

The Castle of Lies

BY ARTHUR HENRY VESEY

(COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY DAPPLETON & COMPANY)

CHAPTER XXX.—Continued.

"The papers from the safe, did you say?" asked Helena in slow wonder. "Perhaps you know that I was imprisoned in the room yonder. It took me three hours to loosen the bar of the window. I made my way round the sloping roof of the towers by the stone gutter to the window of that other room. The window was open. When I gained it, and was about to enter it, I saw this man, whom I believed to be your brother, enter the room, bolt the door behind him, kneel at the safe, open it, and abstract from it a packet of papers which he now has in his pocket."

If Forbes had expected Helena to be dumfounded at this surprising news, his wish was gratified. But it was wonder tempered with infinite joy. The papers that convicted her brother of guilt had been rescued from the cruel clutch of Madame de Varnier. She did not realize at once that I had steered clear of Charybdis only to fall foul to Scylla. The peril of Sir Mortimer's guilt being known was now infinitely greater than it had been half an hour ago. Helena's defense of myself, and Madame de Varnier's untimely interruption, had both alienated all sympathy from Helena and strengthened his conviction that I was one of the conspirators.

If I had kept silent so long, if it seems unmanly that I should have allowed a woman to plead in my behalf—it is because I was racking my brain for a means of escape from the awkward predicament that held me captive.

"I have told you, Captain Forbes, that I have ample reason to believe in the honesty of Mr. Haddon. If he has taken any papers from the safe, it is with my fullest and deepest gratitude. It was the woman there who had stolen them from my brother. They are personal papers. They concern only my mother and myself now that Mortimer is dead. Mr. Haddon will restore them to me."

"I shall forbid that," protested Forbes hotly. "I tell you, Miss Brett, those are papers of State. They belong to the State. I must see that they are placed in the hands of the ministers of the Foreign Office. For the last time, give me those papers."

I leaped at the loophole Helena had offered me. If I could not prevent their falling into the hands of Forbes, at least I could delay that dire event. "I shall obey you, Miss Brett. Into your hands alone shall I place those papers."

"If you please," she said with dignity, and held out a hand that did not tremble to receive them.

And still I hesitated. I saw the gleam of resolution in the glitter of Forbes' blue eyes. If I produced the papers now it would be only to have the king's messenger snatch them from my grasp. Forbes turned to Helena in angry triumph.

"You see, Miss Brett, he hesitates. The woman and himself are as reluctant that the papers fall into your hands as they are that I obtain them. He thinks that he may trick you, as he has already once tricked me. Is there nothing I can say to shake your blind confidence in this treacherous impostor?"

"Nothing," said Helena, with resolution; but I could see her troubled surprise at my reluctance.

"Then I shall be forced to resort to violence. I am going to have those papers, and at once. If you are so blind to the grave danger of letting this man keep the papers, even for the moment, I am not. How could he have taken them from the safe unless it were with the permission and perhaps at the entreaty of this Madame de Varnier?"

"The inference is clear enough, I should think—she must have left the door of the safe open."

Helena spoke confidently, but trust in me had been put to a sore test. "Your credulity is very great, if you think that. Why, madam, I saw him deliberately work the combination of the safe."

Helena uttered a cry of horror at my supposed treachery. Her trust was shattered.

"I could not dream of a villainy so hypocritical."

watched her open the safe through the half-closed door.

It was only a question of instants before she had thrown open the door of the safe with a cry of dismay. But that instant sufficed.

As Forbes turned his back to me I took swiftly from my pocket the two packets. One envelope was plain, with no writing on it. The other was addressed to Sir Mortimer Brett and bore a foreign stamp.

No word was spoken. I had but to hold the two packets before Helena. In an instant she had hidden in the bosom of her dress the first packet I had mentioned, whose envelope was plain; the other I returned to my pocket.

Madame de Varnier sprang to her feet with the likeness of a tigress. She came toward me as I stood by Forbes' side with a rage that was dreadful in its intensity.

Before I could guess at her purpose she had torn my coat open and seized the packet I had placed there. She pressed it into Forbes' hand. Her bitter rage and disappointment made her oblivious of the fact that she had given only one of the packets.

"Take it!" she screamed. "Take it! Ah, M. Coward, you are clever, but I shall have you nothing. At least I shall have my revenge."

Forbes buttoned his coat over the papers he had received with an



"Take it!" She screamed. "Take it!"

amazed but grim satisfaction. Helena, standing apart from us, was convulsively clenching and unclenching her hands. Unseen by the other two, I cast her a meaning glance that she should exert her strong will to regain her poise. When they looked at her she stood passive and acquiescent. As for myself, I affected an air of chagrin and defeat.

"You will bear me witness, Miss Brett, that I did my best to place the packet in your hand. I can only hope that Captain Forbes will restore you those papers without reading them, or that they are of little importance."

"Little importance!" hissed Madame de Varnier. "Sir, guard those papers well; your ministers at Downing street will not thank you if you lose them. And now, M. Coward, that you have conquered me, but not robbed me of my revenge, how much longer are we to stay here?"

Captain Forbes showed little surprise at the turn affairs had taken. He interpreted Madame de Varnier's move as that of one who had betrayed a confederate for motives of revenge. While he recognized the fact, he mistook the motive.

"And they speak of honor among thieves!" he sneered in an aside to Helena.

I feared that Helena might make an indignant protest. But she said nothing. I supposed her silence dictated by prudence; this was no time to champion my cause. But as I looked at her I read her perplexity in her troubled eyes. I had given her back the papers indeed, but that I should have known the combination was too startling a fact to be accepted without distrust. I could have known the combination only from Madame de Varnier; that proved to me to have been in her confidence. If I had repented and betrayed my accomplice in my remorse, she was grateful for the act itself, but she could no longer trust me.

"As this woman says," Forbes was speaking to me, "there is nothing to detain us here longer. But you, sir, as well as this woman, will leave this room only to be placed under arrest. You must consider yourself my prisoner."

With these words he strode toward the door of the staircase, and turned the handle.

"It is locked," he said sternly. "Who has the key?"

I handed it to him in silence. As he received it from me he glanced meaningfully toward Helena. It was one more link in the chain of evidence. I confess I could have wished the key had not been in my pocket.

He turned the key. To the consternation of all of us the door still resisted his efforts. He exerted all his strength to no purpose.

"What new trick is this?" he demanded furiously of me.

"I think," it was to Madame de Varnier I answered, "that Dr. Starva has taken the precaution of insuring himself a free field."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Ladder of Stones.

Madame de Varnier had been seated in sullen apathy. At my words she looked up at me for a moment in dull surprise. Then slowly, as if a mask had fallen over her face, an expression of horror and insensate fury disfigured her beauty. She rushed to the door; she shook it frantically; she beat on it futile blows.

"What does it mean, this locked door?" demanded Forbes of me once more.

"It means that Dr. Starva, the ally of this woman, for some purpose of his own, has imprisoned us here," I answered calmly. "Even you, Captain Forbes, will not accuse me of fastening the bolt."

He turned from me in contemptuous silence. "It is only a question of a few hours at the most," he said reassuringly to Helena. "At dawn we can attract the attention of some one from the street. In the meanwhile we must be patient."

"I am thankful that you were able to make your way to me," said Helena brokenly. "It would be dreadful to be here alone with my brother lying dead in that room."

"Are we to make no effort?" I demanded. "Surely in some way—"

My words were arrested on my lips. Madame de Varnier had abandoned

him them. Madame de Varnier and I were alone.

"I hope you are satisfied, monsieur, with your adventure in this Castle of Happiness," she said with a hysterical sob.

"I am waiting for the climax," I answered significantly. "Is it to be a comedy or a tragedy?"

"Oh, God!" she raised her clenched hands in a gesture full of anguish, "it is I who am asking that."

"Why did you look at me in that manner. You wish to tell me something—to warn me."

"The death-mask—" she whispered. Her emotion suffocated her. "Why should Dr. Starva have imprisoned us here, unless—"

"I looked at her stupefied. "But Prince Ferdinand is not here at the chateau."

Her self-control vanished utterly. She clung to me in her despair.

"Save him! Save him!"

"But Ferdinand is not at the chateau!" I repeated.

"Last night—in the music room—that death-mask!" She spoke incoherently, but her meaning was too clear. "You knew that he was coming here?"

"When you told me of the death-mask, when I saw the rage of Dr. Starva—I realized his danger. Yes, he was coming here—to-night. But I telegraphed him that at all costs he must not come. But if Dr. Starva by some means intercepted that telegram—"

"Who sent it?" I questioned anxiously.

"Jacques."

"Then your prince is doomed. It was Jacques who betrayed to me your presence here. I thought it was because I bribed him sufficiently well. Be sure of this, he is Starva's creature."

"Heavens, how you torture me! But if this is true, why did he allow Sir Mortimer's sister to come to me? He must have known that you sent for her."

"With ourselves she would be safely out of the way. Dr. Starva is more ingenious than I have given him the credit of being. We are caught like rats in a trap."

"But you must save him!"

"Impossible!"

"Listen: it is not impossible. There is a ladder—not on this side, but beneath the window of the oratory."

Her eyes glittered in the semi-darkness. She placed a finger on my lips. I had cried out in my surprise.

"A ladder of a hundred feet or more! And it stands against the wall of the tower!" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Besides, if it were there, Captain Forbes must have seen it."

"This ladder, I call it so for want of a better name, is made of great stones half as long as one's forearm that project from the smooth masonry at intervals of a foot. The chateau is old, very old. In feudal times, with a stout rope, one might escape from the tower. But it is impossible! We have no rope." She wrung her hands.

"But if this ladder of stones reaches from roof to terrace, it would be simple enough without a rope. The stones are built out at regular intervals. How far are they apart?"

"At intervals of a foot, they reach in a straight line for 100 feet. But the chateau is 150 feet high. These stones begin at the roof. No one could drop that 50 feet to the marble terrace below and live. Yes; we are caught like rats in a trap."

"Fifty feet! It would mean a broken limb, if not certain death. But if a rope could be knotted of our clothing for half that distance!"

I went into the room through whose window the king's messenger had made his untimely entrance. I leaned far out of the window, shuddering. I was resolved to make the descent myself. Twice I had proved myself a coward. This was to be my chance, unless Forbes should stubbornly refuse to believe in the existence of Ferdinand's danger.

The moon was rising; it shed an unearthly light on the pale face of Madame de Varnier as she looked up at me anxiously. The wind came in fitful gusts.

Suddenly there sounded a muffled report. At first I thought it thunder in the far-away mountains. But as I listened intently the mysterious sound was repeated again and again, though more and more feebly. And it came from above.

"Do you hear it, that strange, muffled clap?" I asked of Madame de Varnier.

She took my place at the open window. For some moments she heard nothing. Then, strangely enough, though the wind was blowing almost a gale, it sounded distinctly.

"It is a flag on the high flagstaff of the central tower," she said presently. "But you can have given orders that it be raised?"

"That is a matter of indifference," I said joyfully. "An ensign so large as that requires a fairly substantial cord. If we can get that cord and plait it—"

"Where is it fastened? Surely at one of these windows?"

"No," she said anxiously. "It is Dr. Starva who has raised that flag. But why? The question seemed to increase her anxiety."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

herself to her despair. As I spoke she looked up furtively, and then transgressively clenching and unclenching her hands. Unseen by the other two, I cast her a meaning glance that she should exert her strong will to regain her poise. When they looked at her she stood passive and acquiescent. As for myself, I affected an air of chagrin and defeat.

"You will bear me witness, Miss Brett, that I did my best to place the packet in your hand. I can only hope that Captain Forbes will restore you those papers without reading them, or that they are of little importance."

"Little importance!" hissed Madame de Varnier. "Sir, guard those papers well; your ministers at Downing street will not thank you if you lose them. And now, M. Coward, that you have conquered me, but not robbed me of my revenge, how much longer are we to stay here?"

Captain Forbes showed little surprise at the turn affairs had taken. He interpreted Madame de Varnier's move as that of one who had betrayed a confederate for motives of revenge. While he recognized the fact, he mistook the motive.

"And they speak of honor among thieves!" he sneered in an aside to Helena.

I feared that Helena might make an indignant protest. But she said nothing. I supposed her silence dictated by prudence; this was no time to champion my cause. But as I looked at her I read her perplexity in her troubled eyes. I had given her back the papers indeed, but that I should have known the combination was too startling a fact to be accepted without distrust. I could have known the combination only from Madame de Varnier; that proved to me to have been in her confidence. If I had repented and betrayed my accomplice in my remorse, she was grateful for the act itself, but she could no longer trust me.

"As this woman says," Forbes was speaking to me, "there is nothing to detain us here longer. But you, sir, as well as this woman, will leave this room only to be placed under arrest. You must consider yourself my prisoner."

With these words he strode toward the door of the staircase, and turned the handle.

showed traces of his business, and, indeed, on the surface of the water traces of oil were found.

Showed Traces of His Business

A blind street musician, reports a Chinese paper, stood on the shore of a river, puzzled how to cross the stream. He implored an oil dealer, who happened to come along, to assist him. The oil dealer had pity on the helpless man, took him on his shoulders, gave him his money bag to hold and carried him across. When he deposited his burden on the other shore the blind man refused to return him his money bag, raised a noise and declared that the money was his property. The matter came before a judge, and each man said on oath that the money belonged to him. The judge finally ordered the bag of money emptied into a water tank, and then suddenly announced that the oil dealer was the owner. When asked for the reason for his decision, he declared that the money of the oil dealer must

certainly show traces of his business, and, indeed, on the surface of the water traces of oil were found.

Disgrace to the Profession.

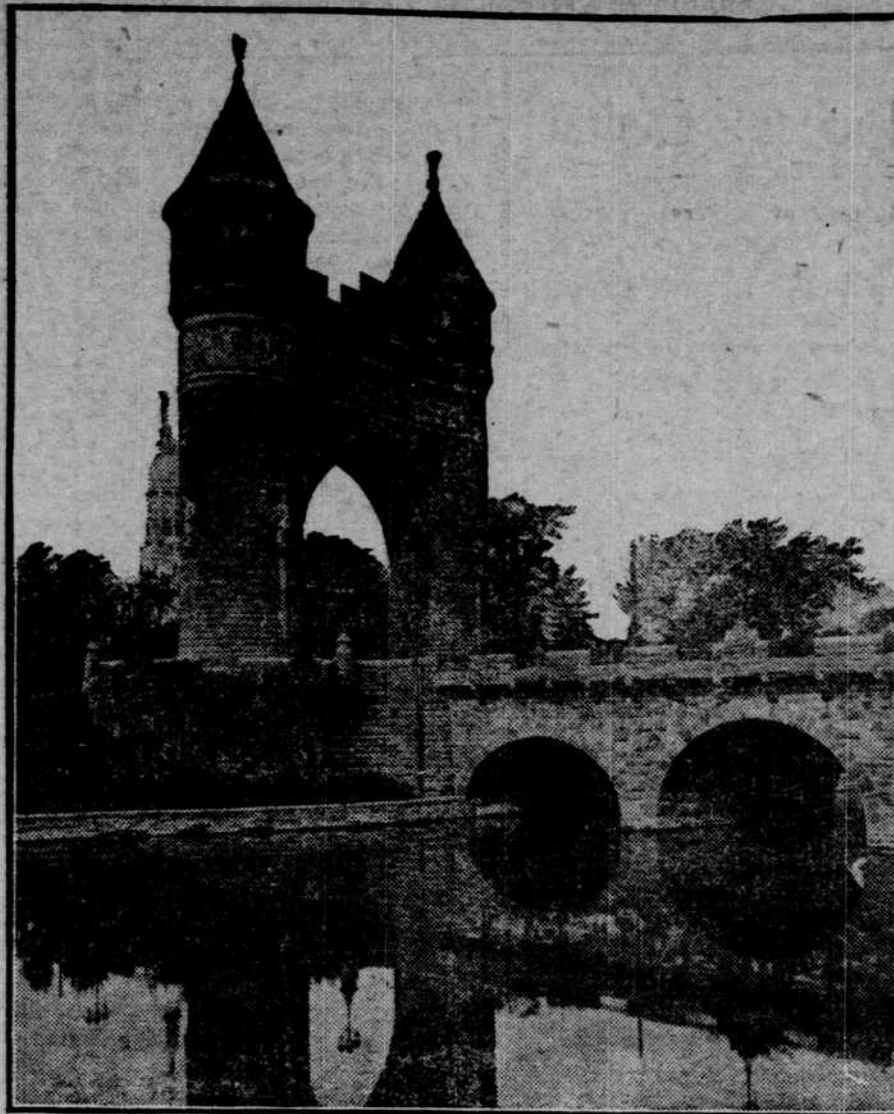
Wareham Long—I ain't arskin' fur somethin' to eat, mister. I'm tryin' to raise a little money so's I can git out o' this town. I need a change of air.

Fellare (formerly Rusty Rufus)—You do, you grimy old fraud, but you need a change of shirts a thundering sight worse. Here's a dollar and a kick, to assist you in effecting both of those changes. Have the goodness to move on.

Horse Has Small Stomach.

In proportion to its size, the horse has the smallest stomach of any quadruped.

Memorial Arch, Hartford, Conn.



Erected in Honor of the Soldiers of the Revolution.

If there have been any increases in this original number, expiration of enlistments has kept the total down.

Not many of the men are going back to the companies when their three years have expired. Most of the privates are counting the days and months which elapse between now and the hour when they again will become the directors of their own movements.

Officers at the post say the country is too prosperous to make recruiting successful. Nearly everyone is at work, and those who want employment have it. There also is little glamour to the army service at present. Enlistment means either the monotonous routine of post life or service in Cuba or the Philippines, where climatic conditions are bad and insects numerous.

"There are almost as many officers being graduated from West Point each year as there are new men being enlisted."

The new barracks will be completed about October 1. They were to have been ready this summer, but as there is little pressing need for them at the present time the failure of the contractors to complete the work on schedule will cause no hardship.

As soon as the six new structures are ready the various companies will move into them from the old barracks, which then will be remodeled. The new structures are designed to accommodate several companies. Each company will have its own messroom, doing away with the need of a general mess hall.

BLACK EYE FOR BRIDE.

Groom Objected to Other Men Dancing With Her and Riot Ensued.

Irwin, Pa.—Michael Portezy side-stepped a social custom among Russian miners, east of town, and the result was a free-for-all fight, numerous broken heads, a riot call, and seven arrests. Portezy married pretty Annie Barzek. Wedding festivities started at his boarding house in the evening with a dance.

The men present supposed the usual custom was to be followed, that of dancing with the bride on payment of a silver coin. When the first man came up to lead out the woman the groom objected. The former insisted, but Portezy contended that he would not allow his wife to dance with other men all night, just because they had money to pay her. John Maszy then attempted to haul the bride to the floor. This was a signal for a blow at Maszy's head. A general fight started. When officers arrived nearly all of the guests bore marks of the fracas.

Portezy was badly used up and his bride had a black eye, while her wedding finery was almost stripped from her. Seven men were locked up on charges of rioting.

FEW SEEK ARMY LIFE.

RECRUITING AT SO LOW EBB OFFICERS ARE DISCOURAGED.

Scarcity of Men Seriously Interrupts the Formation of New Mounted Battery Being Organized at Fort Sheridan.

Chicago.—Recruiting for the regular army has fallen to such a low ebb that the commandant and officers at Fort Sheridan are despairing of success in their efforts to keep the companies there filled up to the required peace footing.

The scarcity of men has interrupted seriously the formation of the new mountain battery which is being organized at the post, and the Third battalion of the Twenty-seventh infantry, stationed there, is short 150 men.

Despite the activity of the recruiting officers, the new battery needs 125 more men, and the outlook for getting these enlistments is so poor that no

efforts are being made toward obtaining equipment for the organization.

The Third battalion of the Twenty-seventh infantry suffered when the First and Second battalions of the regiment were sent to Cuba last fall under the command of Col. Pitcher.

The companies of the Third were broken down that the companies of the other two battalions might be filled for the Cuban service. At that time it was thought the regiment would be back after a few months, but it remains in Cuba and seems likely to for a considerable period.

As this condition of affairs became apparent Maj. Chatfield, commanding officer at the fort, made efforts to obtain additional men for the battalion. His sergeant major, however, has been able to report only a few enlistments.

As a starter for the new mounted battery, 25 men for each company were sent from one of the other posts.

PARDON AFTER THIRTY YEARS.

Man Sentenced for Stealing Two-Dollar Pig Now Free.

Montgomery, Ala.—William Pearson, who escaped from the Alabama penitentiary 30 years ago, while serving sentence for stealing a pig, and fled to Texas, settling at Palestine, where he has become a man of prominence and influence, has been pardoned by Gov. Comer.

The petition for his pardon was made by Gov. Campbell and Congressman Gregg of Texas, who say that Pearson is a leading and wealthy citizen of Palestine and that he and his wife and children stand high socially. The petition states Pearson has frequently refused political office because he knew he could not legally hold it.

Gov. Comer had the case looked up and found Pearson had been convicted in 1876 in Clay county, when he was 18 years old, of stealing a pig valued at two dollars and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. After serving two months Pearson escaped by knocking down a guard, and nothing was heard of him till the petition came from the Texas governor.

DUCK TIES UP PHONE SYSTEM.

Gets Wire in Its Mouth and Line Is Short-Circuited.

Watertown, S. D.—One spoonbill duck was the cause of the suspension of the long distance telephone service east of this city for several hours.

All tests known to the management were applied but failed to locate the seat of trouble. A lineman was despatched by team to ascertain the cause. He found that, just east of Almont, the third station from this city, on the Northwestern railroad, a spoonbill duck, in its flight from one lake to another, had evidently started to quack either a greeting or a warning to its mate and had caught the wire full in the mouth. The momentum had carried it against a second wire, the two forming a vicelike grip upon the bird's neck, the body making several revolutions around the wires and twisting them into a cable, thus short-circuiting the system. The duck, with a broken neck, was still suspended from the wires when the linesman reached the scene.

Chief Meocatsé



One of the chiefs of the Osage tribe which is the richest tribe of Indians in the world.

Shakespeare's Phrases.

Users of everyday catch-words are constantly quoting that ubiquitous person Shakespeare. "Dead as a door-nail," "long and short of it," "getting even," "tag-rag," "birds of a feather," "that's flat," "mum," "scarecrow," "sol-

id," "milk-sop," "loggerhead," "bag and baggage," "a mere song," "dancing attendance," "send him packing," "kill with kindness," "Greek to me," "ill wind that blows no good," "give and take," "an eyesore," "to boot" and "the man in the moon" are all his.

Hyacinths Prove a Curse.

Rank Growth Chokes Navigation in Southern Louisiana.

New Orleans.—The annual hyacinth curse is plaguing every manner of industry in southern Louisiana. The water lilies, now rank of growth and in full bloom, choke thousands of streams and prevent navigation, meaning an actual money loss of millions to transportation companies and their dependent customers. A vast number of cane, rice and lumber and timber producers depend upon the complex water way system of Louisiana to get their wares to the railroads and milling industries. The damming of these streams with this luxurious plant cuts off the livelihood of thousands of people, who are made idle by the shutting down of various manner of enterprises.

The sheer weight of the hyacinth at Franklin, La., was sufficient to burst 50 log booms held in Bayou Teche, and lumber manufacturers resorted to a fleet of powerful gasoline boats to

tow the lilies—miles and miles of them—to deep water. This, however, afforded only partial relief.

News Paper Statistics.

Washington.—In the year 1905 alone there was manufactured in the United States over \$35,000,000 worth of news paper, according to an announcement made by the census bureau. In the five-year period, 1900-05, the production of news paper increased in value 79 per cent. The total value of paper and wood pulp manufactured in 1905 was over \$188,000,000. Of this, \$37,000,000 was of book paper, \$30,000,000 wrapping paper and \$22,000,000 fine papers. New York leads in this industry, while Massachusetts comes next, followed by Maine, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The Contraries of Speech.

"Cannot I help you at this trying time?" asked the cook's admirer. "No," replied the cook, "for this is my hour of knead." And she forthwith proceeded to work the dough.

RUSSIAN LANDS IN BARREL.

Fared He Would Be Deported Because He Lost an Eye.

New York.—Hyllan Masowitch, a Russian who fled from outrages in his country, has had the unusual experience of being landed on America in a tightly heaped barrel. When on his way to America Masowitch met an accident in which he lost an eye. Informed that he would be deported because of this defect he called on friends, and they made up a purse and offered it to one of the petty officers of the ship to land him. The officer, knowing the circumstances, prepared a barrel, and as the steamship was going up New York bay a boat was lowered containing the barrel which contained Masowitch. The boat's crew pulled ashore at Hoboken, rolled the barrel on land, and returned to their vessel. A few days afterward the Russian appeared in Waterbury, where friends were wondering about his safety.

Some women speak of their ill as boastfully as if they were virtues.