

A CHANGED DECISION.

CHAPTER. II.

It seemn that for granted that, according to the best authorities, and the highest, or at least the most prevalent fashions of taste, nothing new—be it of the hopes, the fears, the trials, successes, and disappointments of any heroes and heroines who may get married. Those who have been fortunate enough to taste the wedded bliss of real life, know how far this is a sensible rule, and how far justified by the absence of all exciting episodes afterwards. However, we shall begin by adhering to this rule pretty closely, only indicating the course of Rodbury's life for a few years after his marriage; and it is but fair to his wife to start with the declaration that he was more happy with her than he expected to be. The love was wholly on the girl's side. Rodbury had not for a long time the least idea of the love which glowed, and flamed too, in her heart. But he saw it at last, and as a man would see, not as a woman, came gradually and logically to know and understand, that so long as he kept her love, and she knew or thought she had his, no pain, no sacrifice would be too great for her to suffer or make in his behalf. After realising this, he seemed to know, even better than before, that she had never had his love. Her earnestness and intensity almost frightened him; and often, when he was away from her, he would picture her conduct in certain contingencies or trying positions, and the result of these reflections was rarely increased cheerfulness on his part.

Two children were born to them, a girl and a boy. The girl was named Rose. Her mother had asked Rodbury if he would not like to have a second name, after his mother; but he said: "No. My mother's name was not so pretty as your own; so let it be Rose only."

With the boy it was different. Mrs. Rodbury wished his name to be "Francis John," after her husband, her brother, and, as it appeared, her father; but here Rodbury was unexpectedly firm. He was very grave for a while, more silent and thoughtful, indeed than Rose had ever known him for so long a time, and he would sit and watch the sleeping child by the hour together, when this spell was upon him. One day—he was to start on their country round upon the next one—he came in and said he had registered the boy, and his name was Cyrus. It had struck him as being a very pretty name, and he had been reminded of it by a tale he had recently read.

Rose was quite mortified at this, and shed a few tears of vexation at the idea of her beautiful boy being called by such an outlandish name. Whoever had heard of Cyrus? Such an ugly, foreign-sounding name! Thus spake Rose; but the mischief was done. There was no doubt of that, for Sparle, whose chief failing was not that of placing implicit confidence in any one, went round to the registrar, with whom he had some acquaintance, and satisfied himself that Rodbury's statement was a true one, so far as it went. Sparle qualified it thus in his own mind, but said nothing openly: "He must have had some reason for calling the boy Cyrus Launceston, and for holding his tongue about the second name." Thus reflected Sparle. "Well, I can hold my tongue as quiet as he can hold his, for a bit, anyhow. There is a place called Launceston somewhere; I am sure I have heard the name; perhaps he has something to do with that place. Anyhow, I shall be likelier to find out if he does not know exactly what I suspect; so we shall see."

This little vexation was soon got over; and Rodbury and his wife parted good friends, when the former went off for his country round. Business was brisk upon this excursion, and there was increased geniality between the partners. A constant source of conversation was little Cyrus, of whom Sparle was quite as ready to talk as was the father, and this was not feigned on "Uncle John's" part, as he was really fond of both the children. If he had any other motive in so often turning the conversation to this topic, he always managed to conceal it under the interest he assuredly did take in the young ones.

The tour was concluded, and so successfully, that some plans for dividing the round and working it more completely were discussed as the pair returned to London in the best of tempers with each other. They parted at their usual rendezvous, the stable and warehouse, and, as was natural, Rodbury went straight home, or nearly so.

During the time he had been with Sparle, he had called, on returning to and ere leaving London, at a certain restaurant—a "coffee-shop" it was called in its neighbourhood, but modern taste prefers the foreign name—where, as he had arranged with his friend Mr. Ashwell, such letters of importance as it might for any reason be desirable to screen from too general a gaze were to be sent.

Hitherto, these calls had been fruitless; but on this night the landlord said: "Yes! Mr. Rodbury, there is a letter for you at last; and any one would have thought you knew it was coming, for it has not been here an hour."

Rodbury smiled at this, uttered some little jest; in reply, then carelessly thrusting the unopened letter into his pocket, walked away with anything but the air of a man who was expecting important news. This indifference only lasted until he was fairly out of sight of the shop; he then tore open and eagerly read the note. It was brief, and emphatic: "DEAR RODBURY—Come to me at once; I have news of importance for you—news which changes everything. Do not delay.—H.A."

This was all; but there was quite enough in these few words to disturb the reader palpably. With knitted thoughtful brow, he went on until he was within a quarter of a mile of his own home, then, just as he reached the corner of a large street from which his smaller thoroughfare branched, he paused, looked hesitatingly down it for a few seconds, then, as though he had suddenly come to some decision, turned abruptly round and at once struck off in another direction.

As well he might, his way led him to his friend Ashwell's, and on inquiry he found that gentleman was within.

"And never more glad to see any one in my life!" exclaimed Ashwell, after a few words of explanation; "although I little expected so prompt an answer to my letter. You must have received it, friend Launceston—"

An exclamation and a warning shake of the head interrupted him here.

"Yes, I said Launceston, and I meant it," continued Ashwell. "I directed the note to Mr. Rodbury, and repeated the name in side, according to our agreement, but for the last time, I hope. Henceforth, you are again to be Cyrus Launceston to me and to the whole world."

"Why, what—what has happened?" said Rodbury; and his face paled, then flushed, while his voice faltered as he spoke. "Your grandfather is dead. I was sent for by his special request, when it was plain that his hours were numbered," replied Ashwell. "He is gone; so you have no cause to fear; and, moreover, he had completely forgiven you, as I can amply prove."

"But even if he had—which I could hardly believe if any one else had told me," said his friend—"even if he had done so, there are others still more dangerous who know—who had proofs that—"

"Not a bit of it, my dear fellow," interposed Ashwell, as the other faltered. "But I had better tell you all about it; so, sit down there—take one of these cigars—and listen."

Mr. Ashwell then entered on a summary of what had transpired of such importance to his friend; a pretty lengthy summary too, requiring the best part of an hour in its telling; but a brief outline of his narrative will serve our purpose.

Herbert Ashwell and Cyrus Launceston had been playfellows, schoolfellows, and friends; while the latter, having once saved Ashwell's life at the imminent risk of his own, had earned the never-fading gratitude of his chum, although he made light of the service himself. He was wont to say, with a little spice of truth, that as it was the only good deed he had ever done, it shone out more vividly with him than it would have done with any one else.

Both Launceston's parents died when he was young, leaving him to the care of his grandfather, a wealthy and in the main a kindly man, but crochety, hasty of temper, and tyrannical; not at all a model custodian for a youth, and such a youth. What judicious treatment and care might have done for Cyrus, it is impossible to say; he had enough, as he owned, of the family gifts to need a great deal of both these essentials, and he got nothing of them.

First, he quarrelled with the old man, violently, too, as such a pair would be likely to quarrel; then, as nothing was gained and much lost by this, the young fellow took to craft, and tried to hoodwink his harsh old relation. Unluckily, he got hold of a very bad set; such a young man as himself was sure to get hold of a bad set; on which the need for cunning and craft increased rapidly. In plain English, Cyrus was a sad young fellow, selfish in the extreme, dissipated—of course hypocritical—and was sowing worse grain all round than even the traditional wild-owl.

Much detail of his behaviour is not required here; but it turned out that his grandfather, who was fully fourscore years of age, and held him more closely under watch than the young man dreamt of, so knew of nearly all he would have concealed, among other things of his having given post-office bills payable at his grandfather's death, and discounted at a ruinous rate upon the chance of his being made heir to the old man's property. At last there came an explosion, premature on each side, it would seem, for Cyrus could not afford at this crisis to quarrel with the old man, who on his part, had he but waited for a day or two would have heard something well calculated to cause a breach between them, had all else been satisfactory.

As it was, they parted after a stormy interview, in which, it was reported, the elder struck his grandson across the face with his cane so as to draw blood. On the next day his bankers advised him that he had slightly overdrawn his account. They had paid his cheque for a thousand pounds, but only out of courtesy to an old customer. This cheque was a forgery, and Cyrus Launceston the forger.

The old man was furious. He paid the cheque, and so obtained possession of it; but then he gave information to the police, and actually offered a reward for the culprit's apprehension. This was so trivial in amount, however, as to savour more of an insult than a stimulus. It was supposed that Cyrus would endeavour to make his escape to America; and as he was not stopped at the ports, it was supposed also that he had succeeded.

Ashwell kept upon friendly terms with the old man, and by his counsel and by his unflinching advocacy of Cyrus, who, he always contended, had never had a chance to do well, had gradually soothed the grandfather, who, with advancing years and declining health, became gentler in his memories of the boy, as he termed him, and a severer critic of himself. He thought that Cyrus must be dead; but Ashwell invariably asserted his conviction that he was not; he had stronger grounds for this conviction than he chose to confide to the old man; but the latter was very shrewd, and may have divined that Herbert knew more than he told.

Be that as it may, when the old gentleman died, it was found that the bulk of his property was left to his grandson, if claimed by him within seven years. The forged cheque had been destroyed in Ashwell's presence; while the old man had written to the police, and had advised the bank, that on reflection he saw it was probable that his grandson considered he had authority to sign in his name; and so there was no criminality in the act for which he had fled.

"So, everything is plain sailing for you," concluded Ashwell, whose narrative, as may be supposed, did not include all the points herein detailed. "You are worth a hundred thousand pounds as you stand there, besides the house and grounds. All is clear now. You can go and take possession fearlessly. You will look out for a handsome wife, and settle down among the best of them. And then, you know, by-gones will be by-gones."

"And is such a marriage to be the natural result of my change of fortune?" said Rodbury, or Launceston. "Is it in such a position I am to find my happiness? He spoke with apparent difficulty, and ended with a short laugh, so harsh and strange, that Ashwell looked curiously at him for an instant ere he spoke.

"You are a queer fellow, Cyrus," he said; "but that you always were. Why

do you pitch upon one harmless jest—if you like to consider it so—the exclusion of everything else? When you come into your money, which practically you may do tomorrow, you will naturally think of settling, and then—"

"No! I shall not!" abruptly interrupted his friend. "I am married."

"Married!" The surprise had evidently rendered Ashwell incapable of saying more for the moment; but recovering himself, he continued: "You are married, and have kept it from me? This was not friendly or wise, Cyrus. I should have been glad to know your wife; I might have done more for you, and her."

"And the children," again abruptly interrupted Rodbury, as we shall continue to call him. "Yes, you may stare; but it is true. I have been married long enough to have two children; and my wife belongs to the tribe of hawkers and cheap jacks—or her friends do."

"By Jove!" muttered Ashwell. The quick ears of his visitor caught the exclamation, subdued though it was. "I tell you, Herbert," he went on, "that notwithstanding this, she is good enough for me, and is a true and devoted wife, according to her light. I looked upon myself as no better than a fugitive convict, so what did it matter how I flung myself away. But even that last sentiment is all humbug. I repeat that she was good enough for me. To keep up my character, I suppose, and to ensure my marriage being in keeping with the rest of my honourable life, I married her under a false name. To her I am Frank Rodbury, and she is Mrs. Rodbury.—You might have expected this from me—might you not?"

"Sit down again," returned Ashwell; "talk calmly, and reasonably if you can, and tell me all about this strange business."

His friend complied; and his narrative evidently had the greatest interest for Ashwell. Now, the latter was an honourable man, a generous and devoted friend, as he had shown often enough. But he was, and had always been, under a sort of glamour or charm as regarded Cyrus, whom he rated far too highly, and for whom he always made excuses. He believed in him, as calculated to make a figure in the world if he could only get the chance; and this admiration, this belief, rendered him an unsafe adviser when his friend's interests were concerned; perverting his own honour and truthfulness into something wearing a very different aspect.

On the few occasions when, of late years, he had seen and conversed with Ashwell, Rodbury always left him the better for the interview; but he did not do so on this night. If the counsel Ashwell had given, or rather the hinted suggestions he had made, for the time had hardly come for direct counsel on the subject, were such as would prompt an ungenerous line of conduct on Rodbury's part, fate played strangely and unexpectedly into his hands.

Rodbury walked thoughtfully home-wards; it will be admitted that he had some food for thought; and his reverie was so absorbing that it was more by habit than observation that he reached his house, but there he was suddenly aroused.

He dwelt in a small back street, lined with six-roomed houses, decent and quiet enough places, and his, like most of the others, held more than one family. He and Rose held four rooms, a man and his wife rented the other two, and all had hitherto gone on smoothly between them. The man was an omnibus conductor—it must be seen that the social change likely to arise from Rodbury's succession to wealth was great and tempting—so he was from home a great deal, and on this particular day, chance, or fate, brought about a quarrel between the two wives, on some mean and paltry question of washing or drying clothes, as far as could be made out. In his mood, a quarrel on such a basis was infinitely more galling and painful to Rodbury than any outbreak arising from more important matters.

"Why, Rose!" he exclaimed, as he threw open the gate of his little garden and saw his wife standing in the passage leading from the street door, which was wide open, her face flushed scarlet, while she was exchanging an "angry parol" with some shrill feminine voice in the upper part of the house.

"Be calm, Rose!" he continued. "Do not excite yourself. If Mrs. Kilby has offended you, she shall leave."

"Leave! Leave! screamed his wife; her tone was pitched for the benefit of her unseen adversary. "I should think she should leave! She shall go before dinner-time tomorrow, and I will turn her out myself, if no one else will do it."

"You! You!—such a thing as you!" retorted the voice. "It is more than you dare do. I can show my receipts for rent; and you lay a finger on me, or touch anything of mine, and I will have you before the magistrate—a thing I dessay you are used to, madam."

"Come in, Rose? Do you hear? Come in, I say!" cried Rodbury, seizing his wife's wrist. "You must not go on like this." But if he had not known it before, he was to learn now of how little avail are reasonings and commands with an infuriated woman. It was many minutes ere he could part the disputants, whose language grew hotter, as "hits" on either side told; and when at last he got his wife into her own rooms, she was seized, as a matter of course, with a desperate fit of crying hysterics.

It was unfortunate that such a display should have occurred on this night. Rodbury had never before seen his wife at her worst; he always knew she was capable of violent passion, but she had not shown it so openly. Twenty-four hours earlier he would have been offended, angry, no doubt, but he would not have been so utterly disgusted and shocked as now.

Rose was penitent on coming to herself, and begged her husband's pardon for the outbreak. He had not shown many lofty characteristics since his marriage, it is true; but for all that, the girl was fully aware that he had been once in a very different sphere, and was not likely to tolerate such a display. She was very fond of him too; and this fact shone strongly through her penitence, her tears, and her promises of reformation.

In some strange manner, all this, even her affection, contributed to heighten the loathing which Rodbury already regarded his home; but as he was a man to whom deceit always came easily, he assumed a forgiving mood much earlier, as his wife naively owned, than she had expected; and she thought him the kindest and best-tempered man in the world. The lodger was forgiven also; Rodbury actually uttered some jests about the skirmish, and so all was harmony in the household once more.

This was of course gratifying, and his ex-

cellent temper, after so irritating an incident, was, or ought to have been, gratifying also; but if Rose had some of the failings of a woman, she had a woman's instinctive quickness and penetration as well, and a vague alarm took possession of her. She knew not what she dreaded; but she felt almost frightened when in her husband's presence, and although she had really been a good wife, had never been so docile and watchful to anticipate his wishes as now.

The time had almost come round for the firm—Sparle and Rodbury—to make another start, and the latter grew gentler and fonder of his children's company than was his wont. He had not been a very attentive father, and even in this change there was the vague something which was now ever present to Rose. She tried to laugh it off, and spoke to her brother about it; but the experiment did more harm than good, for she found that a kindred feeling was in the man's mind.

"There's a change come over him that I can't make out," was his summing up; "he keeps his affairs more to himself than he has any need to do; but he has got something on his mind, I am sure."

The very next day after this consultation took place, Rodbury announced with some abruptness that he should not be able to accompany the journey with Sparle, whom he would join about a week later. To the strong remonstrances of his partner, he only replied that he had some important business to look after, and that if any loss ensued, he, Rodbury, was willing to bear the whole of it.

So perforce the matter was settled, Sparle mentioning in confidence to his sister that "if this was going to be the game, I shall not stand much of it; not but that I shall be glad to be away from him for a day or two." If Rodbury had not married his sister, it is probable that Sparle would have preferred a dissolution of partnership, as he had never heartily liked the man. This course was, however, out of the question, and so Mr. Sparle started on his round alone; feeling that there was something in the air which boded no increase of comfort to the circle.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

How they Travelled in Former Times.

All great men kept messengers to carry letters and parcels; Edward III. had twelve of them with a fixed salary; they "received threepence a day when they were on the road, and four shillings and eightpence a year to buy shoes." Merchants, though not professional travellers, were constantly journeying to different fairs, and such of them as were below the class of merchant princes like Whittington and Canyng were to be "met about the roads almost as much as their poorer brethren, the pedlars." At the same time, merchants travelled as much by boat as they could, both because they conveyed their goods more cheaply by water than they could by land, and also, no doubt, because they were safer from robbers on a river than they were on a road. Among foot passengers who shunned the public roads were outlaws and villains escaped from bond. The criminal law was severe, and many fugitives from justice took shelter in the forests, which at that period extended over vast districts. An extract from the ballad of the "Nut Brown Maid" gives a melancholy picture of the outlaw's amid brambles, mud, snow, frost, and rain. Neither man nor woman who had fled from the terrors of the law could claim its protection; the life of either might be taken with impunity, for "an outlaw and awayve," as Fleeta says, "bear wolves' heads." During the latter part of the century escaped villains formed no small part of the way-faring population. Some gained their freedom by remaining unclaimed for a year and a day in a free town, others wandered from place to place, and wherever they came, brought news to men of their own class as to how their brethren fared in different parts of the country. In France, wayfarers of this sort were few; for there, during and after the English wars, the fugitive villain turned brigand, and the peasants fled at the approach of an armed man.

A Japanese Stabbing Case.

Karawa Sawataro, 34, native of Japan, a ship's fireman, was brought up on remand charged with seriously wounding Suk Wake, another Japanese fireman, by stabbing him on the left side of the neck.—Prosecutor was now able to attend, and, having been sworn, in Chinese fashion, by the breaking of a saucer, said he was now staying in the Asiatic Home. On the 16th ult. he was in a house in Limehouse-causeway with the prisoner and other shipmates. A quarrel took place between him and the prisoner, and the latter struck him in the face and knocked him to the ground. After that witness went and lay down on a bed. He afterwards got up, took a lamp glass, and struck the prisoner in the face with it. He again returned to the bedroom and lay down. The accused came in and commenced stabbing him with a knife. He tried to get off the bed, but was unable to do so. After some time he managed to raise himself, and fell to the floor. He had a deep cut in the neck, and was afterwards taken to the hospital.—Other evidences having been given, Mr. Corner, house-surgeon at the Poplar Hospital, said the prosecutor, when admitted to the hospital, had a deep, incised wound on the left side of the neck, and also other injuries. He was now quite well.—Inspector Bridgman said he searched the room where the offence was committed, and found a piece of rag smothered with blood. The bed clothes were also blood-stained, and he picked up some pieces of broken glass.—Sergeant C. Price, 6 K, said he arrested the prisoner. The shirt he was wearing was blood-stained on both wrists.—Mr. Lushington committed the prisoner for trial.

She Was No Medical Almanac.

Aunt Jerushy called the doctor as he was passing. She was "kind o' sick all-over."

"Doctor, I'm troubled with a pain in my left breast," she said.

"Pleurisy," crisply replied the doctor.

"I haven't no appetite."

"Dyspepsia."

"My feet swell occasionally."

"Gout."

"I've the backache a good deal."

"Lumbago."

"I git dizzy spells."

"Softening of the brain."

That was too much for Aunt Jerushy.

"Oh, it is, eh?" she said, as she reached for the rolling pin. "Take care I don't soften your brain! I'm no medical almanac!"

The doctor thanked his stars when he found that he had escaped serious injury.

THE AFRIQAN DWARFS.

Stanley Confirms the Existence of the Wonderful Akka Pig.

The explorer Stanley has had an opportunity, during his present journey in Africa, to outline the southern limit of the fauna of Akka pigmies whom Schweinfurth was the first to study on their northern frontier. These little gypsies of the African forest are far more numerous on the route Stanley followed than in any other region where they have been met. Along 200 miles of the upper Aruwimi he saw about 150 of their villages or camps hidden in the dense forests. Very few of them go south of the Aruwimi River. They call themselves the Wambuti, but they are identical with the Akka further north, of whom the latest accounts were written by Emin, and published last year. Stanley's discovery that the Aruwimi limits the wanderings of these remarkable nomads on the south shows us that they are scattered over a territory about one-third larger than the State of New Jersey, several hundred

MILES OF DENSE FORESTS

separate them from the equally interesting Batwa dwarfs, who live south of the big northern bend of the Congo. It is probable that the Akka equal or exceed the Batwa in number, though the latter are scattered over an area twice as large as that which the Akka inhabit. They may not have met or heard of each other for many generations, but the numerous respects in which they are strikingly similar seem to indicate that they had a common origin. Living among other tribes, they have not adopted the language of their neighbors. Many Batwa can speak Baloto, the most prevalent language in their territory, but no Baloto interpreter in the service of explorers has been able to converse with Batwa in their own language. They have shown themselves excessively timid or very ferocious in the presence of white men, and for this reason no Batwa vocabulary has yet been collected. When their language becomes known it will be interesting to observe whether the speech of the Batwa and the Akka afford additional proof that in some past age the two tribes were identical.

The Akka had not attacked white men until they made the Stanley expedition a target for their poisoned arrows. They produced a very unfavorable impression upon Stanley who calls them "a venomous, cowardly, and thievish race." Emin says they are very

PASSIONATE AND VINDICTIVE,

and they become dangerous even to the tribes among whom they live if their requests are not granted. Both Akka and Batwa are usually lighter in color than the surrounding peoples. Another striking similarity is that their woolly hair usually grows in tufts. Von Francois saw Batwa with as many as forty tufts on their heads, all painted a fiery red. Both are eager cannibals. An Akka who long served Emin went home at last because he said, he was tired of beef. "Here is meat for us," was the exclamation Grenfell sometimes heard as the Batwa arrow rattle against the steel net work which covered his steamer. Both are remarkably expert as hunters, and their mission in life seems to be to provide larger people with game, feathers, and skins in exchange for vegetable produce. Their methods of hunting are the same, with the exception that while the Batwa use both the bow and spear the Akka, according to Emin, make exclusive use of the bow and arrow. Both are scattered over their countries in small communities, and often change their place of abode to go to fresh hunting grounds. Both intermarry to a considerable extent with surrounding tribes, and

THE MIXED PROGENY.

are lighter in colour than the large tribes, and dwarfish, though considerably taller than the pure pigmies, who are from four feet three inches to four feet and a half in height.

As the azalea cropp out here and there like little islands on the world's surface, showing the oldest geological formation of which we have knowledge, so these pigmy communities in Africa are regarded as vestiges of an ancient and inferior race who were nearly swept out of existence by incoming waves of stronger populations, leaving as testimony of their ancient prevalence only the vestiges we find in the Doko o, Abyssinia, the Obongo of the west coast of the Akka of the north Congo, the Batwa of the south Congo, and the bushmen of South Africa. This is only a theory, supported, however by the fact that all our knowledge of them seems to point to their homogeneity. Undoubtedly the strongest evidence favoring this theory is the fact that their languages, so far as we know them, are related, and have no points of affinity with any of the other groups of African languages.

The Legal Status of Bohemian Oats Notes in Iowa.

Two or three years ago a mania seemed to seize farmers in different parts of the West for speculating in Bohemian oats. The mania became so wide spread and the threatened consequences so disastrous that the Twenty-second General Assembly of Iowa, following the example of Ohio and Michigan, enacted a law making this form of speculation a criminal offense. The effect of the law has been to drive the agents of these gambling concerns into other States. This law, however, could not be retroactive and the interesting question is now before the courts in several districts of this class of notes. The first case has been tried in Marshall county and a verdict given by the jury for the defendant—that is, the maker of the note.

The note was given by a Mr. Packer to Mr. E. C. Johnston, a farmer of Marshall county, but the active man in procuring the note was one Sherwood, the agent of the "Farmers' Field and Garden Seed Company," of Michigan. Sherwood sold to Packer forty bushels of oats for \$600 and gave the bond of the company to sell eighty bushels of the crop at \$15 per bushel. Sherwood then sold the note given to Johnson as payee, who was merely a stool pigeon in the matter, to one O. L. Binford and Binford to one Merrill, who sues Packer for payment, and thus becomes the plaintiff in the case. The case was fully argued by able attorneys and given to the jury under instructions, the most important of which we publish for the benefit of the farmers who refused to take our advice over two years ago and keep clear of rural gambling.—(Live Stock and Western Farm Journal.)

A theatrical company is charitable when it plays to a poor house.