Fantastical Bicycle.

Fanciful structure on course expeditional
Thou strikest the gaze like a form apparitional,
With strangely bewildering slide.
Thy shadowy outline is phantasmagorical;
Thou seem'st (to utter a phrase metaphorical)
A sort of personified guide.

What wondrous inventor with mind methodistical
Conceived thy idea, aerial, mystical,
Yet so mathematic'ly true?
The brain which concocted thy airy machinery—
Imagined thy spectral effect on the scenery—
Was ghostly and dreamy as you.

Philosophers tell us inventions mechanical
Are made by observing the structures organical
Which all throughout nature abound.
But were she subjected to strictest of scrutiny
By geniuses Archimedean or Newton-y,
The prototype would not be found.

Thou *lusus naturæ*—thou wilt, irresponsible,
Filmy objective to all that's demonstrable—
Fantastic, ridiculous word!
Thy gyrates mesmerical puzzle humanity,
Thou outcome of science, inspired by insanity,
Thou wavy, embodied absurd.

"Drew the Wrong Lever!"

ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

This was what the pointsman said,
With both hands at his throbbing head:

"I drew the wrong lever, standing here
And the danger signals stood at clear;

But before I could draw it back again
On came the fast express, and then—

Then came a roar and a crash, that shook
This cabin door, but I could not look

At the wreck, for I knew the dead would poor
With strange dull eyes at their murderer here."

"Drew the wrong lever?" "Yes, I say!
Go, tell my wife, and—take me away!"

That was what the pointsman said,
With both hands at his throbbing head.

O ye of this nineteenth century time,
Who hold low dividends as a crime,

Listen. So long as a twelve-hours' strain
Rests like a load of lead on the brain,

With its ringing of bells, and rolling of wheels,
Drawing of levers until one feels

The hands grow numb with a nerveless touch,
And the handles shake and slip in the clutch,

So long will ye have pointsmen to say—
Drew the wrong lever! take me away!"

AT THE TWELFTH HOUR.

BY E. E. FRANCILDON

CHAPTER I.

The ground was as hard as iron, the sky blue as turquoise, the sunshine yellow as gold, and the air as still and as silent as only the hardest of frosts can be. Nobody, for weeks past, had dared even so much as to dream of a fox—it was Reynard's Holiday. Had things been as they ought to be, Rupert Grayshaw would not, late in the afternoon, have been found upon only two legs instead of four. Things being as they were, he was making the best, or the worst, of them by walking briskly along a winding lane that led from the village of Combe Bassett to nowhere in particular, at the rate of something over four miles an hour.

Rupert Grayshaw was going on for three-and-thirty years old, full of strength and life, handsome and something more. Few people noticed how fine a face he really had until they came to know him well, for those who saw him for the first, second, or third time were struck exclusively by all such signs and symbols of both mental and vital force as would have made plainness forgotten. He was a man who looked both eager and able to enjoy the whole of life all round, with body, brain, and soul. And assuredly, though the foxes were safe, it was a day on which life could be most amply and actively enjoyed. I need make no mystery about Rupert Grayshaw, for there was none to be made, as though, no doubt, he had his secrets and private affairs like other men, he was known, on the whole, rather more openly than most of one's friends. He was the only son of the younger son of an old Yorkshire family; he had taken high mathematical honours at Cambridge; he was a Fellow of St. Kenneth's; he was without near relations; he had no profession, but lived on his Fellowship, and, without sacrificing any pleasures that were open to him, had, with an enduring enthusiasm, adopted scientific investigation and discovery for a career. He held himself as much above and beyond marriage as science is above the brewing of small beer. He had come to Combe Bassett on a visit to his father's old friend, Dick Derwent, for the sake of the events said, so far as the coverts were concerned, had come in vain. And that is the whole history, as completely told as any man's can be—from the outside.

The lane presently led through a thick but now brown and leafless wood. Rupert vaulted over a stile to the left, and his feet were soon enjoying the never-palling delight of trampling and crunching over fallen and frozen leaves. He was glowing with health and exercise, and, it might be, with some still more peculiar joy. The wood was a maze of paths, but he either knew their clue by heart or else gave himself up to chance more decisively than most men go towards a known goal. And so, either by accident or design, he reached at last a solitary cottage standing in a small garden and nearly hidden among the trees. It was a humble place enough—a little, but not much, better than the common run of labourers' dwellings in that part of the country—low, rough-cast, and straw-thatched, with small latticed windows and immensely deep eaves. The long strip of garden was given over to vegetables, except a patch in front of the porch, where it was not hard, though in midwinter, to conjure up, in fancy, a little wilderness of full scents and strong colours. Some style was given to the place, even now, by the creeper with evergreen leaves and scarlet berries that covered the porch, and the thick ivy that darkened the lower windows. As if he knew its inmates and all their ways, Rupert went to the window at the side of the cottage and tapped thereon three times. Then he leaned against the pear-tree and waited patiently.

Or perhaps impatiently. For presently the lattice opened, and like a live portrait set in a frame of ivy leaves appeared a face that seemed to say, "Ah! he has a Secret in his life, after all—and I am She!"

Yes; when a man comes to look for Foxes and finds Frosts, he must find something wherewith to fill up his idle days—something or somebody. Of course it is unlucky when it happens to be Somebody instead of Something—when he has both publicly and privately foresworn marriage, and when, if he forswear himself, he must give up the means of study and take to bread-winning instead of working for science and glory. Perhaps it is rash for men to take long holidays until they are at least seventy years old. For if ever there was a face made to come between a student and his books, between a sportsman and his sports, between a sworn bachelor and his vow, it was the face that Rupert had called from out the ivy as if his three taps had been spells. It was a very young girl's; she could not possibly have been more than seventeen. But her number of years was to be gathered from the indefinable expression of girlhood rather than from any palpable signs. She was neither child nor woman, but blent in one face the charms of the two. The delicate glory of perfect health breathed from her; the biting air did her no wrong, but merely deepened the glow on her cheek that proved no frost to lie within. She could be called neither darker nor fair, but simply harmonious; and so quick were the changes of light and shade that Rupert seemed to hear her looks with some subtle inner sense as if they were the melody of a song. And, whatever else the words of that song may be, they were at least gentle and pure. Why need I describe her feature by feature, line by line? Enough that passing and heedless eyes would have called her lovely, while Rupert's as clearly found her a great deal more.

She was no cottager's daughter, though she was found in this out-of-the-way, almost hidden cottage. She suggested one of those lost princesses whom travellers find by chance among woodcutters and charcoal-burners in the forests of fairyland. All things favoured the fancy—the brown, dark, windless wood; the blue sky, the silence, and the loneliness everywhere. She herself had not spoken, except with a smile; and, after a moment of such greeting, shut the window again. But Rupert, having had his answer, went to the door, raised the latch, and entered. And then he seemed to turn over another page of a fairy tale. He passed through an ordinary kitchen, with an open window and brick floor, with nothing out of the common about it except that it was empty on so hard a day, when; labour had nothing to do but sit and rest by its own fireside. But the room into which he passed out of it was very different indeed, in such a place it was even startling to find such a room. It might have been a boudoir of any great lady in the land, if it had not been so obviously an enchanted maiden's bower. In that country of Once upon a Time, soft carpets, fine hangings, luxurious upholstery, books, and pictures cost nothing more than a few waves of a wand, or else their presence here would have seemed something more than strange. And here she, whose face we have for a moment seen, ran forward to meet Rupert quickly and joyfully, and let him take her in his arms.

"I have good news, Bertha!" said he. "And you will never guess it. The post, this very morning, brought me the news that I am rich enough for all things—for You, and Work, and Gladness, and all life means to me: for You and Love, above all! Yes, my darling, it's true. I shall be able to give you a better bower even than the mysterious enchanter who keeps you here in his power."

"Oh, Rupert! What has happened? What is going to happen? Who do you mean?"

"Everything has happened, Bertha! A far-off cousin of my mother's, whom I never saw in my life, is dead, and has left me a fortune—an immense fortune for me and you, but not too large to be a burden—only on condition that I will change my name".

"What!—you are not to be Rupert, my Rupert, any more?"

"Oh, I shall keep that name—*that* is yours! But I shall give up my Fellowship with more pleasure than I had in getting it; for I hate the least thing that has kept me from you; and there is nothing left but a form or two to keep me from my wife for another hour! When will you come to me? In two weeks?—In one? In '——"

"Rupert! *Is* it true?"

"All true—every word! When will you come?"

"And may I tell my father—"

"Your father! Bertha, my darling, now that I can claim you I think this mystery ought to be at an end. Just think what our story has been—a story that nobody could believe. I come down to Combe Bassett with a heart as empty as life without you. I wander into a wander into a wood—I find, by chance, in a common cottage, a Fairy Queen. I win her heart, and her troth plight, and at the end of weeks I know no more of her than that her name is Bertha—Queen Bertha—and that she has no surname, but only a mysterious, nameless father, who comes to see her, like an enchanter, from far away—flying, I suppose, on a magic carpet, or a brazen horse through the air. She is attended by invisible hands—for none but her own have I seen. I am sworn to ask nothing more than if she loves me. She forbids me to enter her bower without a signal, and unless it is answered. And yet I know that she is as innocent as the lilies, and as pure as the snow. Sooner than loose you, Bertha, I would consent to know nothing but that you are lovely, and good, and true, and that you love me; but is it in man not to wish to know more? And is it not time?"

"As if I would not tell you every thought I have in me! But, oh Rupert, how can I tell you a name I never heard? As you say, my father must have some dwelling-place of his own, I suppose that is true too. And——"

"And you really do not know who you are?"

"Surely—that I am Bertha, and yours. . . . But if it is time——"

"It *is* time."

"Then—my father comes to-morrow, at five o'clock in the afternoon. I *have* told you why you must not come to me without a signal; because *he* does not wish to be seen, and because I do not always know when he is coming. But I do happen to know to-day when his next visit will be—for he never fails to see me on the first day of the New Year——"

"Yes—to-morrow is New-Year's Day. Well?"

"Come, Rupert, and come openly, and tell him——"

"And if he says No?"

"Why should he say No? And—if he does—do I not love you? He cannot forbid that, Rupert——"

"My darling! I *will* come, Enchanter though he be."

Rupert left the cottage just in time to reach the Hall (as his host's place was popularly called) before dinner. He met nobody on the way but an old woman in a blue cloak, of whom he took no special heed—for what were all outward things to a man who loved, and before whom the future was opening out in rainbow colours? Even the mystery of his love story gave it additional charm to him, whose imagination, chronically kept in the grooves of hard study, needed now and then to take a flight into the open air.

There were not many guests at the Hall. Dick Derwent was a bachelor of five-and-forty, who did not care to fill his house for the sake of having it full. The few who were there were men who were waiting for the frost to break, and with whom Rupert—engaged as he was with his own affairs—had but little sympathy. He liked Dick, who was the best of good fellows, and had shown him much kindness; but he did not like Dick's friends. And even to Dick, good fellow as he was, he had never breathed a word of his love-story. There were many reasons for silence, of which each was sufficient for him. In the first place—until to-day—marriage had, from his point of view, been simply impossible. He had been merely drifting, and hardly bared to open his own eyes as to the course he had been taking. In the second place, to profane the mystery of his romance by speech would be sure to reduce it from poetry to prose. Again, how could he bear to tell such a story to open-hearted and free-tongued Dick, who had never kept a secret in his life, and would be sure to make Bertha and Rupert's love for her a matter of rough chaff, even if they did not some day, for want of better sport, ride out and draw the cottage with "View-holes" and "Tallyho!" And who was Bertha's father, and what secret might he not have that ought not, in honour, to be betrayed? And Bertha's existence been known of at the Hall, he would himself have been the first to hear.

Dinner and billiards had lasted the evening through, when the stroke of a church bell sounded full and close through the thin air. Dick Derwent rose and filled his tumbler to the brim.

"Let all who love me, follow!" cried he, in his bluff, ringing voice. "At the first stroke of twelve, I throw open the front door with my own hands, to let the old year out and the new year in!"

Dick Derwent was a fine, stout, hearty country gentleman, with all manner of jovial ways. He was the very pink of generosity and honour. He had been Rupert's father's staunchest friend, and had, at old Mr. Grayshaw's death, transferred his affection from the father to the son. Indeed, it was more than common affection that he showed towards Rupert, on every possible occasion. Though so much the elder, he had a strong belief in the prudence and worldly wisdom of the younger man, which cannot be supposed to be altogether ill founded—at any rate, Dick Derwent was not the man to have let a hundred fellowships stand in the way of marriage had he been that way inclined. But, then, it is true he was not a man of science, but only a jolly middle-aged gentleman who kept up old customs and followed the hounds well.

The half dozen young and middle-aged men, without a woman or a child among them, gave way to their host's whim, though not without smiles and shrugs of the shoulder at taking part in such a piece of obsolete folly.

"What does it all mean?" asked West—a young man who was wiser in his own eyes even than Rupert Grayshaw was in Dick Derwent's. "Why should we trouble ourselves to let out a good time—thank's to you, Dick—and let in what nobody knows may be death, may be marriage."

"Marriage, eh?" said Dick, turning upon him suddenly. "Perhaps I know more about that than you. But that's neither here nor there—marriage won't come inside this door for many a long day. That isn't what it means. It means that the master of this house has, with his own hands let in two hundred New Years, and that I'm not going to be the first inhospitable fellow that has been surnamed Derwent and christened "Rip-Van-Winkle" for Whatever whatever you are!" he said, loudly, as he threw open the front door and let the first cold blast of the New Year rush into the Hall. "God speed the year, and God bless the new!"

"I know it's a common custom," said Rupert, "for the master of the house to open his door at the first stroke of the last midnight of the year. But I could never find out what it means, and yet every superstition must have a meaning somewhere. I wonder what people think would happen if the New Year came to a house and found the door closed?"

"Happen?" said West. "Why, that fewer people would begin the year with a sneeze." What idea do you suppose?"

"I dare say," said Dick—"I dare say they knew once upon a time. Well, its done now, and after all it would never have done to have the frost break up everywhere else, and not round the Hall."

But the first day of the New Year did not bring a thaw, either round the Hall or elsewhere. To-day was yesterday's twin brother. Nor was Rubert sorry for it, for had it thawed, he would have found it exceedingly difficult to invent an excuse for staying at home while the other men were all a-field. Of course, while the ground was hard it was shameful enough for a philosopher to take solitary walks in company with problems. But problems when the scent lay—even a broken leg would hardly serve as an excuse for him then, after three long weeks of iron. Happily, the weather allowed him, with no more difficulty than usual, to be at the cottage by five in the afternoon. If he had believed in omens, he would have felt that his luck at least had not changed with the change of the year.

He was neither shy nor timid by nature, and was eager rather than anxious for the first interview with the mysterious person who kept his daughter so strangely confined in such an unaccountable prison. Beyond all question, Bertha was nearly as ignorant as he of her own history. She scarcely knew of any other life, except after the vague and untrustworthy manner of dreams. She was fairly well educated, for she had been thrown upon her own mental resources all her life, and had been put by this same unnameable father into the right way of using them. Oddly enough, she was most familiar with the very books and branches of knowledge that Rupert himself would have chosen for her had her education been given into his hands. She had lived in this way—so he learned from her—all her life, seeing none but her father and an elderly nurse who attended to her admirably, but told her nothing. She was under a strict discipline which she had never thought of breaking through, never going out for exercise except in the early morning in the woods, or being allowed to have a friend. Short of making inquiries, Rupert had invented a thousand theories to account for the mystery, but had rejected them all. But about one thing there was no mystery at all. No wonder that a young girl, with such infinite capacity for the life that had been withheld from her for seventeen years, had snatched at life, love, and liberty as soon as they had found her out in her solitude. She was the sleeping princess who woke when the prince had forced his way to her through the thorns.

But now, at last, the whole secret was to be disclosed. Of the result, Rupert had absolutely no fear. He was rich enough to satisfy any earthly father, and in love enough to satisfy any father, man or demon, who loved his child. His high spirits of yesterday were nothing compared with to-day's. He hardly felt the ground as he walked, but seemed to tread on air.

He reached the cottage well before five. But——

The door stood wide open, and the front garden was littered with bits of broken wood, ends of cord, and straw. The kitchen was without a fire. With a strange feeling of fear in his heart, he went at once into Bertha's bower—it had four bare walls and an empty floor. The lattice was open, and the air seemed deadly cold.

Had it all been but a Fairy Dream? But it was no dream that he loved her with his whole heart—and she was gone.

CHAPTER II.

One: Two: Three:—Ten: Eleven: Twelve!

He whom bettered Fortunes and a testator's fancy had transmuted form Rupert Grayshaw into Rupert Hildreth did not rise from his chair, or throw open so much as an inch of window at the sound. He laid down his pen—but that was all. The twelve strokes came to his ears muffled through double windows and close doors.

"I am not such a fool as that," thought he, "The old year's a great deal too long to lose, and I don't want a better. I've done for six years past with wanting more than I have, since—since—No: I've done with dreams. Perhaps *they* might come back if I opened the door to a change. Let those open their doors who are sick, or sorry, or sinful, or poor: not I, who am rich, and content, and sound in heart and limb and brain—and who knows what happened once, when I let out the one sweet dream of my whole life, and when that better waking came in through the open door! Never again. I might let in sickness, or discontent, or worse—who knows? I'll be as I am, with one long, faithful old year all to myself, that I've tried and proved. Yes, it has answered. Fevers have come with the new years, and have emptied other houses, but they have passed by my doors, that had kept out the evils of the unknown like those of a wise man. Fortunes have broken: but mine stand. Others, in the new years, have married and died; I, with the old year under my roof, am as alive and free as I was six years ago. I have seen others grow grey and wrinkled: I am near middle age—and young. Life palls on others, unless they renew it in their children: I have only myself and my book—but they are as fresh as of old. . . . Why, if there be a grain of truth in old wives' tales, to bar the old year out and to bolt the new in means to stand still at one's best all one's days, to be for always as one is, and to fear no chance or change that comes to the rest or the world. . . . So knock on, New Year, as hard and as long as you like—you'll find one door bolted and barred against you and yours."

He took up his pen again, and worked on. It was true that, ever since that midnight of six years ago, he had practiced the new superstition of keeping his front door close shut, so that no new year might find a chink whereby to creep in. For on the night of long ago he had lain down with joy and hope which the new year had, with its first touch, taken away. Perhaps—so he felt in fancy—if he had kept the new year out, Bertha and the old year would have staid with him: nor was the fancy quite so unreasonable in a man of science as it may seem, or what had Bertha herself ever been to him but a fancy and a dream? And it was true that, while the new years had brought troubles enough on others, they had left Rupert Hildreth, the scholar and chemist, undisturbed in his life and labour. With him the same old year seemed for ever to abide, until it had earned by custom an undisputed right and title to a place by his hearthstone. He and his life never knew a change, from year to year, from day to day. He lived, for quiet study's sake, in the outskirts of the town of Rainham. One year a plague of cholera swept through the place, and broke up households—that would have been safe had they never let the old year go. But he never troubled himself about the matter, and just lived and worked on. Some thought he kept himself too much aloof in time of trouble: and no doubt that same sad new year, while it brought death to bodies, brought good to souls. But what has he to do with the things of new years that have never come to him? Another new year had brought among its gifts a great financial crash that had been felt in most homes, but had not given Rupert Hildreth, though a rich man, a moment's doubt or fear. He had never loved a new face, or made a new enemy. From January to December every year had been one and the same.

There were some who thought him hard, cold, and selfish. Others—women mostly—could not help believing that, early in life, his heart had been broken by some great sorrow with which a woman had had to do, and that this made his days so changeless and his life so lonely and self-contained. He would have denied such a theory, had it ever come to his ears, with scorn. His treatment of new years and its effects might be but a superstitious fancy; but he lived as if he thought it based on truth and reason. Never, since that New Year's Eve, had he seen, or even, despite of all his searching, heard of Bertha again or of anybody who had ever heard of her. And now he had shut out the threats of another new year.

He worked late, and rose late, without taking note that a new year had begun for all the rest of the world. Why should he, indeed, when it was still the old year, of years ago, for him?

It was certainly nothing particularly new, though a little unusual, that he should receive a visit from a stranger in the course of the afternoon. The card by which the visitor introduced himself was that of Mr. J. Diamond.

"Mr. Hildreth?" asked Mr. Diamond, a stiff, middle-aged man, with a professional look about him. "Then, in the first place, I have to wish you a happy New year."

"Ah—What? I beg your pardon," said Rupert, absently. "You are on business, I suppose?"

"It is odd you should expect that—very odd indeed, considering the day. It is a rare holiday that has brought me to Rainham, where I happen to have friends. But it is business, all the same; and I have taken the opportunity of doing it without wasting a day. Time has a way of flying, you see"——

"Or of standing still."

"Not with me, Mr. Hildreth; not with me. Years—landmarks—and so on. I believe you were acquainted with Mr. Richard Derwent, of Combe Bassett. I have been his legal adviser for some years. Perhaps you are not aware"——

[TO BE CONTINUED.

The Connemara Colony.

(From the Chicago Times.)

A STORY OF SUFFERING.

The *Times* correspondent, in company with three responsible gentlemen, visited the Connemara settlement, twenty-five miles from Morris, the other day, made a thorough investigation of each shanty in that colony, and conversed with these truly unfortunate people and their neighbours. There is no possible doubt of the reality of their misery and destitution existing, and the utter criminal heartlessness and neglect with which these poor, miserable creatures have been treated. Never has there been seen in this country such squalid poverty, distress, and suffering. It is outrageous that such an indescribable state of affairs should exist in any civilized community. It is alleged that these poor, ill-treated, half-starved creatures have gone to the priest in charge, Father Ryan, for aid, reported the suffering, hunger, and want, yet in every case were

TURNED AWAY WITH ANGRY WORDS

and abuse instead of food, medicine, clothing, fuel, or even sympathy. During this trip the *Times* correspondent never heard his name mentioned with respect, nor one word spoken in favour of his colony. The colony is situated mainly in town 124, range 45 Big Stone county, the people being scattered over the township at distances of from five to thirteen miles from Graceville. As a rule they are more intelligent than the founders of the colony would have it appear. In almost every case they were striving to economize the little wood they had by burning hay on mild days instead, and in no single instance, although closely watched by all the party, was even an attempt made to conceal or mislead when questioned as to their

SUPPLIES ON HAND.

Their shanties are about 12 by 16 feet, eight feet posts, boarded and battened on the sides and the roof. Some few have the roof shingled. All the shanties are sodded to the eaves. The shanties are cold, desolate, and dreary, some dirty, but the majority comparatively clean. Of furniture of even the rudest description there is nothing but a shelf and a bench, and occasionally a bunk and a table. All have cook stoves and a few dishes, but the families are destitute and in sad need of beds and bedding. A few of the cows are giving milk, and in some cases are in the shanties; but as a rule are in little sod stables near by. Few have more

FUEL

than will last for a few days. Two families had only enough to last over to-day. Some wood—from ten to thirty sticks—was distributed Thursday, and the day previous each house was supplied with a few frozen potatoes. These potatoes were sent up by the bishop last month, but owing to the priest having refused to pay the freight they were left in an unfinished depot and frozen. As they are rotten, they are unfit for any use whatever, although the poor people were trying in a few cases to eat them. The writer has seen the sick and the frozen, noted the lack of food and the scanty of fuel; has heard from reliable parties of the wretched, starving condition of these people and it was plainly written in their

PINCHED FACES.

A three-months-old babe was in a cold shanty, with nothing but a shirt made from a flour sack to cover it, and a child was trying its hands on a cow in the room. There were hands black from frost, the nails coming away with the rag, and limbs swollen and discoloured from the same cause; a father helpless and dying from exposure and suffering. It is not necessary to say more than that the actual condition of these unfortunate, wronged people has never been fully described in its gaunt, cruel awfulness, to say nothing of being exaggerated. These people are in need of immediate assistance, as the supplies of food sent from Morris will not last long. Nothing but corn meal has been furnished them by the priest. The outfit of

CLOTHING

from Morris was liberal, the first they had received since they left Ireland, and it will last for some time. Fuel and food are needed, and the former especially; both are needed, as their supply will not last any length of time, and it will be hazardous to leave them even a day on the bleak prairies in their miserable and unprotected situation without a supply to last during a period of stormy and cold weather. Their condition has been only temporarily relieved by the timely and generous contributions sent from Morris, and there is no question but this colony alone were their from perishing. Strange and incomprehensible as it may seem, while many of the other settlers acknowledge that these people are and have been destitute and suffering, yet they are

INDIGNANT AT THE INVESTIGATION,

and displeased that measures have been taken to relieve the distress. There is no little comment here over the fact that Dillon O'Brien peremptorily refused to allow Mr. Hutchins to accompany him on his tour of investigation, and his report is looked for with interest. No liquor or any trace of it was found anywhere. Nineteen families were visited and interviewed. It should be remembered that no part of this destitution and suffering is due to any lack of fertility or productiveness of the land where the so-called colony is located. It results simply from the

STUPID AND CRUEL BLUNDER,

or worse, of bringing penniless and practically helpless men, women and children from Ireland and placing them in huts on an open prairie, with no time for raising a crop before the closing in of a severe northern winter, without adequate provision for feeding or warming them, and apparently with little care on the part of the authorities whether they survived or not.

A BLIND boy at Montreal has built a minature house outside an ordinary four-ounce bottle, out of forty pieces of wood neatly glued together. It would puzzle a person with good eyesight to get the parts into the bottle, to say nothing of putting them together.

THE Boston speculators in Bernhardt tickets have had a hard experience. They bought the best parts of the house for the entire two weeks, and found that, after the great rush of the first night, they not only could sell at an advance, but had difficulty in getting their money back. It was usually possible, at a few minutes past 8 o'clock, to buy a $3 seat for $2.

MR. ARCHIBALD FORBES.—An American paper has the following amusing burlesque of Mr. Archibald Forbes' style. Mr. Forbes is supposed to be replying to the toast of the English press:—"Mr. Chairman—I am Mr. Archibald Forbes. I have been everywhere. I have done everything. I am a smart fellow. I am not to be outdone. I know the Emperor of China. I know the King of the Cannibal Islands. I am intimately acquainted with the Grand Lama. I have lived with the Shah of Persia. I am the dearest friend of the Emperor of Russia." The report comes abruptly to an end with the editorial remark, "Here our supply of I's gave out."

THE BABY.—The youngest is always emperor of the household. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, all bend to his baby dictation. He can sow the parlor carpet with cake crumbs, tip over the plant stand spill the milk pitcher, and get nothing but hugs and kisses for his rascality; he is kept on the laugh and screech by all the members of his family, and their nerves are not strained in the least; he picks up the art of talking without any trouble, and "gives away" family secrets to high-toned callers, and is rewarded by candies innumerable; he is round and chubby, and sweet and happy, and household affairs revolve in their orbits around him, as though he were a grand central sun. We pity a family who hasn't a "youngest."

The Fate having been persuaded at last to cede Dulcigno to the Montenegrins, and to issue a circular to the creditors requesting the appointment of a commission to inquire into the resources of the country, with a view to paying its debts, the Greekophiles consider this an auspicious moment to press the claims of Greece to the province which, according to the treaty of Berlin, should be ceded to that country. Lord Rosebery, as President of the Greek Committee, has lately made a speech in which the views of the majority of intelligent people are clearly set forth.

TURKEY AND GREECE

stand at the present moment on the brink of war of what, if once begun, it would be impossible to predict the end. It is certain that, should an appeal to arms be made, England, under her present Government, could not stand by and see Greece beaten, and possibly annexed, by Turkey. On the other hand, should Greece be victorious, it is hardly probable that she would be content with the territory promised her by the Berlin treaty, more especially as she would have the moral support of Russia. In such a case England could hardly remain inactive and permit her ancient ally and debtor to be plundered and the security of her Turkish bondholders to be handed over to the Athenian Government. The Greeks are clever enough to see the horns of the dilemma between which England is placed, and they realize that "now or never" applies to their case. They argue that they have waited long enough for the fulfilment of the promises made to them. Their army is ready and the sentiment of Europe is on their side. Why, then, should they not fire away? Curiously enough, the only hitch in their programme is occasioned by the troubles in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone's Ministry seems to be in such a muddle about Irish affairs, and the English populace are getting so exasperated over what they consider a policy of vacillation, that it is quite possible the Liberals may go out of office as suddenly as they entered it a few months ago. When Lord Beaconsfield was in power the Greeks were shrewd enough to keep quiet, and should he return to the Premiership, it would be a sad blow to their hopes; the Conservatives are much more opposed to a dismemberment of Turkey than the Liberals.

THE ANNUAL CATTLE SHOW

began on the 6th inst. at the Agricultural Hall, London. The distinctive features of cattle show week are as different from those of any other part of the year in London as can well be imagined. In it the farmers throng to the metropolis from all parts of England, and the streets and places of amusement are filled with their burly bodies and merry with their jovial faces and resonant voices. As a rule the month of May a casual visitor might fairly imagine that the majority of Londoners were clergymen, so, three weeks before Christmas, he might jump to the conclusion that the population was chiefly composed of farmers and stock raisers—or graziers, as they are termed—who might compete, so far are they, with their cattle for the prizes offered for an excess of adipose tissue.

This is a great season for artists, as the exhibitions of the

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS,

the Society of Painters in Water Colours, and the Dudley Gallery fully attest. The Society of British Artists, in Suffolk street, contains over a thousand pictures, none of which are very good, though many are very bad.

A different class of picture is to be found in the rooms of the Society of Painters in Water Colors, although here, too, the figure paintings are far behind the landscapes.

The Dudley Gallery is composed of cabinet pictures in oil, which as sketchers are not to be considered in comparison with pictures of more elaborate character. There is, nevertheless, a great amount of talent exhibited here. Among the most noteworthy are M. Fantin's "Panier de Fleurs d'Automne" and an intricate study of nasturtiums by the same master.

The Berlin correspondent of the London *Daily News* reports that the police authorities have paid a strange posthumous to

THE POET HEINRICH HEINE.

A portion of his works it is said, have been confiscated and ordered to be destroyed. The reason given for this singular proceeding is the fact that certain passages in the condemned portion of the dead poet's works contain unflattering remarks in regard to the reigning house of Hohenzollern. This petty attack on Heine's remains would be in keeping with the spirit now manifested in Germany against all who belong to the Jewish race.

On the 29th of November, 1780, the most liberal, intelligent, and humane monarch who ever ruled Austria took into his own hands, absolutely, the reins of imperial government. It was upon that date that Joseph the Second succeeded to the sole administration of an authority which he had already shared for fifteen years with the Empress Marie Therese. Vienna celebrated this centenary with a popular festival.

JOSEPH THE GOOD,

"the friend of mankind," was conspicuously the sovereign of the people. His universal benevolence, the liberality of his creed, his enlightened devotion to the arts and sciences, made him a grand figure among the monarchs of his time. He emancipated the peasants, introduced freedom of worship and the liberty of the press, and reformed the administration of justice, finance, and education. His especial zeal was directed against the religious orders, whose magnificent establishments he sequestrated and converted to public use as hospitals and asylums. He loved to roam about his capital as Haroun Al Raschid, used to wander through Bagdad, but he had no headsman at his heels. Once, in Moravia, he took a plough from a peasant's hand and finished the serf's work, merely to know by experience the labour it entailed. He was a break water for the people, against which the encroachments of the aristocracy and of the priesthood dashed in vain. He ruled thus wisely for ten years and died amid the lamentations of his subjects. The Viennese celebration of his accession to the throne began with a meeting of the Town Council. Their hall was profusely decorated with silken favors and garlands. A large bust of the Emperor stood between crowns of laurel. The civic dignitaries went in state to the chapel of the Capuchin Friars, where a commemorative service was held. One of the most effective features of the imposing ceremony was the singing of the *Beati Mortui* by the Vienna Manner-Gesang-Verein. At night there was a grand full dress performance at the Stadt Theatre, at the close of which the patriotic hymn, "Gott Erhalte Unsern Kaiser," was sung by an immense chorus. The students held their own celebration the night before in the great Hall of Music, where libations of beer and clouds of incense from pipes and cigars honoured the memory of the good Kaiser. It must be a gratifying fact for the present Emperor to hear the whole press apostrophize him as the only successor of Joseph the Second who has inherited his virtues and his wisdom.

The ancient

HOSPICE OF SAINT GOTHARD

is to be closed. The establishment dates back to the fourteenth century. The tunnel of the Mount St. Gothard will make the hospice useless. It was razed to the ground by an avalanche toward the end of the last century, but was rebuilt shortly afterward on a larger scale. In 1799 it was ravaged by Massena during the attack on Souvorow. The building fell almost into ruins, but was once more restored by the authorities, and has ever since remained open to poor travellers. These are almost all laborers from upper Italy, who come in troops. Over one hundred of them were recently received in a single night. Large numbers of wandering Germans are also accommodated, but Swiss and French applicants for shelter are few. Of late years the refuge received annually an average of 20,000 travellers, for each of whom is provided a warm meal and a night's lodging. The expenses are borne in part by the Governments of the Canton of Ticino and of Italy, and by annual subscriptions which are taken up throughout the Swiss cantons.

There has been but one conspicuous dramatic novelty in Paris for the past two or three weeks. M. Francois Coppee, the well-known poet, has composed a fantastic ballet called "La Korrigane," for which M. Charles M. Widor has contributed the music. It was produced at the Grand Opera in the most sumptuous manner, and achived an immediate success.

A NEW BALLET IS AN EVENT IN PARIS,

and the first night of "La Korrigane" was attended by everybody in society, including the ex-Queen of Spain with a brilliant suite. She expressed cordial delight at the triumph of Mlle. Mauri, the *premiere danseuse* of the ballet, who is a Spaniard, and who, making, with obvious nervousness, her first appearance, took the house by storm, and succeeded at once, *en pirouette*, to an upper niche in the temple of Terpsichore.

LONDON SOCIETY IS HALF PUZZLED,

half amused by the extraordinary reports of Miss Pinkerton's proficiency in speaking the English and servants in India. It seems that the Anglo-Indian circles are thrown in a state of excitement by the news of Pinkerton's marriage with Col. Olcott, who comes to be her escort—though why such a wonderfully able person should need an escort is quite beyond the guessing of all every-day people, and is a matter of great heart burning. Anyhow, it is said, she will be found afterward in Madame Tussaud's wax helmet; long-lost relations turn up unexpectedly in cabbage beds; weird missives of cigarette paper, on which are traced hieroglyphic characters, come from Thibet to people who hardly know of the existence of such a country; in fact, the most amazing phenomena occur under the most commonplace circumstances. The interest taken in all this by London society seems to produce a world of lionization for Miss Pinkerton whenever she pays a visit to the British metropolis.

Gift Hunting.

Earlier than usual—indeed every importer endeavoured to be earlier than his fellow, and he almost succeeded this year—the allurements of

A PROSPEROUS CHRISTMAS TRADE

were spread out before wishful eyes.

Our shopkeepers have most widely arranged all their departments into a greater number of divisions, or separations, than hitherto, although the fascinations of this generous season have such an opportunity of readily focusing one's attention.

This subdivision of an almost limitless variety of articles that might be classed as fine arts, high arts, decorative arts, and arts pictoresque, grotesque, and semi-worthless, offers an easy opportunity for that too common searcher after a gift; the style of which she yet knows not. If she has fixed her mind upon the fabric, or the material, she can visit the locality of such things, and hunt for a formalatic expression of her hitherto vague desires. Last year it was a rare pattern of Oriental rug that won more interest and search than anything else. The year before it was a longing, after antique bellows which were carved in discremembered ages; snuffers that had forgotten how hot candle-wicks tasted; porringers which had been for centuries bereft of gruel; halberds that were supposed to have chopped open no end of feudal but vastly heroic brains.

This year this sentiment is still warm, but its blaze is less fierce. Like volcanoes, the bursting forth of all our enthusiasms must begin upon the highest plane and pour their molten emotions down upon the lower levels. It is about these humbler surfaces that the warmth for skillets and snuffers now gathers, while the crater burns other sorts of fire.

PICK POCKETS GO TO FIRES

and funerals, and there ply their trade of robbery, because the minds of crowds are too intent upon the coffin or the tossing furniture to notice just what other motives prevail amid the throng. Annual gift-hunting draws together in the city another and equal preoccupied multitude. Only their eyes are deceived and their purses robbed; but never mind, "Christmas comes but once a year."

We have had our epochs of many things which are droll. This season our enthusiasms are more evenly divided, as I have learned by visiting the various shops where elegance combine with costliness with an unprejudiced, at least an almost even, balance. Fabrics that are painted, or embroidered, take the lead among Christmas gifts that are prepared by young ladies. These articles are for furnishing rooms or for personal decorations, or they may be painted book-bindings, cigar-cases, *portemonnaies*, letter-cases, writing-pads, etc., which are on linen, satin, silk, wood, or leather.

Gifts of silver and gold have

GIVEN PLACE TO BRASS,

this metal being the only one that causes exclamations of a properly expressed artistic delight, or an ideal enthusiasm, and perhaps very properly. With the rug there seems dreams of hearth with Christmas fires ablaze upon them. These fires suggested brass scuttles, fire screens that are in fanciful and graceful shape, andirons, braziers, shovels, tongs, and pokers, with a pretty stand for their support; also scuttles and fenders; yes, and toddy kettles, too, and brass coffee-urns, the ingenious internals of which are so subtly cunning and so satisfactory that coffee will be coffee, if not genuine nectar, no matter where its barriers grew, provided it is passed through this last invention of an inspired Russian.

BRASS AS BRASS,

and not as a metaphor, is really one of the prime factors of this season's gift combinations.

Vases and lamps from Benares, from Persia, and from Constantinople rouse a wild longing in the souls of purchasers. Their curious engravings and their still more effective carvings in this enduring and but lately dishonored metal is an illuminator to cabinets and to apartments where, but lately, only the most subdued and ripened (faded was its other adjective, but nobody used it), hues were permitted. The eyes even of trained enthusiasts may have wearied of

A TOO PROFOUND SOBERNESS.

At any rate, they are eager for possession of these articles of real beauty and luminous tints, the more especially as they are Oriental in their fabrication, and cannot be reproduced in a country where skilled labor costs much money. Only handiwork is able to perform these quaint, irregular, semi-barbaric, and yet altogether charming ornamentations, upon these recently imported objects of real art and indisputable beauty.

A few years ago, when we were young and foolish—the nat on, not the individual, is referred to—a pretty list of china, or a single cup and saucer, a dainty gruel bowl, or a tiny tray for wafers made one glad for the whole year. Now we expect to find on our table, or in our stockings, complete dinner sets, dessert sets, soup sets, fish sets, cream sets, fruit sets, or, perhaps, all these