PERE LEMONNIER'S GUN.

In the midst of fruitful vales and wooded hills a little Norman village lay. Each generation had brought its wars and strife and revolutions, but their hot breath had passed over the face of the land, leaving this green spot in peace, until the "terrible year" of the German invasion, when the enemy had come there, killing, burning, and pillaging all before them, and leaving in their wake a memory of terror and desolation. It was all so very terrible to these quiet, thrifty peasant proprietors, who dwelt in their thatched cottages and farmhouses down yonder in the valley, where the parish church, with its slated roof, green and moss-grown through age, used to peal forth the call to vespers of a summer evening with a sweet, deep tone that seemed the very soul of old-world rest and peace. A poet, it was said, had once hymned those venerable oak trees, which had seen many centuries come and go; but now alas! they had been cut down in order that men might the better see to slay each other.

Old Pere Lemonnier sat in the kitchen of his farmhouse, which was situated in a sequestered spot, and hitherto been respected by the foe.

He was over eighty now and had fought in the great Napoleon's wars, but ever since that time he had tilled those lands which were his very own—albeit a small holding—and, living a healthy, frugal country life, he had come to this ripe old age a hard, honest man—the very soul of uncompromising honour. His only son, Antoine, was away with his regiment, and no news had been heard of him for a long time past so Pere Lemonnier was quite alone now, save for his niece Melanie, who kept house for him.

He could neither read nor write. What good would it do him? he would say; he could earn his living from the soil without these accomplishments. He, therefore, could not read the newspapers; but even had he been able to do so he would only have swallowed a mass of official lies in which the French journals of 1870 mainly dealt. But the news that passed from mouth to mouth—the news he heard when he went with his cattle to the market-town—had, alas! more truth in it; and he could hardly believe or understand the fearful disaster to his glorious patrie which came on every hand; they seemed to crush him, and to break down his proud old spirit. Now they were forced to realise all the shame and the horrors that were brought upon them by a corrupt and decaying dynasty. The hated Prussians were even now in their very midst, and Pere Lemonnier knew not at what moment he might be driven from that home which had been his father's before him in the dead and gone days when the seigneur ruled over the land.

"Ah, well," he sighed now, as he looked up at his ancient rifle which he kept loaded, hanging from a black oak beam above the ample chimney-piece; "thou hast seen good service, my stout companion, but I am too old to raise thee now for my country. That is Antoine's duty, and please the good God he may do it bravely! But still, who knows? Perhaps I may yet have to take thee down to defend my life, or my honour!"

He raised his eyes towards the window, and there out in the basse-cour, by the fading evening light, he could just descry Melanie in apparently earnest converse with a man in the uniform of a French linesman. The old man called to his niece, whereupon Melanie hastily ran into the house, and the soldier disappeared.

"Who was that thou wert speaking to?" Lemonnier asked. "I thought all our men had been driven away from these parts?"

"It is a poor fellow who fled from Buchy, where there has been a terrible battle."

"A thousand thunders!" cried the farmer, striking the table with his fist. Why didst thou not make him come in?"

"I—I did not like to do that," the girl answered hesitatingly.

"Why not? I am hard enough, God knows—perhaps a miser, as they say—but my door shall never be closed against those brave lads who have been facing the cursed Prussians in defence of their country. Go! bid him come in and rest himself, and have a glass of cider."

"I cannot, my uncle," Melanie replied, seeming strangely embarrassed. "He—he would not come in, I am sure. He is afraid—I mean he has already gone away."

"Well, go; call him back if thou canst still find him."

Lemonnier's niece left the room, as though glad to be released from further questions; but she did not return, and the old farmer, sitting sad and lonely by the side of the great open hearth, forgot all about the matter again. Old age, having no future, lives in the past, and oftentimes the events of the present come and go, making no more impression on the mind than so many fleeting dreams.

The hours passed slowly on. Darkness began to fall around, and the fire cast huge shadows on the ancient, carved-oak cupboards, black with age, which give that quaint, old-world air to Norman farmhouses. Then Pere Lemonnier, who had been fighting the battle of Jena over again in imagination, and wishing those times under the Little Corporal might come back, returning to everyday affairs, bethought him it was nearly time for his evening *gousse*, and began to wonder where that good-for-nothing Melanie could have got to. He rose up and lit the little lamp of colza oil, which he set upon the table, muttering something about the flightiness of youth. Then he determined to go out and look for her, when he was suddenly arrested by the sound of voices speaking in an unknown tongue, and the regular military tramp of many feet, which halted right outside his door. There was a loud knock, and he called out:

"Who is there?"

The intruders did not trouble themselves to answer, but forced the door open, and the next moment the kitchen was full of German soldiers.

"What do you want?" cried the old man, with wonderful courage for his years. "I am past the age for fighting, as you see. If it were not so it would be the worse for some of you. As it is, go, and leave me in peace!"

"We will do that," replied the sergeant commanding the party in excellent French—their linguistic accomplishment was one of the weapons with which his countrymen fought and won—"we will leave you in peace if you will give up our prisoner whom you are hiding."

"What prisoner?" asked Lemonnier, in utter surprise. "I do not know what you mean. I am hiding no one; but if I were and he wore the uniform of the French army, you may rest assured that you might never take him by my consent."

"That is as good as to confess that you are hiding our prisoner."

"No, it is not. I know nothing about him. I would not sully my honour by lying to such dogs as you!"

"That is idle talk. If we were beaten, you would be the dogs, with us. You had better take care what you do and say. Some of your people have had their homes burnt down for less. But there is no good in beating about the bush. It is your son you are hiding, and we mean to have him."

These last words so greatly astonished the old farmer, that he made no resistance when two of the Prussian soldiers held him forcibly down in his chair, whilst the rest filed out of the room to search the house.

"My son is not here, I tell you. He is far away, fighting with the army of the Loire. I wish he were close at hand. He would never allow this indignity to be put upon us while a single drop of blood remained in his body. My son would retreat and fly, if ordered by his officers; but I tell you he would never hide from his enemy!"

"Nevertheless," the sergeant answered brutally, "you shall presently see him shot down before your very eyes as a fugitive prisoner of war."

"That I shall never see!" Lemonnier exclaimed, possessed by a sullen rage.

Now he could hear the soldiers tramping about upstairs, searching and turning over all his secret and sacred hiding-places; breaking, pillaging everything before them. Ah, of course! He had heard these dogs of Prussians were nothing but thieves. This, then, was only an excuse for robbery. Oh, why had he not the strength of forty years ago, or why was not Antoine here to prevent this insult being put upon him?

The sergeant crossed the room, and shouted upstairs in German: "Make haste! If you cannot find him, we must go on. We have other work to do."

But they answered back: "We have him, sergeant. He was hiding under a bed!" and then there was a noise of scuffling and a strange scream.

"It is Melanie!" cried the old farmer, struggling to be free. "Ah the brigands! They make war on women now!"

But it was a French soldier who was being dragged, pale and trembling, down the gloomy staircase.

"*Donnerwetter*, you fools!" swore the sergeant, as the prisoner was brought forward into the lamplight; "who have you got here? This is a girl!"

"Melanie!" exclaimed Lemonnier, this time wrenching himself free; indeed his captors were too much astonished to detain him. "What is the meaning of this senseless masquerading?"

"Oh, forgive me, my uncle; I did it to save Antoine!"

"To save Antoine!"

The words came like a dagger-thrust.

At this moment the outer door was flung open, and two more Germans entered the kitchen with a man of about five-and-thirty, attired in the cap and blouse of a Norman peasant, who walked sullenly between them.

"We have got our man, sergeant," said one of the new comers. "You have been played a fine trick, it seems. He was trying to escape from us in disguise; but I knew his ugly mug directly I set eyes upon it, for I had marked it myself with the butt-end of my gun when he tried to give us the slip before."

The look of shame and agony which was imprinted on the aged farmer's pale features was indeed piteous to behold, as he recognized here before him his own son, Antoine!

"What!" he moaned, bitterly, "You! Is it you who disgrace our honor by casting off your uniform at the bidding of a girl, and sneak and hide away from your enemy, instead of facing them like a man—and worse than all, let a woman meet danger for your sake! But stay, thou shalt escape these cursed Prussians yet, where they can not touch thee!"

And as he spoke these words, before they knew what he was about, or could stir a step to prevent him, old Lemonnier had snatched down his gun and fired it for the first time since the day of Waterloo. There was a tremendous report which echoed through the room, a cloud of smoke rolled up to the black oak beams, and his son Antoine lay dead upon the floor!

Even the hard German sergeant's heart was touched with pity as he looked upon tragic scene—the old man sunk upon his knees, his white head bowed down; the girl in her strange garb sobbing out a breaking heart over her lover's corpse.

"Forward!" he said very softly to his men; "we can do no good here. One prisoner has escaped us after all!"

Gibraltar and Spain.

The Gibraltar of to-day can only be victualed by the good-will of Spain. If we were, unhappily, at war with Spain and desired to victual the place, we should first have to silence the Spanish batteries round the bay, and it these were constructed as modern science enables them to be constructed, we certainly could not silence them unless we landed, and, by slow and laborious methods, captured them. This would practically involve an invasion of Spain on a comparatively large scale, for until we had fully effected our object, Gibraltar would have to remain unrelieved. In the last century relief from seaward could only be prevented by way of the sea; in the present, it can also be prevented by way of the land. Thus have the modern developments of gunnery altered the situation to our prejudice.

It may, perhaps, be objected that although Gibraltar might be useless to us as against Spain, it would still, in war time, be useful to us as against any other power. It certainly might be useful to a very modified extent. It is, nevertheless, a matter of notoriety than Spain ardently desires to regain possession of the fortress, and it is scarcely conceivable that, unless we were actually fighting for the protection of Spanish interests, Spain would remain rigidly neutral while another power was attempting to expel us from the Rock. In order to secure the more or less active co-operation of Spain, the power would merely have to give some secret pledge that, having once gained possession of Gibraltar, she would hand it over, without charge, to its ancient owners. France, there is no doubt, would, with things standing as they do at present, be very glad to see Spain take our place there, and, though Italy might not like it, she would not spend a single centesimo to prevent it.—[The Fortnightly Review.

THE LOSS OF THE BIRKENHEAD.

A Tale of British Valor in the face of Certain Death.

In a letter to the Weekly Scotsman of March 4 Mr. James Mure Forbes, of Cape Town, gives some interesting quotations from Bowler's "Kaffir Wars and British Settlers in South Africa" and Thomson's "Comprehensive History of England," which describe the spot and tell the story of the disaster. Bowler says:

"Cape Point the dreadful 'Cape of Storms,' is a scene of wild and desolate grandeur. The African continent property terminates in a low, sandy beach known as the 'Cape Flats,' which have during long ages been thrown up by the two contrary prevailing winds and tides, and stretch out into the sea, connecting what was evidently once an island with the mainland. This island is nothing more than a long, narrow strip of mountainous coast, stretching right across and beyond the Flats, in form not unlike a huge pickaxe, the one arm of which consisting of the Devil's Peak, Table Mountain, and the Lion's Rump, incloses Table Bay, while the other arm, stretching far out into the sea and terminating in the bold, precipitous promontory of Cape Point, forms the one side of the wide inviting, but dangerous False Bay. Cape Point though not the most southerly is generally regarded as the extreme end of the continent. On the summit of the outermost crag, overhanging the sea, a very fine lighthouse, with very powerful revolving reflectors, has been erected.

"Leaning out of one of the windows of the lantern, the awed spectator gazes straight down into an abyss of dark rocks and tumbling waters, and sees the flash of the wings and hears the screams of the sea fowl, wheeling in the horrid gloom a thousand feet below. During a strong southeaster the surf breaks and boils and roars for a mile out to sea, as it dashes with mad fury over the Bellows and other remarkable rocks.

"The Birkenhead, freighted with 500 soldiers on their way to the Kaffir war, steamed past Cape Point in a few hours before she struck on Point Danger. The memory of the fearful ship-wreck, on the 26th of February, 1852, is still fresh in the minds of all who treasure deeds of daring, courage, and devotion. It is a fitting tribute to the gallantry of the British Army to picture here the scene of a brave a battle as was ever fought, against a worse enemy than man."

Thomson says: "This vessel was conveying detachments from several of our regiments to the seat of war under Lieut. Col. Alexander Seton, Seventy-fourth Highlanders, (who had succeeded to the command on the death of Col. Fordyce), and had proceeded on her voyage from Simon's Bay, when she suddenly struck upon a sunken rock near the shore, off Point Danger. The shock was so tremendous that the iron plates of the ship's bottom gave way, the cabin was quickly filled with water, and it was evident that in a few minutes more the ship would be engulfed among the breakers.

"It was yet only 2 o'clock in the morning, with no light but that of the stars; but in an instant the deck was crowded with the alarmed passengers, and while death was imminent, only two of the ship's boats were available for service. To rush into the boats, at the risk of swamping them, would have been the impulse of the selfish; to fling themselves into the sea in the hope of reaching the shore, but only to sink each other by their overcrowding and perish in the breakers and by the sharks that were on the alert, would have been the headlong attempt even of the bravest.

"But nothing of the kind in either way was done, and never was the power of military discipline, or the worth of fearless, unflinching courage, or the moral grandeur of self-sacrificing devotedness more conspicuously displayed than in the moment of terrible trial.

"At the word of Col. Seton the soldiers drew up upon the reeling and loosening deck, as if they had been on parade; they obeyed his orders as if they had been executing the usual movements of the drill. The brave, humane heart of the Colonel was first directed to the safety of those who could least help themselves—and whose fate would otherwise have been certain—to the women, the children, and the sick on board, and they were carefully conveyed into the boats, which, in the first instance, were given up for their special benefit; and by this arrangement all the helpless were saved without a single exception. And now only were the strong and vigorous to look to their own safety, after they had so nobly discharged their duty to others, and while several betook themselves to swimming, or committed themselves to a piece of floating timber, the vessel parted amidships and went down with the greater part of the officers and soldiers, with whom self-preservation had been only the latest subject of anxiety.

"In this fatal catastrophe 357 officers and soldiers and 60 seamen perished, while nearly 200 lives were saved, and this, too, in a crisis where, but for these arrangements and the fidelity with which they were executed, nearly all might have been lost. These soldiers also, be it observed, were not veterans, but for the most part young recruits who had never been under fire, and yet they calmly stood in a breach more dismaying than Badajoz or San Sebastian and saw the boats, their last hope of safety, depart from them without a murmur."

A mural tablet was erected by Government at Chelsea Hospital bearing the following inscription: "This monument is erected by command of her Majesty Queen Victoria to record the heroic constancy and unbroken discipline shown by Lieut. Col. Seton, Seventy-fourth Highlanders, and the troops embarked under his command on board the Birkenhead, when that vessel was wrecked off the Cape of Good Hope on the 26th February, 1852, and to preserve the memory of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men who perished on that occasion."

Electric Weaving.

A story is going the rounds of a wonderful electric loom which will weave the coarsest carpet or finest linen. It makes no noise in operating, as each shuttle and moving part works independently. The present power looms run 140 to 180 picks per minute, but this contrivance easily picks 250 to 300 a minute. Altogether it is very wonderful, but no details of its construction or data of practical tests of its workings have yet been made public.

A FIRE HORROR.

Loss of Life in a Cleveland Apartment House.

A despatch from Cleveland, Ohio, says:—A fire horror unprecedented in the history of Cleveland, happened shortly after noon to-day, when four women and a child were burned to death in an apartment house on one of the leading residence streets. The fire broke out at the Morgan, a fashionable boarding place, at No. 508 Prospect street. The building was a three-storey and basement brick structure, containing forty-five rooms, and it had nearly forty inmates. Just at the hour for luncheon, Mrs. J. H. Miller, one of the boarders, discovered flames in the hall on the second floor. Escape by the stairway was cut off, so Mrs. Miller jumped from a second-storey window to the ground and gave the alarm. The fire spread rapidly through the halls, and hundreds of people who congregated on the scene at once attempted to rescue those who were in the building. Nobody thought, however, to turn in a fire alarm, and at least half an hour elapsed before a steamer arrived or a policeman had been sent to the place. The utmost excitement prevailed, and it was not until the flmes had been subdued that the extent of the catastrophe was learned. The names of the dead are:—Mrs. Mary E. Abbey, widow of Judge Abbey, aged 78; Mrs. Emma Somers, a blind woman, aged 45; Mrs. Jessie Hunt, wife of A. C. Hunt, aged 21, who was visiting her mother, Mrs. Somers; Percy Hunt, daughter of Mrs. Hunt, aged one year; Mrs. P. G. Somers, 70 years, mother-in-law of Mrs. Anna Somers. Mrs. J. H. Miller was badly bruised by jumping from a second-storey window. The fire started in the basement, just how is not known, and it swept up through the halls, cutting off all means of escape. The women who perished ran to the windows, but before anything could be done to assist them they were driven back by the smoke and flames. Those on the lower floors rushed to the street, and one woman beside Mrs. Miller jumped from a second storey window. She was Mrs. E. T. Gigord, and she was caught in a rubber coat held by two spectators, escaping without injury. The dead bodies were found on the third floor. The corpses were burned to a crisp. The two upper floors of the building are gutted and the contents of the house are ruined.

PNEUMATIC TUBES ABROAD.

Their Extensive Use in London, Paris Vienna, and Berlin.

Pneumatic tubes for local transmission of telegrams are now used in all the principal cities in Great Britain. At present about 50 miles of such tubes are in operation, requiring an aggregate of 40 horse-power, and transmitting a daily average of over 105,000 messages (or 30,000,000 annually), more than half of these in London. The length of tubes varies greatly; the average length is 630 yards; the greatest single length in London is 3,992 yards.

The tubes are of lead, laid in castiron pipes for protection, and are usually of $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches inner diameter; some tubes of $1\frac{1}{2}$ and some of 3 inches inner diameter are used. As a general rule, with the same air pressure and diameter of tube, the speed varies inversely as the length of the tube. In tubes not over a mile long, the usual average speed is 25 to 30 miles an hour. The carriers are of gutta-percha covered with felt, with a buffer at the front end, and an elastic band at the back or open end to hold in the messages. An ordinary carrier weighing $2\frac{3}{4}$ ounces holds a dozen messages.

The marked success of the British pneumatic service led to the adoption of similar systems in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. The pneumatic system of Paris was put into operation in 1866, and has grown steadily, so that to-day in Paris tubes are used almost exclusively for transmission of local telegrams and letters demanding quick delivery. A small stamped envelope, the petit bleu, costing 50 centimes, or 10 cents, is used for the message, which, dropped into a special post box, is delivered anywhere in Paris within an hour, often within 25 minutes.

In Vienna the "tube post" was established in March, 1875. The nine districts of the city are connected with a central station. The "tube mail" is dropped into special post boxes, collected every half hour, forwarded to the central station and distributed. Pneumatic envelopes cost 15 kreuzers (about 6 cents), ordinary letters 3 kreuzers. "Tube letters" are delivered within one hour after mailing. The Vienna system consists of a main circuit of 5.31 miles, with three branch lines; total length 7.2 miles.

In Berlin the Prussian postal authorities began in 1862 discussion of measures of relief for the overcrowded local telegraph system, and a pneumatic line was opened in 1865 between the Central Telegraph station and the Exchange building. The beginning of the present extensive "tube post" of Berlin dates from 1876, since which time it has been enlarged until there are now over 28 miles of tube line in the city, with 38 stations.

Tube letters are to-day delivered in Berlin more quickly than telegrams, at a cost equivalent to $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents, and "tube post-cards" at $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents. The tubes in Berlin are of wrought iron, and have an inner diameter of 2.55 inches. The system is operated by eight steam engines, aggregating only 128 horse power.

They Ought to Know.

"Don't you think we ought to separate our husbands?" said a lady to her friend. "Do you not see how excited they have become? They are beginning to call each other 'ox' and 'ass' and all sorts of nasty things."

"Oh, no!" was the calm reply. "Let them go on. They have been acquainted with each other for more than twenty years and probably know what they are talking about."

The Science of it.

"Arrah, thin, Pat, do yez rally think the wor-r-rld is as round as that?"

"Av coorse I do."

"Thin phwat I can't get t'rough my shkull is, phwy the folks on the unther soide don't fall into the say."

"Yez make me toired!"

"Well, but phwy is it, I ax yez?"

"God has given them common sense, man aloive, an' they simply howld on!"

HE COULD MAKE MONEY ANYWHERE.

Death of the Most Brilliant Business Man in the Congo Valley.

The career of Camille Delcommune, who died on the Upper Congo in December last, illustrates the fact that some white men are able to make splendid opportunities for themselves even in tropical Africa. Ten years ago he went to the Congo at a small salary to be the agent of a trading company at one of their stations. Nine years later he was the director of the Society of the Upper Congo, had more than forty trading stations under his direction, and, from a commercial point of view, was the most important white man on the river. Fourteen steamboats are engaged exclusively in the transportation service of this company, whose stations are scattered along the Congo and its tributaries for thousands of miles. Delcommune established all of these stations on the upper river.

Delcommune went to the Congo when he was 22 years old on a salary of only about $700 and his rations. He died when he was only 33 years old, and the salary he then commanded would be considered as representing brilliant success in any commercial centre of the world.

One reason for his success was his unbounded enthusiasm and his faith in the future of the much-decried Congo country. In one of his letters he wrote: "The trade that can be developed in the Upper Congo Valley is almost incalculable." In another letter he said: "Any degree of success may be attained here by men of enterprising character and of dauntless determination to achieve their purposes."

Delcommune was that sort of a man. Had he lived he would have become wealthy. He had already won a fair competency when he died. Men like him cannot be suppressed. Put them in the desert of Sahara and they would find some way to make money.

He was the first European to buy ivory on the Upper Congo. Somehow or other, not even physical obstacles could defeat him. Explorers had tried in vain to take their steamers through the Zongo rapids of the Mobangi River. He was the first to make the passage when he planted his stations on the Mobangi in 1891. The missionaries say no other man of such activity, push, and vigilance has ever been seen on the Congo. He had great tact in dealing with the natives, and they all liked him. He was a strict disciplinarian, and held his white subordinates to a rigid accountability. They had to make money for the company or get out.

He launched most of the fleet of steamers that he controlled. He did not hesitate, however, to push inland, away from the rivers, when he believed there was a good prospect of opening a profitable ivory and rubber trade. In two months, a while ago, he travelled 900 miles along tortuous and narrow native paths, studying the prospects of commercial development, at a distance from the rivers.

During his ten years' service he visited Europe only once, and was away from his field of work but a few months. His vigor and energy never became impaired, and he knew how to keep well in a trying climate, and yet his death seems to have been due to an indiscretion. While standing by the grave of one of his subordinates, he removed his hat to make a few remarks. He received a sunstroke, fever followed, and he died in a few days, lamented by all the white men on the Congo as the most brilliant man of business whose talents had been developed in that region. His brother Alexander is a well-known Congo explorer.

DESERVED A BETTER FATE.

A Heroic Engineer Dependent on Charity – Drove the First Locomotive.

The pioneer engine driver of the United States, Christopher Benson, now 86 years of age, is an inmate of the Philadelphia Hospital. After a remarkable career of fifty-nine years of service on the railroads of this continent he is at last dependent on the charity of the city of Philadelphia.

Although the old man is past the fourscore in years, yet he is still hearty and in possession of good health. A remarkable accident, in which he saved the lives of 672 passengers, nine years ago on the Mohawk railway bridge of the New York Central & Hudson River railroad, has deprived him of his teeth and all the hair on his head. Benson is the famous engineer who drove the engine safely over the bridge at Mohawk, accomplishing one of the most astonishing feats of railroad adventure. The newspapers at that time lauded him to the skies for his heroism.

It was a horribly literal truth that the passengers escaped by the skin of their teeth, but it was at the loss of the teeth and hair of the dauntless engineer. The passengers came off with a few scratches, and as the last car cleared the bridge it fell—a mass of flames. Benson had all his hair burned off and teeth so injured by the shock and fire that they were loosened and lost.

Benson held the throttle of the first engine ever brought into the United States—the John Bull. This was on May 27, 1829, and over the Albany & Schenectady Railway. This engine was a cumbersome piece of mechanism, with wooden wheels. It was laid aside a year later for the first engine manufactured in America—the De Witt Clinton—which was driven over the same railroad for the first time by Benson, on August 30, 1830. This engine was specially built here by Englishmen brought over for that purpose.

Bridget's Rebuff.

A lady had been ill and under medical treatment for a long time. As she grew no better all the while, she became distrustful of her physician's skill and did not wish to see him, and yet was not bold enough to tell him so. She communicated her state of mind to her maid.

"Lave 'im to me, mum, lave 'im to me!" said the girl.

By and by the doctor came to the door and Bridget opened it about an inch.

"Sorry, sir," said she, "but ye can't come in the day, docthor!"

"Can't come in? How's that?"

"The misthress do be too ill for to see ye the day, sir!"

Clara—"And so you have at last brought Harry Goodcatch to your feet?" Maude—"Yes; but I'm afraid its for the last time. I accepted him!"