt the Witch inspired unseen and hostile hands in those columns of vapour.

At that moment Boldwin heard a voice, which he could not resist, and his eyes were again directed to the hill-top. He saw, beside the Princess Rosenblume, who now knelt on her stony couch, the shadowy form of the Ice-cold Witch, whose blanched hand was lifted to strike the girl into silence. But the latter had descried Boldwin; and, rejoicing to behold one well-known human face at last, she would not let the appeal for his help be hushed by threat or stroke.

Never was the heart of a man more sorely wrung, never more cruelly divided between those two calls. Friendship to the true and staunch mate in peril, and bounden duty to the hapless maiden, drew him to opposite sides.

The vine began to untwist and to split under that strain, all the more severe because of the fierce exertions made by the Smith to climb the treacherous cable. Out of his belt he plucked his pincers, and with them seized the rope with a grip which would not slip like his hands. But its sharp jaws cut the fibre, and his position grew only the worse.

Boldwin closed his ears to the girl's cry in pain and hope, and laid both hands on the vegetable cord to draw the Troll towards him, since he could not mount himself. Upon the pull the rope parted in the centre, and the gnome fell down until he struck heavily against the bank on the same side as the youth. But for the end being fast to the latter's sword, driven into the jasper like a pike, the latter must have been hurled over to join his friend in the abyss.

Ferrugino swung there for a few minutes; then, little affected by the shock, so tough was his frame, he was seen clambering up the steep. He was not to be feared for any more.

Boldwin turned, partly relieved. With active foot, he did not even pause to pluck his sword up, but darted to the rescue of the royal maiden.

When upon the summit of the mount, within but a few yards of her, he saw the Ice-Witch shudder with rage. She darted on him a hateful glance, and seemed to dread a contest with him, though he was unarmed save for the fragment of the icicle-wand still in his girdle, and uttered a shrill scream of rage. Throwing herself upon Rosenblume, she enfolded her, despite her struggles, in her cold and bony embrace, and at the moment of the contact vanished. Boldwin, who thrust out his arms to tear the Princess from her persecutor, dashed his open hands against a transparent wall which had sprung up from nothing. The Witch had transformed herself into a block of crystal, which confined her captive in its core, like a fly is caught in amber.

She was under the eyes, under the hand of Boldwin, and yet unapproachable!

As he glanced round in despair, he bethought him of his trusty follower. But he saw him not. Reluctant to leave the hill, he stepped only to its edge, but still there were no signs of the Iron King. He called. Not even echo responded. He blew loudly through his horn, but all was stillness again.

"I have lost my friend," he sorrowed. "I have found the Princess, and yet she, too, is lost again to me!"

Not to be defenceless against he knew not what fresh dangers, he retraced his steps to take up his sword, but he could not find the spot. Had the vine carried it away? He could not tell. Where he was sure the torrent had been brawling, and the cascades tumbling, not a drop of water moistened the ground; and the channel, like the chasm, was closed up level with the plain.

"Oh, if this wretched hag has buried and sealed up my poor brave friend in that gulf, what a debt I shall have to repay her!" thought he.

Weaponless, save for his dagger and the icicle, he returned once more to the hill. He beheld the cube of crystal slowly moving down the further side. He quickened his steps, and with three superhuman bounds, overtook it, and seized it desperately.

"With you now, wheresoever you are rushing!" shouted he.

The block slid with more and more speed down the slope, till it glided with such rapidity at last that Boldwin lost his breath, and almost his senses. At length it came to a sudden stop by its wild dashing against a building with agate walls, and splitting in halves, which fell one to one side one to the other. The boy at last had the joy of holding the insensible girl for a moment in his arms.

For only a brief interval, though; for a dozen pair of hands clutched him, and parted the two.

He looked round upon persons whose visages were like and yet unlike any which he had ever before beheld. They returned his wondering and inquiring gaze with the same emotions; and he felt that their hard, cool hands shrank from pressing his arms roughly, as if startled that his flesh should be plastic, as theirs was not.

For their skin was smooth and polished, without pores, of the rich hue of pure gold, of which precious metal the underlying substance seemed. Their finger-ends were protected by scales of cornelian, truly rounded and lustrous, without a flaw. Their eyes were as bright as diamonds, of which they seemed sparks; and their long locks were of a fine silver thread, running in waves to their waists. They were clothed in plates of an iridescent, or rainbow-hued metal, edged and linked together with gems of varied hues, rendered flexible by some means unknown to those who live on earth. These plates bent with every one of their agile and graceful movements.

On perceiving that neither from Rosenblume, who was in a swoon, nor from her defender any resistance was now to be expected, they nobly withdrew their hands, and stood off a few paces.

Boldwin learnt at the time, when they began conferring together with lively signs, that the Enchanted Dragon-helm gave him not simply the power of understanding all creatures' speech, but the language also of dumb show. He, therefore, replied to what they were stating in flourishes of their hands.

"It is so," said he, bowing courteously. "It is indeed far from me in mind and heart to seek to harm the worst of you. And this poor child, weak with many a pang and harsh usage, which I care not to know now that she has passed through them with life, is in a less fit state to alarm the weakest of you. You have a smiling mien, a clear and lofty look, and I do not believe you could be allies of that cruel and repulsive Evil Spirit who is transfigured into those fragments of the crystal mass seen at our feet."

Surprised at his addressing them, one of the party returned his bow with a wave of both hands, and smiled with pleasure.

"Your like has never been in the Realm of Gold and Gems," said he, speaking this time in a melodious voice, like the chink of golden balls in a glass bowl; "hence our rude treatment of you. But do not fear. We will bear you with kindness, and your sister with tender care, unto our monarch, who will not receive you so that you will grieve or blame."

One of the Golden People strode off a few yards, where nothing in the untouched ground called for attention, or betrayed what it covered. But he, with a sure hand, unfolded the head of a spear which he carried, and which thus became a spade. With this he turned up the stony soil as it were chalk, and disclosed the burnished surface of a large tube.

He found, too, a sort of door in it, which he lifted up by its hinges, and laid bare the rounded interior. A sort of car, accurately fitting the casing, appeared in the opening.

They carefully carried the still insensible Princess to this place, and laid her in the car. It moved on apace, and so gave more room for Boldwin and all the others to enter. They had not a backward glance to give. But he, hoping against despair to see the Iron King, reverted his gaze, though in vain.

No sooner had the lid of the doorway in the tube been shut down on them than he wished to beg them to help him search for his friend. But that was too late, for the car started with such great speed even from the first that he might have believed himself seized by an eagle and swept through air.

Better if his glance had turned to remark what happened to the halves of the crystal tube, resting not long after their departure in the state in which they were left.

Gradually the two pieces trembled, then rocked, and lastly rolled towards each other. Once they touched they melted into an united mass. This was at first of no precise shape, but after a pause, during which no doubt the spirit of the Ice-cold Witch decided what mask it should assume, there rose on the place a huge black-faced man, with gold rings in his ears, lips, and nose, and silver bands that tinkled merrily at ankles, wrists, and waist. He was clad in a flowing robe, with wide sleeves of a gorgeous orange damask, worked with flowers in rose, grey, and jet.

"Never will the boy know me now," said the Sorceress, in her own voice; but her next speech was uttered in the perfectly-assumed tone of a negro endeavouring, with thick lips, to imitate the soft, sweet accents of these Golden Genii.

"The Ice-cold Witch is no more, and Ebonio, the Affrite of Jet, is the body in which my soul will carry out its plans of hate and ruin to the daughter of the ocean conqueror and the youth who has dared me and pursued me even here, after destroying my subjects!"

He shook his sable fist, and uttered a thunderous cry of defiance and malice.

"I have divided his only ally from his side, and have robbed him of the silica sword of Siegfried! My next step will be to regain possession of the Princess, and crush the presumptuous boy!"

Afar, where a gleaming wall bounded the Golden City's limits, the speaker descried a swarm of its people coming this way. The plain was covered with grass, whose flowers were full of dry resinous pollen or seed-powder. The whole mead appeared spread with yellow meal. Drawing one ragged and steel-like nail of his dark hand over a flinty stone, a stream of fire issued from it. The dust caught alight, and in a few moments the flame had run from flower to flower, till all was one sheet of lurid blaze. It was bright but fleeting. When it had burnt itself out, there was no living thing on the scorched pasture-land.

The Genii sent to bring in the pieces of the crystal block searched in vain, and returned empty-handed to declare:

"You need suffer no fear; the Witch has been destroyed by a fire which sprang up of a sudden, and not even her ashes blacken the ground."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This tale commenced in No. 292. Back numbers can always be had.)

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THE VAIN RHINOCEROS.—A rhinoceros who was drinking at a limpid stream observed therein the reflected image of his horn and legs. "Alas!" quoth he, "that animal with such massive legs should be disfigured by so insignificant a horn." Just then he was interrupted by the baying of a pack of hounds. Away he fled, but his legs refused to convey him with sufficient speed; and turning round as the pack gained on him, he defended himself with his horn. "I see," he cried, as he tossed the last hound into the air, "that the legs I admired would have proved my ruin had not my despised horn insured my safety."

# ODYSSEUS:
## HIS
## WANDERINGS AND ADVENTURES.

By C. A. READ.

### CHAPTER XV.

AT the words of Odysseus, and after glancing at the narrow strait, the men bent to their oars in silence. Then the ship shot on as if impelled by some strength in addition to theirs.

As they neared the narrow pass, Odysseus could see everything was as Circe had described. There, beneath the lesser rock roared Charybdis, drawing in the waves with horrid gulp, then flinging them out again, while from it rose a smoke or mist that shrouded half the cliff. High upon the greater rock yawned the great cave that held the monstrous, many-headed Scylla; but search as he might with his eyes he could catch no glimpse of the creature hid away in the darkness within.

After he had gazed sufficiently long, Odysseus turned to the pilot.

"Listen to me," he cried, "and obey my words. Keep your course wide of the angry waves that boil beneath yon smoke, and steer close by the higher rock. If once we get within that whirling foam, no power can save us."

Fearful of alarming his men to the point of despair, and thereby losing all, he made no mention of the cruel Scylla.

The pilot bent his head in obedience, and the ship shot towards the higher rock.

Then hastily Odysseus donned his armour, grasped two spears, and placed himself high on the deck in front. His armour shone bright in the murky glare, and his eyes fixed themselves intently upon the mouth of the cave.

No sight of the fell monster answered his gaze, and presently they were within the very strait itself, Charybdis with its roar on one side stunning their ears, the mighty rock frowning on them on the other.

Here, just where most courage was needed, the men's hearts failed them, and though they did not drop their oars they worked them weakly and in disorder. The ship swayed, slackened speed, and almost halted.

Then suddenly, with the rustling noise as of an army quickly put in motion, the awful monster sprang from the darkness to the mouth of the cave, and six fierce heads on six long necks looked out upon the Grecks.

The sight seemed to paralyze the men, and to make them helpless as children.

Next moment, before another stroke was given, the six fierce heads swung down towards the men, and snatching up six, held them aloft in the air.

A hideous laugh gurgled from each of the six foul throats, while the men snatched up screamed out in agony, and held forth their arms imploringly.

Alas, their screams were in vain! Their companions in the ship below were as if turned into stone, while even Odysseus stood aghast and idle, his blood seemingly frozen in his veins.

For a moment or two the six poor wretches were tossed about in the air, then the fierce monster slid back and down into the darkness of the cave, dragging them with it to a horrid tomb.

At this the tongue of Odysseus seemed loosed, and he cried out to his men:

"To your oars! To your oars, O Ithacans! Our friends are lost beyond all hope, and only our own strong arms can save ourselves. To your oars—to your oars!"

Roused by his voice as if from a dream, the men bent to their oars again, and the ship surged past the frowning cave.

It was only in time. Next moment, while Charybdis, with an awful roar, sucked in the very waves on which they had been floating, the six terrific heads shot out of the cave, and darted with bloody mouths towards the ship. The foul breath of the horrid creature swept over the Greeks, but the grinning mouths reached just short of their prey.

The beast uttered an awful six-fold roar, then sat back, couching in the mouth of the cave as if waiting for another spring.

Meantime the ship shot fast away; and this became yet faster when, after a while, the mast was raised and the sail unfurled and set.

Soon the dreadful rocks began to sink below the horizon, and presently before the voyagers rose the gleaming hills of Trinacria, the bright island of the god of day.

Next, suddenly, across the waves came the voices of lowing herds and the bleating of sheep. The faces of the Greeks brightened, and their hearts leaped up at the sound. The awful dangers were past and gone, and now a haven and a feast lay before them.

Thus they thought, while the heart of Odysseus sunk with fear, and his face grew dark.

The words of Circe and of the Theban seer came back to him, and oppressed him heavily.

"O friends," he said presently, in a sad, slow tone, "listen to heaven's command, and obey it. Tiresias and the maiden Circe both have warned us not to touch these shores. The isle is sacred to the god of day. Then let us fly it, and obey the gods, lest some mightier woe than any yet fall upon us."

While Odysseus spoke, the faces of the men clouded over with anger and regret; and presently Myron made answer fiercely:

"O cruel man!" he cried, "surely some fury has steeled your soul, and made you strong to bear all toil. Sleepless and weary and oppressed with what we have endured, we need rest; but you refuse it. Must we still rove restlessly from sea to sea, and evermore explore new lands?"

Odysseus stood looking on his soldier in silent astonishment; and as he did not speak, another, growing bold, continued:

"Yes," he said; "see, the night is coming down upon us fast, and all the dangers of our way grow double. Night is the time to sleep; let us obey its voice, and haste to the land. Thence, when the morning comes, we can keep on our way again."

"And who knows what storms may rise within the night?" said a third. "Is it not the time when Auster comes treacherously in all his strength?"

"Yes, yes!" cried the rest, with one voice; "we will haste to the land."

"O fools, hasting to your ruin!" said Odysseus, sadly. "Against my will I keep your company. But if you will land, at least obey me in one thing. Let no hand touch the flocks and herds we hear. Let our feast be only on the food by Circe given—an innocent one, that may not anger the gods."

"We will not touch the flocks or herds!" cried the men, as they lifted their hands to heaven. "By Zeus himself we swear it!"

At this Odysseus bowed his head in silent assent, and the ships shot straight towards the land.

Here they arrived before day had gone, and in a quiet cove beneath a fountain welling out of the green hillside they ran the ship ashore.

Then they landed and feasted, and for a time made merry. But presently they began to sigh for their friends devoured by Scylla, and to call upon their shades. This over, they laid themselves down to sleep. Odysseus laid himself down to sleep also, satisfied that his men had kept their word, and determining that by the time the sun had risen they should turn their backs upon the dangerous land.

Alas, how little the decisions of the greatest of mortals are worth! Long before morning showed the first faint streak of light, a howling tempest roared aeross the sea, and beat upon the shore.

All night long the din continued, and when the sun rose, instead of launching out for home, the wanderers drew their ship up higher on the beach, where a grotto near at hand gave pleasant shelter from the wind and rain.

Here, when the men were all gathered together, Odysseus once more warned them not to touch the flocks or herds.

"Listen to my voice again," he said, "and do not touch a single beast that feeds in these fair fields. If ye touch, be sure ye die. A great god is this to whom the flocks belong. It is he who spreads the light abroad, and to him everything in heaven and earth lies open wide."

Once more the men raised their hands to heaven, and promised to obey him, let what might happen.

One thing, however, happened they did not expect. Day after day the wind blew steadily from the south-east, and day after day they saw their store of food grow less.

At last it utterly disappeared, and nothing was left for them but the fish within the little bay, and the screaming seafowl that flitted about the coast.

In time this also grew scantier and scantier, and threatened to fail them also. Famine stared them in the face, while yet before their eyes roved great herds of oxen and flocks of sheep.

Day after day and hour after hour, as famine grew near, Odysseus wandered from grove to grove, or stood statue-like on the beach, looking and longing and praying for a wind to waft them to some other land.

One day, weary with his long watching, he wandered to a grove close by the entrance to the bay. There, throwing the water of the cruel sea on his head, he prayed once more to all the powers to calm the wind, or let it blow to waft them home.

This done, he stretched himself within the shade, and soon fell fast asleep.

Meanwhile the men, after devouring their last morsel, were hurrying to the cave to seek him. There they found Myron instead, and to him they poured out all their woes. He heard them to the end, then rose and answered.

"O brothers, a thousand ways lead to the tomb," he said. "They all are dreadful, but most is that when hunger wastes the man into a ghost. Here let us cease to pray the powers above—they will not hear. Then let us rise and slay, and if to Ithaca we should e'er return we can repay the god a hundredfold. If not, and if we are to sink beneath the wave, it is better to rush at once to Pluto's shades than linger here and die a thousand times."

A cry of assent answered his speech; and without more ado the men poured out of the grotto after him, and hurried towards the nearest flock.

This they found straying securely confident not a thousand yards away, and from it they immediately drove to the beach a selected band.

Then a fire was lighted, and while this blazed up ready, the axe was brought and the work of slaughter begun.

At this moment a dream full of horror shot across the brain of Odysseus, and wakened him from sleep. Then he started to his feet, feeling that some evil was about to fall upon him, and that the spirits of mischief were abroad in air.

"Pallas forbid another woe should reach us!" he cried, as he hurried towards the ship. "Ah, see," he continued joyfully, as he flew along—"the winds are hushed at last, and a soft breeze rises in the west. Now, all the gods be praised, for surely here to-day our troubles end."

Scarcely had the words left his lips when he paused, and stood still in fear and horror.

The soft breeze rising from the west became suddenly scented with odours of a feast, while faint and low in the distance he could hear the very blows that told him a victim from the charmed herd had fallen beneath the Grecian axes.

His heart seemed to cease to beat, and his very hair moved as if it would stand upright upon his head. Too well he knew the deed his men had wrought would bring him bitter grief, and drag away from his longing eyes the sight of home for years to come.

After a pause he lifted his hands aloft, and cried out:

"O father of gods and men!" he exclaimed. "O all ye powers that reign within the sky! Why, oh, why was I beguiled to sleep? Alas, dear sleep, to be repaid with years of woe! Oh, fatal slumber, that brings on so many deaths! Surely this deed has angered every god, set heaven in arms, and sent fierce vengeance to the earth, even while I speak!"

As he ceased he hurried on again, hoping against hope that he might even yet do something to stop the fatal slaughter of the sacred beasts.

### CHAPTER XVI.

And now, as he hurried along, a wondrous sight appeared before Odysseus.

There before him on the beach were his own men yet busy with the slaughter of the oxen; here close at hand, almost within reach of him, as he thought, the figure of a lovely maiden soared up with streaming garments to the sky. High over all, with face almost too bright for mortal eyes to gaze upon, rode Helios himself. Beneath him was a chariot, whose wheels flashed out with gold and gems. Before him sprang four haughty steeds, whose nostrils shot forth fire instead of breath. In his hands he held lightly the weighty reins.

Presently the floating maiden raised one arm to the god, and Odysseus could hear her voice as she cried out:

"The Greeks of Ithaca have slain your beasts, O mighty god! I am Lampetic, who have kept them safe for many a year. Let me be revenged upon the robbers, every one!"

"Ay, you shall be revenged," replied a sweet but awful voice, the voice of Hyperion himself. "The Greeks shall die!"

Next moment the figures in the sky melted away, and Odysseus saw before him only the sea, the clouds, the groves and meadows, and his men upon the beach busy round the slaughtered beasts.

"Was it dream or vision of the brain, or did I indeed behold the sun god himself?" he muttered, as he hurried along. "Alas! I fear it was no dream, or, if a dream, a true one."

Presently he reached the place of slaughter, and rushed among the men.

"O fools, O gluttons!" he cried in rage, "could ye not have kept your oath a little longer? See here as ye do the wrathful deed and make yourselves foresworn, the gods send us the breeze to waft us to our home! Up quick, and leave this place now made accursed by you."

"Nay," replied Myron, "it is the gods, not us, who are to blame. Have they not held us here till we have wasted almost to a band of ghosts? Have they not tempted us with these fat flocks on every side? Friends, let the breeze blow how it pleases. I stir not hence until I taste the flesh that smells so fragrantly upon the fire."

"Nor I, nor I, nor I," cried a chorus of voices. "How know we that the gods are angry with us? And if they be, better stay here than trust ourselves upon the treacherous sea, where nothing can save us from their rage."

"Alas, alas, I will not fight with you," replied Odysseus, his anger changing to pity. "Foolish and impious, do ye think to escape the wrath that flies on land as well as sea? Alas, in your faces I behold the doom already written."

The faces of the men grew dark, but Myron stepped forward a pace, and answered.

"Why mourn at what is done, O king?" he muttered. "If we are indeed doomed to die we cannot avoid it. Therefore let us feast and make merry while we have time."

"I will be no partner in your impious feast, O Ithacans—rebels to me, and liars to the gods!" cried

Odysseus, as he turned away. "Feast on—it is the feast of death!"

"So be it!" cried Myron, fiercely. "But yet what sign have we—what proof beyond your word, O subtile king, that it is so?"

Scarcely had the words left his lips when the raw hides just at his feet moved as if alive, and a low bellow burst from the scattered limbs.

At this the Greeks shrank back with fear, all except Myron, who, gathering up the hides in his arms, flung them into the sea. Then after these he flung the heads of the oxen already slain.

"There, go bellow to Poseidon!" he cried. "We trust him not again—not while one head of your companions remains upon this isle. Now, friends, to the feast whose scent so sweetly fills the air!"

While the men turned to the smoking viands, Odysseus hurried down towards the ship. Clambering on board, he sought the darkest part below, and there, flinging himself upon a heap of skins, gave way to anger and vexation. "Now, now," he muttered, "I do not care if I should die."

Suddenly, while he lay in this state, he seemed to be lifted, at one bound, far above the earth. The islands, seas, and continents of the world spread out below him, while he walked upon and among great fleecy clouds.

"And thou! Why didst not thou strike them to the earth with one of thy far-reaching shafts?"

"Vengeance is thine, O father of all!" replied Hyperion. "In my own cause I may not loose a single shaft."

"Listen, ye powers that stand around our throne," said Zeus, as he looked round upon the godlike crowd. "Listen, and take a lesson from Hyperion. He whose shafts are deadly almost as our own, lifts not a hand in private quarrel. But"—turning to the sun god—"what do you ask from Zeus?"

"Vengeance! vengeance! O guider of the thunder!" replied Hyperion. "Alas, with what pride I saw these glorious flocks, when in the morn I sprang through heaven's gate to light the world, or when, at night, I plunged the burning ray beneath the sea! But now they fall beneath weak mortal hands! Vengeance, ye gods, or I will leave the skies, and bear the glowing orb to Pluto's realms!"

"Listen now to Hyperion, and learn from him!" cried the queen. "Doth he not threat the king of gods himself?"

"It is but a passionate word, and thou hast no need to speak of such, O Heré!" cried Aphrodite.

A slight frown at the words of the two goddesses passed over the brow of Zeus, then he turned to Hyperion.

"A mortal's voice in heaven! A mortal's voice!"

Next moment, from the right hand of him who sat upon the throne shot forth a score of flaming brands, while the deep thunder rolled through the wide vault of the sky. Then the clouds clashed together in wild confusion, and all the heaven grew dark as night. Between the bursts of the terrific thunder strong mocking laughter shook all the air.

In the confusion, Odysseus awoke and sprang to his feet. Glancing around, he saw that he was within the ship instead of above the clouds. Outside, however, the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the clouds and tempests clashing together made day almost as dark as night.

Scrambling on deck, Odysseus leaped ashore to feel the very island rock beneath the awful storm. Hurrying to the grotto he found his men assembled there, clustered together like a flock of frightened sheep.

At his entrance half of them flung themselves upon their faces before him.

"Oh, would to heaven we had obeyed your words, Odysseus!" they cried, "for now we know our deed has angered all the gods!"

"How know you now? An hour ago ye scorned my words."

"An hour ago, O king?" cried one, in astonishment. "Seven days have passed since that on which

"The six fierce heads swung down towards the men, and snatching up six, held them aloft in the air."

Presently, on what seemed a rosy mountain, he beheld a great throne, and on this seated a figure full of majestic beauty. Close by the head of the godlike figure fluttered an eagle, and in a lesser throne on his right hand sat the figure of a goddess, whose wide-open eyes and snowy forehead showed her to be the queen of heaven. In the right hand of the great figure on the throne was a sceptre, on his head a wreath of olive leaves. Here and there to right and left were gods and goddesses, Pallas and Apollo, Hermes and Artemis, Hephaistos and Aphrodite, Ares and Poseidon.

"It is the council place of the gods," murmured Odysseus, as with his hand he shaded his eyes from the too great splendour of the glowing faces. "I am before the throne of Zeus himself!"

Even as he spoke there was a movement among the gods. Then with the noise of a rushing wind the figure of the sun god, Hyperion himself, in his flaming chariot, burst through a cloud and bowed before the throne.

"Whence comest thou, Hyperion?" cried Zeus; "and what hath angered thee? For thy face is wrathful, and thy whole being disturbed."

"I come from fair Trinacria's meads, O king of gods and men," replied the sun god, while from his forehead flashed blinding rays. "Once there, in fair Lampetic's and young Phaëthusa's charge, my flocks and herds were fed at peace. Now impious hands are laid upon them, and even while I speak a band of wandering Greeks are feasting on their flesh."

"What Greeks are these, Hyperion?"

"The Greeks of Ithaca, with King Odysseus,"

"O god of light," he exclaimed, "whose flame makes beautiful the azure vault, may thy beams still spring through heaven's gate, the glory of the sky and joy of earth. What thou hast asked is granted. Before another moon has run her starry round I bare my arm, and with my thunders dash the impious mortals in the roaring sea."

"Nay, king and father," cried Pallas, as she advanced before the throne and bowed low, "surely not all the woe-worn Greeks must die? What hath Odysseus done?"

"He is their king," exclaimed Hyperion, "and for the people's fault the king should die."

"Say, father Zeus, was it always thus?" cried Pallas. "Shall the king die because the crowd rebel? In heaven itself were rebels once, and for their fault no ruler suffered."

"Thy words are wise, O daughter," replied Zeus, with a smile awful yet sweet. "They only who rebelled in heaven were punished. Let it content thee, bright Hyperion, that all the guilty shall be destroyed, and King Odysseus saved."

A cloud passed over the brow of Hyperion a moment; then his face flashed out bright as before.

"I am content, O king of heaven," replied Hyperion. "Let King Odysseus live, if all but he shall die."

"Not all!—not all! O god of heaven and earth!" cried Odysseus, in agony, bursting in upon the council of the gods, "oh, slay not all my friends!"

At these words there was a strange commotion among the gods. They clustered together as if affrighted, and one cried out:

we slew the sun god's oxen. Since then we have not seen you until now."

"Seven days?—seven days?" muttered Odysseus, bewildered. "Have I slept seven days?"

"Yes, seven days have passed since last we saw you, Odysseus," muttered Myron, as he stepped forward, with the sour, set look of a desperate man; "and during these seven days the island has been rocked with tempests, filled with strange, horrid noises—the sky black by day, but full of flame by night. And worse than all, just at our sorest want, when all the first slain oxen were consumed, the herds and flocks utterly disappeared. O king, we have done wrong, and surely our doom draws nigh. But let it reach us nearer home. Command us once again, as of old. Set us to launch the ship, and fly these awful shores."

"Be it as you say, O Myron," replied Odysseus. "And listen, the tempest sinks. See, the sky grows brighter. Out and launch the ship, O Ithacans!"

"The tempest sinks to lure us to our doom," muttered Myron to himself. "But better sudden death upon the sea than here to starve or sink beneath some demon's glance." Then aloud: "Follow me, Ithacans. Let us obey the king again, and if we die, let us die in obedience."

With a cry of joy the men rushed from the grotto to the ship, and bent their shoulders to her sides and stern.

The job was rather a heavy one, for they had drawn her far up on the beach. Before it was finished great patches of blue began to appear overhead, and the thunder and lightning died away in distant growls. Then the clouds drifted past, and a light

breeze springing up from the west, filled their sails and drove them from the shore.

Presently, as they looked back, they saw the island gleaming in the sunshine, after the rain and storm, like a fair paradise, while on the meads close by the beach, as if they had sprung from earth, wandered the sacred flocks and herds.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

# "I WANT TO SEE THE WORLD."

THERE was once a young pig who wished to see the world. He lived in a sty with an old sow, and he used to talk to her of his great plans.

One day the farm-boy did not shut the door of the sty.

"Ho, ho! now is my time!" cried the pig, and out he ran through the door into the yard. It was a square yard with a high wall all around it, and a high door in one side of the wall.

"So this is the world," said the pig. "What a large place it is! Dear me! I must take care, and keep close by the edge of the world, so that I may not lose my way."

So he walked on by the side of the wall, and soon saw a flock of geese. They thrust out their heads, and made a great noise as he went by.

The young pig did not like this, and he went on as fast as he could. But, as soon as he had passed, he felt quite proud that he had seen such strange things.

Next he saw two ducks in the pond, who cried, "Quack, quack!" when they saw him.

"What does that mean?" thought the pig; but he could not find out. "How much I shall have to tell when I get home!" thought he.

By this time he had got to the high door.

"This must be the end of the world," said he; for he could not see through.

He went on, still by the side of the wall, and met a large cow, and, when he saw her great horns, he thought he had best get out of her way as fast as he could. So he made haste, and soon found that he was back at the door of his own sty.

"So here you are back," said the old sow.

"Yes, here I am!" cried the pig.

"And what have you seen?" asked the sow.

"Oh, such things! I have been all round the world. I find that it is square, and has a wall all around it, lest pigs should fall off. In fact, it is like a big sty."

"Well, to be sure!" said the old sow.

"And the end of the world," went on the young pig, "is made of wood, and has two high posts, one on each side, to mark the place. The first thing that I saw in the world was a herd of such queer pigs! They had but two legs each, and they were quite white. Then I saw two pigs that could swim. There are but two in the world. Think of that! And they said, 'Quack, quack!'"

"What does that mean?" asked the old sow.

"Oh, it is what they say in the world," said the young pig, with a grand air. "It is of no use to tell you what it means, for you have not been there, you know. Then I saw a huge red pig with two horns. There is but one pig of this sort in the whole world."

"Well, to be sure!" said the old sow. "But what did he have to say? Did you make friends with him?"

"I should have made friends with him," went on the young pig, "but he did not look my way. And then, as I had gone all round the world, I came home. Ah, the world is a fine place, you poor old thing!" and he turned up his snout once more.

"What a deal you must know!" exclaimed the sow.

"I know all that is to be known now," said he. "The farm-boy may shut the door when he likes. I am a great pig now. I know the world."

"Well, to be sure!" said the old sow.

# THE MAGIC WELL.

## A LEGEND OF THE HERZEGOVINA.

A CERTAIN king had two sons. The one was wicked and passionate, the other lovable and good-tempered. After the death of his father the elder said to the younger, "You must leave me; I can no longer allow you to live with me. Here are three hundred ducats and a horse, which our father left to you; take them—I owe you nothing more."

The younger son took the money and the horse, and went to live apart from his brother.

Some time afterwards the two princes, who happened to be riding along the same road, met each other by accident. The younger saluted the other, saying:

"God save you, my brother."

"What do you mean," asked the elder, "by always talking about God? In our days might is better than right."

"Very well," rejoined the younger brother, "I am willing to lay a wager with you that injustice is not, as you suppose, as profitable as justice."

Each one staked a hundred sequins, and they agreed to put the case to the first man whom they should meet, and to abide by his decision.

Riding on some little distance they met the Devil, who had disguised himself in the dress of a monk; and when they asked him whether justice or injustice were the more preferable, Satan, without hesitation, replied, "The latter."

The good brother paid his hundred sequins; but, as he was very much surprised at the decision, he made a second wager with his brother, and then a third, and on each occasion the Devil assumed a new disguise, and, of course, decided in favour of injustice. At last the younger brother lost all his money. Then he staked his horse; and after he had also lost that, he cried:

"God be praised! Though I have no more money, I have still my eyes. I will wager them with you in favour of justice."

The elder brother, without waiting for another decision, savagely seized his dagger, and gouged out the unfortunate prince's eyes, remarking:

"Now that you have no eyes, let right help you, if it can."

But the victim, in spite of his pain, still stuck to his opinion.

"I have lost my eyes," he said, "in the cause of justice. Now, I beg you, brother, give me a little water that I may bathe my wounds and moisten my lips, and then lead me to the side of the well, beneath the tree, before you leave me."

The wicked brother did as he was asked, and the other one lay down and fell asleep.

Towards midnight he was awakened by the Vilas, who had come to bathe. One of them said:

"You know, sisters, that the king's daughter is suffering from leprosy. All the best physicians have been called in, but their endeavours to cure her have failed. Now, if his majesty only knew, he would take a little of this water in which we are bathing, and wash his daughter, who would become perfectly well in twenty-four hours. Deaf, dumb, or blind people would also be cured if they made use of this magic water."

At cock-crow the Vilas vanished, and as soon as they had gone the unfortunate prince dragged himself down to the well, and bathed his eyes. In an instant his sight was restored. He then filled a bottle with some of the water, and went to the palace of the king whose daughter had the leprosy.

"I have come," he said, "to cure the princess, if the king will allow me to try. I am willing to guarantee that she shall be quite well again in the course of twenty-four hours."

The monarch gave orders for the prince to be introduced into the sick chamber, and the princess, having been bathed with the contents of the bottle, speedily recovered her health. So delighted was the king at the wonderful cure, that he offered half his estates, together with his daughter's hand, to the prince, who thus became his son-in-law, and the first subject in the realm.

The news soon spread, and after a time it came to the ears of the wicked brother, who, jealous of his victim's good fortune, and anxious for a piece of similar good luck, went to the well beneath the tree, and gouged out his own eyes.

At night the Vilas came down and bathed as usual. Talking of the princess's cure, one of them said:

"Certainly some one must have overheard our last conversation on the subject. Let us see if any one is listening now."

After a short search they discovered the wicked brother, and, in their anger, they seized him and tore him to pieces.

# BLUEBELL VANE'S STORY.

BY LADYE BYRDE.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### "IF WISHES WERE HORSES," ETC.

AFTER tea I was carried into the drawing-room and put on the sofa. Herbert and Lucie played chess in a corner of the room. Graham was playing the accompaniment to a song Jack was humming. Ion crouched over the fire, his feet on the fender, and Aunt Esther was discussing some pictures in a magazine with Bernard and Tom, while the two youngest children were doing their utmost to enlist my unsympathizing sympathies in their dolls' new finery.

"Just see!" cried Zoe; "it's got seven tucks. Aren't they lovely, Bluebell?"

"Mine's more bootifuller nor yours, isn't it, Boobell?" asked Baby Gertrude, putting up her china beauty to be admired. "Mine's dot boo eyes, and Zoe's hasn't."

"Ah, but," returned the sister, "mine has got a beautiful new flannel petticoat, and yours has only got a white one."

"Well," replied Baby, trying to reconcile herself to the absence of the flannel petticoat, "you've tissed your nose nearly off, and my nose is quite big, isn't it, Boobell?" And she pushed her doll into my face for inspection.

"Yours has a capital nose," said I, feeling that I was really called upon to make a personal remark.

"Ah! Boobell says my nose is tapital!" exulted the baby, "and Boobell knows all about it, too!"

"Yes," said Zoe; "but she doesn't like dolls, for all that; and my doll is wax, so of course its nose comes off much sooner than your china one."

"Don't you like dolls?" asked Baby of me, in a tone of intense pity, regarding me with a look of incredulity in her violet eyes.

Ion was listening.

"No, she'd rather climb trees than dress dolls," he said.

"Is that a true bill?" asked Graham, leaving the piano and coming over to the sofa. The two children at once took possession of him, and carried him off to the window, assailing him with twenty questions as to the loveliness of their respective dolls—questions that he answered with a patience that ought to have made me ashamed of my own lack of that virtue. Aunt Esther brought the two boys to the sofa, much to my delight, and Tom soon gave up the pictures to talk to me; it seemed a month since I had spoken to him.

"How much longer are you going to be lazy?" he asked. "It's jolly to lie down and be waited on by everybody, isn't it? I think I'll try the dodge myself one of these next days."

"I wish you'd change, that's all," was my reply. "I can't bear it, and Aunt says I'm not to move till the swelling has quite gone down; I'm so tired of waiting."

"What a bother! Never mind, perhaps you'll have company to-morrow. I might be taken ill myself, you know," he said, solemnly.

"I wish you would! 'twould be such fun—that is, if you weren't very bad, of course."

"Ah! we shall see. I say, didn't you come down plump that day? Wasn't it a lark? Didn't I tell you Horace was regularly gone? You wouldn't believe me."

I answered in the same undertone he had used, "Graham says that Horace has some fever, and that he has been badly bitten; he thinks Lucie has it too, but she looks quite well."

"Oh, that's what you and Graham were talking about with your heads so close together, was it? Take care you don't get that fever yourself, for although you're only a chicken, it may be catching."

"I'm not a bit afraid of fevers," replied I, with sublime indifference, not having the remotest idea of what he meant. "I only wish I might get off this sofa and hop round the room a bit, I am so tired of lying and sitting still."

"Would you like me to carry you on my back?" he asked, in fun. "I say, supposing I sprain my foot one of these next days, or get a kick from some animal or other, and go halves with the sofa—eh?"

"What wickedness are you two concocting?" questioned Ion, on his way to the piano to play the "Dies Iræ," with which he usually favoured us every evening.

Tom deigned no reply, and Herbert's voice was heard saying:

"Checkmate, my formidable antagonist. Now I have had my revenge. Let's have some music, after Ion has finished his concert. We'll try our trio with Graham—shall we?"

"I must put Baby to bed first," said Lucie. "It's past her time now, but I'll soon be down again."

Aunt Esther's quick ear had caught the last words.

"Practise your trio by all means, dear," she said. "I'll take Baby under my wing to-night."

"But, Mother mine, you're tired, I know, and I really"——

"No, I'm not tired now, and it will be quite a treat to both Baby and me. Come, little Gertrude, bring dolly to bed. Say 'Good night' all round, and we'll go."

"It's quite like old times to have Tom amongst us again," said Jack, in a pathetic tone, after Baby had been the round and gone up stairs with her Mother. "I hope you've improved after your castigation. Have the cat-o'-nine-tails left any scars?"

"I'd rather have the cat, and have it over, than governor's punishments, any day," returned Tom.

"Ah," said Herbert, "Father knows just the sort of burden to lay on our backs—trust him for that; but I fancy our noble Brother looks as impudent as ever. He hasn't had enough sweet solitude, perchance."

"Making up for lost time," said Bernard.

"Confinement to the den has upset me; I don't feel well," observed Tom, with a plaintive sigh.

"He's been tucking into cake and pie on the quiet," said Jack, "you may depend upon it. I shall tell Mother to give him some pills, and a Nux-pilule every half hour during the night, poor little fellow!"

"No," said Lucie, "he must have a whole bottleful under his pillow. There won't be many left by the morning, I'll be bound!"

"How pale and interesting he looks!" observed Herbert, pretending to raise an eyeglass.

"A sweet delicate complexion he has!" added Bernard.

"How languid his fine eyes are!" put in Jack.

"He must have his breakfast in bed to-morrow," said Lucy.

"Mind he gets a jolly one, lots of ham and sausages," was Jack's recommendation.

"I know what's the matter with him," said Bernard, watching the effect of his words on Tom,

who had taken all this banter with wonderful coolness.

"Tell—tell!" cried all.

"Ah!" said Bernard, feigning diffidence, "he wouldn't like it."

"Tell all you know, pray," said Tom, grumpily.

Bernard was preparing to rush off at a moment's notice, yet he spoke very slowly.

"He's been grieving, poor Tom has, because he's been torn away so long from his—Bluebell."

With a savage howl Tom sprang off the sofa, and, seizing Bernard, bore him down on the floor, thumping him with unnecessary energy.

"There, that's enough," said Herbert; "don't kill him altogether, or Bluebell will have to interfere."

I sat still, laughing at the two boys rolling over each other, and Ion left the piano to watch the performance.

Bernard got up, shaking himself, and saying, good-humouredly:

"That nail hit home, and no mistake;" while Tom, without looking towards me, made for another part of the room, saying:

"I wish people weren't such fools!'

"I wish people wouldn't thump so hard!" said Bernard, rubbing his arm.

"I wish this vile east wind would change!" quoth Ion, taking his old seat. "I shiver every time I go from the fire."

"I wish I knew my part in the trio," observed Lucie, perching herself on the music-stool, and beginning to play over her own notes.

"I wish I knew mine," said Herbert, coming up behind her. "Play mine with your own, Loo, will you?"

"Let the wish pass round," said Jack. "'If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride,' you know; so I'll wish that some good Samaritan will buy for me at the Cranefells sale Mr. Hopkinson's bay cob. I may as well cry for the moon!"

"I'd have a better wish than that," said Tom, who could not resist such a temptation as was presented. "If I was you, Jack, I'd sooner by half have that famous puppy that Bluebell told us about the night she came here."

"You want your ears pulled, sir," observed Jack; "but perhaps I'd better change the horse for the pup. I'm as likely to get one as the other;" and he looked at me and laughed, to show that he bore no malice.

"I wish," said Zoe, who had squatted herself at Ion's knee, "that somebody would give me a feather for my dolly's new hat."

There was a pause, then Graham said:

"My wish shall be that a foolish dream in which I indulged to-day may be realized in the future."

"What was the dream?" questioned Jack. "You're bound to tell it."

"A vision suspended in the air by golden threads," he said, absently, as if he was thinking more of the music leaves he was turning over; and while I regarded him with perplexed surprise, he raised his eyes to mine, and said:

"You haven't had your turn yet, have you, Bluebell?"

"I wish," said I, heaving a great sigh at the thoughts called up, "that whoever gets the bay horse for Jack at the sale, would bring me back the picture of my Mother."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A TUMBLE DOWN STAIRS.

The breakfast bell had rung, and all were reseating themselves, after grace had been said when a loud cry was heard on the stairs, followed by a something or somebody rolling headlong down.

Aunt Esther and Lucie jumped up and ran out. Zoe gave a scream, and Baby said, as if she supposed some of our party were deaf:

"Somebody is tumbled down the stairs!"

My Uncle was arranging his newspaper, so as to be able to read the summary and first leader while he drank his coffee; now he looked round the table to see who was absent, and said, quietly:

"It's Tom."

I was seized with a strong paroxysm of coughing when Tom was led in red and limping; but contrived to smother it decently in my pocket-handkerchief.

"How did you manage that little business, Tom?" asked his Father.

"He must have slipt his foot. I expect one of the stair rods is loose," said Aunt Esther. "It was careless of me not to have seen to it. There's no great harm done, I hope. Here, sit down, my boy. Give him a corner of your sofa, Bluebell."

"No broken bones, at any rate," said my Uncle, as Lucie settled herself at the urn, and began arranging cups and saucers.

"He looks uncommonly like a turkey cock," said Bernard, to himself; and I stole a glance at Tom's face, which was fiery red. He kept his eyes downcast, so that I could not find out whether this was one of those accidents which had been done for the purpose or not.

I took my meals on a small occasional table which was placed beside the sofa, and now my Uncle said:

"He'd better have his breakfast on a corner of Bluebell's table, hadn't he?"

Tom turned redder, if possible, and muttered something about not wanting any breakfast. His Mother came and arranged a stool for him, asking him questions in a low tone.

"He's hurt his arm and his leg," she said, "that's all. He must lie still a few hours; he'll soon be himself again. Come, try a little coffee—nonsense, you must."

Mr. Carringer disliked any sort of fuss, so that nothing was said about the accident till he had left the room; then the banter began.

"Why, Tom, you'll have to hire old Betty's donkey to take you to school to-day!" said Jack.

"We might borrow Sam Crawford's crutches," said Bernard. "It's a bad thing to be weak on one's pins."

"The evil effects of the Puls and Nux, I am afraid," said Ion. "He should be whipped soundly for falling down, have half a dozen leeches applied to his bruises, and be kept in bed for a couple of days—that's what I recommend"——

"He may require amputation," said Herbert, seriously, "my poor afflicted Brother."

"There, there," said Aunt Esther, "let him have his breakfast in peace. Come, Tom, try to eat just this little slice. How red your face is! All your blood seems to have rushed to the head. What a tumble you have had, my boy."

"It's nothing at all," he said, pushing away the bread and butter. "Can't I get up now, Mother?"

And he made a feeble attempt to rise.

"Sit where you are; don't try to move; keep perfectly still," said my Aunt. "You must stay at home this morning, at any rate, and keep Bluebell company."

"Bother!" he began, when I called out:

"I'm so glad! How nice that will be!"

"Unsophisticated innocence," quoth Ion.

"They can have nice little lessons together," said Bernard, encouragingly, "and learn 'Mary had a little lamb,' and those pretty things."

"I never learn such rubbish," said I.

"Tom can give Bluebell lessons in roguery and impudence," said Jack; "and I'll warrant she'll make an apt pupil."

"She's pretty far advanced in the science already," observed Ion, "and needs restraining rather than advancing."

"Now, good people, are you going to move?" asked Lucie. "Bernard, you'll have to go off alone this morning. Tell Mr. Scott we kept Tom just for to-day; Mother thought it best. I sewed that button on that you told me of last night."

"All right—thanks."

"Farewell," said Jack, putting in his head for a moment on his way to the office. "How frightfully ill he looks! So wan and pale! My heart bleeds for him. What's a good thing for tumbling down stairs—eh, Bluebell? Plum puffs and custard—golden pudding and apple fritters! Ta, ta!"

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### PITCH PIES.

"And now for the surgical operation," said Aunt Esther, when the breakfast things had been cleared away, and my cousin and I were amicably sharing the sofa together—I sitting at the head, he at the foot.

"It's nothing at all," said Tom, with assumed indifference. "Only my leg feels queer about the knee, and my elbow is all sticky. I expect it's bleeding; but that doesn't matter."

"Take off your jacket," said the Mamma surgeon.

I helped him to unrobe, and some sticking plaister soon covered an ugly-looking cut.

"Can you stand on your foot? Try," was the next order.

"Oh, Mother, I'd rather not."

"Well, if it hurts you so much as all that, of course you can't. It's lucky you did not break a bone in such a headlong fall as you had. This bruise by the knee looks bad; but I'll bathe it with very hot water, and that will take away pain as well as discolouration. Now remember, Tom, you are to lie still. Do you hear?"

"I may sit up, like Bluebell does, so long as I don't let my leg hang down—mayn't I?"

"If you'll promise not to attempt to move off the sofa, I have no objection; otherwise"——

"I promise."

"Very well."

We thought Bernard had gone to school, but he had lingered later than usual, and now peeped in for a moment.

"Good bye," he said, nodding his head lovingly at Tom. "Take care of my dear little Brother, mind, Bluebell, and don't let him stuff himself to death with all the good things Lucie is making. And, Tom, mind you're very kind to Bluebell."

"We'll take care of each other," said I, as my Aunt went out to hurry Bernard on his way; but Tom ground his teeth and shook his fist, and said:

"That chaff's getting rather too much for me."

"What a goose you are to mind him!" said I. "It's only fun."

"There's a certain kind of fun I don't like," he replied, moodily.

We were now alone, and I naturally expected him to unbosom himself and tell me the history of his tumble downstairs, and how he had managed it; but he showed no sign of gratifying my curiosity. So, after waiting awhile, I said:

"Well, Tom?"

He turned to me:

"Well?"

"Why can't you talk and be nice? You said yesterday it would be jolly to have to stop here, and now you"——

"How can you expect a poor fellow to be nice when he's all over cuts and bruises?"

"Why, it was your own fault, wasn't it? You did it yourself."

"Just listen to her!"

"Do you mean to say it was an accident, then? I thought 'twas done on purpose."

"You don't think I'd be so wicked?" said Tom, virtuously, drawing himself up with a grand air.

"Indeed I do," returned I, with a laugh.

"Bluebell, you are a naughty, suspicious little girl, and I'm quite ashamed of you."

"No, you're not."

"Oh, dear! how hungry I am," he cried. "I didn't have an atom of breakfast."

"Why didn't you eat it when Auntie brought it, then? I say, Tom, what was it made your face so red?"

He burst out laughing; and then putting his lips to my ear, said:

"Did you ever hear of a Turkish towel?"

The door opened, and Lucie brought in a tray temptingly laid.

"Come, you two poor invalids," she said, with a mocking smile, "especially the little boy who had no breakfast, I've brought you an early lunch. As I'm extra busy this morning, Bluebell, I shall grant you a holiday, and you must amuse each other as best you can."

She set down the tray and left us.

"My gum!" said Tom, his eye roving over the tray, "this is almost worth a tumble, ain't it, even if you didn't bargain for a stiff elbow."

Cold sliced pudding, sugared apple tartlets, and Madeira cake vanished before the sick boy's appetite in a way astonishing to behold. I kept some of the cake to eat later, but Tom consumed the rest.

"Are you better?" asked I, when the last tartlet had disappeared.

"Rather better," replied he, wiping his mouth. "I feel stronger. I think I shall lie down for a minute or two. I heard Old Daddy Long-legs tell Mother it was a good thing for the digestion."

In less than a minute he was up again, asking:

"I say, do you think anybody will come in here for the next five minutes?"

"I shouldn't think so. Why?"

"Oh, nothing! I say, isn't this a jolly big sofa?"

"Yes; it's a good thing it's big enough to hold two sick people like you and me."

"You needn't make fun of me so," he grumbled, pretending I had hurt his feelings. "You don't know how bad I am. Can't you draw up your feet a bit, and give me a lot of room, just for a minute; go on one side, will you?"

I complied, wondering.

"Do pitch pies agree with you?" he asked next.

"I don't know; I never tasted any."

"Well, I'm going to show you how they agree with me. Here goes! Out of the way!"

He kicked off his slippers, sprang to his feet, and bending his head till it touched the sofa cushion, turned one somersault after another with incredible speed, barely escaping a fall off on the floor, and once coming heavily against the arm I held to protect my wounded foot.

Could he be mad, thought I, as I watched him, half afraid.

"Tom, you'll kill yourself! You'll hurt your knee! Take care of my foot! You'll tumble off!" exclaimed I, but in vain.

He must have accomplished about ten when he

paused, stood upon his head, still on the sofa, putting his feet against the wall, kicking them to the tune of "Oh, Susannah!"

I kept myself huddled up in a corner, uncertain whether to laugh or scold, when a voice at the door said:

"Tom, what *are* you doing?"

In a moment he was stretched at full length on the sofa as before.

It was Lucie, who stood, plate in hand, with some three-cornered puffs just fresh from the oven. She put the plate down, sat on a chair, and laughed till tears literally rolled down her cheeks.

Tom lay still, grave as a judge, but uncomfortable enough I could see. I waited, looking from one to the other. As soon as she could speak she said:

"You're the worst boy living! I don't believe you hurt your leg at all."

"You can believe what you like," said he. "I'm better since I had lunch, that's all. This is a free country, ain't it? Mayn't a fellow kick up his heels if he likes?"

"You are the most consummate hypocrite in Pinebridge," was her reply. "Here have we been full of pity and commiseration about that leg of yours, and after all it's a sham. You might have hurt Bluebell's foot very much with your antics. You needn't excuse him, dear" (this was to me, seeing I was about to speak). "You're a regular humbug, Tom; it's too bad of you."

"I never asked to stay away from school, did I?" said he, indignantly. "I never asked you to bring me up cakes and things, did I? If you'd only come in one moment later, you'd have seen somebody else in the middle of a flying leap—she was just beginning when you came in."

"Oh, Tom, what a story! How can you!" I exclaimed.

"One would think I meant it!" cried he. "What does it matter? Lucie knew I was only telling crams."

"Yes, but it does matter," said Lucie, "for it's a very bad habit to tell crams, as you call them; and allow me to mention in passing that crams is a word you won't find in the dictionary proper. It is so vulgar to use those expressions; I can't think how you can lower yourself to make use of them. How much nicer it would be if you'd cultivate a taste for"——

"I know all about that," said he, interrupting her. "See if I don't hit it off to a t." He stood up, and putting himself into an attitude of tender entreaty, turned towards me, with an admirable imitation of Horace Mayne's voice and manner, saying:

"Say something sweet, darling—one sweet word—do, oh, do!"

Then with a startling change of tone, and putting his head on one side, he said, mimicking Lucie's voice: "Jam tarts."

It was perfectly irresistible. In spite of his sister's justifiable vexation, she couldn't help joining heartily in our laugh, though she went to Tom and gave him a good shaking, declaring she had a great mind not to let him have the puffs she had brought.

When we were once more alone, he said to me: "Blub, I'm going on the stage some day, see if I don't! Wouldn't you like to come too?"

"You mean to act in a theatre, don't you?"

He nodded.

"Yes, it would be awful fun, and you'd make a famous ballet girl; we might get quite a fortune together."

"I've never been to a theatre," said I.

"Ah, then you don't know how jolly it is. But I've never been to a proper one either, only I've seen heaps of acting. Horace is such a capital hand; wait till you see him in 'Nine Points of the Law'—he'll make you split; and in charades he's prime, I tell you. And do you know he's the next best cricketer to Graham in the whole neighbourhood? He's a first-rate classic, Scott says; and he'd be quite a heavy swell in mathematics if he only tried; and for all that I've heard him say he'd rather go on the stage than anything. Oh my! ain't that fellow spooney? Who'd believe it if they hadn't seen him like me and you have, eh?"

"It's very funny that Graham should call it a fever," said I. "I thought when people had fevers they were ill and went to bed, didn't you?"

"Are you better?" asked I, when the last tartlet had disappeared.

"Flipperty, wipperty, hi!" sang Tom, snapping his fingers, with a meaning grin. He was not usually given to any outward expression of regard towards myself, but now he leant over so as to reach my nose, and stroking it affectionately downwards, said, in a warning voice:

"Graham may say what he likes. Take care you don't get it yourself one of these days, Blub. Now let's have our puffs. Lucie's a nice girl, isn't she?"

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### A SECRET.

It was not long before I was able to leave my sofa, and to resume the usual duties and occupations assigned me. Tom and I were faster friends than ever; and he was, at least for a time, more careful in the observance of home rules.

It was the first day of the Cranefells sale. Jack had gone off that morning to attend it, and would most likely be absent a couple of days. Graham went with him, telling me he would surely bring me back the picture I so much longed to possess.

That afternoon I was sitting with Zoe, wearily plodding over the hemming of a duster, needlework being most distasteful to me, though I have long since reformed in that respect, I am thankful to say, when Baby Gertrude came to pay us a visit, and caught me in the middle of a lamentation.

"How I do hate hemming! Horrid—horrid stuff! I can't think what's the good of it. I wonder who invented needlework. I'm sure it was some disagreeable person."

"Well, Bootbell," said Baby, putting up her chubby little face to mine, "if you hate it, why don't you cry? and Lucie's sure to let you leave off. I always cry," added the cunning little sinner.

"But that would be wrong," said Zoe, who never lost an opportunity of setting her younger sister right; "and besides, it would be like a baby."

"I'd cry a pailful if it would do any good," said I. "There, now, I've broken my needle, look. Oh, dear—oh, dear!"

"Perhaps there ain't no more needles in the workbox," suggested Gertrude; "and then you can leave off."

"There's hundreds and thousands," said Zoe. "I got mine from there just now."

"What a bore!" was on my tongue, when Zoe good-naturedly offered to fetch one for me, and Baby went after her.

As I sat listlessly with idle hands in my lap, I was surprised to see Tom's figure rushing across the lawn, it being a full hour to the regular time of his return. He was in the room almost before I could run to greet him.

"News—news!" he cried, throwing himself on a chair.

I felt somewhat incredulous; but his arrival was a most agreeable break in the monotony of duster stitching.

"What!" exclaimed I. "Have you got into a hobble?"

"Hobble! Bless you, no! My gum, how I've raced and raced! I haven't enough breath left to blow a single bubble. Listen here! You're to put on your hat and toddle off to the Rectory. Mr. Stewart wants you."

"Wants me?"

"Yes, you, and there's some lady. No," he added, breaking off and reddening, "there's not. I mean to say—I don't mean—— Bah! what's the use? It's a secret, and I'm not allowed to tell. But it's most particular, and if Mother says yes, you are to come at once."

He darted off, and met Aunt Esther in the hall. I heard a rapid dialogue carried on, and the words "Cranefells—old Mother Viperr;" then Tom wound up with:

"I'm not allowed to tell her anything I know yet. Miss Thingumijig will be sure to let something out; but Mr. Stewart was reading her a lecture about being circumspect when I came away. He says it would be very cruel to let Bluebell know half."

"Hush, my dear boy. She'll hear all you say if you talk so loud."

But I scrambled thimble, cotton, scissors into my workbox, and hastily joining them in the hall, said:

"What mustn't I know, Tom? Oh, Aunt, it isn't fair, is it, not to tell me?"

"Who's talking about you?" said Tom, evasively. "A little goose like you, as if anybody would bother their heads! There, don't ask me one question, for I'm going to be deaf, and we must run every step of the way. Come along."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

[This story commenced in No. 286. Back numbers can always be had.]

# FRANK HOWARD.

## A SEA STORY OF ADVENTURE AND DARING.

By J. A. MAITLAND.

### CHAPTER XIX.

"COME ON BOARD, SIR."

KEEPING as much as possible along the shore, Douglass and I followed the line of coast as far north as Barcelona without seeing any chance of escape. We passed through several villages, but always gave the large towns and cities a wide berth, for we were afraid of being questioned as to who we were, and why two young women—as we were supposed to be—were wandering through the country without apparently any settled purpose. Our Spanish—though we picked up a great deal day after day as we wandered along from the fishermen and peasantry, with whom we had no fear of conversing—was not such as would enable us to stand an examination with the authorities, and therefore we kept as much as possible out of *their* way. As it was, we were questioned so often that we thought it advisable to appear to have some occupation, so we purchased a couple of market-baskets, which we filled with nuts and fruit, selling the contents, and refilling the baskets with fresh supplies whenever we had sold out, and we found that this trick enabled us to get along without incurring so much suspicion, though it was not very agreeable to be obliged to carry a heavy basket slung over our shoulders as we trudged along the beach or the hot country roads. We also purchased a Spanish dictionary and grammar, and these assisted us with the language considerably.

We were obliged to be very careful of our money, though we eked it out by means of the profits—and little enough they were—gained from the sale of our humble wares. Fishing-boats and small Spanish coasting vessels we saw in abundance; but though we expected that the British Mediterranean fleet had put to sea from the harbour of Valetta, in Malta (the headquarters of the fleet), by this time, and must be cruising about off the Spanish coast on the look-out for the enemy's cruisers, we never saw any sign of them.

One day while standing on the summit of a hill near Tarragona, we discovered several large vessels in the far distance; but though they were evidently ships of war, we were doubtful whether they were English or French. *I* thought they were French, from the cut of their sails; but Douglass fancied they were too square-rigged to be French vessels, and if not French, of course they were English. However, French or English, there was no chance of our getting on board of them from where we were. We began to grow tired of our wandering life, and one day, when we were washing our garments in a lonely spot by the seaside—a task that was necessary at least once a week, for we could not spare the money to buy a change of dress, and consequently were obliged to wash the garments we wore at every favourable opportunity, and bathe, or run about on the beach till they got dry, which they did very soon on being spread out on the pebble stones in the hot sun—one day, I repeat, while thus engaged, Douglass thus gave vent to his discontent.

"I tell you what, Frank," said he, "I'm getting thoroughly tired of this work. Confound the scorching sun! It dries our clothes, but it raises blisters all over a fellow's body; and as to our hands and faces, they're as dark as a Moor's."

"I'm as tired of this life as you can be," I replied; "but what can we do?"

"Anything. Make off with the first boat we come across, and put to sea."

"We should gain nothing by that except a bath and a watery grave, should it come on to blow while we were far out at sea, and, of course, we would not dare to keep in shore."

"Better that than to lead this lazy, wandering life."

"There I disagree with you," said I. "I have no fancy for drowning."

"I wouldn't care," continued Douglass, "if there was any excitement to amuse a fellow. I feel like the Irish tailor who was 'blue moulded for want of a batin'.' If there were half a dozen of us now, so that we might kick up a row with the Spanish *guarda costas*" (coast-guards).

"And get lugged off to prison—as would most likely be the case—for our pains," said I. "We should be far worse off then than we are now."

"But then what *are* we to do?" said Douglass. "How *is* this to end? Here we are in Catalonia. North of this province lie the Pyrenees Mountains. I rather fancy the idea of climbing the mountains; but we can't live amongst them, and on the other side lies France. Out of Spain into France!—out of the frying pan into the fire! We should be worse off in France than here."

"I don't know that. I can speak French fluently."

"So can I."

"The mischief you can!" said I. "*I* never knew that."

"I was going to say, if you hadn't interrupted me, as you always do—it's a confounded bad habit of yours, Howard—but I was going to say that if they'd only understand me. I do speak French quite plainly. It's just the very distinctness of *my* French that bothers them—the French speak their own language very badly."

"Then if we were in France you might give lessons in French, old fellow. There, you see, is another advantage. But what *I* was going to say is, that I think we are much more likely to make our escape from France than from Spain. In the first place, the English ships cruise about more off the French coast; and then, supposing that we are unable to get on board any one of the ships, I could do many things in France which might eventually lead to an escape in some guise or other that it is impossible for me to do here."

"Then you think our best plan is still to travel northward until we have crossed the Pyrenees?"

"I think it is our only plan. Unless some lucky opportunity occurs to us, I don't see what else we *can* do."

"I grasped him by the neck of his coat, and bore him down across the stern thwart."

In somewhat better temper, Douglass proceeded to dress himself—always a difficult task to him—our garments being now quite dry; and when we were both dressed, we slung our baskets over our shoulders and made our way towards a village a short distance off, at which we purposed to offer our wares for sale, and pass the night.

We were, however, never destined to cross the Pyrenees Mountains.

On our way to the village an idea entered my head that I had never thought of before, by which we might make our escape at any time; only, in order that the scheme might fully succeed, it was necessary that some English vessel—man-of-war or merchantman, it mattered not which, though the former would be preferable—should be within reasonable distance from the shore.

I confided my scheme to Douglass, who highly approved of it.

"It would be an act of piracy, I suppose," said he, laughing, "though we have a right to harass, annoy, and plunder the enemy in any way, large or small, in time of war. But (with a more serious look) the mischief of it is we never *see* an English vessel of any kind in the offing; and, as you say, that is essential to the plan."

"I don't know about that," I replied. "After all, we are much more likely to fall in with the English fleet at sea than to sight the ships from the coast here; and if we were to victual our boat well, so that we could keep out at sea for a few days without fear of starving, I am confident that we should come across an English ship of war of some description."

"I think you are right there," said Douglass; and we resolved to put our plan into execution at the earliest opportunity.

We slept that night at the village, where we sold the whole contents of our baskets at a fair profit. The next day we travelled onwards till we arrived at a small seaport town called Blanes. The formation of the coast at this spot seemed to me to be suitable to our project. About ten miles distant lay the town of Gerona, and near Gerona Cape Begu stretches away seaward. Between Blanes and Cape Begu lies a deep bay, rendering the distance between Blanes and Gerona much nearer by sea than by following the line of coast along shore. It was therefore quite reasonable for two young peasant girls who wished to go to Gerona, to prefer to hire a boat and take a short cut by sea, rather than trudge wearily, laden with their baskets, over the longer route along shore.

At Blanes, therefore, instead of replenishing our baskets with fresh supplies for sale, we laid in a store of rye bread, onions, grapes, figs, and

wine sufficient to last us, with care, for a week at least. These stores we carefully covered with a cloth so that nobody should see what were the contents of our baskets, and then, going down to the wharf, we looked out for a boatman. A young Spaniard, about eighteen years of age, presented himself, and we chose him rather than an older and stouter boatman. I had previously studied my Spanish dictionary and grammar, and got by heart the phrases I should require to speak.

"We wish to go to go to Genora, *senor*," said I, in what I flattered myself was tolerably good Spanish.

"I will be happy to take you in my boat, *senorinas*," replied the boatman, of course also in Spanish.

"What will you charge us? We are two poor girls trying to earn an honest living."

"Ah, I will not be hard upon two young *senorinas*," the young boatman gallantly replied, adding with a pleasant smile, "The company of the *donzellas* will be a pleasure to me."

We soon arranged for our passage for a small sum of money, and took our seats in the boat. The young boatman set his sail. The fishermen on shore smiled, and wished us *buono viargé*, and we were off without exciting the least suspicion. When we were fairly out of sight of the town, I suggested that the boatman should stand further out to sea, where the wind would blow fresher and speed us on our voyage.

The boatman smiled.

"Yes, *senoras*. The wind would be fresher; but in these days, when the *ladrone Ingleze* (the English thieves) are everywhere on the water, looking out for prey, and the French, who call themselves our allies, are as bad as the English and worse, it is not safe even for a poor boatman, to go far from the shore. See," he added, "there are English ships now hovering about in the distance."

It was true. In the far-distant horizon we could discern the upper sails of several vessels, which from their being clustered together in that spot we had no doubt belonged to the British fleet we had so often longed in vain to behold. I gazed around me. Not a boat nor a vessel of any kind was in sight, save the ships in the far distance. We were at least two miles from the shore, and not a human dwelling was visible on that part of the coast. We could not have a fairer opportunity.

"Permit *me* to steer, senor?" I said, with a smile. "I can handle a boat well in fine weather. I have been used to steer my father's boats."

The young boatman gallantly resigned the tiller to me, keeping his seat at the same time, to be at hand if the young *donzella* (maiden) should be at fault, which he probably thought would very likely prove to be the case.

In an instant I gaasped him by the neck of his coat, and bore him down across the stern thwart, and Douglass, according to prearrangement, came to my assistance. In five minutes he was firmly bound hand and foot, and the boat—which, by the way, was taken aback by the breeze, and nearly capsized during the struggle—was in our possession.

We trimmed the sail anew, and bore away towards the distant ships, and when everything was arranged, we took the gag we had inserted from the boatman's mouth.

He looked perfectly amazed, as if he didn't know what to make of us, nor whether we were men, or women, or demons in the form of women. But we briefly explained who and what we were, and what was our object, assuring him at the same time that his wisest plan would be to keep himself quiet, and submit patiently to his fate.

He pleaded earnestly on his own behalf, and told us that his mother depended upon him for support, and that he was soon going to be married, and if he were made prisoner, or if his boat were taken from him, he and his mother would be ruined for ever, and the *donzella* whom he was going to marry would die of a broken heart. We assured him that he would only be detained from his mother and friends for a few days, and that if he behaved himself properly we were sure that no English captain would detain him or his boat after we had quitted it, but that he would be instantly set free, and allowed to return to the shore.

The poor fellow took us at our word, and was so patient that—confident that we had him in our power—we unloosed his bonds in a short time, and he willingly assisted us in the management of the boat, we, of course, sharing our provisions with him.

We, however, had a much harder task to get near the ships than we had anticipated. We soon satisfied ourselves that the vessels (three in number) were English frigates; but when we were about three miles distant from them, they suddenly bore away to the southward, leaving us again far behind, and for four days we followed them, sometimes almost losing sight of them without being able to get near them again. Cramped up in the small boat, and exposed to the hot sun by day, and the chill air at night, our sufferings were very great, and but for two heavy showers of rain that fell and enabled us to fill a small keg that was on board, we should surely have perished for want of water.

Twice, when approaching the English ships, we had to keep off again to avoid foreign cruisers that would have intercepted us if we had kept our course, and on these occasions we had to keep a sharp watch over the boatman lest he should try to betray us, and thus recover his boat.

At length, on the morning of the fifth day, it fell nearly calm. The heavy ships lay perfectly still on the water; but the light breath of air still helped us on, and with the aid of the oars we drew near the vessel rapidly.

"What is the name of that vessel?" said I, pointing towards the largest frigate of the three, whose sternports were towards us. "Can *you* make it out?"

"The Andromeda," replied Douglass, reading the name. "Surely that is Captain Barlow's new frigate!"

"Yes," said I, "that *is* her name. Let us steer for her. If Captain Barlow is on board, how amazed he will be to see us in this guise! Ha! ha! ha! The idea of having his frigate boarded in the open sea by two young females!"

Douglass also laughed heartily at the idea; but the poor boatman, who did not know the cause of our merriment, looked very grave. He, poor fellow, was thinking whether he should lose his boat and be made prisoner, or whether he would indeed—as we had promised him—be set free.

As we drew near the frigate we saw the officers looking at us through their spy glasses, no doubt wondering who we were, while the sailors were regarding us with equal curiosity through the portholes, from aloft, and over the hammock nettings.

No objection, however, was made to our coming alongside. The first lieutenant, who came to the gangway, was immediately followed by Captain Barlow, whose features both Douglass and I recognized, though the lieutenant was a stranger to us.

The sentry tried to stop us from descending from the gangway; but, followed by Douglass, I pushed past him, thrusting him rudely aside, and also past the lieutenant, who evidently wondered at our rudeness.

"That's precious cool, anyway!" he muttered. "One might suppose the frigate was their home. They're bold creatures, these Spanish fishwomen!"

To his great disgust, I laughed aloud. I could not help it; and stepping up to the amazed captain, Douglass following close behind me, I touched my forehead, and said:

"Come aboard, sir!"—that being the customary phrase when an officer who has been absent returns to ship.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A DESPERATE ADVENTURE DECIDED UPON.

The amazement of the officers and crew of the Andromeda, when they learnt that the two seeming young Spanish peasant-girls were two of Captain Barlow's former midshipmen, may well be conceived; for it must be borne in mind that the officers and crew of the Andromeda were, with the exception of the captain, all strangers to Douglass and me.

"Where, in the name of wonder, have you come from?" asked Captain Barlow, after he had expressed his satisfaction at seeing us again.

"From the Spanish coast opposite, sir," I replied; and then I briefly explained how Lord Alfred Douglass and I had hired a boat, under the pretence that we were two market girls who wished to dispose of our merchandize at Gerona, after having landed near Cape Begu; and how, as soon as we had got a safe distance from the shore, we had seized the boat and put out to sea, in the hope of reaching the British squadron, which we had seen in the far distance. "We've had a long and weary chase, sir," I added, "and sometimes we almost despaired of coming up with the vessels; but we were well rewarded for our risk and fatigue when, to our great joy, we recognized the Andromeda."

"How came you to recognize the frigate?" asked Captain Barlow.

"We saw the name on her stern, sir, and knew her to be your ship from what we heard from the admiral at Bermuda."

"Ah, yes, of course," said the captain. "I had forgotten that."

"And now, sir," said I, "I hope you will not be offended or think me impertinent when I say that I have a favour to ask as soon as I have come on board?"

"That depends," smiled the captain. "You don't want to be put on shore again?"

"No, sir," said I. "I think we've both had enough of Spain for the present; but when we seized the boatman, after pretending to hire his boat, we promised to set the poor fellow free as soon as we could get on board one of our own country's ships. I know that we had no right to give such a promise, but we thought that no commander of a British ship of war would refuse to set a poor boatman free who had been captured under such peculiar circumstances."

"You thought," said the captain, laughing, "that the man would earn his liberty by rendering a service to the British navy in assisting, however unwillingly, to aid two young midshipmen to escape from Spain—eh? Well, such a prisoner would be more in the way than anything else, and his boat would be no great prize. He may return to the shore as soon as he pleases."

"He has a long way to go, sir; and we have consumed all the provisions we brought away with us, and as, after we had seized his boat, he made no endeavour to recapture it, but willingly assisted us to navigate it, we thought that perhaps

"I would revictual the boat at his Majesty's cost!" put in the captain, laughing. "Well, I have no wish that the poor fellow should starve. He shall be supplied with provisions."

Captain Barlow then gave orders to the purser's steward to supply the boatman abundantly with whatsoever he might require; and when Douglass and I shook hands with the young man, and gave him what money we had left—amounting in English and Spanish coin to about three guineas—he thanked us and the captain, and put off from the frigate, thinking, I have no doubt, that he had made no unprofitable trip after all.

Captain Barlow now requested Douglass and me to follow him into his cabin.

"You must make friends with the purser, young gentlemen," said he then, with a smile; "for, however well you look the characters of two Spanish peasant-girls, your costume is scarcely adapted to the position you will occupy on board the frigate. As to uniforms, you must make shift without them for awhile until we enter some port where you will be able to procure them; but I have no doubt the purser will be able to supply you with slop-jackets and trousers, and such other articles as you need, and the ship's tailor will be able to make any alterations the garments may require.

"Now tell me how you got on shore in Spain, and what you have been doing since you landed there, and how you came to adopt your present singular costume."

I briefly related all that had occurred to myself since I had got adrift in the jolly-boat of the troop-ship, and then Douglass told his own story.

Captain Barlow was much amused with the account of our adventures.

"You may consider yourselves fortunate, young gentlemen," said he, "that you did not meet the fate with which you were threatened. The French are very savage with us on account of the disasters they have suffered whenever our troops have met theirs since they invaded Spain, and though the Spaniards are nominally their allies, they are desirous to throw them off, and unite with us. Davoust, the general in command of the French forces in the east of Spain, is a savage brute, and he has executed several English prisoners on the pretence that they were spies, though he was well aware that such was not the case. You were lucky to get out of his hands."

The captain then told us that he was not at Valetta when the troop-ship arrived, but that, previously to that period, he had heard of the loss of the Firefly from the admiral in command on the West India station.

"I regretted to hear of the loss of the Firefly," he said; "for she was a lovely little craft, and it was sad to lose so many brave seamen. But the admiral assured me that you, Mr. Howard, were not to blame in any respect whatever. I learnt from the Jamaica journals, as well as from the admiral's letter, all the particulars of the capture of the Ladrone by the Firefly, after a most gallant action, for which both you and Lord Alfred merit the highest praise, and also of the previous capture of the slaver. I may now tell you both that I am more than satisfied with your conduct, and that you did more than I expected you would do when I left you behind in the schooner, half-doubting whether I did right in so doing. Be assured that your conduct shall be made known to the Lords of the Admiralty, and when you are out of your time as midshipmen, if you continue to act as you have done hitherto, your promotion will be certain."

This was high praise from Captain Barlow, and

though both Douglass and I were too much overcome to speak, I was sure that the kind-hearted captain knew that we were truly grateful to him.

He then went on to tell us that we had better write to our friends in England, at the earliest opportunity.

"They will be very anxious about you," said he; "as indeed I was until you just now boarded the frigate so unceremoniously, and in such ridiculous guise. The troop-ship sailed from Valetta immediately after she had landed the soldiers; but her captain made such a garbled report concerning your absence from the ship, that the governor of the island understood that it was his (the captain's) belief that you, Mr. Howard, had perished at sea, and that you, Douglass, had actually been hanged for a spy! I began to fear that such was really the case when nothing further was heard of either of you, and I was therefore very glad to see you again, in any guise. I have written to your mother, Howard, and also to your godfather, Admiral Crossbrace, telling them what I feared was your fate, and at the same time saying that I lamented your loss, not only for their sakes, but because I had every reason to believe that you would have become an ornament to the service, and I purposed to write to Lord Alfred's parents by the next mail. They however will, ere now, have heard of Douglass's supposed fate, therefore you will both see the need of relieving the minds of your friends as soon as possible."

After some further conversation, and after inviting us both to partake of the refreshment he had ordered his servant to set upon the table, an invitation we were not slow to accept, Captain Barlow dismissed us, well satisfied with the interview. We went to the cockpit and got rid of our female garments, glad once more to get into jackets and trousers, though they *were* such as were worn by common seamen; and we then made the acquaintance of our new messmates—the midshipmen of the frigate—to whom the story of our adventures was a source of great amusement.

For eight or ten days after we had joined the Andromeda, the frigate, with the other ships of the squadron, six in number—viz., four frigates, one of which carried sixty guns, as did the Andromeda, and the other three fifty guns each, and two eighteen-gun sloops of war—cruised to and fro, about eight miles distant from the Spanish and French coasts, without our meeting with any adventure worth recording.

I understood, however, from the conversation of the officers, that the squadron was looking out for a large squadron of French ships that it was believed were somewhere in the vicinity.

I think it was on the tenth morning after coming on board the Andromeda when, on coming upon deck, I found that we were much nearer the French coast than we had yet been. My duty that morning was to watch the signals on the quarter-deck, and to reply, if necessary, to any signals made by any of the other ships. I therefore had a good opportunity of hearing the conversation that passed between Captain Barlow and Mr. Edwards, the first lieutenant; both of whom, I saw, looked more than usually anxious. I soon discovered that they had heard that the Hermione, an English frigate, had lately been captured by the French, who were so much delighted at the idea of having taken an English vessel—a *very* rare thing for them to do—that they were making quite a show of the frigate in the harbour of Toulon, whither they had carried her, and where she lay at anchor, and that it was Captain Barlow's purpose, if he saw that there was any chance of so doing, to recapture the vessel, and carry her out of the harbour, under the heavy guns of the forts and in sight of the inhabitants of the town.

I should have mentioned that Captain Barlow was the commodore of the squadron, and therefore the captains of the other vessels—all of whom were young men—were subject to his authority.*

"Mr. Howard," said the captain, presently, "take your spyglass and go aloft to the maintopgallant mast, and take a good look to leeward. Try if you can make out the harbour of Toulon. You will know it by the lighthouses at the entrance. At the same time take a sharp look around for any vessels that may be in sight. We should be able to see the harbour by this time, and I think it very probable that the French squadron we have been looking after so long will be hovering somewhere hereabouts."

I was at the topgallant masthead in less than a minute; and, clinging fast to the mast with my legs, and with one arm over the stay, I pointed my glass and took a long and steady look.

"Quarter-deck ahoy!" I presently shouted.

"What is it?" cried the captain.

"I see the lighthouses quite plain, sir," said I.

Then changing my position slightly, I glanced around the horizon. For some time I saw nothing. At length the sun shone forth from beneath a dark cloud which had hitherto obscured it, and I fancied I saw a ship's upper sails away to windward. I looked for some time, so as to make sure before I spoke. Yes, there was a ship—another—three more—large ships, too, by the appearance of the sails. Then I reported what I saw.

"The French squadron, by Jove!" cried the captain, gleefully. "Keep them in sight, Mr. Howard. How are they steering?"

"They're apparently bearing down before the wind, sir," I replied. "I can see their topsails now."

"Can you make out how many vessels there are?"

"Four, sir, altogether. They *are* bearing down this way."

"Good! That'll do, Mr. Howard. Come down from aloft."

Before I had descended to the maintop, I heard the captain give the order:

"*Prepare for action!*"

There was little to be done, the guns having been kept constantly loaded for some days past, and the pikes and cutlasses having been placed ready for distribution. The boatswain piped his whistle; but almost as soon as I reached the deck, the men had stripped off their shirts, and were standing at their stations—some at the guns, others at the braces—ready to trim the yards at a moment's warning, while the marines stood in line, armed with their muskets. On reaching the quarter-deck, however, I saw that Captain Barlow was somewhat annoyed.

"Confound it!" said he to the first lieutenant. "For three weeks past we've been on the look-out for that squadron; and now, when we have another job in view, we fall in with it. There's an end to any hope of cutting out the Hermione. It would be an act of madness to enter the harbour while a foreign squadron is outside. If the Frenchmen had *only* kept away another day!"

I stood watching the French vessels through my spyglass. Their topsails could now be discerned from the quarter-deck. Presently I temporarily lost sight of them. The Frenchmen had braced up their yards, which presented an angle to our vessels.

"I think, sir, the Frenchmen have changed their course," said I.

"Ha!" exclaimed the captain. "Is it so? It *does* look like it. Mr. Edwards, be kind enough to see what you can make of the squadron from the maintop."

The lieutenant went into the top.

"The Frenchmen are steering a south-east course, sir," he presently shouted. "They're standing out to avoid the shoals off Hyeres Islands, and evidently have no notion of entering the harbour of Toulon."

"I'm better pleased than if I'd just gained a thousand pounds!" cried the captain. "We'll finish the job we have on hand, and then go after the French squadron. We know now where to look for it."

The men were called away from the guns, and ordered to muster aft.

"It's plain that the Frenchmen have not seen our ships," said Captain Barlow to the first lieutenant, when that officer returned to the quarter-deck, "or they'd either have borne down for battle or sheered clear off, instead of running along the coast. I wish to say a word to the men presently.

"Mr. Howard, be ready to signal the other ships!"

It was very likely that the Frenchmen had *not* seen the Andromeda, lying as we were under the shadow of the land, while the other ships of our squadron were concealed from the French by Cape Sicie, close under which lofty headland they were lying.

We watched the progress of the enemy's squadron for some minutes, but the ships were soon out of sight.

Then Captain Barlow addressed the men.

"My lads," said he, "some of you have sailed with me before now, and I have heard a good character of all of you from your former captains. I know that I can trust to you to do your best. Yonder, between those lighthouses, is the port of Toulon, the great southern naval arsenal of France, and a port that is well fitted for defence. In that port lies an English frigate—the Hermione—and so long as she lies there all true British sailors must feel that the navy is disgraced, the more especially as the French, as I am informed, are making a show of her.

"*That* I don't wonder at. It is so seldom that the French people see a captured English man-of-war that they may well regard such a thing as a curiosity. But it's not pleasant to my feelings that one of our ships should be in such a position, and I'm sure it's not agreeable to yours. Now, my lads, I intend to cut that vessel out, if I can, and I want you to help me to do so. It'll be desperate work, most likely; but British sailors are never daunted at the thought of danger. It rather stirs them up to fight better. I shall send in the boats of the squadron, well manned and armed, and, if necessary, the boats will be supported by one or more of the ships, though it will be dangerous work to carry the ships under the guns of the forts, and it must be avoided if possible. Now you know the work that lies before you. That done, we'll go after the French ships that have so long evaded us, and give *them* battle. We know where to find them now; so you see you have plenty of work before you after you've cut out the Hermione. That's all I have to say, except that I shall keep a sharp eye upon you all, and shall reward those men who best perform their duty."

The men gave three hearty cheers, and dispersed to their several duties.

"Mr. Howard," said the captain, "hoist the signal for the other ships to prepare their boats, and for the ships to keep close under the land, so that they may not be seen from the town or harbour."

I obeyed this order, and in a few minutes the boats appointed for the duty on hand were seen approaching the Andromeda, but still keeping close in shore.

By this time we could see the Hermione, with the aid of the glasses, from the quarter-deck of our frigate, though we kept the frigate covered as much as possible by the high land of Cape Sicie, so that she was not likely to be seen from the harbour unless a special look-out was being kept from the forts.

We could see the French tricolour hoisted over the British ensign—the latter hoisted upside down in derision—on board the Hermione, and we could see that two large French frigates were at anchor in the harbour, close under the guns of the forts, also that the harbour was thronged with boats full of holiday-makers, going to and coming from the English frigate.

"Ha," muttered the captain between his teeth, "we'll soon reverse the position of those flags, my fine fellows, or I'm greatly mistaken!"

Still, we all knew that it was a desperate task that lay before us. Either one of the forts was capable of blowing the Andromeda out of the water if she entered the harbour; and though the guns of the forts could do comparatively little execution upon boats skilfully managed, the boats might all be sunk by the fire from the two French frigates! In fact, the adventure would have appeared to some officers perfectly desperate, and one that none but a madman would attempt. I learnt afterwards that some of the other captains and many of the officers so regarded it, and predicted that we should lose our men and boats to no purpose. I truly believe that had Captain Barlow failed he would have been brought to a court-martial, and probably, despite his great family influence, have been dismissed from the service. Indeed, it did really appear that we were venturing upon an impossibility; and I doubt whether Captain Barlow himself, when he came to see the great strength of the fortress, would not have given up the idea, had he not seen at the same time that the presence in the harbour of the two French frigates, which would to most other officers have appeared to increase the perils of the adventure, might be turned to *our* advantage, and enable us to effect what, under other conditions, would have been impossible. At all events, he resolved to attempt the task, and, as I shall show in the next chapter, he succeeded in accomplishing one of the most heroic feats ever performed by British seamen, and then increased his fame and glory by successfully engaging the French squadron.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

* The officer whose commission bears the earliest date—that is, he who has held the rank of captain for the longest period—takes command of a squadron when no admiral is present, and bears for the time being the nominal rank of "Commodore."

THOROUGHNESS.—Whatever they may undertake, teach the young to do it well. What the future has in store for them nobody can tell. As a general rule, if active and smart, they have a great deal of ambition, often saying to themselves, "I'm going to be this or that when I get big." Therefore the more imperative is the duty resting on their elders of teaching them to become useful men and women, so that in after life, if misfortune happens to come, they will not be found sitting down with helpless hands, crying, "I would work, but I can do nothing well;" but starting out with an energetic determination to conquer all obstacles, willing to work at anything they can find to do, and able, because they have been taught, to do everything well.

### JEMIMA BROWN.

BRING her here, my little Alice—
Poor Jemima Brown!
Make the little cradle ready,
Softly lay her down.
Once she lived in ease and comfort,
Slept on couch of down;
Now upon the floor she's lying—
Poor Jemima Brown!

Once she was a lovely dolly,
Rosy-cheeked and fair,
With her eyes of brightest azure,
And her golden hair.
Now, alas! no hair's remaining
On her poor old crown;
And the crown itself is broken—
Poor Jemima Brown!

Once her legs were smooth and comely,
And her nose was straight;
And that arm, now hanging lonely,
Had, methinks, a mate.
Ah, she was as finely dressed as
Any doll in town.
Now she's old, forlorn, and ragged—
Poor Jemima Brown!

Yet be kind to her, my Alice!
'Tis no fault of hers
If her wilful little mistress
Other dolls prefers.
Did *she* pull her pretty hair out?
Did *she* break her crown?
Did *she* tear her arms and legs off?
Poor Jemima Brown!

Little hands that did the mischief,
You must do your best
Now to give the poor old dolly
Comfortable rest.
So we'll make the cradle ready,
And we'll lay her down;
And we'll ask papa to mend her—
Poor Jemima Brown!

L. E. R.

# THE TOPCOAT OF THISTLES.

## A COMICAL FAIRY TALE.

BY HENRY L. WILLIAMS.

IN the reign of the bluff and burly King Henry the Eighth there lived in the west country a nobleman nicknamed "Baldrick the Bountiful." Baron Baldrick, however, was bountiful only to himself, and never a man took such pains for his own pleasure.

But Baldrick's wife was a kind-hearted lady, and whenever she heard of any cruelty which her greedy husband had wrought in the way of laying his strong hands on plump fowls and fat beeves, she would hasten to make a recompense, and so earned the blessings of all in the barony.

One day, when he was out a-hunting the red deer, and had killed a round-bellied buck, which made his mouth water, he stopped to rest at a lonely cottage, being easily "blown" by rapid riding. The old woman who owned it and dwelt there was bedridden, and her beautiful daughter, only in her sixteenth year, had to receive the high and heavy grandee. She was not so overpowered by his magnificent bearing to forget her duties, but, on smelling the hot air from the ovens, cried out:

"Your lordship will excuse me, if you please," dropping a very low curtsey, with her finger modestly at her lips, "but I must not let the pie for our supper get burnt;" and with that she opened the oven to turn the pasty.

There came forth such a delicious odour of the brown, light, flaky crust, that the baron opened his little round eyes in wonder, and chuckled, in his treble voice, which was very funny, considering what an enormous size he was:

"Oh, my gracious appetite!" which was his favourite remark. "Now, that's what I should call a *burster!*"

This speech proves that that word, now left to the vulgar, was once in the mouths of the very greatest.

In common politeness, little Milda could not but regret that it was not worthy of his highness's acceptance; but she blushed a sweet tiny bit, because she had the fame of being the best cook for fifty-and-five miles around.

"Not worthy of me!" exclaimed the baron, trundling himself nearer the oven, at the risk of melting; "but it is prime!—gorgeous! Dear me! I really must have a corner of the crisp edge of the crust, smothered in a spoonful of the gravy; and then," added he, in as rough a voice as possible, "I perhaps may pardon you for robbing me of my game."

There certainly was a brace or two of wild birds in the pie; but Rolph-o'-the-Greenwold, who had presented them to the old dame, never imagined the lord had any claim over the fowls of the air, or Milda either. But the two latter shivered with dread, for the men-at-arms, who had monstrous long boar-spears, were poking their uncombed beards in at the door and window.

"In fact and in short," continued the baron, putting the only two rush-bottomed chairs next to one another, and sitting on them, without finding them any too broad a basis, "here's a silver sixpence, and hand over your pie. I like 'em warm, not to say hot—don't I, Gorman?"

Gorman was his squire—not a bad trencherman himself—who fondly imagined there would be the scrapings of the dish to himself, and so nodded grinningly.

Poor Milda had to put the pie on the table; it was seasoned just right, and the baron whipped out his knife, and without heeding the scorching of his fingers, ploughed into the pie as if it were a cheese. After twenty huge gulps, more like a whale than a human being, he began to eat slower—slower for him, for even then it was more than at the top of man's speed. The squire groaned; there was no hope for him. Indeed, the noble hog was not content with wiping the corners where the jelly was lurking with his fingers, and crunching the bones and collecting the crumbs, but tilted up the dish, now pretty fairly cool, and let his tongue wander playfully all about the inside.

Then he smacked his lips like a waggoner's whip, making them all jump, and said:

"Half a dozen of you hale me up on my horse, and forward march!"

He had forgotten to tell his treasurer to pay over the sixpence. But he did not forget the pie; and after a delightful night, when for the first time he was not racked by indigestion, but had visions of joy, he was no sooner disgusted over his breakfast than he yelled out:

"Oh, my gracious appetite!—oh, my gorgeous drinkatite! Go and hang my cook for again sending me up scorched onions with the steak; and bring here in her stead the young wonder who baked that luscious P-I-E!"

And he smacked his lips so loud at the recollection that the baroness came running in, thinking that he had kissed one of her maids of honour, which would have been curious, for they all hated the glutton.

As the squire imagined that with such a cook in the castle the days would be one endless round of enviable devouring, he flew like lightning to the cottage. But Milda's sweetheart Rolph no sooner heard him say, "But you *must* come to the castle!" when she had answered, "I have to tend my poor old mother!" than he tripped up his heels, and would have lowered him into the well, only—remarking that washing was not clearly understood by the squire—it would spoil the water.

Ten guardsmen were then despatched with offers of high wages and the appointment of Grand High Potent Ruleress of the Kitchen and Piebakeress Extraordinary to the Baron, but still she refused.

It was very humbling to his pride; but if he loved honours he was still more fond of pie, and so he went in person to command her to accompany him back to his mansion. At the end of his insisting, she said she would go, only walking beside him on foot, without any of his nasty, scowling, bearded men-at-arms near her. But on the way she led him out of their sight by the pretence of picking the tenderest road through the forest, and a very fine jaunt he had of it. At the last, too, they came out into the widest field of thistles he had ever seen, where, while she lightly floated between the big clumps, his enormous bulk got him caught and torn and pricked and stung till he was immensely "nettled," any one would say. With that she left him, laughing, and he rolled into his castle, dancing with pain and rage.

Some months passed, and Milda hoped the great lord had forgotten this punishment, for she had to ask his leave to wed Rolph, which was the custom of the country.

He was very yellow and sulky, for he had had to have his old cook unhooked from the gallows and restored to her pots and pans. But he smiled ghastlily.

"You have my permission on one condition," he said. "You may remember the thistles which grow so thickly yonder? Well, they are bursting with the silk of the ripened flowers. Go gather the stuff to make me a topcoat."

From the description of this garment, which was to come down to his podgy heels, there is no doubt he meant an "Ulster," there being not even that invention new under the sun.

"When you bring me that coat woven of thistledown to fit me double-breasted, you shall have your husband."

She went away in terror, for nobody had ever heard of a topcoat of even ordinary size of thistletops. The young man was always for violent measures, and when he heard this, he proposed waylaying my lord, and rolling him into the moat.

"No, no," said Milda; "he must not be injured, for his good lady has been very kind to my poor old mother. Has she not, mother?"

The old woman answered "Yes," and went on to say that she had been a little of a witch in her younger days, and though she had forgotten most of her craft, she thought enough remained to help the young lovers.

"I never saw a yard of thistledown cloth; but suppose you see if it will not spin, my girl."

Behold! after Rolph had bravely gathered the thistletops, the filaments spun out into a tolerable and nicely soft thread. At the very time that Milda began, after having a high heap of thread, to weave the cloth for the coat, the baron felt a cold shiver all over him. He lost his appetite. When, soon after the cloth was made, the young girl travelled over it with her knife to cut out the pieces to pattern, the baron howled even at that distance as if the cold steel was tracing incisions on his body. His wife was so alarmed that she went herself out to consult the mother of Milda, and by putting this to that, they discovered the connection of the making of the garment and the unmaking of the baron.

"It is quite clear," said the bedridden cottager, "as the top-coat approaches its end, my lord will waste away. The bigger the coat, the lesser he will become."

But the baron, though his clothes were beginning to flap loosely on him, and he could wear the dress too small for him a year before, refused to let Milda marry Rolph, and the great coat went on being made.

The squire and quite an army marched to the cottage, seized poor Milda, and flung her into the well. But Rolph was at hand, and as soon as they had gone, pulled her up, and she resumed the tailoring.

The baron found no improvement. On the contrary, he was becoming like any ordinary man in bulk, which enabled him to walk more freely, though he was terribly weak. He was helped to the cottage, where they saw Milda hard at work, surely enough. He was so enraged that he stubbed his toe at the threshold, and, falling forward, made his nose bleed, and even while he was rubbing it with his sleeve, he felt his flesh fading from him, and he saw the coat all but completed.

He had the waist of a greyhound, and his fingers rattled like a bunch of sticks. His cheeks had fallen in in many pleats, and he thought now and then that he would lose himself in his boots.

"There will be no more left of you," said the old woman, propped up in bed, and glaring at him with vexed eyes, for she was also fond of pie, and this coat work had quite prevented the girl attending to cookery. "By the time that coat is done thou wilt fill its smallest pocket, so do not be an obstinate, lordly donkey, but let the young people marry!"

The baron dared not hesitate, for Milda's needle was racing away.

"Stop, stop!" sighed he, in a faint whisper, which was the remains of his voice, "I will wear the confounded coat as it is, unfinished, and take you your sweetheart! But as nothing will tempt me to eat but one of those pies you alone make, you *must* become my cook, and your husband shall be my steward and squire, for he cannot rob me worse than my present rascal."

So all ended well, and a course of pies restored the baron to his former build, and it seemed that the coat of thistles clothed him with good temper, for he was called "The Bountiful" once more, but in sober earnest.

# THE STORY OF AN OLD AXE.

BY PIPER'S SON.

YOU think it strange, don't you, boys and girls, that a rusty old axe with a broken handle should tell me a story?

It was curious, I admit, but then strange things happen in these days, and none of us are surprised at anything.

I was looking around in the back-yard of an empty, desolate old house in the outskirts of the city. There were cans, bottles, barrels, old rags, and lots of other stuff in the yard, and the wind swept into the house through a dozen places where the clap-boards had fallen off. No one had lived there for a year or more, and I had the whole yard to myself. I was kicking the bottles out of my path, when I uncovered an old axe, which had probably been lying there ever since the last family moved out of the desolate old house.

"I wish this old axe could talk," I said, as I lifted it up and leaned it against the fence.

"You do—eh?" replied a strange voice, and the axe-handle tapped against the fence to attract my attention.

You may suppose I was greatly surprised, but seeing a chance to hear something strange, I sat down on a barrel, and inquired:

"How can an axe talk?"

"Easy enough," was the reply. "Now, you listen, and I will give you my history."

The axe moved a little, so as to look me square in the face, and then went on:

"I am about twenty-four years of age, but I can remember the day I was made an axe as well as if I wasn't six months old. The workman who finished me off said to a co-worker that I was one of the best axes in the lot of five hundred just turned out, and that whoever got me would have a splendid bargain. I was proud to hear him say so, for I didn't want to be an axe unless I could be a good axe. I was packed in a box with eleven others, and we were shipped away and sold to a merchant in a smart little village."

The axe paused, as if to take breath, and then went on:

"We hadn't been unpacked three days when a man came into the shop and bought me, saying to the merchant: 'My son William is large enough to cut wood, and I'm going to get an axe and keep him out of the streets.' He paid my price, took me home, and drove a handle into my eye, secured it with a wedge, and I was handed over to the boy William. I didn't like his looks at all. He was sulky and cross, and as he picked me up he muttered to himself, 'All the wood I cut this summer won't bake one biscuit.' I knew then that he was a bad boy."

The axe waited a minute, and then continued:

"The boy struck me against a stick of wood once or twice, and then purposely hacked me on a stone, knocking off a large piece of my edge. Then he dropped me and ran away, and at noon I heard him tell his father three deliberate fibs, and he gave his mother a good deal of bad language. I said to myself that such a boy would turn out bad, and in less than a year my words came true. One night, when I was lying on the ground, a thief crept into the yard and stole me. He sharpened me up next day and sold me to the head constable, and I found myself in the gaol-yard before I had recovered from the confusion of the rough grinding."

"Quite an adventure!" I remarked, as the axe paused in its story.

"Yes, it was; but I am not through yet. I had been in the yard about a month, when one day a turnkey hung me on a post in the yard. I was high enough to see the windows of the cells on that side, and as I looked around I caught sight of the face of the boy William looking out upon the yard through his grated window. He didn't know me, but I recognized him at once. A few days after that he was sent to another prison for a long term of years."

For two or three minutes the axe was silent, perhaps to refresh its memory, and then it began again:

"After I had done duty at the gaol for a year, I was lost in the street from a waggon, and was found and

carried home by a mechanic. He seemed well pleased with me, and as he reached home he handed me to his boy John, whose age was about fifteen, and told him to use me at least two hours every day. It was the same thing over again. The boy wanted to loaf round the ships, go cricketing, or be reading in a corner, and he knocked my edge off, and told his father that I was a poor axe. The father believed him, and I was flung aside, allowed to rust, and was finally sold for twenty pence to a man who said I was good enough to split wood with. I was where I could keep track of the boy, and in two years he was a drunkard and a loafer, and his mother had died of a broken heart."

"Is that all?" I asked, after waiting awhile for the axe to go on.

"No; I have quite a long story to tell yet," it replied. "If you will take me home, I will give you the rest of my history this evening."

I took the axe home, and you may suppose I had a great curiosity to hear the rest of its adventures. I said nothing to any one, lest they should make fun of me for saying that an old axe could talk; but I took it home under my coat, walking through the alleys instead of the streets. That night, after all the rest were abed, I stood the axe up against the wall, and humbly remarked that I was ready and anxious for it to further detail its history.

"And I shall be pleased to give it to you," replied the axe. "As you intend to publish it to the world, some one may be benefitted thereby."

After a short pause, it went on:

"Well, you remember, I was sold to a man who thought I was good enough to split wood with. I liked his appearance very much, indeed; and I often heard him say that I was the best axe he ever had in his hands. During my stay with him I split a great many cords of wood, and was often used to split boards and knock old barrels to pieces. I had begun to think that I would end my days in that family, when the man's wife was taken sick, and a servant-girl was employed. It seemed as if she hated me from the start. She threw me about, struck me into the ground and against nails, glass, and stones; and I made up my mind that she would not remain there long; for if she would wantonly abuse a family axe, she would abuse the family furniture, and waste the family provisions."

"That was good reasoning," I said, as the axe paused for a moment.

"It was also correct reasoning," it replied. "She didn't keep her place but two weeks, yet she had her revenge on me. I heard the master telling her that she smashed and wasted twice what she earned, and that he could no longer keep her. As she left the house, bag in hand, I was lying across the path, and as I tried to get out of the way to let her pass, she somehow got a trip, and down she went, sprawling out flat on the walk. 'I'll kill that axe!' she shouted, gathering herself up, and she seized and flung me into the alley."

"That was a mean trick," I put in; "for you were not to blame."

"Of course I wasn't. Over I went into the garbage, and it wasn't fifteen minutes before two boys came along, driving an old horse and cart. They uttered a shout as they espied me, and next moment I was in their possession. One of them wanted to take me home, saying that I was a better axe than the one they had; but the other was determined that I should be sold for what I would bring. After some argument, I was taken to a blacksmith's shop and sold for two shillings, which was not half my actual value. The smith said I was used up, and found a good deal of fault with me; but after they were gone, he congratulated himself on having made a bargain. 'I'll put a new handle in it,' he said, as he prepared to put me on the grindstone, 'and then my apprentice shall cut all my wood.'"

"Getting back into the hands of the boys again, I see," I remarked.

"That was my fate," continued the axe. "I was sharpened up, had a new handle given me, and was then presented to Albert, the smith's apprentice, a youth of fifteen."

"And how did he use you?"

"The very best. He took care of my edge, and when done using me, I was regularly hung up in the shed, beyond the reach of thieves, and where the rain would not rust me. He was a good boy, always doing his work well, and I felt certain that he would some day be master of a shop of his own. It was no fault of his that my connection with the family was severed. One day his employer's wife made use of me in the garden to fix the border of a flower-bed, and when night came, I was lying on the grass. Before midnight I was pounced on to by a thief, and next day I was sold to the family who last lived in the house where you found me. There were three sons, and I hadn't been in the yard half an hour when I found that I was in bad company. I heard the boys swearing and fighting, the father came home intoxicated, and there was a grand family fight."

"Intemperance is a great evil," I said, as the axe rested for breath.

"Ah, you can never even imagine the half of the misery I saw there. There were oaths, fights, drunkenness, and evil, until I became ashamed of being seen in the yard. One by one the family grew smaller, some dying and some going to prison, and when you found me I had not seen a human face for many long weeks. I am now anxious to know what you will do with me."

I have oiled it over to prevent rust, given it a dry place in the shed, and some time it may have something more to tell. It is the most curious thing I ever heard of—an axe telling a long story—but I have the axe to prove it.

# FUNNY CHARACTERS.

By S. HOLLAND.

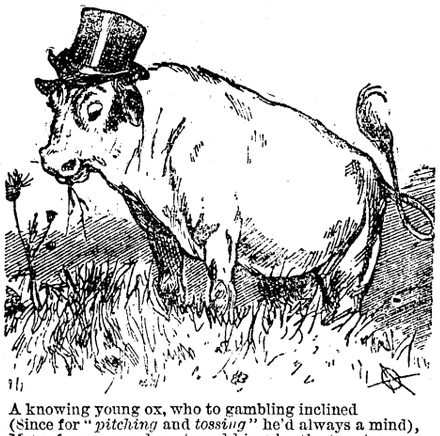
A porcupine pig, that was ugly and big,
Sat down on a chair to try drumming,
But his ear-splitting knocks gave every one shocks,
Then they bade him give up such vile strumming.

He would not obey, but banged there all day,
Till *his* head drums and drum heads were broken;
So he banged himself sick, dropped his quills, "cut his stick,"
And was ne'er seen again—so 'tis spoken!

A little foot page, who was short for his age,
Once over a plain quickly sped;
He lifted his eyes up to the blue skies,
And saw four great *feet* overhead!

An elephant there was flying through air,
The man stood and gazed with affright;
He turned up his nose to the ponderous toes,
And stared with his *might*, did this *mite!*

He watched the beast pass, and when on the grass,
In a fit of alarm, he had sunk,
He said, "Oh, how queer, that traveller, 'tis clear,
Where'er he goes bears his own trunk!"



A knowing young ox, who to gambling inclined
(since for "*pitching* and *tossing*" he'd always a mind),
Met a farmer one day—tossed *him* o'er the tree-tops,
And from that time to this there the poor farmer stops!
But his hat fell down plump on the ox's thick head,
"Oh, I'll be the farmer," roared Beefy, "instead;"
But the people, enraged, did for once what they ought,
They killed him—*a cut that cuts this ox-tale short!*
I'd better end here, for fear when I'm gone
You'll say its *ox (s)tale* in more senses than one!



# OUR WEEKLY PARTY.

A WARM welcome to you all, dear YOUNG FOLKS. Everything *must* be warm in this weather, we suppose, and so, you see, we cannot make our welcome an exception to the general rule.

We remember once having heard a young lady declare, in a song, that she would seek a four-leaved shamrock through every shady dell, and if she found the charmed leaf she would at once proceed to work certain spells, which would entirely change the state of affairs in this world. As some of you may not know how this could be done by the aid of such a trifling plant, we must tell you that the four-leaved shamrock was supposed to possess magical properties that would enable its possessors to do just as they pleased. This young lady who said she would seek the plant had made up her mind that the world wanted mending very badly, and if she found what she was about to seek, she was quite determined to mend it in her own fashion. We must confess, however, that we thought her intentions were very good, because she promised to use her magic power for the benefit of others, rather than for herself alone. She would dry up all tears, cure all aching hearts, and perform a variety of other services, which would make the earth a perfect Eden of happiness and virtue. Indeed, she drew such a pleasing picture of all she would do, that we could not help wishing she might succeed in her search, and then prove that her performances were as good as her promises. We never saw that young lady afterwards, nor learned whether she had found the wonderful plant or not; but we are inclined to think *not*, because we have not noticed much improvement in the state of things since that time. We have been told there is no such magical plant, and we daresay it is true.

One evening of late we thought of this song that we had heard long ago, and we also wished that we had some "charmed leaf" that would enable us to do something that would afford us a great deal of pleasure, and would be, we think, not disagreeable to you. Can you guess what it is that we would like to do? No? Well, then, it is to bring you all visibly around us—to shake your hands—to exchange greetings with you, and ever after to bear the impression of your faces, sunny with smiles, imprinted on our heart. Would not that be glorious? Just imagine our conjuring you from all parts of the three kingdoms—the "bonnie bairns" of Scotland, from the Hebrides to the Firth of Clyde—the boys and the girls of Old Ireland, from the Giant's Causeway in the rugged north to Cape Clear in the mellow south—the lads and lasses of Merrie England, from the hills of Cumberland to Land's End. We say again, would not that be glorious? An immense party, numbering—but there, we cannot think of the numbers, only that it would comprise many, many thousands—so many that no place less roomy than one of the great parks would serve for our meeting. That would be a treat, indeed! and if we thought there was any possibility of finding that magical plant, we would not mind making a long and close search in order to bring it about.

But there—what is the use of wishing for impossibilities? We will not do so any longer, but, instead, we will make up our mind to enjoy the pleasures that are actually within our reach. Whether there ever was a magical plant or not, it is certain that we can at least communicate with you in spirit, that our thoughts and feelings expressed here will be borne to you all in every village and town of Great Britain and Ireland. This is a great and cheering thought, and we confess to you that it makes us feel not a little proud, for it is something to know that when we address you at "Our Weekly Party," our great audience of YOUNG FOLKS numbers tens of thousands on tens of thousands. Is not that a wonderful fact? and do you not all and each feel a certain amount of pleasure in knowing that you belong to the mightiest band of YOUNG FOLKS, to the hugest party, the most colossal company, that has ever been organized? This capital little magazine is the banner under which we are ranged; it is the flag around which we throng, and upon it is inscribed the legend that has become famous wherever the language we use is read or understood. That legend is "YOUNG FOLK'S," two very simple words, but of world-wide signification, at once our motto and our watchword, our distinguishing title and a universal invitation. Hurrah for the *Young Folk's!* we say, long life and increasing prosperity! And to that little burst of enthusiasm we know you will respond with a hip, hip, and three times three that will ring round the world—started in England, echoed in Ireland, repeated in America, passed on to Australia, and returning to us again by the overland route from our possessions in the East.

Now, dear young friends, a word or two about the coming treat. Of course you all remember very well what we said to you at our last "Party." That, we are sure, is a matter you are not likely to forget. We need not repeat anything we then said, but we cannot pass the important subject without directing your attention

to the grand announcement that stands immediately before our "Party" space this week, and urging upon your memory the fact that ROLAND QUIZ, the ever-welcome entertainer of young people, will introduce to you

JACK THE VALIANT

in our next number. Look out for it, YOUNG FOLKS. We can confidently promise you a rare and *glorious treat.*

And now to our usual entertainment.

We have heard a great deal about Cashmere shawls of late. We do not mean to hint that we and you had not heard of them and seen them before; but since the return of the Prince of Wales from India, and the display of the beautiful specimens he brought home, they have aroused more than the usual interest. Now we propose to tell you a little about them. You may have thought, when you saw these articles in the shop windows, or, to still better advantage, hanging gracefully over mamma's shoulders, that they were made somehow like the great webs of cotton and woollen stuffs which our own English looms produce. But it is not so. The manufacture of the Cashmere shawl is a widely different operation, as we now proceed to show.

CASHMERE SHAWLS.

Cashmere shawls are made of the wool of the goat of Cashmere and Thibet. In the best shawls, the wool selected is the fine down growing next to the skin, from which the long hairs are carefully picked by hand. Each goat yields about two pounds of wool a year. To make the real Cashmere shawl is the work of time and patience. They are manufactured by the dozen—that is to say, one shawl is never made singly, but always a dozen are made at one time and after one pattern, on account of the number of persons employed in the manufacture, each person having a distinct portion of the shawl to make, and who is always kept at work on the same part, although the pattern of his work may be changed from time to time. By this means each operator becomes skilled in the particular form or shape of his piece of work. It may require thirty men for a year, or many months, according to the fineness of the texture, to produce the dozen shawls. The work is performed upon small hand looms held upon their laps, from patterns traced upon cloth and so described in form and colour that the eye readily follows the pattern. When the pieces are finished, of which a shawl comprises many, they are put into the hands of tailors, who fit them nicely together, and with some hand embroidery, that is generally employed upon the borders to cover seams or finish designs, the shawl is at last finished, and after the washing and pressing is ready for the market. This work is done by men, boys growing up to succeed their fathers in the same kind of work. The wages given for this work run from fourpence to sixpence per day. It is said that some of the most costly shawls never find their way into the market, but are kept by the rajahs for their own use. There is a great deal of trickery in the shawl trade; the dealers at Calcutta at first demand at least two and sometimes three prices for their goods. But a careful purchaser may—in India—buy for about one-half the prices they command.

From this you will learn what a vast amount of labour is represented by one of those elegant articles, and you may regard them with more interest when you know that each one of them has engaged the skilful hands of many men in the distant East for a long time. How little we think of the origin or the history of the several luxuries we enjoy!

A young friend has favoured us with some entertaining verses, which we will now have the pleasure of presenting to you. It is a little story of school-life, with which many of our boys, and, we hope, not a few of our girls, can sympathize.

ROBIE'S DREAM.

The bell is rung, and for a while
The bat is thrown aside;
The ball is shied, I don't know where,
As through the door they slide.
Woe—woe to him who does not know
His French or Latin grammar!
He'll sing the words of bats and stumps
To tune of cry and stammer.

"Confound that bell!" Will Thompson cries,
And Robie says the same;
"My Euclid I don't know a bit;
But I am not to blame.
Oh, wouldn't I punch old Euclid's head,
If he'd just walk this way;
I'd pity poor old Cæsar's crust,
If he was here to-day!"

Now Latin takes the place of bat,
Greek has usurped the ball;
For wickets they have got the cane,
And Euclid equals all.
"Robie, this way; your prop. begin,
'Tis number thirty-three;
You know it not—you'll have it hot
Come, hold your hand to me."

He takes six cuts with injured air,
A sailor he would be,
And bid adieu to Euclid hard,
For he would go to sea.
Rob had a nose of monstrous size,
By colour it was red,
Some people said a pinkish grey—
No matter what they said.

He went to bed to hide his rage,
And soon was fast asleep.
He dreamt he was a sailor bold,
Ploughing the vasty deep;
He thought his bedstead was a ship—
His bolster mizenmast;
Supposed his mattress was the deck,
And she was sailing fast.

Then came a storm, a dreadful storm,
The ship rocked to and fro;
The timbers cracked, and all was lost,
Down, down, the ship did go.
At last there was a dreadful bang,
Robie woke up in fright;
He'd bang'd his head against the floor,
And his legs were bolt upright.

To all who hear this fearful tale,
A warning may it be
To stay at home, your Euclid learn,
And do not go to sea.
If not, you may, like this bad boy,
Soon tumble out of bed.
I think he hurt his nose as well—
It was a deeper red.

T. W.

Very good, T. W. We thank you for the pleasure your well-told serio-comic tale has afforded.

Have you, dear boys and girls, ever met with persons amongst your acquaintance who were so unreasonable as to think they might gratify all their own whims and humours without regard to the feelings of others? We have, and we never could think that such persons were pleasant acquaintances. We knew one boy of this disposition, who had long made himself a bore to all his friends, and might have continued to do so still, but for an attempt which resulted in his being made

A DAMAGED BOY.

Young Smith had bothered his father to buy him a pocket-knife, until, to be rid of his importunities, the father consented, and the knife was bought and duly presented. A few days after the youth had become possessed of this dangerous toy, however, the father was greatly surprised at seeing two men leading home the young hopeful in a very dilapidated condition. His face seemed to be cut and bruised and covered with blood.

The father, of course, was very much alarmed, and inquired of the boy who had hit him.

"Nobody didn't hit me," the boy answered between his sobs. "It was only a mule kicked me in the eye."

"A mule kicked you in the eye—eh?" echoed the father. "Haven't I told you a thousand times or more that mules and gunpowder were not fit things for boys to play with? What were you doing to the mule?"

"I wasn't playin' with him at all," said the boy. "I was only *tryin' to cut my name on his back!*"

The mule didn't like it, you see, and he expressed his objections in the natural way. Young Smith thought the mule an ill-natured beast for objecting to an operation that it pleased him to perform, but we must confess we think it served young Smith right. What do *you* say?

This is the season of out-door amusements—of promenades, picnics, and delightful visits to the seaside. Nature is dressed in her most glowing and beautiful robes, and the very brilliance of her sunshine shows up with unsparing and sometimes disagreeable distinctness all the varieties—whimsical, tasteful, or vulgar—in the apparel of those who go out to enjoy her beauties. At such a time a very important question is, "What shall I wear?" We are sure our young lady readers often think this question, if they do not speak it; but we are not at all sure that they can always give to their own self-questioning a satisfactory reply. Now, if we state a few facts which may assist them in deciding this point, we flatter ourself we will have done something that should gain for us their thanks; and as we are very covetous of their favours, we will try to tell them

HOW TO CHOOSE COLOURS FOR THE COMPLEXION.

*Red Drapery:* Rose red cannot be put in contact with the rosiest complexions without causing them to lose some of their freshness. Dark red is less objectionable for certain complexions than rose red, because, being higher than this latter, it tends to impart whiteness to them, in consequence of contrast of tone.—*Green Drapery:* A delicate green is, on the contrary, favourable to all fair complexions which are deficient in rose, and which may have more imparted to them without inconvenience. But it is not as favourable to complexions that are more red than rosy, nor to those who have a tint of orange mixed with brown, because the red they add to this tint will be of a brick-red hue. In the latter case, a dark green will be less objectionable than a delicate green.—*Yellow Drapery:* Yellow imparts violet to a fair skin, and in this view it is less favourable than the delicate green. To those skins which are more yellow than orange it imparts white, but this combination is very dull for a fair complexion. When the skin is tinted more with orange than yellow, we can make it roseate by neutralizing the yellow. It produces this effect upon the black-haired type, and it is thus that it suits brunettes.—*Violet Drapery:* Violet, the complimentary of yellow, produces contrary effect; thus it imparts some greenish yellow to fair complexions. It augments the yellow tints of yellow and orange skins. The little blue there may be in a complexion it makes green. Violet, then, is one of the least favourable colours to the skin—at least when it is not sufficiently deep to whiten it by contrast of tone.—*Blue Drapery:* Blue imparts orange, which is susceptible of allying itself favourably to white and the light flesh tint of fair complexions, which have already a more or less determined tint of this colour. Blue is, then, suitable to most blondes, and in this case justifies its reputation. It will not suit brunettes, since they have already too much of orange.—*Orange Drapery:* Orange is too brilliant to be elegant. It makes fair complexions blue, whitens those which have an orange tint, and gives a green tint to those of a yellow tint.—*Black Drapery:* Black draperies, lowering the tone of the colours with which they are in juxtaposition, whiten the skin; but if the vermilion or rosy parts are to a certain point distant from the drapery, it will follow that, although lowered in tone, they appear, relatively to the white parts of the skin contiguous to this same drapery, redder than if the contiguity to the black did not exist.

And, we do not draw all this information from our own experience, but we have obtained it for you from one who is looked up to by all the little ladies of her acquaintance as an almost infallible authority on such matters.

At our last "Party" we took occasion to say something to you about the qualities of a real lady. To-day we intend to give the boys a turn, and we will point out one or two things that are necessary to make a real gentleman. As every little girl desires to be a lady, so every one of our boys should try to be a gentleman, and indeed the requirements in either case are alike in very many points. To be a gentleman it is necessary to be literally gentle. There is nothing boisterous, nothing rude, nothing wantonly hurtful to others, and above all, nothing low or mean in the person who worthily bears the character of

A GENTLEMAN.

When you have found a man, you have not far to go to find a gentleman. You cannot make a gold ring out of brass. You cannot change a crystal to a diamond. You cannot make a gentleman till you first find a man.

To be a gentleman it is not sufficient to have had a long line of ancestors. To be a gentleman does not depend on the tailor or the toilet. Blood will degenerate. Good clothes are not good habits.

A gentleman is just a gentleman—no more, no less—a diamond polished that was first a diamond in the rough. A gentleman is gentle. A gentleman is modest. A gentleman is courteous. A gentleman is slow to take offence, as being one who never gives it. A gentleman is slow to surmise evil, as being one who never thinks it. A gentleman subjects his appetites. A gentleman refines his taste. A gentleman subdues his feelings. A gentleman controls his speech. A gentleman deems others better than himself.

Sir Philip Sydney was never so much of a gentleman—mirror though he was of English knighthood—as when, upon the field of Zutphen, as he lay in his own blood, he waived the draught of cool spring water that was to quench his mortal thirst in favour of a dying soldier.

Our young friend E. S. HOPE will now favour us with a specimen of his poetical skill. He instructs us thus sagely in his pretty fable of

THE VAIN FLY.

A FABLE.

A pretty fly, one summer's day,
Across a brooklet chanced to stray,
And looking downward, she espied
Her image in its limpid tide;
So many beauties she descried,
They turned her little head with pride.

The smiling sun, with fingers warm,
Had wrapped a rainbow round her form;
Her body shone with green and blue,
Her wings were of an opal hue;
So, just to get a better view,
The fly a little nearer flew.

So near, indeed, that ott she dipp'd,
And of the placid water sipp'd.
Her friends around her screamed "Beware
The hidden danger lurking there!"
"Danger!" she answered, with a stare,
"There's none, I'm sure, in brook so fair."

"Alas!" they cried, in woful state,
"Reflect, before it is too late."
"*Reflect!* Ha! ha!" she laughed with glee,
"The *stream*, so kind, does *that* for me!"
And chuckling in her vanity,
She thought a fly of wit was she.

Her friends, insulted, flew away,
And left her to her foolish play;
But (here a moral may be taught)
A trout, who for such vain ones sought,
Snapt up the fly without a thought,
And cut her life and story short.

E. S. HOPE, Liverpool.

Very good, Master Hope. Yet there is a blemish which we cannot allow to pass without comment. In the last line there is a false rhyme. These little pieces should be finished with the greatest nicety, and only perfect rhymes should be allowed to pass. We have made a slight alteration in the last line of the third stanza, which we suppose you will notice.

The thousands of schoolboys and schoolgirls who attend our "Party" must know very well what is meant by compound interest. Yet it seems that some grown people may fall into error as to the meaning of the phrase. We have heard of a Dutchman who made a funny mistake of this kind; but we can excuse him when we remember that in his boyish days education was not to be got so easily as it is now. This little anecdote will show you what he understood by

COMPOUND INTEREST.

A Dutchman read somewhere that money doubled itself by compound interest every fourteen years, if it was put carefully away, and left untouched. The guileless Hollander at once dug a hole in the cellar, and buried one hundred pounds packed in a tea kettle. Fourteen years after he rose at four o'clock in the morning, and dug up his cash, with the confident expectation that it had increased to two hundred pounds. His disappointment was great; and when his friends interview him about mathematics now, he expresses the opinion that "Dem arithmetics ish all a lie!"

We do not like to give our little friends examples of wickedness, especially when that wickedness appears to be for a time successful. Still, we sometimes meet with instances in which bad actions are committed in such a comical manner that we cannot but laugh at the wit or cunning of the sinner, even while we feel shocked by his sin. Now, we have made up our mind to depart from our general rule for once, at least, and to tell you a story of a very wicked little rascal of whom we have heard. We may call this an anecdote of

A 'CUTE ROGUE AND HIS UNSUSPECTING VICTIM.

An infirm old gentleman was found by a young scamp of a fellow moaning for something he had lost.

"What's the matter, sir?" said he.

"Oh, sir, a villain just stole my gold-laced hat from my head, and ran away with it."

"Why don't you run after him?" asked the scamp.

"Bless your heart, sir, I can't run at all. I can scarcely walk," answered the old gentleman.

"The deuce you can't! And he stole your hat?"

"Yes, he did, sir."

"And you can't run?"

"No."

"Nor catch him?"

"No."

"Then here goes for your wig!"

And accordingly pulled off the wig. The wicked fellow went off like shot, and the old gentleman was left, with his bald head exposed to the inclemency of the weather, unable to run after him.

The young rascal! A liberal application of birch and a course of bread and water would, we think, be of great benefit to that youth. Do you not think so?

And now let us seek our next entertainment in the always-interesting department of natural history. The spider is generally looked upon with aversion and dislike, partly because it is a cruel and ferocious little creature, and partly because its shape is not so comely as that of other creatures with which we are equally familiar. We daresay but few of you have ever thought that such an ill-favoured animal could be endowed with such an amiable feeling as love, yet it is true that the spider, like nearly all the creatures that God has made, is gifted with that strongest and most beautiful of all affections, love for its young. An anecdote that we are about to relate gives a remarkable proof of this truth.

ANECDOTE OF A SPIDER.

An eminent professor, in his studies in natural history, has been in the habit of immersing for preservation his different species of spiders and ants in bottles of alcohol. He saw that they struggled for a few minutes, but he thought that sensation was soon extinguished, and that they were soon

free from suffering. On one occasion he wished to preserve a large family spider and twenty-four of her young ones that he had captured. He put the mother into a bottle of a cobol, and saw that after a few moments she folded up her legs upon her body, and was at rest. He then put into the bottle the young ones, who, of course, manifested acute pain. What was his surprise to see the mother arouse herself from her lethargy, dart around to and fro, gather her young ones to her bosom, fold her legs over them, again relapse into insensibility, until at last death came to her relief, and the limbs, no longer controlled by this maternal instinct, released their grasp, and became dead. The effect of the exhibition upon him is a lesson to our common humanity. He has never since repeated the experiment, but has applied chloroform before immersion.

Amongst the many stories of adventures with sharks which we have from time to time related to you, we do not think there was one that recorded a narrower escape from death than this, which describes a boy's

ADVENTURE WITH A SHARK.

When but fifteen years of age, I ran away from home, and shipped on board a whaler as steward.

We were bound for the South Pacific Ocean, in search of sperm whales. One day, when it was fearfully hot, the sailors proposed that we should have a swim.

We all obeyed with alacrity, and were soon disporting ourselves in the refreshing water. All had soon retired on board except myself, who was some distance from the others, when the warning cry, "A shark! a shark!" resounded through the ship.

I gazed around me. I saw it half a mile to leeward, making directly towards me, his fins cleaving the water like a knife.

When I recall that moment it makes me shudder even now, although it is many years since then.

I heard a great commotion on board and the rattling of the chains as the boats were lowered.

By this time the shark was within a few yards of me, and was turning on his back, so that when he rushed on me he could just snap me in his jaws and then disappear.

The men in the boats worked with a will, but it seemed as though the shark would get the best of it.

The moments seemed hours. Would the boat never arrive?

The shark was now going to seize me, when a harpoon, thrown by the skilful hands of my shipmate Waldo Maxwell, pierced the brain of the monster and killed him.

As the shark was in its dying struggles it seized me by the arm, and tore it to pieces below the elbow.

I fainted and all was a blank until I recovered my senses three weeks after, for the excitement and pain had brought on fever.

We realized a goodly sum; but the remembrance of the shark clings to me to this day.

And now we must devote our time to the teeming contents of

OUR YOUNG FOLK'S LETTER-BOX.

We have not time to read letters aloud to-day, young friends, even if there were any in our box that we could give at length. We may therefore proceed to the business of answering your queries without delay.

SAM. CLARKE (Oldbury).—Thanks for your friendly letter, and for the service you have rendered us by inspiring your friend the iron-master with a better, and, we hope, a more just, opinion of our merits. We must ask you to read "A Child's Song" again, and we think you will not fail to be sensible of a certain dearth of thought in the second stanza. It is, indeed, merely an echo of the first, and might be omitted without any injury to the piece. Will you write in another stanza, or allow the first and third only to appear? We will change the title of your latest contribution, and use it in due season. We hope your little adventure is progressing satisfactorily.

NELLIE BALDWIN (Margate).—It is always pleasant to read your fresh, natural, and affectionate letters. We earnestly hope you will not permit an imprudent over-anxiety to lead you too soon to any studies or amusements (for we count your writing to us amongst your amusements) that might retard the improvement of your eyes. We must decline your verses, dear Nellie, because they have two serious faults, either of which would render it impossible for us to accept them. In the first place they are not poetical—that is, there is no elevated or novel thought in them. They are just such lines as any young person of intelligence and right moral feeling might sit down and write at a moment's notice. Then they are irregular in number and quantity. Read the first stanza, and then the third, and we think you cannot fail to be struck by the remarkable difference between them.

FRANK M. TEBBS (Kingston).—Many thanks. Your verses are far above the average of those we receive, and within a point of being up to the standard we have set for poetical contributions to these columns. Avoid such extremely hackneyed phrases as "the sun shone bright with golden light" and "joy without alloy." The word "carol" is accented on the first syllable.

J. E. FEARN (Uttoxeter).—We are compelled to decline your cons. In answer to your questions, the 23rd of April, 1860, fell upon Monday. Ember-days were so called from the practice of sprinkling ashes upon the head upon certain days as a sign of penitence.

WATERSPRITE (Great Grimsby).—Thanks for your kind letter and for the cons. enclosed. The latter, however, we must decline. The advice conveyed in your verses is very good, but it is not so well expressed as we could wish, and we must therefore decline them. The 8th of May, 1861, fell upon Wednesday.

J. GOLDING (Stratford) writes—"In answer to one of your correspondents, as to how to paint on glass, I send the following directions. Draw on a paper the subject you desire to paint. Lay it on a table, or any flat surface, and place the glass over it; then draw the outlines with a very fine pencil, in varnish mixed with black paint, and when dry fill up the other parts in their proper colours. Transparent colours must be used for this purpose, such as carmine, lake, &c., and these must be tempered with a strong white varnish, to prevent their peeling off; then shade them with black or with bistre mixed with the same varnish."

The great remainder of our correspondents will please find their communications acknowledged in

SHORT ANSWERS TO SHORT LETTERS.

DOT L. R. (*Birmingham*)—*We thank you for your kind letter, dear Dottie, and we may use one of your funny bits. The verbal charade will do;* H. M. DONNER (*Bowden*)—*We are much pleased to learn that you like our stories so well. As to your cons. we must remind you that in writing them you have broken two of our rules; you have written them into the body of your letter, and you have also written on both sides of your paper. We are, therefore, compelled to decline them;* T. D. DICKSON (*Bolton*)—*Your contributions are to hand, and will be attended to on the first opportunity;* O. Y. W. B.—*The matter is no longer in our hands. As we received them they were handed to the cashier, and he assures us that all were despatched fully three weeks ago;* A. H. SCALES—*We thank you, little friend, and will endeavour to use some of your cons., but we beg you to remember that we require each riddle to bear the signature of the composer as well as its own answer;* ROBIN HOOD (*Hull*)—*You have written us a kind and sensible letter, for which we thank you very much. We fear it is now impossible to give a sequel to the old story you name;* ELIZA STUART (*Macroom*)—*We did not find any stamp in your letter. The 31st of July, 1857, fell upon Friday;* J. S. HICKMAN—*We require that contributors of riddles should write the answer of each riddle at the bottom of the composition, and should also attach their signature to each one separately;* BLANCHE L. PRITCHARD (*Bristol*)—*We are sorry, indeed, that any delay should have arisen, dear Blanche. We hope this candid apology will procure us your pardon. The hidden names are not enough disguised to puzzle any of our readers, and we must therefore decline them with thanks;* SAMUEL T. KERSHAWE—*We are reluctantly compelled to decline your verses. You say they are your first attempts at versification, and so you cannot be much surprised that they are not good enough to compete with the productions of others, who in addition to natural talent, enjoy the advantages which long practice gives. When you are older, and have learned to distinguish poetical expression from very poor prose in rhyme, you will not send such a couplet as this for publication.*

"And when on high the sun doth shine
With radiance and splendour fine,"

*which we quote from the second stanza of your "Summer Walk." Study diligently, young friend, and amongst other works read those of Alexander Pope and of Thomas Moore, paying special attention to the smooth melody of their lines;* CHARLES BOOTH—*Many thanks for your kind and gratifying letter. We will examine your cons. in a few days, and it will give us real pleasure if we can use all or any of them;* H. O. H. R. (*Armagh*)—*Many thanks for your very kind letter. We admit you to our "Party" with much pleasure, and we can give you another bit of information, which we doubt not will give you equal pleasure—it is, that your con. is filed for insertion;* HENRY NOAKES (*Kilburn*)—*We are much gratified by your generous praise, and grateful for the kind promise you make to us. You may depend that we will do all we can to retain the favour of our generous friends;* FRED WAKE (*Wandsworth*)—*Your kind and well-written letter has given us much pleasure. We will be happy to find you amongst those who contribute to the entertainment of our guests;* T. P. POOLHESS—*Thank you, but we do not find your cons. up to the mark. You may, however, try again;* CLARENCIEU—*If you think the account would interest our readers, you may send it, and if we form a similar opinion of it, we will certainly present it to them. Rub a little white lead into the crack. The 19th of December, 1861, fell upon Thursday;* RUBY GREY (*Dublin*)—*Thanks for your kind letter, dear Ruby. We have not yet decided whether we will recall the hero, but we think not;* F. L. LANCASTER (*Birmingham*)—*We are thankful for your kind letter, but we regret that we must decline your cons., because they are not up to our publishing standard;* LADY CLOTILDE—*We fully appreciate your kindness, dear lady; but we do not think the con. would be of any interest to our readers;* NOVICE—*Thanks. Yes, two l's in such a case count as one hundred;* HIRAM—*Thanks; we highly appreciate your praises. The 6th of December, 1860, fell upon Thursday;* A. S. BELL (*Sydenham*)—*Many thanks for your kind and cheery letter. We are happy to say that you are quite in agreement with the great number of our readers, who have expressed an opinion on the recent alteration in our first page. We are grateful for the important service you have rendered us, and will try to make our sentiments appear in the still continued improvement of this journal. Dissolve gum arabic in a small quantity of water;* J. DOHERTY (*Dublin*)—*We are much pleased to know that our journal affords you so much enjoyment, and that you like our "Parties" so much. You could not gild the edges of book leaves; it can only be done by a person who is well-instructed in the business;* W. J. T.—*Thanks. You are quite an old friend, it appears, and we always have a special pleasure in renewing acquaintance with such staunch supporters as you. The verses are very good, but they are not suitable;* B. R. (*Preston*)—*Thanks. We will attend to your cons. in due time, but you must not be impatient if we do not produce them for some weeks to come;* JAMES RICHARDSON (*Liverpool*)—*We fear the holiday season will not bring us any more personal enjoyment than that we can find in knowing that our friends are spending the time pleasantly. No, we have already treated the subject of fishing at considerable length. The cons. are accepted with thanks;* J. T. DENNY—*We are quite assured of the sincerity of your friendship, dear boy, and we thank you warmly for the valuable services you have rendered us. We have a large quantity of your cons. on hand, but we are using them up as occasion offers;* P. PORTBURY—*Your contribution is so very irregular, that we cannot make use of it. In writing it, you have also committed a breach of one of our rules, which requires that each riddle shall bear its own answer at the bottom;* A HIGHLANDER (*Inverness*) *We have not the space to give the directions you require, and, further, we do not think the object in view is of sufficient importance to warrant us in devoting to it a great part of a column. You can purchase a cage for less than the materials would cost;* GEO. F. ADAMS—*We have long excluded the poor old riddle-me-ree from our columns. Could you not choose some more ambitious field for the display of your talents?* J. W. WAINWRIGHT (*Worcester*) *Many thanks for your cheery letter. We are much pleased to learn that you like our stories so well. We have filed several of your cons. for insertion;* SIGISMUND E. SALMON *Your answers are correct, but we have long ceased to give prizes, or even to publish the names of those who send answers;* E. NORTON—*We have not seen any riddles, but it is quite possible they may have been displaced. We will search for them, and if they are found, and found suitable, you may depend upon their appearing in due course;* LESC (*Bristol*)—*Many thanks. We are gratified by your praises, and proud to learn that our journal affords you so much pleasure. You have not encroached upon us more than any of our readers are at liberty to do;* SQUIB *We thank you much for your kindness in sending us the batch of cons., but regret that we cannot give the gratification which we think acceptance would yield. We may use one or two, however, and be sure that we will do so if we can. A day or two will decide;* FLORENCE E. P. (*Weybridge*)—*Will our dear Florence accept our hearty thanks for her very kind and interesting letter? Oh, what a happy girl she must be, to be sure, with a pony, a carriage, and side-saddle, and the "dear little white puppy, with a pink ribbon round its neck!" It is, indeed, well for Florence;* RED LIONESS (*Ashwell*)—*We regret that we cannot put your little con. in the "Budget;" it is not up to our standard. Pray, why do you choose a* nom de plume *so suggestive of ferocity? We think it is rather inappropriate for a young lady;* CHARLES ELDRIDGE—*We thank you for the trouble you have taken in our behalf, but we must decline the cons. You have much to learn before your aspirations after authorship can be fairly gratified. Allow a piece of ice to dissolve in your mouth every morning;* YOUNG PRINCE SUNNYSMILE (*Manchester*)—*After the perusal of your very flattering letter, it is not the easiest or the most agreeable task to make a reply, in which we must inform you that your verses are thankfully declined, yet such is the hard necessity to which we are reduced. The lines are not up to our standard, while the letter is full of a spirit of extravagant praise, that is considerably above the high standard to which we are accustomed. Of course, we do not doubt that you are thoroughly in earnest, and we are thankful accordingly, but we cannot but think that you have permitted your sentiments to run riot in expression;* JOHN BENBOW (*Whitehaven*)—*Many thanks, young friend. We are much pleased to learn that our journal affords you so much pleasure, and we quite agree with you in thinking that Mr. Read's classical tales are both interesting and instructive. You do not encroach too much upon our time. We wish you had followed our often repeated direction to write on one side only of the paper, but since you have written on both, we are compelled to decline the cons.;* MAUD MILLER (*Leyton*)—*Dear little Maud, you are young to begin the writing of stories. You have written on both sides of the paper, and therefore part of the foregoing answer will apply to you; but in addition we must inform you that we do not undertake to return rejected MSS. They are sent to us voluntarily, and authors who set great store by their writings should retain copies of them;* T. A. MARSHALL (*Sunderland*)—*We regret that we cannot give you any information about the former contributions. We would have felt gratified could we have inserted the verses you now send, dealing, as they do, with an incident in our own experience, but their good nature is more conspicuous than their poetry, and as we require literary merit even more than friendliness in writings intended for publication, we are compelled to decline them;* JOAN OF ARC (*Worthing*)—*We think you will be better pleased that we should use your* nom de plume *for this answer. We decline the cons. with thanks. You have written on both sides of your paper;* JOHN M. MORLOCH (*Glasgow*)—*It is amusing to observe the great satisfaction with which you congratulate yourself upon having discovered something. You lead us to think that discoveries of any kind are rather out of your line, and certainly the supposed discovery over which you chuckle so pleasantly is not a discovery at all;* LUIZ DARCY—*We have been much pleased by the perusal of your kind and intelligent letter. We have not yet made up our mind as to whether we shall use one of your cons., but when that serious operation is completed we will let you know the result;* ARTHUR DALE (*Leicester*)—*Many thanks; the cons. will do very well;* FAIRY QUEEN (*Walsall*)—*You may imagine how pleasant we must find, when we are in the habit of reading very many letters such as yours in a day. The only difficulty amongst our young friends seems to be that of finding language warm enough to express their admiration and delight. We cannot promise to teach you the language of flowers at our "Party," but if you will send us the names of two or three flowers, we will inform you of their signification to the best of our skill;* ASTYANAX—*The hackneyed quotation would have been more effective in English. On both points we give a very decided affirmative;* ARTHUR E. SWIFT (*Lavender Hill*)—*For your kind words of approval, and your generous good wishes, accept our sincere thanks. We feel assured that you will not blame us for declining your cons., when we inform you that we have more than a hundred verbal charades at present in our possession;* THOMAS E. WILLIAMS—*Notwithstanding the difficulties of which you complain, you have contrived to write a pleasant, readable letter. The organ of voice is an exceedingly delicate mechanism, for the improvement of which we do not feel ourself qualified to prescribe. Judicious exercise, never carried to excess, is the best, as it is the simplest and most natural strengthener of the voice. We will take you upon such a journey before many weeks are passed. We must close our ears against persuasion and entreaty on that subject, and still preserve a strict incognito;* THOMAS ROBSON (*Newcastle-on-Tyne*)—*Thanks. The answers are correct, and the contributions you send will appear in due course;* W. B. Y.—*We recently gave such a recipe as you require. Paint the lines with a camel's hair pencil dipped in milk;* ARAB KNIGHT (*Dublin*)—*We thank you for your very friendly letter, and are much pleased to learn that you consider our parties so enjoyable. As to your cons., we are compelled to decline them. We have no fault to find with your sentiments, but the manner in which you express them, or attempt to express them, is louse, irregular, and unpoetical. The last two stanzas of "Friendship" are the best of all you have sent us. In the first stanza of the same piece, you call not friendship—but friendship's "sway," a "gem" and a "ray," which, to say the least, is a puzzling confusion of metaphors. "Forget-me-not" is very poor and exceedingly ragged in composition. It is far below our standard;* SAM WELLER —*We thank you for your well-intended offering, but it is not good enough for our fastidious young folks;* L. E.—*We really cannot oblige you by inserting your verses, but we will insert the first stanza here, in the belief that when you see it in print you will admit that we have sufficient reason for rejecting it.*

"When the night is calm and lightsome,
And the harvest's toil is o'er,
'Tis then the time for quiet thoughts—
Sweet moments of reflection."

*Wherever the reason may be, we are sure it must puzzle any one to find the rhyme;* PRINCESS ROSENBLUME—*Many thanks for the very kind and gratifying letter you have written us. It gives us great pleasure to know that you enjoy our "Party" so much. Leonard means lion-like;* W. P. B.—*We are gratified by your praise, dear friend, but we must decline your con., because you have broken one of our rules, which requires that contributions shall not be written in the body of a letter;* EDWARD M. (*Margate*)—*Thanks. We trust you may long continue to find our journal a source of pleasure and instruction. We have glanced through your cons., and some of them will appear when their turn comes round;* MOONSHINE (*Glasgow*)—*We are sorry that we must again decline your contribution. We daresay you have read the grand announcement we made at our last party, and we cannot doubt that yourself and your sister will be pleased by it;* ST. GEORGE (*Bradford*)—*It is pleasant to know that our stories afford you so much entertainment. We regret that we cannot accept the contribution you have been so kind as to send us;* THOMAS J. LYTHGOE (*Manchester*)—*Your contributions are to hand, and will receive attention on an early day.*

Our friend, SEMPER IDEM, of Ballymena, will lead the riddling brigade this week, with a creditable

### ACROSTIC.

No. 1.

*Cross Words.*

The battle had been fought and won,
The second were all fled;
But, mounting first, I them pursued,
And many I left dead.

But night came on, and then I turned
And went into my tent,
And flung myself upon my couch,
And soon to sleep I went.

The morning came, and I third up;
In fourth the sun bright beamed
To take a fifth I thought I'd go,
So cheerful each thing seemed.

But in a field a mile away
How diff'rent all was there,
Where carnage, death, and sorrow reigned,
To spoil was every care.

While walking thus in gloomy mood,
Two sixths I fighting saw;
It seemed to take each other's life
Must be a natural law.

Soon on a seventh I sat down—
It was to take a rest;
But soon a last came bounding past,
Hard by the hunters pressed.

On, on it sped o'er hill and dale;
To grief at last it came—
'Twas killed, and on the hunters went
To catch some other game.

*Foundation Words.*

And now, dear reader, I have given
Eight words for you to find;
The initials name a hero brave—
Him try and bring to mind.

SEMPER IDEM, Ballymena.

### CENTRAL DELETIONS.

No. 2.

If from an instrument of war
The centre you delete,
What's prized by girls both near and far
You then will have complete.

SAM VELLER, Hapton.

No. 3.

In ev'ry street, no matter where
You go throughout this land,
You see my mute form stand
In countless numbers proudly there.

From this the centre now delete,
And then before your eyes
A name will there arise,
Which will remind you of your feet.

J. W. LOWE, Ilford.

### CHARADES.

No. 4.

I am a word of letters five,
Yet you can spell me with but two;
And though from me you can derive
But nothing, still it is quite true
That in my first a thousand lies,
And second just begins the same.
Though millions come, my first will rise,
And place itself first in their name;
My second is to many dear—
It comes to us o'er many a mile;
And o'er its friendly cup of cheer
The hard-wrought ploughman wears a smile.
Connect them now, and to your gaze
Devoid of all things it appears;
And woe to him who spends his days
And can exclaim, "Such were my years."

ANGUS MACPHERSON, Lentram.

No. 5.

On his midnight watch the sentry stands,
The bright stars o'er him shining;
His memory flies to a distant land—
To one he has left repining.
No wonder he in a foreign clime
Should for home and love be sighing,
For the morrow's sun may shed its rays
On his form 'midst the dead and dying.
Though death may come with the battle's strife,
Yet a soldier brave he'll be;
For love's fond glance or own dear life
From my first he will not flee.

Not a sound breaks on the sentry's ears,
Yet with slow and cautious tread
The foe steals on, and their gleaming spears
Flash bright as the stars o'erhead.
Too late the brave youth hears the sound,
And notes the glittering steel;
Yet quick as thought, with a lion's bound,
And the foremost foemen reel,
Love nerves his arm, and his trusty blade
Rings many a foeman's knell;
But the odds are great—on the earth he's laid,
Though he like my second fell.

For many a day does the maiden mourn,
And her eyes are dim with weeping;
Waking, she sighs for her love's return,
He haunts her dreams when sleeping.
One morn she stood by her garden gate,
As the birds were gladly singing;
Ah, little she knew that her future fate
Was in what my whole's now bringing.
He comes at last, and with eager eye
She scans her true love's token;
"Dead—dead!" she cries, and heaves a sigh
At the feet of my whole, heartbroken.

T. TYSON, Remshaw.

### PUZZLE.

No. 6.

One-third of one, one-fourth of four,
One hundred now, and fifty more;
One and five hundred now please take;
A mathematician these will make.

J. P. L., Worcester.

### ENIGMA.

No. 7.

My whole, urged on by mighty first,
Across the sea now goes;
But should my first its prison burst,
My last it then will lose,
For down beneath the briny sea
Probably all will go,
And nothing left then will there be
To tell the tale of woe.

F. TEBBS.

### ENIGMA.

No. 8.

I am quite indispensable;
I am too good to lose;
No doubt I'm comprehensible,
As this you do peruse.
*O. Y. F. B.* could never
Appear before your view,
If I, so very clever,
Hadn't much of it to do.
Dear reader, now investigate
What I have said with care,
And then the answer quickly state—
You'll solve it, I declare.

T. ATKINSON, Manchester.

### TRANSPOSITION.

No. 9.

What means to instruct if you transpose,
To impose upon it will disclose.

H. BEYNON, Bristol.

### CURTAILMENTS.

No. 10.

A marine animal if you curtail,
A body of water you'll have without fail.

T. U. OPENSHAW.

No. 11.

My whole is found in every door—
'Tis easily traced, I ween;
Curtail, and I shall name what is
In every window seen.

Again curtail, and then to you
I shall assuredly state
A broad and shallow vessel, which
Is neither dish nor plate.

Once more, good friends, curtail and you
Will see without delay,
The name that little infants are
Taught first of all to say.

F. J. WILSON, Forest Gate.

### METAGRAM.

No. 12.

A company of musicians my first will be;
Change head, on a clock this surely you'll see;
Another fresh head, and then you will trace
That I'm over the country in every place;
Change again, and just listen attentive to me,
On the sea-coast 'tis found—there it always will be;
Queen Mab with my last guarded Tim from all harm,
And with this strange sceptre worked many a charm.

THE YOUNG KNIGHT.

### GEOGRAPHICAL REBUS.

No. 13.

ARTHUR, London.

### REVERSION.

No. 14.

A liquid, reversed by you,
Will bring an animal to your view.

T. U. OPENSHAW.

### DECAPITATIONS.

No. 15.

I belong to an office of exalted station,
And I also assist to make laws for the nation;
My calling is holy—I devote all my labours
In promoting good-will and concord among neighbours.

Behead me, and now with a little prescience,
You'll see that in kindred we bear close alliance;
Or a tale in the *Budget* if you are perusing,
To tell it this word you would surely be using.

Behead me again, and with victory flushing,
The conqueror's this, on the foe he is rushing;
Or when I with sly steps to my sweetheart am stealing,
I also feel this as my Love I'm revealing.

Again you behead—when to school I was going,
The master for this often left my tears flowing;
Or to go on a journey, if I had a notion,
I'd surely be this if the train was in motion.

Behead me once more, and for your subsistence,
You'll have done this to maintain your existence;
And when the Lord Mayor gives his annual dinner,
Who has done this the best I am sure won't be thinner.

Behead me and also my tail from me sever,
I'm found to a "T" if our young folks are clever.

P. CREGAN, Trim.

No. 16.

If you a well-known fruit behead,
A part of your frame you'll see instead.

J. MURRAY.

### LOGOGRIPH.

No. 17.

When whole, I'm very often won
By deeds both brave and good;
But please behead and then transpose,
I'll be a kind of wood;
Again behead, and then transpose,
A drink I will express;
And now, dear young folks, you must try,
This logogriph to guess.

J. RICHARDSON, Liverpool.

### PUZZLE.

No. 18.

One-third of jam, one-third of ham,
And then one-half of me;
One-fourth of meat, one-fourth of seat,
A Christian name you'll see.

SILVERSPEAR.

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

No. 19.

*Foundation Words.*

A country near to England will
My primals bring to sight;
My finals show a continent;
Say, riddlers, am I right?

*Cross Words.*

Sometimes when near a hall you'll ask,
"Is it first, or is it not?
For really, I'm ashamed to say,
No money have I got!"

A famous ancient man is this,
From Germany he came,
And conquered France, and from whose line
The Normans claim their name.

My third is found in every ship;
My next a king was he—
A tyrant, too; he reigned in Rome,
And caused great misery.

My fifth is but a simple thing,
From which we get our tea;
My last is what we all desire
When we are bored, you'll see.

F. HISCOE, Leeds.

### SQUARE WORDS.

No. 20.

Drawn by a horse my first you will see;
A quarter of the globe my next will be;
My third a place for skaters to go;
Receive my last, and the answer you know.

F. S., Tottenham.

No. 21.

My first is to shine with intense heat;
My next is the name of a tribe, I ween;
My third is for baking bread, pies, and meat;
My last's often heard, but never seen.

G. GOLDING, Essex.

### DIAMOND PUZZLES.

No. 22.

Attention please, ye riddling bards of fame,
As I m about my diamond to proclaim,
And to commence the ocean search with care,
And you will plainly see that I dwell there;
This means to hurt, to injure, or deface,
It's name undoubtedly you soon will trace;
A fowl for table now to mind recall,
I have no doubt 'tis relished by us all;
I do believe this means a separation—
You'll see it without much consideration;
But to proceed—a well-known female's name
For this, my fourth, I wish you to proclaim;
What means slow to discern I now express,
You certainly will solve that one I guess;
A *Budget* author now please call to mind,
He wrote a splendid story you will find;
The act of making worse in this is seen,
I do not love to practise it, I ween;
For next please name a nation of renown,
It is a very warm one you will own;
Borders and confines now please understand;
And this is quite the opposite to land;
A little house, a hut, a shed or fold,
My next to you will certainly unfold;
And now to bring this diamond to a close,
Bring last from out the limits of transpose.
And now the centrals will, if read aright,
Immediately an author bring to sight
Who wrote a story full of love and grace,
His title now, fair reader, kindly trace.

T. ATKINSON, Manchester.

No. 23.

A consonant for first indite;
This weapon's used when soldiers fight;
Gentlemen oft smoke my third;
Bricklayers use these, I have heard;
The rich and poor alike share this;
Our laws are made by sixth, I wis;
My next will name a famous tale;
My seventh means "on a large scale;"
A kind of plant my next will be;
On every sofa this you'll see;
The fading flower does this, I trow;
A kind of jump my next will show;
And for my last just please indite
Exactly a sixth of the word alight;
If you these centrals trace with care,
A famous story they'll declare,
That does with daring deeds abound,
Its equal is but seldom found.

F. WILSON, Forest Gate.

### ANAGRAM.

No. 24.

Ttliel oibnr edrreatbs,
Ats oupn a rete,
Nad gans rremily,
"I ma refe."

C. E. HAMPSON.

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

1.—Summer. Thus: Scent, Up, Mab, Mild, Each, Rapt.
2.—Cheat, chat.
3.—Manager, manger.
4.—Lighthouse.
5.—Editor.
6.—Isaac.
7.—Inch, chin.
8.—Balm, lamb.
9.—End, den.
10.—Glove, clove, love, dove.
11.—Amine.
12.—Navan.
13.—Cripplegate.
14.—Norwich. Thus: Nelson, "Orlando," Roland Quiz, Whale, Isabel, Cuckoo, "Harold the Brave."
15.—Constantinople. Thus: Constant, tin, pole, no, son, sit, pen, leap, tap, pin.
16.—Ocean, cane, can, an, a.
17.—Mary, ram.
18.—Mouse, Ouse, use.
19.—Mabel, Abel.
20.—Cart, art.

21.—
EMIT
MARY
IRON
TYNE

22.—
SEND
EVER
NEVA
DRAM

23.—
T
DON
MEMEL
ELEANOR
TOMAHAWKINS
DUNKIRK
REIGN
INK
S

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