Gates of the City.

A pilgrim once (so runs an ancient tale),
Old, worn and spent, crept down a shadowed vale;
On either hand rose mountains bleak and high;
Chill with the gusty air, and dark the sky;
The path was rugged and his feet were bare;
His faded cheek was seamed by pain and care;
His heavy eyes upon the ground were cast,
And every step seemed feebler than the last.

The valley ended where a naked rock
Rose sheer from earth to heaven, as if to mock
The pilgrim who had crept that toilsome way;
But while his dim and weary eyes essay
To find an outlet in the mountain side,
A ponderous sculptured brazen door he spied,
And tottering toward it with fast failing breath,
Above the portal read, "The Gate of Death."

He could not stay his feet that led thereto;
It yielded to his touch, and passing through,
He came into a world all bright and fair.
Blue were the heavens, and balmy was the air;
And, lo! the blood of youth was in his veins,
And he was clad in robes that hold no stains
Of his long pilgrimage. Amazed, he turned;
Behold! a golden door behind him burned
In that fair sunlight, and his wondering eyes,
Now lusterful and clear as those new skies,
Free from the mists of age, of care and strife,
Above the portal read, "The Gate of Life."

Love or Lands.

"I bring not houses, lands or gold,
To give, sweetheart, to thee;
No richer than I was of old
Am I to-day," quoth he.
In sooth he looked his poverty,
If ever so did one;
In rags and tatters clad was he,
Bare-headed to the sun!

It was her love of long ago
Whe took her outstretched hands.
"If you are he I used to know,
I seek not gold or lands;
If you but love me still, sweetheart,
I am content," cried she.
"And I will share your lowly part,
For I your bride will be!"

"Then, by my troth, my heart is thine!"
Quoth he at her reply;
"Though rags and tatters may be mine,
No beggar now am I.
I'm richer than with gold and lands
The proudest monarchs be,
With thee for mine, and these two hands
To work, sweetheart, for thee!"

—*Chambers' Journal for March.*

THE CHOICE OF THREE:

A NOVEL.

It was very evident to Dorothy, who was always strictly practical, that to keep Eva and Ernest in the same town was to hold dry tow to a lighted match over a barrel of gunpowder. She only hoped that he might come back now without having put his foot into it.

"Oh, what fools men are!" she said to herself, with a stamp; "a pretty face and a pair of bright eyes, and they count the world well lost for them. Bah! if it had been a plain woman who played Ernest that trick, would he be found dangling about after her now? Not he. But with her, she has only to say a soft word or two, and he will be at her feet. I'll be bound I am ashamed of them both."

Meanwhile she was putting on her bonnet, which was a very favorite time with her for meditation, having already made up her mind as to her course of action. Ernest had authorized her to make arrangements for an interview with the oculist. She proceeded to make those arrangements by telegram, writing to a celebrated surgeon to know if he could make an appointment for the following afternoon. Then she took a walk by herself to think things over. In an hour she returned, to find Ernest in the sitting-room looking extremely shaken and depressed.

"You have been to see Eva," she said.

"Yes," he answered.

Just then there was a knock at the door, and the servant brought in a telegram. It was from the oculist. He would be glad to see Sir Ernest Kershaw at four o'clock on the following afternoon.

"I have made an appointment for you with an eye-doctor, Ernest, at four o'clock to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" he said.

"Yes. The sooner you get your eyes looked to the better."

He sighed. "What is the good? However, I will go."

And so next morning they all took the express, and at the appointed time Ernest found himself in the skillful hands of the oculist. But though an oculist can mend the sight, he can not make it.

"I can do nothing for you, Sir Ernest," he said, after an exhaustive examination. "Your eyes will remain as they are, but you must always be blind."

Ernest took the news with composure. "I thought as much," he said; but Dorothy put her handkerchief to her face and wept secretly.

Next morning he went with Jeremy to see Messrs. Paisley & Paisley, and told them to try and let Archdale Hall, and to lock up the numerous and valuable heirlooms, as unfortunately he was unable to see them. Then they went on home to Dum's Ness, and that night Ernest lay awake in the room where he had slept for so many years in the boyhood which now seemed so dim and remote, and listened to the stormy wind raving round the house, and thought with an aching heart of Eva, but was thankful that he had bid her farewell, and wondered if he could find the strength to keep away from her.

And Eva, his lost love, she too lay by the sea, and listened to the wind, and thought on him. There she lay in her beauty, seeking the sleep that would not settle round her. She could not sleep; sweet sleep does not come readily to such as her. For her and those like her are vain regrets and an empty love and longing, and the wreath of thorns that crowns the brow where sorrow sits enthroned.

Yet, Eva, lift up that fevered head, and turn those streaming eyes to heaven. See, through the casement, high above the tumult of the storm, there gleams a star. For you, too, there gleams a star called Hope, but it is set in no earthly sky. Have patience, wayward heart, there is but a space of trouble. As you suffer, so have millions suffered, and behold! they are at peace; so shall millions suffer:

"While thou that once didst make the place thou stoodst in lovely, shalt lie still,
Thy form departed, and thy face remembered not in good or ill."

For of this we may be sure—if suffering be not the widest gate of heaven, then heaven has no gates. Yes, unhappy woman, stretch out those perfect arms in supplication to the God of sorrows for strength to bear your load, for here it shall not be lightened. The burdens which Providence straps on our backs Providence will sometimes lessen, but those which our own folly fastens remain till death deliver us.

So, Eva, dry your tears, for they can avail you naught, and go get you to your daily task—go, tend your children and smile that sweet, sad smile on all alike and wait.

CHAPTER XLI.

HOME AGAIN.

It was very peaceful, that life at Kesterwick, after all the fierce racket and excitement of the past years. Indeed, as day succeeded day, and brought nothing to disturb his darkness, but the sound of Dorothy's gentle voice, and the scent of the flowers on the marshes when the wind blew toward the ocean, and the sharp, strong odor of the sea when it set upon the land, Ernest could almost fancy that the past was nothing but a dream more or less ugly, and that this was a dream more or less pleasant, from which he should presently wake up and find himself a boy again.

English villages change but little. Now and again a person dies, and pretty frequently some one is born; but, on the whole, the tide of time creeps on very imperceptibly, and though in the course of nature the entire population is changed every sixty years or so, nobody seems to realize that it is changing. There is so little in such places to mark the change by. The same church-tower makes a landmark to the eye as it did centuries ago to the eyes of our ancestors, and the same clouds sweep across the same blue space above it. There are the same old houses, the same streams, and, above all, the same roads and lanes. If you could put one of our Saxon forefathers down in the neighborhood of most of our country towns, he would have little difficulty in finding his way about. It is the men who change, not the places.

Still there were some few changes at Kesterwick. Here and there the sea had taken another bite out of the cliff, notably on the north side of Dum's Ness, out of which a large slice had gone, thus bringing the water considerably neearer to the house. Here and there too, a tree had been cut down, or a cottage built, or a family changed its residence. For instance, Miss Florence Ceswick had suddenly shut up the Cottage, where she had remained, seeing nothing of her sister or her sister's husband, ever since Eva's marriage, and had gone abroad—people said to Rome, to study art. For Florence had suddenly electrified the Kesterwick neighborhood by appearing as an artist of tragic force and grewsome imagination. A large picture by her hand had been exhibited in the Royal Academy of the previous year, and, though the coloring was somewhat crude, made a great and deserved sensation, and finally sold for a considerable sum.

It represented a promontory of land running out far into a stormy ocean. The sky above the sea was of an inky blackness, except where a fierce ray of light from a setting sun pierced it, and impinged upon the boiling waters which surged round the low cliff of the promontory. On the extreme edge of the cliff stood a tall and lovely woman. The wind caught the white robe she wore and pressed it against her, revealing the extraordinary beauty of her form, and lifting her long, fair locks, tossed them in wild confusion. She was bending forward, pointing with her right hand at the water with such a look of ghastly agony upon her beautiful face into the great gray eyes, that people of impressionable temperament were wont to declare that it haunted their sleep for weeks. Down below her, just where the fierce ray lit up the heaving waters, gleamed a naked corpse. It was that of a young man, and was slowly sinking into the unfathomable darkness of the depths, turning round and round as it sank. The eyes and mouth were wide open, and the stare of the former appeared to be fixed upon those of the woman on the cliff. Lastly, over the corpse, in the storm-wreaths above their heads, there hovered onsteady wings a dim female figure, with its arm thrown across the face as though to hide it. The picture was called in the catalogue "The Lost Lover," but speculation was rife as to what it meant.

Dorothy heard of it, and went to London to see it. The first thing that struck her about the work was the extraordinary contrast it presented to the commonplace canvases of reapers, little girls frisking with baa-lambs, and nude young women musing profoundly on the edge of pools, as though they were trying to solve the great question—to wash or not to wash—by which it was surrounded. But presently the weird horror of the picture laid hold upon her, and seemed to fascinate her as it had so many others. Then she became aware that the faces were familiar to her, and suddenly it broke upon her mind that the sinking corpse was Ernest, and the agonized woman Eva. She examined the faces more attentively. There was no doubt about it. Florence had with consummate art changed the coloring of the hair and features, and even to a great extent altered the features themselves, but she had perfectly preserved the likeness both upon the dead face of the murdered man, and in the horror-inspired eyes of his lover. The picture made her sick with fear, she could not tell why, and she hurried from Burlington House full of dread of the terrible mind that had conceived it.

There had been no intercourse between the two women since Eva's marriage. Florence lived quite alone at the Cottage, and never went out anywhere, and if they met by any chance they passed with a bow. But for all that it was a relief to Dorothy to hear that she was not for some long time to see that stern face with its piercing brown eyes

In Dum's Ness itself there appeared to be no change at all. Except that Mr. Cardus had built a new orchid-house at the back, for as he grew older his mania for orchids increased rather than diminished, the place was exactly the same. Even the arrangement of the sitting-room was unchanged, and on its familiar bracket rested the case which Jeremy had made containing the witch's head.

The people in the house had to all appearance changed as little as the house itself. Jeremy confided to Ernest that Doll had grown rather "tubby," which was his elegant way of indicating that she had developed a very pretty little figure, and that Grice (the old housekeeper) was as skinny as a flayed weasel, and had eyes like the point of a knife. Ernest maliciously repeated these sayings to the two ladies concerned with the result that they were both furious. Then he retreated and left them to settle it with Jeremy.

Old Atterleigh too was almost exactly the same, except that of late years his intellect seemed to have brightened a little. It was, however, difficult to make him understand that Ernest was blind, because the latter's eyes looked all right. He retained some recollection of him, and brought him his notched stick, to show him that, according to his (hard-riding Atterleigh's) calculation, his time of service with the devil, otherwise Mr. Cardus, would expire in a few months. Dorothy read what the old man wrote upon his slate, and repeated it to Ernest, for he being practically dumb, and Ernest being blind, that was the only way in which they could communicate.

"And what will you do then?" asked Ernest; "you will be wretched without any writs to fill up. Who will look after the lost souls, I should like to know?"

The old man at once wrote vigorously on his slate:

"I shall go out hunting on the big black horse you brought with you; he will carry my weight."

"I should advise you not to try," said Ernest, laughing; "he does not like strange riders." But the old man at the mere thought of hunting was striding up and down the room, clanking his spurs and waving his hunting-crop with his uninjured arm.

"Is your grandfather as much afraid of my uncle as ever, Doll?"

"Oh, yes, I think so; and do you know, Ernest, I don't quite like the way he looks at him sometimes?"

Ernest laughed. "I should think that the old boy is harmless enough," he said.

"I hope so," said Dorothy.

When first they got back to Dum's Ness, Jeremy was at a great loss to know what to do with himself, and was haunted by the idea that Mr. Cardus would want him to resume that stool in his office which years before he had quitted to go in search of Ernest. A week or so after his arrival, however, his fears were very pleasantly set at rest. After breakfast, Mr. Cardus sent for him to come into his office.

"Well, Jeremy," he said, letting his soft, black eyes wander round that young gentleman's gigantic form, for it was by now painfully large, not so much in height, for he was not six foot three, as in its great width, which made big men look like children beside him, and even dwarfed his old grandfather's enormous frame—"well, Jeremy, and what do you think of doing? You are too big for a lawyer; all your clients would be afraid of you."

"I don't know about being too big," said Jeremy, solemnly, "but I know that I am too great an ass. Besides, I can't afford to spend several years in being articled at my time of life."

"Quite so. Then what do you propose doing?"

"I don't know from Adam."

"Well, how would you like to turn your sword to a plowshare and become a farmer?"

"I think that would suit me first-rate. I have a little capital laid by. Ernest and I made a little money out there."

"No, I would not advise you to take a farm in that way; these are bad times. But I want a practical man to look after my land around here, salary £150. What do you say?

"You are very kind; but I doubt if I can boss that coach; I don't know anything of the work."

"Oh, you will very soon learn; there is a capital bailiff, Stamp—you remember him—he will soon put you to the ropes. So we will consider that settled."

Thus it was that our friend Jeremy entered on a new walk in life, and one which suited him very well. In less than a year's time he grew aggressively agricultural, and one never met him but what he had a handful of oats or a mangel-wurzel in his coat-tail pocket, which he was ready to swear were samples of the finest oats, mangel-wurzel, or whatever the particular agricultural product might be, that ever had been or were ever likely to be grown.

CHAPTER XLII.

HOW IT ALL CAME OUT.

How did it all come about?

Let us try and discover. Dorothy and Ernest were together all day long. They only separated when Mazook came to lead the former off to bed. At breakfast-time he led him back again and handed him over to Dorothy for the day. Not that our Zulu friend liked this; he did not like it at all. It was, he considered, his business to lead his master about, and not that of the "Rosebud," who was, as he discovered, after all nothing but a girl connected with his master neither by birth or marriage. And on this point there finally arose a difference of opinion between the Rosebud and Mazooku.

The latter was leading Ernest for his morning walk, when Dorothy perceiving it, and being very jealous of what she considered her rights, sallied out and took his hand from the great Zulu's. Then did Mazooku's long-pent indignation break forth.

"O Rosebud, sweet and small Rosebud!" he commenced, addressing her in Zulu, of which, needless to say, she understood not one word, "why do you come and take my father's hand out of my hand? Is not my father blind, and am I not his dog, his old dog to lead him in his blindness? Why do you take his bone from a dog?"

"What is the man saying?" asked Dorothy.

"He is offended because you come to lead me; he says that he is my dog, and that you snatch his bone from him. A pretty sort of a bone indeed!" he added.

"Tell him," said Dorothy, "that here in this country I hold your hand. What does he want? Is he not always with you? does he not sleep across your door? What more does he want?"

Ernest translated her reply.

"Ow!" said the Zulu, with a grunt of dissatisfaction.

"He is a faithful fellow, Doll, and has stood by me for many years; you must not vex him."

But Dorothy after the manner of loving women, was tenacious as to what she considered her rights.

"Tell him that he can walk in front," she said, putting on an obstinate little look, and she could look obstinate when she liked.

Ernest translated again (for the Zulu vowed he could never understand Dorothy's English), and Mazooku accepted the compromise. Thus for a while the difference was patched up.

Sometimes Dorothy and Ernest would go out riding together, for, blind as he was, Ernest could not be persuaded to give up his riding. It was a pretty sight to see them; Ernest mounted on his towering black stallion "The Devil," which in his hands was as gentle as a lamb, but with everybody else fully justified his appellation, and Dorothy on a cream-colored cob Mr. Cardus had given her, holding in her right hand a steel guiding-rein linked to the Devil's bit. In this way they would wonder all over the country-side, and sometimes, when a good piece of turf presented itself, even venture on a sharp canter. Behind them as groom rode Mazooku, mounted on a stout pony, with his feet stuck, Zulu fashion, well out at right angles at his animal's side.

They were a strange trio.

And so from week's end to week's end Dorothy was ever by Ernest's side, reading to him, writing for him, walking and riding with him, weaving herself into the substance of his life.

And at last there came one sunny August day, when they were sitting together in the shade of the chancel of Titheburgh Abbey. It was a favorite spot of theirs, for the gray old walls sheltered them from the glare of the sun and the breath of the winds. It was a spot, too, rich in memories of the dead past, and a pleasant place to sit.

Through the gaping window-places came the murmur of the ocean and the warmth of the harvest sunshine; and gazing out by the chancel doorway, Dorothy could see the long lights of the afternoon dance and sparkle on the emerald waves.

She had been reading to him, and the book lay idle on her knees as she gazed dreamily at those lights and shadows, a sweet picture of pensive womanhood. He too had relapsed into silence, and was evidently thinking deeply.

Presently she roused herself.

"Well, Ernest," she said, "what are you thinking about? You are as dull as—as the dullest thing in the world, whatever that may be. What is the dullest thing in the world?"

"I don't know," he answered, awakening. "Yes, I think I do; an American novel."

"Yes, that is a good definition. You are as dull as an American novel."

"It is unkind of you to say so, Doll, my dear. I was thinking of something, Doll."

She made a little face, which of course, he could not see, and answered quickly:

"You generally are thinking of something. You generally are thinking of—Eva, except when you are asleep, and then you are dreaming of her."

Ernest colored up.

"Yes," he said, "it is true, she is often more or less in my mind. It is my misfortune, Doll, not my fault. You see, I do not do things by halves."

Dorothy bit her lip.

"She should be justly flattered, I am sure. Few women can boast of having inspired such affection in a man. I suppose it is because she treated you so badly. Dogs love the hand that whips them. You are a curious character, Ernest Not many men would give so much to one who has returned so little."

"So much the better for them. If I had a son, I think that I should teach him to make love to all women, and to use their affection as a means of amusement and self-advancement, but to fall in love with none."

"That is one of your bitter remarks, for which I suppose we must thank Eva. You are always making them now. Let me tell you that there are good women in the world; yes, and honest, faithful women, who, when they have given their heart are true to their choice, and would not do it violence to be made Queen of England. But you men do not go the right way to find them. You think of nothing but beauty, and never take the trouble to learn the hearts of the sweet girls who grow like daisies in the grass all around you, but who do not happen to have great eyes or a splendid bust. You tread them underfoot, and if they were not so humble they would be crushed, as you rush off and try to pick the rose; and then you prick your fingers, and cry out, and tell all the daisies how shamefully the rose has treated you."

Ernest laughed and Dorothy went on:

"Yes, it is an unjust world. Let a woman but be beautiful and everything is at her feet, for you men are despicable creatures, and care for little except what is pleasant to the senses. On the other hand, let her be plain, or only ordinary-looking—for the fate of most of us is just to escape being ugly—and you pay as much regard to her as you do the chairs you sit on. And yet, strange as it may seem to you probably, she has her feelings, and her capacities for high affection, and her imaginative power, all working vigorously behind her plain little face. Probably, too, she is better than your beauty. Nature does not give everything; when she endows a woman with perfect loveliness, she robs her either of her heart or her brains. But you men don't see that, because you won't look, so in course of time all the fine possibilities in Miss Plainface wither up, and she becomes a disappointed old maid, while my Lady Beauty pursues her career of selfishness and mischief-making, till at last she withers up too; that's one comfort."

Ernest had been listening with great amusement to Dorothy's views. He had no idea that she took such matters into her shrewd consideration.

"I heard a girl say the other day that, on the whole, most women preferred to become old maids," he said.

"Then she told fibs; they don't. It isn't natural that they should, that is, if they care for anybody. Just think, there are more than ten hundred thousand of our charming sisterhood in these islands, and more women being born every day! Ten hundred thousand restless, unoccupied, disgusted, loveless women! It is simply awful to think of. I wonder they don't breed a revolution. If they were beautiful they would."

He laughed again.

"Do you know what remedy Mazooku would apply to this state of affairs?"

"No."

"The instant adoption of polygamy. There are no unmarried women among the Natal Zulus, and they as a class are extremely happy."

Dorothy shook her head.

"It wouldn't do here; it would be too expensive."

"I say, Doll, you spoke just now of our 'charming sisterhood'; you are rather young to consider yourself an old maid. Do you want to become one?"

"Yes," she said, sharply.

"Then you don't care for anybody, eh?"

She blushed up furiously.

"What business is that of yours, I should like to know?" she answered.

"Well, Doll, not much. But will you be angry with me if I say something?"

"I suppose you can say what you like."

"Yes; but will you listen?"

"If you speak I cannot help hearing."

"Well then, Doll—now don't be angry, dear."

"O Ernest, how you aggravate me! Can't you get it out and have done with it?"

"All right, Doll, I'll steam straight ahead this time. It is this. I have sometimes been vain enough to think that you cared a little about me, Doll, although I am as blind as a bat. I want to ask you if it is true. You must tell me plain, Doll, because I cannot see your eyes to learn the truth from them."

She turned quite pale at his words, and her eyes rested upon his blind orbs with a look of unutterable tenderness. So it had came at last.

"Why do you ask me that question, Ernest? Whether or no I care for you I am very sure you do not care for me."

"You are not quite right there, Doll, but I will tell you why I ask it; it is not out of mere curiosity.

"You know all the history of my life, Doll, or at least most of it. You know how I loved Eva, and gave her all that a foolish youngster can give to a weak woman—gave it in such a way that I can never have it back again. Well, she deserted me; I have lost her. The best happiness of my life has been wrecked beyond redemption; that is a fact that must be accepted as well as the fact of my blindness. I am physically and morally crippled, and certainly in no fit state to ask a woman to marry me on the ground of my personal advantages. But if, my dear Doll, you should, as I have sometimes thought, happen to care about anything so worthless then, you see, the affair assumes a different aspect."

(To be continued.)

A Thieves' Supper.

A select company of 150 thieves sat down to supper in Glasgow the other night. Each guest was provided with a ticket with the inscription:

ADMIT BEARER
to
A SUPPER
Of Beef Steak Pie and Plum Pudding,
SPECIALLY FOR THIEVES,
On Thursday Evening, 17th February, at 6.30 o'clock, in Tolbooth Hall, 10 High street.

This supper is only for men who have been convicted of theft.

NED WRIGHT
(From London),
Who was himself a Convicted Burglar and Prize Fighter, will make some interesting statements, and, it is hoped, will be able to point out a variety of ways of escape, which have already proved to be a great blessing to others.

As the number is limited to 150, come early and secure your seat.

On the reverse of the card was the following intimation:

Should any wish to enter the hall without being observed they may do so by the back door, entering by Old Exchange court, a few doors nearer the Cross.

The convicts—real and would-be—had to pass under Ned Wright's review, and not a few of them were rejected as impostors. The features of the evening were the want of liquor, the want of speeches, and a performance by Ned Wright's daughter on a violin once belonging to the notorious Charles Peace. The guests seem to have behaved themselves satisfactorily, and had proper respect for the knives, forks and spoons, as one of the onlookers remarked at the end of the feast that "a better ordered congregation could not have been found in a West End church."—*St. James' Gazette.*

How He Settled the Quarrel.

John Groat is said to have come from Holland to Caithness, Scotland, in 1439; with him came his brothers. They owned land in the Caithness, and increased and multiplied until there were eight families. Once a year they all met in the first house they had built. At one meeting the question of precedence was raised, and there was almost a fight. John O'Groats, as the Scotch called him, who seems to have had the most level head of them all, settled the matter temporarily then, and said that next year he would settle it finally. When the time for the next meeting came John O'Groats had built an eight-sided house with eight doors and windows; in the middle of the house he put a round table. By this means all struggles for precedence were avoided.—*New York Sun.*

Resurrection of the Hittites.

Capt. Conder, of the Palestine Exploration Expedition, after the labor of four years, has succeeded in deciphering and translating the Hittite inscriptions, which have hitherto excited and tormented the inquisitiveness of Orientalists. Ten principal texts are known; and he has interpretated them all. They have been found chiefly at Carchemish, Hamath and Aleppo, though Asia Minor at large has traces of the class scattered about it. It is a fresh and grand stage in the astonishing recent process of resurrection of a dead and for gotten people.—*London Truth.*

Friendly Cynicism.

Treat your friends as you treat your corns. When troublesome, cut 'em.

Friends are like flies. If you have a bald place they settle on it.

Never offer to post a letter for a friend. The accidental dropping of a letter may change friend into fiend.

The dog is called the friend of man. This is because he can't eat man, and man won't eat him.

Florist Leander Brown, of Madison, N.J., is the proud parent of triplets—two boys and a girl. They were christened Grover, Cleveland, and Frances.

Talmage says that men who sing and whistle cannot have much evil in their hearts. Bet him a new hat that the warden of any state prison will give him statistics to knock him out on his assertion.—*Detroit Free Press.*

The gold brick swindlers are beginning to find victims even in the land of gold. Two of them recently did a Los Angeles real estate agent out of $1,700 by the threadbare scheme.