UNDER A CLOUD.

A THRILLING TALE OF HUMAN LIFE.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GUEST'S SUGGESTION.

Stratton did not move, but stood as if lost in thought while involuntarily Guest's eyes were directed towards the door on his left.

A key had always been visible, in old times, by the handle—a key about which Guest had bantered his friend and cut jokes in which the spirit-stand and Mrs. Brade's name were brought into contact. But there was no key there now, and he recalled how Stratton had endeavored to keep him away from that door. A trifle then, but looking singularly suggestive now.

A dozen little facts began to grow and spread into horrors, all pointing to the cause of Stratton's sudden change, and strengthening Guest's ideas that there must have been a quarrel on the morning appointed for the wedding, possibly connected with money matters, and then in a fit of rage and excitement—disappointment perhaps, at not willingly receiving the help he had anticipated—a blow had been struck, one that unintentionally had proved fatal.

All Guest's ideas set in this direction, and once started everything fitted in exactly, so that at last he felt perfectly convinced that his friend had killed Brettison and in some way disposed of the body.

Stratton stood there by the fireplace, pale, haggard, and wrapped in thought, apparently utterly unconscious of his friend's presence, till Guest took a step or two forward and rested his hand upon the table.

"Well, Stratton, what have you to say?"

There was no answer. Stratton gazed at him with a far-off, fixed stare, full of helpless misery, which drew his friend far nearer in heart, and he spoke more freely now.

"Come," he said; "speak out. In spite of everything, I am your old friend. I want to help you. Will you trust me?"

"Trust you? Yes," said Stratton slowly.

"Tell me, then, everything, beginning rom the morning when you were to be married."

Stratton slowly shook his head.

"Come, man; this is no time for reticence. Tell me all," cried Guest excitedly; and he spoke in a hoarse whisper, and glanced to door and window, as if afraid of being overheard.

There was the same desponding movement.

"I will not be dragged into any confession," said Stratton fiercely. "It is my secret, and I will tell it to none. I have a right to keep my own counsel. You have a right to denounce me if you like. If you speak, you can force me to no greater punishment than I suffer now."

"Then it is all true?" groaned Guest. "You killed him, and hid him there?"

Stratton uttered a mocking laugh.

"That door—" said Guest huskily. "Twice over you have stopped me from going there. Your manner has been that of a guilty man, and I am forced to share the knowledge of your crime."

"No," said Stratton, speaking now with a look of calm contempt; "you share no knowledge—you shall share no knowledge. You say I killed him and hid him there; where are your proofs? You have brought in the police, and they have searched. What have you found? Again, I say, where are your proofs?"

Guest looked at him wildly, and his lips parted, but he uttered no sound.

"Let me rest, my good fellow, let me rest. You are warring against your own happiness in trying to pry in matters that are naught to you. I will not blight your future, Percy Guest, by letting you share any secrets of mine. There, good-night. I want to be alone."

Guest tried to recommence the argument, and to master the man who looked so pitifully weak, but somehow the other's will was too powerful, and he had to yield, leaving the chambers at last with a shudder of horror, and feeling that he could never take Stratton by the hand again.

For the man seemed changed. There was a mocking, almost triumphant, look in his eyes as he took the lamp from the table, and followed Guest out to the landing to stand there, holding the light over the massive balustrade for his friend to descend.

As Guest reached the bottom he looked up, and there, by the light which fell full upon Stratton's face, was the strange, mocking air intensified, and with a shiver he hurried across the inn, feeling that the mystery had deepened instead of being cleared.

His intention was to hurry back to his own chambers, feeling that it was impossible for him to go near Bourne Square, knowing what he did, but the yearning for one to share his knowledge proved too strong.

"And I promised that she should share every secret," he said to himself. "Whom am I to trust if I don't trust her!"

The result was that, with his brain in a whirl of excitement, and hardly knowing what he did, he leaped into the first cab, and urged the man to drive fast, while he sank back into the corner, and tried to make plans.

"I won't tell her," he decided at last. "I'll see the admiral, and he will advise me what to do."

He altered his mind directly. "It will be betraying poor Malcolm," he thought; but swayed round again directly after.

"I ought to tell him," he said. "It is a duty. He stood to him almost in the position of a father, and, for Myra's sake, ought to know; and Heaven knows I want someone to advise me now."

He changed his plans half a dozen times before he reached the square but that of telling the admiral under a pledge of secrecy was in the ascendant when the cab drew up to the door.

It was opened by Andrews.

"The admiral in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, but he's asleep in the library. Miss Myra is in her chamber, sir—not very well to-night, but Miss Edith is in the drawing room."

Guest went upstairs, and, upon entering, Edie rushed at him, when all his plans went for naught.

"Oh, how long you have been," she panted, as she caught his hands. "Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"Have you found out anything?"

"Yes."

"Is it dreadful?"

"Too dreadful to tell you, dearest," he replied sadly.

"Then I won't know," she said with a sob. "Oh, my poor, darling Myra! She will die of a broken heart, I know, I know."

Guest tried to comfort her and she grew more calm.

"I cannot—I dare not tell you."

"Not tell me—and you said you loved me!"

"As I do with all my heart."

"Then you cannot keep anything from me."

"I'll tell your uncle, and ask his opinion first."

"No, no, Percy. I must know now—I must, indeed. No, matter how terrible, you cannot keep it from me."

"But it is like betraying the man whom I'd give anything to save."

"Save? Save from what?"

"Don't press me, dearest," he said tenderly. "Trust me that it is best for you not to know."

"Percy, dear," she said gently, as she laid her hand upon his arm; "you can trust me. I always knew there must be something very terrible to make Mr. Stratton behave toward poor Myra as he did, and you and I have been plotting and planning to find it out, in the hope that it would prove to be a trouble we could bridge over, and bring them together again. You have discovered it all then at last?"

"Yes."

"Then tell me."

"I cannot—I dare not."

Edie was silent for a few moments, as she sat gazing straight before her into the dimly lit back drawing room, her eyes suffused with tears, as she at last said in a whisper:

"You asked me the other day if I would be your wife."

"And you promised me an answer when I knew all," said Guest, cutting the ground from beneath his feet.

"And now you know, and I'll tell you," she said, hardly above her breath. "Yes, Percy, some day when we have made poor Myra happy."

"Then it will never be," he said despairingly.

"Let me judge," she whispered. And he told her all.

"But—but I don't quite understand," she faltered; "you think, then—oh, it is too horrible—you think, then, he had killed poor Mr. Brettison, his friend?"

"Yes," said Guest slowly and thoughtfully. "It must have been that. I cannot see a doubt."

"Ah!"

They started to their feet at the piteous sigh which came from the back drawing room, and it was followed by a heavy fall.

Myra had entered in time enough to hear the terrible charge, and for her life seemed to be at an end.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile Stratton had stood motionless, gazing down into the dark pit formed by the staircase, with the light of the lamp he held shining full on his haggard face, made more painful by the smile which contracted the lower parts of his countenance, till the last echo of his friend's steps died out, when he turned slowly and walked into his room, closing and fastening both doors.

Then his whole manner changed.

He rushed to the table, set down the lamp so that the glass shade rattled and nearly flew out of the holder; then, crossing quickly to a cabinet, he took out a decanter and glass, poured out a heavy draught of brandy, and gulped it down.

The glass almost dropped from his hand to the table, and he clasped his brow, to stand staring before him fighting to recall his thoughts.

Twice over he threw his head back, and shook it as if something compressed his brain and confused him. Then the stimulant he had taken began to act, and he went to a drawer and took out a new screw-driver, with which, after seeing that the blinds were down and the curtains drawn over the window, he crossed to the door on the left of the fireplace; but only to turn away again, and take up the lamp and place it on a stand, so that it should light him in the work he had in hand.

He was alert and eager now, as, with deft touches, he forced the screw-driver under a piece of moulding at the top and front edge of the door, wrenched them off, and bared some half dozen screw-heads. These he rapidly turned and withdrew, laying them down one by one till all were out, when, from an inner pocket, he took out a key, unlocked the door, threw it open, and went into the bathroom, lamp in hand.

Placing it on the polished lid, he rapidly toiled on till these screws were taken out in turn, when, lifting the lamp with his left hand, he threw up the lid with his right, and stood staring down into the bath with a shudder, which rapidly passed away.

The lid fell with a heavy, dull sound, and, with a curious, wondering look, he turned and went slowly back to his table, set down the lamp, caught it up again, and walked into the bathroom, where he again set down the lamp, tore a fly-leaf from a letter in his pocket, folded it into a spill, and lit it at the lamp chimney.

"Will it burn slowly or explode at once?" he said, with a reckless laugh. "Let's see!" and once more he threw up the lid.

CHAPTER XL.

FOR HIS SAKE.

Edie rushed to her cousin where she lay prone on the carpet, her face turned toward the shaded lamp, which threw its soft light upon her face, and, even then, in her horror, the girl thought had never looked so beautiful before, while, as Guest, full of remorse, joined her, he felt ready to bite out his tongue in impotent rage, against himself for a boyish babbler in making known to two gentle women his fearful discovery at the chambers.

"Shall I ring?" he said excitedly; and he was halfway to the bell before Edie checked him.

"Ring? No; you absurd man!" she cried impatiently. "Lock the doors. Nobody must know of this but us. Here, quick, water!"

Guest was hurrying to obey the business-like little body's orders about the door when she checked him again.

"No, no; it would make matters worse. Nobody is likely to come till uncle leaves the library. Water. Throw those flowers out of that great glass bowl."

Guest obeyed, and bore the great iridescent vessel, from which he had tossed some orchids, to her side.

"That's right. Hold it closer. Poor darling! My dearest Myra, what have you done to suffer all this terrible pain?"

There were drops other than the cold ones to besprinkle the white face Edie had lifted into her lap, as she sat on the floor, bending down from time to time to kiss the marble forehead and contracted eyelids as she spoke.

"Percy dear," she said, as he knelt by her, helpful, but in spite of the trouble, full of mute worship for the clever little body before him.

His eyes meta hers, and flashed their delight, as the second word seemed to clinch others which she had spoken that night.

"This is all a secret. Even uncle must not know yet till we have had a long talk with aunt. She can be quite like a lawyer in giving advice."

Myra turned her head slightly on one side, and muttered a few incoherent words in a low, weary tone; and at last opened her eyes to let them rest on Guest's face as he knelt by her.

There was no recognition for a few moments, as she lay back, gazing dreamily at him. Then thought resumed its power in her brain, and her face was convulsed by a spasm.

Starting up, she caught his arm.

"Is it all true?" she cried, in a low, husky whisper.

Guest gave her a pitying, appealing look, but he did not speak.

"Yes, it must be true," she said, as she rose to her feet, and stood supporting herself by Guest's arm, while Edie held her hand. "You have not told anyone?" she said eagerly.

"No; I came here as soon as I knew."

"Where is Mr. Stratton?"

"At his chambers."

"And you, his friend have left him at such a time?"

"It was at his wish," said Guest gently, "his secret is safe with me."

"Yes, he trusts you. I trust you. Percy Guest, Edie, even if he is guilty, he must be saved. No, no it could not be guilt. I must not be weak now. He may be innocent, and the law can be cruel. Who knows what may be the case?"

She pressed her hands to her temples for a few moments, and then the power to think grew clearer.

"Go to him—from me. Tell him I bid him leave England at once. Leave with him, if you can be of help. Stop. He is not rich. Edie, all the money you have. Mr. Guest, take this, too, and I will get more. Now go, and remember that you are his friend. Write to me and Edie, and we will send; but, though all is over, let me know that his life is safe."

Guest caught the hand she extended with her purse and Edie's, kissed it reverently, and closed the fingers tightly round the purses, and gently thrust them from him.

"What!" Myra cried passionately; "you refuse?"

"I want to help you both," he replied gravely.

"O Percy!" cried Edie, with the tears starting to her eyes, and her tone of reproach thrilled him.

"Don't speak to me like that," he said. "You mean well, but to do what you say is to condemn him at once in everybody's sight. It is all so foreign to my poor friend's nature that, even knowing what I do, I cling to the belief in his innocence."

"Yes; he must be innocent," cried Myra. "He could not be what you say."

"Then should I be right in taking money and your message, saying to him, though not in words—'Fly for your life, like a hunted criminal'? I could not do it. Myra, Edie—think, pray, what you are urging. It would be better advice to him to say—'Give yourself up, and let a jury of your fellow-countrymen decide.'"

"No, no," cried Myra; "it is too horrible. You do not know; you cannot see what he is suffering—what his position is. I must act myself. It cannot, it cannot be true!"

"Myra!" whispered Edie, clinging to her.

"What? And you side against me, too?"

"No, no, dear! How can you speak such cruel words? You know I would do anything for your sake."

Half mad with mental agony, Myra repulsed her with a bitter laugh.

"Anything but this," she cried. "There it is, plain enough. He speaks, and you cry 'Harken! is he not wise.' He says, 'Let him be given up to justice for the mob to howl at him and say he must die' Die? Oh, no, no, no, it is too horrible! He must—he shall be saved!"

In her agony she made a rush for the door, but before she was half way there, she tottered, and would have fallen but for Guest's ready arm. He caught her just in time, and bore her to a couch, where she lay back sobbing hysterically for a few moments, but only to master her emotion, draw her cousin to her breast, and kiss her again and again before holding out her hand to Guest.

"Forgive me!" she whispered. "These long months of suffering have made me weak—half-mad. My lips spoke, not my heart. You both are wiser than I am. Help me, and tell me what to do."

"I will help you, and help him, in every way I can," said Guest gently, as he held the thin white hand in his. "Now let me talk coolly to you—let us look the matter plainly in the face, and see how matters stand. I am speaking now as the lawyer not as the friend—yes, as the friend, too but our feelings must not carry us away."

Myra struggled with her emotion, and pressed the hand which held hers firmly.

Guest was silent for a few moments and stood as if collecting his thoughts and reviewing his position.

"There is no need for taking any immediate steps," he said. "The scene that took place to-night was forced on by my precipitancy, and the danger to Stratton has passed away. To-morrow I will see him again, and perhaps he will be more ready to take me into his confidence, for there is a great deal more to learn, I am sure."

"It is not as bad as you imagined."

"After what took place to-night I can't say that," Guest replied sadly; "but there are points I have not yet grasped. An accident—a fit of passion—a great deal more than I have yet learned."

"Then go to him to-night," said Myra eagerly. "I will go with you. He shall not think that all who love forsake him in the hour of his need."

"Myra!"

"I cannot help it," she cried, springing up. "Did I not go to him when that suspicion clung to him—that he was treacherous and base? Even then in my heart I felt it could not be true. Yes, I know what you say; he has tacitly confessed to this dreadful crime, but we do not know all. I saw that Malcolm Stratton could not be base. If he has taken another's life, I know, I feel all the horror; but he has not been false or treacherous to the woman he loved, and it was on account of this horror that he shrank back that day. To insult—to treat me with contempt? No; to spare me, Edie, and my place is at his side."

"No, not now," said Guest firmly. "I will go back to-night. Trust me, please, and have faith in my trying to do what is for the best."

There was a few moments' silence, and then Myra spoke again faintly, but with more composure.

"Yes, we trust you, Mr. Guest. Don't think any more about what I said. Come to me again soon with news. I shall be dying for your tidings. Yes," she said, with a weary sigh, as she clung to his hand, "dying for your news. Only promise me this; that you will not deceive me in any way. If it is good or bad, you will come."

"You must know," said Guest quietly, "sooner or later. I will come and tell you everything."

"Then go now—go to him."

"Your father? He will think it strange that I have been and gone without seeing him."

"No; you have been to see us. I will tell him everything when we are alone. Good-night.

"Good-night."

Guest hurried back to the inn, but all was dark there; and, on going on to Sarum Street, he knocked at the door in vain.

"I can do no more," he said; and he went slowly back to his own rooms.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SMOKER'S CRAMP.

It Afflicts Those Who Roll Cigarettes, and Has Appeared in Europe.

A new disease has appeared in Europe, which has been styled smoker's cramp. It is very similar in its effects to writer' cramp or scrivener's palsy. The disease i caused by rolling cigarettes with one hand. For many years it has been common in Spain, although some smokers are so expert as to make a cigarette with a single twist of the fingers. Since a law was recently passed in France permitting the manufacture of hand-made cigarettes, large numbers of girls have been employed in rolling cigarettes by hand. It is among them that the disease has appeared. In Spain, however, it is not confined to the cigarette girls, but is a common ailment among the rest of the population who indulge in the fragrant but baneful papelito.

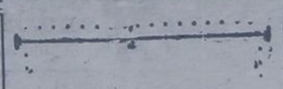
Feminine Vanity.

Some fuss has been made at Mannheim about a well-known old lady resident, Frau Sophie Brechter, having completed her hundredth year. Letters of congratulation poured in upon her, the municipality waited upon her in a body with an address, and even the German Empress sent her a portrait and autograph signature. The old lady, however, still preserves enough of feminine vanity to feel quite annoyed at these attentions. She declares she is only eighty-eight, a figure at which, according to reliable witnesses, she has stood for twelve years past.

AGRICULTURAL.

Improved Method of Laying Out an Orchard.

In laying out land for orchard planting the use of a wire marked with solder gives far more accurate measurement and is more time-saving than a measuring pole and



IMPROVED ORCHARD CHAIN.

stakes. A light galvanized wire is best, and the drops of solder that mark the distance required for the trees, or vines, should be prominent enough to be seen readily when the wire is on the ground. In taking the wire from the coil it should be unrolled, not pulled out from the end, as in the latter case the wire is more liable to take short kinks that interfere with its accuracy. About 100 yards is the limit of length of wire that can be readily handled by two men on fairly level land. On undulating land a third man will be needed at the middle of the wire. The ends of the wire are made fast to the middles of two short, stout sticks which serve as handles in moving the wire. When the wire is stretched on the ground for marking, it is held in place by pegs set against these handles. In marking off the orchard, the first step is to run a base line a, as seen in the sketch, along one side of the field. The wire is stretched tight and straight where the tree row is wanted, the handles are pegged down and then each solder mark has a peg pat down beside it. The wire is then carried to the opposite side of the proposed orchard—if that be not more than a wire's length distant,—and again stretched exactly parallel to the base line, b, and each solder mark pegged as before. This is a guide line, merely. The distance from the base line is not material, but it is material that it be exactly parallel. Now the actual work of laying off the orchard begins. The wire is stretched along the side of the field, at right angles to the base line, c, the first solder mark touches the first peg on the base line, the wire touches the corresponding peg on the guide line, is made tight and straight, fastened down, and a peg placed on each solder mark. Then the wire is moved down the field a peg, d, and the operation repeated. If all has been done with care and correctness the pegs will range straight both ways and any number of diagonals may be sighted greatly to the pleasure of the lover of exact work.

Getting the Seed Ready.

The rough, cold, rainy, or snowy days of winter may be spent to advantage indoors. The seed corn is to be selected, if it was not done in the field when gathered, as it should have been. Choose long, thin ears with deep, long, narrow grains. Such corn will ripen early and will yield from fifty to sixty bushels of shelled grain to the acre.

Carefully select four or five bushels of ears of such corn out of the corn crib and spread them upon the upper floor of the barn or in the granary, where they can be kept dry and free from vermin. It may take several days to pick out the right kind of seed, but it is time well spent.

The garden sweet corn should be likewise as carefully selected. The editor knows of a gardener who gets two dollars a bushel for all his "evergreen sweet corn," and has done so for a number of years. A farmer grows some 200 bushels of yellow corn, true to name, for which he receives an extra price These extra prices are received by those growers who are careful to make a proper selection year after year. It should never be forgotten that it is just as important to make a careful selection of farm or garden seed for one's own planting or sowing as if the seeds were grown for sale. The corn should not be shelled off the cob, as it gathers moisture when shelled and kept in bulk. It should be shelled by hand a few weeks before planting.

Seed oats, if oats are grown, should be run through the fanning mill four or five times. Take off the chaff screens and put in screens Nos. 3, 4, and 5. Put a last screen in the upper notches of the mill. This will keep the oats longer on the screen, and a more complete separation of the heavy grains from the light and chaffy will be had. The mill should be turned briskly and the oats put into the hopper gradually. Oats so cleaned will be worth sixty to seventy cents per bushel, and when drilled two bushels will seed an acre. Carrot, parsnip, and beet seeds may be cleaned in the same way.

A large number of farmers, on their limestone soils, raise clover seed, and take cold winter weather to thresh it out. It threshes better out of the hull. Such seed should be recleaned, so the light seed can be blown out of it, besides the light weed seeds. This is important, as only prime heavy seed is wanted. Dealers in clover seed say that the best seed comes from the West. This is occasioned by our farmers not being careful enough in their cleaning of the home-grown article before sending it to market.

The hay chaff from the hay mows should be carefully gathered every few weeks and kept stored in a dry place, and early sown thickly over the pasture. This seedling will thicken the sod and drive out weeds.

Wire Worms.

This pest is one of the most harassing the farmer is called upon to deal with. In turnips, mangels, and grass the presence of wire worm is often not so apparent, and remains undetected. A winter fallow is desirable after a bad attack in wheat, oat, and barley crops, in which damage is plain and manifest. In this case the land should be cultivated immediately after harvest, and moved constantly, so that nothing may grow. Early in the spring the ground should be stirred again and vetches sown, of which wire worms do not seem to be very fond. When oats and barley are attacked, dressing with soot and rolling should be tried, or nitrate of soda to stimulate the plants, says an exchange. It should be harrowed in if possible. It is suspected that wire worms are abundant in land sown with grass; some rape seed should be sown with the seeds to attract the wire worms, until the grasses are established. In meadow land infested with wire worms, rolling with a very heavy roller is sometimes beneficial. Salt at from five to seven cwts. per acre is sometimes useful, and folding sheep with mangels or swedes carted on to the grass land is a most valuable remedy.

Of Interest to All.

"During dangerous weather of this sort," said the old Doctor, "the most careful persons are apt to catch a cold in their chests that will extend swiftly to the lungs if not attended to. It usually makes its presence known by a constricted sensation just under the breastbone, where the flesh is the thinnest. When a person experiences this feeling he can rest assured that he can procure almost instant relief by drinking a cup of water as hot as he can bear to take in the mouth and to swallow. There is no better medicine in the world to arrest the progress of a cold than hot water, and, besides its affect upon the stomach and the system generally, it is beneficial in the highest degree. And in sore throat the remedy will be found almost a specific."

ONE LONG ROUND OF CURRY.

The Food the European Encounters While Living in India.

"Although Europeans in India fear Indian beef and eschew pork," said the returned East Indian, "they have several devices for obtaining edible meat. Groups of European residents at Bombay and Calcutta sometimes purchase a flock of English sheep and fatten them for the table. It is thought a great thing to buy a live sheep from one of the incoming ships, and when an English resident does this he invites his friends to dinner. Now that portable refrigerators are so excellent, game and fish are sent out from England to India, and pheasants are brought from China.

"You find along the daks or post roads of India bungalows in charge of natives. The traveler who carries his own bedding and many other necessaries may stop for two days at a bungalow for a nominal fee payable to the attendant. There is a price list of foods, and the traveler, of course, pays for the cooking. The meat at the dak bungalow is always fowl and always curried. Curry, indeed, hides the poverty of the Indian larder. It is used with almost every kind of meat and fish. Every Indian kitchen has a slab like that of the lithographer, and a stone roller, and on any morning you may see the cook preparing the curry paste for the day. The curry powder of commerce is unknown to domestic India.

THE CURRY PASTE

is made fresh every day, and thirty-two ingredients go to the making. The cook seems to take a dip out of every compartment in the spice box. Mutton curry is the staple dish, and it never comes to the table surrounded with rice as you see it in Europe and America, but the rice is served afterward. Chutney, which is made of any one of forty fruits—the mango, apples, raisins, or what not—is served with curry as pepper and salt are served with eggs in America. There is the moist curry and the dry, and a curry in which the bits of meat are skewered like chicken livers en brochette. The southern India and Ceylon curry tastes strongly of fresh cocoanut, and almost every district has its special curry. It is a breach of etiquette in India to eat curry with anything but a spoon. If need be, you may use the fork to separate the bits of curried meat into smaller pieces, but the spoon alone may convey the meat and sauce to the mouth. Along with the curry are several slices of tongue and Bombay duck, which is peculiar dried fish extremely popular in India. It is toasted, and it tastes a little like toasted bread and cheese. A thin yellow cake or biscuit is also often served with a curry of mutton.

"There are many excellent fish in the Indian waters. The fresh Bombay duck, much like a jelly, is served for breakfast eaten with a spoon. The sier is another good fish, and the pomfret another. Oysters, too, have been planted along the Indian coast, but Europeans have a notion that they are unwholesome and many will not eat them. Indian milk is thin and poor. It comes from the native buffalo cow, or from the goat, mostly the former. The butter is correspondingly poor, being almost white, and to many very unpalatable.

INDIA IS RICH IN FRUITS,

and I sometimes think the most delightful fruit in the world is the East Indian mango. It is utterly different from the turpentine-like West India mango. Mangoes are so valuable that when you have a compound with mango trees the fruit does not belong to you, and just before it ripens the owner sends a native to sit under the trees and see that you take none of it. The ripe mango fetches at least 25 cents, and is, of course, a luxury of the well-to-do. The proper place to eat it is in one's bath before breakfast, for the pulp stains one's hands and clothing. It is served just from the ice, and you cut it into three parts, and scoop the pulp from the thick, tough rind with a spoon. Then you reach the stone. There can be nothing more delicious. It is also good pickled. The pomegranate of northern India is good, but the oranges are poor, shrivelled things, and I never cared for the custard apple or the tasteless guava, though it is of the latter that the familiar and delicious jelly is made. Bananas of many varieties are abundant and good.

"Ice is a necessity of the East Indian kitchen. I have heard that it used to be brought over in American clipper ships. Now it is made by machinery and chemicals but it is expensive. Indian drinks, by the way, are a delusion, though punch is an Indian invention, and is so named because it originally had five ingredients, punch being Hindustan for five. The good East Indian of any religion save the Christian does not use alcoholic drinks, and the native drinks are lemonades and fruit syrups of gay colors, cooled in porous vessels.

"Europeans habitually dine in the elaborate European fashion, and it one dines at the court of a native ruler, the host likes to imitate the European meal. Ordinary natives eat sitting on their haunches about a bowl of curry. They take the curry and the rice, made a ball of it with their fingers and pop it into the mouth. One is occasionally invited to a native wedding or some such celebration. On such an occasion the European guest is laden with heavy garlands of flowers, scented with sweet water, and fed upon all sorts of curious native cakes and other sweetmeats. Champagne is often served for the European guest, though the host declines to touch it. A not unusual accompaniment of such an entertainment is a dance by a group of Nautch girls. The dance is a disappointment to the European that has heard startling stories of Egyptian Nautch dancers. All the dancing that I have seen on such occasions has been performed in an elaborate costume that hid the whole person of the dancers. The thing is really a posturing to the music of a twanging banjo and the drone of the dancers. It may last two hours, and one is bored after the first ten minutes."

The Sea's Inroads on England.

An inspection of the cliff between Dover and St. Margaret's shows that an enormous slip has taken place—the largest subsidence of coast cliff, in fact, which has occurred for many years. When it happened, on Sunday, a dull roar was heard in the distance, followed by a cloud of dust from debris, which blew across Dover Bay almost like a sea fog. There is every appearance that when the frost breaks further slips will occur, as there are several places along the cliff where there are great cracks on the top, as well as in the face of the cliff. One is right in front of the convict prison, which, in course of time, as well as the South Foreland Lighthouses and the Cornhill Coastguard Station, must stand in great danger of slipping into the sea unless some measures are taken for the protection of the foreshore. So serious has been the effect in recent years of the encroachment of the sea that the whole line of cliff between Dover and St. Margaret's is becoming extensively honeycombed at the base.

He Paid the Bills.

Mrs. D'Avnoo—What are you groaning about now, I should like to know?

Mr. D'Avnoo—The bills for your last reception are just coming in.

Mrs. D'Avnoo—Well, I will pay those bills with my own money if you will relieve me of the duty of listening to the chatter of people who come to make party calls. There's the bell now. Go to the parlor.

Mr. D'Avnoo—Um—I'll pay 'em my dear.

SOME FORTUNE STORIES.

Lucky Distant Relatives—Tin Cans Filled with Gold Sovereigns—A Foolish Young Man—A Ruined Noble Family.

The London newspapers within a day or two have told interesting stories of the fate of three large private fortunes. Each episode might make the basis for a striking drama. The first is altogether charming. A rich Bordeaux merchant died intestate without direct heirs. His fortune of 22,000,000 francs has just been distributed among a large number of humble French families and distant relatives of the deceased man who never saw him. Among the beneficiaries are two barbers, a cooper, a shoemaker, and several laborers.

The second story is the blackest contrast. It tells of the fate of an old man long known as a miser, who kept a little cigar shop in London. The shop was closed for several days, and finally it was entered by the police, who found the owner almost naked and frozen to death. There was no food nor fuel in the place, but on the shelves were found several large tin cans, usually holding snuff,

FILLED WITH GOLD SOVEREIGNS.

Complete search revealed money and securities amounting to $150,000. The dead miser had no known relatives.

The third story is that of a foolish young man who inherited a fortune of $3,500,000. He recently spent within a period of two or three weeks no less than $435,000 for jewelry. He is now suing one of the best known Bond street jewellers, from whom he bought the stuff, on account of alleged overcharges to the amount of $85,000. Joseph Tasker is the young spendthrift's name, and among the trifles which he testified to buying from the persuasive canvasser for the jewellers were the famous Agra diamond at $75,000, seven large brilliants $150,000, a beautiful bow brooch for $25,000, the Stafford collection of colored gems for $50,000, and a model of the Holy City for $6,000. He wanted to buy the renowned Hope diamond and offered $160,000 for it, but the sale was not completed. The plaintiff created a good deal of amusement, and disgust as well, by his behavior in court. He professed the utmost indifference for the whole matter, and was much annoyed when he was urged to recall the particulars of transactions

INVOLVING FORTUNES.

He had more important affairs than such trifles, he declared, and frequently he replied to questions by such words as "Oh, it don't matter," and "Blowed if I know." It was brought out that he had spent many thousands more for curios, "rubbish" he called them, in all parts of the world, to fill up his apartments at the Hotel Belgravia. It was attempted to show that some of his largest purchases had been made at his rooms when recovering from the effects of a debauch.

The case of a ruined noble family was made public last week. Count Stozzi hazarded the whole of his fortune in big land building speculations in Rome a few years ago, and for two or three short weeks was seemingly an assured winner of millions. But a crash came while his operations were still open, and he went under, with scores of families as noble, as ancient, and as reckless. The Count's young daughter was engaged to be married at the time, but her lover proved as

FICKLE AS FORTUNE,

and the ruined family retired to Bologna. The young Countess, in order to support her parents, took a place as chambermaid, and recently, under stress of poverty, stole some of her mistress's jewelry, and being tried and convicted was mercifully sentenced to only twelve days' imprisonment, the Judge admitting as extenuating circumstances the sad change in her family's fortunes. The publicity thus given to the case may possibly prove the salvation of the family. The young Countess is now 28 years of age.

HINDUISM AND ISLAMISM.

No Possibility of the Continent of India Ever Becoming One Nation.

That the 280,000,000 inhabitants of the continent of India should ever become one nation is so wild an improbability, and even if possible, a matter of so many centuries, that its assumed realization cannot be made the basis of practical politics. England and Ireland are an example of the slowness of growth of a common national sentiment in closely-allied peoples forming one State, and the national unification of mediaeval Europe would have been a problem analogous to that of India to-day. For Latin, then, as English now, in India was a common tongue for the educated classes, yet the former did not supplant, as the latter is now not destroying, the popular languages. And the ideal of a temporal head of Christendom in the holy Roman Emperor, with its attendant aspirations, was a sentiment counteracting local or tribal feeling stronger than any that has yet arisen in India from the superimposed authority of the Queen's Government, while there is nothing in India to correspond with the religious unity of Europe under the Popes. For Hinduism and Islam show no signs of decay, and the antagonism between their followers is on the increase.

In the traditions of history, one of the most powerful elements of national sentiment, the pride of the one is the shame of the other. The Mussulman glories in Aurangzeb; the followers of Gobind Singh and Sivaji detest his memory. Intermarriage is impossible, and is a sin even among the myriad castes of Hindus. There is no historical example of such a miracle as the amalgamation into one nation of such a multitude of diverse elements, and if it is to be effected the first steps have yet to be taken.

His Own Little Railroad.

About a year ago a complete railway a mile and half in length was laid down by a London firm of small engine builders in the grounds of the Marquis of Downshire, who acts as his own engine driver and stoker. The train in connection with this private line, which was also supplied by the firm in question, consists of a locomotive—the exact model of a Northern Railway passenger express—weighing three tons, one carriage, and a guard's van.

The engine cost 1,000 guineas, can travel forty miles an hour, and consumes something like 200 pounds of coal per day. This railway precisely resembles a big railroad, only, of course, it is in miniature. There are the usual signal boxes and switches, these latter being strictly necessary, as his Lordship's railway runs across the carriage drive. Besides this the Marquis of Downshire has a model of a Great Eastern Railway engine five feet in length, which is fitted with Joy's patent gear. It cost 800 guineas, and runs through the conservatories, a distance of about a quarter of a mile.

The Queen's Baggage.

Our Paris correspondent learns that the greater part of the Queen's luggage, including 134 boxes, has been already forwarded to the Riviera, so as to be at the Hotel Cimiez before Her Majesty. The railway lines by which the Queen is to travel have been informed that she will pass over them on the 15th and 16th of next month. She will be due at Darmstadt on the 24th of April.

GOES ON DOING BUSINESS.

JOHN BULL NO LONGER PULLS THE CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE.

To Protect His Interests and Care for His People Everywhere is What He is Now Doing—He is No Longer the Cat's Paw for Scheming Nations.

"John Rusk" has the following interesting communication in the Chicago Post:—

This is a song long sung. It is more intense at present, lighter in key and reaching far. It is on a par with the idea and in time with the chord promulgated and played upon for twenty-five years—that England is a decaying power.

Why mention twenty-five years? Because in that time those great armies have risen in Europe which have put some nations in the front, which stay there by force of arms. It is argued that England in consequence of these changes is a bit of mud lying off the coast of Europe and living wholly by the sufferance of continental governments. But they prove too much, and the earnestness and force of argument used to show that Great Britain is dead is only proof that she is still alive.

We are told ad nauseum that England never makes a move without using some nation as a "cat's-paw" to pull chestnuts out of the fire. The fact of the matter is, Great Britain, until a few years since has been the "cat's-paw" and she is now refusing to rake the chestnuts. She played her moneybags, and her men to maintain "the equilibrium." Whenever a cry went up the "equilibrium is being destroyed" it was quite certain that England would suffer a hemorrhage of

GOLD AND BLOOD TO THAT "BOGEY."

The alliances in Europe, coax, cajole, bluff, swagger, swear, sing softly and quote figures to show her on what side she should throw her magnificent fleet, her immense riches, her small but memorable army. And she says nothing, but goes on doing business.

Isolated in one sense she must be; her people will not permit her to be otherwise. She wishes for no foes. She did not create the circumstances of the vast armament. Why should she be enslaved by its conditions? The task of Europe is to compel her to come into this slavery.

See some of the methods. Great Britain for "equilibrium" of power has sustained Turkey. When Russia was intriguing in Bulgaria it was declared that Great Britain would lose prestige if she permitted it. Bismarck declared very loudly that he would not spend the life of one Pomeranian. That with other things was contrived to let the load down on Great Britain. She did not take it for she saw that the advance of Russia was far more to Germany and Austria than to her. Great Britain sees the situation and proposes to allow the Pomeranian to share it. The Russian so far has not advanced and Great Britain is not isolated in fact. She simply shares the situation where

SHE USED TO BEAR IT ALONE.

Recent events in the Pamirs have given rise to much talk. The press of the continent has told Great Britain that the road to Asia is so long; the dreibund can have no possible interest in any matters there. England has always attended to business alone in Asia. The comments of the press simply made the adjustment of the Pamir question between England and Russia a bit more impressive. Just as soon as the question is arranged quietly the continental press raises its voice to warn Albion that Europe is against her. Why? Because she attended to the Asian business alone.

Our own writers say that Great Britain is being fooled. Great Britain alone does not see it. The writers on foreign politics see it best, and say with great solemnity England is being deceived. They should remember the dictum is: Affairs in Asia lie too far toward the sunrise to affect Europe.

England, like other countries, is caught napping, but she manages to make a living, and if anyone thinks she forgets the past or shuts her eyes to the future in dealing with Russia he is mistaken.

THE LAST INCIDENT

is the passing of Russian ships of war through the Dardanelles. England permits it. Leaving Russia out of the question, the people who live north of the Black Sea have the right to come down to the sunlight and beauty and business of the Mediterranean. The sooner that is recognized the sooner will much of the congested political condition pass away. If Great Britain willingly permits it—permits what is natural—she will have friendship on a true basis. Let those who want to bottle Russia up do the business. Why call so frantically to Great Britain? So long as there is talk about a feeble degenerate and isolated England, there is room to think her situation is not desperate. That she wants territory is natural. Her condition is such that she must have markets. When her spindles and wheels are still, her forges smokeless, her ships gaunt and empty, her children die, pitifully stoical as her soldiers on the bleak and bitter winter hills and sands of the Crimea.

The "belly" is a wonderful factor in life and the talk of trade in England is a simple matter of meat and bread. A nation like an army, is successful only as it feeds itself.

IT WILL BE A COMMON CAUSE.

We ought not to fight British Advances in any territory, for the time is coming when we shall take the lead in the Anglo-Saxon race. We shall have enough to do to make headway against the hundreds of millions of Slavs and Mongols when they waken and they will. Watch patiently the growth of the English language. Its future, its lands will be ours to share in most. We shall be isolated—Anglo-Saxon isolation. It is the Anglo-Saxon vs. the world; not in war, but valor of ideas. Great Britain has a difficult role. Can she remain free of entangling alliances?

Her riches make the dream of her foes a danger. They would seize her territory, dismember her empire. The continental press delicately phrases it thus:—"Let us strike the monster at the heart; take London. Carthago delenda est."

The combination of many powers against Great Britain is a contingency she must contemplate. Then better go down to the sea bottom and sacrifice every man she has than surrender. If her colonies have any blood or pluck they will stand with her.

Great Britain's isolation is simply attending to her own territory. That is all.

Learning Golf.

First Young Lady (learning golf)—Dear me! What shall I do now? This ball is in a hole.

Second