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THE BLIND GIRL AND THE SPRING.

By SYDNEY GREY.

Yes, it is true that I am blind (it was not always thus),
But oft it comes into my mind how God can comfort us.
For if of some good gift bereft, we bend before His will,
He ever has a blessing left which should our sorrow still.
This very morn I found it so; scarce had the day begun,
Ere with small pattering, restless feet that hither swiftly run,
The children came in joyous mood, and shouted, "Spring is here!"
And when they led me through the wood, I knew that she was near.
I felt her breath upon my cheek, and while we walked along,
A thousand times I heard her speak the rustling leaves among,
In tones as though a harp had thrilled beneath an angel's touch,
And all my soul with rapture filled; yet when I said as much,
The others laughed and whispered low, "Nay, nay, it is the wind!"
To them, perhaps, it might be so; but ah! if folks are blind,
They learn in every sound that floats around their pathway dark—
The breeze, the brook, the glad bird-notes—some hidden voice to mark.
Therefore when spring begins to don her garments fresh and gay,
Because I cannot look upon her beauty day by day,

Nor see the pointed crocus flame above the garden mould,
Nor watch the snowy tips that frame the daisy's heart of gold;
Because unto my longing eyes may never be displayed
The changeful glory of the skies, warm shine and soothing shade,
Nor the great sun's far reaching rays which crown the day with light,
Nor yet the star-lit purple haze that comes before the night;
She breathes the tender tale to me, in accents clear and plain,
Until I nearly rend the veil and see it all again.
And though I'm blind, I know quite well, when to the woods we go,
The place to find the wild bluebell, and where the lilies blow;
Shy violets tell me, as I pass, their buds are at my feet,
And through the lengthening meadow grass run murmurs soft and sweet.
Oh! I thank God that He doth bring such daily joy to me,
For even I can welcome spring, like happy girls who see.

MERLE'S CRUSADE.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Aunt Diana," "For Lilias," etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

UNCLE KEITH.

I HAD been obliged to defer my visit to Aunt Agatha for more than a fortnight, and it was not until an early day in October that I could find a leisure afternoon. I believe that only very busy and hard worked people really enjoy a holiday—listless and half occupied lives know nothing of the real holiday feeling and the joyousness of putting one's work aside for a few hours of complete idleness.

I felt almost as buoyant and light-hearted as a child when I caught sight of the old bridge and the grey towers of All Saints. The river looked blue and clear in the October sunshine; there were barges floating idly down the stream; a small steamer had just started from the tiny pier; two or three clumsy-looking boats with heavy brown sails were moored to the shore; there was a man in a red cap in one of the boats; two or three bare-legged urchins were wading in the water. There was a line of purple shadow in the distance, little sparkles of sunlight everywhere, yellow and red leaves streaming, a little skiff with a man in white flannel coming rapidly into sight, omnibuses, cabs, heavy waggons clattering over the bridge. Beyond the white arches of the new bridge the busy hum of workers, the heaving of great cranes, the toil and strain of human activity.

The sight always fascinated me, and I stood aside with others to watch until a well-known figure in the distance recalled me with a start. Surely that was Aunt Agatha crossing the road by the bridge; no one else walked in that way—that quick, straightforward walk, that never seemed to linger or hesitate, that could only belong to her. Yes, it was she, for there was the dear woman holding out her hands to me, with the old kind smile breaking over her face.

"I came to meet you, Merle; I did not want to lose one minute of your company, but I was a little late after all, dear child. What a stranger you are, all these months that we have not met!"

"It has seemed a long time to me, Aunt Agatha, so much seems to have happened since I was last here."

"You may well say so," she returned, gravely; "we have both much for which to be thankful. Your accident, Merle, which might have had such grave results, and——" here she checked herself, but something in her manner seemed strange to me.

"We need not walk quite so fast, surely," I remonstrated. "How these people jostle one, and I want to talk to you so."

"And I to you. Never mind, we shall find a quiet corner under the shadow of St. Mary's." And as she spoke we turned into the narrow flagged path skirting the church, with the tombs and grey old headstones gleaming here and there. There were fewer people here.

"Are you sure you are quite well?" I began, rather anxiously. "You are looking paler than usual, Aunt Agatha, and, if it be not my fancy, a little thinner."

"Yes, and older, and perhaps a trifle graver," she returned, rather briskly; but I thought her cheerfulness a little forced. "We have not yet learnt how to grow younger, child. Well, if you must know, and this is why I came to meet you, that we might have our little talk together. I have not been without my troubles; your uncle has been very ill, Merle, so ill that, at one time, I feared I might lose him; but Providence has been good to me and spared my dear husband." And here Aunt Agatha's voice trembled and her eyes grew misty.

I was almost too shocked to answer, but my first words were to reproach her for keeping me in ignorance.

"You must not blame me, Merle," she replied, gently. "I wanted you dreadfully; I felt quite sore with the longing to see you, but I knew you could not come to me. Mrs. Morton was in Scotland; you were in sole charge of those children. Unless things grew worse I knew I had no right to summon you. Thank God I was spared that necessity; the danger only lasted forty-eight hours; after that he only required all the nursing I could give him."

"Aunt Agatha, it was not right; you ought to have told me."

"I thought differently, Merle; I put myself in your place—you could not desert your post, and you would only have grown restless with the longing to come and help me—the same feeling that made you hide your accident from me led me to suppress my trouble. I should only have burthened your kind heart, Merle, and spoiled your present enjoyment. I said to myself, 'Let the child be happy; she will only fret herself into a fever to help me, and she must do her duty to her employers.' If Ezra had got worse I must have written; when he grew better I preferred telling you nothing until we met."

"I shall never trust you again," I burst out, for this reticence wounded me sorely. "How am I to know if things are well with you if you are always keeping me in the dark?"

"It will not happen again, Merle; indeed, my dear, I can promise you that it shall never happen. If you had been at Prince's Gate I should have summoned you at once, but, in your position, how could I ask you to desert your post, Merle, when those who placed you there were hundreds of miles away?"

I saw what she meant, and I could not deny that she had kept me in ignorance for my own peace of mind. It was just her unselfishness, for I knew how she must have longed for me; we were so much to each other, we were so sure of mutual sympathy and help. Aunt Agatha cried a little when she saw how hurt I was, and then, of course, I tried to comfort her, and I very soon succeeded. I never could bear to see her unhappy, and I knew it was only her goodness to me.

I begged her to tell me about Uncle Keith's illness, and she soon put me in possession of the salient points. He had worked a little too hard, and then had got wet in a thunderstorm, and a sharp attack of inflammation had been the result.

"He considers himself well now," she continued, "but he is still very weak, and will not be able to resume work for another week or two. His employers have been very kind; they seem to value him highly. Oh! he has been so patient, Merle, it has been quite a privilege to nurse him; not a complaint, not an irritable word. I always knew he was a good man, but illness is such a test of character."

"But you have worn yourself out," I grumbled; "you do not look well." But she interrupted me.

"Do not notice my looks before your uncle," she said, pleadingly; "he is so anxious about me; but indeed, I am only a little tired; I shall be better now I have told you and got it over. You have been on my mind, Merle, and then that horrid accident." But I would not let her dwell upon that. We had reached the cottage by this time, and Patience was watching for us; she looked prettier and rosier than ever.

I found Uncle Keith sitting pillowed up in an armchair by the drawing-room fire. I thought he looked shrunken, and there was a pinched look about his features. He had not grown younger and handsomer to my eyes, but as he turned his prominent brown eyes on me with a kind look of welcome, and held out his thin hand, I kissed him with real affection, and my eyes were a little wet.

"Hir-rumph, my dear, I am pleased to see you—there, there, never mind my stupid illness; I am quite a giant now, eh, Agatha? It is worth being ill, Merle, to be nursed by your aunt; oh, quite a luxury I assure you! Hir-rumph." And here Uncle Keith cleared his throat in his usual fashion, and stirred the fire rather loudly, though he looked a little paler after the exercise.

"But I am so dreadfully sorry, Uncle Keith," I said, when Aunt Agatha had taken the poker from him and bustled out of the room to fetch him some jelly, "to think I never knew how ill you were."

"That was all the better, child," he returned, cheerfully. "Agatha was a wise woman not to tell you; but there are not many people in the world, Merle, who would come up to your aunt, not many," rubbing his hands together.

"No indeed, Uncle Keith."

"How do you think she looks?" he continued, turning round rather sharply. "Have I tired her out, eh?"{387}

"She looks a little tired certainly."

"Hir-rumph, I thought so. Agatha, my dear," as she re-entered with the jelly, "I do not want all this waiting on now; it is my turn to wait on you! I must not wear out such a good wife, must I, Merle?" And though we both laughed at that, and Aunt Agatha pretended that he was only in fun, it was almost pathetic to see how he watched her busy movements about the room, and how he begged her again and again to sit down and not tire herself, and yet she loved to do it. I think we both of us knew that. I was not disposed to pity Aunt Agatha as I had done in former years. Perhaps I had grown older and more womanly in those eight months of service, and less disposed to be critical on quiet, matter-of-fact lives. On the contrary, I began to understand in a vague sort of way that Aunt Agatha was garnering in much happiness in her useful middle age, in her honest, single-eyed service. Love had come to her in a sober guise, and without pretension, but it was the right sort of love after all, no doubt. To youthful eyes, Uncle Keith was not much of a hero; but a plain honest man, even though he has fewer inches than his fellows, may have merit enough to fill one woman's heart, and I ceased to wonder at Aunt Agatha's infatuation in believing herself a happy woman.

We had not much talk apart that day. Aunt Agatha could not leave Uncle Keith, but I never felt him less in the way. I talked quite openly about things; he was as much interested as Aunt Agatha in listening to my description of Marshlands and Wheeler's Farm, and had not a dissenting word when I praised Gay Cheriton in my old enthusiastic way, and only a soft "hir-rumph" interrupted my account of Reggie's accident.

It was Aunt Agatha who walked back with me over the bridge in the soft October twilight. Tired as she was, she refused to part with me until the last minute.

"You must come again soon, Merle," she said, as we parted; "Ezra and I are not young people now, and a bright face does us both good, and your face has grown a very bright one, Merle."

Was Aunt Agatha right, I wondered? Had I really grown happier outwardly? Had the inward peace of satisfied conscience and a heart at rest cast its reflection of brightness? I was certainly very happy just then; my life was growing wider, friends were coming round me, interests were thickening, there was meaning and purpose in each opening day. I no longer thought so much of myself and my own feelings; the activities of life, the needs and joys of others seemed to press and crush out all morbid ideas. I had so many to love and so many who seemed to need me and care for me.

I went more than once to Putney during the next two or three weeks. My mistress was far too sympathising and unselfish to keep me from my own people when they needed me; on the contrary, she was always full of contrivances that I should be spared.

November passed very pleasantly. Mrs. Morton was recovering strength slowly but surely; she was no longer a prisoner to her dressing-room, but could spend the greater part of the day in the drawing-room or in her husband's library.

But she still continued her invalid habits and saw few people. I still sat with her in the afternoon, and either Joyce or Reggie played about the room. When Mr. Morton was absent I came down to her in the evening, and read or talked to her. I prized these hours, for in them I learned to know my sweet mistress more intimately and to love her more dearly.

At the beginning of December Gay came to us. I was looking forward to her visit with some eagerness, though I knew my evenings would then be spent in the nursery, as Mrs. Morton would only need her sister's society; but, to my great surprise, I was summoned to the drawing-room on the evening of her arrival. She

had come just in time to dress for dinner, and we had not yet seen her. I could scarcely credit Travers' message when she delivered it.

"Will you please go down to the little drawing-room, Miss Fenton? Miss Gay wants to see you, and my mistress does not care to be left alone."

She started up and came to meet me with outstretched hands. She looked prettier than ever, and her eyes were shining with happiness.

"I am so glad to see you, Merle. I wanted to come up to the nursery, but this spoiled woman—how you have all spoilt her!—refused to be left. She said Hannah would be there, and that we could not talk comfortably."

"Yes, but there was another reason," returned my mistress, smiling; and Gay blushed and cast down her eyes.

"I wanted to tell you the news myself, because I knew you would be interested. Sit down, Merle, in your usual place, and guess what has happened."

I did not need to guess; the first look at Gay's happy face had told me, and then I had glanced at a certain finger. Opals tell their own tales.

"Guess," continued my mistress, mischievously. "Who was the guest who came oftenest to Marshlands?"

"There were two who came most frequently," I returned, looking steadily into Gay's blushing face, "Mr. Hawtry and Mr. Rossiter, but I do not need to be told it is Mr. Rossiter." And Gay jumped up and kissed me in her impulsive way.

I could see that she was pleased I had guessed it.

"I told you it would be no news to her, Vi," she said, breathlessly. "Do you remember our talk in the orchard, Merle, when I told you I was afraid of poverty?"

"Yes, but I knew you magnified your fears, Miss Gay." But she shook her head at that.

"I hate it just as much as ever. I tell Walter I am the worst possible person for a poor man's wife, and if you ask Violet she will agree with me, but I was obliged to have him, poverty and all; he would not take 'No' for an answer."

"I think Walter was very sensible," returned her sister. "I should have despised him for giving it up."

"He would never have done that," replied Gay, with decision, "until I had married somebody else, and there was no chance of that. You are grave, Merle; do you mean to forbid the banns? Why do you not congratulate me?"

"I do congratulate you with all my heart; will that content you?"

"To be sure; but what then, Merle?"

"I ought not to say, perhaps, if you have made up your mind. I like Mr. Rossiter. He is young, but he seems very good. But do you remember what I said to you that evening, Miss Gay, when we were watching the moon rise over Squire Hawtry's cornfields, that your environment just suited you; I can't realise Marshlands without you."

I saw the sisters exchange a meaning look, and then Gay said, in a low voice, "What should you say, Merle, if I am not to leave Marshlands—if my father refuses to part with me?"

"I do not think that would answer. Mrs. Markham would be mistress, and you have told me so often that she does not like Mr. Rossiter."

"There are to be changes at Marshlands, Merle," broke in my mistress; she had been listening to us with much interest, and I wished Mr. Morton could have seen her with that bright animated look on her face. "Adelaide will be mistress there no longer. A young cousin of ours, Mrs. Austin, who was with Adelaide in Calcutta, has just lost her husband. She is an invalid, is very rich, and very helpless, and has no one except

ourselves belonging to her. She is very fond of Adelaide, and she has begged her to live with her, and superintend her establishment. She has a large house at Chislehurst, and so Adelaide and Rolf and Judson are to take up their abode with her."

"Things have not been very pleasant lately, Merle," observed Gay, gravely. "Adelaide has set her face against my marrying Walter, and she has worried father and tormented me, and made things rather difficult for all of us. It is quite true, as she says, that Walter is poor, and has no present prospects," continued Gay, "and she has dinned his poverty so incessantly into father's ear that he has got frightened about it, and has made up his mind that he will not part with me at all—that Walter must make his home with us. There was a terrible scene when Adelaide heard this; she declared she would not stop in the house under these conditions. And then Amy's letter came, and she announced her resolution of living at Chislehurst. I do not like the idea of driving Addie away, but," finished Gay, with an odd little laugh, "I think father and I will manage very well without her."

We talked a little more on the subject until I was dismissed, and I had plenty of food for my thoughts when I went back to the quiet nursery.

(*To be continued*.)

EASTER TIDE

A PRAYER.

Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee,
From death's dread sting Thy servants free,
That we may live and sing to Thee Alleluia!

EASTER EGGS.

THE origin of the practice of connecting eggs with our Easter festival is, I believe, lost in antiquity; but they are said to have been used by the Jews at the Feast of Passover. In some Eastern countries there is a very old custom, which still prevails, of presenting eggs at this season of the year—some say because the egg is an emblem of creation, or recreation, there being a tradition that the world was created in the spring. In parts of Russia people present eggs to one another on Easter day, saying, "Jesus Christ is risen," being answered, "It is so of a truth," or "Yes, He is risen." The Russians also serve red eggs on that day, symbolising at the same time the resurrection and the blood of the Saviour.

At the time of Edward the First the eggs to be given to the members of the royal household on Easter day formed an item in the expenses. Over four hundred eggs, which cost about one shilling and sixpence, were,

we learn, distributed on that day. Eggs used to be blessed by the Pope for allotment throughout the Christian world, and the service of Pope Paul the Fifth contains the following curious form of consecration:—

"Bless, Lord, we beseech Thee, this Thy creature of eggs that it may become a wholesome sustenance to Thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to Thee, on account of the resurrection of our Lord."

In some parts of the north of England, particularly parts of Cumberland, decorated Pasch or Pace eggs are still sent to children, so that the present fancy for ornamenting eggs is but the revival of a very old custom. Some young readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER may be disposed to try what they can do in this way. I will, therefore, tell them some of the methods employed; but first let me mention that all eggs to be decorated must be perfectly clean, for the least spot of grease where it was not wanted would spoil the effect aimed at; and they should be boiled hard.

To simply colour the eggs they need only be dipped in water, then placed in a decoction of logwood for the various shades of purple; of cochineal for red, or boiled with onion peelings, or in an onion, for amber, or coloured with spinach juice for green. But superior to these simple colourings are Judson's dyes, which may be obtained of any colour, and can be used as paints on the shells as well as dyes.

The eggs are dipped in water before being put in the dye, to make them take the colour evenly. If it is desired to keep part of the shell white—for instance, to have a name or motto in white on a red ground—proceed thus: When the egg is warm after boiling take a small piece of mutton suet, which, being hard, you can cut to a point almost like a pencil. With this draw or write what you wish on the warm egg, which you can then place in the dye. The part greased will not take the colour, but when dry the fat is easily removed, and the white design can be left or filled in with another colour, or with a little gold or silver paint. A pretty way is to grease a delicate piece of moss, a fine fern leaf, or a skeleton leaf, to roll either round a warm egg so as to leave a greasy print on it, and then put it in the colour; but great care must be taken in handling the work not to blur the design. An egg spotted with grease then put in a yellow dye, the grease removed, and then a pale blue dye used, produces an effect that would puzzle a naturalist. Brown and blue dyes answer, used in the same way.

Eggs may be also simply treated by having small leaves or little bits of moss bound on to them with various coloured wools, or ribbons (not fast-coloured ones), before they are boiled, the wool or ribbons being removed when they are dry again; the effect is often very good, but there is great doubt about the results in this way of colouring.

A neater and much better way than greasing the design, for those who do not mind the trouble, is to dye the egg all over, and then to scratch out the motto, or whatever is required white, with a penknife. This is, of course, a much more difficult process, and requires great care.

Eggs dyed pale blue, and a little cloud and sea with a tiny boat painted on them, or dyed yellow and turned into a little sunset picture, with a tree added, are very pretty. They can be done in oil or water colours.

I have seen cupids and like subjects painted on them, but they are quite unsuited for Easter eggs, which are not, and should not be used as, adjuncts of Valentine's day.

For more elaborate work, the eggs, having been boiled hard, can be painted over with gold size, and then covered with gold, or any metal leaf, which maybe again painted on with oil paints, or by using a medium and body colours, with water colours.

A gilt egg, with a white lily on it, or a silvered one with a daffodil, looks very pretty; violets and primroses, emblems of spring, are also appropriate, while eggs with butterflies or small birds bearing mottoes painted on them, are much appreciated by children. When painted in water colours, the eggs can easily be varnished. On Easter day I once saw the breakfast eggs which the cook had boiled, some with red and some with blue dye in the water, sent to table in a nest of green moss lined with a little white wool; the eggs were only cooked the usual time, and were greatly relished by the younger members of the family.

I would recommend the use of Easter eggs to those girls who take Sunday-school classes; they are very good mediums for giving precepts or words of advice; a judiciously chosen motto or text may often do a great deal in helping a child or person to correct a fault, and a motto is more attractive on an ornamental egg than in a book.

I remember a little German book called "Ostereier" (Easter eggs), in which a charming account is given of an Easter festival, when motto eggs were distributed to a number of children. Some of the rhymes given are very pretty; they lose in translation, but are such as "Goodness, not gold, wins love and trust," "For meat and drink the giver thank," "A good conscience makes a soft pillow."

Such sentences as these do for quite small children, but a short verse from a hymn or a text can easily be written on an egg. They look very well coloured pale blue or mottled green and blue, as directed above, and the words written on after with red, or blue ink of a darker colour, and a little ornamentation round. For school-children water colours should not be used in painting the eggs, for the warm and often moist hands of the recipients of these little gifts would smear the paint.

We must now come to another kind of egg I have found much appreciated, as it is eatable, though imitation only. It is prepared thus: Procure some half egg shells which you can colour or not, as you please, but you must cut the edges as smooth as you can with a pair of small, sharp scissors; next take one pound of ground almonds (they can be bought ready prepared), mix with the beaten whites of three, or if small, four eggs, add a teaspoonful of orange flower water, or a little more, if needed, make into a paste, and stir in one pound of fine sifted loaf sugar, and work with a wooden spoon into a smooth paste; next shake a little icing sugar into the half shells, and fill them with the almond paste, scoop a piece out of the centre of each half, and as you put the two halves together insert a preserved apricot (dried) without a stone; if the apricots are too large use half ones, but whether large or small they must be pressed into suitable shapes before they are used, as they have to represent the yolks of the eggs.

When the parts are joined together, a strip of tissue paper should be fastened round the junction with white of egg, and then a ribbon or ornamental paper put round and the shells decorated with a little water colour paint. If preferred, the shells can be used as moulds only, and removed as soon as the paste is dry, but if this is to be done the two edges of the almond paste must be moistened with white of egg before they are put together, or they would come apart when the shells were removed.

The almond eggs must be put in a warm, dry place as soon as made; a very cool oven will do to dry them.

If you remove the shells, cover the almond paste with icing sugar that has been well worked with a little white of egg and lemon juice; this is not an easy operation, but if the sugar is well worked before using, it will cover the paste more neatly than if used quickly; if sufficient smoothness is attained the sugar can be decorated afterwards with some harmless colouring, such as saffron or cochineal.

To make sugar eggs, mix one ounce of raw arrowroot with one pound of icing sugar, add the beaten whites of three or four eggs, according to size, and a teaspoonful of lemon juice; work the mixture well; use the egg shells as moulds and proceed as with almond paste, putting anything that is liked in the centre, and joining the halves together with white of egg; dry thoroughly, in some place not warm enough to melt the sugar, before you remove the shells. It is easier to take the halves off if they are slightly oiled before the sugar is sifted into them.

NOTES FOR APRIL.

It is very interesting in the spring to watch the gradual development of a frog from the egg, through the tadpole stage of its existence, till at last it assumes its final form.

The old frogs emerge from their winter hiding places in the mud, early in the spring, and during March their eggs may be found floating on almost every stagnant pond. A group of these eggs in their early stages of development looks like a mass of clear white jelly, containing numbers of black specks, each of which is really the germ of the future tadpole.

In order to watch the development, a group of the eggs should be taken and put in a shallow vessel of water, which, if kept in the house, should have a bell-glass, or some other covering over it, to keep out the dust.

The jelly-like mass which envelopes the future tadpole is so clear that all its changes can be easily watched. First the head appears, then a flat tail, and in course of time the nostrils, mouth, and large eyes, till at length the completed tadpole bursts open its gelatinous covering, and apparently not in the least embarrassed by its new surroundings, begins swimming briskly about, looking for something to eat. The time occupied in hatching varies in different countries, according to the climate, from four days to a month. In England the tadpole does not often appear till towards the end of April.

The following stages are even more interesting, especially for those who can take advantage of the transparency of the parts to watch the circulation of the blood through a microscope.

The body of the tadpole gradually gets broader, while the tail gets thinner and thinner, till it finally disappears altogether; but before that happens its place has been taken by two hind legs, which first appear under the skin and then gradually push their way through. The fore legs next appear, and so on through all the stages of development, till in a longer or shorter time, according to the amount of warmth, light, and food it can obtain, the complete frog appears.

But woe betide the unfortunate tadpole which, first of the shoal, attains to the dignity of possessing limbs, for so ferocious are the later ones, and so jealous of their precocious little brother, that they almost always fall upon him, and, not content with killing, never rest till every morsel of him is eaten. And unless several of the tadpoles assume their final change about the same time, this proceeding is repeated till their numbers are very considerably diminished, or, as sometimes happens, till only one survivor is left, who, having helped to eat all his brethren, instead of meeting with his deserts, is allowed to live on in peace, till some day in the course of his walks abroad, he, in his turn, is snapped up as a delicate morsel by some hungry snake or waterfowl.

Insects and flowers are much more closely connected with one another than we sometimes think.

Not only do many insects depend upon flowers for their food, but many flowers also depend upon the visits of insects to carry their pollen from one flower to another and so continue the life of their species.

There are some flowers, however, whose pollen is carried by the wind instead of by insects, and which are therefore an exception to this general rule. These, not needing to attract insects, are small and insignificant, with neither scent nor honey, but with a very large quantity of pollen. They generally flower early in spring, before the leaves are out, as these would catch the pollen as it is blown along by the wind, and prevent it reaching the flowers for which it is intended. Notice, for example, the flower of the oak, elm, ash, and Scotch fir.

April is a busy month in the garden. Auriculas and polyanthuses in bloom should be watered often, and shaded if the sun is very bright, and sheltered when the weather is cold; tulips also must be sheltered from severe cold, though they may safely be encouraged to grow now.

Seeds of perennials and biennials for flowering next year should be sown now, such as wallflowers, carnations, and pinks. Heartsease for autumn flowering should also be sown, and cuttings taken from old

plants. Hardy annuals should be sown not later than the middle of April. Give them good soil, and do not cover the seeds too deeply with earth (some of the smallest kinds should only be sprinkled on the top), and when they begin to shoot up thin out the young plants vigorously; amateur gardeners almost always leave them too close together, but the more room they have the better and stronger they will grow.

If there is no greenhouse, or "heat," half hardy annuals may be sown out in the open garden towards the end of April, and if diligently cared for they will grow well and thrive.

After a warm day, evergreens are benefited by syringing. Ivy that is wished to grow close should be clipped all over; and grass should be cut about once a week, and often rolled. It should not be allowed to get long before cutting the first time, or it will be troublesome to get into order again.

April is the month in which we welcome most of our spring bird visitors. The nightingale and cuckoo have already come and begun their song; the swallow and house-martin will arrive about the middle of the month, and are soon busy making new nests, or patching up old ones. The whitethroat appears towards the end of the month.

During the April showers the whole air seems full of song. Walking through woods ringing with bird music, we are once more reminded of the problem which so puzzled Daines Barrington. "Do the birds all sing in one key? And if not, why do the songs harmonise instead of producing unpleasant discords?" Perhaps it is the distance which lends enchantment and softens the discords. No doubt if all the songsters were in one room, the result would not be quite so happy.

Many eggs, larvæ and cocoons of butterflies and moths may be found this month among heaps of dry leaves, on low bushes, or trunks of trees. Grasses and rushes shelter several of the early species, which are already flying about, and some rare insects may be found now which cannot be obtained later in the season.

THE ROMANCE OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

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OR,

THE OLD LADY OF THREADNEEDLE STREET.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER VI.

It is a true saying, that when mothers begin to talk of their children they never know when to stop; and the children, who might otherwise have found favour, are thereby made to appear as uninteresting and vexatious bores.

I will try to avoid falling into this error, and only tell you enough to enable you to understand the peculiarities of mine.

You may have noticed how great a variety exists in the characters and dispositions of the members of every large family, and will not be surprised to hear that the same individuality of character shows itself in the family of Funds and Stocks.

In introducing you to the steadiest and most reliable of my children, I feel that I am putting you in the way of deriving real advantage. If, however, you prefer the less worthy, the more daring and speculative, I shall feel that no blame attaches to me.

Have you ever remarked, in your round of visits among your friends, that it is almost possible to tell the character of host and hostess by the people you meet there, and even by the servants who wait upon you—all seem to take the tone of the house? I notice this specially among my children. For example, my "Three per Cent. Consols" and my "New Three's," whom I select as specially suited to be your friends, have the most courteous, kindly, sober and religious class of visitors; on the faces of all, old and young, clergy and laity, there is an expression of repose and security and "well-to-doism" which is charming; while, on the other hand, the faces and manners of those who visit some of my other children are so wild, so haggard, so restless, that you cannot help wishing that some good fairy would give them a soothing syrup, or else insist on their choosing safer friends; but if you ever pay me a visit, and use your eyes, you will see more of this than, as a mother, I can tell you.

Against one thing, however, I am, as your friend, bound to warn you. Listen to no one who proposes to let you have money at a very cheap rate, while at the same time he offers to pay you large interest on it. More I cannot say at present.

Closely connected with me, and in my neighbourhood, stands a most mysterious building, known as the Stock Exchange. Its chief entrance is in Capel-court, Bartholomew-lane.

None may pass within its portals but those specially privileged, still I may tell you something about it without breaking through any of the barriers which the inhabitants have set up between the public and themselves.

This Stock Exchange is an association of about two thousand persons, all men, of course, who meet together in Capel-court, and who agree to be governed by a committee of thirty, chosen from among themselves.

To the outside world, all the members are known by the name of "stockbrokers," but inside the mysterious building they divide themselves into two classes—"stockjobbers" and "stockbrokers."

Whether they be one or the other, their lives, occupations, fortunes and reputations are bound up with the Stocks and Funds. They live for them and they live on them. They determine their value, they study every

shade of temper exhibited by the family, they decide their rise and fall, they are their interpreters and mouthpieces, they act also as their bodyguard: none can approach but through them.

These two classes, jobbers and brokers, have a distinct work, which I will try to make clear to you.

To start with, the stockjobber does not deal with the public, but the stockbroker does.

You see stocks and shares are marketable commodities; you can buy them, sell them, or transfer them, and the stockjobber is, as it were, the wholesale merchant, and the stockbroker the retail dealer. Let me explain. If you required twenty yards of black silk, you would probably go to Marshall and Snelgrove or to Peter Robinson for it. You certainly would not think of going to a wholesale house in the City for it; and if you did, the article would not be supplied to you in this way—it is contrary to the etiquette of trade.

Just in the same manner, if you wanted to buy some stock, you would go to a stockbroker for it, and not to a stockjobber—the stockbroker occupying the same position as Marshall and Snelgrove, while the stockjobber stands in the place of the wholesale house in the City.

The stockjobber, or wholesale merchant, is always ready both to buy and sell with the broker. If you give an order to the latter, he darts into the Stock Exchange, and without disclosing the nature of his order to the jobber, inquires of him the price of the particular stock which you wish to deal in. The jobber names two prices: one at which he is prepared to buy (the lowest price, of course), the other at which he is willing to sell (the highest price).

Thus, if the price of Consols was given by him as 100¼ to 100½, it would mean that if you wanted him to take some stock of you he would give you £100 5s. for each £100 of stock; and that if you desired to buy some stock of him, you must pay him £100 10s. for each £100.

These prices are the limits which the jobber sets himself. He is often ready to give more or to sell for less than the prices he at first names, according to what is known as the state of the market.

The profits of the jobber and the broker are not of the same kind; the jobber makes his money out of the difference between the price at which he buys the stock of you and sells it to someone else.

The broker charges you a small percentage on the cost of the stock by way of commission for his services in the matter; this does not include stamp duty or fee, but otherwise he undertakes any incidental service which may be necessary to give you the full proprietorship of the stock.

Stockjobbers, or wholesale stock merchants, are, as you see, very necessary, for brokers could not at all times accommodate their customers; it might be that one would want to sell at a moment when there was no one to buy; as it is, however, all is made easy by the jobbers, who are at all times ready both to buy and sell, and to almost any amount.

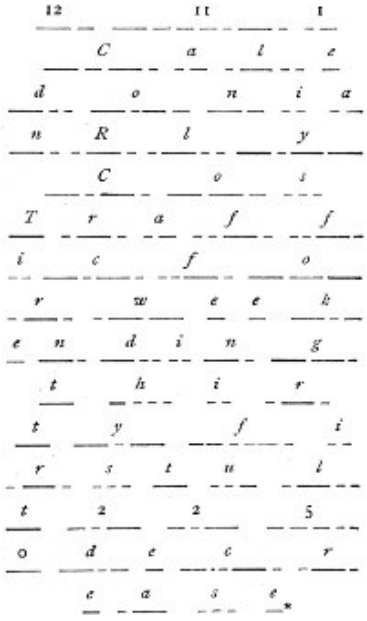
It does sometimes happen that they promise to sell more than they possess, and then they have to borrow and pay for the use of it on their clearing day, which takes place once a month for Consols and similar securities, and once a fortnight for other stocks within the Exchange. It would never do for members of the Stock Exchange to fall short of their obligations.

The mystery that has always hung about this building has greatly increased since it has been in combination with the Exchange Telegraph Company of London, with all its scientific developments and its electric currents. Between this bureau and the Stock Exchange ghostly, silent messages pass the livelong day concerning the health, the value, the rise and the fall of the various stocks and funds, and in a few seconds these mysterious messages are wafted through the length and breadth of the land.

I am a curious, inquisitive old lady, and as there were many points in these mysterious proceedings I could not understand, I went to the bureau a short time back, and begged Mr. Wilfred King, the courteous and clever secretary of the company, to make them clear to me.

I was very interested in what he said about the rapidity with which the messages are transmitted. He assured me that the result of the last Derby was known all over London before the horses had had time to stop after they had passed the winning-post; and, again, that during the last Parliamentary session the debates, by means of this company, were known at the Crystal Palace before they reached the smoking-room of the House of Commons.

As I stood watching the clever instrument pouring out silently and persistently its yards of tape messages, I asked as a favour that Mr. King would cut off a piece, that I might show it to you. You will see that the language is conveyed by means of simple lines, over which he was so kind as to write the letters so represented—



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The following little sketch will give you some idea of the instrument and its working:—

I should like you to know more of this wonderful place; but it belongs to my life only inasmuch as it carries my messages so silently and rapidly that people hundreds of miles away can do business with me in the same hour, and the result is that many thousands of pounds pass through my hands in a day, which might otherwise have remained idle.

You will possibly feel surprised to hear that on an average six millions of pounds[2] are daily passed in London, without a single coin being used, and without any inconvenience or fatigue; whereas such a sum as this, if paid in gold or silver, would necessitate the carrying backward and forward over many miles some hundred tons weight.

Like many other gigantic transactions, it is brought about in an insignificant building in a court leading out of Lombard-street, and therefore close to my residence.

It is not a mysterious place like the Stock Exchange, but its power of working is so wonderful as to be quite beyond the power of woman to take in.

It transfers more money in one week than the whole quantity of gold coin in the kingdom amounts to; and not the least wonderful thing about it is that the entire work is performed by about thirty well trained clerks, in the most exact, regular, and simple manner.

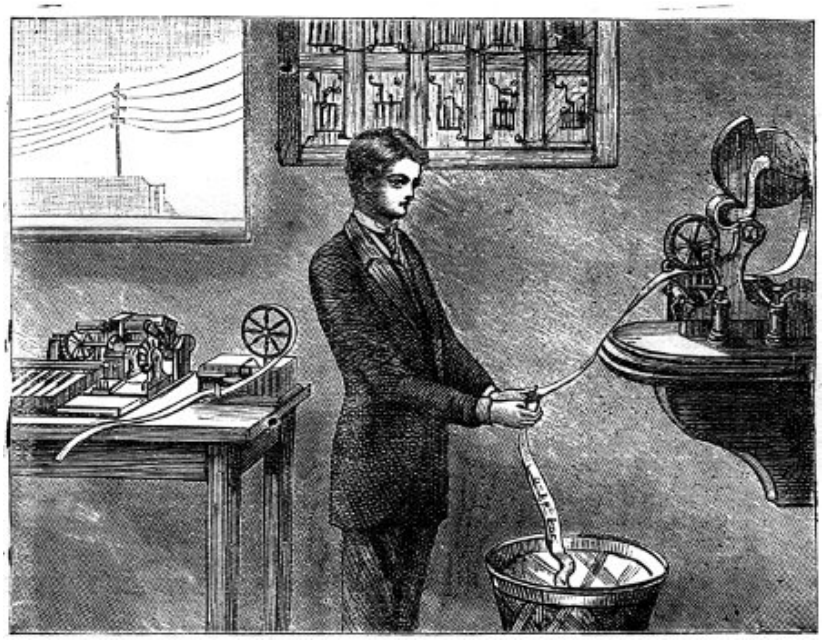
The place I am speaking of is the Bankers' Clearing House—not to be confounded with that in the Stock Exchange. It was established in 1775 by bankers who desired a central place where they might conduct their clearing, or balancing, and their needs led them to the invention of a simple and ingenious method of economising the use of money. Almost all their payments are in the form of cheques upon bankers.

The system of clearing is quite as important in money matters as division of labour is in manufactures, and deserves a much more thorough explanation than I can give here; and my only excuse for mentioning it at all is to show you how wonderfully different my position is now, strengthened as it is by the development of science, knowledge, and experience, from what it was in my early days.

While my transactions have increased a thousandfold, money, labour, and time have in an equal degree been economised.

I thought myself very rich formerly with a fortune of £1,200,000, and I considered that I and my household had a great deal to do in the management of it, and the work which fell to my lot. Dear me! I can call back the picture of even a hundred and twenty years ago. My own house was so small that passers-by could scarcely recognise it; the population of London was only half a million, and there was but one bridge over the Thames connecting my side of the City with Southwark; and as to that mysterious building, the Stock Exchange, it did not exist. You know, also, for I have told you, that my directors only employed fifty-four secretaries and clerks, and that their united salaries did not exceed £4,350. The contrast between then and now is marvellous even to me.

Only look at it. The proprietors' capital is now fourteen millions and a half instead of £1,200,000; I am the Banker of the Government; I receive the Public Revenue; I pay the National Debt; I receive and register transfers of stock from one public creditor to another, and I make the quarterly payment of the dividends. I have undertaken also the management of the Indian Debt, as well as the Funded Debt of the Metropolitan Board of Works. What do you think of that for a woman old as I am in years? You must own that, notwithstanding my age, I am young and vigorous in thought, in action, and in organisation, otherwise how could I get through my work as I do?



"GHOSTLY, SILENT MESSAGES."

My profits, too, are, when compared with those in my young days, enormous. You wanted to know, if I remember rightly, how I lived, and how I obtained the money to pay you your dividends; and whether, in this

respect, I was worthy of your trust.

Well, I will tell you a few of the ways in which I make money. I obtain large sums by discounting Exchequer Bills; then there is the interest upon the capital stock in the hands of the Government; I receive, also, an allowance for managing the Public Debt. Up to 1786 I used to get £562 10s. for every million; it was then reduced to £450 a million; and since 1808 I get £300 per million up to 600 millions, and £150 per million beyond—a nice little sum for you to work out.

A further source of income is interest on loans, on mortgages, profit on purchase of bullion, and many other small matters. I am careful, you see, not to have all my eggs in one basket.

For help in all this work I employ between eight and nine hundred officers and servants, whose salaries exceed £210,000 a year.

I think I am a good mistress. I am sure I do my best to take care of all my people, and I am acquainted with every one of them, even with those who perform what is called menial service (I don't like that word; every service is honourable, if well performed); but I do confess that I am extremely strict and particular and I am intolerant of mistakes, from whatever cause they arise, because they dim the lustre of my honour.

I think on the whole I have reason to be proud of my servants. Indeed, I have a firm belief that no lady in the land is served better or more faithfully.

I think you will like to hear a little about the way I manage my people.

First of all, I make every increase of salary to depend upon punctuality in the morning, knowing as I do its importance. I am equally particular that those living within the house shall keep good hours at night.

Then I do not mind giving occasional leave of absence, if urgently required; but I don't allow anyone to take what is called "French leave" without paying a fine for each day's absence.

When my people get too old for service, I like to feel that they will not suffer want; so I give them a pension in proportion to the salary they are receiving at the time they retire. I spend about £40,000 in this way—a spending which has nothing but pleasure in it for me.

I started a library some time ago for the younger members of my household, by giving them a large room and £500 for books. It has since been kept going by themselves, each subscriber paying eight shillings a year. Between three and eight on certain days in the week you may see numbers of them making their way thither for reading and recreation. Those who prefer it may have books to take home. One of my representatives is always present during these hours, just to show our interest in their recreation.

The kind feeling, however, is not at all one-sided, as I have had frequent opportunities of judging. Times of trouble, panic, and sickness never fail to show me the love and devotion of my people, and that they have not hesitated to sacrifice their lives for my safety is a matter of history.

During the hours of the night, when I take my well-earned sleep, I am watched over by my faithful servants, who take it in turn, two at the time, to keep watch, in which loving duty they are assisted by a company of Foot Guards.

So you see on the whole I am a happy woman, a very busy one, and I think a safe one for you to trust.

(*To be continued.*)

OUR TOUR IN NORTH ITALY.

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By TWO LONDON BACHELORS.

ST. GIORGIO, MAGGIORE.

Our longing expectations were fulfilled, and we were vouchsafed a lovely evening for our entrance into Venice. By the time the train reached Mæstre all traces of the storm had disappeared, the sky was dark blue, and glittered with innumerable stars and a full moon—just such an ideal night as one would choose for getting one's first impressions of the most poetical city in the world.

From Padua to Mæstre there is nothing remarkable; the same seemingly eternal plain has to be traversed; but as the train draws near to the last-named city one begins to realise that one is really approaching the Queen of the Adriatic.

At Mæstre we began to feel the sea breezes, and as the train rushed on to St. Giuliana we caught glimpses of the far-off lights of Venice reflected in the water. And now commences the vast bridge which takes the train over the lagune. This bridge is between three and four miles in length, and contains 222 arches.

Our excitement was great when we reached the lagune, and the train seemed actually rushing through the water.

At first the buildings of the distant city looked like huge black rocks, though the hundreds of lights reflected in the water told one of the approach to habitation. But as we drew near, the churches, towers, campanili, and palaces became almost distinguishable, telling out black against the starlit sky, and seemingly rising from the middle of the sea—an exquisitely poetical scene, with which no one could be disappointed.

Of course, we can understand that approaching Venice by day is quite another matter. Then the shallowness of the lagune (the water is sometimes not more than three feet deep) is realised; then all the ruin, shabby detail, bad restoration, and bizarre Gothic work of the city are seen at a glance. The beautiful moonlight night, however, told us of none of these defects, but emphasised the strange poetry of this singular city, with its wonderful history and associations, built in the middle of the sea.

The approach to Venice by gondola in former times must have been even more romantic, as the puffing and the screeching of a steam-engine brings one's mind back to the nineteenth century. Though, at the same time, rushing across the lagune in a railway-train at night produces a somewhat remarkable sensation.

The train took about nine minutes to cross the bridge, and then glided quietly into the railway station at Venice. There were only about half a dozen passengers besides ourselves, and there was none of that noise and bustle which is usually so great a nuisance in terminal stations. On alighting from our railway carriage a porter, with true Italian politeness, asked us the name of our hotel, and, conducting us to the side of the canal, handed us over to a gondolier.

Everything helped to make the scene as poetical as possible. The night kept glorious, and there was not a sound to be heard. Our gondolier, a tall, dark man with a thick black beard, was a beau ideal of his class, and the hearse-like gondola being drawn up to the landing-stage, the bachelors determined to see a little of Venice by moonlight before going to their hotel.

THE BRONZE HORSES—ST. MARK'S.

In a few minutes we found ourselves in the Grand Canal—the great marble palaces rising on either bank, brilliantly illuminated here and there by the beams of a full moon, and the lights from the graceful Gothic windows reflected in the still water in long streams of light; the domes and campanili of the almost innumerable churches piercing the sky, and looking gigantic, from their details being shrouded in the deep shadows of night; while their outlines were made still more prominent and more distinctly defined by the clear, sharp moonlight.

One of these great campanili had an almost startling effect as the gondola passed it. It seemed to interpose itself between the moon and ourselves. We never saw any building which, for the moment, seemed so gigantic. On we went—past the opening of many a narrow canal, looking on one side into impenetrable gloom, and on the other into almost magical light. Here and there was some exquisitely traceried window, illuminated like burnished silver. The plash of the oar and the ripple of the water against the gondola added to the charm of the scene, and before long the strains of distant music enhanced the poetry of that most lovely night.

A huge arch soon came in sight, spanning the great canal. Need we say that this was the Rialto? The gondola shot beneath it, and wound its way along past a sharp curve in the canal through another bridge, and on our right the Church of the Salute came in sight, and we soon emerged on to the broad and lake-like water of the Giudecca. To our left was a garden, and a little behind it rose the group of domes and the lofty isolated campanili of St. Mark. We knew it was St. Mark's, and were therefore not surprised at its exquisite beauty, though, owing to the intervening buildings, we could only see its domes and campanile. The Ducal Palace,

strange to say, did not present so striking an appearance by moonlight, owing to its somewhat box-like outline. But still the deep gloom of its arcades somewhat repaid the mind for the disappointment experienced in its general aspect.

Of course, we looked out for the Bridge of Sighs, which was buried, as it should be, in profound gloom. It was appropriate that this tragic structure should be hidden in the deepest shadow of our first view of Venice, just as we recollect the dome of the Salute forming its greatest light. On the one side was typified human suffering, human woe, tyranny, cruelty, and oppression, and on the other the salvation which came to us through the Healer, whose purity is rightly symbolled in the clear white dome of the church.

These two buildings, so typical of human life, are rightly placed. The one at the junction of the two great canals, where they expand almost into a lake, lifts its marble dome, soaring up to the skies, and everyone asks as they come in sight of it, "What is that?" The answer is, "That is the Salute" (Salvation). Happy omen for a city where such a sign is always visible amidst the surrounding gloom! The other building, half concealed, and skulking away over a gloomy canal, like secret sin deep buried in the human heart. We know it is there, and that its loathsome presence will be found when sought for, and though the gloom of night may for a time conceal it, yet with the daylight it will be visible, carrying with it condemnation.

More mundane thoughts, however, filled our minds, and we began to realise the fact that in ordering our gondolier to take us a "bit of a round of Venice" before landing us at our hotel, we were running serious risk of going to bed supperless, if not of being shut out altogether. So we directed him to retrace—we can't say his steps, but let us say his course—and, after passing down one or two narrow canals, we found ourselves at the steps of our hotel.

It was not, however, without a sigh and a kind of feeling almost approaching to dread that we left the bright moonlight of the Grand Canal to penetrate the dark, silent, and gloomy little streams that run between the high walls of the houses. Gloomy they are at all times, these narrow quayless canals, but how infinitely more so in the night, and how their lugubrious aspect impresses itself upon one after emerging from the beautiful scenes which we have just attempted to describe.

The first thing we did on arriving at our hotel was to see whether any of our friends had written to us, and we were pleased to find quite a goodly pile of letters awaiting us. How pleasant it is to hear from our friends when abroad, and how doubly dear those friends seem to us when hundreds of miles separate us from them.

A rather doubtful compliment this. But is it not always true that "distance lends enchantment?" When absent from those we like, we are inclined to think over their good qualities and those characteristics that we admire, and to forget all those differences of opinion and little waywardnesses that are so irritating to us when we are with them. Of course, it is different with those we really love; even then, however, absence intensifies the affection, but from a different reason, arising from an almost nervous anxiety for their health, happiness, and prosperity.

After reading our letters, we began to discuss our first sight of Venice, and we both agreed that, up to the present, our fondest expectations had been more than realised. Little did we think that the morrow would bring its disappointments—that in the short space of twenty-four hours we should underrate Venice, as much as we now exaggerated its beauties—and that we should not gain a correct and "lasting" impression of its peculiar and unique character, until many days had passed away. In fact, one does not entirely form one's impression of Venice until it has been left, thought over, and compared with other places.

From the city itself we called to our memory the wonderful history of Venice, at one time the first maritime power in Europe, and so like our own country in many ways.

Our girls may remember the importance of Milan and Verona during the periods that the Viscontis and Sforzas ruled the former city, and the Scaligers the latter. The history of these two cities, however, is simply insignificant when compared with that of the great republic of the Doges.

Venice is said to have been founded about the year A.D. 450, by the inhabitants of Aquileia, Padua, Altinum, &c., who were driven out of their cities, and their homes utterly destroyed by the cruel Attila, who was at this time overrunning Italy. The persecuted inhabitants flying before the barbarians, as a last resource crossed the lagune and built a town on the islets which had formed in the Adriatic.

Goethe says, "It was no idle fancy their colonists fled to these islands; it was no mere whim which impelled those who followed to combine with them; necessity taught them to look for security in a highly disadvantageous situation, which afterwards became most advantageous, enduing them with talent, when the whole of the Northern world was immersed in gloom. Their increase and their wealth were the necessary consequence. New dwellings arose close against dwellings, rocks took the place of sand and marsh, houses sought the sky, being forced, like trees enclosed in a narrow compass, to seek in height what was denied to them in breadth. Being niggard of every inch of ground, as having been from the outset compressed into a narrow compass, they allowed no more room for the streets than was absolutely necessary for separating one row of houses from another, and affording a narrow way for passengers. Moreover, water was at once street, square, and promenade. The Venetian was forced to become a new creature, and Venice can only be compared with itself."

The colonists, under the protection of the Byzantine Empire, must have grown in importance and prosperity, though their early history is very obscure, and it was not until the commencement of the ninth century that Venice became a really important city.

The exact date of the election of the first Dux or Doge (Paulucius Anafestus) is not known, but it must have been either at the end of the sixth or the commencement of the seventh century. The year A.D. 809 was important for Venice, as the colonists in that year defended themselves against Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, and throwing over all foreign influence, they commenced their career of independence.

The next important event was the bringing of the body of St. Mark to Venice in A.D. 828. The evangelist was thenceforth made the patron saint of the city, and his emblem, the lion, became the arms of the republic. The Venetians had not as yet made foreign conquests, but the great Doge, Enrico Dandolo, who went to the Fourth Crusade, conquered Constantinople in 1204, and commenced the grand era of Venice. The breaking up of the Byzantine Empire was a great opportunity for Venice, the republic gaining possession of several islands in the Greek Archipelago, together with numerous cities on the Adriatic.

As can well be imagined, the growing power of the republic was watched with jealous eyes by the other Italian States, especially by Genoa, at this time very powerful. The rivalry between the last-named city and Venice caused innumerable wars and misery to both combatants. At first Genoa was successful, but the Doge Andrea Dandolo completely defeated the Genoese in 1352, an event which made Venice the most powerful city in Northern Italy.

The successor to Doge Andrea Dandolo, Marino Falieri, by secret means endeavoured to upset the government of Venice and make himself king. His plot was discovered, however, and he was beheaded on the Giants' Stairs in the Palace of the Doges.

The Genoese were at war again with the republic in 1379; but a lasting peace was concluded in 1381. From this year until about 1450 Venice carried everything before it; Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and numerous other North Italian cities, were added to the republic, and by the year 1420 the whole of the east coast of Italy surrendered to the power of Venice. But perhaps the grandest victories were those gained over the Turks, as in these wars Venice undoubtedly saved Italy the calamity of a Mohammedan invasion.

It was during the years 1370 and 1450 that Venice was building up her commercial prosperity, which at the latter date had made her the greatest maritime and commercial city in the world.

But as in individuals, so in countries. We go on increasing in health and strength up to a certain age, after which comes the inevitable decline. "First from age to age we ripe and ripe, and then from age to age we rot and rot." The decline of Venice is soon told. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, and the

discovery of the new Indian sea-routes were terrible blows to the republic, from which, indeed, it never recovered. The Turks, with whom the Venetians were always at war, proved in the end victorious, and took possession of the eastern colonies of the republic.

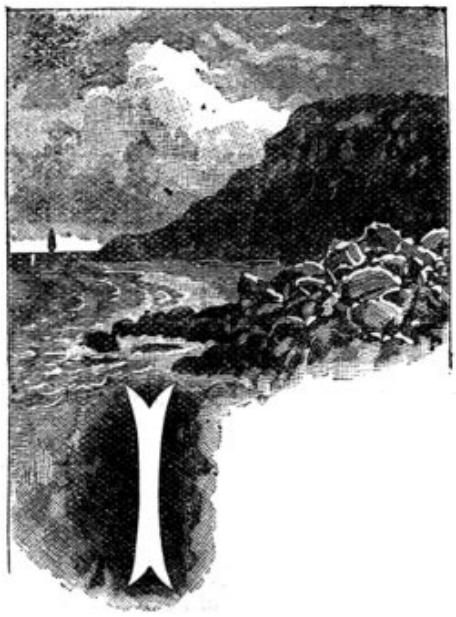
And then came the great shame of Venice's history—the alliance with the Turk against the Christian powers, the sacrifice of Rhodes, and the selfish abandonment of that great Christian hero, Lisle Adam; while, as a modern writer says, "the Venetians and other merchants were trafficking their goods and their souls at the same time with the enemies of the Church, and dishonouring their Christian calling." A sad Nemesis was, however, in store for Venice, and, notwithstanding her crimes, we cannot read unmoved of the last Doge embracing the banner of St. Mark and then flinging it into a grave over which a solemn funeral ceremony was performed. Napoleon, who regarded neither art, poetry, nor history, when they stood in the way of his ambition, was approaching Venice. Resistance was impossible, and the banner which had led the Venetians to so many victories must not fall into the hands of the invader, so, with tears and sighs, it was reverently placed in the grave.

(*To be continued*.)

UNCLE JASPER.

By ALICE KING.

CHAPTER III.



made my way forward as quickly as I could, endeavouring, as I went, to make believe in my own mind that I was not much frightened, and did not very much dislike the whole situation—in fact, that it was rather an amusing and interesting one. But, after all, it was an extremely poor, thin make-belief indeed. The darkness grew thicker and thicker, the outlines of surrounding objects more and more indistinct; the wind rose higher and higher, and went sweeping by with a wild, dreary wail; the rain began to stream down as if a couple of rivers or more were being emptied from the sky on to the earth. I had brought no waterproof with me, I had only on a mantle of light summer cloth, and, as well may be supposed, I was soon enjoying the comfortable certainty that I was getting wet through as rapidly as I could. Yes, there was no denying it; it would decidedly be better to be in bed than here, even if I was expecting next morning the arrival of the ugliest ogre uncle that ever appeared in a fairy tale.

I felt a most real and lively inclination to sit down and cry; but as there were some small shreds of heroism still hanging about me, I did not do it—I persevered onward, instead. Things were, however, becoming most uncompromisingly worse and worse. Hitherto there had been at the side of the road fences of some kind, the dim outlines of which had been, in a certain degree, a guide to me; but now I had got out on to an open common, where there was nothing round me save an expanse of what seemed immeasurable darkness, and where the wind and the rain beat upon me more violently and pitilessly than ever. I soon became aware, too, of another very unpleasant fact: I had evidently got off the road, for I could feel the damp, spongy-ground of the common underneath my feet. I tried to find my way back to it, but all in vain; I seemed only to get into wetter and less solid ground.

It was so dark now, I was so completely enveloped in thickest blackness, that I could not have seen even a stone wall had it been in front of me; but it would have been some consolation, some reassurance, only to have felt it when I stretched out my hand before me; instead of that, however, when I extended my arm it went groping about helplessly in illimitable space. The storm appeared to be finding a cruel pleasure in playing me all sorts of unkind tricks, for now it flung the folds of my mantle over my head, and now it poured a waterspout down my back. The ground under my feet was growing every minute more swampy, and sometimes I sank in ankle deep; two or three times I found that, by way of a little change, I had stepped into a gutter, which caused a refreshing shower of muddy water to come splashing upward to meet and mingle in friendly amity with the raindrops that pelted down from above. The sprites of earth and air may possibly have found much satisfaction in this meeting, but most decidedly I did not, nor did my luckless petticoats and stockings.

All at once I found myself making a most undignified descent from an upright position; I had stumbled over some object which was lying in my way. There was no saving my untrustworthy feet; the next instant I was lying prostrate on the dripping grass, with my head in what seemed to be a shallow puddle. I was going to try to pick myself up again as quickly as I could, when there rose around me a series of long-drawn-out, horrid,

incomprehensible sounds, each of which appeared to strike a rough note in a discordant gamut, while in among them there was a tumultuous, confused jangle of bells, as if a hundred tambourines were ringing together. Then there came a sensation of having my face swept with a drenched mop that was composed of very long, shaggy hair, and was passed and re-passed over my cheeks and forehead, and used my eyes and mouth in a most unpleasantly free-and-easy fashion, and after that I was trampled upon by a succession of small, but by no means airy feet—a process which it is far more agreeable to describe than to feel. This over, there followed a noise of scampering and rushing and hurrying across the common, until footsteps and bells all died away in the far distance, mingling with the chorus of the storm.

My head was so dizzy and bewildered after this adventure that I lay still for two or three minutes, utterly oblivious of all Miss Dolly's well-instilled principles with regard to damp ground and rheumatism. When, however, I had recovered myself sufficiently slowly to rise to my feet, I began to realise what had happened. I had fallen in with one of the numerous herds of goats which we had often seen in our drives, and which, no doubt, frequented the common. I must have stumbled over one member of the flock as they lay huddled together, and this must have startled and aroused the whole band. Yes, it was all plain enough now. It was a horribly prosaic, unromantic incident, and a horribly uncomfortable one at the same time.

If ever a young lady made vows never again to run away from any of her relations—no, not even from a forty-seventh cousin—it was I, Beatrice Warmington, that night. On I went, wading through the heavy, marshy ground, shivering with external cold, yet at intervals hot with inward fear. There seemed no possible way out of my self-incurred difficulties. The darkness was as dense as ever, the storm as unrelenting. I had completely broken down, and was sobbing bitterly. What was to become of me? And the wind answered mockingly, "What?"

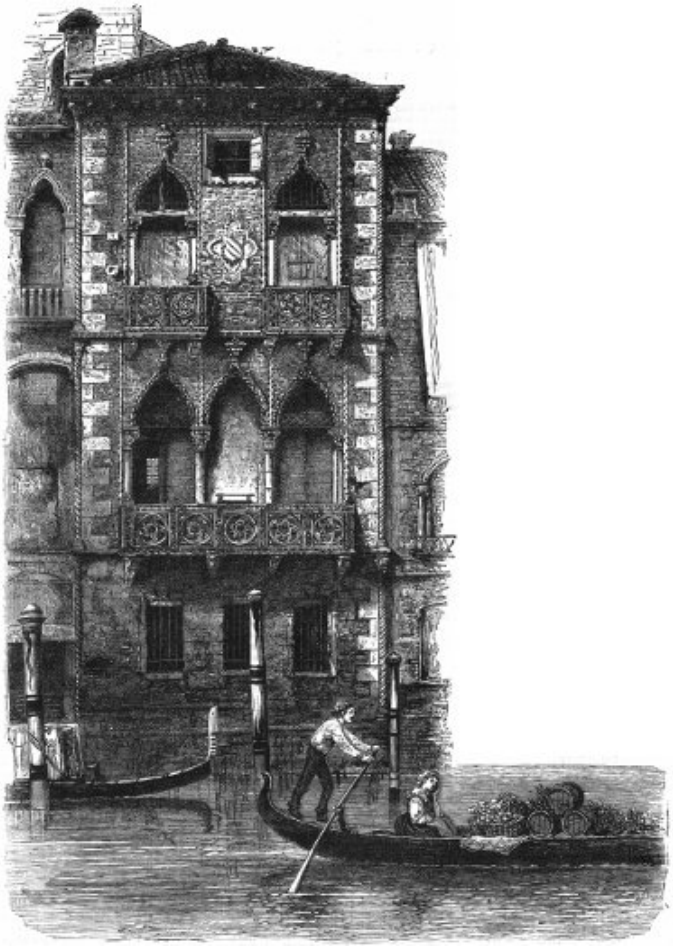
My situation appeared to me, in truth, to be growing one of real danger. I was becoming so weary that I did not think I could drag my tired limbs much further; a half-stupor was creeping over my brain, and my senses were beginning to be partially numbed and blunted with terror and fatigue. It seemed to me that I must soon sink down and glide into unconsciousness. I heard in the wind the voice of Lily calling me, half sadly, half reproachfully; and with the thought of Lily came the thought of prayer. But prayer had never been to me what it was to Lily; I could not lean on it as she would have done in my situation. I strove to get hold of words which would tell of my sorrow for my rebellious wilfulness, which would be a cry to my Father above; but they slipped away from my lips, and would not come when I wanted them, as they would have come like helpful angels to Lily.

I was now evidently beginning to descend a slope of some sort; I could tell that from the feeling of the ground as I trod it. The earth I was walking upon appeared to be less swampy than it had hitherto been, but it was more slippery. Before long this slipperiness became something that there was no contending against; my feet lost all power of stopping themselves; I was sliding swiftly downward, as if I was upon ice. Whither was I going? The question flashed confusedly through my bewildered brain in the midst of the storm and the darkness, and still I flew forward at always increasing speed. All my senses began to float into a dim whirlpool, and I could scarcely take firm hold of any distinct idea.

Suddenly there was a sensation of extreme coldness up as high as my waist, and at the same time a consciousness that my involuntary downward flight had ceased; I was standing still again at last, but where was I standing? I stretched out my hand, and bent forward; I could feel water round me. Now that I was at last still, I could collect in some measure my shattered intelligence; I reflected for some moments, and came to the conclusion that I must have slid down the sloping side of the common, rendered especially slippery by the rain, and must have landed in some stream which ran at the bottom of the declivity.

I was wet up to my waist, but at least I was off the common at last; I groped about cautiously with my hands, keeping my feet firm where they stood. I soon found the bank of the stream, which must, I felt certain, be but a shallow and a narrow one; I made a spring in the direction in which my hands had gone, and was quickly, with a great feeling of thankfulness which thrilled from heart to brain, standing once more on solid ground that was neither swampy nor slippery.

I had apparently now reached again some road; it was still too dark for me to distinguish anything, but the wind and the rain were less violent here than they had been on the open common. This made a small improvement in my condition, but still there seemed no more hope than there had been before, of my getting out of my difficulties. I moved onward, it is true, but it was quite without there being any distinct notion in my mind of any end or object in my proceeding forward. However, anything was better than standing shivering there by the stream; movement would, at least, keep me warm.



ON THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE.

I had advanced thus some little distance, when my further course was impeded by some object in front of me. I extended my hand, and what it touched was a cold iron bar; I moved my arm from side to side, and still it was iron bars with which my inquiring fingers came in contact. It must be an iron paling of some kind, I thought, and then began, while I lent wearily against the bars, to ask myself vaguely what kind of places are generally enclosed within such a fence.

While these questions passed through my mind, the bars suddenly began to give way before the pressure of my whole weight, which I was supporting upon them; the circumstance nearly caused me another fall, but I saved myself just in time. Then I made a discovery that sent a gleam of indistinct hope flashing through me; what I had been leaning against was an iron gate, I could feel its fastening now quite clearly, and hear the little click it made as I moved it up and down with my finger. Did not the existence of such a gate warrant the notion that some house must be near at hand? The gates into fields are not generally like this gate, I argued.

I advanced some steps, and then I became aware of another fact; I was certainly standing underneath trees; I could hear the wind in their branches, could feel the raindrops that dripped from them. I was pausing in doubt and new uncertainty, considering what I might infer from this, when, borne on the wind, there reached me a sound which was like the sound of voices. My heart gave a great leap, all my senses went into the sense of hearing; I listened as eagerly as if I had been catching the rarest notes of music; yes, voices were decidedly drawing nearer and nearer to me, and with the voices there approached a glimmer of light.

"If we can't get in by the glass door, we shall by the store-room window."

Such were the words that reached my ears, spoken in a man's voice in French.

"We'll get in quick enough if we can only reach the house," said another man's voice, in the same language, and a very rough, harsh voice it was this time, too.

"We must be very quiet and silent in our movements," rejoined the first speaker.

"Not even the old dog shall catch a sound of us—no, not even if he is sleeping with one eye open," replied the other.

"There must be a house, then, close in this neighbourhood," I thought, "and this must be the way up to it, and surely, surely," and now a great terror seized me, "these must be burglars who are going to break into it."

An agony of fear, worse than any by far that I had experienced on the lonely common, now took possession of me, as I heard the steps of the two men drawing nearer and nearer. I went on one side and held my breath, hoping that, in the darkness, they would pass me unnoticed; but I must have made some sound that betrayed me, for the next instant a hand was on my arm, and I heard a voice in my ear.

(*To be concluded.*)

"SHE COULDN'T BOIL A POTATO;"

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OR,

THE IGNORANT HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE.

BY DORA HOPE.

Two very happy events happened in Ella's household at the beginning of this month; her father came to see her, and her aunt came downstairs for the first time.

Mrs. Hastings had been feeling rather anxious about her daughter for some time. The young housekeeper had had a good deal of worry and anxiety, and her letters had quite unconsciously betrayed the fact that she felt in low spirits. Her depression soon disappeared, however, when her father came, and his strong common sense and masculine way of ignoring the little trials of housekeeping were as good a tonic to her mind as the sharp walks he took her were invigorating to her body.

Thinking her looking pale and languid, Mr. Hastings inquired as to her daily exercise, and found that on many days she did not go out at all, except to feed the fowls, or gather a few flowers from the garden, as her household duties took her so long that she felt she had no time for walks. Mr. Hastings considered that this quite explained her want of colour and appetite, and insisted that it must be altered. In vain Ella pleaded that it was impossible for her to go out always, and would be still more so when the nurse left. Mr. Hastings was quite unmoved by all her arguments, and insisted on her promising to take some open air exercise every day, even if it were only a quarter of an hour's run up and down the quiet lane behind the house.

He also planned in his own mind to send Ella's two brothers, Robin and Norman, to Hapsleigh for their Easter holidays. They were good boys, who would not make unnecessary noise in the house, and they would supply a complete change of thought for their sister.

Nor was this the only alteration Mr. Hastings urged in Ella's daily routine. In her restless anxiety about her aunt and the housekeeping, she had entirely omitted all her own studies. The piano was rarely opened, and all the useful books her mother had packed up for her still lay untouched at the bottom of her trunk. Mr. Hastings strongly disapproved of this, and pointed out to Ella that not only was it a great pity for her to lose the knowledge she had spent so many years in acquiring, but that it was very bad for her health, both bodily and mental, to give up all interests in life, save the cares of a household; nor would she be an agreeable companion for her aunt or their visitors if she had no topics of conversation more interesting than the difficulties of servants, or the best food for fowls; it was quite imperative, therefore, that she should set apart a certain time every day for reading and music.

Mr. Hastings was quite ready to acknowledge that Ella would find it difficult to manage, especially at first, for her inexperience in household matters made her twice as long over them as she would otherwise have been; but she felt she could do it if she made effort, and a little conversation with her father soon convinced her that it was well worth exerting herself for.

In order to make her studies as easy as possible to her, before leaving Hapsleigh Mr. Hastings went through the library with Ella and chose out a selection of books which he thought she would find interesting as well as instructive, for he held very strongly the theory that unless a book interests us, it is waste of time to read it, for though we may imagine ourselves to be getting a great deal of information, if the facts do not take sufficient hold upon the mind to interest it, the knowledge is as soon forgotten as acquired. He was very careful, therefore, in advising a course of reading for Ella, to consult her taste, and to select only those books which she would really enjoy reading.

Nor was this the end of Mr. Hastings's suggestions, for Kate had commissioned her father to explain a new enterprise of her own. She had joined a water-colour sketching club, and, without waiting to consult her, had proposed her sister's name also as a member. Each member was expected to send in an original sketch once a month, the subject being proposed by each in turn. The sketches having all been sent in to the secretary, they were then submitted to a professional artist, who put his initials on the back of the one he considered the best, and wrote a short criticism on each. The portfolio was then sent the round of the members, who each in the same way marked the one they liked best.

Kate had sent a supply of all the necessary materials by her father, with an injunction to Ella to be sure to send in a trial sketch in time for the next month.

Mr. Hastings's visit came to an end all too soon, but not till his loving counsel had done Ella good in every way. His experience smoothed over all her difficulties with an ease which seemed to her almost marvellous, while she was encouraged to fresh exertions by the unstinted praise he gave her for the manner in which she fulfilled the duties of hostess.

To Ella's surprise, when her aunt heard of these new schemes for study she took a deep interest in them, and suggested that Ella should read her instructive books aloud to her. The fresh subjects of interest quite roused the invalid, and Ella had the great satisfaction of finding that the little mental stimulus they produced not only helped to soothe the irritability and restlessness which troubled her, but that as the mind naturally re-acts upon the body, she was actually better in health for it; while, for her own part, Ella found that her aunt's sharp intelligent remarks often cleared up points which would otherwise have been a difficulty to her.

In the sketching, too, her aunt took a great interest, and once, when Ella was lamenting over an effect she could not catch, abruptly asked why she did not get Mr. Dudley to help her.

Ella felt shy of asking him; but shyness had no chance of thriving in her aunt's presence, and Sarah was despatched to ask if he would have half an hour to spare that afternoon. He soon showed Ella where she was wrong, and henceforward was always ready to give her just the advice she needed; and as the weather grew warmer, and made outdoor occupations possible, she was surprised at the many charming "bits" he found for her to sketch in the flat, uninteresting country in which Hapsleigh was situated.

Soon after Mrs. Wilson's new servants arrived, Mrs. Moore, the widow woman whom Ella had engaged as cook, asked her if she might "make so bold as to say, could she not have family prayers for them in the morning; for, not being a very good scholar herself, she could never manage to read her Bible, and Sarah, though a nice steady girl, was not so fond of her Bible as to care to sit and read it to her."

Ella was a good deal dismayed at this suggestion, but promised to think it over and consult her aunt. This was a mere matter of form, for she was sure that her aunt would approve of the suggestion, so that the decision really rested with herself. She felt sure it was the right thing to do; but she was really very bashful, though she dared not say much about it at Hapsleigh, and this seemed to her taking so much upon herself. And what should she read? and when?

A very short reflection decided her that it must be done somehow, and for the rest she had no choice but to consult her aunt.

Mrs. Wilson warmly approved of the idea, but seriously added to Ellen's discomfiture by remarking—

"You had better begin to-morrow, my dear. I wonder we none of us had the sense to think of it before; and, nurse, if you will begin from to-morrow to give me my breakfast punctually, we will have prayers here in my bedroom directly afterwards. Yes, my dear," she went on, in reply to an exclamation of dismay which Ella could not altogether repress, "it is so long since I have attended a service I feel a perfect heathen, and need to be read to quite as much as Mrs. Moore."

And having once taken the idea into her head, nothing would induce Mrs. Wilson to give it up; though, on nurse's advice, she agreed that they should meet in the evening instead of the morning, as being a more convenient time for an invalid.

Mrs. Wilson had one or two books of prayers in the house, but as they were old and most of them rather too long, she told Ella to look through the books beforehand, and select a prayer each day, marking with a pencil which portions to omit. At the same time she talked over with her the most suitable portions of the Bible to select for reading.

"You know, Ella, that, as St. Paul tells us, the whole Bible is given us for our instruction, yet some portions are not easily understood unless a rather long passage is read at a time, and as that cannot be managed at daily prayers, it needs care to choose a portion which gives a complete thought in a small compass, so that those who, like Mrs. Moore, get no other reading during the day, have something definite to carry away with them."

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It was with considerable inward trepidation and a trembling of voice she could not altogether control that Ella made her first attempt at conducting the family prayers the next evening; but she struggled to forget herself, and as she went on her voice grew steadier, till, when they all repeated the Lord's Prayer together in closing, she was able to join in the spirit of the prayer as simply as anyone present.

It was with sincere pleasure that, a few days afterwards, Ella helped her aunt downstairs for the first time; but her delight that her patient had advanced so far towards recovery was mingled with a certain amount of nervousness lest she should find anything to disapprove of in the rooms, which she had not seen since she was first taken ill. For several days the servants had been expending a good deal of hard work on polishing the furniture and rearranging all the ornaments of the sitting-rooms, and Ella had exercised all her skill in arranging flowers to make the rooms look bright to welcome the invalid, so that Mrs. Wilson could not but be pleased, and she expressed her approval with a warmth which greatly gratified Ella, and which sent Sarah into the kitchen with a beaming face to tell Mrs. Moore that—

"Missis do seem pleased like, and she says to me, 'Sarah,' she says, 'I never saw that bookcase look so bright before; why, you must have got a patent polisher.'"

This well-earned praise was very gratifying to all the household, and spurred them on to fresh exertions.

Ella's interests just now were chiefly centred in the fowls. She took the greatest care of the sitting hens, and brought her aunt each day a minute report of their welfare. When the time drew near for the chickens to appear, her eagerness became so great that she would have disturbed them a dozen times in the day to see how they were getting on but for the exhortations of her aunt.

The hens were allowed to remain on the nests the whole of the day before the chickens were due, but were well fed, and had a plentiful supply of water given them. When the day for hatching came, Mrs. Moore refused to go near the nests till late in the afternoon, but at last when she and Ella approached them very quietly, so as not to disturb the hens, a gentle peeping sound announced that some chickens had already broken their way into the outer world. They found, indeed, that one hen had hatched all her chickens, but the other had still two eggs unbroken. Mrs. Moore removed the hen which had finished her work, and while Ella went into ecstasies over the fluffy round balls, she made the mother dust herself well with the ashes sprinkled about, and then escort her lively children to a clean new nest, while the old one was burnt and the box which had contained it was put into the open air to sweeten.

The mother hen was given a good meal of barley and plenty of water, but no food was given to the chickens.

In answer to Ella's remonstrances, Mrs. Moore explained that chickens need no food for from twelve to twenty-four hours after they are hatched, and, indeed, are much better without anything.

Mrs. Moore then brought a basin of warm water (heated to 105 degrees), and placing it near the other nest, deftly removed the two still unhatched eggs without disturbing the hen, and put them in the water. In a few minutes one of the eggs began to bob about in a curious manner, whereupon Mrs. Moore took it out and returned it to the hen. The other one remaining still, she held it close to Ella's ear, and shook it for her to hear the fluid contents shaking about, proving that the egg was useless.

The shells of the hatched eggs were then removed, and Ella was much interested in noticing that the two ends of each shell had been laid one inside the other, so as to take up the least possible space; but Mrs. Moore could not answer her questions as to whether it is the chicken or the hen who does this, whether it is done deliberately, or as the result of the chicken's struggles to free itself from the shell.

The next morning the last egg was hatched, and the two "hen-wives" congratulated each other on having fifteen eggs hatched out of sixteen set.

For the first day or two the chickens were fed on hard-boiled eggs, chopped up and mixed with breadcrumbs or oatmeal; and for a time they needed such constant feeding that Ella's generous mind was quite satisfied, and the chickens soon knew her so well that when she appeared they would come running to meet her, and flutter up all over her dress and into her lap.

The hens were put into coops and brought into the garden, and as long as they were too young to do mischief, the chickens were left loose to run about where they liked near the mother's coop.

It was in the midst of these cares and pleasures that Ella's two brothers, Robin and Norman, came for their ten days' visit. Robin was nearly sixteen, and Norman fourteen, and, considering their ages, they were good, considerate boys. For the first night and day after their arrival they were extremely subdued, and afraid of disturbing their aunt, but this unnatural quietness soon wore off, and Ella found her powers of mind and body fully exercised in supplying them with amusements which would not excite or tire her aunt too much.

Happily the weather was fine, and the boys delighted in long excursions into the country after mythical rare ferns, herons' nests, or other treasures. Frequently Ella went with them, and she told Mrs. Mobberly, much to that lady's amusement, that they made her feel like a child again.

Mrs. Mobberly, being very anxious to encourage the feeling in Ella, that although she had reached the mature age of eighteen her youth was not quite a thing of the past, came in several time to spend a few hours with Mrs. Wilson, so that Ella was set free for a long day's excursion with her brothers.

(*To be continued.*)

VARIETIES.

Hints for Travellers.

Take one-fourth more money than your estimated expenses, and have a good supply of small change.

Acquaint yourself with the geography of the route and region of travel.

Arrange, if possible, to have but a single article of luggage to look after.

Dress substantially. Better be too hot for two or three hours at noon than be cold for the remainder of the twenty-four.

Arrange, under all circumstances, to be at the place of starting fifteen or twenty minutes before the time, thus allowing for unavoidable or unanticipated detention by the way.

Do not commence a day's travel before breakfast, even if it has to be eaten at daybreak. Dinner or supper, or both, can be more healthily dispensed with than a good warm breakfast.

A sandwich eaten leisurely in the carriage is better than a whole dinner bolted at a railway station.

Take with you a month's supply of patience, and always think thirteen times before you reply once to any supposed rudeness, insult, or inattention.

Do not suppose yourself specially and designedly neglected if waiters at hotels do not bring what you call for in double-quick time. Nothing so distinctly marks the well-bred as waiting on such occasions.

Comply cheerfully and gracefully with the customs of the conveyances in which you travel, and of the places where you stop.

Respect yourself by exhibiting the manners of a lady, if you wish to be treated as such, and then you will receive the respect of others.

Travel is a great leveller; take the position which others assign you from your conduct rather than your pretensions.

Good Reasons for Learning Singing.

The following eight reasons why everyone should learn to sing are given by Byrd in his "Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs," etc., published in 1588:—

1. It is a knowledge easily taught and quickly learned, where there is a good master and an apt scholar.

2. The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.

4. It is a singularly good remedy for a stuttering and stammering in the speech.

5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation and to make a good orator.

6. It is the only way to know where nature has bestowed a good voice ... and in many that excellent gift is lost because they want art to express nature.

7. There is not any music of instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.

8. The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith; and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.

"Since singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learn to sing."

AN ANTIPATHY TO CATS.—People who have a strong antipathy to cats detect their presence by the odour, in circumstances which would be thought impossible. A lady in my study, one day, suddenly remarked, "There is a cat in the room." On my assuring her there was none, she replied, "Then there is one in the passage." I went out, to satisfy her. There was no cat in the passage, but on the first landing, looking through the railings, there, sure enough, was the cat.—*G. H. Lewes*.

DR. ZIMMERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

he name of Zimmerman has been familiar to me almost from my first being able to read. In catalogues of libraries, or of books for sale, the last entry is usually "Zimmerman on Solitude." I do not like solitude, and I always fancied that a book about it must be very dull; so I never knew anything about Zimmerman and his book beyond the title.

But I have lately found, in an old book published at York in 1810, an account of Zimmerman's daughter, which I have read with much interest. The title of this book is "True Stories and Anecdotes of Young Persons; Designed, through the Medium of Example, to Inculcate Principles of Virtue and Piety." In fact, it is a little book of Christian biography, and among the examples of virtuous and pious young persons is the daughter of Dr. Zimmerman. The page is headed, "A Tribute of Paternal Affection," and this tribute proves that, whatever else Dr. Zimmerman may have been, he was a most fond and devoted father. It seems that he lost this only and beloved daughter, a very amiable, accomplished girl, in the summer of 1781, when she was twenty-five years of age. Here is what her father says of her, a record well worth reproducing for the benefit of others, even now after more than a century has passed.

"May I be permitted," says the sorrowing father, "to give a short account of one whose memory I am anxious to preserve? The world was unacquainted with her excellence; she was known to those only whom she has left behind to bewail her loss. Her sole pleasures were those which a retired and virtuous life affords. She was active, always gentle, and compassionate to the miseries of others. Diffident of her own powers, she relied with perfect confidence on the goodness of God, and listened attentively to the precepts of her fond parent. Though naturally timid and reserved, she disclosed the feelings of her soul with all the warmth of filial tenderness. For me she entertained the most ardent affection, and convinced me, not by her professions, but by actions, of her sincerity. Willingly would I have resigned my life to save hers, and I am satisfied she would as willingly have given up her own to preserve mine. One of my greatest pleasures was to please her, and my endeavours for that purpose were most gratefully returned.

"From her early childhood she had been the victim of ill-health; but, though of weak frame of body, and deeply afflicted, she bore her sufferings with steady fortitude and pious resignation to her heavenly Father's will. Soon after our leaving Switzerland for Hanover she fell into a deep decline, which too soon deprived me of the comfort of this beloved child. From the knowledge I had of her constitution, I apprehended that the disorder would prove mortal. How frequently did my wounded, bleeding heart bend me on my knees before God to supplicate for her recovery! But I concealed my anxiety from her observation.

"Although sensible of her danger, she never discovered the least apprehension. Smiles played around her pallid cheeks whenever I entered the room. Even when worn by the fatal disease, and under most afflicting pains, she made no complaint. Her decay became evident to the eye, but to the last hours of her life she preserved a serenity correspondent to the purity and composure of her mind. Thus I beheld my dear, my only daughter, at the age of twenty-five, after a tedious suffering of nine long months, expire in my arms.

"During our short residence in Hanover, where she was much respected and beloved, she composed some religious pieces, which were afterwards found among her papers. About the same period she also wrote many letters, which were always affecting, and frequently sublime in the expressions of her feelings. The last words that my dear excellent child uttered were these: 'To-day I shall taste the joys of heaven!'"

Such is the memorial tribute. The love of a father and daughter is always beautiful, and in this case is unusually touching. The perusal of what the good man wrote has made me think of him with softened feeling. I know nothing about his life or history, save what appears in this account of his daughter, after reading which I could even look at his book on solitude with complacency!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

B. IGNORAMUS.—You cannot say, "No one knew I was here but her," because you are speaking in the nominative case, which answers to the question "who"—viz., "Who was there?" "She was;" not "her was." In the accusative case the personal pronoun "her" is employed—viz., "Of whom did you borrow it?" "Of her;" not "of she;" the accusative answering the word "whom."

A. R. B.—A visitor requested us some time since to draw attention to the Training Home for Governesses, 81, Mildmay-grove, N., at which the fee for board, lodging, and laundry for three months is only £6. We think this might suit you, especially as the foundress undertakes to find situations for the students. The Kindergarten system is included in the course of training. Address the directress.

MOLLY M.—Friendless and homeless girls and others needing a short training in the ordinary work of a general servant are received at a payment of 5s. a week, at Breydon House, North Quay, Great Yarmouth. Address the lady superintendent, Mrs. H. E. Buxton. Every effort is made to place the girls in suitable situations on leaving the institution. They cannot remain there after the training is over.

DOROTHY.—We fear there is nothing to be done, if you cannot spell, but to purchase a little dictionary, and always look out every word of which you have the least doubt. We are glad you find our dress articles so useful.

BEEAHUDHU AND INNISTORE.—The action of the rays of the sun does put out a fire by rarefying the air, and so causing it to flow more slowly towards the fire. The air which really does reach the fire at the time also affords no nourishment, because rarefied air contains less oxygen than the same quantity of condensed air. We should imagine the steel chain would have no effect unless you were struck by lightning.

PURPLE CLEMATIS should write to the secretary of the College of Preceptors, 42, Queen-square, Bloomsbury, W.C.

A COUNTRY LASSIE.—The 12th February, 1886, was a Friday. We do not know the school you mention. It is probably a private one. Why not write yourself direct?

ANXIOUS.—Perhaps a Kindergarten school would suit you better.

GLAN MENAI.—1. *Kinder* is one word in German, and *garten* is another, so the word is "Kindergarten." 2. Tancredi is an Italian name. The most famous bearer of it was Tancred, son of Marquis Odo the Good, of Sicily, born 1078. He assumed the cross in the First Crusade, 1098, was created Prince of Galilee, and died of a wound at Antioch, 1112. He was "a very perfect, gentle knight," and in him was embodied the chivalrous spirit of the Crusades.

F. E. N. (Bishop's Stortford).—There is a good arithmetic society, including algebra, for particulars of which write to Miss Frances Mason, hon. secretary, care of Mr. Horwood, 62, Green Lanes, London, N. French and English correspondence is likewise undertaken by this society. We thank F. E. N. for information respecting her Pledgdon Bible-class Society, to which we gladly draw the attention of our readers.

HOUSEKEEPING.

VIOLET and ROSE.—Put a little turpentine on the spots of paint; or if that be not successful, try benzine colas.

SIDNEY R.—We can only advise you to hang curtains between the pillars in your drawing-room. With some flowing draperies they will look less stiff.

BLUE-EYED BURKIE.—Hominy porridge would be quite as nutritious as any other, and would provide a change from oatmeal. You could also try polenta, made from Indian meal or maize in the same manner as oatmeal porridge.

IRENE.—It is still the fashion to hang curtains over looking-glasses, as you describe. The curtains should match those in the windows or the trimmings of the dressing-table.

MADGE.—To take rust from steel ornaments we should advise you to cover them with sweet oil, well rubbed in, and after 48 hours to use finely-powdered unslacked lime. Rub in until the rust disappears.

F. O. writes to us to say that spots of mildew on the leather covers of books that have been kept in a damp room may be removed by rubbing them with dry crusts of bread.

DEVONIA has only to set the milk in clean pans for the cream to rise. Once a week is the usual time for churning, and every two or three days the pans are skimmed. The cream need not be sour to churn into butter.

MISCELLANEOUS.

JIM'S DARLING.—Your mother should see that the two children obey you, and if they need punishment she should inflict it, not you. Your spelling and writing are both very defective.

RED BERRIE.—"Genius" appears to us to mean originality and creative power; talent does not imply originality. We generally apply the word to those who ably interpret the ideas and carry out the discoveries of others.

JANET MORETON.—Stopped teeth sometimes last for years if well done. If the stopping should come out, it ought to be at once replaced.

DAISY NAOMI seems to need a tonic. We advise her to read the articles by "Medicus." Cod-liver oil would probably be of service to her. Naomi needs a doctor's advice as to her digestion.

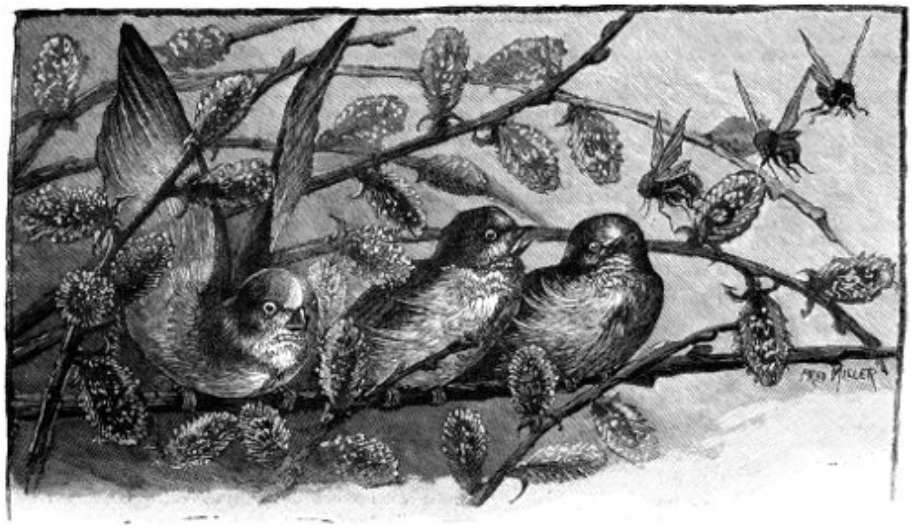
ALYS and MABELLE.—"Nigel" is pronounced as it is spelt; the last syllable as the first in "gelatine."

K. M. W. is anxious that others who, like herself, have lost their voices, should know how much she has benefited from the treatment by the electric battery, which she obtained at St. Thomas's Hospital. She hopes not only to recover her voice completely for speaking, but also for singing.

MONA.—The lines, "Break, break, break! On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!" are by Lord Tennyson. They have been several times set to music, and you can obtain the songs at any music-seller's.

FAIR ROSAMOND.—When you first observed that the strange man made a habit of occupying the same seat as yourself, you should have gone elsewhere. Now you have habitually sanctioned the liberty he took, seeing you without a chaperon or companion, and this has made your case difficult. You can only say that you acted indiscreetly in the first instance in allowing yourself to be drawn into conversing with a perfect stranger, and that you regret that you must withdraw from further intercourse, unless properly introduced and suitable references be given. Even were he thoroughly respectable, he may be in no position to pay his addresses to you in point of fortune.

FOUR MAIDENS.—Young ladies in England have their names put on their mothers' visiting cards, unless under peculiar circumstances. If they have no mother, their names would appear together—*i.e.*, Miss Smith—Miss Belinda Smith.



SARNIA.—Your school children, whom you train to sing in the choir of your church, would be rendered more efficient were they to sing through a few ordinary scales for a few minutes previously to practising the chants and hymns. It would only extend the time some five or ten minutes beyond the hour hitherto devoted to the lesson once weekly. There would be no necessity for consulting them on the subject, nor even drawing attention to the brief prolongation of the time. Were you to propose an extra day for practising, they might grumble or find difficulty in attending.

MIGNONETTE.—The 20th of April, 1868, was a Monday. Many thanks for your nice letter.

D. E. S.—Messrs. Cassell publish a "Guide to Female Employment in Government Offices."

MAUDE must make inquiries, and try to find some writing, copying, or needlework. She gives us no indications of what she can do, so is evidently not a practical young person.

ALICE ROCKHAMPTON.—1. The words, *Ricordo di Napoli*, mean "a remembrance, or memento, of Naples." 2. We should think lemonade a very good summer drink.

H. S. G. H.—The 28th August, 1852, was a Saturday, and the 5th January, 1864, was a Tuesday.

SCOTCH LASSIE.—We should advise you to take a situation as cook-housekeeper. Your writing does not seem good enough for a clerk.

NATALIE METZ.—In writing such articles, a doctor makes use of his acquired knowledge, of course. How do you suppose a doctor could prescribe with success if he did not know about every portion of the human organism and its use and functions?

PHYLLIS H.—You may use the tweezers, but we do not think you should try anything else.

THISTLE sends us a letter of inquiry as to how she can earn her own living. She says, "I have no special talent for anything; I am no musician, I have no accomplishments, I am a bad writer, I dislike teaching, also nursing, and I cannot learn languages." We see nothing left but domestic service or matrimony, and Thistle had better begin to learn cooking and housekeeping, so as to be prepared for either position.

AN ANXIOUS ONE would do well to try the Dental Hospital and have advice about her teeth.

MAUDE C.—Felt hats, if good enough, can be re-dyed and blocked without much expense. The 4th Feb., 1869, was a Thursday.

NESTA.—The 15th March, 1871, was a Wednesday; and the 28th February, 1874, was a Saturday.

AUDREY GALLOP.—The German *Auf Wiedersehn* means the same as the French *au revoir*. We have no similar idiom in English, the meaning being, "a wish for our next meeting."

A JUNE ROSE.—Most young girls if short-sighted prefer eyeglasses to spectacles, but it is quite a matter of individual preference.

BUSY BEE must go through the usual course of submitting her story to the various publishers. There is no royal road to literary success.

MAKIE.—We could not give space for such a quantity of statistics. Buy a "Whitaker's Almanack." The story you mention about the Queen has been recently contradicted, we believe.

EMMELINE KENNEDY.—1. The distance from Rydal to Ambleside is given differently in guides and gazetteers—viz., as two miles, a mile and a quarter, and a mile and a half. You say it is a "short mile," but you will allow it is not a matter of very vital importance. A quarter of a mile from the shores of any lake may be very truly described as being on or near the banks of that lake. You will understand that we are not called upon to visit each locality and test the correctness of gazetteers and guides, so we are quite willing to believe your statement correct. 2. The poet Wordsworth had, as you say, an only daughter, Dora; married to Mr. Quillinan. She died in 1847, leaving no family. Mr. Quillinan had, however, two daughters by his first wife, who was a daughter of Sir Egerton Bridges. This poor lady was burnt to death. Mr. Quillinan himself died suddenly in 1857.

CECIL.—The lines you quote are from a short poem by Lord Byron.

CONSTANT READER.—Colour-blindness is, unfortunately, very common, and more especially among men. It is rare among women. Red and green are the colours which, through some defect in the eyes, are the more generally confounded. Sailors and soldiers have to be carefully examined to ascertain their ability to distinguish signals, and engine-drivers likewise.

NORA, THE ANXIOUS.—You had better apply to Mrs. Houston Smith respecting situations as mother's help; office, 409, Oxford-street, W.

A. M. B.—We quite understand your difficulty in understanding our Lord's statement (St. Mark xiii. 30, and St. Luke xxi. 32). It may be explained in more than one way. If He referred to His Second Advent, you must remember that the term "generation" is sometimes employed to denote the nation as a whole, and in this sense this is true, as we see in reference to the Jewish people, who exist to this day, notwithstanding the cruel exterminating persecutions to which, through all the subsequent centuries, they have been subjected. If the statement referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, the term "generation" bore the signification which we put on that term, for those standing by (very many of them) lived to see that prophecy fulfilled. Our Lord's discourse referred to both events, although the two prophecies are rather unaccountably run together by the evangelists in their record of them.

MARROW BONES repeats an old query, which we have ceased to answer. Read "The Art of Letter-writing," vol. i, page 237.

SANDOWN.—The few holidays accorded to the banks include Christmas Day and Good Friday, and though national, they are properly called bank holidays also. Christmas Day was a great festival of the ancient Romans, but the day was observed by Christians to commemorate a very different event.

SARAH.—The man who made use of such an expression as that to which you refer is certainly very profane, and wanting in the feelings of a gentleman towards those in whose presence he spoke. It is a species of swearing of a very low class and horrible kind. If these girls allowed such language to be used without denouncing its gross profanity and the personal insult to themselves, as listeners, they showed want of common self-respect, not to speak of reverent feeling.

ELLENNETTE.—Perhaps it would be of some service to have the old boards planed, then well saturated with turpentine, and, when dry, painted thickly with two or three coats of paint. The vermin will scarcely be

able to penetrate this, if any survive the turpentine bath. We have not tried this plan, but should do so under the same distressing circumstances. Some have found the use of a kettle of boiling water very effectual. We should use this first, then the turpentine, and then the paint.

INCOGNITO.—The *Ides* in the Ancient Roman Calendar were eight days in each month. The first, denominated the *Idus*, fell on the 15th of March, May, July, and October, and on the 13th of the other months. The *Ides* came between the *Calends* and the *Nones*, and were reckoned backwards. Thus, the 14th of March, May, July, and October, and the 12th of the other months, was called "the day before the *Ides*." In the calendar of the "Breviary," and in the Chancery of Rome, this needlessly complicated mode of reckoning is still retained.

A CHESHIRE CAT.—When the reflecting surface is concave the contiguous reflected rays themselves intersect, and as we pass along any line on the surface—say the line of intersection, by a given plane—the reflected rays by their ultimate intersections form a plane curve. By varying the plane of section an indefinite number of such curves result, and these all lie upon the surface known as the caustic, to which every reflected ray is a tangent. A concave lens must of necessity render originally parallel rays divergent. The principal focus of the convex lens is the point at which the rays which pass through it, near and parallel to its axis, converge. The science of optics is one that needs to be taught.

BUNCH OF GRAPES.—1. We do not hold ourselves bound to inform our readers of the why and wherefore respecting our plan of conducting our paper. 2. If the terra-cotta be very dirty, sponge with turpentine, and then with soap and water.

M. S. O.—No further continuation of the article on "Paper Boxes" was given in the G. O. P. "My Work Basket" is continued at intervals as space will permit.

PARTICULAR.—From Angus's "Handbook of the English Tongue," we quote the following with reference to your query:—"In old writers, and occasionally in modern print, 'an' is sometimes erroneously placed before semi-vowels or vocal 'h,' as 'an usurpation,' 'an historical account.'" Thus, you see that "a historical account" was right. You should get the book in question; it is published at 56, Paternoster-row, E.C.

FOOTNOTES:

12-1[1-1].

Caledonian Railway.—Traffic for week ending 31st ultimo, £2,250 decrease.

There passes through the Clearing House annually the incomprehensible sum of £6,000,000,000 a year in the shape of cheques.[2]

[Transcriber's note—the following changes have been made to this text.

Page 394: duplicate word "sight" removed—"sight, and we".

Page 395: he to the—"of the storm."

Page 396: Dandalo to Dandolo—"Dandolo, who went".

Page 400: Weidersehn to Wiedersehn—"Auf Wiedersehn".]

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