

lord the earl of Severne sat in his great lbrary in his fine new house in Golden square and, perhaps because he had the gout and his foot was swathed in bandages, he scowled nore ferociously at the logs burning on the hearth than he would otherwise have done. Also, the lackey who mostly sat out in the passage all day long, except at the numerous times-about fifty in the day-when his lordship beat upon

the silver gong by his side to call him in-was enduring tortures from my lordis temper and wishing that for once-only for once-he could summon up his courage to return his mas ter's abuse and curses-with interest. But the poor wretch knew that this meant loss of place and of fine feeding below stairs, and good drinking, too-which would be doubled and trebled and quadrupled next week, to say nothing of valls and presents when Christmas came-and he reflected that all these, including love passages with the maids in not only this house but also others in the square, were better things than poverty and hunger-also at Christmas! Likewise, he ecalled that his old bedridden mother had a musty proverb to the effect that " curses were like chickens and came home to roost," and another "that hard words break no bones." and still another that "fine words buttered no parsnips," all of which pithy and indisputable saws, as well as many others, the old dame was in the habit of muttering in her bed day by day when the spirit moved her. Wherefore the fellow mumbled to himself, 'Curse on, an' you will," as he heard my lord roaring and grunting within, while, being a philosopher, though he did not know it, and, it may be, had never heard of such a thing as philosophy, he told himself that, if fine words did not indeed butter any parsnips, neither did cough words do anybody any harm, and thereupon tisted a bottle, which he kept under the chair, to his lips, and drank-well-salvation to his master within.

But, now, fresh roars came from out the library and the bell was struck upon, and "blessings" were bellowed out upon the variet's body and other portions of his frame, so that, slipping the bottle back into a convenient drawer beneath the seat of the chair, the man rose and entered the library with an attitude of extreme alacrity. "Fellow," the noble lord exclaimed, "what are you

doing without? Sleeping or guzzling, or what? Don't dare to answer, or, i' fags, I'll have ye whipped. Where is my Lady Millicent?' "My lord, I do not know-

"Not know! What in the name of the flend are you kept here for? Look out in the square and see if she is coming. Look, I say."

"My lord," the man said, fawningly, "in truth her ladyis coming. Your lordship is a necromancer. The coach rounds the street corner, her ladyship is wrapped in her great fur cloak, and she descends."

But he did not tell his master that her ladyship had already descended from the coach nine houses off, at which spot she had been joined by a bravely appareled, handsome young man, who had kissed her hand, and, as the lackey thought, had looked much as though he would like to kiss her face. But-it was broad daylight-this he had not done. I do not hear the wheels," the irascible old peer said, after two or three minutes' pause.

"My lord will remember the ground is heavy with snow. "Bah! Has she come into the house?" 'She is coming, my lord," the servant replied, he having seen her ladyship tear her hand out of that of the handsome young man, walk swiftly towards her father's house, and,

ooking round once, wave that hand towards the admiring cavalier. This also he did not mention to his master. Wrapped still in her long fur houppelande, her three cor-

nered that upon her head, and her long fur embroldered gloves upon her hands, Lady Millicent Thame entered now her father's presence, while bringing with her, as it seemed to the servant if not to the master, an air of freshness and youth that was altogether delightful. For my lady was but wo and twenty, and she was fair and sweet; her cheeks were soft and had a bloom upon them such as a peach on a south wall possesses when at its best in summer's prime; her eyes were cool and gray, her hair-a lock of which had escaped from beneath her wig-was blonde comme le blé.

The grunts and gurgles emitted now by the gouty old man cannot be represented on paper by any combination of the letters of the alphabet, therefore let them be imagined, with, since in his heart my lord loved his child full well, an accompanying belief that they were intended to represent some form of welcome and endearment. Then, after further choking and grunting, the earl said:

"Well, what is a-doing in the town? And the thieves; has aught been heard of them? And you, whom have you seen, and what done? Hey? Go!" (This latter being addressed to the footman, who promptly went, since none waited for his tordship to speak twice.)

"There are no tidings of the thieves as yet," his daughter answered, sitting down by him after the man was gone. The news letters say the robbery was committed in the iouse by some vagabonds who knew what they were a-doing. Others say---"What others?"

"I met Luke Rivers in the Mall, and-and Bertle War-

grave ten minutes ago in the square. And he-" Bertie Wargrave! A wastrel, a dissolute youth; dissolute as his debauched old cavaller of a father. And poor as Job's cat." "Maybe." Lady Millicent said, unmoved at this melan-

sholy statement. Then, looking her father in the face, she added, "I love him, nevertheless." "Love away," said Lord Severne with a wheezy laugh, the first he had given vent to that day and surprising his daughter by doing so, since she had expected something that

was not-well! a laugh. "Love away, and be happy, only be no fool, nor think of marrying him. His father loved a many when he was young; so, too, for the matter of that, did I. But we only loved them, and we knew where to marry. My life and soul! In the days of merry King "We are not in his days now, the Lord be praised!" Lady

Millicent replied. "And we, the women of today, have some touch and spot of modesty within us now. Paugh! your merry King Charles and his French ways, and the ways of the women of his days! I do hate their very names-the women of his days and their multitudinous lovers! My Lord This one day, and my Lord That another, and a broken down cavalier the next, and so on, till a footman or a scrivener's clerk, or a shopman served at last. Bah! for your King

"We lived our lives and loved 'em, too," his lordship said, still wheezing and chuckling, "and once this cursed gout hath departed, I'll enjoy mine again. Only I would I had not been robbed of 30,000 guineas, and I would I had a daughter who did not wish to marry a beggarly officer in Peterborough's Horse.

"You are deceived." Lady Millicent said to her father, she being the only creature who dared to argue with and defy, and, what was worse, generally to vanguish him. Bertie Wargrave is no beggar. He has 200 guineas a year

Two hundred devils!"

"Enough to keep a wife on, at least if he leaves off campaigning. He is no beggar, and he wants nothing from you. He would not even have taken your 30,000 guineas' orth of valuables which the thieves have robbed you of as a gift. And, to conclude, I love him, and always shall."

These were the days-the Christmas day that was drawing near so blusteringly was one of them-that are now, to us, so full of perfumed memories of

The teacup times of hood and hoop, Or while the patch was worn."

Also they were brave, bold days in many ways; days of great storm and strife by sea and land, when Russell had not long ago defeated our enemies-our only great enemyat La Hogue, and when Marlborough had just done the same thing at Blenheim. The days when men wore scarlet coats and wige, and red heeled shoes, and lace that was someworth a fortune on their breasts and their wrists, and carried ivory and gold hilted swords, and fought and loved women, and fought again-and then loved other women-and oft drank too deep, though, when they were sober, they could write poems imbedded now in many a sweet anthology, and plays that were full of life and movement and had no problems to propound.

The days when women were more prettily clothed than ever they have been since; when the blood ran free and full brough their veins; when, if they loved men-a man-one -they said so and were not ashamed, while, if they had a latter day capacity for leving a dozen, they did not say so but did it, assuming thereby a virtue if they had it not,

for decency's sake. Yet days, too, when villains flourished as now they never

could flourish outside the boards of fifth rate theaters, when wills could be destroyed with open scoutings and derisions by the powerful; when duels were fought in daylight in the park, and sometimes fought unfairly, too; when men were murdered by kinsmen for their wealth, and others kidnaped and sold to the plantations by relations hungering for their inheritance, and women abducted and deceived into mock marriages; stealthy midnight murders done and either never known of or the murderers never discovered.

Bloundelle Burton

Now, in these days of good Queen Anne of which I tell, some of these things were still a-doing. Lady Millicent Thame loved a man who, in solemn truth, was not, perhaps, her proper match, and said openly that she did so; and there were villains, thieves, highwaymen, housebreakers all about, and villains in high life, too; men were being hanged daily at Tyburn and Execution dock, and Kennington common and other detectable spots for stealing shillings, and horses, and dogs; and the earl of Severne had recently had his house broken into, and his strong box robbed to the value of 30,000 guineas.

Yet the wonder was now it had been done. The box of iron, having in it a lock which required for its works the whole of the lid of the box-it had been made a hundred years before by Ventimi of Florence-stood in the cabinet, or dressing room, opening out of the bedroom of the noble earl. The door leading from the bedroom of his lordship to the cabinet stood open all night; the key to the lock reposed beneath the pillow of its august owner. Yet still, a week ago, the lackey, coming in one morning to pull the hangings of the bedroom windows, saw that the lid of the strong box was open, and that the box had been rifled of all its contents.

Let us pass over the earl's roars and terrible ejaculations the gout was on him then-the awful hubbub in the hour the flying hither and thither and you of the scared domestics who, hearing their master, thought a thunderbolt had struck the roof. Passons aussi (but sorrowfully, since, indeed, it was rather a sight to dwell upon), a delicious vision of Lady Millicent, with golden hair all tumbled and disheveled by sleep, rushing into the room at the noise-it would have waked the dead! clad in some fleecy, flowing gown or robe de chambre of clinging material, which as she ran showed fair white arms in the loose sleeves, and little feet hastily thrust into gold thread, pearl embroidered mules.

Ten thousand pounds in guineas," the earl was yelling as she entered, "ten thousand in African Elephant guineas, bills on Sir Josiah Child and Matthew Decker, and many drafts! O, my heart and liver! All gone, and most of them as ready money in hand, with, too, your sainted mother's pearls! Ah! O! Stap my vitals! O! no one in the house ever, except ourselves and the domestics!"

make inquiries after your pains-"Luke Rivers! A youth of parts, a godly man, a church-

Bah! One who says he is, yet at church time is walking in the Mall with many a saucy quean. Church indeed!" while pretty Lady Millicent muttered to herself: "A fawning, capting knave who pretends to be at church because his godly uncle hath much money to leave."

'A righteous youth," the earl went on, "and therefore-

"Whom you admire, and would have me wed. Yet never will I!"

"Minion!" the earl raved, "would you accuse him of robbing me? 'Him! And he never alone in the house by day or night, and sick, too, in his rooms, at the time! 'Twas more like your beggarly lover with his gambling, dissolute habits, and need of money than Luke."

To which Lady Millicent said nothing, but, tossing ner pretty head mighty high, walked out of the room.

Now, whenever her ladyship walked out of the roomor, at least, when mostly she did so-she as often as not walked out of the house, too; the earl knowing nothing of her movements since no servant of his would tell him aught of what the girl did, they all loving her and being afraid of him. And when she walked out she went ever one way, which was down towards St. James' square and in to it, and towards the tamarisk tree which had been planted by Mme. Davis, who was, in truth, that Moll Davis of whom no more was known than that King James, when duke of York, loved her and gave her a house in the square. And, beneath that tamarisk tree would ever be found awaiting Lady Millicentperhaps by rendezvous, since lovers have ever done such things and ever will, it is to be supposed-that handsome young man in the scarlet coat whom we have heard spoken Bertie Wargrave. And soft words would be whispered and hands clasped, and-if there was a fog or the night was nigh, or the watchman was asleep or drunk-their lips would meet and murmurs pass between those lips. And so you who read do now know enough to understand, or at least much as a poor scribe knows how to relate from what books and telltale lovers have revealed to him.

'My precious soul, my sweet, my love, my life!" Bertie said the day after the ropbery, as he slipped his hand beneath my lady's long furred cloak, and put it in under her arm and held her hand after those things written above had had their happenings. "What is it?" And then he listened to his lady love's story.

But, sweetheart," he said at last, "'tis passing strange. Luke Rivers ill in bed at this time! He ill in bed! be, the man who, prior to the robbery, had been admitted to your father's house!"

'Is't not so?" Lady Millicent asked, pausing in her walk. "Ah, Bertle, fond love, what know you to the contrary? Tell me, tell me, my heart?" while, bidden as much by the look in her eyes and the bloom on her cheeks, as by her

words, Bertle went on: "Last night," he said, "I sat in Luke Rivers' lodgings down by the river. And-and-he told me he must go forth that instant, only-only-he knew not how to compass it He owed much money to his landlord who waited beneath to pounce on him if he attempted to descend, and waited with a Bow street man to serve a warrant on him. Yet still he said he would go an' he could. He had a dicing debt to pay that night. O! if he could but go. Then, suddenly, he besought of me a favor. If I would lend him my coat and cloak and hat and would call out 'good nights' as he went down the stairs, the watchers below would think it was the visitor going forth and not he, and so he could go and would soon return and release me. Also, he said, if I would walk about the room now and again, then would the obdurate ones below think he was still in 't, and so he could creep back in safety to his hole and I could go.'

"And thou did'st it! Risked thyself for that canting. hypocritical sewer rat?"

I did it, heart of my heart. In truth I did. And he went forth clad in my clothes, which well became the roystering, doystering ne'er do well your revered father calls me, not the sober, plous churchgoer, Luke Rivers. And a sweet fool he looked in them. Yet still he went. And, my lady fair. 'twas vastly cold when I was left alone with nought but a guttering rushlight to cheer me. Now," said Bertie to Lady Millicent, "listen to me, and-"

Do I not ever listen to you, no matter what you speak upon? Am I not your slave-your loving slave, but still that same? Is there a thing you do or say that makes not summer in my heart-

"Sweetest," said Bertie, stopping the words from issuing 'out of her pomegranate lips by a process that, he who writes this narrative has been told, is effective on occasions. "listen to me. Walking about the gloomy den, holding the rushlight on high so that I might see, I did perceive upon his

do you stop and break off? "Tis you who stopped me. Still, it matters not. Milly,

that key was a strange one, cunningly wrought and devised.

"But my father's key never leaves his room. That, too hes ever on the high mantelshelf." Does he, thy father, never leave his room? Has he ne'er done so, leaving Luke Rivers there alone one single moment;

And-and-and-"

long enough to make a wax impression?" "But, sweetheart, if he had gone to our house to rob the strong box, then would he not have left the key in his rooms?

'It was a broken key. Doubtless one that had failed and so was flung aside. Another, a second, or a third, sufficed better, and that he took. See'st thou?" 'O. Bertie, Bertie," Lady Millicent exclaimed, her blood

on fire, "bring it home to him; let us bring it home to him. Get you father's goods back to him-he loves his possession and it will soon be Christmas; we will spend it together. A masterful, exacting man is my father; but I have a touch of his condition. I, too, am masterful. Had my lord not wanted to find his master he should never have bred me. Give him his money back and he shall give you your wife. Trust me. Now come. See, my precious love, the wintry night draws in-it is nigh dark-and, O, the watchman sleeps again. Dost thou see that, Bertie?"

I see, and, seeing, understand. Thus and thus." Christmas eve in London. A fine, clear night, with, pevertheless, fleaks and flakes of snow blowing through the air as though driven forward by the cold north wind as avant couriers of what was on the way from that stormy north. Yet still fine and clear, with a half rusty moon hanging low in the heavens and lighting up the faces of the passers by: lighting up the faces of the mummers and the maskers dancing round his grace of Northumberland's house at Charing Cross, and singing of carols and scrambling for the small sliver pieces thrown out to them by the duke's sumptuously clad menials. Lighting up, too, the faces of men and women passing along, many of whom had already anticipated the drinkings and feastings of the morrow, and the faces of debauched gentlemen-" night hawks, mohocks, owls, etc.," as they termed themselves who leered into every young woman's face, and, as often as not, got the leer

returned with interest. Through this crowd weat two young men, one tall, dark, handsome, covered up in a heavy roquelaure, and with his laced hat pulled well down over his brows; one, who was leading, helping, guiding another, who surely was his younger brother. A stripling lad this, with eyes blue as the periwinkle and cheeks pink as the Bourbon rose, with fair curis tucked well up under his slouch felt hat; a youth at whom every woman's eye was directed with an approving glance. Leading, guiding this youth, whose sword got vastly in his way, the other went on, until at last, turning down a street leading to the river's edge, both paused beneath the stoop of one of the ancient houses.

Put on thy vizard mask now, sweet one," the elder said. "He must be upstairs since the landlord, would never let him come down. The door stands open, the stairs invite. Tread softly, or shall I carry thee up them?" Nay, let me walk, Bertie. But down your feet heavily.

will plant mine lightly. "You are not afeard?" "Afeard! with you by my side! Nay, never. Not of the

flend himself. Up the stairs, therefore, the two went, while, since the landkord seemed to be carousing within with some friend-

"A key! The dastard, treacherous knave! Go on-why perhaps the Bow street runner-he heard them not. Nor would it have mattered much had he done so, since he had some days before been paid his bill by Luke Rivers, who was now as free as air. But this neither my lady nor her lover know as yet. They knew it soon, however, when, tapping gently on the door of Rivers' room, they learnt by the silence that was the only answer-for silence can answer as well as words sometimes-that the man they sought was not within. "You understand?" Bertie Wargrave whispered in her

AND THAT IS DEATH.

NOT YET! YOU WILL HAVE ONE BRIDE TONIGHT.

ladyship's ear. "He is out. Therefore he has paid his bill. 'Dis well. We know where he got the money from. Now to open the door. Thinking it most like he would do this, I have brought these." Whereupon Bertle produced from his pocket a bunch of

picklocks, and in five minutes they were in the rooms. High and low they hunted for half an hour by the aid of the rushlight they kindled after some trouble, and then, at last, they found that for which they sought, though found it only when they had begun to despair. Thrusting his hand up the large open mouthed grate, in which no fire had been kindled for many a long day, they found all. The bags of guineas-one being open, doubtless for the thief's needs-the drafts, the bonds, all.

We have gotten them," Bertie said. "We are man and

wife." " Not yet," a voice exclaimed, while at the same momen the rushlight was knocked to the floor, my Lady Millicent was thrust aside, and a pair of sinewy hands seized Bertie by the throat, and, flinging him down on the bed, began to throttle the life out of him. "Not yet! You will have one bride tonight, and that is death! Afterwards this stripling, who is a woman, doubtless, can join you." And again Luke Rivers, who had returned from Rummer's coffee house for more money with which to gamble, pressed harder and harder on Bertie Wargrave's throat. "And then," he added.

"the river can have you both." Yet, think not that the bold heart of Lord Severne's daughter had stood still. 'Twas not of such mettle this masterful brood was made. The candle was knocked out 'tis true, but the moon, whose rays streamed through the window into the room, illuminating it brightly, could not be served thus. And, through her cays, there flashed now something on which they sparkled and gleamed, something that, bright one instant, was gone the next. The small, lithe rapier the girl had carried at her side with much discomfort to herself, caused still greater discomfort to Luke Rivers as it hurtled against his ribs and, gliding in between two of them, caused him to utter one piercing yell, to quickly, in his agony, unchasp his hands, and then fall senseless on the bed by the side of his expected victim, while the fair young slip of noblesse hissed, "Dog! Beast! Jackal in the lion's hide, you

would have put it on him. On him, my one, my only love. Die, an' thou wilt." By 10 o'clock on Christmas night the earl of Severne's thood ran high. A-many a glass of Lisbon and Oporto had he drunk since morning, many a weird song of old Carolinian days had he favored his listeners with-when they would listen-the domestics had been bidden to eat and drink their fill, and the gout had gripped him worse than ever. Yet, still, my lord was at his best in one way. No matter whether his heart was softened by the bold recovery of his precious treasure, or whether his daughter had worsted him in one final conflict, at least she was now the affianced wife

of the man she loved "I' fags!" the earl grunted to Bertie Wargrave as he drank again. "if you're no good at aught else, you are good at making a fool girl love you. Also you have a touch of the buildog in you. You shall have her. 'Fore gad, you



shall. But I'll have you out of Peterborough's regiment, and buy you one for yourself, if you must go a-soldiering. Buss her, man, buss her, though I doubt me if your lips know the way to a woman's, unless it be those of some saucy waiting

Then, as Bertie stepped up to his future bride and kissed her long and tenderly, his arm around the silken dress she wore now, the old man seemed mightily astonished. "He might be his dissolute father," his lordship muttered, "or me when I was young. Zounds! I do believe he

has kissed her before. I should, had I been he." So, in spite of his lordship's gout and in spite of his temper and his terrible loss, which was now retrieved, they kept high revels in Severne house that night. That bowls of spiced wine and other drinks should be consumed bravely by all need not be told, remembering that these were days of wassall and carouse, nor that the servants recled about unsteady and my lord slept in his chair, nor that Bertie and her pretty ladyship sat behind a vast Indian screen at interthere-to talk! Nor that the girl sat later at her spinet and her lover sang a soft song to her made by my Lord Pem-

broke, having for refrain the lines: "Silence in love betrays more woe Than words, tho' ne'er so witty. The beggar that is dumb, you know,

May challenge double pity.' And Lady Millicent hummed, out of keeping with the "I love you, I love you, I love you," as she accompanied him, and the bells of St. Martin's and St. James' rang out their joyous peals for the last time as midnight struck; and my lord slumbered startorously.

And Luke Rivers lay in the watchhouse wondering whether Tyburn or the plantations would be his doom.