SPOTS OF THE LEOPARDESS.

A NOVEL.

[Written for the SUNDAY UNION by Gale Braith.]

He told a tale as mild as sad:
And they who listened deemed it mad—
Mad as the delirious dream
Of one who, on an Indian stream
Floating in a Morphean bark,
Feeds on the charmed lotus-leaf—
While under the palms, in visions brief,
Through shadows of sunset, golden-dark,
The graceful leopard and leopardess stand,
With plumed tribes on the yellow sand,
To gaze with steadfast, wondering eyes
Where the feeding dreamer floating lies.
—*Thomas Buchanan Read.*

PRELUDE.

A scorching day in the East Indies. Not a breath of air to lift the oppressive burning heat upon the tall, gay trees; the leaves appear dead and withered; flowers of the twining arclepias droop their beauteous heads in helpless abandonment, bowing to the mercy of the pitiless exterminator.

Beasts of the jungle shrink with lolling tongues in search of water, while rays from the blazing sun pour down hotly, fiercely, drying and blasting each shrub and blossom, seeming to laugh in high derision at the harm it has wrought. Only the slender bamboo raises its stately head in scornful indifference and a proud defiance towards the fiery darts.

In short, it is just the sort of day you might term "hotter than limbo."

My scene is a bungalow. The interior a long, low, narrow room, partly darkened and hung with richest Smyrna tapestries. Skins of the leopard, tiger and panther are strewn upon the matted floor; rugs of all colors lie in variegated confusion. Across the entrance hangs a yellow silken curtain of heaviest, brightest fabric, falling in straight rigid folds to the floor.

At the farthest end of this room a stand is thickly laden with groups of tropical flowers and plants. Low willow chairs are huddled together as if inviting a tete-a-tete. Upon the crimson-covered table a vase filled with queer brown and yellow blossoms—which scent the air with languorous sweetness—lies overturned, and the frip, frip of the water dripping from them with monotonous regularity is the only sound which breaks the deathlike stillness. Directly in the center of this apartment stands a couch, whereon reclines a woman whose softly modulated breathing indicates sleep. Her beauty is almost bewildering in its placid loveliness. The most striking wonder of all is the hair, reddish gold, which, unconfined, strews the couch and sweeps the floor. Upon her forehead and beneath the thick brown lashes of unnatural length, the moisture stands in clusters like millions of tiny crystal beads.

She lies in an indolent, luxurious position. The loose gown, open at the throat, discloses the beautiful neck from chin to breast, whose fair, white roundness is but faintly hid. One arm pillows the head, and the loose sleeve falling backwards, it is seen, almost dazzling in its whiteness. The other hangs carelessly by her side, and is caught and tangled in the radiant veil of hair. Upon the third finger shines a plain golden circle—the badge of wifehood. Thus she lies, whose wondrous beauty is in perfect keeping with her surroundings.

She moves slightly, sighs, and then opens a pair of eyes like blackest midnight.

Almost instantly the portiere is roughly thrust aside, and a cheetah—or more commonly called hunting leopard, an immense animal—enters, which, with slow, undulating movements, comes toward her. She turns and smiles a sleepy welcome. The beast crouches upon the rug in front of the couch. Her hand with the ring strays lingeringly, caressingly upon his head, neck and shoulders.

So intent is she with her pet that she fails to notice the portiere has again been lifted, and the intruder stands regarding her with disapproving eyes.

The leopard rises in his massive magnificence and utters a low angry snarl; his yellow eyes are fastened upon the man, whom he evidently regards as an antagonist.

The woman turns with a start, and lays her hands firmly upon the animal's neck, and as she slowly raises to her feet it needs but a glance to know she is soon to bear the pangs of maternity. Shaking back the heavy cloud of hair it falls in masses almost to the floor, touches and kisses the edge of the rug in which her feet stands embedded.

She stands, and awaits with an air of expectancy for him to speak. At last he does so, and points angrily towards the leopard, who sends forth a second vicious snarl, no doubt fully comprehending the words just spoken.

She laughs insolently, and bending forward with a light swift touch, sends a bell tingling, which brings in response an old black ayah, who, with coaxing and a word of command from his mistress, leads away the leopard.

Husband and wife—for such they are—stand facing one another; she in her proud young womanhood, he, long past the meridian of life. His voice is low and tremulous; he is talking earnestly, passionately, pleadingly. He advances a step towards her. She recoils, shudderingly. His face shows traces of care and grief, though signs of manly beauty are still observable upon his aged countenance as he awaits patiently for her answer.

With the same insolent, contemptuous smile curling her lips, she turns her back to him.

And with a sigh deep and full of infinite pain, he passes slowly through the yellow silken curtain, whilst she arranges the flowers in the overturned vase with tenderest loving care.

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Night—A woman fighting for life in the throes of death. Each groan is echoed in the outside passage, where a huge leopard is couching at the sick room door. Every moan seems to penetrate the animal's body with sharpest, keenest pain, as he writhes and rolls upon the floor in unmistakable agony.

* * * * * * *

A female child is resting in the old ayah's arms and a mother is gasping her life away. Each breath brings her nearer to death. Then, shudderingly, closing her eyes she passes into eternity.

CHAPTER I.

The incidents which I am about to relate in the following narrative are so fearfully horribly strange in their unnaturalness that I pause, with my pen upraised in hesitating doubt, debating within myself, Is it best to proceed and tell what I know or to let it sink into everlasting oblivion? Not that I expect to find but few believers, and for these few who have made nature and metaphysics a study for their benefit and for their benefit alone, I write these lines.

Wiseacres, learned and deep in magic lore, will smilingly shake their gray heads and mutter: "An utter impossibility. This trash is beyond all power of human comprehension. The man must be mad to write such a thing."

Well, be it as it may, I am about to give the candid truth, and it will be of no use for me to suppose this, nor suppose that, and seriously expect to hear myself called an "erratic fool" for my pains, and for those self-same critics who may mock these pages I will simply remind them of the old, time-worn phrase regarding "Truth being stranger than fiction."

In fact I feel it an actual duty to make known this strange enigma which has puzzled me almost beyond endurance, and as I remarked before, for the benefit of my few believers I will state the plain case.

The following chapters have been very kindly contributed by Miss Olivia Longnus, a most estimable lady, and in whom I place the most explicit trust and confidence. So for the present I leave you to take up the thread of this story at a later date. Very truly, yours,

FELIX ROSSITER, M. D.

MISS OLIVIA LONGNUS' STORY.

After some little time spent in deliberation, I have promised Mr. Rossiter an account of my experience while at "Glandour Court," and whereas I truly esteem Mr. Rossiter as a true gentleman, and also for the reason of him being a friend of the family to which this story pertains, I could not refuse his request. The happenings are as fresh in my mind as if it were but yesterday.

I was employed in the capacity of governess to the only child and son of Sir Lional and Lady Glandour.

Glandour Court, the magnificent country seat of Sir Lional Glandour, is but a few hours' ride from London.

When I first became an inmate of the court, it was the happiest and most united family in all England. The husband's affectionate tenderness for his wife was self-evident, and I, whose heart was well nigh broke from the recent bereavement of a dear mother, was treated with all the respect and consideration which a sister would be entitled to by the fair, gentle mistress of Glandour Court.

Dora, Lady Glandour, without being, strictly speaking, beautiful, was infinitely sweet in her fair, pale prettiness. I am a plain woman, and am trying to write in a plain, matter-of-fact manner, without using any grandiloquence to assist me. Lady Dora was an angel, if ever there was one. But I will not stop to eulogize her, for the tears fill my eyes and drop upon these pages as I write. So with present trembling lips I say: "God bless you, Dora Glandour."

Sir Lional I will not attempt to describe, at least not minutely. Tall, dark, handsome, proud, hasty, passionate—there he is in six words.

One morning at the breakfast table, a footman handed Sir Lional a yellow-tinted envelope—why is it, that a yellow envelope always sends a shudder through me? and this morning I noticed it more marked than usual.

His Lordship lazily glanced at the inscription, and then leisurely proceeded to open it. He could scarcely have read more than a couple of lines, when, rising hastily from the table, with a glance at his wife—who quickly followed him—he left the room.

I, sitting alone, wondered vaguely what the news might be, occupying myself in the meantime looking out of the long, low windows to the smoothly-kept lawn and the white marble walk, whereon a peacock strutted proudly back and forth. From him my glance wandered to the rose bushes, whilst each puff of wind sent a shower of pink, yellow and white petals fluttering in the breeze, flecking the short green sward with pretty, delicate tints.

Through the thickly-shaded distance I could see the timid deer and fawn in which Glandour Park abounds. Still musing on the letter, I started perceptibly when Lady Dora addressed me.

"Miss Longnus, my husband has just received sad news from India, informing him of his uncle's death."

The yellow letter was in her hand. I regarded it with a strange fascination. It seemed to hold me spellbound. She held it towards me. Almost mechanically I reached my hand for it.

It was a brief letter, written in a clear, smooth, running French hand, with long thickly crossed t's and the i's heavily dotted. Without the slightest trace of grief for the writer's father, it ended with a fine, bold, black flourish, and the name signed was "Infern Tarrant," which, after reading, I felt an indescribable impulse to fold Lady Dora in my arms and shield her from some lurking, unseen danger.

"Infern Tarrant!" I said. "What a queer name!"

"Yes," replied her ladyship, "it is. You perceive by this letter she is coming to make her home with us. Poor girl, she is entirely alone now. Her mother died at her birth."

I am not given to imaginary fancies, nor am I at all superstitious, but a thrill of something, I cannot explain what, passed through me, chilling me to the heart, and I asked with difficulty:

"When does the young lady arrive?" quite forgetting that I had but just read the letter.

"Almost any day," replied her ladyship. "Those foreign mails are always more or less late, and this letter is no exception to the general rule. It has been delayed three days, so I presume we may expect her at any time from now."

CHAPTER II.

Subsequent to the foregoing conversation I was seated in the schoolroom, occupied with little Cyral, when Mrs. Dunlap, the housekeeper, entered hastily, and in a great flutter, without the least explanation, exclaimed:

"They have come!"

I looked at her inquiringly.

"Whom?"

"They—the Indians."

Again I repeated, "Indians."

"Yes, the East Indians."

"Oh!" I replied, smiling, "you mean Miss Tarrant, Sir Lional's cousin. She is not an Indian."

"Well," said Dunlap, with a nod, "the one that I was ordered to show to the west wing was an Indian sure enough, black as"—looking around for comparison—"as that dress you're wearing."

"Oh!" I said, a light breaking upon me, "it must be her maid or servant of some sort."

"Perhaps, but the idea of a person having an Indian to wait on 'em. A Negro is bad enough, Lord knows. But an Indian—ugh!"

I am not giving to gossip, nor encourage servants to do so, but I could not help my curiosity getting the best of me, and asked, "Did you see Miss Tarrant?"

"No. She was in the library and had her back turned when Lady Glandour requested me to show the Indians to the rooms."

I felt disappointed. A devouring curiosity was coming over me regarding the girl from India.

"Well, we will see her soon enough, no doubt, as she is to remain at the court."

"God forbid," ejaculated Mrs. Dunlap, starting for the door.

The next morning or so I did not join the family at meals, refusing Lady Glandour's kind messages to do so.

Once passing hurriedly through the halls I ran almost against a queer old black woman dressed in true Oriental costume, which, I concluded, must be Miss Tarrant's attendant. And one day, passing through the drawing-room, I saw her. Almost instantly I knew it was her. She was sitting, or, to be more explicit, reclining upon a low velvet couch, and as I entered she started, ever so slightly. An involuntary exclamation escaped me, and I covered both eyes with my hands; then, feeling ashamed and endeavoring to master my feelings, I addressed her.

"Excuse me; Miss Tarrant, I believe."

"Yes," with a quick glance of survey. "And you, I presume, are the governess?"

I bowed in acquiescence. My eyes were riveted upon this girl, or woman. The barbaric splendor of her beauty was appalling. I never saw a human creature anything like her. The hair, which grew in stubborn crispy strands from the low, white forehead, was the oddest, most beautiful hair I ever saw—not one color, but mixed gold and brown. It was the strange, beautiful mixture, dark brown and light gold, that formed the remarkable charm of this magnificent face. Her complexion was of downy whiteness. The eyes—where had I seen anything like them before? Somewhere; but when or where. I could not then think. Yellow! Yes yellow as saffron; and now, even as I write, I tremble with a feeling of dread, for the glorious, grand eyes were not as yours, nor mine, dear reader. The pupils, instead of being round or oblong, were narrow, straight, black slips, slanting downwards. The heavy lids were only partly lifted, as she indolently stretched herself, animal-like, patiently submitting to my scrutiny. On the lobe of the right ear, upon the left temple, and almost at the end of the chin, were three large brown moles. One hand was in plain view, and the smooth, tapering fingers were beautiful to behold; but the nails grew thick, and ended in a long sharp point at the tips. She was clothed in a brown and yellow spotted gown, of some rich Eastern fabric.

Her appearance was so striking, so terribly bizarre, that I stood without uttering a word.

She smiled through her half-shut eyes, evidently pleased and a good deal amused at my perplexity.

"If you are looking for Lady Dora you will most likely find her in the library," she said, and stretched herself again lazily upon the couch.

As if under a spell I reluctantly took my eyes from the wonderful face and slowly left the room. My heart was beating strangely, and my will seemed paralyzed. I felt wholly irrevocably, stubbornly bound to this girl, woman or what? My steps lagged with an effort from looking back. I almost reached the door, but an influence, I could not control, forced me to turn my head, and as I expected, she was standing straight in the middle of the floor convulsed with silent laughter.

CHAPTER III.

A few mornings following Lady Dora asked me kindly if I had the least objection to giving up my rooms in the east wing, stating, as a reason, Miss Tarrant had expressed an ardent desire to exchange with me the west wing for the east wing.

I told her ladyship I would gladly make the exchange, for, indeed, I had always felt a little timid in my rooms, owing to the fact that there was an outside stairway leading into the park.

Her ladyship thanked me, and informed me that Miss Tarrant would like to occupy the rooms that same night. So, with Mrs. Dunlap's help and one of the maid's assistance, I packed together my possessions and prepared to vacate. The old ayah had already commenced bringing in some of her mistress' belongings, amongst which was a large leopard skin. This she proceeded to spread upon the floor, telling me, in her broken English, it was the skin of a pet leopard—a beautiful tame cheetah—which years and years ago belonged to Miss Infern's mother, and which, strange to say, died the very hour Miss Infern was born.

"Why does she carry it about with her?" I asked, curiously.

The old woman shook her turbaned head.

"When Miss Infern baby she no could sleep without skin. Cry, cry all night; by by I bring skin; she laugh ha! ha! Bury her little face in the hair and sleep always nice since then. Now must have it."

I saw very little of Miss Tarrant, as I now seldom joined the family, and then only by Lady Dora's earnest request.

Sir Lional was a thorough horseman, loving a horse as only an Englishman can, and since his cousin's arrival they both spent much of their time in the saddle, riding regularly to hounds. Lady Dora, who was of an extremely nervous disposition, seldom accompanied them.

I was surprised one day to see Mrs. Dunlap eagerly looking through the half-closed library door. Upon catching sight of me she motioned with her hand, at the same time placing a finger upon her lips as if to enjoin a silence.

I approached and saw nothing—or nothing very startling as I at first supposed—only Miss Tarrant lying flat, face downward, upon a great animal skin spread in front of the fireplace.

I looked inquiringly at Mrs. Dunlap. "Watch," was all she said.

I did so, and saw the girl take something from her bosom and press it devouringly to her lips again and again, whilst from her mouth came low, sensuous sounds. She rolled and laid partly upon her side for an instant, then suddenly springing to her feet walked with long, gliding steps from the room.

The housekeeper, without the least hesitancy entered, and bending over the rug picked up a glove—evidently a man's—and still retaining the shape of long, slender fingers. She held it towards me—"Do you know who's it is?" she asked.

I shook my head.

"Sir Lional's," she whispered. "Mark my words, Miss Longnus, there will be sad trouble at Glandour Court before long. Will you help me to keep our poor young mistress in ignorance as long as possible?"

"What do you mean?" I gasped.

"Just what I say. This woman is charming Sir Lional away from his wife. You are young, Miss Longnus, but I am an old woman, and have seen and heard much of the world."

"Oh! Dunlap? Surely she cannot be so vile as that," I cried. "Surely you must be mistaken."

"Mistaken? No, miss, not I; and for why, I pray, was she kissing the master's glove and purring like a cat, the huzzy?"

However, in spite of Mrs. Dunlap's suspicions, I could not credit such a thing, and dismissed all such horrid thoughts from my mind, believing them to be simply an old woman's fancies.

Sir Lional had long promised little Cyral a treat by taking him to London to see the animals in Regent's Park. The child was highly delighted when his father proposed taking him, Miss Tarrant and myself, Lady Dora, as usual, preferring to remain at home.

The little fellow went into ecstacies over the lion and tigers. In fact, every species of animals were represented.

At last we came to the leopard's cage. Miss Infern, who was slightly in advance, stood talking low and caressingly to the largest of these animals—a huge beast of the hunting species. Nay, more than that, she held her hand inside the cage.

The keeper hurried forward.

"For God's sake, madam, take care. These are the fiercest animals in the park."

She laughed and shook her head.

"They will not harm me, see;" and placed her hand and arm far inside the cage again.

The leopard came forward, and passing back and forth, pressed his spotted sides against her hand, muttering at the same time a low noise—a sound of seeming content.

She slapped and stroked his neck, head and back. The keeper, meanwhile, looking on incredulously.

As she laughingly raised her eyes for an instant, I involuntarily glanced at the leopard, and my heart almost stood still, for her eyes and the animal's were exactly alike—the same shape, the same color.

At that moment a little boy, who had evidently escaped from his nurse or parents, ran up to the cage and seeing Miss Tarrant's hand inside the bars, immediately thrust his tiny, chubby fist in also. Instantly the leopard's huge teeth met around the baby's wrist. The poor child screamed in agony.

With a wrench the savage brute pulled the tender flesh from the hand, laying the bone quite bare.

The sight—may I never witness such another—made me deathly sick and faint.

Then followed horror and confusion. The poor little fellow lay fainting upon the ground. I raised him gently in my arms, the tears streaming from my eyes at his sufferings.

Sir Lional, standing a few feet distant, conversing with friends, came hurriedly forward, fearing some evil had befallen his own son. Then came the mother, almost crazed with grief, and pitiful in her woe and terror.

But she, Miss Tarrant, stood unmoved, with even the semblance of a smile, lurking upon her beautiful hard face.

"The little fool," she muttered.

I looked at her in horror, while the leopard, with his long, cruel, red tongue, licked the blood from the floor and bars of the cage.

Sir Lional very kindly offered me his arm to the carriage, which I, being ill and faint, accepted gratefully.

But my nerves had undergone such a shock that for a week or more I found myself confined to my bed.

CHAPTER IV.

From that day on I shrank from Miss Tarrant. Something, a terrible something, caused me to fear, loath and abhor her; and, strange as it may seem, little Cyral joined me in these feelings, for never could, or would he, be coaxed to approach her.

But the old ayah's devotion to her mistress resembled that of a faithful hound.

Nowhere did this girl turn but the old Indian woman would be in close proximity. The indifference with which the young mistress treated this dog-like fidelity I supposed must be from the aversion and contempt which she felt towards her, until I was convinced to the contrary in this manner.

The servants at the court enjoyed a great deal of fun at the old creature's expense, and never missed an opportunity to tease her, especially Mollie, the cook, a great big good-natured Irishwoman. Mollie liked to joke the old woman purely for sport, meaning no harm by so doing.

One day having occasion to visit the servant's hall I found them assembled together, with the old woman amongst them, ridiculing her dress, her turban and her jewels, the old Indian, though, not understanding English very perfectly, evidently comprehended what they were saying; and her little black bead-like eyes glared from one to the other in rage. Mollie, the cook, was executing an Irish jig, with some fancy steps thrown in, around her, amidst roars of laughter from the others, in which I could not help from joining right heartly.

When, suddenly, Miss Tarrant, like a fury, swept into the room.

I never saw this woman look so magnificently beautiful, as with eyes blazing and nostrils distended, she took in at one glance what was going on.

With one sweep of her arm she sent Mollie—who was spinning around on her heel—flying across the polished floor.

Then, putting her arms tenderly around the old woman, she raised the bent old form and pressed the ugly, black wrinkled face to her breast. Her bosom heaved and swelled, and a shivering, trembling current seemed to chase itself up and around the strong shapely hips.

She stood, facing the servants, with her grand head thrown backward. They quailed like culprits before her.

"So," she said—and the red lips parted over the sharp, white teeth—"so this is what you are doing, you cowards. How dare you torment a poor old woman, helpless and weak?"

From them her glance chanced to rest upon me. "But"—and her voice changed from anger to contempt—"but what else can be expected when the mistress' confidant is the instigator?"

"Indeed, Miss Tarrant," I began; but she stopped me with a look.

"No need for any excuse nor apology. They are not accepted. But I warn your servants, *all*—yourself included, looking at me with hatred—"I warn you all, from henceforth, from interfering with or making any disparaging remarks at or about my foster mother; for you will regret it, and regret it sorely. Mind well what I say."

And then, with her arms still clasping the old woman's tottering form, she slowly left the room.

The servants, feeling rebuked, humbly returned to their various duties.

I felt annoyed and ashamed at what had occurred, but what was the use. It was too late now, so I turned and left them, feeling stupid and not a little guilty.

From that time on Miss Tarrant treated me with the utmost insolence, never missing an opportunity to insult or annoy me. I should certainly not have remained at Glandour Court under the circumstances, but Lady Dora—who was in a delicate condition—begged me with tears, in her eyes, to remain until after her trial.

"I have no one to depend upon but you, Olive. Stay with me a little longer; then if you insist upon going I suppose you must," she said.

And I, loving her with my whole heart, promised to remain. Many, many times has that girl tried my patience and insulted me beyond all endurance. I have gone to Lady Dora with my heart, burning from some fresh insult, to beg a release from my promise. But Lady Dora's sweet, patient face, would banish all feelings of anger. I know it was the girl's desire that I should leave the court, but for what reason I know not; but I staid on, and now, I thank God, who knoweth all things best, that I did so. The consolation is great, and very dear to me, and I feel that Lady Dora, in heaven, is looking smilingly down upon these lines as I write.

Lady Dora! Lady Dora! with your infant daughter clasped in your fair, white arms, I feel your presence strangely near me to-night.

CHAPTER V.

A short time later Mrs. Dunlap's prophecy was undoubtedly becoming true. Sir Lional was plainly neglecting his wife, and neglecting her, too, for this cousin, who seemed to have completely infatuated him. Lady Dora, in her purity, never guessed the cause of her husband's growing coldness; but the servants discussed it in whispered comments, scathing in their denunciations, regarding Miss Tarrant. At first I could not, nor would not, believe it until one evening hearing voices, and thinking it some of the servants, I paused and overheard Sir Lional's voice, and then hers—his cousin—he was speaking quickly and hoarsley.

"Infern, your golden eyes fill me with love, hope and terror. Your savage power has placed madness in my heart. I am mad, girl, raving mad, with love for you."

I could hear his lips pressing hers in smothered iteration. I started, my first thought being Lady Dora. My head was whirling. Could it be? Could such a shameful thing be possible? And then my heart arose in a fury of hate towards them both. I could scarcely contain myself from rushing in and confronting them in their treachery. Then the thought struck me of what use could it be. I should only be dismissed, and they could still have it all their own way.

I stood, biting my lips, listening to her voice, low and purring, but failed to catch a single word, and then rushed frantically from the hall and ran to my room to throw myself across the bed and sob for hours.

"My poor darling, my poor darling!" I cried; "at such a time, too, when you most need his love and affection. Ah, heaven is cruel to allow it."

So I lay upon my bed without undressing, until the sun rose high in the heavens.

The next morning I saw her, and the hateful yellow eyes seemed to smile and glare into mine with a glow of fierce, triumphant mockery. I looked at Lady Dora's dear white face, and made a vow, a solemn vow in my heart, to keep this shame and sorrow from her if it required my life to do so.

I so far forgot myself one morning as to speak bitterly to this girl, beseeching her, for her woman's heart, to refrain from playing with Sir Lional's affections. She looked at me an instant with anger blazing from her eyes and said:

"Miss Longnus, being a lady myself, you cannot wonder that I fail to quite catch your meaning. Pray, explain yourself more fully."

I pretended not to notice the insult implied, and forgetting my pride—forgetting all else but my poor Lady Dora, I very bluntly said:

"You know well enough what I mean. Why feign ignorance? Every servant in the court knows, for it is no secret. You are breaking Lady Dora's heart—Sir Lional and yourself, between you."

And then, in remembrance of my sweet mistress, I forgot my anger, and almost knelt to this woman praying, pleading to her with the faintest hope that as yet some heretofore unknown kindly feeling in her heart might turn her in pity towards Lady Dora. I never begged nor prayed so earnestly to my Father in heaven as I did to this woman, more than half devil, to go and leave Lady Dora in peace.

She stood, her eyes emitting yellow flames of fire, and that strange, trembling up and around her lips which I had noticed once before.

"Miss Longnus," she said, "I am not at all surprised at what you, a hireling, may say, for you, like the rest of your class, to which there are no exceptions, frequently forget your station; but what does surprise me"—and an ugly sneer curled the corners of the upper lip—"is that Lady Dora Glandour, a lady by birth and education, could make a confidant of you, a servant."

Then passing, she suddenly bent towards me with a fierce, short laugh.

"I love him. Let that stand as a matter that cannot be altered or palliated."

Her breath almost scorched my cheek as it swept quickly past me, giving me a strange uncanny feeling—a feeling that it was not the breath of a human, but of some fierce, blood-drinking, flesh-devouring animal. I turned hopelessly away, knowing that by my interference I had only made things a thousand times worse, for Lady Dora. I know now, all efforts to assist her ladyship, were quite, quite useless. She continued to grow weaker day by day, and I, watching the change in her poor, worn face, which tried so bravely to hide its misery, doubted all heavenly justice.

"Why," I asked myself, "could a loving Father allow this dear lamb to suffer so cruelly?"

Ah, me! I rebelled against unknown divine justice that may transcend all human understanding. Us poor mortals, who question the justice of Almighty power, are born blind, and thus it is best.

CHAPTER VI.

One of the strange things I noticed about Miss Tarrant was that she never ate meat of any description whatever at the table; and one time I met the old ayah coming from the direction of the kitchen with a large covered basket, to which I paid no especial attention, but which caused me a twinge of curiosity, nevertheless, when Mollie informed me it was meat, raw meat, which she carried away with her.

"Faith, an' what she does wid it is a puzzler to me, unless, indade, she kapes a managrie of wild bastes up in thim rooms of hers to feed."

"Nonsense, Mollie, don't be so silly."

But the cook tossed her head in knowing disdain.

"Sure, thin, Thomas told me he has heard strange growlings in them east wings, and I for one believe it."

These words of Mollie's I regarded as foolish servants' gossip, though, nevertheless, I wondered not a little why this old Indian woman required raw meat, for, not to my knowledge, did she nor her mistress own one single pet animal.

Mollie's conversation had almost passed from my mind, when, having occasion to visit the east wing, I was startled by hearing low, suppressed snarling and growling noises issuing from Miss Tarrant's apartments. What could it be? My gown made a slight rustling noise—instantly the door was opened a trifle, and the old woman peeped out. All noise quickly ceased. I turned and hurried quickly away.

"It must be imagination, or I am dreaming," I muttered, and felt instinctively the old woman's little black eyes still peering after me.

[*To be continued next Sunday.*]

The *Independent* says: "We had a comment lately on the surprising editorial of the *Catholic Review*, which severely attacked the Catholic Church for its apathy regarding the Catholic press. We said that one important reason for what our neighbor regarded as the discreditable character of the Catholic press was probably the fact that it was not free, that contributors were not allowed to discuss opinions which it was free for them to hold. The *Irish Catholic Benevolent Union Journal* has its explanation, which is not so far off from ours, to the effect that the ecclesiastics run the church, and that a church press is allowed no particular sphere. It says:

"'Are Catholics not taught that this life is only worth living in order to save our souls? That is done by fidelity to faith and keeping one's self pure and undefiled—that the troubles of the church are but temporary—that the Lord will see that His Church remains until all time ceases. Hence, what's the use of bothering about newspapers? Those inclined to them may enjoy them. One's soul can be saved without reading.

"'If Catholics got more instruction to work in the world, and by ways of the world that are not sinful, would not we all be more zestful for work and regard the church as something to be worked for instead of, as it were, hanging on to her to save our souls because Christ promised He would not let her go to pieces, and hence what concern of ours is it about extending her kingdom? That's the Lord's affair. Ours is to look after ourselves.'"

Each of the Justices of the Federal Supreme Court is allotted a body-servant, who is paid out of the contingent fund of the court. These servants report promptly every morning at 9 o'clock at the residences of the Justices, whom they attend constantly during the day. They shave the Justices, do their errands and occasionally act as coachmen for them. Each Justice is also furnished with a private secretary.

Tehama County, California, paid out $795 for scalps in December. The bill included five lions, 198 coyotes, 63 wildcats, 1,952 rabbits, 53 crows, 10 bears and 2 eagles.

IN RELIGION'S REALM.

Expressions from the Various Religious Newspapers.

The Religious Thought of the Day as Expressed in the Sectarian Press—Some Matters of Interest to Both Ministers and Laymen.

The Nashville *Christian Advocate* (Meth.) says: "The preacher who is not constantly growing in grace, and growing in the intensity of his desires after God, will rarely advance his people to any spiritual depths or spiritual hights. The one condition of helping other people nearer to God is to have a growing nearness to him ourselves."

The *Interior* (Pres.) says: "The New York ministers who are contributing articles for the Sunday papers, each one advocating his own denomination, are contributing their strength to the breaking down of respect for the Sabbath. No man who will devote his Sunday mornings to reading of the contents of the Sunday daily will long have a high idea of the sacredness of the day, or much respect for the sanctuary. When the sacredness of the Sabbath is gone there is not much of it left."

The *Central Presbyterian* says: "The truth is, that there seems to be a craze in certain quarters for human machinery within the church. There seems to be a want of confidence in the efficacy of the agencies which our Lord has instituted. It is a subtle form of unbelief creeping into the church. What we need is not more machinery, 'Seek and Save' societies, 'Societies of Christian Endeavor,' etc., but more diligent use of the means and agencies divinely appointed, and more fervent prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit to render these means and agencies effectual."

The *Catholic Herald* says: "Shortly after the emancipation of Catholic Ireland the Bishops there refused to allow their people to receive the Catholic Scriptures, with notes, explanations and approvals from one of the English proselyting societies which wished in that way to get access to the people. They knew full well that the object of the non-Catholic society was to weaken Catholic faith and make way for the rule of private judgment. It is not through the love of the Word of God that bigots retain the Bible in the public schools; it is because they hate Catholicity, and they justly regard the reading of the Bible as 'a protest' against the authority of that church, which is the 'pillar and the ground of truth.'"

The *Christian Union* says: "Several of our correspondents have asked us what we mean by saying that man can forgive sin. We have asked them in response what they mean by the forgiveness of sins. We have, as yet, received no answer to our question. Is it possible that they do not know what they mean? We hope that some of them will tell us what they suppose the New Testament means by such a declaration as 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you,' or by such a promise as 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,' or by such a direction as 'Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.' We are only waiting to learn from our correspondents what they mean by the forgiveness of sins in order to tell them why we believe that man can forgive sins."

The *Watchman* says: "Congregationalism in England is apparently declining. The last 'Year Book' shows an increase of only four churches the past year, and the total increase in six years has been but 242. As during this time there has been a steady increase of population, this conclusion is reached that Congregationalism has relatively fallen behind. There has been no expansion in London. The London *Independent* in view of those facts has started a discussion of the question, 'What ought the churches to do?' To this inquiry the *Advance* makes a pertinent reply, which will be appreciated by readers of the *Christian World*, for example, 'If permitted to answer the question from this side of the sea, we should say that the religious papers themselves could help matters not a little by giving up the equivocal and unprofitable business of apologizing for every form of rationalism and by so adjusting their point of observation that they can see some good in orthodoxy.'"

D. E. Hervey says, in the *Church Eclectic*: "*Zion's Herald*, a well-known and able Methodist weekly paper, recently had something to say on the perennial subject of the presumed antagonism between the pulpit and the choir: 'We again enter our emphatic protest against the encroachments of the choir upon the pulpit. It must not be forgotten that the sermon is the essential part of the service, and the singing is collateral and incidental.'

"Here is the fundamental mistake—a mistake which has crept into all Protestant sects to such an extent that they have utterly lost the sense of proportion. The true idea of worship has been so obscured that these sects have actually elevated to the chief place that which is essentially human and fallible, while derogating to a very minor position the real sense of worship. The truth is the direct reverse of that asserted by *Zion's Herald*. The sermon is the collateral and incidental part of the service, and, properly speaking, as a service of real worship, the sermon has no place. The substitution of preaching for worship is entirely a modern idea, which has sprung up since the idea of sacrificial worship has been lost by the numerous Protestant sects."

The *Jewish Voice* says: "It is our abiding conviction that with the Sinaic Sabbath Judaism stands and falls, no matter what rationalists, agnostics, time-servers, and even honest radicals may gainsay. You will say: 'Can it be a transgression if I go to hear the Word of God on Sunday?' No, but you encourage thereby the Sunday morning service and lecture which, in the midst of Judaism and in our time most particularly, cannot stand without disastrous results to the continued validity of our Sabbath. If your faith is not worth the inconvenience which the attendance at a lecture and service on the sacred Sabbath eve would cause you, then it is not worth even the attendance at a lecture in a temple next to your own house.

"There are those who have embraced the cause of the Sunday—who mean therbey to benefit the cause of our holy faith—we often feel sorry to be forced to write and speak against them, as we dislike to hurt their feelings; still we would be derelict in our most solemn duty if we were to keep silent and thus silently acquiesce in a movement which we know—so strong is this our conviction—has a sure tendency towards the ultimate destruction of that which must be to the Israelite dearer than life."

The *Churchman* says: "The discipline of Lent is no unwonted exercise to the faithful churchman, for the rule of Lent extends throughout the year, to all Fridays except Christmas Day; the Ember Days, at the four seasons; the Rogation Days, and by ancient custom and general consent to the half-Lent of Advent, though this last is not prescribed in this church. All told, and omitting duplications, more than one hundred days in the year are appointed on which 'the church requires such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to the extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion'; with Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as absolute fasts. As for the frequent services, the church provides an order for morning and evening prayer daily throughout the year, and makes an addition to that order in Lent. If there be anything spasmodic, therefore, in the piety of the forty days, as is sometimes alleged by outside observers, it is not in the church's system, but in her children's practice. If the abstinence of forty days, broken weekly by the Sunday feast, be found severe by any person in ordinary health, it is probably because that person has neglected his weekly practice on Fridays. The constantly recurring bodily discipline, one day in seven, is as great a moral force as the due observance of the Lord's Day is confessed to be. But since there must be a beginning to every duty, there is no time so favorable for forming the habit of penitential exercise, as the Lenten season, which even the world respects and honors, in form if not in heart. At least the world accepts Lent as an excuse from its demands in social life, and when churchmen live up to their standards, it will not be hard to enforce the same respect for Fridays and other days of abstinence."

The *Christian Leader* (Univ.) says: "Professor Briggs is surely a New Presbyterian. What would Albert Barnes—of the new school himself—have said at such an utterance as this: 'The bugbear of a judgment immediately after death and of a magical transformation in the dying hour should be banished from the world, and we should look with hope and joy for the continuance of the process of grace and the wonders of redemption in the company of the blessed to which we are all hastening?' Did the elder Ballou ever dream that such words would come from the chair of a Presbyterian theological seminary?"

The *Watchman* (Bapt.) says of the passage above quoted that "it must come in the most direct and violent conflict with the confession of faith to which Dr. Briggs had just repeated the formal subscription of seventeen years ago. We confess ourselves at an utter loss to comprehend the meaning of what is herein set forth, if it be not much more than an open espousal of the post-mortem probation theory, about which the air has been so full during these later years. If the new Robinson Professor of Biblical Theology in the Union Seminary is to be accepted as an accredited and sound theological teacher—even as he has been formally installed—then the new peculiar position of Andover, as the center of novel inculcation, can no longer remain peculiar or distinctive."

The *Christian Union* says: "The Bible itself everywhere appeals to man's reason, and demands of him nothing which is unreasonable. The nature of religion Paul declares to be the development of the perfect manhood, and it would be a curious way to develop perfect manhood to begin by dethroning reason, which is the light of the soul. It is equally certain that the Bible exhorts the church, which both reason on the one hand and Protestantism on the other have too often dishonored. The Old Testament church existed before the Old Testament, the New Testament church existed before the New Testament, and both Testaments grew out of and are the expressions of the life of the two churches—two, we call them, though they are in reality one. Those Calvinists who object to Dr. Briggs' doctrine that the church is a concurrent testimony to the truth with the Bible, must settle their dispute first with St. Paul, in his declaration that the church is the pillar and groundwork of the truth, and, secondly, with John Calvin, whose commentary on 1. Timothy iii., 15, we recommend to the attentive consideration of Dr. Briggs' critics. When they have finished their study of Calvin we recommend them to the further study of Luther, who says of preaching that it rises above the Bible. After that they might consider the meaning of the text in Revelation, 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come'—a concurrent invitation from the spirit in the individual prophet and the spirit in the organized church."

The king of the gypsies in England rejoices in the name of George Smith.

A State of Siege

How many people there are who regard the coming of winter as a constant state of siege. It seems as if the elements sat down outside the walls of health and now and again, led by the north wind and his attendant blasts, broke over the ramparts, spreading colds, pneumonia and death. Who knows when the next storm may come and what its effects upon your constitution may be? The fortifications of health must be made strong. **SCOTT'S EMULSION** of pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and So