AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER I.

One evening of late summer, before the present century had reached its thirtieth year, a young man and woman, the latter carrying a child, were approaching the large village of Weydon-Priors on foot. They were plainly but not ill clad, though the thick hoar of dust which had accumulated on their shoes and garments from an obviously long journey lent a disadvantageous shabbiness to their appearance just now.

The man was of fine figure, swarthy, and stern in aspect; and he showed in profile a facial angle so slightly inclined as to be almost perpendicular. He wore a short jacket of brown corduroy, newer than the remainder of his suit, which was a fustian waistcoat with white horn buttons, breechers of the same, tanned leggings, and a straw hat overlaid with black glazed canvas. At his back he carried by a looped strap a rush basket, from which protruded at one end the crutch of a hay-knife, a wimble for hay-bonds being also visible in the aperture. His measured springless walk was the walk of the skilled countryman as distinct from the desultory shamble of the general laborer; while in the turn and plant of each foot there was, further, a dogged and cynical indifference, personal to himself, showing itself even in the regularly interchanging fustian folds, now in the left leg, now in the right, as he paced along.

What was really peculiar, however, in this couple's progress, and would have attracted the attention of any casual observer otherwise disposed to overlook them, was the perfect silence they preserved. They walked side by side in such a way as to suggest afar off the low, easy, confidential chat of people full of reciprocity; but on closer view it could be discerned that the man was reading, or pretending to read, a ballad-sheet which he kept before his eyes with some difficulty by the hand that was passed through the basket-strap. Whether this apparent cause were the real cause, or whether it were an assumed one to escape an intercourse that would have been irksome to him, nobody but himself could have said precisely; but his taciturnity was unbroken, and the woman enjoyed no society whatever from his presence. Virtually she walked the highway alone, save for the child she bore. Sometimes the man's bent elbow almost touched her shoulder, for she kept as close to his side as was possible without actual contract; but she seemed to have no idea of taking his arm, nor he of offering it; and far from exhibiting surprise at his ignoring silence she appeared to receive it as a natural thing. If any word at all was uttered by the little group it was an occasional whisper of the woman to the child—a tiny girl in short clothes and blue boots of knitted yarn—and the murmured babble of the child in reply.

The chief—almost the only—attraction of the young woman's face was its mobility. When she looked down sideways to the girl she became pretty, and even handsome, particularly that in the action her features caught slantwise the rays of the strongly colored sun, which made transparencies of her eyelids and nostrils, and set fire on her lips. When she plodded on in the shade of the hedge, silently thinking, she had the hard, half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps, fair-play. The first phase was the work of nature, the second propably of civilization.

That the man and woman were husband and wife, and the parents of the girl in arms, there could be little doubt. No other than such relationship would have accounted for the atmosphere of domesticity which the trio carried along with them like a nimbus as they moved down the road.

The wife mostly kept her eyes fixed ahead, though with little interest—the scene for that matter being one that might have been matched at almost any spot in any country in England at this time of the year; a road neither straight nor crooked, neither level nor hilly, bordered by hedges, trees, and other vegetation, which had entered the blackened-green stage of colour that the doomed leaves pass through on their way to dingy, and yellow, and red. The grassy margin of the bank, and the nearest hedgerow boughs, were powdered by the dust that had been stirred over them by hasty vehicles, the same dust as it lay on the road deadening their footfalls like a carpet; and this, with the aforesaid total absence of conversation, allowed every extraneous sound to be heard.

For a long time there was none, beyond the voice of a weak bird singing a trite old evening song that might doubtless have been heard on the hill at the same hour, and with the self-same trills, quavers, and breves, at any sunset of that season for centuries untold. But as they approached the village sundry distant shouts and rattles reached their ears from some elevated spot in that direction, as yet screened from view by foliage. When the outlying houses of Weydon-Priors could just be descried, the family group was met by a turnip-hoer with his hoe on his shoulder, and his dinner-bag suspended from it. The reader promptly glanced up.

"Any trade doing here?" he asked phlegmatically, designating the village in his van by a wave of the broadsheet. And thinking the laborer did not understand him, he added, "Anything in the hay-trussing line?"

The turnip-hoer had already begun shaking his head. "Why, save the man, what wisdom's in fashion that 'a should come to Weydon for a job of that sort this time o' year?"

"Then is there any house to let—a small new cottage just a builded, or such like?" asked the other.

The pessimist still maintained a negative; "Pulling down is more the nater of Weydon. There were five houses cleared away last year, and three this; and the fokes nowhere to go—no, not so much as a thatched hurdle; that's the way o' Weydon-Priors."

The hay-trusser, which he obviously was, nodded with some superciliousness. Looking towards the village, he continued, "There is something going on here, however, is there not?"

"Ay. 'Tis Fair-Day. Though what you hear now is little more than the clatter and scurry of getting away the money o' children and fools, for the real business is done earlier than this. I've been working within sound o't all day, but I didn't go up—not I. 'Twas no business of mine."

The trusser and his family proceeded on his way, and soon entered the fair-field, which showed standing-places and pens where many hundreds of horses and sheep had been exhibited and sold in the forenoon, but were now in great part taken away. At present, as their informant had observed, but little real business remained on hand, the chief being the sale by auction of a few inferior animals, that could not otherwise be disposed of, and had been absolutely refused by the better class of traders, who came and went early. Yet the crowd was denser now then during the morning hours, the frivolous contingent of visitors, including journeymen out for a holiday, a stray soldier or two home on furlough, village shopkeepers, and the like, having latterly flocked in; persons whose activities found a congenial field among the peep-shows, toy-stands, wax-works, inspired monsters, disinterested medical men who travelled for the public good, thimble-riggers, nick-nack vendors, and readers of Fate.

Neither of our pedestrians had much heart for these things, and they looked around for a refreshment tent among the many which dotted the down. Two, which stood nearest to them in the ochreous haze of expiring sunlight, seemed almost equally inviting. One was formed of new, milk-hued canvas, and bore red flags on its summit; it announced 'Good Home-brewed Beer, Ale, and Cyder." The other was less new, a little iron stove-pipe came out of it at the back, and in front appeared the placard, "Good Furmity Sold Hear." The man mentally weighed the two inscriptions, and inclined to the former tent.

"No—no—the other one," said the woman. "I always like furmity; and so does Elizabeth-Jane; and so will you. It is nourishing after a long hard day."

"I've never tasted it," said the man. However, he gave way to her representations, and they entered the furmity-booth forthwith,

A rather numerous company appeared within, seated at the low narrow tables that ran down the tent on each side. At the upper end stood a stove, containing a charcoal fire, over which hung a large three-legged crock, sufficiently polished round the rim to show that it was made of bell-metal. A haggish creature of about fifty presided, in a white apron, which, as it threw an air of respectability over her as far as it extended, was made so wide as to reach nearly round her waist. She slowly stirred the contents of the pot. The dull scrape of her large spoon was audible throughout the tent as she thus kept from burning the mixture of corn in the grain, milk, raisins, currants, and what not that composes the antiquated slop in which she dealt. Vessels holding the separate ingredients stood on a white-clothed table of boards and trestles close by.

The young man and woman ordered a basin each of the mixture, steaming hot, and sat down to consume it at leisure. This was very well so far, for furmity, as the woman had said, was nourishing, and as proper a food as could be obtained within the four seas; though, to those not accustomed to it, the grains of wheat, swollen as large as lemon-pips, which floated on its surface might have a deterrent effect at first.

But there was more in that tent than met the cursory glance; and the man, with the instinct of a perverse character, scented it quickly. After a mincing attack on his bowl, he watched the hag's proceedings from the corner of his eye, and saw the game she played. He winked to her, and passed up his basin in reply to her nod; when she took a bottle from under the table, slily measured out a quantity of its contents, and tipped the same into the man's furmity. The liquor poured in was rum. The man as slily sent back money in payment.

He found the concoction, thus strongly laced, much more to his satisfaction than it had been in its natural state. His wife had observed the proceedings with much uneasiness, but he persuaded her to have hers laced also, and she agreed to a milder allowance after some misgiving.

The man finished his basin, and called for another, the rum being signalled for in yet stronger proportion. The effect of it was soon apparent in his manner, and his wife but too sadly perceived that in strenuously steering off the rocks of the licensed liquor-tent she had only got into Maelstrom depths here amongst smugglers.

The child began to prattle impatiently, and the wife more than once said to her husband, "Michael, how about our lodging? You know we may have trouble in getting it if we don't go soon."

But he turned a deaf ear to these bird-like chirpings. He talked loud to the company. The child's black eyes, after slow, round, ruminating gazes at the candles when they were lighted, fell together; then they opened, then shut again, and she slept.

(To Be Continued.)

CAPITAL UNDER THE SEA.

Asked once what was the capital lying, not lost, but in the form of productive capital, at the bottom of the sea, Sir John Pender replied; "About £41,000,000. There are 11 cables across the Atlantic, belonging to five companies, costing nearly £14,750,000, but the dividend paid, owing to competition, is only 1 per cent. The three companies, Eastern, Eastern Extension and South African, have together a mileage of 51,325, and the aggregate capital is over £10,000,000, on which dividends of from 5 to 7 per cent. have been paid."

A REMARKABLE CATCH.

A Fish Story Bearing the Appearance of Truth.

Mr. Jones had come home very late after a day and a good part of a night on the river. He woke very late the next day and had a lumpy feeling about his head and an indistinct recollection of the manner in which he got home.

"Wonder if my wife is onto me," was his first thought, and it was the feeling that he must keep up appearances before his family that induced him to shake off his disposition to remain in bed.

The countenance with which his wife greeted him was not reassuring.

"I congratulate you on the unusually good luck you had on your fishing excursion," were her first words.

Mr. Jones was not sure whether she meant to be sarcastic or not; and he had not the slightest idea whether he had brought home any fish, but on the chance that he might have done so he answered:

"Yes, luck was pretty fair."

"Fair! Why, Mr. Jones did you count the number of your fish?"

"No," said Mr. Jones, weakly, "I didn't; did you?"

"I did. There were just 436 of them."

Mr. Jones' eyes stuck out. Could it be possible? Yet it would not do for him to show surprise. Still, there was some elation in his voice when he said:

"Beauties, aren't they?"

"Oh, yes, they're pretty enough," said Mrs. Jones, "but why did you go to bed without taking your fish out of your pockets?"

"Out of my pockets!" echoed Mr. Jones in amazement.

"Yes," said Mrs. Jones, sternly. "Is it possible you don't know what you did bring home? Look here!"

And, taking him into the kitchen, she showed him a pan heaped full of dead minnows.

"Where did those come from?" gasped Mr. Jones, as he looked at them.

"I found them," replied Mrs. Jones, "in the pockets of the clothes you wore yesterday. Every pocket was stuffed full. I suppose they are your catch. Shall I have them fried for your breakfast?"

"It's a trick of those confounded boys," was the only explanation Mr. Jones could give, as he seized his hat and fled from the house.

THE GREAT KRUPP WORKS.

It is the Largest Establishment of the Kind in the World.

More than 1,250,000 tons of coal are consumed yearly by the famous Krupp Works at Essen, Westphalia, commenced in 1810 by Peter Friedrich Krupp, and now in the possession of Herr Friedrich Krupp, member of the Reichstag. The establishment consists, according to the Eisen Zeitung, of two steel works with fiteen Bessemer converters; four steel works with Siemens Martin open hearth furnaces; iron steel and brass foundries; puddling, melting, reheating and annealing furnaces; draw benches; a hardening and tempering department; file manufactory; rolling mill for plates, rails and tires; railway spring and wheel manufactory; steam hammers, forges, axle turning shop, boiler shop, engineering and repair shops. Besides the above and many other departments at Essen, connected with the making of cannons, there are steel works at Annen, in Westphalia, three colliers in Westphalia, besides participation in several others; 547 iron mines in Germany, various iron mines at Bilbao, in Spain; four iron works, including one at Duisburg, one at Engers, one at Neuweid and one at Sahn: various quarries of clay, sandstone, etc.; four steamers, and artillery ground at Meppen, Hanover.

The property owned extends from 974 hectares; and the number of hands employed in the mines and steel works is 25,301. There are altogether 1,500 furnaces of various kinds, 3,000 engines and machine tools, 22 roll trains, 111 steam hammers, two hydraulic presses, 263 stationary boilers, 421 steam engines, representing together a force of 33,139 horse power, and 430 cranes including travelers, having a collective lifting power of 4,662 tons.

The total length of the shafting is 8.8 kiloms (5 1-2 miles), and that of railways, standard and small gage, 85 kiloms. (53 miles), worked by 32 regular trains, with 33 locomotives. The annual consumption of coal amounts to 1,253,161 tons, and that of lighting gas to 12,000,000 cubic meters, while there are 573 arc and 1,804 incandescent electric lamps.

A HUNDRED MILLION SUNS.

A peep into the heavens through a telescope ia a peep into the very depths of mystery. With such an instrument one may gaze upon 100,000,000 stars, each of them a burning, blazing sun! From what little we know of creation we cannot but believe that each of these suns is giving light and heat to a train of planets, just in the same manner that our sun gives light and life to his own little flock of worlds. Beyond those 100,000,000 suns there may be hundreds of millions more. Thus they may continue "system after system and worlds without end." Verily, we may say with Richter's dream man who was taken on a voyage by an angel through the depths of space: "End there is none, neither was there a beginning."

AMBITIOUS.

I wish John, that you would get nominated for some office.

Why?

Then all the papers would print my pictures and describe my gowns as they do with that detestable Mrs. Thomson, whose husbnad is running for something.

HEALTH.

COD-LIVER OIL.

Cod-liver oil for medicinal purposes should be a perfectly limpid yellow thick oil, and while having the peculiar, characteristic smell and taste, should be absolutely free from rancidity.

Like all fatty substances, cod-liver oil has a tendency to cause formation of fat in the body, and so to improve the quality of the blood. But it is a very complex substance, and the iodine, phosphoric acid, and other substances which it contains, may account in part for the remarkable effects which its uses nearly always produces.

Cod-liver oil is useful, and is extensively employed in almost all kinds of chronic disease attended by wasting. Sufferers from scrofula in its various forms, from tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, chronic rheumatism or general debility, referable to misery, overwork and underfeeding, are all likely to be benefited by a persevering course of cod-liver oil. Then in combination with creosote, it often exerts a positively wonderful influence in consumption, especially in conjunction with change of climate and intelligent nursing.

In all cases where the administration of cod-liver oil seems desirable, the point to be first determined is the attitude of the patient toward it. Can he take it with impunity, and, if so, can he digest it? And are there no conditions, such as diarrhoea, hemorrhage or much fever, any one of which would prohibit its use?

Great care must be used in forcing the oil upon sensitive or deranged stoamchs; but by ingenious manipulation it can be made palatable even in such cases, provided there is no other objection to its use. Sometimes a piece of salt taken into the mouth just before the oil, and another just after it, will obviate the difficulty.

Various emulsions containing aromatic waters, yolks of eggs, or equal parts of glycerine and a drop or two of almond-oil, may all be experimented with.

Sometimes it is necessary to begin with a single small dose daily, gradually increasing the amount as the person becomes habituated to it.

In infants, or in cases of marked emaciation and weakness, in which it would be difficulty to give the oil through the mouth, it may be rubbed on the abdomen and chest.

REST CURE.

A distinguished American physician has devised and elaborated a method for the relief of a large class of persons who, while suffering from no apparent organic trouble, have fallen into a condition which is more or less alarming. In nearly all such instances careful study reveals the fact that owing to some severe strain the vital forces have been exhausted, leaving the body to perform its various offices.

Under this method of treatment, the rest cure, as it may be called, it is necessary that the patient be kept in bed from three to six weeks, according to the nature of the case. The room should be bright and airy, and easy of ventilation and cleaning. Adjoin- it should be a smaller room for the attendant or nurse, who with the doctor is to be the patient's sole companion. Even the members of his own family are not to be admitted, since visitors of all kinds necessitate the physical and mental effort of conversation.

In severe cases the patient must be fed, and on no account should be allowed to sit up. All reading should be done by the nurse, and if the patient be a woman the hair should be dressed by the nurse.

Two measures are necessary to take the place of the ordinary daily exercise—massage and electricity. Massage may be employed from half an hour to an hour every morning and afternoon. Even the face and scalp should not be neglected. Once a day every muscle of the body should be gently stimulated with the electric current. Neither of these measures calls for the expenditure of an ounce of the patient's nerve force, and at the same time the general nutrition is increased.

The remainder of the rest cure consists in a carefully prepared and systematic course of feeding, combined with bathing and other hygienic measures. The benefits to be derived from this part of the programme are to be found in the regularity and the simplicity of the daily living. A defininte hourly scheme must be arranged and strictly adhered to.

Very few if any drugs are needed to supplement the treatment by the rest cure, but entire charge of the patient should be left to a competent physician.

NOON AS NATURE'S DINING HOUR.

Persons who keep close watch on themselves are of the opinion that the hour of noon is the most critical period of life. At that time the human frame undergoes serious changes. The stomach has dispatched the morning meal and sends scouting parties out in search of another. The eyes and brain are on the alert, and there is a sort of allgoneness pervading the anatomy that sharpens the facilities and puts a new edge on the teeth. It is nature's dining time, and everything about the healthy man or woman is attuned to the demolition or enjoyment of what is called a "good square meal." Those who pay heed to the prompting of nature at this divine hour have their reward in good appetite, good temper and excellent digestion, which is conducive to all the good that flesh is heir to. But those who, following the imperious dictates of fashion, defer the hour of dining until all natural longings are dead, and have to be resurrected by adventitious aids, lay a train of evils and discomforts which sooner or later become the plague of their lives. It is a well-known fact that the noon diners are healthier and stronger, and have better chances for long life than others.

MEDICAL VALUE OF ICE.

To the already multitudinous methods of utilizing ice in therapeutical practice, Dr. Barthold Brae, a German physician is now credited with its successful use for inducing respiration by placing the article in contact with the lips, the method consisting in rubbing slowly with a piece of ice the mucous membrane of the lips and the mouth, the rhythm of the motion corresponding as much as possible to that of normal respiration. In the cases observed by Dr. Brae the result was a return of respiration, very strong at first, but with the continued application of the ice becoming very regular, quiet and deep. The ice used in this way is said, moreover, to have a general sedative effect, and this quieting action has also been employed with success in the treatment of cerebral troubles. A Vienna physician is said to have obtained equally favorable results with this treatment in cases of asphyxia.

IS WORKING HIS PASSAGE HOME.

Son of a London Banker Acting as Stoker on the Umbria.

John Henry Swales, the son of a London banker, sailed from New York on the Umbria the other day for Liverpool. His name was not on the passenger list, but the chief engineer has the following entry on his books: "J. H. Swales, English, 29 years old, stoker; shipped Aug. 21, 1896." Mr. Swales, at this moment, is in the fireroom of the Umbria, stripped to the waist, shoveling coal into the fiery maw of the vessel's boilers. This is interesting chiefly because, when Swales crossed the Atlantic before it was as a cabin passenger on the Lucania. This was in April last, and Swales with a pocketful of money and a light heart, was coming back to join his wife. She is a niece of the late Sir Philip Egerton, bart., the head of an old Cheshire family, and of Mayor Egerton, who represented Chester in parliament for many years.

This was the beginning of the end for Swales. He landed in New York and repaired to the apartments where he had left his wife. She had gone, leaving no word behind. The housekeeper could tell the husband nothing except that Mrs. Swales had been joined, soon after his departure, by an elderly woman whom she addressed as "my lady." They had gone away together. It develops that the woman's marriage with Swales was frowned on by her family, and that all efforts to effect a reconciliation failed. Thereafter things went from bad to worse with Swales. His money gave out, and, for the first time in his life, he learned what it was to want for food as well as shelter. He was able only to procure an introduction to the chief engineer of the Umbria. This officer was shipping two extra stokers for the homeward voyage. He gave one of these hard posts to Swales, who was glad to get it and say "Thank you," hat in hand. And so he goes home, working for the first time in his life.

WHAT BLIND MEN DO.

A Blind Bicycle Rider—Founded a Museum—Vidal, the Sculptor.

One is sometimes almost inclined to doubt if seeing is, after all, so necessary a sense as it seems to us who enjoy it. Blind people can, if they will, do so many things which we are apt to regard as reserved for men and women with eyes!

One of these is a blind gentleman of Paris, who has taken to riding the bicycle. He does not, indeed, attempt to ride entirely alone, but is accompanied by a friend, who touches him or his wheel from time to time in such a way as to assure him that he is getting in no one's way, and that his way is clear.

Other blind persons have done things as remarkable as this. M. Edgar Guilbeau, a blind man who founded a museum for the blind, was able to ride a horse, swim in the river, go about alone through the streets of Paris, and even to explore without a guide through the precipitous mountain region about Cauterets, in the Pyrenees. He also wrote and published two volumes of poetry—not so remarkable an achievement for a blind person, since poetry and blindness are often found in company.

A still more remarkable blind man was Vidal, the sculptor, who, indeed, learned his art while seeing, and lost his sight at the age of twenty-eight. He was not discouraged by this calamity, but became a successful sculptor of animals. He was so proud of his triumph over misfortune that he signed all his works, "Vidal, aveugle"—Vidal, the blind man.

John Marchant Mundy, an American blind sculptor, is the author of a statue of Washington Irving, at Tarrytown, N .Y., which has been much admired.

LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS.

Life Raft Which is to Take the Place of Boats in Shipwreck.

An innovation in life saving appliances for seagoing ships is the bridge life raft. This raft, which costs $2,250, and weighs six tons, replaces 10 boats, costing $7,000 each, and weighing with fittings 35 tons. The raft would carry the same number of men as the boats. One of these rafts fitted to a vessel 48 feet beam is 21 feet long and 3 feet deep, and forms the top of the bridge, the raft's deck being the deck of the bridge. The raft, which is built of steel, carries 400 men, and in addition to being divided into 60 water-tight compartments, is provided with air-tight lockers for water, provisions, signals, etc. The nominal time occupied in launching the raft is 45 seconds, although in a recent test on board an English warship, it was launched, with 200 men, somewhat under that time. Unlike boats under davits, this raft will not go down with the ship, for if there is not time to launch it, the movement of a pair of levers allows it to simply and automatically float off as the vessel founders, and if she has a list on the raft launches itself clear.

RIVER THAT PETRIFIES.

Extraordinary qualities are possessed by the River Tinto, in Spain. It hardens and petrifies the sand of its bed, and if a stone falls in the stream and alights upon another, in a few months they unite and become one stone Fish cannot live in its waters.