

# A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

## CHAPTER I. THE HEIRESS.

Mrs. Farquhar was thirty years younger than her husband. The fact, originally a pleasure to him, became afterwards an offence, and he quarrelled with her for no better reason. At least, so said Mr. Nevill, his cousin; and so said every one at all acquainted with the harmless lady. Old John Farquhar died at seventy-six, and left his widow not one penny of money. And her son, young John—as good a boy as ever was seen, a smart young soldier, who had never offended his father till a year ago, and then only by over-zealous intercession for his mother—found himself cut down to a pittance of two hundred a year. While, on the other hand, Mr. Nevill's daughter, little Jessica, whom no one knew, and who was totally insignificant, became the possessor of a house, and a park, and a hundred thousand pounds. It was scandalous.

Of course gentle Mrs. Farquhar cried herself ill, and said it was all her fault; and of course young John was aghast, and believed himself on the workhouse threshold. But Mr. Nevill took the matter more to heart than did either, and his very hair stood on end with dismay; for he was an extremely high-souled gentleman, horrified to think a member of his household should profit by such monstrous injustice. Jessica at this time was eighteen, pretty, and the apple of her father's eye; rather a clever little person, who, having left school, wanted now to go to college. But she did not understand money matters, and became, under the present circumstances, just a little annoying to her papa. For her remarks were perfunctory and childish; and one moment she was building with her wealth some extravagant castle in Spain, and the next clamoring to pack it all up in a parcel, and send it off by post to her cousin John. Clearly, however, there was but one comfortable solution of the difficulty; the heiress must marry John Farquhar, and so restore to him his inheritance. This project was the simultaneous invention of both Mr. Nevill and the widow. It was propounded to John, who, after a little hesitation, and having no fancy for the workhouse, agreed. Provisionally that is: in Jessica's interest he inserted in the treaty a saving clause. "If," he wrote, "your daughter is perfectly willing; at present, and when we shall have become acquainted."

"Very proper," commented Mr. Nevill; "could not be more proper. Every word John says is admirable. You are to be congratulated on your husband, Jessica. Sit down, my dear, and write him a cordial response."

Jessica obediently took a pen and wrote "My dear Cousin," with a full stop after it.

"What, my love, is the matter?" inquired her father.

Jessica threw down the pen and began to cry. Then it came out.

"I don't want to marry John Farquhar," sobbed Jessica.

Mr. Nevill bit his lip impatiently demanded reasons, and Jessica found it supremely hard to make them intelligible.

"I don't want to marry till I'm at least twenty-eight papa. I shouldn't mind if I were an old maid. I want to go to Girton, papa; and to be—to be cultured. I mean, I want to be superior."

"You must try to express yourself more clearly," said Mr. Nevill.

"Papa," said Jessica, who till this moment had imprisoned her aspirations in her breast, and who though she loved her father dearly, was not much in the habit of talking to him—"papa, Lady Sterne was married at my age, and now she is so stout, and has so much to do, and she always seems so tired of her husband, and so tired of babies, and every one thinks her so stupid."

"You have not yet made your meaning clear, Jessica," said Mr. Nevill.

"I should much rather be like dear Miss Snow, who is always so nicely dressed, and who reads so much, and writes for the Sunday at Home, papa. I mean, what is the good of marrying at all?" cried Jessica. "And if ever I do get married, I want to marry a person—whom I esteem and worship." Here Jessica colored.

Mr. Nevill explained that she was at full liberty to worship John Farquhar, but that she must not keep him ten years waiting for his money; and then he advised her to go on with her letter.

Jessica tried again. "But John Farquhar seems quite an ordinary person, papa, and I don't suppose I shall find it the least possible to esteem and to worship him."

"Then you had better love him," said Mr. Nevill dryly—"that will do as well."

Jessica grew very pink. "Papa, I could only esteem and worship and—and"—here she blushed furiously—"love any one who was quite my ideal in every single way."

Mr. Nevill put on his spectacles and stared. "Jessica, are you thinking of Mr. Hobson?"

(Mr. Hobson, the curate, had made a sudden proposal for Jessica two months ago, and had been declined with a few tears.)

"Papa, you know I hate Mr. Hobson."

"I know nothing of the sort," said her father testily. "Are you thinking of Sir Edgar Lee?"

"Papa, Sir Edgar has never so much as asked me, and I hate him worse even than Mr. Hobson."

"Of whom are you thinking?"

"I am not thinking of anyone."

"Excuse me, my dear. You called him your 'ideal,' I think."

"He isn't any one," murmured Jessica.

"Oh, a figment of fancy? Then I can't allow him to be a rival to John. A fancy is of no importance."

"Oh, papa, it is! it is! And, besides, you want to upset my whole life. I am not one of those girls who are always talking and imagining about 'falling in love.' I think all that is such nonsense. I want to go to Girton as Flora Williams did, and learn a great deal, and—and be sensible. Oh, I can't explain," ended poor Jessica, in despair.

"My dear," said Mr. Nevill, "falling in love is not nonsense. It is very serious; especially to women, who are judged chiefly by the way they do it. They teach nothing about it at Girton, I think? That is my chief reason for not sending you there. But all this is irrelevant. You need not study the question in the abstract. You are to marry your cousin John, and the sooner

you fall in love with him the better. Write your letter, my love."

Jessica could not make her father understand that he was trampling on the finest sprouts of her delicate soul. She submitted; and in the summer John Farquhar was to come to Nevill Lodge to make his betrothed bride's acquaintance.

Now, it must be confessed, the young man did not altogether like the part he was playing in this affair, for he felt himself turned into an object of compassion; the role least suited to an Englishman; and, moreover, the male animal relinquishes with a bad grace his privilege of wooing. Still, he hoped for the best, having heard that Jessica was pretty; and he was enamored of getting his position restored and his few debts paid; besides which, he wanted to please his mother and to make her comfortable. For John was romantically devoted to his mother, and she was in ill health, and altogether unfit to cope with poverty and disappointment.

The wedding was fixed for the autumn, and the consins were to be introduced in the summer. Just now it was spring. And, alas!

In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

John Farquhar, the engaged man, was not sufficiently alive to this springtime danger in which he stood.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## A SNOWFLAKE.

The Crystallized Water is Really Blue, Not White.

The first snow of winter is always hailed with mingled feelings of pleasure and apprehension. The youngsters welcome it with unalloyed delight, but their elders realize that it is but the harbinger of many and more severe storms which will bring misery to some and discomfort to all. But even these cannot but admire the beauty of the little crystals of water as they fall so softly and gently from the skies. Even in the mass its pure whiteness and its soft feathery character give snow a charm peculiarly its own, which has been celebrated in proverb and poem in all ages of mankind. It came rather as a shock to learn, as the realistic painters showed and the philosophers corroborated, that the snow was not white, but blue; a faint and delicate blue it is true, but one well marked in deep shadows and exactly that of water when viewed in large masses. Pure water in small bulk is almost perfectly transparent, but in large masses gives a distinctly blue tint to white objects when seen through it. So the whiteness of the snow, due to interference of the light by the reflection and refraction of the innumerable facets of minute crystals, is found to be tinged with blue when these interferences are sufficiently numerous.

For snow is nothing more than crystallized water, and its beauty in mass is surpassed by the beauty of some of the individual crystals which catch on one's coat-sleeve or fall on the ground, when examined closely by the eye or, still better, when looked at through a magnifying glass. Multitudes of forms of all degrees of complexity from the slender, straight needle to the most complicated star-like figures have been drawn and described, but in spite of this great diversity they are all absolutely uniform in their primary design, that of the hexagonal prism. The ordinary form is that of six straight needles of the ice radiating from a common center, and the straight needles occasionally seen are regarded as broken or incomplete specimens of this class, but each of these needles is capable of throwing out other needle-like branches, always at symmetrical distances and always at an angle of 60° or 120° degrees. Occasionally little plates are seen, but these also are invariably 6-sided planes the angles of which are still 120° degrees.

What is the meaning of this rigid adherence to a certain geometrical form? Evidently the result is the action of physical force on the individual molecules which make up the crystals, and evidently also this force is either all-pervading or else inherent in the molecules themselves, for the crystals figured by Arctic explorers and those found in the mountains of the Andes are practically identical. There is scarcely a possibility of a doubt that the force, whatever it is, which determines the form of crystals is inherent in the molecules of which the crystal is composed, and, perhaps, represents the position of the atoms in the molecules themselves. The theory of crystallization has been so elaborately worked out that it is second only to those of mathematics and chemistry itself in exactness. So accurate is it that the crystalline form of a substance unknown in other than a liquid or a gaseous state, and even that of a substance entirely unknown, but whose existence is possible, can be predicted with accuracy. This is the last and greatest test of a scientific theory. To most minds it is a complete proof of the correctness of that theory.

Crystallized water assumes the form of a hexagonal prism, not from chance, but because it is compelled to assume that form on account of its molecular arrangement, due to the forms which the atoms themselves assume within the molecule or rather to the restrictions of their several ranges of movement through their mutual attractions. This is the basis of the present theory of the formation of crystals, and it will be seen that given the character and number of the atoms and their arrangement in a molecule it is perfectly possible to predict the range of their movement in a molecule and thence the probable character of a crystal which would be built up of many molecules. It is needless to say that it is unnecessary to carry the investigation of any compound back to the atoms, and that the fact of a certain number and character of atoms having been established in the molecules of any substance, it is possible at once to predicate the arrangement they would assume and the crystalline form the molecules would take.

The little crystals which make up the snow are, therefore, the resultant of physical and chemical forces of the universe and each represents in its perfect form the unalterable character of the laws of nature, which regulate alike the shape of the greatest globe of the earth and the tiny feathery flake which falls on a coat sleeve on a dark winter day.

## BRITISH DEFENCES UNMASKED.

The Plans of Four Important Anglo-Indian Ports Taken by a French Spy.

Advised just received from Rangoon, British Burmah, show that the British Government defences at Aden, Kurrachi, Bombay, and Rangoon are probably as well known now in Paris as they are at the army headquarters in London. The plans of these most important defences of the Indian Empire were secured by a Frenchman, who, under a German name, obtained employment as an engineer in the British India service. Last September he obtained leave of absence at Rangoon, but when he failed to return an investigation was made, which revealed his treachery. The disclosure created great excitement in Rangoon and Bombay, and there was much cabling between those cities and the Home Office in London, but it was a case of locking the stable door after the steed was stolen.

The man who secured accurate plans of the fortification of these four Indian ports was known as Wald. His real name was De Boulanger, and he came of a prominent family in Marseilles. He was educated for the army, and when still under age served in Pondicherry, but a quarrel over a woman forced him to leave the colony. He was transferred to Algiers, but soon tiring of this hard life, he came back to India and obtained a position as corresponding clerk in a Bombay commercial house. While there he fell in with some British officers, and, as he went by the name of Wald and claimed to be a German, he was induced to enlist in the Royal Artillery at Colaba, Bombay. This was six years ago. He was assigned as gunner at Aden, and it was noted then that he spent much time in his room, making drawings and notes, all of the latter being in French. He was soon transferred to Kurrachi, then to Bombay, and finally to Monkey Point, Rangoon. He was noted at each place for his close attention to work and his studious habits. At Kurrachi he gained a place on the staff and became chief clerk, which gave him unlimited opportunities for securing information about the defences. He spoke English, French, German, and Italian, and his command of Hindustani and Burmese was perfect. His labors in his room were supposed to be supplementary to his regular work and no one suspected that he was a spy in the service of France.

His disappearance coincided with the departure of Mrs. N—, a French woman of Rangoon, and it is thought the couple left together. At Bombay he bought two tickets for Paris, but he had already reached the French capital before suspicion was aroused, as he had cunningly applied for three weeks' furlough.

## Europe's Armies.

International peace is not the only thing threatened by the armaments of Europe. Each of the great Continental powers has its own festering social disorder, to which its standing army is a constant irritant. War taxes and enforced military service are nursing internal discontent which may impel war before it has really been provoked. The tremendous strain of supporting her army must reach the breaking point if it is not soon eased. That country may choose the horrors of war as a means of preventing the miseries of revolution. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and France are able to maintain their huge military establishments, but at a cost not entirely measured by the vast financial outlay. Their armies have vied into existence swarms of Socialists and large numbers of those criminal malcontents, the Anarchists. The full force of the reaction of the armed peace upon society in the countries maintaining that paradoxical attitude is not to be gauged by the visible signs of discontent. It is only the more insidious that in such countries as Germany express their spirit of revolt against the military taxes and service. In all those countries, however, Socialism is gaining a strong foothold, and political leaders find it necessary to bargain with it in order to carry on government or effective opposition.

If the twelve million able-bodied men composing the armies of Europe should emigrate, their loss would be a great benefit to the countries on whose produce they are now preying. If they should leave the camp and return to the fields and workshops of their own countries, they would probably bring down the level of wages appreciably, but by their stimulus to production they would also bring down prices, and thus balance the tendency of lower wages to lower the standard of living. Then the production of wealth which had been unproductively consumed by the standing armies would be available as capital to employ the labor released by the breaking up of the armies. New enterprises would be started, and though over-production might result, that condition would be incomparably better than the state of things subsisting at present. Further, emigration still affords a safety-valve for superfluous labour. Just now the military requirements of Germany incline her to discourage emigration, and at the same time are an impulse to it. There are other motives besides the desire to escape military burdens and military service that urge emigration. Artisans and labourers can get better wages in America or South Africa than they can at home, for though the army takes away many labourers from industry, it also takes away much capital, so that there is a smaller fund to be divided among the fewer workers.

## Afghan Postage Stamps.

The collectors of stamps may like to know that Ameer Abdur Rahman has had three issues of stamps. When he first came to the throne he had dies struck for two postage stamps, both round in shape and of a dull red color. One of these was valued at one abasi, or four annas, and the other two abasis; the former was used on letters weighing one miskal, or half the weight of a Cabuli rupee. The latter carried a letter up to two miskals. The inscription on these stamps is "Darus Sultaneh Cabul" on the margin, and the price is in the middle. Three years ago a small black oblong stamp about an inch long, valued at one abasi, was issued. This was merely inscribed "Masul Kagaz Dak Khana Dowlat-i-Afghanistan fi miskal ek abasi." This has now been superseded by a much larger red oblong stamp, which bears the same words, but has in addition a mosque and two flags.

The remains of a Roman watergate have been unearthed at Nimes. There are two openings of 13 feet span.

## Where Law is Not Respected.

Quite recently two freight trains on the Boston and Maine Railway were stopped by bands of tramps, who broke open the seals of some of the cars and attempted to rifle them. Before they had accomplished their purpose in either case the arrival of another train reinforced the captured train hands sufficiently to enable them to make a successful fight against the tramps, who were finally routed. One of the train hands was badly wounded. The despatches said that none of the tramps had been arrested, and they are quite silent as to any measures being taken by the officers of the law. The despatch recounting the second attempt states that the company has armed the trainmen of all outgoing trains on the section of the road on which the attempted robberies were made. It is a very remarkable fact that in the United States more than any other European or American nation the defence of life and property and the punishment of crime is undertaken, with little protest on the part of the properly constituted authorities and powers, by the individuals, companies or mobs who are interested or who interest themselves. In many Western States mining camps are apparently expected to administer justice for themselves, with little assistance from any legal or responsible authority. In the great manufacturing and mining Middle and Southern States the great industrial companies depend more for defence of their property upon hired forces than upon the police or militia. Even the railway companies of the Northern States do not despise the aid of Pinkerton's forces. In the Southern States the white people take all the punishment for certain crimes on the part of negroes entirely from under the hand of law and authority, and summarily execute justice or injustice, as it may happen. It is certain that the United States needs to give more attention to the properly constituted administration of law and justice. Just now there is a great deal more attention given by congresses and legislatures and the public generally to the work of enabling people to make money easily and rapidly than to the lawful security of either life or property. The condition of things is a disgrace to civilization and, what is worse, a discouragement and a hindrance to progress throughout the world.

## The Bane of Irish Villages.

It is the wholesale dry-rotting of the boys growing up in the Irish towns and villages, merely through contact with this ever-swelling army of loafers and vagabonds, which makes one ask, with a sinking heart, what hope there is of the new generation. We are still raising many good boys, in spite of this contaminated environment—steady, pure-minded, ambitious, diligent lads, who are not ashamed to be regular at mass, and at their studies or work, and at their beds in good time. It is our curse that these exceptions will not remain in their maturity to help us combat the national evil. They will sail off for America or the Antipodes, weakening steadily the minority which strives to better matters. As things go now, this always-shrinking minority cannot much longer keep up with a decent show of resistance. It must be overwhelmed by weight of numbers.

It is a significant fact that the Irishman returned from America or Australia is one of the worst elements in this mischievous and dangerous class. I suppose this is logical enough; if he had not had the seeds of worthlessness in him, he would have taken root in the soil of a new continent, and remained there. I could name from personal acquaintance a dozen small towns and villages where the home-coming of a single sophisticated loafer or ruffian from foreign parts has wrought the whole difference between a tolerably quiet and well-ordered community and a place visibly going, with loud turbulence and vicious abandon, straight to the devil.

It is a part of the irony of our fate that this returned blatherskite or miscreant should take a wild and absorbing interest in local politics. If he has learned nothing good abroad, he has at least acquired a shrewd acquaintance with the tricks and machinery of the "caucus," and he knows how to put himself on the Town Council of Galway, or make himself a poor law guardian in a smaller place, in the teeth of all the soberer elements of the electorate. There is a certain vigour and unholy activity about the fellow, a kind of brass imitation of the golden resourcefulness he has seen abroad, which make him the natural ring-leader of the slower and more timid stay-at-home loafers, and he gathers them up and propels them along as a force for confusion, waste, and wrong which no one knows how to stand up against.—[The Fortnightly Review.]

## Both Religions Asiatic.

In their origin, Christianity and Islam are both Asiatic, both Semitic, and Jerusalem is but a few hundred miles from Mecca. In regard to the number of their adherents, both have steadily increased from the beginning to the present day. After 1,900 years, Christianity numbers 400,000,000, and Islam, after 1,300 years, 200,000,000; but Mohammedanism has been practically confined to Asia and Africa, while Christianity has been the religion of Europe and the New World, and politically it rules now over all the world except China and Turkey.

Mohammedanism has been identified with a stationary civilization, and Christianity with a progressive one. There was a time, from the eighth century to the thirteenth, when science and philosophy flourished at Bagdad and Cordova under Moslem rule, while darkness reigned in Europe. But Kenan has shown that this brilliant period was neither Arabic nor Mohammedan in its spirit or origin, and, although his statements may admit of some modification, it is certain that, however brilliant while it lasted, this period has left no trace in the Moslem faith, unless it be in the philosophical basis of Mohammedan law, while Christianity has led the way in the progress of modern civilization.

Both of these are positive religions. Each claims to rest upon a divine revelation which is in its nature final and unchangeable; yet the one is stationary and the other progressive. The one is based upon what it believes to be divine commands, and the other upon divine principles—just the difference that there is between the law of Sinai and the law of love, the ten commandments and the two. The ten are specific and unchangeable; the two admit of ever new and progressive application.—[The Contemporary Review.]

## THE TALLEST EXTANT ANIMAL.

Male Giraffes Have Reached the Height of Eighteen Feet.

Compared with their extinct allies of earlier periods of the earth's history, it may be laid down as a general rule that the large animals of the present day are decidedly inferior in point of size. During the later portion of the territorial period, for instance, before the incoming of the glacial epoch when mammals appear to have attained their maximum development, there lived elephants alongside of which ordinary individuals of the existing species would have looked almost dwarfs, while the cave bear and the cave hyena attained considerably larger dimensions than their living representatives, and some of the sable-toothed tigers must have been considerably larger than the biggest African lion or Bengal lion. Again, the remains of red deer, bison, and wild oxen disinterred from the caverns and other superficial deposits of this country indicate animals far

## SUPERIOR IN SIZE

to their degenerate descendants of the present day, while some of the extinct pigs from the Siwalik hills of northern India might be compared in stature to a tapir rather than to an ordinary wild boar. The same story is told of reptiles, the giant tortoise of the Siwalik hills, in spite of its dimensions having been considerably exaggerated, greatly exceeding in size the largest living giant tortoises of either the Mascarene or the Galapagos Islands. The latter rocks have also yielded the remains of a long-nosed crocodile, allied to the gavia of the Ganges, which probably measured from fifty to sixty feet in length, whereas it is very doubtful if any existing member of the order exceeds half the smaller of these dimensions. If, moreover, we took into account totally extinct types, such as the megatheres and mylodons of South America, and contrasting them with their nearest living allies—in this instance the sloths and anteaters—the discrepancy in size would be still more marked, but such a comparison would scarcely be analogous to the above.

To every rule there is, however, an exception, and there are a few groups of living large mammals whose existing members appear never to have been surpassed in size by their fossil relatives. Foremost among these are the whales, which now appear to include the largest members of the order which have ever existed. The so-called white, or square-mouthed rhinoceros of South Africa seems also to be fully equal in size to any of its extinct ancestors; and the same is certainly true of the giraffe, which may even exceed all its predecessors in this respect. Whether, however,

## THE FOSSIL GIRAFFES,

of which more anon, were or were not the equals in height of the largest individuals of the living species, there is no question but that the latter is by far the tallest of all living mammals, and that it was only rivaled in this respect among extinct forms by its aforesaid ancestors. Moreover, if we exclude creatures like some of the gigantic dinosaurian reptiles of the secondary epoch, which, so to speak, gained an unfair advantage as regards height by sitting on their hind legs in a kangaroo-like manner, and limit our comparison to such as walk on all four feet in the good old-fashioned way, we shall find that giraffes are not only the tallest mammals, but likewise the tallest of all animals that have ever existed.

As regards the height attained by the male of the tallest of quadrupeds, there is, unfortunately, a lack of accurate information and since it is probable that the majority of those now living are inferior in size to the largest individuals which existed when the species was far more numerous than at present, it is to be feared that this deficiency in our knowledge is not very likely to be remedied. By some writers the height of the male giraffe is given at sixteen feet, and that of the female at fourteen feet, but this is certainly below the reality. For instance, Mr. H. A. Bryden states that a female he shot in Southern Africa measured seventeen feet to the summits of the horns. From the evidences of a very large though badly preserved specimen in the Natural History Museum it may, however, be inferred that fine males certainly reach the imposing height of eighteen feet.

## Her First.

A woman got into a street-car in Toronto on a recent Saturday afternoon. She was carrying a sweet-faced baby, which was not more than six months old.

The car was detained at the corner where the woman got on, and she shifted round nervously in her seat for a moment and then began to toss the baby about. Here is a true description of what she did with that child while the car was going 250 yards: Held it up on one knee for thirty seconds. Then shifted it to the other knee. Pulled it up against her and hugged it twice.

Tossed it on her left shoulder and then lifted it to her right shoulder.

Held it up to the window and then stood it up on her lap.

Made a cradle out of her arms and jumped it up and down six times.

Placed it on her left knee. Then put it on her right knee.

Laid it on its stomach in her lap.

Hugged it to her bosom and patted it seven times.

Held it up to the train window again, then pulled it over her left shoulder, shifted it to her right shoulder, and wound it up by dumping it into her lap.

Tossed it into the air a dozen times and hugged it four or five times.

Laid it on its back in her lap and then turned it to lay on its stomach.

Patted it for a minute and hummed "Hush-a-bye, Baby," although the child wasn't making a sound.

Put it on her knee and joggled her knee up and down, shook it in front of her, holding it out at arm's length, and then hugged it ecstatically three times.

Held it up to the window for the third time, and then, when the conductor came after her fare, laid it in a lump on the seat beside her.

Patted it some more, joggled it some more, tossed it some more, and flopped it down on its stomach again.

Held it out at arm's length, and gazed at it rapturously. Talked gibberish to it, and hugged it some more.

And all this while the car was going 250 yards.

But, then, it was—her first!