

# A SCRATCH IN PLAY.

PART I.

Beware, my friends, of fiends and their grim-aces.

Of little angles' wiles yet more beware thee. Just such a one to kiss her did ensnare me. But coming, got wounds, and not embraces. Beware of old black cats with evil faces; Yet more of kittens white and soft be wary. My sweetheart was just such a little fairy, And yet she well-nigh scratched my heart to pieces. Oh child! O sweet love! dear beyond all measure How could those eyes so bright and clear deceive me? That little paw so sore a heart-wound give me! My kitten's tender paw, thou'st small measure. Oh! could I to my burning lips but press thee, My heart the while might bleed to death and bless thee.

I am very sorry to have to say it, yet I must speak the truth even to her I love most; and I repeat, what I always have maintained, not only that she was completely in the wrong, but that she ought to confess it.

We had loved each other all our lives. Our fathers were old brother-officers and the closest of friends; and each being widowed and the father of an only child, what was more natural than that when they left the service and her father settled on his estate, my father should take up his quarters in a pretty cottage on his friend's domains? What plans the two old fellows used to make for their children's future! I, of course, should enter the old regiment; and she, of course, should marry me. Alas! I myself was the cause of the shattering of the first dream; and subsequent events very nearly put an end to all chance of the second's being realized.

When I had reached the age of seventeen, when my brain ought to have been on fire for the sound of the drum, and my sleep disturbed by dreams of the glories of war, my dear old father discovered—through an intolerable odour which prevailed the house, and was traced to a mysterious box in my bedroom—that my mind turned towards science, and that a macerating pot or the dissecting table was more to me than the extermination of the entire British army. I often sigh now as I think of the sad head-shakings the poor old gentlemen must have indulged in as they discussed my extraordinary fancy over their wine; and I know that my little playfellow, Avis, treated me to a good deal of contempt when it was confessed that I actually turned from "the profession suitable for a gentleman," and deliberately chose that of a mere sawbones.

Poor old father! He loved me too well to oppose me; and one dull autumn morning I left the old home to enter upon my studies at the university of Edinburgh. Why did I go to Edinburgh, and not London? Well, I think it was partly because I had a feeling that I was breaking with all the old life; and therefore wanted to put hundreds of miles between me and the old home, as I had put hundreds of difficulties between my father and the realization of his old hope.

How well I remember my arrival, that cold, gray morning, in the beautiful city! I left my luggage at the station, and climbed up the steep hill that leads from the land of steam and noise to the most beautiful street I have yet seen in my wanderings. How grandly, away to my left, rose the magnificent "Old Town," topped with its castle; and to my right, the gardens and splendid buildings of Princes' Street; while behind me crouched the "Lion," watching over the safety of the maiden city! How lonely I felt among it all—how utterly lost! I think that, if all had approved my design to become a doctor, I should at that moment have turned and gone back to England, and promised my old father to do anything he might wish. But the vision of a child with long flowing hair, defiant face, and hands fast clasped behind her, came across my mental vision. She had refused to bid me good-bye. How she would triumph if I came home again, my work undone! No I must go on. So I plucked up heart, and wandered on alone in that unknown city, looking for a place wherein to lay my weary head. Before long, I found lodgings, and had my things removed to a little street near the theatre. And not many weeks had passed before I was as happy as a king, drinking in all the new mysteries of my chosen profession. Ah! that first enthusiasm, why doesn't it last? Why, as the years go on, does there come in its stead such utter loathing of each fresh step? I did not in the least mind the dissecting room; but the operating theatre—the hospital—the horror of it all. Well, it is over; and to that supercilious little figure with the flying hair and the clenched hands do I owe the obstinacy that carried me through these four years of sunshine and shadow. Give in, when she had said: "I know you will hate it. I hope you will give it up!" Shall I give it up? Never! The thought of the look of triumph I should see in the eyes of that young girl acted as a spur to me.

I worked on. I hardly ever went home; for I was really "keen on" my work, and spent most of my spare time among the foreign hospitals and schools. Then a serious illness, coming upon me just as I had completed my course, made me decide, on my recovery, to go as doctor on board a great ship sailing to the other ends of the earth. So, thanks to one thing and another, it was not till the slim, awkward boy of eighteen had changed into a great weather-beaten man of four or five and twenty, that I once more stood on the old walled terrace of the home of my little love. And by my side was the little love herself! And such a little love! At twenty she was no bigger than she was at fifteen; but oh! so much prettier. The hair that had often been dragged back into a stiff pigtail now wandered in wonderful waves over her little head, poised like a flower on her sweet neck. No more ink-battered pinafores and scratched hands; no more long thin spindle-shanks showing under a short and skimpy skirt! No; she was as dainty as a fairy, and took now as much pains to adorn her already perfect little self as at one time she had seemed to expend on trying to personate a scarecrow. Yes; I stood by her once again, and knew that I was likely to be near her for the rest of our lives. For my dear father was getting old, and longed to have his only son beside him. So I was only too delighted when the offer came of a practice in the neighborhood. Yes, I had come home "to live and die," as my aged nurse cheerfully put it, in the home of my childhood; and I could hardly believe I was not a child again, as once more I settled into the well-

known routine; dined with the two old gentlemen; strolled out as of old on the terrace with my early playmate; climbed at night once more to the familiar room under the thatch; and listened as in years gone by to the murmur of the stream that ran from her home to mine. Yes, it was all the same! The old women seemed not a day older; the trees very little bigger; the river just as it had always been. Only, how different it all was; how different the thoughts that thrilled through my brain—the feelings that throbbled in my heart!

Well, well, we need not go over all that strange, miserable, happy time when my mind was filled with doubt and fear; when I knew not whether I was to be the most blessed or the most wretched of men; whether I was to stay contentedly at home for the rest of my life, or start once more on my travels to heal a broken heart as best I could among foreign lands and unknown faces. I sometimes fancy that if we could but turn back the "forward-flowing tide of time," I would live these weeks over again. But at length they came to an end. One still June evening, when the moon was but a crescent in the sky, and the nightingales were singing with all the strength of their tiny throats and fervour of their great hearts, my little love laid her golden head somewhere about the lower edge of my breast-pocket, and gazing up in my face, promised to overlook the fact that I was only a sawbones and no gallant officer.

"Well, you see," whispered the little voice, "you are so big and strong and handsome, it is no use trying to fight against you. I love you, I love you! and after all, you are my own dear old Clinton; and I'd marry you if you were a sweep, which is even worse than a doctor." And the brave blue eyes looked up at me so proudly and so trustfully, that I thought no man had ever before such loving glances cast upon him.

Oh, what a happy time we had! I thought that trouble could never touch me more. As I strode home through the soft air to tell my father the glad news, I felt like an arch-angel.

Yes, I fancied my troubles were at an end—that I was going to be blessed beyond all human flesh; but I did not yet realize what it is to be an engaged man! No sooner were we safely and firmly betrothed, than my young lady contracted such a habit of flirting as made me stand aghast. I maintain that she flirted. She insists that she did not! She says she was only making herself agreeable for the sake of my practice. She repeats that she smiled on the curates, youths from Oxford, retired military men, &c., not as men at all, but purely as possible future patients. Future patients! Did I want them bought with her smiles? Still, such an injured saint did she look when I ventured to expostulate, that I hardly knew how to bear myself; and I used to wonder whether I really was the most suspicious brute on the face of the green earth.

At length matters reached a climax, and I turned at last.

It was in the week of the "Lawn Tennis Tournament"—the one great excitement of our little country-side—when a young husar made his appearance, and contrived to get himself drawn as her partner in the doubles! She declares that I am simply talking nonsense when I assert that he got himself drawn as her partner; and she says that it is all done by lots, and that people must play with just whoever falls to their lot! Well, that is neither here nor there. She need not have behaved as she did. He did not live in these parts of the world; he could not be considered as a possible patient; yet the interest she took in him was most marked. It is a fact that she could not help having him for her partner in the "doubles"—as they call the thing—need she have stood watching him with all her eyes in the "singles," clapping her hands at each stroke he won, or have been the first to congratulate him the moment he had put on his abominable loud "blazer" and marched off the field or court, victorious?

I do not play tennis, having more important matters to attend to; nor do I dance particularly well; still, at their insufferably dull "Tennis Ball," she need not have thrown me over for him in the pronounced way she chose to do.

"Oh, Clinton, may I give Captain Smyth one of your dances? You won't mind, will you?"

"Oh, certainly not; give him the lot if you like," I answered blandly.

I did not know till that moment that the sweetest of blue eyes can flash sparks of ice; but I saw them do it then.

"Oh, thank you so much. There, Captain Smyth; that is delightful; you can have three more than I promised you at first."

And without waiting to listen to my angry expostulation, she sailed away on his arm. I knew I had been rude and wanted to apologize; and tried hard to catch her eye as she swam round with the handsome captain, who could dance. But never once were the long dark lashes lifted, never once did the old smile play across the sweet little face.

I went home utterly wretched. Ah, how the little paw could wound my big stupid heart! I lay awake all night, and during the long hours I made up my mind to hasten the very first thing in the morning, to 'make friends' with her. I should tell her I was sorry I had been rude, but should also make her understand I had a good deal of cause to feel injured.

"Clinton," she began very quietly the moment she entered the room, "I am glad you have come. There are some things I must say to you. I consider that the way in which you have behaved since our engagement has been most humiliating to me."

"To you! I do not see what cause you have to speak," I broke out.

"I am going to speak," her soft, even voice went on. "I consider your unreasonable jealousy as nothing short of an insult. If you cannot trust me, you had better bid me good-bye. There can be no happiness in a marriage without absolute trust. I hardly know what I said then, whether I pleaded or upbraided. I remember little of what befell till I found myself striding through the fields, their corn-flowers blue like those angry eyes, and their poppies bright like her scornful red mouth. Was it all at an end, then, the dream of my life? Yes, of course it was—over, all over! I must get away, away back to the sea and the wild strange lands; away, somewhere, anywhere—from all

this. But my poor old father! I could not leave him. I must not leave my work; some of my cases were in critical condition. There was no escape. Here I must stay; meet her constantly; shake hands with her; and yet be as if the world stretched between us. And the dreadful part of it all was that she seemed not to care one little bit. She was the same bright, merry, dainty little creature that she has always been. Why was she so cruel? Why would she not once look at me with a glance of pity, love, remorse? How gladly, at her smallest overture of grace, would I have cast myself utterly on her mercy, and vowed anything she chose to demand of me. But she gave no sign; and I was too proud to approach her unless she herself seemed to summon me.

What a wretched time it was! How fiercely week by week did I try to harden my heart against her! But everything conspired to make that impossible. Hardly a cottage did I enter but I heard of her loving-kindness. She seemed to go about like a sunbeam, smoothing coarse pillows, comforting sad hearts, calling smiles to parched and fevered lips, and looks of love to heavy eyes.

How was it that she could be so tender to others, could so hurt the heart that loved her? How could she keep up our quarrel all this time, when she must see how it was wounding me, killing me? If only she would say she was sorry she had vexed me, I should not whisper a word of blame. But say it she would not. And so the summer passed: autumn came with its storms and decay; and yet we were no nearer being friends again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## HEAT PRODUCED BY METEORS.

An Aid in the Maintenance of the Sun's Ordinary Expenditure.

I pointed out that when a shooting star dashes into our atmosphere its course is attended with an evolution of light and heat owing to its friction through the air. We were thus able to account for the enormous quantity of heat, or what was equivalent to heat, which existed in virtue of the rapid motion of these little bodies. Of course, we only see these meteors at the supreme moment of their dissolution when they dash into our atmosphere. It is, however, impossible to doubt that there must be uncounted shoals of meteors which never collide with our earth.

It must necessarily happen that many of the other great globes in our system must, like our globe, absorb multitudes of meteors which they chance to encounter in their roamings. The number of meteors that will be gathered by a globe will be doubtless greater the larger and more massive be the globe, and this for a double reason. In the first place, the dimensions of the net which the globe extends to entrap the meteors will, of course, increase with its size, but, in addition, the more vehement will be its attraction and the greater will be the number of the meteors that are drawn in its extensive atmosphere.

Of course, this reasoning will apply in a special degree to the sun. We shall probably be correct in the assertion that for every meteor that descends upon this earth at least 1,000,000 meteors will descend upon the sun. As these objects plow through the atmosphere, light and heat will be, of course, evolved. It has been conjectured that the friction of the meteors which are incessantly rushing into the sun may produce light and heat in sufficient quantities to aid in the maintenance of the sun's ordinary expenditure. It has been even supposed that the quantity of energy thus generated may supply all that is wanted to explain the extraordinary circumstance that from age to age no visible decline has taken place in the intensity of the solar radiation.

Here again is a question which we must submit to calculation. We have first of all to determine the heat which could be generated by a body of, let us say, a pound in weight falling into the sun after being attracted thither from an indefinitely great distance. The result is not a little startling; it shows us that such a body, in the course of its friction through the sun's atmosphere, might generate as much heat as could be produced by the combustion of many times its own weight of coal consumed under the most favorable conditions.

## The "Great Sea Serpent."

The *New Zealand Herald* in a recent issue reports that on the trip to Fiji and back on the steamer *Ovalau*, just concluded, Captain A. W. Cameron and his officers saw what may be held to be a solution of the "great sea serpent" stories which have been so plentifully related lately. The steamer was going along at about ten knots in mid-ocean, when a commotion was observed in the water ahead, and the body of a huge marine animal or fish, with what appeared to be great flippers, was to be seen rising and falling. Capt. Cameron did not keep away or pass at a distance, but steered direct for the stranger. On approaching close the commotion was found to be a great thresher shark. The latter apparently was having a lot the best of the combat, as the whale kept on the surface of the water comparatively quiet, while the shark ever and anon thrust itself aloft out of the water and brought its formidable tail down with a terrible blow upon the whale. At times fully 15 feet of the shark's body was clear out of the water, and those on board the steamer noted that it possessed two wide and long fins, which might at a distance have easily been mistaken for the flippers which were attributed to the "sea serpents" recently spoken of. The *Ovalau* was so close to the animals, which were too occupied to heed the vessel, that either could have been touched with a pole, but as she had her port to make in good time she did not wait to see the result of this ocean combat.

## No Cause for Grief

A wall-eyed, hungry-looking individual recently entered a Bowery restaurant and seated himself at one of the tables. A waiter appeared, ready for his order. "Boss dead?" observed the man, gazing intently at the table. "O, no," answered the waiter. "O, wife perhaps. When does the funeral come off?" "Wife ain't dead, either." "One of the children, maybe. Ah, well, life is short. We are here to-day, but where to-morrow?" "Children are all well."

## THE FAMOUS DEATH VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA.

A Feature of the Great American Desert.

The most fatally famous part of the Great American Desert is Death Valley, in California. There is on all the globe no other spot more forbidding, more desolate, more deadly. It is a concentration of the horrors of that whole hideous area, and it has a bitter history.

One of the most interesting and graphic stories I ever listened to was that related to me, several years ago, by one of the survivors of the famous Death Valley party of 1849—the Rev. J. W. Brier, an aged Methodist clergyman now living in California. A party of five hundred emigrants started on the last day of September, 1849, from the southern end of Utah so cross the desert of the then new, mines of California. There were one hundred and five canvas-topped wagons, drawn by sturdy oxen, beside which trudged the shaggy men, rifle in hand, while under the canvas awning rode the women and children. In a short time there was division of opinion as to the proper route across that pathless waste in front; and next day five wagons and their people went east to reach Santa Fe (whence there were dim Mexican trails to Los Angeles), and the rest plunged boldly into the desert. The party which went by way of Santa Fe reached California in December, after vast sufferings. The larger company traveled in comfort for a few days until they reached about where Pioche now is. Then they entered the Land of Thirst; and for more than three months wandered lost in that realm of horror. It was almost impossible to get wagons through a country furrowed with canons; so they soon abandoned their vehicles, packing what they could upon the backs of the oxen. They struggled on to glittering lakes, only to find them deadly poison, or but a mirage on barren sands. Now and then a wee spring in the mountains gave them new life. One by one the oxen dropped, day by day the scanty flour ran lower. Nine young men who separated from the rest, being stalwart and unnumbered with families, reached Death Valley ahead of the others, and were lost. Their bones were found many years later by Governor Blaisdell and his surveyors, who gave Death Valley its name.

The valley lies in Inyo County, and is about one hundred and fifty miles long. In width it tapers from three miles at its southern end to thirty at the northern. It is over two hundred feet below the level of the sea. The main party crossed it at about the middle, where it is but a few miles wide, but suffered frightfully there. Day by day some of their number sank upon the burning sands never to rise. The survivors were too weak to help the fallen.

The strongest of the whole party was nervous, little Mrs. Brier, who had come to Colorado an invalid, and who shared with her boys of four, seven, and nine years of age that indescribable tramp of nine hundred miles. For the last three weeks she had to lift her athletic husband from the ground every morning, and steady him a few moments before he could stand. She gave help to wasted giants any one of whom, a few months before, could have lifted her with one hand.

At last the few survivors crossed the range which shuts off that most dreadful of deserts from the garden of the world, and were tenderly nursed to health at the hacienda, or ranch house, or a courtly Spaniard. Mr. Brier had lost one hundred pounds in weight, and the others were thin in proportion. When I saw him last he was a hale old man of seventy-five, cheerful and active, but with strange furrows in his face to tell of those bygone sufferings. His heroic little wife was still living, and the boys, who had such a bitter experience as perhaps no other boys ever survived, are now stalwart men.—(St. Nicholas.)

## Papers Conducted by Madmen.

There are several instances of newspapers being published in lunatic asylums. The most notable one is the "New Moon," which has now been issued from the Dumfries Lunatic Printing Press for the past forty-six years, and is still in full vitality. The matter is provided by the pens of patients and members of the staff, and it is set up and printed by insane occupants, aided by occasional outside labour. Another very respectable and well-conducted newspaper emanates from the Morningside Lunatic Asylum. It is entitled, "The Morning-side Mirror," and is wholly produced within that establishment, and a series of correspondents' letters from other asylums being regularly published therein. Gartnavel, another Scotch asylum near Glasgow, has its weekly journal. Others also exist, or have existed, by the titles of the "York Star," "Loose Leaves," and the "Excelsior," and no doubt there are many others not so publicly known. One of the cleverest works lately published on "Mental Diseases and Abnormal Physical Conditions," written by the physician in charge of a Stockholm asylum, was printed, bound, and issued by the inmates of that establishment.

## 'T would be of no Use.

Stern Parent—"I tell you what it is, Martha, I'm tired of seeing that young fellow coming here two or three evenings a week. I think I shall have to sit down on him."

Martha—"I wouldn't, pa; 't would be of no use. I've done it myself times, and I rather think he likes it."

Mrs. John McLean writes, from Barrie Island, Ont., March 4, 1889, as follows: "I have been a great sufferer from neuralgia for the last nine years, but, being advised to try St. Jacobs Oil, can now heartily endorse it as being a most excellent remedy for this complaint, as I have been greatly benefited by its use."

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## Nervelessness of Chinamen.

There is much to admire in Chinamen; but nothing is more admirable in them than the qualities described by a writer in a Shanghai paper. He says they can remain in one position an indefinite time, have no consciousness of monotony, can do without exercise, are impervious to noise, can go to sleep at any moment and in any attitude—all because they have no nerves. It is not to be supposed that this nervelessness is a physiological fact; but it cannot be doubted that the Chinaman's patience, endurance and insusceptibility to influences which would send a European into an early grave are constitutional. He cannot help taking things at they come. Curiously enough, this difference is not associated with want of energy, for the Chinaman is exceptionally industrious. He is simply insensible to worry.

## Reward of Merit.

Railroad President—"That was a bad accident, but it might have been a thousand times worse. Suppose those cars had taken fire! Phew! Why didn't they?" Superintendent—"A lazy brakeman had let the fires go out." President—"Raise his salary."

## "German Syrup"

"I have been a great sufferer from Asthma and severe Colds every Winter, and last Fall my friends as well as myself thought because of my feeble condition, and great distress from constant coughing, and inability to raise any of the accumulated matter from my lungs, that my time was close at hand. When nearly worn out for want of sleep and rest, a friend recommended me to try thy valuable medicine, Boschee's German Syrup. I am confident it saved my life. Almost the first dose gave me great relief and a gentle refreshing sleep, such as I had not had for weeks. My cough began immediately to loosen and pass away, and I found myself rapidly gaining in health and weight. I am pleased to inform thee—unsolicited—that I am in excellent health and do certainly attribute it to thy Boschee's German Syrup. C. B. STICKNEY, Picton, Ontario."

Scotland and the Thistle. The thistle was selected as the national emblem of Scotland in the year 1010. It was during the reign of Malcolm I. that a notable invasion of the country was made, by the Danes. They came in thousands and, landing on the coast, swarmed over the inhabited districts like locusts, destroying, burning and plundering wherever they went. For safety the inhabitants fled to the castles and fortified towns, and among the most notable of the fortresses of Aberdeenshire was St. John's Castle, where were collected a large number of people of the neighborhood. The Danes projected a surprise. Approaching the castle in the darkness, they planned to scale its walls, and laid aside their shoes that the greater secrecy might be observed when drawing near the fortifications. The surprise might have been successful had it not been for the fact that, on descending into the dry moat, they found, to their great discomfort and mortification, it was filled with thistles, by which their feet were so severely pricked that several made an outcry, which aroused the defenders of the castle and brought them to the wall in time to repel the onset. Regarding their good fortune in repelling the Danes as due to the thistles, these plants were immediately placed in the arms of Scotland and adopted as the emblem of the country.

The best thing out—A conflagration: "A man's deeds live after him." So do his mortgages.

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