"No, no, honey! Maybe he's busy or bothered; 'tis not the man who loves warmest that is the best hand at writing; many a man as is a fine fellow at his pen is a poor hand at courting. There was a young fellow once came courting my sister Susan: his letters were beautiful, a perfect show, and when he came to see her, he was a miserable little sparrow of a creature that it'd make you smile to look at. Some holds them altogether from those who does it well on paper and some does it well on their tongues, and I think your lover,

Miss Nell, is one of them last. "Nurse, I say," watching her as she sits darning the boys' socks, "do you remem-

Did I?" she asks, peering anxiously at me over her spectacles; "I can't call it to mind, Miss Nell. Why should you be worse off than other folk? Rain and sunshine come pretty much alike to all, and you've got such a spirit 'twould take a great deal to make you give in. You're terrible fond of Mr. Vasher," she says, shaking her head. "Father used to say 'twas wonderful the difference there was in people when they fell in love; with some it went to the head and was safe, for pride protected it; with others it went to the stomach, and, if things turned out contrary, got dangerous, and sometimes kill-Nell. Not that you've any call to look out | into one's face? Thus, "Silverbridge," enough, never fear, for he loves you as the very apple of his eye.'

"Does love keep off misfortune?" I ask, as I get up from my seat; "it seems to me that those who love least come off

* My restless feet bave brought me into the nursery, and now they carry me out again. All day long I wander hither and thither, to and fro, and can settle to nothing, save Paul. I go down-stairs and search the newspapers of the past week some woman looked out long and vainly may not be even as hers!

now? How lovely it is! Steps come along the gravel path behind

"You have heard?" he asks, eagerly.

I shake my head.

the breeness has been concluded more think it worth while to write,"

and he promised to write from there." Because you have had a dream, and because you have not legated a letter, you have made up your mind that something dreadful has happneed. I wonder what Vasher will say, when he walks in and finds you have been fretting yourself into a sha-

When Vasher walks in !- how comfort able and safe the words sound!

"I'll try and not be foolish," I say, my spirits rising as they always do when I have someone to speak to: "but, oh! George. this past week has been so wretched I think if I had such another I should go mad. have learned the length and breadth, and depth and height of that ugly word 'en-"Have you dear?" he says, and

man that he is, he door wat any laver lay friend a when a label absence of my new one. This yes many men, I wonder, who could fline post with such unselfishness, dignity, ar single-heartedness, as he does? "How near Christmas is!" I say, look-

ing at the flaming scarlet berries that close round the green stalks with such prim, glossy precision: "Only think that to-morrow week is the 25th! He is sure to be back then, is he not, George?" "Quite sure!" says the young man; "he

may come any day now.' "We meant to have such a merry Christmas-eve, "I say, half aloud-"snap-dragon with the children, and-George, what are you going to do this Christmas? Will you be dull at the Chase? Come and spend it with us do!" I add laying my hand on his

"No, hydear!" he says looking down on me with not idden bitterness of word and tone; "you and not want me. After all," he says, looking up at the sullen sky that has given over lining but gives ample promise of plent more dropping, "I am fond of, a white Christmas!"

CHATPER III.

George's prophecies prove as fallacious must be some one in our midst. as those of most other people here on earth, and the night after his assurances of dirty weather the snow comes down, silently and George comes in. and delicately covering the fact of the earth with a gleaming white man le, that makes my eyes prick and burn with its ex- are my bridegroom?" ceeding purity, as I look out at it from the dining-room windsw. The postman is coming up the carriage drive. How slowly he walks, and what ugly marks he makes on our soi less, dazzling carpet! I do not i watch him with any interest: for it is not | i at the bottom of it?" a letter I am looking for now, but the sound of a step in the hall, the sound of a voice in my ear. Will they not be better a hundred-fold than a few hasty words on paper. And yet I should have loved to have

a leve-letter from him. I have flung all my foolish fears away in a bundle; smiles have crept back to my mouth, lightness to home—that he might walk in any minmy foot-fall. Does not George say that ute. He may come this morning, even, Paul may come in any day, and would he and probably he won't see the paper until like to find me pale and wretched-looking? I show it to him!" For the first time since he went away I have made myself look smart. I have put on the gown he liked me in best-Quaker gray, with crimson ribbons; and a cap which he liked too, though it never was straight when he was with me; and one day (we had both forgotten it) I gave Simpkins some orders with it perched rakishly on one side, and, alas! his breeding was not equal to the occasion, and he disgraced himself by a smile. At present it is straight enough, but

when he comes back-I am laughing softly to myself when Simpkins comes in, bringing my breakfast, the post-bag and

the Times. There are two letters, one from Alice, one from Dolly, both for mother. I send them upstairs, and begin my breakfast. regulation three volumes of a novel. I glance through the agony column, and "Nonsense!" says George, hastily.

most of the happy fathers are either clergymen or officers, and I wonder for the fiftieth time why Providence sends such an abundance of children to the men who can barely fill their own mouths, and withcould bring up a dozen handsomely, and never feel the shoe pinch.

Now for the marriages. How jolly the first one looks-two sisters married on the same day to two brothers! Douglas marreis ber, you used to say I was certain to have a Ruby, and Donald marries Violet. What deal of trouble some day, because I am a big wedding it must have made, and what fun the four young people will have when they meet (as I dare say they will) both come back, I mean-when will it on their wedding tour. Rather awkward, been though, if the sisters ever quarrel; there will be a scrimmage, husbands and wives, all in a lump. This one looks more sober, plain John James marries Eliza Ann; her name is Prodgers, his Trimmins. Here dead you cannot bring him." is a male Brown married to a female

clothes, though one would have thought that, when she did change her name, she would take a prettier one. I wonder why a familiar word, lying before one in a newspaper, always catches ed. Now, I think yours is the last, Miss the eye so smartly, seeming to leap up parture. I wonder what will his return for sorrow that way; things'll go straight and the "Rev. Thomas Skipworth," look up at me in larger type, seemingly, than any of the other words. Who on earth could have been married in Silverbridge without my knowing it, or considered their

admission into the holy state of matrimony sufficiently important to demand an advertisement of the same? A scuffle in the court outside makes me turn my head. Larry and Walter are snowbelling each other with admirable vigor | did I let him go without a warning? and skill. No quarter is given or taken: and I watch them for some time with keen through, and through those useless, papers | interest, remembering the days when Jack | so confident, so sure, when he was with and I indulged in the same recreation, alwhile my eagerly-looked-for letter comes | though we were not so fortunate in getting | have spoken when he went away. Did not | never. How I dread the sound of the post- the court; we had to walk a mile or two my good angel call upon me to speak Simpkins places the bag upon the table be- in to our heart's content. Presently they George has an accident on the road! supside me, how plainly I see his alert look at vanish in a whirlwind of snow and laugh- posing Paul is not at Rome when he gets me as he leaves the room (he knows what | ter, and I pick up my paper and sit down | there! Somehow I feel in my heart that | never come back, that you were dead, or I am looking for as well as I know my- to read this marriage comfortably. It was anyway he will get there too late. It was that some one had come between us, and self)! How my heart sinks as I unlock it near the Browns. Here it is: "On the a sure hand and a strong that struck that even now I cannot believe that you are here

the awakening from my night of dread | meaning; no, not even when my tongue | kixs. repeats the announcement aloud as though "You should have told me this before," I fetch my hat and jacket and go out the sound of my voice might re-assure and into the garden, leafless, sodden, miser- convince me. I am married! able, that looked almost cheerful when and here I give my head an impressive what that foolish old man has been doing hard! Paul and I walked in it a week ago. Round little nod as much as to say "You are a now. and round I go 'visiting every haunt in poor creature, Helen Adair, and you don't which he and I have sat together, pausing | seem to know exactly what you are about; to recall the memories that hang about but one thing you may be sure of-you are

every nook and corner, standing still at | married." I feel something like the old last in the place where he stood that day woman who left it to her little dog to de- had written, but did not wish to have post-Dorley came upon us with his untimely cide whether she was berself or somebody ed. I believed the story, ma'am, and did he is very tired, as you must be, darling." nosegay. Yes, it was just here, and I hold else. The little dog decided against her; not tell you." out my arms to the empty air, with a bit- the paper decides against me. Here I sit, "What is all this about?" I ask. "Mother, ter yearning of body and soul. He was without the ghost of a wedding-ring on who has been tampering with the posthere only a few days ago, but where is he my finger, and yet I am George Tempest's bag?" wife; clearly there must be a slight hitch "Jane, the under-housemaid," says somewhere. My stiff hand relaxes, and mother. "It seems she ran away from here me. I know whose they are-George the paper flutters to the ground. If it this morning without a word, and Simpbreath back, but with its respectable, withcommonplace front facing mine, how can "Then he must be on his way back,"he I possibly treat it as a myth? I take my says, walking by my side, "No doubt eyes away from it, and glance round the quickly than he expected, and he did not are the canaries pecking at each other from

contiguous cages; there is the old family "It could not have been that, George, for | prayer-book, high and dry, among Blair's he would not have known at Marseilles, serious on the book-case; there is the cat asleep on the hearth-rug. It all looks fa-"Do you know, Nell," he vs. looking miliar and real enough, but nevertheless I down into ny wan face, "take you are am asleep and I know it just as one may

have a dream within a dream and in the his. Tha woman was Silvia's spy. last one believe that one is awake. I lift my sleeve and give my arm a good nipping. sense to bethink themselves of that homely remedy), and expect to see all my surroundings dissolve; but no, there they are still, and here am I. in a gray gown, not a be ro doubt either. Oddly enopsin the first lam. ide that enters my head is, "What will the All night long I lie awake, hearing ghost-

ramofounded face, as he comes across the | window-pane-ghostly voices that whisper intelligene, tickles me into sudden laugh- in my ear. My ears are strained to the ter. I have heard of such tricks being faintest echo of sound in the world without. played before, practical jokes people call | Shall I not hear him toward the morning them, but I never believed any one could coming lightly over the snow to tell me do anything so foolish; where could be the he has returned? I know that he is not good of it? Why did they do it, these other | dead or he would have come to me in that people? For fun? A sorrier jest, surely, supreme wrenching of soul from body, as I neither man nor woman ever perpetrated. For mischief. It could not work any.

Let me try and think. I do not seem to those other people ever do it--not in sense- | sit up in my bed, and rock myself to and less wantonness of folly, but to try to work fro in my restless agony-"with all these from her, was it ever done that he might see the paper, and believe her false to him? He would only lough at it; it looks like a lie; he would know it is a lie. He would be angry at my name being coupled with George's, but of course he could not believe

it. I wonder who wrote it? We have no friends, we Adairs, to trouble themselves about our affairs, or to play us tricks; and no enemies, that I know of, who hate us heartily enough to try and do us mischief. A thought suddenly strikes me: Silvia! And yet why should she? How can this absurd ruse benefit her in any way? My being married to George, even if it were afraid we shall het have what you are true, could bring ter no nearer to Paul. And yet how can it be Silvia, who has never been here in her life? How does she know about George Tempest, or Mr. Skipworth, and all the names? The traitor

> Well, I must go and tell mother; and have just reached the door, when it opens, "Good-morning!" I say, making him a courtesy. "And do you know that you

But he does not smile; he looks very grave. He does not seem to see the joke in quite the same light that I do. "Nell," he says quickly, "this is a very

serious matter. Can you guess at all who "Serious!" I echo. "Pray how can it be that? Some one has taken a most insolent liberty with our names; but seri-

ous-" "Vasher will probably see it," says George, uneasily, "and-"I thought," I say, indignantly, "that

"I did think he was on his way back; I not sing too? think so still," says George; "but supposing that he has been delayed, and he does see this announcement, of course he will believe it."

"You mean to say, George, that he would really suppose you and I had got married the minute his back was turned?" "I don't know. Tell me, Nell, was Vasher ever in the least jealous of me? God knows he need not not have been," he

adds, half to himself. "Yes, he was," I say, promptly, "and I always laughed at the idea." "Did you?"

There is a pause, in which my short, place—yes, at the old place, and you were to "Why are you not with your wife!" blessed span of two days' content slips go at once, he said." away from me, and the old presentiments, "He will have to wait a little, then," I

woman, whose misery lasts through the he would never come back?" I say, trembling violently. "He never will!" find it in my heart to smile at its fustian all probability he is on his way back; but pathos I wonder is it true that most of in case he has been detained in Rome, I these heart-broken maunderings are sig- shall set out at once-or at least as soon as

nals from the greatest thieves in London I can get off." "You will go?" I ask, taking his hand Turning to the births (for I am reading between both mine. "O, George! but you in a purposeless desultory fashion), I see | will be too late. Something tells me that that Lady Fatacres has a daughter, and the it is all over now. If you do find him, and Rev. James Poorman a son. I observe that he asks who did it all, tell him 'Silvia,' " "Impossible!" exclaimed George, startng. "Can she be such a wretch as that?" "She loves him. Women will do a great deal to get a man they love, will they

> "Of a very different sort to you, dear, Will you give me Vasher's address?" I write it down for him-yes, I can actually write, - and in no hour of my life have I known the breathless agony that I know in this one. "If he agrives here in the next three

days you will telegraph to me, Nell?" "Yes. And if you come back-if you "I cannot be quite sure, but I should think about Christmas morning."

"Do not come back without him,"

say, in my se!fish mi ery; "only if he is "Only he is nothing of the kind," says Brown, which must have been very con-George, cheerfully. "Keep up your spirits, venient in the matter of marking her dear, and and put all these fancies out of your head. As to that Silvia, he's no more likely to fall in love with her than I am." In another minute he is gone, and I am standing at the window looking after him

> hear her exclamations of horror and anger, read the letter she writes to the editor of the Times, asking by whose authority the advertisement was inserted; as in a dream, fetch my hat and jacket, and wander out over the fields and meadows, walking stiffly and slowly through the deep snowfall, on and on for miles and miles, my feet carrying me where they will. For I know as surely as 1 am living that

she is saying, with an ususual severity in her voice; and I sit down, idly wondering

"I know it, ma'am," he stammers. "When I caught the young woman meddling with the post bag, she said she only

were only out of sight, I might get my kins tells me that he caught her meddling

"She must have meddled with it more than once," I say, putting my hand to my head. "Why did you not speak of this beroom. There is the breakfast table; there fore? 'I cry, turning upon the man in a fury. "Do you know what you have done? Go out of my sight."

He stares at me for a moment; then, as stamp my foot, he turns and flees, "Mother! mother!" I say, groping my way across the room to her, "I see it all now. He never got my letters. I never got

"Poet little daughter" she says, and her tears fall fast and heavy on my upliftrousing pinch (not that people under the ed face. If only I could weep! If only this influence of bad dreams usually have the terrible tightness about my heart would relax!

"Mr. Skipworth," announces Simpkins, tremblingly, half an hour later: and I escape by one door, as he enters by another. roby a nuit. That I am broad a wake He has come to tack about my marriage. they can be no reasonable doubt, but that no doubt. In my present state of mind, the paper is a very evident fact there his voice would send me straight into Bed-

gvernor say?" The Times is read in New ly steps coming up the carriage drive; Zealand suppose; and a vision of his hearing ghostly hands beating against my should go to him straight if I died to-

The morning breaks, gray and chill be able to follow up any one thought. Did "How shall I bear it!" I cry aloud, as I a girl harm? When her lover was away long days and nights to live through before Christmas morning comes!" CHAPTER IV.

> It is Christmas morning, and I am leaning out of the open window of the diningroom into the cold, clear air, looking at the elean white world, that during the night has been covered over freshly, so that she is | cold fair and spotless for the great, high festival, as a bride coming out of her chamber to meet her bridegroom. It is splendid enough, but a little cruel, perhaps, if one happens to notice that little dead robin yonder, whose crimson breast shows prettily enough against the snow. He has struggled gallantly through the bleak days and bitter nights, but to-day-on Christmas morning, the time of feasting and plenty-his poor, slender, starved little body has found death!

Behind me the house is all alive and merry with bustle and noise. They are all at home now, save Jack; and they have decorated the whole place with holly and mistletoe, which gleams brightly red and white from every corner and cranny. The church clock strikes ten; in another wer church will begin, but I shall not go th

the rest. What a noise the boys are making! I shall never be able to hear the sound of the carriage coming over the snow Hark! What is that? My heart stands still, every pulse pauses, then bounds madly on, as a sound, a ears from a distance. It is the sound of when you and I are wed, Paul? And I wheels-it is coming this way. Is that a actually dreamed that you were married carriage coming toward me? The snow has to somebody else, dear; was ever anything blinded my eyes, 1 cannot see- I look up | more foolish and senseless!" seeing, and here see George, alone. I do

and looks into my face. from him to a bird perched on a bough | joy and good hope the world contains has near, who is singing, absolutely singing- | died out to me for ever and ever-and this starved and bitter cold as he is. Why do I is my white, merry Christmas morning!

"He is not dead," says George. "Not dead!" I shrick, recoiling from him with parted lips and wide eyes-"not dead, did you say? Thank God!" And the frozen blood in my body stirs nimbly in my veins, and circulates once creep into my body. His words do not again; and, whereas a minute ago I was a shook me-do not even seem strange to dead woamn, now I am quick.

"But why did you not bring him?" ask. "There could be nothing to detain "He is here," says George; "he bade me tell you," he goes on slowly and painfully. "that he was waiting for you at the old as usual, only maybe a little slower.

we shall never forget that we owe it ail to that never lift themselves from the blank. you, for if you had not gone to Rome in blinding carpet of my parler, "but I time-'

"I know,"he says, shivering. "Vasher waiting for you, Nell.' "What a hurry you are in!" I say, as I makes it sound like nothing human. "If tie the strings of my cloak. "Now do you you had only warned me that morning be know that I mean to scold him-perhaps he fore I left you-" He stops. "God forwas afraid I should, so did not come up give me for blaming you when my own to the house? Perhaps! And I shall be able | mad folly has brought us to this. And to see him wherever I please now, you to think," he cries, smiting his brow with know, for he has come to stay."

"Are you ill?" I ask, turning round from the looking-glass, where I am putting | some distance; and then, reproaching myon my hat. "I must try and make my- self for having allowed you to return home self look nice now Paul has come back." But George does not anwser.

"And I have been so wretched," I say, laughing softly, "though you always told me there was nothing in that presentiment, or the dream! Do you know you have not wished me a merry Christmas, sir? But never mind, you have brought me the best Christmas-gift of all." He has turned his back to me, and i

looking out of the window. "Good-by," I say, pausing at the door. 'I shall not go to church this morning.' In the hall Dolly and the children crowd about me; but I just tell them Paul has come back, and break away from them

I wave my hand to George through the window. How terribly pale and strange he looks! Then I go away over the snow with hurrying, dancing feet. Have I got my Christmas-morning at last-real, golden, perfect? In the whole wide world does there beat such a happy heart as mine? I have not asked George how it happened that Panl never wrote: he shall tell me that himself, and I shall be so angry with him, lazy, naughty, careless fellow! As I As in a dream, I go and tell mother; turn the corner of the meadow. I see him standing with his back to me, leaning over the stile; and for a moment I stand stillthe absolute delight of seeing him in the old familiar place is so keen, that it leaves me no immediate longing to touch his hand or hear his voice. Then I walk quickly on. He does not turn his head, and he used to hear my footfall quickly enough. Perhaps the snow dulls it. I am close upon him when he looks round and faces me. "You have come back," I say, thrusting

both my eager hands into his; "and me, it was so impossible to fear. I should | have been so frightened, so miserable-" He does not answer, only, as I lay my man's knock and ring, how I shiver as before we got a nice quiet corner to shout when I wished him good-by? Supposing and folds them about me, pressing my head head down on his shoulder, he lifts his arms

"Do you know that I thought you would and take out the letters some for mother, 16th instant, at the parish church, Silver- bold and open blow through the newspaper. —you ought to have written, darling. Did one or two for me, welcome enough at any bridge,—shire, by the Rev. Thomas Skip- That the same hand has reached him in you not guess what a miserable time ip other time, but a hateful mockery to me | woth, George Dalrymple Tempest, only son | Rome in some different way I cannot | would be to me? Lam going to scold you now! Other people's letters come safely of Lawrence Tempest, Esq., of the Chase, doubt. And Paul was always a little jeal- for it by and by sir; but I shall have enough—why should not his? In to-day's to Helen, third daughter of Colonel Adair ous of Geogre. But here I stand still to ask plenty of time for that! And I was wicked paper I come upon the account of an Eng- of the Manor House Silverbridge—shire. my e f if it is likely that he will credit so enough to doubt you, Paul—as though I monstrous a story. Granted that I had might not have known better! I had all Yes, there it is, word for word, line for played him false, could I be so horribly sorts of queer fancies. But I will never for news of him, as I am looking now. line, and for a full minute I sit staring at quick in my treachery? In the drawing- be afraid again, Paul-never again. I Perhaps her soul sickened within her with the paper. The words are there, but my room I find mother, and standing before could even let you go away from me and dread, just as mine does, only God grant | brain does not seem to be able to grasp its | her with a perturbed countenance is Simp- | be quite sure you would come back safe-

How silent Paul is! because he is so happy, I suppose; and how quickly he is breathing, as though he had been running

"And you have come back to me Christmas-morning," I say, dreamily, "to give me the whitest, happiest, merriest Christmas. Do you know I asked George wanted to get out a letter of her own she | Tempest to wish me a merry Christmas just now, and he turned away. I suppose I lift my head to look at his face, but he my face with his hand with a passionate Helen Tempest."

tenderness that fills to overflowing my hungry heart. not want to hear you talk-its quite man may look at the knife that has stab- watch for your coming, never see you step-

hot they are! how they quiver! cheerful acress the fields; the peal rises and | him without a word. falls gayly. Can any sound be sweeter than Christmas-bells when one is happy?

you would not believe it." "It is cold here," he says; and I lift my head suddenly and look into his face.

Is this my Paul—gaunt and worn, and lift my head suddenly and look into his face.

Is this my Paul—gaunt and worn, and lift my heart; by and by they will come back to me, perhaps. I shall have plenty of time after he is gone to muse over and be weakness about Tempest) how unworthy life flower. It is my mad, senseless sin that to play me such a trick, and (knowing my weakness about Tempest) how unworthy life flower. It is my mad, senseless sin that to play me such a trick, and (knowing my weakness about Tempest) how unworthy life flower. It is my mad, senseless sin that to play me such a trick, and (knowing my weakness about Tempest) how unworthy life flower. It is my mad, senseless sin that has driven the color from your cheeks, the gladness from your sweet eyes! Nell, Nell! I cannot let you go: You are my pale as death, with deep, burning eyes? of you! The joke seemed to me to be the life.

"You have been i'l!" I cry. "That was opened the paper-not that I expected to smile. "I shall never have a chance of why you stayed so long away and never find there the announcement you bade me throwing any more at you."

again, and see plainly enough that he is ing at it, incapable of any reasonable ill. I should scarcely know him again for | thought, when Mills knocked at the door, the man who went away from me a fort- and asked for orders about something or night ago. As we cross the field I slip and other. As he was going out of the room, stumble on the uneven, snow covered I asked him if he had heard any Silverground, and hold out my hands to Paul to | bridge news since he came away. He hesthelp me, but he does not seem to heed me; tated for a moment, then took from his he walks forward, alone.

himself out at my feet and lays his head how matters lay between you and me. against my shoulder. His face is hidden; The letter was addressed to him, and the steady blaze in his eyes. "She is no wife have so much to tell him, he has so much | you were married to young Mr. Tempest, to tell me, I think that if I were not so to everybody's surprise, that people said it he is with me I should be piqued, and a that Paul's hair is streaked with gray- I always thought it was raven black; and it a bad joke, I had doubted the newspaper, is full early for the color to change. He is for I knew mistakes sometimes occur, but but little past thirty. I pull the short looks out between my fingers, and he shivers under my touch. Yes, he is ill, and

"Paul!" I say, stooping over him, "you must not stay out here; come with me to turned; the strangeness of your mother's into guilt. She has ruined your life, but the house."

He lifts his eyes to my face painfully giddy; then his head falls heavily back and he clasps his arms tighter about me. "Can you not wait a little while?" he says, and his voice is strange and harsh. "Yes, I can wait," I say, gently, looking out at the wide stretching sweep of white. just as I looked at it a few days ago, when came hither alone; only then my heart was heavy as lead, and now it beats under

the head of my lover. I fold my arms about his neck, close and warm: it is such a new delight to me to know that he is all my own. If he had lam; as drunk with grief as any senseless had been cheated into marrying another been given back to me from the dead I beast on the pavement; as incapable as could not look at him with greater wonder either of accounting for or guiding my acand thankfulness. And yet it is altogther | tion. Well, I wandered about all that day; unaccountable. But though Paul has been at night I found myself back again in my with me all this time he has not kissed me rooms; and, as I sat there, my despair at

once; no, nor seemed to think of such a losing you gave way to a fierce fury-that thing! It never happened so before. "Hark at the bells!" I say, as they ring out, now loud, now clear, across the fields. certain dulled, muffled sound, comes to my "I wonder will they sing as sweetly as that

He lifts his head, suddenly rises and not move or speak as he comes over to me stands before me. The minute-bell has almost done ringing as he begins to speak: "He is dead?" say I gently, looking away it ceases, and with the last stroke every Not a sound breaks the silence as we look in each other's deathly faces; then his mouth opens and a terrible curse breaks from his lips and wanders out over the desolate, stirless land; and my heart be-

gins to move again, and sluggish life to me. I listen to them as idly as I used to hearken to the frozen brook yonder when it heart bar, desolate a man as I? And some ran its summer course between the green banks. "And why then did you come back?" I asked, and my voice is much the same

"My wife!" The words leave his lips as

thought she had no power to harm us." "And that has undone us," he cries, with a despair and fury in his voice that his clinched hand, "that I have lost you to get that vile-thing! After parting with you the day I set out for Rome, I walked alone, I retraced my footsteps. Turning the bend of the meadow, I saw you in George Tempest's arms, your head against

his shoulder; and, acting under I don't know what impulse, instead of walking boldly forward, I turned sharply, and in another moment was out of sight. I returned to The Towers, just caught my train, and at Marseilles sat down to write to you. My first hot anger had passed by then: your parting words of love and sorrow had come back to me with the stamp of their own beautiful truth upon them: and, though I could not understand the situation in which I found you, I felt sure you could explain it. And though I did not like it-what man would?-I was not at that time actively jealous of him or doubtful of you; that was to come after In my letter I asked you how it was you came to be with him, and whether you had been ill or miserable when I saw him holding you. I reached Rome safely, and on the day after my arrival I looked for the letter that you had promised to post to me the day I left Silverbridge; but there was none-no, nor on the next day, or the next. Can you wonder that by degrees there grew up in my heart a terrible fear, a sickening doubt: with my absence had your love grown so faint and lifeless? And if I could have hurried back I should have done so: no word of mine should ever seek to determine your wandering allegiance. Only I could not suppose such a thing possible-you had seemed so honest, so true; your love-words were so freshly in my ears. But sometimes I remembered that so others had sounded spoken to other men by women who had betrayed them."

"And did you never receive a letter from so carefully and kissed so tenderly. "I received one," he says,

seal with your name 'Nell' on it, looked me in the face so naturally and sweetly, that my doubts forsook me on the spot, and I kissed it like a fool, child. I opened the letter, and out fell a tiny withered your first love-letter. I took it in my hand ago! so carefully, remembering that it had that you would be happier as George Tem- | rend me? pest's wife than as mine, and that you had

"Paul," I say in a whisper, "did you see | that had for the past ten days tormented | answer." that wicked paper? I mght have known me, that the letter itself came upon me He looks like a man just risen from a bed | worst possible taste. I pushed your letter look for, but because I thought some curi-"No," he says, slowly, "not ill. We can ous similarity of name to yours and Tem- right, child, when you used to say we were not talk here. Let us go to the old pest's had suggested the sorry jest. And I too happy.' found no less than the actual announce-But as we go I look at him again and ment of your marriage. I was still star- go back to your wife?" pocket a letter which he laid on the table. In our snow-parlor I sit down on the old then went away without a word. Like all log of wood; but he does not-he stretches | the other servants, he knew pretty well | the world for casting her off?" . he does not move or stir, or speak. Is he inclosure was from a housemaid (appar. of mine, and it shall be my business to only weary, or in actual bodily pain? I ently) living in your house. She said that 'prove that she is not!" Mrs. Adair went to church to see you made shown her love better by stabbing me to serivce. Nell, I had treated your letter as to her?" this third piece of evidence I could not will go back to kill her!" would. The gross improbability of the a murderer?" another man the moment my back was woman has no power to plunge your soul

and did not doubt; none but a madman it is madness for him to be out here in the | whole thing; the unlikelihood that you should be in so indecent a hurry to marry abetting your rash act by her presence. or why, or where, mat-tered little enough, name.

you were Tempest's wife." to his bleached wild face. "And then I went mad-as utterly mad you should have dared to so trick and shame me; you, who had known of the disappointment I had found in my first love; you, to stab me so surely to the heart, who knew how entirely my whole life and belief in all things rested on the trust I had in your honesty and faithfulness. In that hour my love for you seemed to pass away even more utterly than it

falsehood, for, be her sin what it might, she had been true to me, while you had deliberately left me without a pang, withont a care. "As I sat there, out of the darkness suddenly came clinging arms and stole round my neck, drawing my burning head down to a soft embrace; a tender voice, gentle as a mother's whispered words of comfort in my ear. I did not know whether I was actually mad or dreaming. Had an angel d opped from heaven to tend me, or was my unknown consoler some earthly creature, like myself, who could care for so

had done for Silvia, when I found out her

touch of the hand, some tone in the whispering voice, by and by informed me that this woman, who could lay aside all pride and thought of self, to come to me in my hour of agony, was Silvia to whom I had dealt out such bitter mercy, and who, it them upstairs, and begin my breakfast. Then—for I have fallen into bad ways day—I open the paper, and proceed to look at the "Births, Marriages, and Deaths:" on that I know anybody who is likely to be married or dead, but because they interest me, Many a sad story is told here in set me, Many a sad story is told here in set me, Many a sad story is told here in set me, Many a sad story is told here in and wait like this. God only knows what three lines: many a bitter tragedy chronical that moves me for more than the flectitious woes of artimaginary man and story is set in all now, it is Silvia's doing.

Then—for I have fallen into bad ways and fears, creep upon me like living, cruel shapes, grown rational by the doubts, and fears, creep upon me like living, cruel shapes, grown rational by the sustenance of fact—for he has been gone not that I know anybody who is likely to be able to take it all in at once, "I add, putting my lover, he would never have left me to watch and by I shall be perfectly happy. How the sustenance of fact—for he has been gone not that I know anybody who is likely to take it all in at once, "I add, putting my lover, he would never have left me to watch and by I shall be perfectly happy. How that for years I have been spied on, dogged, followed, and that here, in your and by I shall be perfectly happy. How they are do one of that woman's gave none. She had only field to me or without a bing straight up from my heart to my line. "Why did you let me go without a word of warning?" he ories, with clinched hands in the time that of you know all the time that one or without a bing straight up from my heart to my long enough! I do" seem to be able to take it all in at once, "I add, putting my hand to my head; "but you know all the time that for years I have been spied on, dogged, followed, and that here, in your well when the first of warning?" he ories, with clinched hands in the word of warning?" he ories, with olinched hands in the word of warning?" he ories, with olinched hands in the line. "W now appeared, had loved me through it

"The night wore on; her love, her tenderness, her clinging beauty, her great love andmad! My higher, better nature was dead within me. All reasonable, thinking power | wife.' had gone out of me, and so-God knows the rest!-the maddening wiles of the wothe British embassy, man and wife.

you a woman who had betrayed me. My thought never went any further than that. | lost. I did not love her, and did not hate her; I simply had no feeling for her whatever. "We went to Florence immediately. Tempest was at that moment in the town. if we had known it. With the usual fatality where one's lives are concerned, there had been no less than three break-downs on the road, and he had arrived too late. Afterward I found that, half an hour after we set out, he had reached my door, but alone. no message had been left, and he had no clew to our whereabouts, so he had a long search before he found us. At that time look at him. What if he grows to love her illustration of which truth stands the strange that Sylvia should be in there alone and unattended, I never asked myself or her how she knew of your marriage,

or how she could dare to marry me knowing what effect the news had upon me. felt something like a man under the influence of an opiate that has not made him perfectly unconscious-everything passes around him in a dream, but he knows that by and by he will awake, and see things as they really are. "On the morning after we reached Florence, my senses came back to me; for the

first times I saw face to face this thing I had done; knew that, married though you were, I loved you madly as ever; knew that the woman I had made my wife was less to me than one sound of your voice, me?" I asked, slowly, remembering the one touch of your hand. And strangely dainty knot of flowers that I had gathered enough, you had not seemed lost to me when I knew you to be the wife of another I would rather see you lying in your coffin man, as now that I found myself the hus-Meanwhile I was detained by business band of another woman. I walked out of beyond the time 1 had fixed to return to the house in the still bright, early morning, Silverbridge; and on the 21st a letter and and the first man I met was your husa newspaper were brought to me. The band, George Tempest. There must have hour heart. I would have the last thought former was in your handwriting, and your been murder my eyes as I looked at him, for he said at once, 'It is all a mistake,' "I don't know what happened after that. In that hour we had set out for

England. You know the rest." Yes, I know the rest, as I look upon the nosegay of flowers, that seemed to have face that is now no more than a shadow. been plucked many days and had little The features are there, but where are the scent; and for your sweet sake. I kissed life, the glow, the spirit, that filled it in me? as on mine no touch of living woman them, too, Nell, many times. Then I read bravely a fortnight ago-only a fortnight

And we stand looking, looking into touched yours, and started as I read the each other's haggard countenances, and first words-'Dear Mr. Vasher.' With all dare not put out so much as the tips of our your wilful ways I could not understand fingers to each other-'twixt him and me that. Well, it was a simple egistle enough. a great gulf lies. I wonder if I shall al-It was only to say that, after mature con- ways be this dumb, senseless stone-will sideration, you had come to the conclusion the spirit ever wake in me and cry, and

"If I had to choose between dying now already married him, and were going this minute and living over again the last abroad immediately with him and his hour, I would choose to die," he says, father. You sent a newspaper to corro- slowly. "I have suffered enough, God borate your statement; you asked forgive- knows, since you and I stood here together, ness from me for any disappointment you but never half of what I did when I heard presses my head back in its place, stroking might cause me: and you signed yourself your footsteps coming over the snow, and dared not turn to face you and then, when "Have you it here?" I ask; and he you clasped your arm round my neck, and takes it out of his pocket-book and hands ran on in your loving welcome-when I "How quiet you are!" I say; "but I do it to me, and I sit looking at it much as a think of the future. of how I shall never enough for me to know that I have you so bed his nearest and dearest to the heart, ping across the rye to meet me; never, in near me. What can come between us now The writing on the enevlope is mine, that summer or seed-time, or winter or haron the sheet inside is not; but the forgery vest, listen to your steps and the sound of He draws my hand across his lips. How is so excellent that, were this letter a copy your gentle voice—we shall miss each ed happiness, Paul? will talking about of one I had ever written, I should pro- other's morning kiss, child-at eventide our beautiful yesterday quicken our dead The church-bells ring out sweet and nounce it to be my own. I give it back to we shall hold out our despairing arms to to-morrow? We can never be any more to each other-the days will be empty and each other than we are now; we can never "The sight of your handwriting," he dreary-we shall call upon each other be any less. Let me go now while I have goes on, "had so routed the jealous demon across the silence that gives back no the strength."

"We need not have quarreled about the and the flowers aside, and mechanically books-need we?" I ask, with a faint lily!"

"Paul," I say, shivering, "when do you "Go back to her?" he says, frowning, earth?" "Did I hear you aright?" "Yes. Of course you will go back to her-you are bound to.'

"Am I?" he asks, between his teeth. I think not. "She could not force you to marry her," say, steadily; "you did it of your own hand's breadth between us, we stand lookfree-will. What reason would you give to | ing on each other's wild faces, then-"What reason?" he asks, with a deep,

"Loves me!" he cries, with a fierce perfectly happy in merely knowing that was like a stolen marriage, even though scorn in his voice. "She would have

> "Yes, I would send you back" "Ay!" he says, below his breath, "I "Will you? Was Paul Vasher born to be

"Yes," he says, doggedly, "even that! "No, you will not. That weak, sinful she can do no more. Shameful though when she had countenanced your engage. she is, she is yours. You took her not for ment to me; your father's absence, and a day or a week, but for better for worse. the tacit disobedience displayed to him by You must bear the burden of the rash act the marriage in his absence--all these you committed; remember that any disunnatural circumstances I reconized clear- credit you lay upon her will recoil upon ly enough, but they vanished before the yourself; for she is, in the eyes of the one great fact that you were married; how world, your wife and the bearer of your

"In the sight of God she is not! Did "And then?" I ask, lifting my dull eyes | you ever love me?" he asks, bitterly. After all. I do not think you can know what love means, to wish to send me back for the time being as any wretch in Bed- to that woman. Do you think that if you

man, and you came to me. I would send you back to him? I would hold you-keep you-bind you in my arms so safely that no one should wrest you from me-my love, my darling!" He covers up his face, he trembles in a strong man's agony, and still, still I can look at him and feel abso-

lutely nothing. "As you will not take up your burden and bear it like a man," I say-and at my words he lifts his head—"I must take it up and bear it for you. I will never live | College, Toronto, has just returned from to have people pointing at me and saying: England where he rendered valuable aid 'That is the girl Paul Vasher loves, and to the Board of Trustees in selecting a who loves him-the married man!' It is suitable candidate for the principalship on her account that he does not live with of the college, to be placed before the his wife.' Do you think that I could bear Government of the province. The sert? If you will not go back to her, I will | leave Silverbridge and go far away, where | fore many consultations had been held

the story?' silence?

"None if you are with her, much if you mercy from the world."

but I know my own strength, and I could York Century Magazine and other periodyour name, stand by my side usurping and has frequently addressed the different your rights-she! Do you think I could Chambers of Commerce of the United out yours rising up before me? ever hear The Board of Trustees are very anxious that Old Boys and the friends of the colever let my eyes rest on her false face with- Kingdom. strike to earth the man that said it? ever lege should cordially welcome Dr. Parkin, endure to so much as touch her hand, on his arrival in Canada, early in Septem-

Sooner or later I should break down-

worked on me like a charm. I have told "Paul," I say, and my voice is so hushyou that in that hour I hate? you for your | ed that I can scarcely hear it, "do you not falseness; well, in that hour I loved that see that there is no safety for either you or woman for her truth. Had she not through | me if you are not by the side of your wife? good and evil report clung to me? Did not | For the sake of all the love you bore me, her own sin show white as snow beside in recompense for all the misery you have your black, barefaced desertion? And re- brought me, I ask this one mercy of you! member that I was mad, child-utterly Live with her as a stranger if you will; but, in the eyes of the world, be man and

A shamed streak of red comes into my cheek as I speak; then I bow my head and man, the rage that filled my heart against | wait, and a terrible doubt crosses my mind you—and the morning found us standing as to whether I am acting for good or evil together before a priest, and, later on, at in demanding this supreme expiation of a life. The silence is so long and unbroken Even then the madness had not passed. | that time seems to stand still; and when I did not know what I had done, did not he speaks his voice seems to come from a know what I had married. The darkness long way off. I lift my eyes and look at still lay upon my eyes. She was to me him, and in his there is the beaten, broken simply a woman who had been faithful; look that never comes into a man's face until the last hope is gone—the last stake

"You have conquered," he says. "I will do it for your sake. Could any man do more? You must give me a little while to get used to the idea, a little while to get rid of some of my prejudices" (he laughs harshly), "then she shall be offered a place in my house as the mistress of it, to be gress, as in politics and religion-the diffi-

begun to stir my dull heart, awakes as I of our famous preparations-foremost in again? Is she not fair as the day? and do world-famous remedy to general debility men remember forever? And I am send- and langour "Quinine Wine," and which ing him back to her. There is a little bit- when obtainable in its genuine strength ter silence, and then Paul kneels down in is a miraculous creator of appetite, vitalthe snow and looks into my face; but I do ity and stimulant, to the general fertility not look at him: my heart is waking from of the system. Quinine Wine, and its its torpor, and I dare not. Yesterday he improvement, has, from the first discovery was my lover, to-day he is Silvia's hus. of the great virtues of Quinine as a mediband. Not in one moment can I pass cal agent, been one of the most thoroughly from the familiar friendship to the new, discussed remedies ever offered to the unnatural position we hold toward each

"You have fixed my lot, child; what is to be your own?"

"I shall live." "Will ever any one fill my place?" "Never." "No one man more than another?"

"No man." "I was always a selfish brute," he says, slowly; "I am selfish still, and I tell you with violets in your pale hands than know you to be another man's wife. And that is my love for you, Nell. I would of your sweet soul, the last call from your lips; as your name will be on mine when I die, sweetheart; as I shall love you to the day of my death-and after. And when we meet as we shall meet, in another world, where there are no marriages, will you come to my side with lips as pure and untouched as they have ever been, save to

shall rest between now and then-so help me, God!" "I will come to you, "I say, simply. The calm that lay on me, heavy as the snow on the once throbbing earth at my feet has broken up now, and a wild fever of agony posesses me-a breathless longing to touch his hand, to speak one word of love and comfort to him-and I may not, dare not, though we are young, loving, together, though not a yard of space lies between us. We are separated, not for a week or a year, but forever. Since he lifted his head from my shoulder when the bells were ringing, there has been space between us-Death himself could not set us further from each other. I must get away soon-soon, or I shall break down utterly. I stand up. "Good-by." I ay, in a whisper: "I am going now."

"So soon?" he says, and his voice is almost as faint as mine; "shall we not be apart all the rest of our lives?" "Will talking give us back our murder-

"Strength!" he repeats, hoarsely, as he His words enter my ears, but do not stir | peers into my face; "and I have brought like a rude, violent shock. Then I grew my heart; by and by they will come back you to this, my poor broken little white Nell! I cannot let you go; you are my

real wife, not that other-my life, my "Should I be your lily, then?" I ask, trsmblingly. But he who has been so "Don't, he says, sharply. "You were chary of touching me since he has told me his evil tidings, comes closer; would fold

his arms about me. "Back!" I cry, springing aside; "what! would you be the foulest traitor on God's "To her!" he cries, with a fierce gesture R. HUNT'S

of loathing. "To me!" "To you," he mutters, then an ashen rray replaces the fire of a moment ago; his nands fall to his side, and so, with a

> (TO BE CONTINUED) Good Time to Buy Furs.

This is a capital time to buy furs. It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? when the sun is blazing away in the heavens and muslins are the only wear. but it is true. I realized it myself yesterday, when a little angry. I never noticed until to-day man and wife, and Mr. Skipworth read the the heart! And you would send me back charming girl confided to me that she had hovered between getting her life insured and purchasing a sealskin coat. She had finally decided on the former, but to my notion a good sealskin often insures Oak Tanned one's satety, and, therefore, one's life, in a much pleasanter way than does a mere policy. At this season there is a great reduction in the price of furs, and it is easy to leave an order and save money when cold weather comes and the garment is needed. As for the fashions in fur, believe me, they are pretty well settled by this time. Broadly speaking, sealskin capes will be waist-length, jackets are moderately short, and sleeves slightly more reasonal o than they were last year. Velvet, trimmed heavily with fur, will continue to be worn, but for more definite 1 formation a trip to any firstclass furrier's will suffice. I am only suggesting the economic possibility of the season, and do not venture to outline the Ore of Life

The Rarest State in Yankeedom, It is not surprising that people seeking divorce courts never go to South Carolina. Under no circumstances nor for any cause whatever are divorces granted in that

Upper Canada (College.

Mr. John Martland, formerly so well known in connection with Upper Canada vices of Dr. Parkin were not secured bethe prying finger of scandal cannot reach | with Sir Oliver Mowat in London. Many very eligible candidates offered them-"And why should you? Who will know serves, but no one but Dr. Parkin had any knowledge of Canada and Canadians. "Everyone. Do you think she will keep | As his claims in other respects were not inferior, it seemed to the Board that Dr. "There can be no possible reproach to Parkins was best suited for the vacant

Dr. Parkin graduated with distinction are apart. She who is known to stand be- at the University of New Brunswick in tween husband and wife receives but scant | 1867 and subsequently studied for three terms, at Oxford, England. Up to 1888 "Ask me something less hard,"he says, he was Head Master of the Collegiate and the veins in his forehead stand out School of Fredricton, and latter y has delike cords. "Even for you I cannot do this. | voted himself to literary pursuits-hav-Set me some task that body and soul do ing published several works-and been not utterly forbid. I am not mad, Nell; a writer for the London Times, the New | 57 Front St. East. Toronto. not do it. What do you think I am made | icals. Dr. Parkin is a popular lecturer of that I could see her fill your place, bear on literary subjects and on the colonies.

when I was wearying, aching after you— ber, and should co-operate with him in EVERYTHING FOR THE PRINTER you think I could do all this and live? his endeavors to build up the good Old you think I could do all this and live? his endeavors to build up the good Old Newspapers, Stereotype Matter Electory School, and make it the best residential typing. Engraving. TORONTO TYPE

Delays are Dangeres A few weeks ago, in these column found it necessary to correct views here by some persons respecting the form of treatment for alcoholism given at Lakehurst Institute, Oakville. This week we desire to dispel from the mind of every interested reader the idea, that only besotted, degraded drunkards are to be found under our care. No grosser mistake could be made than this. While many of our patrons have been desperately heavy drinkers, a large percentage of those who undertake the treatment have done so, while yet possessing the respect and confidence of their business associates and before home, influence, wealth and honor shall have been sacrificed to the insatiable demon-alcohol. The example of these is well worthy of imitation by thousands of business men who are daily making fresh concessions to the growing fond ness for strong drink. Take the cure

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treated by me as any other stranger with- culties of opinion and the individualities in my gates, if she refuses, she can live of men have been parent to the disagreements by which the standard of these A sick, jealous pain, the first that has bodies have been elevated. So with most public. It is one of the great tonics and natural life-giving stimulants which the medical profession have been compelled to recognize and prescribe. Messrs. Northrop & Lyman of Toronto, have given to the preparation of their pure Quinine Wine the great care due to their importance, and the standard excellence of the article which they offer to the public comes into the market purged of all the defects which skillful observation and scientific opinion has pointed out in the less perfect preparations of the past. All druggists sell it.

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