The Story of a Masterpiece.

By HENRY JAMES, Jr.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

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Continued from last week.

During this interval the young man's wounds had had time to heal. His sorrow, although violent, had been short lived, and when he finally recovered his equanimity he was very glad to have purchased exemption at the price of a simple heartache. Reviewing his impressions of Miss Everett in a calmer mood, he made up his mind that she was very far from being the woman of his desire, and that she had not really been the woman of his choice. "Thank God," he said to himself, "it's over. She's irreclaimably light. She's hollow, trivial, vulgar." There had been in his addresses something hasty and feverish, something factitious and unreal in his fancied passion. Half of it had been the work of the scenery, of the weather, of mere juxtaposition, and, above all, of the young girl's picturesque beauty; to say nothing of the almost suggestive tolerance and indolence of poor Mrs. Denbigh. And finding himself very much interested in Velasquez, at Madrid, he dismissed Miss Everett from his thoughts. I do not mean to offer his judgment of Miss Everett as final, but it was at least conscientious. The ample justice, moreover, which, under the illusion of sentiment, he had rendered to her charms and graces, gave him a right, when free from that illusion, to register his estimate of the arid spaces of her nature. Miss Everett might easily have accused him of injustice and brutality; but this fact would still stand to plead in his favor, that he cared with all his strength for truth. Marian, on the contrary, was quite indifferent to it. Stephen's angry sentence on her conduct had awakened no echo in her contracted soul.

The reader has now an adequate conception of the feelings with which these two old friends found themselves face to face. It is needful to add, however, that the lapse of time had very much diminished the force of those feelings. A woman, it seems to me, ought to desire no easier company, none less embarrassed or embarrassing, than a disenchanted lover; premising, of course, that the process of disenchantment is thoroughly complete, and that some time has elapsed since its completion.

Marian herself was perfectly at her ease. She had not retained her equanimity—her philosophy, one might almost call it—during that painful last interview to go and lose it now. She had no ill feeling toward her old lover. His last words had been—like all words in Marian's estimation—a mere facon a parler. Miss Everett was in so perfect a good humor during these last days of her maidenhood that there was nothing in the past that she could not have forgiven.

She blushed a little at the emphasis of her companion's remark; but she was not discountenanced. She summoned up her good humor. "The truth is, Mr. Baxter," she said, "I feel at the present moment on perfect good terms with the world; I see everything en rose, the past as well as the future."

"I, too, am on very good terms with the world," said Baxter, "and my heart is quite reconciled to what you call the past. But, nevertheless, it's very disagreeable to me to think about it."

"Ah then," said Miss Everett, with great sweetness, "I'm afraid you're not reconciled."

"I'm afraid you're not reconciled."

Baxter laughed—so loud that Miss Everett looked about at her father. But Mr. Everett still slept the sleep of gentility. "I've no doubt," said the painter, "that I'm far from being so good a Christian as you. But I assure you I'm very glad to see you again."

"You've but to say the word and we're friends," said Marian.

"We were very foolish to have attempted to be anything else."

"'Foolish,' yes. But it was a pretty folly."

"Ah no, Miss Everett. I'm an artist, and I claim the right of property in the word 'pretty.' You mustn't stick it in there. Nothing could be pretty which had such an ugly termination. It was all false."

"Well—as you will. What have you been doing since we parted?"

"Traveling and working. I've made great progress in my trade. Shortly before I came home I became engaged."

"Engaged?—a la bonne heure. Is she good?—is she pretty?"

"She's not nearly so pretty as you."

"In other words, she's infinitely more good. I'm sure I hope she is. But why did you leave her behind you?"

"She's with a sister, a sad invalid, who is drinking mineral waters on the Rhine. They wished to remain there to the cold weather. They're to be home in a couple of weeks, and we are straightway to be married."

"I congratulate you with all my heart," said Marian.

"Allow me to do as much, sir," said Mr. Everett, waking up; which he did by instinct whenever the conversation took a ceremonious turn.

Miss Everett gave her companion but three more sittings, a large part of his work being executed with the assistance of photographs. At these interviews also, Mr. Everett was present, and still delicately sensitive to the soporific influences of his position. But both parties had the good taste to abstain from further reference to their old relations, and to confine their talk to less personal themes.

PART II.

One afternoon, when the picture was nearly finished, John Lennox went into the empty painting room to ascertain the degree of its progress. Both Baxter and Marian had expressed a wish that he should not see it in its early stages, and this, accordingly, was his first view. Half an hour after he had entered the room, Baxter came in, unannounced, and found him sitting before the canvas, deep in thought. Baxter had been furnished with a house key, so that he might have immediate and easy access to his work whenever the humor came upon him.

"I was passing," he said, "and I couldn't resist the impulse to come in and correct an error which I made this morning, now that a sense of its enormity is fresh in my mind." He sat down to work, and the other stood watching him.

"Well," said the painter, finally, "how does it satisfy you?"

"Not altogether."

"Pray develop your objections. It's in your power materially to assist me."

"I hardly know how to formulate my objections. Let me, at all events, in the first place, say that I admire your work immensely. I'm sure it's the best picture you've painted."

"I honestly believe it is. Some parts of it," said Baxter, frankly, "are excellent."

"It's obvious. But either those very parts or others are singularly disagreeable. That word isn't criticism, I know; but I pay you for the right to be arbitrary. They are too hard, too strong, of too frank a reality. In a word, your picture frightens me, and if I were Marian I should feel as if you'd done me a certain violence."

"I'm sorry for what's disagreeble; but I meant it all to be real. I go in for reality; you must have seen that."

"I approve you; I can't too much admire the broad and firm methods you've taken for reaching this same reality. But you can be real without being brutal—without attempting, as one may say, to be actual."

"I deny that I'm brutal. I'm afraid, Mr. Lennox, I haven't taken quite the right road to please you. I've taken the picture too much as serieux. I've striven too much for completeness. But if it doesn't please you it will please others."

"I've no doubt of it. But that isn't the question. The picture is good enough to be a thousand times better."

"That the picture leaves room for infinite improvement, I, of course, don't deny; and, in several particulars, I see my way to make it better. But, substantially, the portrait is there. I'll tell you what you miss. My work isn't 'classical;' in fine, I'm not a man of genius."

"No; I rather suspect you are. But, as you say, your work isn't classical. I adhere to my term brutal. Shall I tell you? It's too much of a study. You've given poor Miss Everett the look of a professional model."

"If that's the case I've done very wrong. There never was an easier, a less conscious sitter. It's delightful to look at her."

"Confound it, you've given all her ease, too. Well, I don't know what's the matter. I give up."

"I think," said Baxter, "you had better hold your verdict in abeyance until the picture is finished. The classical element is there, I'm sure; but I've not brought it out. Wait a few days, and it will rise to the surface."

Lennox left the artist alone; and the latter took up his brushes and painted hard till nightfall. He laid them down only when it was too dark to see. As he was going out, Lennox met him in the hall.

"Exegi monumentum," said Baxter; "it's finished. Go and look at your ease. I'll come to-morrow and hear your impressions."

The master of the house, when the other had gone, lit half a dozen lights and returned to the study of the picture. It had grown prodigiously under the painter's recent handling, and whether it was that, as Baxter had said, the classical element had disengaged itself, or that Lennox was in a more sympathetic mood, it now impressed him as an original and powerful work, a genuine portrait, the deliberate image of a human face and figure. It was Marian, in very truth, and Marian most patiently measured and observed. Her beauty was there, her sweetness, and her young loveliness and her aerial grace, imprisoned forever, made inviolable and perpetual. Nothing could be more simple than the conception and composition of the picture. The figure sat peacefully, looking slightly to the right, with the head erect and the hands—the virginal hands, without rings or bracelets—lying idle on its knees. The blonde hair was gathered into a little knot of braids on the top of the head (in the fashion of the moment), and left free the almost childish contour of the ears and cheeks. The eyes were full of color, contentment and light; the lips were faintly parted. Of color in the picture, there was, in strictness, very little; but the dark draperies told of reflected sunshine, and the flesh spaces of human blushes and pallors, of throbbing life and health. The work was strong and simple, the figure was thoroughly void of affectation and stiffness, and yet supremely elegant.

"That's what it is to be an artist," thought Lennox. "All this has been done in the past two hours."

It was his Marian, assuredly, with all that had charmed him—with all that still charmed him when he saw her: her appealing confidence, her exquisite lightness, her feminine enchantments. And yet, as he looked, an expression of pain came into his eyes, and lingered there, and grew into a mortal heaviness.

Lennox had been as truly a lover as a man may be; but he loved with the discretion of fifteen years' experience of human affairs. He had a penetrating glance, and he liked to use it. Many a time when Marian, with eloquent lips and eyes, had poured out the treasures of her nature into his bosom, and he had taken them in his hands and covered them with kisses and passionate vows; he had dropped them all with a sudden shudder and cried out in silence, "But ah! where is the heart?" One day he had said to her irrelevantly enough, doubtless), "Marian, where is your heart?"

"Where—what do you mean?" Miss Everett had said.

"I think of you from morning till night. I put you together and take you apart, as people do in that game where they make words out of a parcel of given letters. But there's always one letter wanting. I can't put my hand on your heart."

"My heart, John," said Marian, ingeniously, "is the whole word. My heart's everywhere."

This may have been true enough. Miss Everett had distributed her heart impartially throughout her whole organism, so that, as a natural consequence, its native seat was somewhat scantily occupied. As Lennox sat and looked at Baxter's consummate handiwork, the same question rose again to his lips: and if Marian's portrait suggested it, Marian's portrait failed to answer it. It took Marian to do that. It seemed to Lennox that some strangely potent agency had won from his mistress the confession of her inmost soul, and had written it there upon the canvas in firm yet passionate lines. Marian's person was lightness—her charm was lightness; could it be that her soul was levity too? Was she a creature without faith and without conscience? What else was the meaning of that horrible blankness and deadness that quenched the light in her eyes and stole away the smile from her lips? These things were the less to be eluded because in many respects the painter had been profoundly just. He had been as loyal and sympathetic as he had been intelligent. Not a point in the young girl's appearance had been slighted; not a feature but had been forcibly and delicately rendered. Had Baxter been a man of marvelous insight—an unparalleled observer; or had he been a mere patient and unflinching painter, building infinitely better than he knew? Would not a mere painter have been content to paint Miss Everett in the strong, rich, objective manner of which the work was so good an example, and to do nothing more? For it was evident that Baxter had done more. He had painted with something more than knowledge—with imagination, with feeling. He had almost composed; and his composition had embraced the truth. Lennox was unable to satisfy his doubts. He would have been glad to believe that there was no imagination in the picture but what his own mind supplied; and that the unsubstantial sweetness on the eyes and lips of the image was but the smile of youth and innocence. He was in a muddle—he was absurdly suspicious and capricious; he put out the lights and left the portrait in kindly darkness. Then, half as a reparation to his mistress, and half as a satisfaction to himself, he went up to spend an hour with Marian. She, at least, as he found, had no scruples. She thought the portrait altogether a success, and she was very willing to be handed down in that form to posterity. Nevertheless, when Lennox came in he went back into the painting room to take another glance. This time he lit but a single light. Faugh! it was worse than with a dozen. He hastily turned out the gas.

Baxter came the next day, as he had promised. Meanwhile poor Lennox had had twelve hours of uninterrupted reflection, and the expression of distress in his eyes had acquired an intensity which, the painter saw, proved it to be of far other import than a mere tribute to his power.

"Can the man be jealous?" thought Baxter. Stephen had been so innocent of any other design than that of painting a good portrait, that his conscience failed to reveal to him the source of his companion's trouble. Nevertheless, he began to pity him. He had felt tempted, indeed, to pity him from the first. He had liked him and esteemed him; he had taken him for a man of sense and of feeling, and he had thought it a matter of regret that such a man—a creature of strong spiritual needs—should link his destiny with that of Marian Everett. But he had very soon made up his mind that Lennox knew very well what he was about, and that he needed no enlightenment. He was marrying with his eyes open and had weighed the risks against the profits. Every one had his particular taste, and at 35 years of age John Lennox had no need to be told that Miss Everett was not quite all that she might be. Baxter had thus taken for granted that his friend had designedly selected as his second wife a mere pretty woman—a woman with a genius for receiving company, and who would make a picturesque use of his money. He knew nothing of the serious character of the poor man's passion, nor of the extent to which his happiness was bound up in what the painter would have called his delusion. His only concern had been to do his work well; and he had done it better because of his old interest in Marian's bewitching face. It is very certain that he had actually infused into his picture that force of characterization and that depth of reality which had arrested his friends' attention; but he had done so wholly without effort or without malice. The artistic half of Baxter's nature exerted a lusty dominion over the human half—fed upon its disappointments and grew fat upon its joys and tribulations. This, indeed, is simply saying that the young man was a true artist. Deep, then, in the unfathomed recesses of his strong and sensitive nature, his genius had held communion with his heart and had transferred to canvas the burden of its disenchantment and its resignation. Since his little affair with Marian, Baxter had made the acquaintance of a young girl whom he felt that he could love and trust forever; and, sobered and strengthened by this new emotion, he had been able to resume with more distinctness the shortcomings of his earlier love. He had, therefore, painted with feeling. Miss Everett could not have expected him to do otherwise. He had done his honest best, and conviction had come in unbidden and made it better.

Lennox had begun to feel very curious about the history of his companion's acquaintance with his destined bride; but he was far from feeling jealous. Somehow he felt that he could never again be jealous. But in ascertaining the terms of their former intercourse, it was of importance that he should not allow the young man to suspect he had discovered in the portrait any radical defect.

"Your old acquaintance with Miss Everett," he said, frankly, "has evidently been of great use to you."

"I suppose it has," said Baxter. "Indeed, as soon as I began to paint, I found her face coming back to me like a half remembered tune. She was wonderfully pretty at that time."

"She was two years younger."

"Yes, and I was two years younger. Decidedly, you are right. I have made use of my old impressions."

Baxter was willing to confess to so much; but he resolved not to betray anything that Marian had herself kept secret. He was not surprised that she had not told her lover of her former engagement; he expected as much. But he would have held it inexcusable to attempt to repair her omission.

Lennox's faculties were acutely sharpened by pain and suspicion, and he could not help detecting in his companion's eyes an intention of reticence. He resolved to baffle it.

"I am curious to know," he said, "whether you were ever in love with Miss Everett?"

"I have no hesitation in saying Yes," rejoined Baxter; fancying that a general confession would help him more than a particular denial. "I am one of a thousand, I fancy. Or one, perhaps, of only a hundred. For you see I've got over it. I'm engaged to be married."

Lennox's countenance brightened. "That's it," said he. "Now I know what I didn't like in your picture—the point of view. I'm not jealous," he added. "I should like the picture better if I were. You evidently care nothing for the poor girl. You have got over your love rather too well. You loved her, she was indifferent to you, and now you take your revenge." Distracted with grief, Lennox was taking refuge in irrational anger.

Baxter was puzzled. "You'll admit," said he with a smile, "that is a very handsome revenge." And all his professional self esteem rose to his assistance. "I've painted for Miss Everett the best portait that has yet been painted in America. She herself is quite satisfied."

"Ah!" said Lennox, with a magnificent dissimulation; "Marian is generous."

"Come, then," said Baxter; "what do you complain of? You accuse me of scandalous conduct, and I'm bound to hold you to an account." Baxter's own temper was rising, and with it his sense of his picture's merits. "How have I perverted Miss Everett's expression? How have I misrepresented her? What does the portrait lack? Is it ill drawn? Is it vulgar? Is it ambiguous? Is it immodest?" Baxter's patience gave out as he recited these various charges. "Fiddlesticks!" he cried; "you know as well as I do that the picture is excellent."

"I don't pretend to deny it. Only I wonder that Marian was willing to come to you."

It is very much to Baxter's credit that he still adhered to his resolution not to betray the young girl, and that rather than do so he was willing to let Lennox suppose that he had been a rejected adorer.

"Ah, as you say," he exclaimed, "Miss Everett is so generous!"

Lennox was foolish enough to take this as an admission. "When I say, Mr. Baxter," he said, "that you have taken your revenge, I don't mean that you've done so wantonly or consciously. My dear fellow, how could you help it? The disappointment was proportionate to the loss and the reaction to the disappointment."

"Yes, that's all very well; but, meanwhile, I wait in vain to learn wherein I've done wrong."

"Lennox looked from Baxter to the picture, and from the picture back to Baxter.

"I defy you to tell me," said Baxter. "I've simply kept Miss Everett as charming as she is in life."

"Oh, damn her charms!" cried Lennox.

"If you were not the gentleman, Mr. Lennox," continued the young man, "which, in spite of your high temper, I believe you to be, I should believe you"——

"Well, you should believe me?"

"I should believe you simply bent on cheapening the portrait."

Lennox made a gesture of vehement impatience. The other burst out laughing and the discussion closed. Baxter instinctively took up his brushes and approached his canvas with a vague desire to detect latent errors, while Lennox prepared to take his departure.

"Stay!" said the painter, as he was leaving the room; "if the picture really offends you, I'll rub it out. Say the word," and he took up a heavy brush, covered with black paint.

But Lennox shook his head with decision and went out. The next moment, however, he reappeared. "You may rub it out," he said. "The picture is, of course, already mine."

But now Baxter shook his head. "Ah! now it's too late," he answered. "Your chance is gone."

Lennox repaired directly to Mr. Everett's apartments. Marian was in the drawing room with some morning callers, and her lover sat by until she had got rid of them. When they were alone together Marian began to laugh at her visitors and to parody certain of their affectations, which she did with infinite grace and spirit. But Lennox cut her short and returned to the portrait. He had thought better of his objections of the preceding evening; he liked it.

"But I wonder, Marian," he said, "that you were willing to go to Mr. Baxter?"

"Why so?" asked Marian, on her guard. She saw that her lover knew something, and she intended not to commit herself until she knew how much he knew.

"An old lover is always dangerous."

"An old lover?" and Marian blushed a good honest blush. But she rapidly recovered herself. "Pray where did you get that charming news?"

"Oh, it slipped out," said Lennox.

Marian hesitated a moment. Then with a smile: "Well, I was brave," she said. "I went."

"How came it," pursued Lennox, "that you didn't tell me?"

"Tell you what, my dear John?"

"Why, about Baxter's little passion. Come, don't be modest."

Modest! Marian breathed freely. "What do you mean, my dear, by telling your wife not to be modest? Pray don't ask me about Mr. Baxter's passions. What do I know about them?"

"Did you know nothing of this one?"

"Ah, my dear, I know a great deal too much for my comfort. But he's got bravely over it. He's engaged."

"Engaged, but not quite disengaged. He's an honest fellow, but he remembers his penchant. It was as much as he could do to keep his picture from turning to the sentimental. He saw you as he fancied you—as he wished you; and he has given you a little look of what he imagines moral loveliness, which comes within an ace of spoiling the picture. Baxter's imagination isn't very strong, and this same look expresses, in point of fact, nothing but inanity. Fortunately he's a man of extraordinary talent, and a real painter, and he's made a good portrait in spite of himself."

To such arguments as these was John Lennox reduced, to stifle the evidence of his senses. But when once a lover begins to doubt he cannot cease at will. In spite of his earnest efforts to believe in Marian as before, to accept her without scruple and without second thought, he was quite unable to repress an impulse of constant mistrust and aversion. The charm was broken, and there is no mending a charm. Lennox stood half aloof, watching the poor girl's countenance, weighing her words, analyzing her thoughts, guessing at her motives.

Marian's conduct under this trying ordeal was truly heroic. She felt that some subtle change had taken place in her future husband's feelings, a change which although she was powerless to discover its cause, yet obviously imperiled her prospects. Something had snapped between them; she had lost half of her power. She was horribly distressed, and the more so because that superior depth of character which she had all along gladly conceded to Lennox, might now, as she conjectured, cover some bold and portentous design. Could he meditate a direct rupture? Could it be his intention to dash from her lips the sweet, the spiced and odorous cup of being the wife of a good natured millionaire? Marian turned a tremulous glance upon her past, and wondered if he had discovered any dark spot. Indeed, for that matter, might she not defy him to do so? She had done nothing really amiss. There was no visible blot in her history. It was faintly discolored, indeed, by a certain vague moral dinginess; but it compared well enough with that of other girls. She had cared for nothing but pleasure; but to what else were girls brought up? On the whole, might she not feel at ease? She assured herself that she might; but she nevertheless felt that if John wished to break off his engagement, he would do it on high abstract grounds, and not because she had committed a naughtiness the more or the less. It would be simply because he had ceased to love her. It would avail her but little to assure him that she would kindly overlook this circumstance and remit the obligations of the heart. But, in spite of her hideous apprehensions, she continued to smile and smile.

The days passed by, and John consented to be still engaged. Their marriage was only a week off—six days, five days, four. Miss Everett's smile became less mechanical. John had apparently been passing through a crisis—a moral and intellectual crisis, inevitable in a man of his constitution, and with which she had nothing to do. On the eve of marriage he had questioned his heart; he had found that it was no longer young and capable of the vagaries of passion, and he had made up his mind to call things by their proper names, and to admit to himself that he was marrying not for love, but for friendship, and a little, perhaps, for prudence. It was only out of regard for what he supposed Marian's own more exalted theory of the matter, that he abstained from revealing to her this common sense view of it. Such was Marian's hypothesis.

Lennox had fixed his wedding day for the last Thursday in October. On the preceding Friday, as he was passing up Broadway, he stopped at Goupil's to see if his order for the framing of the portrait had been fulfilled. The picture had been transferred to the shop, and, when duly framed had been, at Baxter's request and with Lennox's consent, placed for a few days in the exhibition room. Lennox went up to look at it.

The portrait stood on an easel at the end of the hall, with three spectators before it—a gentleman and two ladies. The room was otherwise empty. As Lennox went toward the picture, the gentleman turned out to be Baxter. He proceeded to introduce his friend to his two companions, the younger of whom Lennox recognized as the artist's betrothed. The other, her sister, was a plain, pale woman, with the look of ill health, who had been provided with a seat and made no attempt to talk. Baxter explained that these ladies had arrived from Europe but the day before, and that his first care had been to show them his masterpiece.

"Sarah," said he, "has been praising the model very much to the prejudice of the copy."

Sarah was a tall, black haired girl of 20, with irregular features, a pair of luminous dark eyes, and a smile radiant of white teeth—evidently an excellent person. She turned to Lennox with a look of frank sympathy, and said in a deep, rich voice:

"She must be very beautiful."

"Yes, she's very beautiful," said Lennox, with his eyes lingering on her own pleasant face. "You must know her—she must know you."

"I'm sure I should like very much to see her," said Sarah.

"This is very nearly as good," said Lennox. "Mr. Baxter is a great genius."

"I know Mr. Baxter is a genius. But what is a picture, at the best? I've seen nothing but pictures for the last two years, and I haven't seen a single pretty girl."

The young girl stood looking at the portrait in very evident admiration, and while Baxter talked to the elder lady Lennox bestowed a long, covert glance upon his fiancee. She had brought her head into almost immediate juxtaposition with that of Marian's image, and for a moment the freshness and the strong animation which bloomed upon her features seemed to obliterate the lines and colors on the canvas. But the next moment, as Lennox looked, the roseate circle of Marian's face blazed into remorseless distinctness, and her careless blue eye looked with cynical familiarity into his own.

He bade an abrupt good morning to his companions, and went toward the door. But beside it he stopped. Suspended on the wall was Baxter's picture, "My Last Duchess." He stood amazed. Was this the face and figure that, a month ago, had reminded him of his mistress? Where was the likeness now? It was as utterly absent as if it had never existed. The picture, moreover, was a very inferior work to the new portrait. He looked back at Baxter, half tempted to demand an explanation, or at least to express his perplexity. But Baxter and his sweetheart had stooped down to examine a minute sketch near the floor, with their heads in delicious contiguity.

How the week elapsed, it were hard to say. There were moments when Lennox felt as if death were preferable to the heartless union which now stared him in the face, and as if the only possible course was to transfer his property to Marian and to put an end to his existence. There were others, again, when he was fairly reconciled to his fate. He had but to gather his old dreams and fancies into a faggot and break them across his knee, and the thing were done. Could he not collect in their stead a comely cluster of moderate and rational expectations, and bind them about with a wedding favor? His love was dead, his youth was dead; that was all. There was no need of making a tragedy of it. His love's vitality had been but small, and since it was to be but short lived it was better that it should expire before marriage than after. As for marriage, that should stand, for that was not of necessity a matter of love. He lacked the brutal consistency necessary for taking away Marian's future. If he had mistaken her and overrated her, the fault was his own, and it was a hard thing that she should pay the penalty. Whatever were her failings, they were profoundly involuntary, and it was plain that with regard to himself her intentions were good. She would be no companion, but she would be at least a faithful wife.

With the help of this grim logic Lennox reached the eve of his wedding day. His manner toward Miss Everett during the preceding week had been inveterately tender and kind. He felt that in losing his love she had lost a heavy treasure, and he offered her instead the most unfailing devotion. Marian had questioned him about his lassitude and his preoccupied air, and he had replied that he was not very well. On the Wednesday afternoon he mounted his horse and took a long ride. He came home toward sunset, and was met in the hall by his old housekeeper.

"Miss Everett's portrait, sir," she said, "has just been sent home in the most beautiful frame. You gave no directions, and I took the liberty of having it carried into the library. I thought," and the old woman smiled deferentially, "you'd like best to have it in your own room."

Lennox went into the library. The picture was standing on the floor, back to back with a high armchair, and catching, through the window, the last horizontal rays of the sun. He stood before it a moment, gazing at it with a haggard face.

"Come!" said he, at last, "Marian may be what God has made her; but this detestable creature I can neither love nor respect!"

He looked about him with an angry despair, and his eye fell on a long, keen poniard, given him by a friend who had bought it in the east, and which lay as an ornament on the mantel shelf. He seized it and thrust it, with barbarous glee, straight into the lovely face of the image. He dragged it downward, and made a long fissure in the living canvas. Then, with half a dozen strokes, he wantonly hacked it across. The act afforded him an immense relief.

I need hardly add that on the following day Lennox was married. He had locked the library door on coming out the evening before, and he had the key in his waistcoat pocket as he stood at the altar. As he left town, therefore, immediately after the ceremony, it was not until his return, a fortnight later, that the fate of the picture became known. It was not necessary to relate how he explained his exploit to Marian and how he disclosed it to Baxter. He at least put on a brave face. There is a rumor current of his having paid the painter an enormous sum of money. The amount is probably exaggerated, but there can be no doubt that the sum was very large. How he has fared—how he is destined to fare—in matrimony, it is rather too early to determine. He has been married scarcely three months.

THE END.

The Negro as a Fatalist.

Some traits are common to all members of the negro race. The darky is yet to be born who would not be willing to submit for the rest of his lifetime upon an exclusive diet of pork, corn bread, cabbage, buttermilk and watermelon. Holding such dietary ideas, it follows that the negroes must, of necessity, be fatalists. They have no faith in the "ounce of prevention" theory, and look upon the idea of taking precaution against disease as "white folk's foolishness." No matter how contagious the sickness, they have no fear of it; I recall an instance of a cook who requested permission to set up with the body of the president of her society. It was only at breakfast time the following morning that her mistress casually inquired into the nature of the defunct officer's disease, and was electrified by the careless answer, "Black smallpox."

Scenes of sickness and death possess a horrible fascination for them all. They congregate in and about the abode of suffering, discussing the patient's symptoms, criticising the medical treatment of the case, uttering pious phrases and singing their weird hymns. As the disease nears its almost invariably fatal termination they gloat over the last scenes and revel in funereal anticipations. No sooner has breath left the body than the clock is stopped; the mirror, if mirror there be, is shrouded in white, and white curtains are hung at the doors and windows. The corpse is kept as long as circumstances and the police will permit, and an almost uninterrupted course of prayer and singing is maintained until the hour of burial.—New York Post.

Packing of Human Beings.

The cellar population of New York city is a source of incessant disease and crime. And with the more respectable class of poor, who occupy the better kind of tenement houses, the packing of human beings in those great caravanseries is one of the worst evils of this city. It sows pestilence and breeds every species of criminal habits. From 20,000 tenement houses comes 73 per cent. of the mortality of our population, and I have little doubt as much as 90 per cent. of the offenses against property and person.

Overcrowding is the one great misfortune of New York. Without it we should be the healthiest large city in the world, and a great proportion of the crimes which disgrace our civilization would be nipped in the bud. While this continues as it does now, there is no possibility of a thorough sanitary, moral and religious reform in our worst wards.

Few girls can grow up to maturity in such dens as exist here and be virtuous. Few boys can have such places as homes and not be thieves and vagabonds. In such places typhus and cholera will always be rife, and the death rate will reach its most terrible maximum. While the poorest population dwell in these cellars and crowded attics neither Sunday schools, nor churches, nor charities can accomplish a thorough reform.—Joe Howard in New York Graphic.

Studies for Spare Moments.

It is plainly impossible to learn every thing that deserves to be learned, and, on the other hand, to give up in despair and let all study go by the board is, of course, both foolish and wicked. The first thing is to select the three or four branches most congenial to one's disposition and capacity, and set one's self to master them thoroughly. The next thing is, as Emerson says, to "lop off decisively ones miscellaneous activities." Three or four subjects of study are better than one alone, because a devotion to one promotes narrowness of view and a wrong perspective. One of these subjects will be, naturally, the main subject—the man's business or profession. The others should be entirely distinct and different.

I knew a man who is at the head of an important and elaborate railway enterprise in Boston, and whose whole time before dinner is engrossed by this business. But in the evenings he studies astronomy, and finds in this pursuit both refreshment and intellectual enlargement. Music is a favorite "second love" with many; and chemistry, geology, botany, history, sociology and a dozen other special branches of study are replete with attractions.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Curious Things About Cooks.

A very curious thing about the cooks that they admit themselves is that a man who succeeds admirably in one house may fail utterly in the next place he takes. A thousand influences govern the matter. The cook may not be in sympathy with his master or mistress. They may not like what he thinks he is best at making, or they may limit him in his expenses, or treat him in a way that makes him miserable. Then, again, a cook may make a great reputation in a restaurant and fail in a private house. That often happens, although, of course, it is still more often the case that a chef trained in family service proves unable to meet the rush and bulk of the work in a public house. The best cooks in town say that the prime necessity for success with private families is not in the scientific knowledge of a cook half so much as in his manners and address. A dapper, pleasant, smiling, smooth, clever fellow will often please a family better than a genius. Curiously enough, so the cooks say, a man who is not liked himself often fails to make his dishes liked.—New York Sun.

Peculiarities of Composite Photographs.

A very curious point in composite photographs is that almost invariably this combined picture is that of a better looking person than any of the individuals who have contributed to it. Some of these photographs now lie before us. Here is one which has been taken from a number of criminals, and, as we have just indicated, the picture is much better favored than the various low browed, coarse mouthed individuals who have contributed to make it up. Another picture we may call attention to as being a great contrast to the last; this is a group of ten girls who are the members of a literary club. The picture is that of a bright looking, intellectual girl of about 19 years of age. The face is thoughtful and the shape of the head indicates great intellectual power. The same observations are applicable to another photograph which is before us, to which several scientific men have contributed each his share.—Chambers' Journal.

India's Troops of Monkeys.

All along this road to this side of Ahmidabad we saw many troops of monkeys of all sizes, from that of a terrier dog up to a large setter—now romping over the fields close by the track, or springing from branch to branch on the trees, or sitting up on some prominent limb wisely watching us as we whizzed by. They are sacred, and the natives never hurt them, although they are fearful thieves and make destructive raids upon fields and orchards. We also saw large numbers of peacocks—noble birds, with tails and plumage of great beauty. They, too, are sacred. A foreigner would be mobbed should he shoot one. They, as the monkeys, are not wild, as travelers' books would lead us to suppose. They are free, and roam as they please, but are hardly less tame than the same birds are on an American farm. They are rarely seen far away from villages and farms.—Carter Harrison in Chicago Mail.

Don't Wait

Until your hair becomes dry, thin, and gray before giving the attention needed to preserve its beauty and vitality. Keep on your toilet-table a bottle of **Ayer's Hair Vigor**—the only dressing you require for the hair—and use a little, daily, to preserve the natural color and prevent baldness.

Thomas Munday, Sharon Grove, Ky., writes: "Several months ago my hair commenced falling out, and in a few weeks my head was almost bald. I tried many remedies, but they did no good. I finally bought a bottle of Ayer's Hair Vigor, and, after using only a part of the contents, my head was covered with a heavy growth of hair. I recommend your preparation as the best hair-restorer in the world."

"My hair was faded and dry," writes Mabel C. Hardy, of Delavan, Ill.; "but after using a bottle of Ayer's Hair Vigor it became black and glossy."

Ayer's Hair Vigor,

Sold by Druggists and Perfumers.

Pimples and Blotches,

So disfiguring to the face, forehead, and neck, may be entirely removed by the use of **Ayer's Sarsaparilla**, the best and safest Alterative and Blood-Purifier ever discovered.

Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.

Sold by Druggists; $1; six bottles for $5.

Worth Your Attention.

Cut this out and mail it to Allen & Co., Augusta, Maine, who will send you free, something new, that just coins money for all workers. As wonderful as the electric light, as genuine as pure gold, it will prove of lifelong value and importance to you. Both sexes, all ages. Allen & Co. bear expense of starting you in business. It will bring you in more cash, right away, than anything else in this world. Anyone anywhere can do the work, and live at home also. Better write at once; then, knowing all, should you conclude that you don't care to engage, why no harm is done. 4-1y

Help thyself, and God will help thee.

Bucklen's Arnica Salve.

THE BEST SALVE in the world for Cuts, Bruises, Sores, Ulcers, Salt Rheum, Fever Sores, Tetter, Chapped Hands, Chilblains, Corns, and all Skin Eruptions, and positively cures Piles, or no pay required. It is guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction, or money refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by Dowty & Becher. july27

At the game's end we shall see who gains.

An Absolute Cure.

The ORIGINAL ABIETINE OINTMENT is only put up in large two-ounce tin boxes, and is an absolute cure for old sores, burns, wounds, chapped hands and all kinds of skin eruptions. Will positively cure all kinds of piles. Aak for the ORIGINAL ABITINE OINTMENT Sold by Dowty & Becher at 25 cents per box—by mail 30 cents. mar7y

On painting and fighting look aloof.

The Commercial Travelers Protective Association of the United States, has a membership of over sixteen thousand and is probably the strongest association of the kind in the world. Mr. John R. Stone, their national secretary and treasurer, 79 Dearbone street, Chicago, in a letter states that he has been severely troubled at times, for the past twenty years, with cramp and bilious colic which would compel him to take to his bed from three to six days—while in St. Louis at their last annual meeting he procured a bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhœa Remedy and has since used it with the best results. It is the only remedy he ever found that effected a rapid and complete cure. No one can safely travel without it. Sold by Dowty & Becher.

Into a mouth shut flies fly not.

Wonderful Cures.

W. D. Hoyt & Co., Wholesale and Retail druggists of Rome, Ga., says: We have been selling Dr. King's New Discovery, Electric Bitters and Bucklen's Arnica Salve for four years. Have never handled remedies that sell so well, or give such universal satisfaction. There have been some wonderful cures effected by these medicines in this city. Several cases of pronounced Consumption have been entirely cured by use of a few bottles of Dr. King's New Discovery, taken in connection with Electric Bitters. We guarantee them always. Sold by Dowty & Becher.

Truth and oil are ever above.

Good Wages Ahead.

George Stinson & Co., Portland, Maine, can give you work that you can do and live at home, making great pay. You are started free. Capital not needed. Both sexes. All ages. Cut this out and write at once; no harm will be done if you conclude not to go to work, after you learn all. All particulars free. Best paying work in this world. 4-1y

Love makes all hearts gentle.

Try Moore's headache cure, it beats the world. For sale by Dr. A. Heintz.

Love rules his kingdom without a sword.

The Passenger Department

Of the Union Pacific, "The Overland Route," has gotten out a fly-bill designed to call attention to the summer resorts along the line of this railway. It is a good bill and tourists, pleasure seekers, sportsmen and fishermen should apply at once to J. S. Tebbets, General Passenger agent, Omaha, Neb., for information in regard to the points of interest along the line, before deciding where they will spend the summer season, or vacation holidays. 3tf

Love is the true picture of love.

I am selling "Moore's Tree of Life" and it is said to give the very best satisfaction. Dr. A. Heintz. 30-6m3

There are many ways to fame.

A positive cure for liver and kidney troubles, constipation, sick and nervous headache and all blood diseases is "Moore's Tree of Life." Try it. Sold by Dr. A. Heintz.

Great pains quickly find ease.

Early Marriages in China.

In China early marriages are the rule. The match is arranged by the parents, and is in the nature of a commercial transaction. The groom is expected to make presents of money and clothes to the bride, who, however, brings no dowry or anything in return. The calendars are consulted solemnly for lucky days, and the blessings of the tutelary gods sought by various propitiatory measures. If the signs fail to turn out auspiciously the wedding is postponed again and again. The ceremony of marriage consists in drinking a cup of samshoo together in the nuptial chamber.—Thomas Stevens' Letter.

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