Pages from Parson Parlett's Diary

I found the farmer very sick of a dysentery, and after tarrying some time with him—I would fain hope to his comforting—I turned me homewards, telling the lad that I could fare right well alone. For the youth was heavy-eyed by reason of the lateness of the hour.

I was gotten as far as a great oak, which I had noted in coming, when I sat me down on a bank to rest, for 'twas a tiring walk and I be not a robust man. And I bethought me that surely must be hereabout a shorter way home than the road, which did seem to bear away from the direction I would go. So musing, mine eye lit on an old stile, partly blocked by bramlbes in the hedge, and peering through I did descry the path making straight for my haven, or so it did appear.

And, in the dim light (for the moon was rising, but not yet free of the mists), a nightingale burst into his song in the underwood. This did decide me.

So I did push me a way over the stile, through the briars, and so along the path with a light step and heart. But anon the track did grow less distinct and did seem to fork out in different directions, to my great puzzlement, so that I did lose me in the wood.

I was bethinking me how Dorothy would be alarmed at my delay, when something did close on my right foot, above the ankle, with a cruel grip. The pain was such as I could scarce endure. At first I thought 'twas some wild animal had bit me, but 'twas a steel trap that did close with a spring. Do what I would I could not rid me of the hellish thing, though I made shift to undo my buckle for the easing of my foot

And it came as a flash to me, that here was Sir Ralph's wood and I caught in one of his traps!—a sorry plight truly for a parson of a parish; and my silk stockings too all rent and bloody, for I had not changed into my woollen, because of the haste to start.

For a space mine anger was hot against the man who had devised such deviltries. But, I bethought me, the engine was not there of set purpose to catch me of all men, and that in sooth I was where no business called me. What would the bishop say should it come to his ears?

By this the late moon was risen, and had I been otherwise placed, I had enjoyed the gentle beauty of the night. And, despite my disorder of mind and body, I could not but mark the delicate tracery wrought by the shadows of the young foliage. Moreover, the song of Philomel that had lured me thither was now grown into a chorus.

One thing I was plain set on, and that to keep off, an 'twere possible, the faintness which did begin to creep on me. For I knew that, if haply I were to fall in a swound, 'twould be the breaking of my leg.

So I did chant me the Litany, what I could remember (and was ashamed how little I could without book), and did sing some hymns to beguile my mind.

I was drawing me a breath at the end of a verse when a voice, mighty deep and stern, spake out of the bushes hard by.

"Thou psalm-singing, crop-eared cur! I'll teach thee sing another tune——"

There was a pause as of one amazed, and a tall men did forth of the covert.

"God save my wits!" quoth he, "whom have we here?"

I essayed to draw me up with somewhat of dignity, though it did sore hurt my foot to do so, and made answer to the ranger, as I thought him.

Gal two Diary of Parson Parlett

"'Tis I, Timothy Parlett, Master of Arts, charged with the spiritual cure of this parish, and am caught in a snare, thinking to have reached home the sooner—"

But he had already stooped to release me.

"Gad, sir," said he, "you adorn the position! Were I in your case, small stomach, troth, were mine for singing."

And I did perceive, by the quaking of his broad shoulders that he was deeply moved by pity of my plight.

Anon he had got the iron fangs open and I was free. But hereupon Nature did seize her opportunity of requital for the pain and loss of blood, and I had fallen had he not caught me in his arms. And I felt myself being swiftly carried homewards.

The motion did so sooth me as I fell on a kind of trance, wherefrom I did awake to find me in mine own bed, but very weak

And I did hear as in a dream my dear daughter's voice, saying, in hushed tones:—

"I fear me the limb be sorely injured."

And the deep voice of him that did rescue me made gentle answer:—

"Nay, young mistress, comfort thee. 'Twill soon heal. There be no injury to the bone of any moment"

Again my Dorothy spake, and her great love for me did tremble in the words:—

"Was it a savage dog, think you, sir, that did set on him?"

"'Tis no dog's bite."

"What then, good sir?"

A space did follow of silence so deep as I did hear plain the faint patter of the ivy on the lattice. And I did lie idly waiting for the answer as though 'twere a thing I had heard long ago.

"'Twas one of Sir Ralph Brant's man-traps"

And I saw the shadow of my Dorothy on the wall as she did rise to her feet in a blaze of wrath

"Were the coward here," cried my girl, "I would box him his ears!"

"Coward or no," quoth the other, "here he be, and submitteth him to thy just punishment."

And I could see his shadow kneeling at her feet.

But for all answer Dorothy did sink on her chair in a storm of weeping, and "Cruell cruell!" she did murmur, 'mid her tears

Whereupon my weakness did again overcome me, and I knew no more till the sun was high in heaven.

Neither my daughter nor I said aught to other living creature of the events of the night, and made some excuse for my keeping my bed, even to our old serving-woman, Deb, who had been long abed when I was brought home

The next Lord's Day, my kind neighbor, Doctor Shelton, of Threllick, did undertake my duties at the church, having by good hap a visitor in his house to wit Mr. Ford, of Cambridge, who did undertake his

Doctor Shelton be an excellent, worthy man, but an indifferent preacher (Mr. Bullamy says the drowsiest, save Parson Thorp, he did ever know), so that I marvelled the more that Sir Ralph should go to hear him. Yet so it was—the first time for many months, in brave attire, Dame Powlett tells me, and did look like a prince of the blood.

Now Dorothy had told me naught of this, nor could I gather that she had observed it. However, the second Lord's Day after my accident I got to church by help of a stick and Dorothy's arm, and did note that the cobwebs were brushed out of Sir Ralph's pew and new cushions, and anon himself did arrive mighty fine, and hath a very distinguished air.

As I was robing me for the service, Mr. Bullamy came to me.

"A wonder hath happened," quoth he, his face red and eyes round: "'tis come to my knowledge that last evening he" (there was but one "he" in Sternax) "hath took up all his man-traps and buried them in a big hole in Thorlop Bottom, and the paths through his woods be now free for the villagers to use as they list!"

I did mark how Sir Ralph did attend closely to the sermon, and did join in the singing bravely and with much skill of music. But my Dorothy, that was ever wont to sing like a lark, was to-day mum as any mouse, which did a little vex me.

And in sooth my girl be grown very silent these days, and her old sprightliness doth seem to have left her. I pray she have not taken my hurt overmuch to heart. That were folly seeing I be, save for a limp, well-nigh healed, though a scar there will always be.

I had thought to thank Sir Ralph privily after the service, but he was gone. 'Tis almost as though he did avoid us of set purpose. Perchance he may have took offence at Dorothy's words of that night. But I have said nought of this to her, nor knoweth she that I did chance to hear them.

We were wending us homewards slowly (for my lameness) when we heard the sound of horsemen riding towards us, and anon two mounted gallants came to view

We had withdrawn into a grassy nook at one side of the road to give them the freer passage by a duck-pond on the other, when they did check their horses, and much to my disquiet I did perceive that they purposed some rudeness. (For the times be unruly from the license of the court, which setteth a pestilent example. This I say that be a loyal king's man to the core, and ever have been.) They were both bravely dressed young bloods, and did ride very good cattle.

"How no, Father Winter?" quoth one; "how comest thou in company of Spring?"

"Mount up, hither, fair maid," quoth the other, "and ride with us. 'Twill be the merrier."

"Gentlemen," said I earnestly, "will it please you go your way and let us take ours?"

"Softly, sir," cries the elder and more evil-looking of the two (to my mind), I would fain first taste that lady's lips. For, Gad, sir, they tempt a man devilishly."

And he dismounted, and tossing his bridle to his friend came towards us. My daughter screamed, and I did put myself in front of her with sore misgiving, for he was a strong man and taller than I. But just as he was laying his hand on my cloak I did hear Dorothy say very softly, "Thank God!" and who should step out of a gap in the hedge behind us, but Sir Ralph Brant. In two strides he had got one hand on the collar and the other on the belt of him who was molesting us, and had swung him off his feet into the deepest part of the duck-pond. The other gallant waited not to see more, but spurred away like the wind, taking his companion's horse with him.

Sir Ralph took a pistol from his girdle and was for aiming at him, but Dorothy put her hand on his arm. He turned his head towards her, and I saw a marvellous tender look soften the stern face as their eyes did meet.

"So be it," quoth he, lowering the weapon, "yet did he richly deserve it, were it but for deserting his friend yonder."

And he pointed to the further side of the pond, where our fine gentleman was now crawling out covered with slime and duckweed, wigless, and his gay feathers drenched and bedraggled with the muddy water like to a wet gamecock. 'Twas a sight none of us could forbear to laugh at, so sorry a figure did he cut

We did leave the fellow to find him his trusty friend, and so on to my house, where I did persuade Sir Ralph to dine with us, and were right merry over good but simple fare, to wit, boiled chicken and gammon of bacon, with bread and fruit; and our guest did much praise Dorothy's conserves

After dinner Sir Ralph and I sat on a bench in the garden under a fine spreading beech-tree. 'Twas sweet summer weather, and we had our wine on a small table, Dorothy being seated on a low stool at my feet sewing.

And I, knowing Sir Ralph to be a man better travelled than most, did draw from him some account of his journeyings.

So he did fall to talk of them—mighty good discourse, and 'tis plain to see he be a man of great understanding and observation

And I did note, when he was telling of a most terrible storm that did burst on the ship he was in off the African coast, and of his danger and being like to be lost, how my Dorothy's cheeks did pale as she did bend over her work.

But what followed did mightily divert me, more than they guessed

It befell thus.

Sir Ralph was discoursing of a certain slave-merchant in Algiers, and how he did ill-treat his slaves and did lash one—a young girl naked to the waist—with a knotted cord. And I saw Dorothy's work fall out of her hands, and her eyes did flash and her bosom heave, and anon up she springs, and did knock her stool over in the act.

"The evil brute!" cried she, "I could—"

"Box him his ears?" asked Sir Ralph demurely, whereupon they did both burst into hearty laughter, Dorothy with a heightened color which did vastly become her.

"'Twas the very thing I did," said he, "and did relish the doing, though it did well-nigh get me in trouble with his countrymen. But you did promise, Mistress Dorothy, to show me your garden. Will it please you to do so now?"

They were soon lost to my sight behind the yew-tree hedges, and being a thought drowsy after the labors of the day, I did fall into a light slumber.

The next I remember was Dorothy's arms round my neck and her soft lips on my cheek. I did rouse me, and saw her sweet face full of a great happiness, so that her eyes did shine like stars.

"I have told your daughter, Mr. Parlett," said Sir Ralph, "the story of my life. 'Twas a woman that clouded it, and a woman may restore its sunshine. Will you give Dorothy to me, if she be willing to try, as I think she be?"

And for the great love I bare her I could not say him nay.

The End.

THE VALUE OF A DOLLAR.

What It Can Do to Relieve a Family in Distress.

"If you can demonstrate to me that you can actually relieve distress with one dollar, I will give you what you want."

A rich cynic thus answered a woman who had come to him for aid to help the poor of their city. He hoped to silence her and send her away.

"Will you come with me?" said the woman, challenged in this novel manner.

The man consented.

In a few minutes the two entered an unsightly tenement. The lady, who knew her ground, led the man up two flights of stairs into a cheerless room. The floor and walls were absolutely barren. The only piece of furniture besides the bed, a chair and a dilapidated table, was a small stove, in which a scant fire was burning.

There was a middle-aged man in the room with two children, each poorly and thinly clad. The few dishes were empty. Destitution could hardly be more complete. The woman accustomed to such pathetic sights, soon learned what was most needed, and from long experience, she knew just what to purchase.

"Please wait," she said to the rich man, "while I run around to the store."

Full of compassion for this mute suffering, the gentleman waited. In a quarter of an hour a large grocer's basket, filled to the brim, was brought into the room. Soon the little stove threw out comforting heat, and the odor of food gave grateful cheer.

"Do you think this charity well bestowed?" asked the woman, as they left.

"Indeed, I do," came the answer, with a suspicious tremor in the voice.

"Well, here is the list." He took it and read. We quote it word for word:

25 pounds coal	.20
2 bundles kindling	.05
Half pound tea	.15
2 loaves bread	.08
2 pounds oatmeal	..14
Half pound sugar	.05
Gallon kerosene oil.	.10
Measure potatoes	.08
1 quart milk	.04
Small bag salt	.02
1 box matches	.01
Total	$1.00

Without hesitation the man of money took a dollar bill and handed it to the good woman, and the next day she received his check for a thousand like it.

The knowledge of what one dollar can actually accomplish to relieve distress and bring happiness to the poor may restrain our hands from foolish extravagance. In these days, when honest poverty is crowding about us, it is nothing less than cruel to throw too many of our dollars away for purely selfish luxuries. Extravagant expenditures hold the germs of disaster. In their full fruitage, they give birth to effeminacy, lower moral standards, stimulate envy, and incite social and political revolution.

HEY, HO! WINTER WILL GO!

A robin sings on the leafless spray,
Hey ho, winter will go!
Sunlight shines on the desolate way,
And under my feet
I feel the beat
Of the world's heart that never is still,
Never is still
Whatever may stay.

Life out of death, as day out of night,
Hey ho, winter will go!
In the dark shall glimmer a light.
A delicate sheen
Of budding green,
Then, silent, the dawn of summer breaks,
As morning breaks,
O'er valley and height.

The tide ebbs out, and the tide flows back;
Hey ho, winter will go!
Though heaven be screen'd by a stormy rack,
It rains, and the blue
Comes laughing through;
And cloud-like, winter goes from the earth,
That flowers in his track.

Sing, robin, sing on your leafless spray,
Hey ho, winter will go!
Sunlight and song shall shorten the way,
And under my feet
I feel the beat
Of the world's heart that never is still,
Never is still
Whatever may stay.

RICH AND RARE LACES.

BLEW A SAFE OPEN FOR SIX YARDS OF LACE.

The Habit of Wearing Rich and Costly Lace Has of Late Been Dying Out—What the Luxury has Cost Some of the Favored Ones.

Once in a while a bit of information leaks out in unusual channels which call attention to a fact that is generally forgotten or ignored. The other day burglars blew open the safe of an uptown modiste in New York, and stole something. There was nothing remarkable about that, for it is a habit burglars have. But it happen-that they got into the safe for the particular purpose of stealing 6 yards of lace. Now, why burglars should go to all that trouble and run all that risk for the sake of 6 yards of lace seems on the surface a deep mystery.

When the theft was reported at police headquarters the reason was plain. The little bit of lace was worth more than fifty times its weight in gold. Twenty years ago it cost exactly $1000 a yard, or $6000 for the piece. To-day its value is between $8000 and $9000.

For some years the fashion of wearing costly laces has been allowed to die out, perhaps because so few women could afford to indulge in it, no matter how great the riches of their husbands or fathers. The wife of the ordinary one-time millionaire can no more afford to accumulate costly laces than a much poorer woman, for the simple reason that it would consume her husband's entire fortune in a very short time. It has been a fad of royalty for numberless years, but the kings and queens spend other people's money, so they can afford to be luxurious.

An effort is making now to rehabilitate the lace-wearing fashion, and if it be successful it will draw a very sharp distinguishing line between millionaire and multi-millionaires. The women members of families who have been rich for many generations will have an advantage over others, as in the days of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers the ownership of fine lace was a social necessity.

The Astor collection of laces, for instance, is very fine and ranks with any of the private collections abroad. At the time the laces of Empress Eugene were sold at auction the Astors were heavy buyers. They pooled with the Vanderbilts and the Rothschilds so as to avoid bidding against one another. These three great families selected an agent to do the buying, and at the termination of the sale the purchases were divided into thirds. Eugenie, of course, was not a gainer by this, but she could well afford the loss.

The 6 yards above mentioned were part of the "pool" purchase at this sale, and were subsequently sold by Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt to Mrs. Corning, the present owner.

There are many pretty legends of the origin of lace-making, and one of the prettiest is the story of the Venetian sailor who, on the eve of a sea voyage, gave to the woman he loved a piece of beautiful sea-weed, to keep while he was absent, in memory of him. He sailed away, and the girl cared for his gift with constant devotion, superstitiously fancying that upon its preservation depended the safety of her lover or the endurance of his love for her. Therefore when she discovered that the seaweed was slowly drying up and falling to pieces, she caught the fine leaves and branches with thread against a piece of linen, and thus invented lace.

Too much confidence must not be placed in this pretty legend, however, for some fine examples of the lace-makers' art have been traced back to the period of about 1000 years before Christ. While the art is an ancient one, the finer qualities did not appear until after the fifteenth century. The most celebrated lace collections are those of the South Kensington Museum, in London, and the Bruges Museum, although the Cluny Museum, in Paris, contains inestimable specimens of antique lace.

French women are notably fond of laces, and a valuable piece is handed down from one generation to another with almost religious care. The famous Honiton set of Queen Victoria is of such incalculable value that her Majesty has worn it only four times—at her own and other royal weddings. No greater evidence of the favoritism of the Queen for Princess Beatrice could be given than her immense concession in allowing these remarkable flounces, veil and bodice trimmings to be placed on the wedding gown of this Princess. The Queen of Italy is particularly well endowed with this delicate fabric, and the cream of her collection consists of superb pieces of Maltese lace, some of it said to be 2500 years old.

Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt, Mrs William Astor and Mrs. Hicks-Lord are perhaps the owners of the finest laces in New York. Mrs. Astor is credited with owning a lace gown which cost somewhere between $25,000 and $30,000. She has never been seen to wear it, but if she did there would probably be some broad but polite smiles in the fashionable assemblage. In the first place, the gown would be sadly out of date, and, notwithstanding her riches, she would not be so extravagant as to have the laces cut up in an effort to fit them to the prevailing mode.

Mrs. A. T. Stewart was, in her lifetime, the owner of the finest laces in the land. As the wife of the great merchant prince she had unusual opportunities for picking up odd but valuable bits in all parts of the world, as her husband's buyers always had a standing order to buy when they were certain of the quality. At the time of her death these laces were valued at $600,000, but since then they have been scattered far and wide.

Mrs. John Jacob Astor has a Venetian rose point lace fan purchased last fall at the sale of a famous collection for $1300. It may not be the most expensive fan in the world, but there are a few which cost more. The sticks are of mother of pearl, with a delicate tracery in gold. It is needless to say that this fan is seldom used, for in the crushes which characterize the average society function it would probably be smashed to flinders and the guazy lace torn into shreds.

The eccentric Queen of Belgium has a lace gown which cost a fabulous sum. It is said to contain 60 yards of lace of various widths. Some wildly imaginative people, in writing of this gown, have placed its cost at $1,000,000. When the vanle of lace is being considered there is a wide field for error at hand. At the utmost the lace gown of Belgium's Queen could hardly have cost more than $75,000, and one-half of that sum might cover the total.

The collection of Mrs. Hicks-Lord is said to contain the famous point de Brussels shawl once owned by Eugenie. Mrs. Hicks-Lord keeps all of her treasures locked up in the vaults of a safe deposit company, and as she never goes into society nowadays it is difficult to name her possessions with any degree of accuracy. This shawl has been valued at $30,000. Eighty experts worked on it for a year, and the Empress Eugenie wore it three times. Since then it has never been worn.

Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt owns som efine bits of point d'Alencon, one of the costliest laces in the world. The reason of the great cost is due, of course, to the amount of intricate labor required. First, the design is drawn by an artist and then engraved on a copper plate, from which it is printed on long strips of parchment. Pieces of linen are attached to the parchment, and the pattern is traced with thread. The ground netting of the lace is then worked out. More than twenty experienced hands are required to do their several kinds of work before the tiniest bit of point d'Alencon can be produced. Some of this lace has brought as much as $1600 a yard, but this is an exceptionally high price.

It can be seen by this that the fad of lace collecting is a most costly one, and possible only to those who have a limitless income.

PROMINENT PEOPLE.

Notes About Some of the Great Folks of the World.

Dr. Nansen has asked permission to name the Siberian peninsula discovered by him after King Oscar of Sweden. The king and the Russian authorities have given their consent.

Dr. De Bossy, of Havre, who has just died at the age of 103, was the doyen of French doctors. Up to the end of January he gave consultations and attended patients regularly.

As a compliment to the Emperor William when he visits Russia, the Czar will make all his public speeches in German, following the example of Alexander II. of Russia on a similar occasion.

Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria is having his portrait painted by the Viennese artist, Eduard Horowitz. He sits for the artist in the Historical Art Museum, where the directors' office has been fitted up for the purpose.

One hundred pen and ink drawings by the late George Du Maurier, which belong to his estate, have just arrived in New York from London. They are the originals of his famous satirical single illustrations well known in "Punch."

The oldest actor in the world is Henry Doel. He will be 93 on his next birthday, and was an actor for sixty-five years. As a child he was rowed out to Plymouth Sound and saw Napoleon walking the quarter deck of the Bellerophon.

Mother Gonzaga Kennelly, who is said to have been the oldest nun in Ireland, died recently at the Ursuline convent, Blackrock, County Cork. The reverent mother had spent sixty-three years at the convent, and was 88 years old when she died.

Lady Henry Somerset is about to place in the centre of her "temperance village," Duxhurst, in Surray, a heroic-sized figure of Christ. The statue, moulded by Percy Wood, represents the Saviour with hands outstretched, and is not altogether unlike the beautiful statue by Thorwaldsen.

It has been decided that the monument to Lord Leighton shall take the form of a recumbent sepulchral figure of the late President of the Royal Academy, to be placed in the nave of St. Paul's cathedral. To Mr. Brock, R.A., has been intrusted the execution of the work, which will be of an ornate character, and in bronze.

Sylvia Du Maurier, one of Du Maurier's loveliest daughters, apprenticed herself to Mrs. Nettleship, a famous London dressmaker, for a year, and went bravely through all the drudgery of dressmaking, from the beginning to the finish. Now, as she has married a brilliant but struggling young barrister, she designs and makes her own costumes.

Jenny Lind's daughter, Mrs. Raymond Maude, of London, has much of her mother's brilliancy of voice, but has always refused to cultivate it for the stage. "I suppose there was too much music at home," she explained to a friend. Jennie Lind herself became tired of the stage and retired at the height of her popularity. Mrs. Maude has three children, none of whom is musical.

The young Queen of Holland objects to being regarded as a child any more. Recently she entered the Cabinet-room during a session of the Council, and in a dignified manner asked the Prime Minister why the postage stamps continued to bear her image as a little girl. Then her Majesty requested that the objectionable stamp be discontinued as soon as possible.

King Oscar of Sweden has just completed a novel in which his grandmother, the wife of Marshal Bernadotte, is the heroine. Her maiden name was Desiree Clary. In her youth she was associated with Napoleon and his brother, Joseph Bonaparte. Her sister Julie Clary, married Joseph, and she herself was affianced to Napoleon for a time, but dismissed him because of his attentions to women of greater note in Paris. Finally Desiree married Bernadotte, a young officer who rose from the ranks of the French army to become a marshal, Prince of Pontecervo, and King of Sweden.