

Britain emerges from her greatest struggle since the days of the Napoleonic wars with enhanced prestige and increased confidence in her own strength and resources, says a recent London letter.

Continental Anglophobia is not, of course, extinct; but its voice is becoming fainter in the presence of accomplished facts. Though Britain has had her teeth in South Africa for three years, not a single continental power has gained anything at her expense.

One European state, oscillating between a policy of bluster and a policy of sycophancy, has lost much that had been laboriously acquired by co-operating with British statesmanship. If there be any isolation splendid or otherwise, in Europe today, Germany and not Britain furnishes the best exemplification.

OPINION OF AUSTRIANS.

In a masterly review of the situation the Fremdenblatt, often the organ of the Austro-Hungarian foreign office, says:—

"Even with her hands tied, Britain's influence in the councils of Europe has never ceased to be effective; and now that her hands are free, it will be dominant. Contrary to continental prophecy three years ago, the Boer war has not brought home to the British people a sense of helplessness. It has enabled them to realize the extent of British might available in a case of emergency. They know to-day that the vast mines of their treasure, both men and money, to say nothing of an overwhelming navy, have scarcely been tapped. Britain is absolutely independent of European alliances. She can isolate the continent if she will."

German opinion, where it is not hopelessly biased by ministerial opinions, recognizes Britain's enhanced prestige.

SHOWS BRITAIN'S POWER.

"It is useless to deny," says the Berliner Post, "that British statesmen lost nothing, even when the success of the British arms was a matter of grave doubt. For this, however, they must thank the Chinese diversion and Russia's extraordinary faux pas. To the former they owe the strengthening of the entente with America, and to the latter the alliance with Japan. Viewed from any point, Britain looms up larger than ever before."

All the difference between independence and isolation is illustrated in the British attitude. While the end of the South African war is welcomed, because Great Britain will now be able to take a more active share in questions of purely European concern, her triumphant emergence is a cause of intense chagrin in circles where hopes of a British alliance had been entertained. It is no secret, for instance, that German and Russian statesmen once believed that England, if crippled in the war, would listen more readily to the plans for defensive economic action against the United States, which some continental powers contemplate as the sole remedy for the present economic conditions in Europe.

AMERICA'S FOES.

Without England's participation such a coalition would be limp enough, and a German alliance has a marketable value, which will increase as the crisis on the continent becomes more acute. To the promoters of the Anti-American trade combination England's assured independence is anything but auspicious.

Whatever the future has in store for Mr. Chamberlain, there is no disputing his present ascendancy. The war was "Chamberlain's war," say his enemies. But both admit that the conditions of peace are of his devising and dictation. One of his critics said:

"Would that the burghers three years ago might have foreseen the inevitable outcome of the struggle. Would that the lying journalism of the continent, which cared not a whit to humiliate England, had not placed the most ambitious and least scrupulous of her statesmen in a position where his political existence depended upon the annihilation of the Dutch republics! Who shall say that the terms of peace would not have been easier and more honorable to the vanquished if the scapegoat had been Leyds instead of Chamberlain?"

KING AND THE CONVICTS.

A report of a specially interesting incident in connection with the King's visit to Portland Prison has leaked out. So delighted was one of a party of convicts at the sight of His Majesty that, setting at defiance all prison rules, he shouted, "Three cheers for the King." The cheers were given by the convicts with great heartiness. His Majesty, who smilingly acknowledged this surprising outburst of loyalty, considerably ordered in recognition thereof that each convict should have on the following Sunday a special course of "sweets" for dinner. This, which consisted of half a pound of pudding and two ounces of golden syrup, was duly served and was much appreciated.

After Long Years

Adelina—the slatternly maid-of-all-work—sided up to my table and gently insinuated a couple of large envelopes and one small one by the side of my plate. I pounced on the latter with avidity. The others I knew could wait.

Eagerly tearing it open I disclosed a cheque.

"Hooray!" exclaimed the girl, over my shoulder. "I thort that little 'un meant luck."

"Luck it is, Adelina," I cried gaily. "Bring me some more 'little uns' as soon as you like."

"I wish I could bring yer one hev'ry mornin'." Somethink allus seems ter grip me 'ere," she returned, laying her hand on her breast, "when I brings them wot yer've addressed yerself back to yer an' sees yer face."

"You're a good sort, Adelina," I exclaimed, touched by her kindly interest. "They have been coming back rather frequently lately, haven't they? But never mind, the tide will turn. Some day, my girl, these gentlemen, who treat me so ungraciously will beg me to write for them, and then—I won't forget my friends. Now, what's the best news this mornin'?"

"Well, the front sittin' room's bin took," she replied, brushing the tousled hair from her forehead. "A lydy an' a little 'un come and engaged yesterd'y. Yer could see in a jiff as she were a lydy, and no error, but Mother Grabbit mude her stump up a week in advance. 'No never-p'y writin' gents fer me,' ses she. 'Mister top-floor-back'll 'ave ter clean 'is pretty slick, or there'll be another tickit in the winder.' I thort yer'd like ter know."

"It's very kind of you, Adelina. Give my respects to Mrs. Grabbit, and request her to send me the change out of this."

Adelina disappeared, flourishing the cheque in her grimy fingers, and after demolishing my frugal breakfast I took up my rountain pen and concentrated my attention on the morning's work.

The day before a local bootmaker had given me a commission to prepare him a trade-bringing leaflet, and the accepted "copy" meant a new pair of badly-needed boots. To such expedients had necessity brought me. If luck held good, the afternoon might bring a new hat. The field of literature was wide, and the day that I had dreamed of when I might command my price was long delayed.

In the meantime the desire to live was still strong within me, and such hack-work—distasteful as it was—and the rare acceptances of my legitimate journalistic "copy," kept me out of the gutter. Some day I should reap the reward of my persistent striving. My novel was even then approaching completion. But the present vital question was how to provide the next meal.

The production of satisfactory copy for that shoemaker proved a matter more difficult than I anticipated. The usual stereotyped platitudes would not pass with my up-to-date patron. Telling argument, condensed in a series of convincing phrases which had never been advanced before, was his stipulation, and after spoiling several sheets of good paper it struck me that the subject, like my own footwear, had already been painfully worn. Stuffing the few last shreds from my pouch into my briar, I lay back and endeavored to gather inspiration from the curling smoke.

Absorbed in the evolution of a new idea that unexpectedly came to me, I did not notice that my door had been pushed open a little way, and I was brought back to my surroundings by a gentle whisper: "Halloa, man; how's 'oo?"

Dropping my feet hastily from the table I turned and gazed in the direction from which the small voice had come, and my first expression of annoyance at being disturbed gave way to an involuntary smile. There, in the doorway, appeared a smiling little face crowned with an aureole of golden curls.

As my eyes lingered on the pleasing picture some chord of memory was touched within me, and I stared, spellbound, incapable of uttering a single word. The little apparition arched her head roguishly on one side, and after favoring my sanctum with a critical survey toddled inside and proceeded to gather up the scattered sheets with which I had strewn the floor and replace them neatly on the table edge.

"You're untidy, I see afraid," she reproved me. "My mammy told me never to leave fings lying about, but to always put them back in their proper places." I felt properly rebuked. "I beg your pardon, young lady," I stammered, lamely. "You see, I didn't expect company."

She placed her hand confidently on mine and looked up into my serious face. "What's your name?" she lisped. "Jack," I returned. "What's yours?" "I'm Nellie," she replied; "Mamma's Nellie. We've come to live here now, you know—downstairs."

"It's very nice of you to call, Nellie," I said, taking her on my knee. "You must often come and see me; will you?"

"Oh, yes," she returned, readily. "Will you tell me a story? Mamma often does, you know."

Here was a dilemma. A fairy story at a moment's notice!

Happily the maid was not so hypercritical as my friend the bootmaker, and was pleased to express approval of my recital. "I like 'oo," she said, decidedly. "I must go now; but I shall come again to hear about the wicked ogre."

With a bewitching smile she pursed her lips for a kiss, and toddled to the door. "I like 'oo, Jack," she cried. "Good-bye."

Long after the pit-pat of her little feet on the stairs had died away I sat sucking at my empty pipe and staring vacantly at the ceiling.

Nellie! The old familiar name, and something in the little maid's expression conjured up the memory of days long past. Gone was the shabby room, and in its stead floated before me the sweet face of a woman—Nellie—my bride that was to be—the woman whom, through my own madness and folly, I had lost for ever.

Vivid, as if but yesterday, the memory of that mad night when I had blindly, recklessly thrown away all my hope of future happiness came back to torture me—the card-strewn room, misty with smoke and reeking with the fumes of wine; Jim Denson, my professed friend, smiling and contemptuous; the men about the table, egging me on to ruin—"Another hand, old man! the luck must change! Here, drink up!" the reckless staking, the swimming room, the blurred cards, the passing of paper, and Denson's mocking laugh—heavens! I could hear it ringing in my ears still!

And in the morning the stunning announcement that I was his debtor to the tune of seven hundred; the display of his hand; the confession that he was my rival; his threat to ruin me if the money was not forthcoming immediately. My despair, as I realized I had been trapped; my paroxysm of madness; the look of hate on his face as he crept from the room after I had struck him to the floor—

The phantasmagoria of events swept rapidly through my brain, as if displayed before my gaze by the magic of some mental cinematograph. And then the picture faded, and the pipe dropped from my mouth. A ruined gambler, I had not dared to face her. Broken and ashamed, I had disappeared and buried myself in this sordid quarter of the great city far from my old haunts, where, under an assumed name, I had lived the eternity of years away.

Seven years ago the papers had informed me that the woman I had lost had become Denson's wife.

Ah, yes, I was a fool—a craven; but Heaven knows I had suffered for my folly.

Why should the unexpected visit of this little child bring up again the bitter past? Why did the recollection of her sweet, innocent face set my heart a-throb with yearnings that I had thought long dead, and bring the blinding mist into my eyes? Nellie—pshaw! Away with such idle regret. That was the happening of seven long years back! The present was all-presenting. Again I took up my pen and applied myself to the working out of the idea. Presently it was finished, and I went forth to submit it to my benefactor. "The past is dead," I soliloquized, as I strode along the busy street. "The future only lives." But I hoped the little maid would come again.

That first visit was the precursor of many, and as the days went by gradually little Nellie twined herself round my lonely heart until I looked for her coming as eagerly as a father looks to the kiss of greeting from the lips of his loved child! When she failed to come, which was but rarely, the day seemed black and the future never more hopeless. The precious moments when she sat on my knee, her little face wrapt with wonder at the marvels I wove for her, lifted me out of the depths and stimulated me to renewed effort. Oftentimes after she had left me I found myself singing for very gladness, and would stop suddenly to wonder at my changed disposition.

Even Adelina noted the change, and one day when I was more than usually cheerful she broke out: "Well, I never did see such a transformation in my nat'ral. W'y before that blessed kid come yer were as glum as a undertaker's apprentice; now yer goes on jes' like a bloke 'oo's lookin' forward to the 'appy d'y. Wot d'yer reckon's tuk yer?"

"It's gait de coeur, Adelina," I returned, smiling.

"Um; it's a pleasant sorter compl'int, any'ow," she remarked.

"It is," said I. "It's a complaint that's brought on through an indulgence in spirits—good spirits, Adelina. Don't look so suspicious." "Yer never seen the little 'un's mother, sir, 'ave yer?" she said. "No; of course yer wouldn't. She's workin' all the blessed d'y, and seldom leaves 'er room. She's a literary individual, too; but she ain't like you. I think she must 'ave reg'lar job, cos ev'ry Thursday the postman's sure to 'ave a letter for Miss Janette Moore. That's 'er nomy-dyloom, yer know. Ever 'ceerd on it?"

"Yes; she does a weekly column for 'The Blackbird,'" I returned, interestedly. "Lucky woman!" "Oh, I dunno," said Adelina; "she don't look particularly strong. I can tell yer. She's workin' on a book too, she told me the other d'y. We've got some clever lodgers," at No. 11, an' don't yer forgit it!"

So the weeks of work were ticked off, relieved by the daily visits of my little Nellie, until the day dawned when I wrote "Finis" to my

novel and, buoyed up with sanguine hopes of its acceptance, sent it forth to the publishers. A fortnight dragged by, and then one morning came a brief note requesting me to call upon them.

The curt communication nited me with misgiving, and yet—Eager to know the best or the worst, I proceeded to the office. As if in a dream, I caught the far-away mumble of the spectacled old gentleman who gripped my hand: "Our reader reports favorably upon your work, sir; we shall be pleased to arrange terms."

The room swam before my eyes. Dazed and half incredulous, I found myself once more in the street. The struggling and privation were over! The future was assured.

Involuntarily a snatch of song burst from my lips. The people turned and stared after me. Why were they all so sober-faced and glum? Surely the world was good. Life was worth the living. Like a man possessed I tore back to my lodging. I wanted to acquaint my little girl with the grand news.

Breathlessly I raced upstairs and summoned Adelina. She came, and I sprang toward her with the intent to seize her hands.

"Adelina!" I cried; and then the words died on my lips as I noted her appearance. Her grimy face was whitened with streaks caused by the tears that had trickled from her eyes. And even as I gazed at her in silent astonishment she raised her apron to her eye and commenced to sob anew as if her heart was breaking.

"Come, my girl," I murmured, consolingly. "What's the trouble? I want everybody to be glad this morning. Fortune has come at last. Run down and tell Nellie Uncle Jack wants to see her."

My cheery words seemed but to add to her distress, and for some minutes I could get no word from her. "Come, Adelina," I cried, "tell me what's gone wrong?" "The little 'un," she sobbed, brokenly. "She's bin an' got 'urt. They think—"

My heart's throbbing seemed suddenly to cease and unconsciously I gripped her shoulder.

"Tell me," I whispered, fearfully.

"What has happened?" "She come up ter see yer this mornin' jest arter you'd gorn," she explained, hysterically. "I dunno wot mude 'er do it, but, childlike, she must try ter slide down the banister. The nex' f'ing we knew she was lyin' a little twisted-up 'eap in the 'all.'"

I gazed incredulously into her humid eyes.

"Adelina, you are joking?" I cried, presently. "Why she was here as merry as a fairy but yesterday!"

"It's true, sir, 'evin 'elp me!" she faltered. "She's broken all ter pieces, the doctor ses. 'Er muvver is jest wild. W'y should she ha' bin marked out fer this?' she went on, irrationally. "W'y couldn't it ha' bin me instid o' that blessed little angel?"

"Adelina," I cried; "do you think—?" I dared not breathe my fears.

"Evin knows," she whispered, divining my thoughts. "I must go an' see wot I can do."

"How obscured the brightness of my day seemed suddenly to have become. How all the glowing future faded away in the face of this unexpected sorrow. Sick at heart, I dropped into my chair and gazed unseeingly before me, thinking of all the glad moments her presence had brought me. Surely this tender little blossom should not be snatched away by the rude hand of Death in all its budding innocence! Heaven could not rob us of her sweet young life!

For hours I sat there, a prey to blank despair, until I could sit no longer. I felt I must know how it was with her. My anxiety urged me towards the stairs. Almost unconsciously I found myself standing at the door of the room where she lay, knocking gently on the panel. A soft voice bade me enter, and I stole noiselessly within.

The mother was leaning over the bed, her gaze fixed on the pain-drawn features of her child. As I stepped quietly towards her—the words of apology for my intrusion on my lips—she turned, and I stopped—struck dumb.

"Jack?" she whispered, half incredulously, her eyes dilated in sudden wonder.

"Nell!" I cried, amazedly, and could say no more, for the woman who knelt before me was she who was to have been my wife. Over the years my thoughts flew back, and my head dropped forward on to my breast. I could not meet her gaze.

With her hand pressed to her breast she stared at me, her breath coming quickly, and presently she faltered: "I thought—you dead."

A quiet murmur came from the bed, and I dropped down and smoothed the golden tangle from the child's brow.

"Forgive me," I whispered, "but I could not rest upstairs. I wanted just to see how it was with little Nell; she has grown very dear to me."

The shining eyes were opened wide, and a wan smile crept over the pallid face.

"Uncle Jack," came the whisper. "Mummy, this is dear old Uncle Jack."

A blinding mist obscured my vision, and dazedly I turned and stumbled to the door. The mother rose and stayed me with her hand on my arm.

"Jack," she faltered—her eyes wet

with tears—"I cannot let you go until you know; in the first bitterness I was ready enough to believe the man who ruined you, and he assured me you had fled the country to save yourself from the felon's cell. Before he—my husband—died he confessed the trick by which he forced you to act as you did; I wanted you to know I am sorry—"

With bowed head I stood, ashamed. "I was a fool," I faltered; "I have been justly punished."

And then her hand stole into mine, and quietly she said: "Won't you stay and help me bring the smiles back to our little darling's face?"

Sometimes when the busy writer is giving shape to his thoughts, a little golden-haired lassie clambers up on to his knee, and, twining her arms about his neck, laughingly cries:

"Tell me some more about the wicked ogre, daddie, like you did when I used to come to see you."

And daddie throws down his pen—there, if she isn't coming now!—London Tit-Bits.

OF SWEDEN'S KING.

Poet, Linguist, Theologian Is King Oscar, and Modest Withal.

The most learned and accomplished of all living monarchs is undoubtedly the King of Sweden, says the People's Friend. His Majesty is a marvellous linguist, an able theologian, a charming poet, and a fascinating conversationalist. So modest, however, is this learned monarch that he gets absolutely angry whenever he is told that he possesses accomplishments and gifts far above the ordinary. Strange to say, nevertheless, there is one thing about which His Majesty does pride himself, about which he is not modest, and that is his knowledge of botany. Now, be it understood, King Oscar, learned as he is in most subjects, understands nothing about botany. His Majesty has, however, produced a small text-book on the subject, which only obtained notice at all because it happened to be written by a real live king.

One day the deservedly popular Swedish monarch happened to visit, unexpectedly, as was his wont, a certain large school in Stockholm, and after a few kind words with the head master, asked to see the latest examination list. After scanning the list carefully, King Oscar remarked: "Very creditable, indeed; very creditable," and then, with a sigh, "But I am indeed disappointed, professor, that the boys have done so badly in botany! This is my pet subject, you know. How do you account for the terrible failure of so many pupils, professor?" "Well, your Majesty," humbly replied the crestfallen tutor, "I really don't know how to account for the failure. Knowing botany to be your Majesty's strong subject, I coached my pupils specially in this study, and the only book we used was the book on botany you, your Majesty, wrote yourself!"

PRAISE FOR CHAMBERLAIN.

Evidently some of the continental sheets realize the blunder made in holding Mr. Chamberlain up to the scorn of mankind for three years. "It is now fashionable, we believe, in London," says the Temps, "to describe Mr. Chamberlain as an English statesman after the most approved fashion of the twentieth century. He has certainly proved his will and courage. His crushing reply to Count von Buelow last January left the German chancellor at a permanent disadvantage, and the unwavering purpose with which he has pursued his South African policy, refusing to be bluffed from any quarter, recalls the tenacity of the younger Pitt."

The Pester Lloyd, which declared six months ago that Mr. Chamberlain had no more to lose, says:

"Europe is not now confronted by a sophistical rhetorician, but by the ablest man of affairs the age has known, intoxicated with a success the world believed unattainable when this country began."



CHILD'S DRESS.

Simple little dresses with box-plaited backs and sailor collars are much in vogue for the little tots of both sexes. To cut this dress for a child 4 years of age 3 1/2 yards 32 inches wide, or 2 1/8 yards 44 inches wide will be required.