An Old Lock.

Last night I found an old forgotten key
Deep in an unused drawer, and quick tears fell
As in my hand I took it tenderly—
For, ah! I knew the story it would tell

Of a familiar door, a "vanished hand,"
A cheery "click" by eager children heard—
"Papa is home!"—Ah, little, loyal band!
How oft your hearts grew sick with hope deferred

In time after! for "papa" went forth
And came not back. Then dawned some darksome days;
The cottage home was sold, and we came north
To a gray city street, to flowerless ways.

On the bright steel, great spots of rust had grown—
"It would not turn so easily as then"
(I thought), and "Rosebank" is no more my own—
I have no claim to enter it again.

"Maybe its door has now a different lock—
And, oh! if even I could venture there,
What should I find? my misery to mock—
Ghosts of the dead—strangers' careless stare."

I took the key and laid it out of sight;
"Since thou can'st no more ope the door for me
Of that dear home, thou need'st not see the light,
For only doors of tears are oped by thee.

The Winds.

The north wind's howling legions
Sweep down from boreal regions,
From the pallid zone where winter's throne
Was wrought in the wide waste, wan and lone,
Unnumbered years ago;
They come on wings whose flutterings
Bestrew the world with snow,
And their icy breath is bitter death,
Their football only woe.

The east wind comes with sadness
And pain and midnight madness,
From a solitude where curses brood
And poisoned dews on the dales are strewed,
And sorrow throttles gladness;
It comes like a ghost from spectral coast
Where cypress branches wave,
And out of its plumes fall ghastly glooms
Like those that encircle the grave.

The south wind comes a-sighing,
To buds and blooms replying,
He comes in quest of love and rest,
And presently, on a rose's breast,
In rapture lies a-dying;
He comes like dreams, and only seems,
His cradle is his tomb;
His life is a song to murmuring streams,
His death—a rich perfume.

The zephyr, fragrance laden,
Brings balm to man and maiden—
Brings dove-eyed rest to the troubled breast
From the mystical regions of the west—
From love's enchanted Aidenn;
It comes with news as fresh as the dews
That gather in starry hours,
With wonderful store of tender lore
From the sweet book of the flowers.

The Old Home.

It stands upon the hillside, with the tall elms bending o'er it,
The homestead, with the lilacs by the door,
And the quaint, old-fashioned garden, gently sloping down before it,
I see just as in the days of yore.

I remember how the sunshine fell across the golden meadows,
Beyond the wooden doorstep old and worn;
And how the summer cloudlets cast their quickly fleeting shadows
On the distant fields of rustling, ripening corn.

In the pleasant, roomy kitchen I see my father sitting,
With the leather-covered Bible open wide;
While my sweet-faced mother listens, as she plays away her knitting,
And rocks the old red cradle by her side.

Three brown-eyed little children, with tangled golden tresses,
When evening prayer in simple words is said,
Come clinging round her neck with loving, soft caresses,
Then merrily go tripping off to bed.

Oh happy years of childhood, with thoughts so true and loving,
And sweet and guileless days so full of rest,
Our old hearts love to linger, after all our years of roving,
And clasp fond memory's pictures to our breast.

Shall we ever in that country, the bright and glorious heaven,
Win back the simple innocence and bliss
We knew when, in our childhood, in the dear old home at even,
We received our angel mother's good-night kiss?

A DIAMOND WOOING:

A NOVEL.

(BY THE AUTHOR OF "GARTH.")

CHAPTER VI.

We made a late start the next morning and did not reach the farm-house before four o'clock. I had little opportunity of speaking to Kate on the way; in fact, the presence of Slurk, who sat on the box of the vehicle and once in a while threw a glance at us over his shoulder, irritated me to such a degree that more tender sentiments were temporarily pushed into the background. Kate herself, though she attempted to appear cheerful, betrayed signs of inward anxiety and nervousness; while Mr. Birchmore conversed with a volubility and discursiveness greater than I had ever remarked in him before.

The farmhouse stood quite alone on an unfrequented bye-road, in a little angle of the hills. It was not exactly a picturesque building, with its four walls covered with rough plaster and pierced with dozens of small windows, and its enormous red-tiled roof, with those quaint, narrow apertures, like half-opened eyes, disclosing a single pane of glass, which do duty as dormers. It stood flush with the road, as German houses are fond of doing, but behind was a large inclosed farmyard, roughly paved with round stones and well walled in. The front door, though rather pretentiously painted and ornamented, with some religious versicle or other written up on the lintel, was not used as a means of entrance or exit. It was, as I afterwards discovered, not only locked and bolted, but actually screwed up on the inside, and the only way of getting into the house was by a side door opening into the court-yard. As the court-yard itself was provided with a heavy gate, you will see that the farmhouse, close to the road though it was, was by no means so easy of ingress or egress as it appeared—supposing, of course, that it was the humor of the inmates to declare a state of siege. I mention these particulars merely by the way. They are common to three houses out of five in this region.

The Birchmores' luggage had, it appeared, already been carried over from the hotel; but a man in rough peasant's costume, who announced himself as the master of the house, now came out to take charge of my trunk. I was, or fancied myself (as you may have noticed), a quick judge of faces, and this peasant's face failed to commend itself to me. It was at once heavy and gloomy, while a scar at one corner of his mouth caused that feature to twist itself into a perfunctory grimace, grotesquely at variance with his normal expression. In person he was much above the common size, and, to judge by the ease with which he slung his heavy trunk over his shoulder, he must have been as strong as August der Starke himself, whose brazen statue domineers over the market place in Dresden.

"Guten morgen, Herr Rudolph!" said Slurk hailing this giant affably. The two seemed to be on some sort of terms of comradeship, having, perhaps, struck up an acquaintance during the previous negotiations for lodgings. I must say they looked to me to be a not ill-matched pair.

We alighted and were welcomed in with surly courtesy by Herr Rudolph. Kate, confessing to a headache, went at once to her room, whence she did not again emerge. Slurk disappeared into the kitchen regions with the landlord; Mr. Birchmore presently went out for a stroll before dinner; and I, finding myself thrown temporarily on my own resources, decided to make a virtue of my loneliness by writing some letters which had been long owing. I accordingly groped my way up the darksome staircase, and so along an eccentric passage to my room.

I did not know then, nor could I, even now, accurately describe the arrangement of rooms in that farmhouse. There were at least three separate passages, not running at right angles to one another, but seeming to wander about irregularly, now and then turning awkward corners, descending or ascending short flights of steps, or eddying into a little *cul-de-sac*, with, perhaps, only a closet-door at the end of it. The consequence was, it was nearly impossible to say whose room adjoined whose. It might be a long distance from one to another, measured along the passage, and yet they might actually be separated only by the thickness of a wall. Where the farmer and his family slept I know not, but I have reason to believe that all our party, including Slurk, were accommodated upon the same floor.

On opening the door of my room I found some one already there. This person was a comely young woman, the farmer's daughter evidently, busy in the benevolent occupation of putting things in order. She had moved my trunk beneath the window, she had put fresh water in the ewer, she had straightened out the slips of drugget on the rough board floor, she had placed some flowers in the window, and she was now engaged in tucking a clean sheet on the bed. I said she was comely; on second looks she was better than that. She was positively pretty, with the innocent, blonde prettiness of some German peasant girls. Her fair hair, smoothed compactly over her small head and wound up in a funny little pug behind, possessed a faint golden lustre; her eyes were of as pure and serene a blue as any I ever looked upon; her smooth cheeks, slightly browned by much sunshine which had rested on them, were tinged with healthful bloom; her mouth might have been smaller, but the full lips were well-shaped and there were white, even teeth behind them. Her figure, like that of most Saxon peasant girls of her age, was robust and vigorous; she wore a simple bodice and skirt, and her feet and legs were bare. Altogether I thought her a very agreeable apparition.

"Good morning, honored Herr Gainsborough," she said gravely in German as I entered.

"Good-morning, pretty maiden," returned I gallantly. "You seem to know my name, though I don't know yours—what is it?"

"I am called Christina — Christina Rudolph. It is some time since I have known Herr Gainsborough's name," she added.

"Really? How comes that?" I asked, by no means displeased.

"The honored Herr has been kind to a relation of mine—a very near relation," replied Christina with the same gravity.

"Have I? I'm glad to hear it! Was she as pretty as thou?" inquired I, venturing upon the familiar form of address.

She blushed and answered:

"It was not a woman—it was my brother."

"Oh, thy brother! And where did I meet thy brother?"

"In Paris, Herr Gainsborough."

"In Paris! Rudolph! What, art thou the sister of Heinrich Rudolph, who lives in the Latin Quarter, and is considered the cleverest jeweller in the city?"

"Yes, honored Herr," returned Christina smiling for the first time and showing her pretty teeth and a dimple on either cheek. "My brother Heinrich cut and arranged the diamonds in the *parure* of the honored Herr's mother."

"So he did, Christina, and he did it better than any one except him could have done it. And so thou art really his sister? How did he tell thee of me?"

"He wrote to me while you were still in Paris, and described the pretty stones and told how Herr Gainsborough used to come and sit with him and see him work and talk a great deal with him."

"Yes, he was well worth talking with. And I remember now that he said he was born in this neighborhood and that he had a sister and a father living here. It was stupid of me not to have thought of that when I heard your name. Well, Christina, I'm afraid I wasn't of much use to him after all. I tried to get him customers, but I knew very few people in Paris, and the only person I did succeed in introducing to him—— By the way, it was this gentleman who is with me now."

"Herr Birchmore; yes, my brother spoke also of him," said Christina, her gravity returning. "But he did not speak of the young lady or of the servant."

"No. I believe they weren't with him at the time. I only met them myself since I came to Schandau."

"The young lady is Herr Birchmore's—wife?"

"His wife? Dear heavens, no! His daughter, of course, Christina."

Christina said nothing, being occupied in neatly smoothing out the pillow and laying the wadded counterpane over the sheet.

"Will Herr Gainsborough stay with us long?" she asked after a pause.

"As long as Herr Birchmore does, I suppose," said I carelessly.

"And Herr Birchmore's daughter!" subjoined Christina with a twinkle of mischief so demure that I could hardly be sure whether she meant it or not.

"Thou art as clever as thy brother, Christina," I laugh, coloring a little, too, however, I dare say. "It is true I have not known them long, but—but people see a good deal of one another in travelling together."

"I have heard it said that travelling makes people acquainted with——" she paused and looked down thoughtfully at her bare feet. Presently she lifted her blue eyes straight to mine and asked: "Herr Gainsborough has his diamonds with him?"

"Undoubtedly! They are never away from me."

"In going about this place the Herr should be cautious. Some of these hills and valleys are very lonely. There are spots, not far from here, where no one goes for sometimes many months."

"Well, I'll be very careful, Christinchen," I rejoined laughing, and in truth not a little amused at the care my friends took of me. "But thou must remember that no one in Germany, except Herr Birchmore and his daughter and thyself, knows that any such diamonds as these are in existence—much less that they are in my pocket."

Christina raised her finger to her lips, as if to warn me to speak lower. "There is at least one other who knows—the man Slurk!" she said.

"Well, perhaps he may," I replied, somewhat struck by her observation, "and, as I see thou hast taken a dislike to the fellow, I will confide to thee that I consider him an atrocious brute. But, brute though he is, there's no harm in him of that kind. He is an old servant of Herr Birchmore, I believe, and would, of course, be dismissed at once if there was anything serious against him."

"Naturally," was all Christina's answer. She made no pretence of arguing the point with me. "Adieu, honored sir," she said at the door. But, with her hand upon the latch, she paused, turned round and added rather confusedly, "Will Herr Gainsborough go on any expedition with his friends to-day?"

"Why, I hardly think so, Christina."

"But to-morrow, perhaps?" she persisted, lifting her blue eyes to mine again.

"Perhaps," I admitted with a smile.

"Then—if he can trust me—would the Herr mind leaving the diamonds with me until he comes back again?"

"Nay, Christinchen, I cannot give them up, even to thee, and although I can trust thee as much as thy brother, or myself. But thou might'st lose them; and, if they are to be lost at all, I would rather the responsibility should be mine. Besides," I continued, showing my revolver, "I go always with this. But I thank thee all the same, Christinchen, and I would like to do something—to——"

I stepped toward her; the fact is, I suppose I meant to kiss her. But her expression changed in a manner not encouraging to such an advance. She looked both grave and hurt, and I paused.

"I was going to say—if thou wouldst like to see the diamonds, it would give me great pleasure to show them to thee."

"Many thanks, honored sir, I would rather not," and, with a formal courtesy, the fair-haired little maid opened the door and disappeared, leaving me feeling rather foolish.

"The pretty peasant has a pride of her own!" I said to myself as I opened my trunk and got out my writing materials. "She's actually offended because I wouldn't constitute her guardian of thirty thousand pounds' worth of diamonds. Good gracious! Why, that father of hers, if I know anything of faces, would cut all our throats for as many groschen. But what an unmistakable scamp my friend Slurk must be to have aroused the suspicions of such an innocent, unsophisticated little creature as Christinchen! By Jove, though, anybody might be suspicious of a leer and a slouch like his! What if there should be anything in it? Just suppose such a thing for a moment, eh? It's impossible, to be sure; but the impossible does sometimes happen. How on earth did Birchmore ever happen to have such a fellow about him? I tell you I've always had a notion that he may be at the bottom of all this mystery that Birchmore and Kate are so much exercised by. Now, what if he—but pshaw!

"There is one thing I'm resolved to do, however," I continued to myself as I settled down with paper, pens and ink, at the table in the window. "I'll buttonhole Birchmore this very afternoon and get out of him everything he knows about his precious valet. It can be no harm to have the matter cleared up. The thing is absurd, of course, still, the situation out here is rather lonely, and with two such lovely neighbors as papa Rudolph and Slurk—*par nobile fratrum*—it may be well to be on the safe side. Yes, that shall be cleared up to-day."

Having arrived at this sapient determination, I set to work writing my letters and scribbled away diligently for an hour or two. At length, as I was looking vacantly up from my paper, at a loss for something interesting to set down upon it, my eyes happened to rest upon the pane of my open window.

Like nearly all German windows, it opened inward on hinges, instead of running up and down in grooves. The pane on my left, therefore, having the dark room as a back-ground, acted as a mirror of the sunlit landscape outside on the right, showing me a portion thereof which was directly invisible to me from where I sat, and to any person standing in which I must myself be invisible.

Now, my window was on the southern side of the house which fronted westward on the road. On the opposite side of the road was a narrow strip of land planted with vegetables, and above this rose the abrupt side of a hill, ascended by a winding path partly hidden by the trees. I could not see this hill and path without leaning out of the window and looking toward the right, but a considerable part of it was reflected in my window-pane mirror, and could thus be readily observed without rising from my chair. Happening, then, as I said, to cast my eyes upon this mirror, I saw two persons standing together on the path upon the hill-side and conversing in an animated manner.

I had no difficulty in recognizing them; they were Mr. Birchmore and his valet. So far there was nothing surprising in the spectacle. That which did surprise and even astonish me, however, was the mutual bearing of the two men toward each other.

I have already mentioned the peremptory tone in which Mr. Birchmore uniformly addressed the man Slurk, and the generally overbearing attitude he assumed toward him. But in the conversation now going forward all this was changed. To judge by appearances, I should have said that Slurk was the master, and Mr. Birchmore the valet. The former was gesticulating forcibly, and evidently laying down the law in a very decided and autocratic way. His square, ungainly figure seemed to dilate and take on a masterful and almost hectoring air, while Mr. Birchmore stood with his hands in his coat pockets, undemonstrative and submissive, apparently accepting with meekness all that the other advanced, and only occasionally interpolating a remark or a suggestion, to which Slurk would pay but slight or impatient attention. Both were evidently talking in a low tone, for, though they were not more than fifty or sixty yards from where I sat, I could not catch a single word, or even so much as an inarticulate murmur, unless by deliberately straining my ears. But I did not need nor care to hear anything. What I saw was quite enough to startle and mystify me.

After a few minutes the two interlocutors moved slowly on up the path and were soon beyond the field of my mirror. But the unexpected scene which I had witnessed did not so soon pass out of my mind.

I got up from my table and began walking about the room with the restlessness of one who cannot make his new facts tally with his preconceived ideas. Who and what was Slurk, and how had he obtained ascendancy over a man like Birchmore? Certainly it could not be a natural ascendancy. Birchmore must have put himself in the other's power. In other words, Slurk must be blackmailing him. And this was the trouble, was it? This was the mystery? It was an ugly and awkward business, certainly, but the main question remained after all unanswered. What was it that Birchmore had done to give Slurk a hold upon him? And had that act, whatever it was, compromised his daughter along with him? For, now that I gathered up in my memory all the hints and signs which had come under my notice in relation to this affair, I could not help thinking that Kate's attitude had in it something suggestive of more than mere filial sympathy with her father's misfortune. In that misfortune or disgrace she had a personal and separate, in addition to a sympathetic, share. And yet, in what conceivable way could a low villain like Slurk fasten his gripe upon a pure and spotless young girl? And what a hideous thought—that such a girl should be in any way at his mercy! The more I turned the matter over in my mind, the more ugly did it appear. No wonder that father and daughter had warned me away. Some men in my position, having seen thus far, might have shrunk back and given up the enterprise. But I was not in that category. I was more than ever determined to see the adventure to its end—nay, to gain my own end in it, too. The conditions of the contest were, at all events, narrowing themselves down to recognizable form. It was to be a trial of strength mainly between myself and Slurk—between an educated, plucky Englishman and a base German ruffian—between one, moreover, who had right, moral and legal, on his side and love as his goal, and one armed only with underhand cunning and terrorism and aiming at nothing higher than the extortion of money. This was the way I read the situation, and I flattered myself that I was equal to the emergency.

Upon consideration, however, I decided to alter my intention of asking Mr. Birchmore about his valet. It was tolerably clear that he was not in a position to give me any information; and, besides, I had already learned everything except the particulars. Those particulars, if I did not succeed in discovering them unaided, must be extracted from Kate. She would not withhold them from me if I questioned her resolutely and directly, enforcing my inquiries with disclosure of the knowledge I had already obtained. This, then, should be my next step. I sealed up my letters, locked them in my desk, and, it being now nearly seven o'clock, I went down to supper.

CHAPTER VII.

But at supper there was no Kate. Mr. Birchmore and I were served by Christina, while the voices of Slurk and our landlord could be heard in the kitchen. My conversation was naturally somewhat constrained. Mr. Birchmore had a good deal to say about some excursion which he had in view for the morrow, but I failed to pay very close attention to his remarks. Once, however, I caught Christina's eyes fixed upon me and smiled as I remembered her warnings respecting the supposed danger of solitary rambles.

After supper I felt more restless than ever. Mr. Birchmore brought out his invariable cigars, expecting me to join him in a smoke, but I was not in the mood for it, neither did I feel at ease in his company until things should have begun to look a little more comprehensible. I left him, therefore, and wandered aimlessly about outside the house, exploring the farm yard and buildings, and then coming round to the road and pacing up and down on a beat about a quarter of a mile in length. It was a clear, moonlight night and so warm as to be almost oppressive. At length I returned to the house, it being then after nine o'clock. Mr. Birchmore had apparently retired. Christina was nowhere to be seen; so I got a lamp from my surly landlord and found my way without much difficulty to my own chamber.

The warmth within doors was still more oppressive than outside. I opened both the windows, drew up my bed between them and placed the table with the lamp on it near the bed's head. I had previously thrown off my coat and waistcoat and laid them across one end of the table. The diamonds were still in the pocket of the coat. I intended taking them out before going to sleep, and putting them under my pillow or in some equally secure place. My revolver I also placed beside the lamp. Then, having provided myself with a book out of my trunk, and drawn the bolt of the door, I reclined on the outside of the bed and began to read.

I could not, however, fix my mind upon the page. First my attention and then my eyes would wander. I took a futile and absurd interest in scrutinizing all the details of the room. I recollect them distinctly now. The walls were not papered, but the plaster was washed over with a dark-gray tint which rubbed off with the fingers, and the uniformity of which was relieved by vertical bands of dull red, painted at intervals of about five feet from floor to ceiling. The ceiling was low—about eight feet from the floor—and whitewashed. In one corner stood the china stove, a glistening, pallid structure of plain tiles, built up four-square nearly to the top of the room. On the side of the room opposite the two windows and the bed was fastened a tall looking-glass, formed of three plates, set one above the other, edge to edge, in such a manner as painfully to cut up and distort whatever was reflected in them. In front of the looking-glass was a liliputian wash-stand, and beside it a straight-legged chair without rungs—in a word, a room more utterly devoid of every kind of picturesque or ornamental attraction could not be imagined; yet I could not keep my eyes from vacantly traversing and retraversing its vacancy. The door was behind me, as I lay toward the little table on which the lamp stood, but I could see the free edge of it brokenly reflected in the mirror, with the cracked black porcelain latch-handle and the iron bolt which I had shot into its place.

I was anything but sleepy; the heat and the pest of midges and beetles which the light attracted in through the windows would have sufficed to keep me awake even had my mind been at ease. In order to disperse the insects I finally extinguished the lamp; the moonlight in the room was so bright that I could almost have seen to read by it. I closed the book, however, and, clasping my hands under my head, I gave myself up to meditation. Not a sound of any kind was audible except the muffled ticking of the watch in my waistcoat pocket and the faint rustle of the pillow as I breathed. The white moonlight seemed to augment the stillness; the whole great night, and the house with it, seemed silently and intently listening, and at length I found myself listening intently, too. For what? I could not tell, but I listened nevertheless.

By-and-bye, I fancied a sound came—a sound from somewhere within the house. It was a very faint sound, and did not come again; but it was such as might have been caused by the light pressure of a foot in one of the passages outside. Instinctively I reached forth my hand and laid hold of my revolver, but I did not rise from the bed nor otherwise alter my position. I still lay as if asleep, with the revolver in one hand, the other beneath my head, and my eyes fixed upon the edge of the door, which was obscurely visible in the mirror.

Several minutes passed thus and there was no return of the noise. Then I saw the handle of the door move and turn. The latch clicked slightly; the door, bolted though it was, opened as if on oiled hinges, admitting an indistinct figure in a long robe of soft gray. So much I saw in the mirror. Then the door was closed again and the figure, advancing toward the bed, ceased to be reflected in the glass. It advanced close to the bed and paused there a moment; I could hear its deep, regular breathing. All this time I had not moved, but lay with my back turned, feigning slumber.

Presently the figure passed round the foot of the bed, and came up the other side. The full white light of the moon fell upon it. It was Kate, as I had known it was from the first moment she entered the room. She was clad in a dressing-gown of soft, flowing material, which was fastened at the throat and trailed on the ground. It had wide sleeves, one of which fell back from the bare, smooth arm and hand that carried a lamp. The lamp was not lighted. Her black hair hung down on her shoulders and on each side of her pale face. Her eyes were wide open, but fixed and vacant. Her breathing was long and measured, as of one sound asleep.

She put the lamp down on the table beside mine and then stood quite still in the moonlight, her face wholly expressionless and without motion. It was an appalling thing to see her thus. I, too, remained motionless, but it was because I knew not what to do. To awaken her might bring on the worst consequences. If she were not disturbed, she might possibly retire as quietly and unconsciously as she had come. But the mystery of her being there at all appeared utterly inexplicable. What had led her, in her trance, to visit my room? How had she ever known where it was? And, above all, how had she contrived to enter through a bolted door with as much ease as though she had been a spirit. Perhaps this was but a spirit—or a phantom of my own brain! Was I awake?

She stretched out her hand, not following its motion with her eyes, but mechanically, and, as it were, involuntarily. She laid it on my coat—on the pocket which contained the diamonds. Then, slowly and deliberately, and still with averted face and eyes and that long-drawn, slumberous breathing, she unbuttoned the fastenings one after one, and her soft, tapering fingers closed upon the case.

Meanwhile, my mind had been rapidly canvassing all the *pros* and *cons* of action, and I had come to the conclusion that it would be better for her that I should interfere. Of my personal interest in the matter I believe I did not think. Indeed, knowing that the diamonds would not be lost, there was no reason why I should. But it would not do to risk compromising Kate. It was dangerous enough that she should be here at all; but that she should carry away the diamonds with her was inadmissible. I rose from my bed and laid my hand gently on her wrist.

She was no spirit, but warm flesh and blood. For a few moments the restraint in which I held her seemed to baffle and distress her. I fancied I could feel her pulse beat under my fingers; a kind of spasm crossed her face, her eyelids quivered and the eyes moved in their sockets. Then her breathing became irregular and caught in her throat in a kind of sob. The moment of awakening was evidently at hand, and I dreaded its coming, lest she should scream out and rouse the house. But, fortunately, she uttered no sound. Slowly speculation grew within her eyes she fixed them on me, first with an expression of strange pleasure, soon changing to bewilderment and fear. Then, with a cry that was none the less thrilling because it was a whisper, she drooped forward into my arms. It was a delicious moment, for all its peril.

"You are perfectly safe," I whispered in her ear, "only make no noise."

"Tom," she said, suddenly freeing herself from my arms, and putting a hand on either shoulder, while her wild, black eyes searched my face, "you understand—you don't think——"

"Of course I understand, my poor darling!"

"What shall I do—what shall I do? Let me kill myself?"

With a motion swift as the glide of a serpent, she reached toward the revolver which I had left on the bed. I was barely in time to catch her arm. The look in the girl's face at that moment was terrible.

"Let me—I will!"

"Hush, Kate! You never shall!"

"Oh, what shall I do?" she murmured again, slipping down on her knees and running both hands through her thick, black hair. "Tom, if you loved me you would kill me!"

"Kate, every one in the house is asleep. You can go back to your room and no one know. Only be calm."

"And no one know? You think that?"

"I am sure of it!"

"I know better! Some one knows it now—he made it happen."

"Don't kneel there, dear. You're not yourself yet. You don't know what you're saying."

I said this reassuringly, but her words had inspired me with a vague alarm that I ventured not to define. I brought a chair and made her sit upon it, and sat down beside her.

"Not here," she whispered, drawing back out of the moonlight into the shadow. "Come here, Tom. He may be looking."

"Why, Kate, who can see us here? The door is shut."

"Oh—why was not the door bolted!"

"It was. I can't conceive how you opened it."

"Oh, the villain! How I hate him!"

"Kate, I love you, and whoever you hate must have to do with me."

"You can do nothing—no one can do anything—unless you help me to kill him."

"Whom do you mean—Slurk? Tell me that."

"Yes," she answered with a shiver, not looking me in the face, but with her hands clasped tight between her knees. "I do mean him."

"Now tell me all that he has done, dear," said I quietly. "I must know everything, and then I promise you that you shall be freed from him."

"He is my master," she said in a frightened whisper. "He has been ever so long. He makes me do what he wills. He sent me here to-night. He shames me and destroys me—he loves to do it! He makes me sleep, and then I cannot help myself. I wake and find it done; and he has no mercy."

"Why does he do this?"

(To be continued.)

A Difference in Customs.

I.

He was handsome.
Faultlessly dressed.
Jewels glittered on his shirt front.
And a smile, that should not have deceived a monkey, illuminated his countenance.
He was suave.
And strictly attentive to business.
He was a member of a fashionable church.
But he could make Rome howl when out on a "high" with the boys.
He had a devoted wife.
And pretty children.
But what did he care?
He held a prominent position
In a big bank.
One morning he failed to turn up;
So did some $200,000.
The gentleman had fled to Canada,
Where he lived in princely style,
On ill-gotten wealth.
By many he was still highly esteemed.
Poor fellow!
And at his shrine
Thousands do him homage.

He was a tramp.
Not a pretty tramp.
Nor a smart one.
Just an ordinary, measly, unwashed, ungodly, dog-bitten tramp.
But he had seen better days.
And in years gone by he had been loved.
There was one somewhere who loved him yet.
Who?
His mother.
And he had shown courage, too.
How?
He had saved a human life by imperiling his own for a wretched companion, who was wildly delirious with the dreadful scourge of smallpox.
But he was suspected of theft.
Of stealing a horse.
He was captured.
And pleaded not guilty.
"Prove it?"
He could not. He did not have the horse, and never had one. He asked for mercy.
They hung him.—*St. Louis Critic.*

A Western Romance.

"Truthful James," writing in the Minneapolis *Tribune* tells this story: A gentleman applied to a young lawyer here for a divorce for a friend whose husband had deserted her. The facts were such that a divorce could easily be procured, and the lady's friend was so informed. The case was placed upon the docket for hearing, and the young legal light assured the parties that the knot would be untied on a certain date without difficulty. The gentleman interested was going to marry the lady, and they made all the necessary preparations for the happy event the day following that upon which the divorce had been promised, issuing printed invitations, securing the minister and attending to other preliminaries. But the young lawyer, in a fit of absent-mindedness, failed to file his note of issue, and the hearing of the case was postponed for one week. To say that there was music in the air does not fairly express the state of affairs when the prospectively happy couple discovered the situation. But the wedding was postponed, all the same.

How He Touched Home Base.

"Oh! I am dying, doctor. I am dying," moaned a Bloomington man, as he lay on his parlor floor yesterday.

"Ah!" said the man of squills, "it's your spine. What caused it?"

"Baseball," said the poor man.

"You, sir, play that odious game, and a man at your age, too! Been sliding in on home plate on your back, I presume," said the doctor, with a look of deep disgust.

"No," feebly moaned the cripple.

"Umpire, was you, eh?"

"No; I stepped on the ball at the head of the stairs, and touched the home base in the cellar."—*Bloomington Mail.*

A GOOD reason why type-writers will hardly become common in China is that the Chinese alphabet contains about thirty thousand characters, and the man who thinks of constructing a Chinese type-writer will have to make it the size of a fifty-horse-power threshing machine and run it by steam.

The Concord school of philosophy struck a snag in a paper forwarded by a Texas professor. It was called "The Platonian Idea," and after an earnest and hopeless search for the idea, the school returned the paper to the professor with the simple interrogation, "Why don't you sign the pledge."—*Lowell Citizen.*

FARM AND GARDEN

Deep tillage means enlarged resources when practised in heavy lands.

Petroleum, it is said, will often cure chicken cholera if given in time. A tablespoonful in a pint of meal fed to the hens is sufficient.

A corn crib may be readily made rat-proof by supporting it on cedar or locust posts thirty inches high and capped with a stone or broad board.

The one great cause of the small profits of the majority of small fruit growers and market gardeners is due to the fact that they try to work too much land.

A few sods and a little cow manure made into a heap now where you can throw kitchen slops will make an excellent compost for your flower pots next winter.

The man who takes up farming just because he has failed at everything else has not a pleasant prospect before him. He is likely to add another failure to his list.

The common daisy is one of the most divisible of plants. Each separate branchlet may be removed with its modicum of root, and every bit will form a thrifty plant.

The days of salt pork as the principal meat for farmers, fortunately, are past, and with them impaired digestion, that under the old diet was the source of innumerable ills.

A remedy considered satisfactory for various kinds of insects in stored grain consists in placing an open vessel of bisulphide of carbon on top of the grain in a tight bin.

Don't let your colonies go into winter quarters with none but old bees. They will "fag out" before spring, and your hives will contain nothing but the remains of defunct workers.

Beans and peas that are to be kept over winter may be pulled from the vines as fast as they dry. If left on the vines the hulls will sometimes pop open and the seeds be lost.

Kansas farmers who raised broom-corn last season and held it till about January 1st received from $127 to $175 per ton, nearly twice as much per ton as they ever before received.

Rearrange fields in such a way as to reduce fencing to the lowest point, and cost of maintenance on many farms will be reduced enough to balance annual claims by the tax-gatherer.

Alsike clover is estimated as capable of producing 500 pounds of honey per acre, but something depends on the season and the crop. It grows best on clay soil, and makes excellent hay.

Green amber cane is very highly extolled by Minnesota farmers as excellent food for cattle and milch cows, it being claimed that it is equal to corn for producing milk and superior to it for butter.

At the Birmingham poultry exhibition, lately held in England, prizes were offered for preserved eggs. First prize went to eggs packed in dry salt; second to greased eggs in lime-water and salt.

Farmers are getting out of the habit of washing sheep. It is dangerous to men and sheep, and unless the wool is very clean there is dirt enough in it to more than balance the difference in price.

Heavy winds that shake off a great deal of fruit do not always diminish yield, for what is left grows larger, sometimes so much superior in size and appearance as to overbalance all apparent loss.

The manufacture of beet sugar in California has proved financially successful both to the manufacturers and farmers who raise the beets. The latter can net $20 an acre profit in raising sugar-beets.

A fat steer or other animal intended for the butcher will go off readily at any time, but it is not possible to put on the required fat in a few days, so if there is the intention to sell good feeding is a pre-requisite.

The careful shepherd varies the feed of his flocks to suit their condition and appetites. On cold clear days his stock will eat nearly twice as much as on warm, wet days, and the amount of feed should be gauged accordingly.

If one takes a little time and pains he can readily raise nearly all the trees and shrubs he needs by transplanting to a nursery patch from the forest when small or by buying from the nurseries, where they are grown from seed very cheaply.

Many nurserymen advise transplanting evergreens in late summer rather than spring, as the pleasant moisture of the autumn causes them to root well before winter, and they are not first taxed to endure the scorching heat of early summer.

It is unfortunate when the character and fertility of a field are not nearly uniform in its several parts. With uniformity of soil the crop will ripen so that all can be harvested together, and this with machinery run by horse power is a great advantage.

Do not feed a sow that has sucking pigs on too much dry food. She should have plenty of slop, but it should be rich and nutritious. A mixture of cornmeal, ground oats and middlings reduced to a thin consistency with skim milk is a good mess.

Farmers who have sown gypsum on strawberry plants to promote their vigor have met some disappointing results. The gypsum produces so large a growth of clover that it becomes almost impossible to keep the rows clean, and in some instances the bed had to be abandoned.

Hubbard squashes are more profitable to grow among potatoes or corn than pumpkins, and they also make excellent food for stock, especially when cooked. A few pumpkins, however, will serve well in winter as a complete change of diet, and the crop should not be neglected.

Plans should be laid to prepare the ground to be planted with raspberries or blackberries next spring this fall. If the ground is ploughed at any time after this and thoroughly cultivated about the close of October, raspberries can be planted as soon as the frost is out without replonghing.

The second crop, or aftermath, of timothy does not grow very tall, and is sometimes not worth cutting. It is excellent for turning under as a green manurial crop and also makes extra fine pasturage. Timothy is not as easily thrown up by the frost as clover, and usually endures the winter well.

The good start that the calf had on milk in the first few weeks must be kept at least through the first year if the animal is to have full development. The first winter is the trying time, but it requires only liberal feed and comfortable quarters to maintain steady growth. Anything short is sure to be loss.

A New England dairyman states that he has fed green rye to his cows for three seasons, and the improvement in the quality of milk, cream and butter was very marked. He uses no coloring for his butter, and finds the green rye better than many other kinds of grass. Considering that rye is a crop that grows well on nearly all kinds of soil, this is very encouraging.

Shelter belts to be effectual all the year round should be of evergreens. Their masses of perpetual foliage make them especially valuable for that purpose. A double row of these trees is worth more as a shelter belt in winter than a dozen rows of deciduous trees that offer only naked boughs in winter.

Besides tilling carefully and thoroughly the young apple trees, rubbing off surplus shoots, etc, keen observation as to caterpillars will avoid the enfeeblement of many otherwise good trees. Rob any tree of its foliage during the growing season by any process, and the tree is greatly reduced in vitality thereby.

The idea that sheep at pasture will live and thrive without water to drink is serious and costly delusion to many farmers. By eating when dew is on the grass they can get along with little water, but that little they require as absolutely as any stock, or poor condition and poor wool will tell the story of their deprivation.

White clover is a very persistent plant, and once it is seeded it endeavors to remain, which makes it a valuable grass on those locations where red clover will not thrive. Like the strawberry, it not only produces seed, but also propagates itself by runners. It makes an excellent pasture, and it is a valuable grass for bee-keepers.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

Queer Fancies of Those Who Are Just Lifting Life's Curtain.

IMPENDING DOOM.

"There's going to be something the matter with my big brother Jim next week," said a 6-year-old child to her teacher.

"Indeed," said the teacher, "what is going to be the matter with Jim?"

"He's going to get married; that's what's going to ail him," was the surprising reply.

A SPORTING SPIRIT AROUSED.

A small child was kept from doing evil by being told by his mother that the booman would catch him, and by his father that the devil was after him. In time the child's curiosity became excited, and on being again warned he answered: "Pape, I'd just like to see the booman and the devil get after each other."

MATTIE SEES NO REMEDY.

"Why, Mattie, you have put your shoes on the wrong feet!" "Whot'll I do, mamma? They're all the feet I've got."

TOO DIFFUSIVE.

"Mamma," said little Mary, "is Uncle Ned Arthur's uncle, too?"

"No," said her mother, "he is Arthur's father."

"Well, is he your uncle?"

"No; he is my brother. He is Fred's uncle, and yours, and Cousin Lizzie's."

"Now, said Mary, shaking her small head very positively, "I know Uncle Ned isn't such a lot as that!"

AN AVERAGE SCHOOL COMPOSITION.

A schoolma'am at the Chase House has the following juvenile composition among her school-house manuscript: "A codfish is the only Annymal that ain't got no neck. There ain't but one kind of a fish in the World that lives on the land and Flys round in the air, and that is a fish-hawk. A codfish has a large mouth, and my Sunday school Teachers got a large mouth too. Two kids got fitting in the vestry one day and one of em pulled quite a lot of Hare out of the other kids Hed and the Superintending pounded one of his Ears with a book and so they quit. A fish would look funny if they had legs and could run."

The Mighty Dollar

Is long distanced by a 10 cent bottle of Polson's NERVILINE, the newest and best pain remedy. It cures colds, cramps, colic, pain in the head, sciatica, pain in the chest; in fact, it is equally efficacious as an external or internal remedy. Try a 10 cent sample bottle of the great pain remedy, Nerviline. Sold by druggists. Large bottles only 25 cents. Try a sample bottle of Nerviline, only 10 cents. Take no substitute.

The new material for unsinkable apparel has been further tested with success in London. This material is composed of threads of cork interwoven with cotton, silk, or woolen—machinery which slices the cork to the required thinness forming part of the invention. The garments which are made in this manner have the same appearance as ordinary clothing, and possess remarkable buoyancy in water.

Thousands of cures follow the use of B. Sage's Catarrh Remedy. 50 cents.

It would seem from the letter of a correspondent of the London *Standard* that frogs and mice are deadly enemies. This gentleman observed a battle royal going on between these creatures in a shed. The mice pursued the frogs all over the place for some little time without result, for the frogs managed to elude them. But grad