AS GOOD AS GOLD.

"Well, he's a friend of mine, and I'm a friend of his—or if we are not, what are we? 'Od send, if I've not been his friend, who has, I should like to know? Didn't he come here without a sound shoe to his voot? Didn't I keep him here—help him to a living? Didn't I help him to money, or whatever he wanted? I stuck out for no terms—I said "Name your own price." I'd have shared my last crust with that young fellow at one time, I liked him so well. And now he's defied me! But d— him, I'll have a tussle with him now—at fair buying and selling, mind—at fair buying and selling! And if I can't overbid such a stripling as he, then I'm not worth a varden. We'll show that we know our business as well as one here and there."

His friends of the Corporation did not specially respond. Henchard was less popular now then he has been when, nearly two years before, they had voted him to the chief magistracy on account of his amazing energy. While they had collectively profited by this quality of the corn-factor's, they had been made to wince individually on more than one occasion. So he went out of the hall and down the street alone.

Reaching home he seemed to recollect something with a sour satisfaction. He called Elizabeth-Jane. Seeing how he looked when she entered she appeared alarmed.

"Nothing to find fault with,' he said, observing her concern. "Only I want to caution you, my dear. That man Farfrae—it is about him. I've seen him talking to you two or three times—he danced with 'ee at the rejoicings, and came home with 'ee. Now, now, no blame to you. But just hearken: Have you made him any foolish promise? Gone the least bit beyond sniff and snaff at all?"

"No. I have promised him nothing."

"Good. All's well that ends well. I particularly wish you not to see him again."

"Very well, sir."

'You promise?"

She hesitated for a moment and then said, "Yes, if you much wish it."

"I do. He's an enemy to our house."

When she had gone he sat down, and wrote in heavy hand to Farfrae thus:

"Sir—I make request that henceforth you and my stepdaughter be as strangers to each other. She on her part has promised to welcome no more addresses from you; and I trust therefore, you will not attempt to force them upon her.

H. Henchard."

One would almost have supposed Henchard to have had policy to see that no better modus vivendi could be arrived at with Farfrae than by encouraging him to become his son-in-law. But such a scheme for buying over a rival had nothing to recommend it to the Mayor's headstrong faculties. With all domestic finesse of that kind he was hopelessly at variance. Loving a man or hating him, his diplomacy was as wrongheaded as a buffalo's, and his wife had not ventured to suggest the course which she, for many reasons, would have welcomed gladly.

Meanwhile, Donald Farfrae had opened the gates of commerce on his own account at a spot on Dummerford Hill—as far as possible from Henchard's stores, and with every intention of keeping clear of his former friend and employer's customers. There was, it seemed to the younger man, room for both of them and to spare. The town was small, but the corn and hay-trade was proportionately large, and with his native sagacity he saw honest opportunity for a share of it. So determined was he to do nothing which should seem like trade-antagonism to the Mayor that he refused his first customer—a large farmer of good repute—because Henchard and this man had dealt together within the preceding three months.

"He was once my friend," said Farfrae, "and it's not for me to take business from him. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I cannot hurt the trade of a man who's been so kind to me."

In spite of this praiseworthy course the Scotchman's trade increased. Whether it were that his northern energy was an overmastering force among the easy-going Wessex worthies, or whether it was sheer luck, the fact remained that whatever he touched he prospered in. Like Jacob in Padan-aram, he would no sooner humbly limit himself to the ringstraked-and-spotted exceptions of trade, than the ringstraked-and-spotted would multiply and prevail.

But most probably luck had little to do with it. Character is Fate, said Novalis, and Farfrae's character was just the reverse of Henchard's, who might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described—as a vehement, gloomy being, who had quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him on a better way.

Farfrae duly received the request to discontinue attentions to Elizabeth-Jane. His acts of that kind had been so slight that the request was almost superfluous. Yet he had felt a considerable interest in her, and after some cogitation he decided that it would be as well to enact no Romeo part just then—for the young girl's own sake no less than his own. Thus the incipient attachment was stifled down.

A time came when, avoid collision with his former friend as he might, Farfrae was compelled, in sheer self-defence, to close with Henchard in mortal commercial combat. He could no longer parry the fierce attacks of the latter by simple avoidance. As soon as their war of prices began everybody was interested, and some few guessed the end. It was, in some degree, Northern insight matched against Southern doggedness—the dirk against the cudgel—and Henchard's weapon was one which, if it did not deal ruin at the first or second stroke, left him afterwards well-night at his antagonist's mercy.

Almost every Saturday they encountered each other amid the crowd of farmers which thronged about the market-place in the weekly course of their business. Donald was always ready, and even anxious, to say a few friendly words; but the Mayor invariably gazed stormfully past him, like one who had endured and lost on his account, and could in no sense forgive the wrong; nor did Farfrae's snubbed manner of perplexity at all appease him. The large farmers, corn-merchants, millers, auctioneers, and others had each an official stall in the corn-market room, with their name painted thereon; and when to the familiar series of "Henchard," "Everdene," "Darton," and so on, was added one inscribed "Farfrae," in staring new letters, Henchard was stung into bitterness; like Bellerophon, he wandered away from the crowd, cankered in soul.

From that day Donald Farfrae's name was seldom mentioned in Henchard's house. If at breakfast or dinner Elizabeth-Jane's mother inadvertently alluded to her favorite's movements, the girl would implore her by a look to be silent; and her husband would say, "What—are you, too, my enemy?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

There came a shock which had been foreseen for some time by Elizabeth, as the box-passenger foresees the approaching jerk from some channel across the highway.

Her mother was ill—too unwell to leave her room. Henchard, who treated her kindly, except in moments of irritation, sent at once for the richest, busiest doctor, whom he supposed to be the best. Bedtime came, and they burnt a light all night. In a day or two she rallied.

Elizabeth, who had been staying up, did not appear at breakfast on the second morning, and Henchard sat down alone. He was startled to see a letter for him from Jersey in a writing he knew too well, and had expected least to behold again. He took it up in his hands and looked at it as a picture, a vision a vista of past enactments; and then he read it as an unimportant finale to conjecture.

The writer said that she at length perceived ho wimpossible it would be for any further communications to proceed between them now that his remarriage had taken place. That such reunion had been the only straightforward course open to him she was bound to admit. "On calm reflection, therefore," she went on, "I quite forgive you for landing me in such a dilemma, remembering that you concealed nothing before our ill-advised acquaintance; and that you really did set before me in your grim way the fact of there being a certain risk in loving you, slight as it seemed to be after eighteen years of silence on your wife's part. I thus look upon the whole as a misfortune of mine, and not a fault of yours.

"So that, Michael, I must ask you to overlook those letters with which I pestered you day after day in the heat of my feelings. They were written whilst I thought your conduct to me cruel; but now I know more particulars of the position you were in I see how inconsiderate my reproaches were.

"Now you will, I am sure, perceive that the one condition which will make any future happiness psosible tor me, is that the past connection between our lives be kept secret outside this isle. Speak of it I know you will not; and I can trust you not to write of it. One safeguard more remains to be mentioned—that no writings of mine, or trifling articles belonging to me, should be left in your possession through neglect or forgetfulness. To this end may I request you to return to me any such you may have, particularly the letters written in the first abandonment of feeling.

"For the handsome sum you forwarded to me as a plaster to the wound, I heartily thank you."

"I am now on my way to Bristol, to see my only relative. She is rich, and I hope will do something for me. I shall return through Casterbridge and Budmouth, where I shall take the steamboat. Can you meet me with the letters and other trifles? I shall be in the coach that changes horses at the Stag Hotel at half-past five Wednesday evening; I shall be wearing a Paisley shawl with a red centre, and thus may easily be found. I should prefer this plan of receiving them to having them sent. I remain still, yours ever,

"Lucetta."

Henchard breathed heavily. "Poor thing—better you had not known me! Upon my heart and soul if ever I should be left in a position to carry out that marriage with thee, I ought to do it—I ought to do it, indeed!"

The contingency that he had in his mind, was, of course, the death of Mrs. Henchard.

As requested, he sealed up Lucetta's letters, and put the parcel aside till the day she had appointed; this plan of returning them by hand being apparently a little ruse of the young lady's for exchanging a word or two with him on past times. He would have preferred not to see her; but deeming that there could be no great harm in acquiescing thus far, he went at dusk and stood opposite the coach-office.

The evening was chilly, and the coach was late. Henchard crossed over to it while the horses was being changed; but there was no Lucetta inside or out. Concluding that something had happened to modify her arrangements, he gave the matter up and went home, not without a sense of relief.

Meanwhile Mrs. Henchard was weakbening visibly. She could not go out of doors any more. One day, after much thinking which seemed to distress her, she said she wanted to write something. A desk was put upon her bed with pen and paper, and at her request she was left alone. She remained writing for a short time, folded her paper carefully, called Elizabeth-Jane to bring a taper and wax, and then, still refusing assistance, sealed up the sheet, directed it, and locked it in her desk. She had directed it in these words:—

"Mr. Michael Henchard. Not to be opened till Elizabeth-Jane's wedding-day."

The latter sat up with her mother to the utmost of her strength night after night. To learn to take the universe seriously there is no quicker way than to watch—to be a "waker," as the country-people call it. Between the hours at which the last toss-pot went by and the first sparrow shook himself, the silence in Casterbridge— barring the rare sound of the watchman—was broken in Elizabeth's ear only by the timepiece in the bed-room ticking frantically against the clock on the stairs; ticking harder and harder till it seemed to clang like a gong; and all this while the subtle-souled girl asking herself why she was born, why sitting in a room, and blinking at the candle; why things around her had taken the shape they wore in preference to every other possible shape. Why they stared at her so helplessly, as if waiting for the touch of some wand that should release them from terrestrial constraint; what that chaos called consciousness, which spun in her at this moment like a top, tended to, and began in. Her eyes fell together; she was awake, yet she was asleep.

A word from her mother roused her. Without preface, and as the continuation of a scene already progressing in her mind, Mrs. Henchard said, "You remember the note sent to you and Mr. Farfrae—asking you to meet some one in Dummerford Barton—and that you thought it was a trick to make fools of you?"

"Yes."

"It was not to make fools of you—it was done to bring you together. 'Twas I did it."

"Why?" said Elizabeth, with a start.

"I—wanted you to marry Mr. Farfrae."

"Oh, mother!" Elizabeth-Jane bent down her head so much that she looked quite into her own lap. But as her mother did not go on, she said, "What reason?"

"Well, I had a reason. 'Twill out one day. I wish it could have been in my time! But there—nothing is as you wish it. Henchard hates him."

"Perhaps they'll be friends again," murmured the girl.

"I don't know—I don't know." After this her mother was silent, and dozed; and she spoke on the subject no more.

Some little time later on, Farfrae was passing Henchard's house on a Sunday morning, when he observed that the blinds were all down. He rang the bell so softly that it only sounded a single full note and a small one; and then he was informed that Mrs. Henchard was dead—just dead—that very hour.

At the town-pump there were gathered a few old inhabitants, who came there for water whenever they had, as at present, spare time to fetch it, because it was purer from that original fount than from their own wells. Mrs. Cuxsom, who had been standing there for an indefinite time with her pitcher, was describing the incidents of Mrs. Henchard's death, as she had learnt them from the nurse.

"And she was as white as marble-stone," said Mrs. Cuxsom. "And likewise such a thoughtful woman, too—ah, poor soul—so thoughtful that a' minded every little thing that wanted ending. "Yes," says she, "when I'm gone ,and my last breath's blowed, look in the top drawer o' the chest in the back room by the window, and you'll find all my coffin clothes; a piece of flannel, that's to put under me, and the little piece is to put under my head; and my new stockings for my feet—they are folded alongside, and all my other things. And there's four ounce pennies, the heaviest I could find, a-tied up in bits of linen, for weights—two for my right eye and two for my left," she said. "And when you've used 'em, and my eyes don't open no more, bury the pennies, good souls, and don't ye go spending 'em for I shouldn't like it. And open the windows as soon as I am carried out, and make it as cheerful as you can for my Elizabeth-Jane."

"Ah, poor heart!"

"Well, and Martha did it, and buried the ounce pennies in the garden. But if ye'll believe words, that man Christopher Coney, went and dug 'em up, and spent 'em at the King o' Prussia. "Faith," he said, "why should death deprive life of fourpence? Death's not of such good report that we should respect 'en to that extent," says he."

"'Twas a cannibal deed!" deprecated her listeners.

"Gad, then, I won't quite hae it," said Solomon Longways. "I say it today, and 'tis a Sunday morning, and I wouldn't speak wrongfully for a silver sixpence at such a time. I don't see harm in it. To respect the dead is sound doxology; and I wouldn't sell skellintons—leastwise respectable skellintons—to be varnished for 'natomies, except I were out o' work. But money is scarce, and throats get dry. Why should death deprive life of fourpence? I say there was no treason in it."

"Well, poor soul; she's helpless to hinder that or anything now," answered Mother Cuxsom. "And all her shining keys will be took from her, and her cupboards opened; and things a' didn't wish seen, anybody will see; and her little wishes and ways will be as nothing!"

(To Be Continued.)

RUSSIA WANTS DOCTORS.

There is Only One Doctor to Every Six Thousand Inhabitants There.

There is already some complaint in this country of many of the professions being overcrowded although this country is comparatively young. The supply of doctors is frequently said to be overstocked, but this may be doubted when one considers the great West with its small proportion of medical men to the population. However, if such is the case, there is hope for any struggling young physician who may have looked in vain for a profitable practice in this vicinity. Russia wants doctors and wants them badly. The percentage of medical men to the population there is very small—about one to every 6,000 inhabitants. In one province there are only three medical men to a population of 155,000. It is probably due to this cause the death rate in Russia is the highest in Europe. Here, then, is a chance for young doctors who fail to find a field for their skill. Russians will be very glad to have their services and to pay well for them.

THE GREATEST ZOO.

The Zoological Gardens of the South African Republic are the largest in the world. They consist of about 20 farms in the Lebombo region, guarded by a whole tribe of Kaffirs. Within this area there is, perhaps, every species of wild animal to be found in South Africa. This region is guarded by a special resolution of the Volksraad.

THE HOME.

PREPARING THE FEAST.

It is said that the very sound of these words causes our mouths to water, but it will be very necessary for the housewife to be systematic in her preparations for this event if we would have the dinner a perfect success. It is not our intention to state here the proper methods of serving an elaborate dinner in the most approved style, but to offer suggestions to help the enthusiastic young housekeeper to enjoy to the utmost the delightful responsibility of preparing and presiding over the dinner which is to be served on this day.

This is the day when the best that is in us and about us is brought forward and made the most of. The true Thanksgiving spirit should prevade the home atmosphere, the family, so far as possible, in all its branches should be brought together, the treasured old blue china and antique teaspoons set forth, and the various precious little heirlooms made to serve their different purposes.

As much as possible of the dinner should be prepared before Thanksgiving day. The mince meat should be prepared the week before it is wanted, as it becomes more thoroughly seasoned after standing several days, and it should be made into pies the day before they are used and the pies kept in a cold place until it is time to reheat them before serving. While making the mince pies make enough crust for the pumpkin and all other pies and place this prepared crust in the cellar, and it will be ready to roll out quickly the next morning, when every moment will count.

Have the suet for the pudding chopped the day before and the hard sauce made for it and put in a cool place. The cranberry sauce and that for the pies can also be prepared and ready for use beforehand. The nuts may be cracked the night before, and last, but by no means least, the turkey should be cleaned and stuffed the day before.

This will leave for Thanksgiving morning, first, the pies to be baked, but as the crust is all ready to be rolled out and the cranberries and stewed pumpkin prepared this task can be readily disposed of. Then, when the turkey is in the oven, the pudding and scalloped oysters may be prepared for the steamer and oven respectively. Then the potatoes may be boiled and mashed for the potato croquettes, if they are desired, and the other vegetables prepared early, so that they may be ready when it is time to cook them.

A little forethought and method in preparing such a dinner will usually save hours of work.

AN ELABORATE APRON.

An apron suitable for dressy occasions may be made very elaborate. Fancy tends toward a thick, creamy satin which would be quite an irresistible material for the apron, and its richness would make a plain style preferable to any fussy arrangement. Of satin about twenty-two inches wide you will want three-quarters of a yard for the skirt part, and another three-quarters to cut some bands, a little V-shaped pocket and a small, plain bodice, which, by the way, is merely a square press with the fullness drawn into the waist, on the upper part of the band, whilst the gathers from the skirt are stroked in beneath the lower edge of the said waist-band.

For trimming, have a band an inch wide, outlining the three sides of the bib, and three others two inches in depth going right around the skirt of the apron, while a very short one across the top of the pocket should be of the same width as those on the bodice. Now then for a display of stitchery. Iron on these bands a floral border, of which you can buy a transfer impression by the yard or packet for a few cents, and this you must work in delicate washing silks, carrying out the natural shades of the blossoms you select. Trails of Virginia creeper would make a very suitable pattern, the leaves in hues of crimson, green, yellow and russet brown, with dark veinings, or pale pink dog roses, with tiny sprigs of blue and pink forget-me-nots meandering in and out, would make another pleasant scheme of color.

As the value and beauty of this apron depend on the fineness of the work on the borders, do not adopt the outline stitch, but rather fill up your flowers and leaves thoroughly, using much discretion and taste in the blending of your shades; if, however, you deem this too troublesome a task, you can modify your labor by selecting instead of the floral design, a conventional pattern which might be worked in coral stitch, not outline, as that would be too thin, but the coral stitch on sprays, scrolls and leaves works up very rapidly and effectively. Carry out the design in tones of soft and dark green.

CAPABLE OR INCAPABLE.

Every child is certainly born with an aptitude for something—a talent, as some would call it, and early in life, if circumstances are at all favorable, will in some way manifest it. When a parent notices such a talent it is his duty to educate his child in it. There is nothing harder than for a man to know that he is misplacing his energies. To have longings for another art or trade and to feel that in that only could success be attained is not conducive to either his welfare or happiness. It is only where there is love for the profession chosen as well as an ambition to become proficient in it that success will attend; and without success there is little satisfaction.

Too many parents permit their children to grow up incapable of taking care of themselves. Of such poor incapables there are thousands, and whose fault is it? In other countries the trades are not looked down upon as they are here, and children, no matter how wealthy their parents may be, are trained for some trade. Ill fortune is apt to come to any and everyone and then the knowledge of some means of support will not come amiss.

It is not always that a boy is adapted for the trade in which his father has become successful; still, whole families of boys go blindly into the same, simply from a foolish carelessness or from the desire to earn money early in life. Unless necessity compels this should never happen if one's future is counted for aught.

CHILDREN'S GOSSIP.

Most children, unless constantly reprimanded for so doing, have a habit of carrying home all bits of gossip they may hear. Unfortunately many mothers encourage it by permitting their children to do so, or in listening to them. If the little ones were told that mother does not care to hear what Mrs. So-and-So said disagreeable about Mr. Jones and Mrs. Blank and that gossip was rude and vulgar," they would not be so ready to carry information from house to house. Many a child who would otherwise be sweet is a perfect nuisance to its mother's friends and neighbors. It listens to conversation which is not meant for its ears and when it finds that it has ready listeners in its parents' fragments of gossip, frequently augmented, alas! are repeated as soon as home is reached.

A child's training reflects upon the parents, and whether good or bad is for them to attend. Children who cannot be trusted are most disagreeable to have about. The little one is no longer a child when he listens at every door and evinces by his eager curiosity that he must find out much that is not his business. Parents, if they must say disagreeable things about their neighbors, should not do so in the presence of little ones if they care to have them well bred, and should discourage gossip on their part as much as possible.

THE THANKSGIVING TABLE.

The table should be spread with snowy napery, the glass and silver polished in the last degree of cleanliness and brilliancy, and every detail perfect before any edibles are served. If there are girls or boys in the house, get them to cut branches of red and gold leaves, if such a thing still exists. Chrysanthemums are usually beautiful and inexpensive at this time of year, and a low bowl of them in yellow in the center of the table is very effective. And everything must be hot, piping hot,and served in a dignified manner—not banged on in the fashion which certain country maids think adds to the friendly feeling of a family dinner.

WAY TO BRUSH THE HAIR.

"The proper way to brush the hair," says a well-known hairdresser, "is not to brush it lengthwise, but to hold the ends of the hair, if it is long enough, and simply scrub the scalp with the brush. This process promotes the circulation of the blood, and excites the oil glands to action. After the hair has been thoroughly brushed in this way, it should be then finished with a few vigorous strokes lengthwise of the hair."

DON'T ATTEND BARGAIN SALES.

The royal family never shops. The Princess of Wales, for instance, and her daughters make a selection of materials and styles from samples and water-color drawings. From these pictures and patterns the royal order is given, while the fitting is done on dummies expressly made to conform to the royal figures.

POWER OF HABIT.

An Interesting Experiment on Three Dogs—What Habit Really Is.

By way of experiment a certain investigator recently placed in seperate and specially prepared kennels a number of dogs which were just old enough to care for themselves.

For each dog he chose a single occupation to which its entire attention was directed as often as possible. Upon one he placed the task of standing erect upon its hind legs when required to do so, another he required to bark at command, another to run around its kennel, and so on. No one save their instructor had anything to do with the dogs, who spent most of the time, when not receiving their "lesson," in sleep.

At the end of a given number of months the dogs were killed and their brains subjected to rigid examination.

In the dog which had been trained to bark, that portion of the brain which controls the organs of speech had enlarged more than the rest; in the dogs trained to run, the portion controlling the muscles of the legs predominated; in every case that portion of the brain was found to be most developed through the agency of which the special act required of the dog had been performed.

If for no other reason, the above experiment is interesting because it helps us to see what habit really is, how it is formed, and better still, how it may be broken or at least held in check.

Mechanical repetition enabled the dogs to become proficient in some one act. Continually working in a certain direction and dwelling upon a given line of thought will develop the brain in a correspondingly uneven manner, until little by little a strong and almost invincible habit is formed, which casts its predominating influence for good or evil over all our acts and thoughts.

Of course it is possible by a supreme effort of the will to overcome the tendency to certain actions and lines of thought. For some persons this may be the best way to put an evil habit to rout. But what if the will is weak and the habit deeply intrenched?

If we will remember the experiment with the dogs, we shall perceive that there is another way in which we can work, a way which promises better results. If the brain can be developed in one direction, it can be in another. So that it is possible, by continued and diligent application in another, and as far as possible opposite direction, to counteract the influence already established in the brain by a given undesirable habit.