THE FIACRE MYSTERY.

A Paris Physician's Horrible Discovery.

[*Translated.—Cincinnati Enquirer.*]

CHAPTER I.

On a cold, clear night in January a gentleman with his hands in the pockets of his overcoat walked rapidly up the Boulevard Haussman, his steps sounding loudly on the asphalt of the avenue, silent and at this hour almost deserted, though the hands of the clock in the cupola of St. Augustine marked but a little past eleven.

Pedestrians were rare, but from time to time a tram-car passed on its polished rails, the horses straining and slipping and enveloped in steaming vapor, and the heads of the passengers, on their way to the Trocadero or the Muette, scarcely distinguishable through the glass of the windows, opaque with the mist of the interior. There was little need of the conductor's horn to warn carriages out of the way—they were as rare as the passers-by; though at long intervals a *volture de place* rumbled slowly along on its way to the depot, and occasionally a private coupe, its lighted lanterns and spirited, high-stepping horses, passing like a flash.

As I said before, the night was cold and the moon shone brilliantly, casting upon the ground the perfect contour of tall houses and bristling chimneys, and tracing the streets and pavements with strange lines and distorted silhouettes. The sharpness of the atmosphere, however, seemed only to add to the good humor of our pedestrian as he walked on and on, softly whistling, and revolving in his head all kinds of happy, cheerful fancies; for Dr. Pascal Borsier would have been a malcontent, indeed, to have complained of destiny. Only thirty years of age, a surgeon of note, and also Professor of Science in the College of France, he had achieved an exceptional position in the Corps Medical at an age when his colleagues were still at the bottom of the ladder.

Sufficiently wealthy to be independent of the drudgery of daily practice, he devoted his attention entirely to scientific pursuits, and has taken as a specialty the nerves of the human organism, those mysterious agents which transmit to the members of the body the orders of the brain.

Some of his recent experiments in this line, the results of which he has just given to the general public, had drawn upon him the attention of the whole scientific world.

No wonder Dr. Pascal Borsier was happy as he walked along, picturing to himself the future await ng him.

As he approached his home in the Rue de Lamennais his thoughts by degrees took another direction, for he was not as yet so absorbed in his work and researches as to be indifferent to all other considerations. Science, for which he felt such passionate devotion, had a rival, and a powerful one. Pascal was married, and had been for several years, to the daughter of one of the chief employes of the Ministry.

Called to attend her father in one of those maladies which science retards and alleviates, but can not control, he had found beside his patient at every visit this beautiful and gentle woman, watching with sad and questioning eyes the unequal battle with death. Charmed from the first with her artless grace and modesty, he was soon completely enthralled by the refined intelligence and pure principles of Christine Dumarias. He demanded and obtained her hand, Christine's mother still remained a widow, with a small but sufficiently ample fortune to meet the requirements of herself and her two children; and as Christine's brother, an engineer and inventor of a specialty in the construction of foreign railroads, was able to visit his family only at rare intervals, Mad. Dumarais felt that she was exceptionally fortunate in finding a son-in-law established in Paris.

From the day that he was united to Christine Dumarais Pascal Borsier had been completely happy; and now, four years after marriage, loved his wife with the same ardor that he felt for her the day he married her. To say that he loved her is to say little; he simply adored her.

Such as he had believed her to be he had found her in reality, artless, loving, always studying how to make his home more attractive; happy if he was with her, and resigned if the duties of his profession called him away. At first Dr. Borsier feared that this lonely life was a little sad for his beautiful young wife, but if she found it so she never allowed it to appear.

Educated in a severe and somewhat parsimonious home, she did not ask herself if marriage ought not to have brought her compensations more amusing than those which had satisfied her as a young girl.

The few worldly pleasures she at intervals enjoyed in the company with her husband amply sufficed her, and her greatest joy seemed to be to assemble about her table her mother, her nearest relatives and her husband's friends. At least, such were the reasons with which Pascal salved his conscience of the complete isolation to which he had condemned his wife.

However, there was another reason, more serious than the rest, which helped to form the line of conduct he had gradually adopted. Mlle. Dumarais, who had passed her earliest years in a somber estressol at the end of a court, suffered from a tendency to anemia, complicated with a slight affection of the heart. But this had not alarmed Dr. Borsier, for he was convinced that he could remedy the evil by vigilant care. Already an appreciable change for the better had taken place in Christine's condition. A tranquil life, exempt from fatigue and worry, was not only an important but an absolutely indispensable factor in the course of treatment, and he made it his duty to strictly enforce this part of the programme.

But, if I must confess it, there was yet a third reason, more powerful than all the preceding ones, and of which he was, perhaps, himself unconscious—ardently as he loved his wife, his passion was surpassed by his jealousy. Yes, Dr. Brosier was jealous, absolutely, ridiculously jealous. Although he had not the slightest reason in the world for being so. On the rare occasions that he allowed his wife to appear in society, instead of enjoying the sensation produced by her beauty and intelligence, he had suffered torments, every look of admiration cast upon her seeming to his jealous heart an insult to be avenged. At any rate he could cut short exhibitions which infringed upon his own privileges and prerogatives, and he kept his word. The beauty of Madame Brosier fully justified the triumphat reception she had met with in society. Her hair, worn in a single massive braid, coiled about her head, was of a light golden brown, and when unbound fell in rich, undulating waves almost to her feet. Her complexion was of that milky whiteness which invariably accompanies hair of a reddish shade, and her eyes long and almond-shaped with dark brown pupils, shaded by silky lashes. A laughing, rosy mouth, an expressive face of a charming oval, and great beauty and elegance of form, produced an ideal which justified the immoderate love of Pascal, and even to a certain extent explained his jealousy.

The nearer he approached to his home, the more Dr. Brosier hurried his steps, thereby hastening the moment when he would meet his wife, and she had promised to sit up reading by the fire until his return.

He could see her now, just as she would look when he entered the room, curled up in her arm-chair, enveloped in her plush dressing-gown, with her little feet toasting upon the fender and her book in her hand. He was never so happy as when able to quit his work sooner than he anticipated, for it gave her the joyous surprise of an unexpected return. Such would be the case this even ng.

Called in consultation to a patient at Versailles, whose condition was desperate, and upon whom they were going to perform an operation, he had gone away at 7:30, not intending to return until the last train leaving Versailles at midnight. But the patient had not considered it necessary to await the operation, and, at the very moment the faculty were ascending the stairs, had tricked them nicely by slipping from life to death, considering it preferable to steal away in that style to remaining for a premature autopsy.

"He was a man of sense," cried Borsier, laughingly, as, bidding his confreres good-night, he boarded the ten instead of the twelve o'clock train, and an hour afterward was deposited at the foot of the Rue de Rome, whence he had preferred to walk to his home in the Rue de Lamennais.

As he passed through the avenue Friendland his attention was suddenly arrested by the loud rumbling of a fiacre passing rapidly ahead of him. All at once the yellow body of the vehicle and the white hat of the coachman, which he had followed carelessly with his eye, disappeared from view. It had wheeled about, and, unless the distance deceived him, into the Rue de Lamennais.

A few moments afterward, as he turned into the street himself, he perceived the vehicle again, stopped before his own door. The coachman had descended from his seat, and standing by the side of the fiacre, seemed to be expostulating with some one in the carriage. In the silence of that retired quarter his words were perfectly audible to Pascal as he walked down the street.

"Madame," cried the coachman. "Madame, wake up! We have arrived. There was no response.

"Madame," he cried again, raising his voice considerably, "wake, up, if you please; we have arrived."

Still the sleeper did not move.

"Well, this is a go," mumbled the coachman, gruffly. "She's a regular dummy. What's the matter with her, I wonder?" And the man in the white hat peered into the fiacre in perplexed uncertainty.

"Anything wrong?" asked Pascal, approaching him. "I am a physician, and perhaps can assist you."

"It's more than I know," responded the coachman; "but something's gone wrong with the fare. Can't move her no more than a block o' wood. Look for yourself, monsieur."

Pascal, obeying the coachman's directions, looked into the interior. Stretched upon the cushions, a woman was lying perfectly motionless, her face shrouded in the folds of a thick veil.

He took her hand, his trained fingers instinctively seeking the pulse; the artery did not beat.

"Hello," said the doctor to himself; "this is more than a fainting fit. Bring me a light,' turning to the coachman. "A light, quick—your lantern will do."

The coachman obeyed, and the light thrust into the carriage enabled him to see that the woman before him was slender in form, dressed in some kind of a dark-colored robe, and enveloped from head to foot in a long fur mantle. Supporting himself on the carriage-step the doctor carefully began to remove the veil which concealed the features. Suddenly a cry of horror burst from his lips. He dropped from the step—his legs refused to support him. The lifeless woman whom he had lifted in his arms, upon whose discolored lips and ghastly face the rays of the lantern fell broad and full, was his wife—his own wife—Christine Borsier!

Yes, it was his wife, dying, perhaps, dead! But how did she come to be in that carriage, and at that hour of the night? A pain as sharp as the stroke of a stiletto pierced his heart as a terrible suspicion surged through his mind; but it was only a flash—there was no time to think of such things now; he would consider them afterward. Mastering himself by a powerful effort, he turned to the coachman:

"Seek the concierge of the house," said he, "and tell him to come quickly, Dr. Borsier wants him," and drawing from his pocket a bottle of salts, he held it under the nostrils of the unfortunate woman.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Passing around the hat is one way of getting the cents of the meeting.—*Texas Siftings.*

"Should Critics Be Gentlemen?"

Mr. Fawcett in the last number of *Lippencott* asks the question, "Should critics be gentlemen?" and in his reply attempts to prove not only that the critic should be a gentleman, but that, being a gentleman, he cannot be a critic. He holds that neither author, publisher, nor reader reaps any benefit from the ubiquitous book reviewer, and thinks the time will shortly be when Othello's occupation will be gone. But even while he rails he cannot resist the temptation of usurping that gentleman's function and criticising the critic. There is much of merited severity in Mr. Fawcett's somewhat illogical tirade, and while we cannot agree with him that the remedy lies in the total annihilation of the critic, for that were to annihilate the human race, we give a fervent amen to the original proposition that only gentlemen should be critics. The *Lounger*, in the *Critic*, after ridiculing Miss Cleveland's poem, "The Dilemma," at some length, says: "I hope Mr. Fawcett won't read what I have just written. Such words about the work of a lady would go far to confirm his low opinion of the irritable and ungentlemanly race of critics whom he scathes in the same magazine in which "The Dilemma" appears. Mr. Fawcet is very amusing when he is angry; now and then he is amusing even when he keeps his temper; the only time you can depend on his not being amusing, is when he tries to be. He takes life very seriously, and nothing in life so ser ously as himself, his verses, and his stories. A review not altogether laudable sets his teeth on edge and sends a cold shiver down his back; a really severe notice of his work offends him beyond the limits of endurance." This is the sort of criticism against which all persons with the instinct of fair play protest. Ridicule is not argument, nor is it criticism. A crit cism should be honest, and, therefore, it cannot be at all times favorable, but surely it need not descend to rudeness and injustice. No man or woman who is capable of doing good work should object to sincere though adverse criticism but all rebell when the reviewer's pen is wielded only to point a witite sm, and mangle the tale. Miss Cleveland has suffered much from this so-called criticism. While the fact that she is a woman and the sister of the man whom our nation most delights to honor should not entitle her to more generous treatment at our hands, it certainly should not preclude her from fair and courteous treatment. If her work is bad, she has no right to expect fulsome praise, but she has a right to expect that the manner of the adverse criticism shall be dignified and gentlemanly. A man whose personality is hidden behind a reviewer's mask has no more right to address Miss Cleveland as Rose than he would in a personal interview, and yet the penny-a-liner whose keenest shaft is tipped with this witticism would never dream of offering this indignity in person. A man may be incapable of writing a poem, an essay, or a story, and yet possess the ability to discover merit, or the lack of merit, in the work of another, but a boor has no more business in the columns of a newspaper or magazine than in a drawing-room, and the time will come when such will be a recognized fact, to the relief of the public and the advantage of the author. "It takes more refinement of soul to discover beauties than to detect flaws."—*The Current, Chicago.*

Among the Gas-Wells.

A group of burning wells north of Washington, Pa., has presented many grand and beautiful night-scenes. Though several miles apart, they appear at a distance, to be close together, and their light intermingles. On a dark night, with all of them burning, they make a great show. These wells in full blast—with those flanking them on the right and on the left, with the broad glare of those at Wellsburg, W. Va., showing twenty miles to the northwest, and with those at Murraysville, Pa., thirty miles to the northeast—make a scene which would terrify a stranger, if he should come upon it unaware of the existence of such things as burning gas-wells. It would only need columns of fiery lava to convince him that the whole region was full of volcanoes. And his terror would doubtless be complete when he saw a great fiery column shoot skyward, unless he was made aware of the real cause of the phenomenon, when he would remain to admire what a moment before had filled him with alarm. The explanation of the sudden burst of flame is that it is necessary often to "blow out" the wells and the pipes leading to the regulator, to keep them from being clogged by the salt which gathers in the pipes from the salt-water thrown up by the gas. The flow of the gas is stopped for a moment; and when again released, the gas drives everything before it into the open air. This escaping gas is burned at the regulator. The effect of the suddenly increased pressure is to shoot a tongue of flame, hissing and roaring, high up in the air. On a misty night, when the light is broken up and diffused, —the snow-covered hills sometimes adding their reflection, —the whole sky is brilliantly illuminated, and the scene is grand and beautiful.—*Samuel W. Hall in St. Nicholas.*

Some Other Day.

Old Darky (to gentleman)—Cud yo' help a poo' ole cullud gem'men, sah? My gran'mother wuz nu'se to Christ'fer Klumbus, sah.

Gentleman—Christopher Columbus?

Old Darky—Yes, sah. She cum over un de Mayflowah wif him when he fust discovered Amer'ca, 'deed she did.

Gentleman—Not to day, uncle.—*Life.*

There She Had Him.

He hadn't quite come up to her standard and she refused his escort to the picnic, He said:

"Why, your'e as full of airs as a hand-organ to-day."

"Maybe I am," she tossed out. "Anyhow I don't go with a crank."—*Sunny South.*

HIS PLACE OF REST.

"I know a place" the old man said,
Where such as I, can rest;
Where there's a shelter for the head
Of every aged guest."

"Where none that are infirm and old,
Are driven from the door;
For all are welcome to that fold,
And doubly so the poor."

"You doubtless speak of heaven, my friend!"
The listening parson said;
"Ah! yes, up there all sorrows end,
Up there no tears are shed."

"Nay, nay," the ancient one replied,
"'Tis not of heaven I speak;
I mean the work-house, sir," he sighed,
"Where I have been a week."

—*Hal Berte, in The Arkansaw Traveler.*

The Perils of Authorship.

Mildred's pretty face wore a new expression as she toyed with her teaspoon and tried to finish her roll, and coffee. John had just left her for his office. They had been married three months, and the serious aspects of life were for the first time presenting themselves.

The problem of income and outgo had made a fair showing on paper. A small apartment—fuel and gas included—one servant, and with such loads of wedding presents, absolutely nothing to buy, they could actually save money. But, somehow, there were leaks which had not been considered, and ten dollars covered a much smaller amount in time and space than John or Mildred had supposed.

"I wish I could do something to help John," thought Mildred, as she gazed abstractedly out of the window. "He has to work so hard," and she gave a little sigh.

"What can I do?" she pondered. "What can I do?" she asked herself again and again, as with deft touch she straightened and arranged the dainty apartment.

Suddenly her face looked as if a door had opened and flooded it with sunlight.

"I know what I will do; I will write a story. I know I can if I try. People do not have to be so awfully clever to do that. It is a knack, not a talent. There is Mrs. ——, who has made heaps of money; and her stories are only poor trash—all of them. John says so,"

Before another hour had passed the outline of a plot was dancing in her excited young brain, and as soon as she could get the time she sat down with pad and sharpened pencil. Then came a pause. "How shall it begin?"

She drew little geometric figures on the margin of her paper as she reflected, her thoughts seeming to revolve in a circle, returning even to the place from whence they started. Finally she wrote:

"In a small village on the banks of—"

"Oh, that is so commonplace. No; that will not do." And she tore off the first sheet of her pad and reflected again, then wrote:

"Frank Atwood was the only son of a—"

"No, no; that is too stupid," and the second sheet of the pad went into the waste paper basket.

She recalled what John had said of the superfluous three pages, which might with benefit to most stories be eliminated—for John was a journalist and literrry critic, and his standard and ideals were just on the measure of her own. So she thought with great deference of what he had said about tedious preambles.

"He is right," she said with decision. "It is the personal interest in the characters which we are looking for in reading a story. All that comes before that is tedious superfluity.

"I will dash right on with a letter from the heroine, which will at once explain the situation." So with the confidence which came from feeling herself at last on the right track, she wrote:

"'DEAR FRANK. I return herewith the letters, which of course I have now no right to keep. I need not tell you what it costs me.

"'I have reflected much upon what you said yesterday, but I am at last resolved. I will not see you again. Any attempt to make me break the resolve will be fruitless. God knows you have only yourself to blame that this marriage has—'

"Please, ma'am," said the cook, coming suddenly in upon the young authoress. "Please, ma'am, the butcher is here. Will you come and see him and give the order yerself about havin' them chops frenched or whatever it is."

"Oh, what a bore," sighed Mildred. "I was just getting into the swing of it." And she left the manuscript upon her desk to be resumed later.

The matter of the chops disposed of there were other things requir ng attention.

At last, however, she was at her desk again. She red over the letter with which her story opened to see how it sounded. "Really, she said, "I think that starts off very well," and then she took up the broken thread. "Only yourself to blame that this marriage has—" A violent ringing at the telephone again broke the current. "Hello," said our young novelist.

"Mildred, is that you?"

"Yes, is it you, Alice?"

"Yes. Mamma does not feel very well and wishes you to take luncheon with us She has sent the carriage. Be ready to come as soon as it arrives." Obviously no more authorship to-day. So slipping her paper in her desk she departed.

Now John was a nice sort of fellow. But we may as well acknowledge at once that he was not so heroic, nor so wise, nor so infallible an authority as his wife supposed.

She had taken the outline of the real John, touched it up with the glowing colors of her imagination and out of it had made an ideal John, which, while it bore a strong resemblence to the real, was nevertheless largely a work of art.

But, after subtracting these additions for the real, there was still left a very excellent fellow, with good talents, which he was using with rather brilliant effectiveness in journalism and various kinds of literary work; who was adoringly fond of his wife, and had not yet recovered from his surprise at his excessive good fortune in possessing that much-coveted treasure—for whom he had much contended, with many others, in those anxious days of courtship. And now—there she was at home, waiting for him, while he was urging his brain to the top of its speed, and driving his quill in eager haste, thinking only of what it would bring for him to lay at her feet.

Mildred was right in thinking he felt anxious at times, for things did not always turn out as he hoped. And he oftentimes felt disheartened when he thought that with the fullest measure of success which he could achieve in his profession could never yield what so peerless a wife as Mildred deserved. For, of course, he had with his imagination retouched the real Mildred too.

The new purpose of authorship brought a great light and hope into Mildred's life. She felt important—indeed that she was much more important than people were aware. That she was carrying a very large secret—that if John only knew!

Then she pictured to herself his reading her story, possibly reviewing it. After he has written all kinds of nice things about it I will tell him that I am the author; or—and her heart turned cold and sick—what if he should say it was trash? For, of course, like other good critics, John was seldom pleased. If things were all excellent, what would be the need of critics? So he had cultivated the art of discovering flaws in what seemed to ordinary readers pure gems. He had developed rather a talent for pillorying people in a single terse phrase, and was much valued for his skill in beating down with the editorial club tender young aspirants who were trying to make themselves heard. This sounds brutal But he was only professionlly brutal. In his personal characteristics none could be more tender or sympathetic.

Mildred knew of this caustic vein and believed it, too—as she did also of John's attributes and gifts—"but," she thought, if he should say any of those dreadful things about me; what should I do? I should never—never—tell him!

And so during the entire day she thought and planned. Few intricacies of plot suggesting themselves—vivid and interesting scenes coming before her stimulated imagination.

Her mother urged her remaining and sending for her husband to dine with them. Her secret desire was to return, but she looked at her mother's wistful face and had not the heart to refuse. She would stay and send for John.

That gentleman arrived at home at the usual hour. As he put his latch-key into the door he smiled, thinking of the quick ear which was listening for it, and of the pretty apparition which would meet him in the hall. "By Jove," he thought, "what a lucky fellow I am!"

But the expected figure did not meet him. He was conscious of a little chill of disappointment, and still more as he wandered through the rooms and found all silent and deserted.

He rang for the maid.

"Where is your mistress?"

'She is out sir. There's a note, sir, somewhere," and she looked anxiously about. "Oh, it is on the desk," said she with returning memory, starting to go for it.

"No matter; I will get it, and John turned his impatient steps toward his wife's room.

There was no note on the desk, and quite naturally he opened the lid. His eyes were riveted upon the words before him.

"DEAR FRANK: I return herewith the letters which I have no longer any right to keep. I need not tell you what it costs me—"

He felt as if his blood were turned into ice.

"I have reflected much upon what you said yesterday—"

"Yesterday!"—John felt as if he were going mad. "Yesterday!"—and he had so trusted her! The room had grown black and a great sledge hammer was beating his brain, but he read on—"upon what you said yesterday, but I am at last resolved. I will not see you again. Any attempt to make me break this resolve will be fruitless. God knows you have only yourself to blame that this marriage has—"

John stood for a few moments as if turned into stone, his face blanched, his muscles tense. Then a ray of hope seemed to come to him. "There is no signature; it is not hers." He looked again. How could he doubt it? He knew too well the turn of every letter. He was alternately livid with rage and choking with grief. His dream of happiness vanished. Something like a curse came from between his closed teeth.

"She loves this man, and she meets him and tells him so, and only yesterday. Oh, it is too horrible!" too horrible!" He buried his face in his hands and groaned. "I shall go away; I shall never—" At that moment the telephone bell rang. He took no notice of it. "I shall never—" Again it rang long and and loud. What should he do? There was no one else to answer it; he must go. So he said huskily, "Hello!"

Mildred's silvery voice replied, "John, is that you?"

The situation was shocking. How could he reply?—but—there was no time for reflection. He knew that the Central office would share all his confidences through that infernal piece of black walnut and ebony. So he said, "Yes."

"Why do you not come? Dinner is waiting for you."

How well he knew the pretty inflexions of that voice!

"I wish no dinner—I am going away—good-bye."

It might have been the convetional telephonic "good-bye," or it might contain a profounder meaning.

The effect at the other end of the line cannot be described. Ten minutes later a cab drove furiously up to the door of the Apartment house, and Mildred, with white face and fast beating heart, rushed into the room, and would have rushed into John's arms if he had let her.

"You are going away?" she said breathlessly.

"You are a very clever actress," said that gentleman repulsing her intended embrace.

"A what?" said she, amazed. "John, what's the—"

"A very clever actress," said he, quite as if she had not spoken, "but hereafter we will have a more perfect understanding, and you need not trouble yourself."

"Why, John," said she, "have you lost your senses?"

"No; on the contrary, I have recovered them. I am no longer a dupe. I was fool enough to think you—"

"John, for God's sake tell me what this means!"

"Oh, Mildred! Mildred!" said he, breaking down utterly. "Why did you not tell me like an honest woman that you loved some one else?"

"John, you know. I—"

"Stop!" said he. "Stop! do not stain your soul with any more falsehood.

"You need not have married me," went on the wretched man. "God knows I wish you had not."

She tried to put her arms about him as he paced to and fro in rapid strides, but he pushed her away angrily. "No, no more of that. That has lost its charm."

Mildred burst into tears.

"I never—would—have—believed—you would be—so—so—cruel," sobbed she. "What—have I done?"

"Done?" shouted the exasperated man. "Why, you have spoiled the life of an honest man, who doted on you, believed on you—like a trusting fool—who would have risked his life on your honesty—"

"Stop!" said Mildred, and she gathered herself up to a fuller height than John's eyes had ever before beheld in her. She too was angry now.

"If you have charges to make I demand that they be definite, and not in base innuendo. You are very cruel and and also very insulting to me. I shall not remain in this house to-night, nor return to it until you have apologized." And she swept from the room and from John's astonished sight.

A moment later he heard the messenger call, then heard his wife give an order far a cab, then saw her packing a handbag. He intended doing the same things himself. But somehow having her do them was infinitely harder to bear.

Mildred was very angry. "Not a thing of his," she said to herself, as she stripped off her rings and gathered her trinkets. "My purse, too," she thought and went to the desk to find it. Her husband had been watching for this. He knew she would try to secure that letter.

"Ah," said he, "you are a little too late. You should have thought of that before."

These, to his unmeaning words, uttered with much concentrated bitterness made her seriously doubt his sanity. She looked at him curiously. How else could she construe the incomprehensible fury? She pursued, the thought had calmed the resentment. She went to his side, placed her hand kindly on his arm. "My dear John," said she, "will you explain to me what all this means?"

He felt touched, and oh, how he longed to take her to his heart; but that could never be again.

"Will you first explain to me," he answered, trying to be hard and cold, "explain to me where you were yesterday?"

"Certainly he is mad," she thought, and she tried to be very calm.

"Ah, yes," he went on. "You can look very innocent, but, woman, look at that," and with tragic gesture he held up the paper.

Mildred looked at it bewildered; then she read, "Dear Frank." A gleam of light came into her face, and gradually deepened into an expression of interest and amusement. She understood it all.

John looked to see her crushed, despairing and penitent; and instead he witnessed this unaccustomed, this extraordinary, change; and laughter—peal after peal of silvery laughter—rang through the rooms. She tried to speak, but could not.

John in his turn began to think that she was mad.

At last, with tears rolling down her cheeks, not from grief this time, she said:

"Oh, you dear silly—silly thing. Oh, you dear goose—that's my story—and I was going to surprise you—and bring you ever—ever so much money—and now you have gone—and spoiled—" and here she began to cry in earnest. "And—you—have—said—such—cruel—cruel—"

Her sobs, together with John's great enfolding arms, stifled the rest. "Oh, my angel, my angel, I have been such a brute. Can you ever forgive me?"

That was what John said; but this pen refuses to attempt the portrayal of what he felt. He had been a willing and a loving slave before, and now he was in addition a penitent and crest-fallen one besides. And so his chains were riveted anew.

As hinted before, John had a professional character quite distinct from his domestic one. This quality affords a much needed outlet to perturbed spirits; hence as he turned towards his office the next morning an ominously stern look came into his face.

The unfortunate man whose first book he reviewed that day never suspected that the average criticism which very nearly threw him into a nervous fever, and quite into despair, was almost entirely inspired by the misadventures just related.—*New York Graphic.*

His Aunt Was a Daisy.

"I wish you would go away on another visit, Mama," said a little boy to his mother, who had just returned from a two weeks' visit in the country. "Aunt Mary is a daisy housekeeper."

"Did you have a good time, Bennie, while I was away?"

"Well, I should smile," replied the boy. "Aunt Mary just let us have all the fun we wanted."

'I guess she allowed you children too many privileges."

"That's all right, Mama. Aunt Mary is a darling, and I will stand up for her every time. She is just like me, when I run away from school."

"I do not understand you, my son," said Mama.

"Well, she is a tru-ant."—*Pretzel's Weekly.*