SPOTS OF THE LEOPARDESS.

A NOVEL.

[Written for the SUNDAY UNION by Gale Braith.]

CHAPTER III.

When I again visited the court Lady Dora was no better. A settled melancholy seemed to possess her. What I at first laid to nature now puzzled me, and I asked Sir Lional's permission to summon our old friend D'Herbelot, whom I have mentioned before. His life was spent in searching after mystic art. The stories told regarding his wonderful gifts were incredible, and as I puzzled over Lady Dora the thought struck me to send and ask D'Herbelot if he could spare the time to run down to Glandour. Gaining Sir Lional's consent I straightway wrote to him, stating the plain facts as far as I knew, expecting an answer to my communication. My surprise was great when I received an answer in due time, with D'Herbelot's compliments, who said he would be pleased to meet me at Glandour. "But my boy," he concluded, "I cannot promise to remain longer than a couple of days, as I am bound again for Tibet, so if this is satisfactory let me know without delay."

It was late in the afternoon when he arrived in answer to my prompt telegram. I was surprised at the slight change in his appearance. He still possessed the straight, square shoulders of youth, the same piercing, black, eagle eye, but his hair was the color of snow.

Perhaps this great and wonderful man was spoiled by excessive tributes to his knowledge, or, perhaps, by extensive travel, for when presented to Miss Tarrant, he regarded her curiously, fixedly, but, strange to say, without the faintest particle of admiration. Nay, he even showed his poor taste and manners so far as to partly turn his back to her, and direct his conversation to Lady Dora.

CHAPTER IV.

Miss Tarrant noticed D'Herbelot's indifference, and it seemed to pique her. At dinner I was a great deal surprised by some of the questions which he asked her.

"Miss Tarrant, do you never eat cooked meat?"

I had noticed that she ate no meat at the table.

She raised her eyes with a startled wonder, for a moment, to his face.

"No," she answered calmly, "I never eat meat."

"Of no kind?" he queried.

I looked at him in wonder. A change was in his powerful face, the muscles twitched convulsively, his eyes rested with a perplexed expression upon her face, her hair and upon the strong, shapely hand toying with the wine glass, she sitting, meanwhile, as if quite unconscious of his scrutiny.

Again he asked:

"Did you never try the taste of raw beef or flesh of any kind?"

This time she raised her eyes and regarded him through half-closed lids. I could see the anger hidden therein—a lurid, yellow coal of fire.

"Why do you ask such questions? Have I not just told you I never eat meat?"

"Never tasted it?" he persisted.

A swift change seemed to flit, for an instant, through the yellow eyes. It struck me as an expression of fear or cunning, I knew not which. He, too, noticed it, for a triumphant smile turned the corners of his lips for a second. A quick glance of unmistakable fear darted swiftly from the eyes as she slowly drank her wine to the last drop. Then setting the glass down empty said, quietly:

"Yes, I have tasted certain kinds of meat."

"Ah!" He bent eagerly across the table and looked boldly into her face.

This time there was fear, absolute terror, pictured upon her countenance, and the hand clasping the stem of the wine glass shook violently. But noticing our puzzled faces this woman, who possessed superhuman self-possession, laughed lightly, gayly, holding her glass to be refilled; and then, with her eyelids almost closed, looked at him with a seeming challenge.

I am satisfied that whatever this man knew or hinted at, she understood it thoroughly.

"Yes, at times," she said, "I eat meat—at certain times."

"Ah!" he said, drawing a deep breath, "I thought so—I knew so."

Her manner changed from haughty demeanor to the verge of reckless hilarity. Passing the glass of wine to her lips she bowed to him smilingly, "*A votre vante.*"

He drank gravely. Again she raised the glass. He drank as before.

Lady Dora here gave the signal to withdraw, and the ladies arose from the table, leaving Sir Lional and ourselves to finish the wine and walnuts, our host barely concealing his eagerness to join the ladies in the drawing-room, where he seated himself by his cousin's side, basking in her radiant beauty, even when the retirement for the night took place, resigning his seat reluctantly.

"Well," said I, entering D'Herbelot's room before seeking my own apartments, "what do you think of Glandour Court? and what do you think of her?"

"Glandour Court is magnificent, but not more so than a dozen other estates which I have seen. As for *her* there I am puzzled, for I have seen nothing like her in my life before."

"Her beauty is bewildering. Is it not?"

"Beauty!" he echoed. "I saw no beauty in Miss Tarrant, for I know that is whom you mean. To my mind, Lady Dora far surpasses her in looks and manners."

"Oh, her manners are nothing to brag about," I said, remembering her behavior at dinner; "but her beauty, beyond a doubt, is without a flaw. It discounts anything I have ever seen or ever hope to see."

"Ah," he answered, sighing, "I see you are as badly infatuated as our unfortunate host, Sir Lional."

"Sir Lional!" I gasped.

"Yes," continued D'Herbelot, smiling, "Sir Lional Glandour who cannot exist out of his *chere amie's* sight."

I arose to my feet in indignation.

"Sir, I am a gentleman, and as such cannot listen to defamatory remarks against my oldest and dearest friend, and while I am enjoying the hospitality of his roof."

D'Herbelot regarded me contemptuously, pityingly.

"Rossiter, are you so blind that you cannot see an inch before your nose? and what is the secret malady which is slowly but surely killing Lady Dora?"

"What under heaven do you mean?"

"Simply this: Sir Lional Glandour, your precious friend, and considered a man of honor—a prince of good fellows, no doubt—is harboring a mistress under the same roof with his pure wife and innocent child. Yes," excitedly, "for this woman, half animal, he forsakes that pale, sweet lady, whose heart is breaking beneath its burden of shame and dishonor. That thing beautiful! She is hideous, diabolical, in my eyes, for I see her without the glamour of magnetism with which she has so successfully surrounded you, that you, foolish boy, see her, exactly as she desires you should. This woman possesses a gift, the gift of magnetism, so intense that it was all I could do to prevent her from overpowering me with her will, which, for an instant—for the first time in my life—came near overmastering me; but, by strength of will power, I let her know I was her master; ah, and forced some truths from her, too. I saw her as she really is—a large, well-formed woman, a white hairy skin, plentifully sprinkled with large, brown moles, her lips red, blood-loving lips, and sharp, cruel, beast-like teeth; the eyes of a cheetah. Her hands with long claw-looking nails. For a secret in your ear, Rossiter, she is more than half animal."

I looked at him, a fear taking possession of me. This man, learned beyond his fellows, was undoubtedly going mad. What a pity, and what a loss to science.

"You need not be afraid; I am far from mad. On the contrary, never was saner in my life."

I started; he is a wizard reading my very thoughts.

He smiled cynically and continued:

"Yes, I surprise you. I read you like an open book. With a wave of my hand I could bind you to me body and soul. Yes, make an abject slave of you. And the secret is, I have studied the black art, called jugglery, that which abounds to such a marvelous extent in Tibet and the East Indies, where some of these people obtain such a control over the natives, as to make life almost a simple story compared with it. And this woman and her black ayah are experts far surpassing any which I have yet seen. Did you notice she does not eat meat? Why? Simply because it is one of the conditions which enable her to exercise her masterful will. You and I eat meat, Rossiter, which places our intellect upon a plane with the dumb beasts; she refrains therefrom. Only at certain intervals does her nature crave and devour raw meat. She is a human leopardess, plain and simple; a beautiful, sensuous woman's form, but a leopardess. Ah! even to the spots."

I started as a clock in the outer hall struck 10 in slow, loud cathedral chimes, and with reluctant and nervous sensation I left him to seek my bed, where I passed the night in nightmares, to awake in the morning more tired than ever.

CHAPTER V.

D'Herbelot lingered on at Glandour, and I had so settled my affairs that I could remain at the court until after Lady Dora's illness. She, poor lady, shut herself up alone in her rooms and seemed isolated from all happiness. And finally, when her trial came to hand I delivered her of a blue-eyed girl, the picture of its fair, gentle mother.

I thought that now I should be enabled to return to London, but Sir Lional urged and begged me to remain a short time longer, and it was only two days following Lady Dora's confinement that I received my second shock at Glandour Court, when it was discovered a fawn and dog—a fine Siberian bloodhound—were found dead, mangled most frightfully. The dog was found chained to his kennel, and the deer lying at the south end of the park with its throat torn completely open.

By this time the excitement in the neighborhood and surrounding counties was intense. So things were in a stir of excitement when Lady Dora—who had never quite recovered from her recent illness—was taken suddenly worse again, and I was hastily summoned to her ladyship's assistance. I found her, as I thought, dying, and hurriedly called D'Herbelot, who quickly responded. He had conceived a deep fatherly affection for Lady Dora, to whom he displayed the greatest sympathy. I could see the genuine compassion with which he bent over the bed, and she, who was of a singular clinging affectionate nature, seemed to find relief in his strength and cheering words.

"Now, now, my lady, you must not turn back again, we have got you along the road so nicely. Come, take a little sup of this, then close your eyes. Hold my hand hard. You won't hurt it, and go to sleep. There now, so."

And in three minutes Lady Dora was sleeping soundly.

I strolled with my cigar in the park. It was a fair, beautiful night. The moon, sailing in all her majestic splendor, lent her glorious countenance so generously, that one could almost see to read. Presently I was startled by a step beside me, and, turning, beheld D'Herbelot. He, too, was smoking, and the cigar from which he emitted curling, bluish puffs, was a strong one.

"How is her ladyship?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"Worse, Rossiter, much worse. Lady Glandour cannot live more than two weeks."

"Nonsense! She was coming along swimmingly. It is nothing but a little nervousness, occasioned, no doubt, by hearing of the fawn killing."

"Nay, my boy, Lady Dora is dying, and has been dying ever since the birth of the child. The potion which I have just given her will prolong life, perhaps, two weeks—no longer. It is an herb I discovered in Tibet. Its effects are marvelous; but, my boy, it was the last drop I owned which I have just given her, and I cannot procure more in this country. Lady Dora will live two weeks—no longer. Perhaps not so long, as the drug loses its strength with age." He sighed deeply. "If I could obtain twenty drops her life would last, perhaps, twenty months. But as it is, she must die."

At that instant a laugh; no, not a laugh, but some horrible noise resembling it. A weird, sneering sound broke the night's stillness close behind us; and as I don't profess to be a brave man, the cold sweat broke out in a stream and ran trickling down the small of my back.

Not so D'Herbelot. With a sharp jerk of his muscular arm he pulled me unceremoniously behind a clump of ferns which grew in luxuriant foliage in close proximity.

"Hush," he whispered, "not a word for your life."

I crouched, trying to stifle my smothered breathing. For the space of a minute, probably, we knelt there, and I was beginning to regain my composure when again that fearful, blood-curdling noise, as if some immortal soul, damned forever, had escaped from its tortures for a brief space, and was enjoying its temporary freedom. Then, from the clump of trees to the right, bounded an immense animal—a noble beast, of what species I know not, but strongly resembling a leopardess. The smooth, silky skin shone like richest satin, and great, round spots covered the sides and back, while the breast was of soft wooly whiteness.

I gazed, losing all fear, in silent admiration, inspecting the splendid creature before me.

D'Herbelot's breathing became loud and hoarse. His pistol was held tightly in his right hand, and his black eyes blazed with excitement.

"By God, it is she," at last he ejaculated. "How under heaven has she got the secret?"

Again my old fear returned. He was undoubtedly insane. I watched, as if fascinated, the beautiful creature standing before me, one moment shaking and tossing its head to the moonlight sky, anon, walking with long, slow, dainty, graceful steps back and forth. The scene was beyond description. Lying suddenly down upon its stomach the animal stretched and rolled like a young colt, reminding me of something which had been imprisoned all day and had but just gained its liberty. Once more I was startled by the queer noise, but this time it was a human laugh, plain, distinct—a laugh which I had heard only a few hours previous at dinner.

At that instant a report rang out, clear and sharp, followed by a cry of pain, or rage, like a wild beast in distress. I jumped to my feet in terror to see D'Herbelot with the smoking pistol in his hand, spring suddenly forward, but too late. The leopardess was already among the thick trees, making for the court. A second shot rang out, and D'Herbelot laughed like a demon.

"Take that, my lady; it will hinder your midnight pranks for some time, I fancy."

"For God's sake," I said, "what is it? and what do you mean?"

"Simply this, my infant, I have caught the leopardess in her lair."

He laughed gleefully, and gave me a resounding slap upon my shoulder.

Instantly the servants came in groups, headed by Sir Lional, loudly demanding to know the cause of the shooting. Male and female servants stood in huddled groups, for they, one and all, had heard of the mysterious killing of the fawns and deer.

"Matter! Sir Lional, nothing; but I have taken a shot at your unknown intruder, and can almost bet your deer will henceforth be quite safe. Come in this direction."

So saying, D'Herbelot seized a blazing torch from one of the footmen and hurriedly led the way, Sir Lional and myself at his heels, the servants following a little distance in the rear. Suddenly D'Herbelot stopped and glanced around, a look of blank despair upon his countenance.

"Rossiter, you noticed it was here where the animal fell?"

"Yes, I could swear I saw it fall," I asserted positively.

But now there was not a sign, nor mark of any kind, to indicate what we were saying. And I am almost sure Sir Lional looked upon us as a pair of half-witted fools, or dolts, perhaps, with our brains muddled from a too excessive indulgence in his wine cellar.

"Ah," cried D'Herbelot, "blood! I thought so. I have struck it, see. This is the spot where it fell, and see, see, here are traces. Come, follow me. We will catch her ladyship yet. Quick, quicker."

The servants pressed eagerly forward seeing the traces of blood and thinking the beast wounded, banished all their fears except a large woman—Mollie, I think, Miss Longnus called her—who kept up a frightened howl every couple of minutes. He traced the blood stain, which led in the direction of the east wing and near the edge of the graveled walk, where the rhododendrons grew high and dense, they were now pressed apart, trampled and broken, disclosing the path through which this monster's feet had dragged its heavy, bleeding body, evidently seeking concealment in the vicinity of the court walls; but how or where sufficient shelter could be found to conceal its huge size was a mystery.

Miss Longnus stood trembling with fear—or cold—in the bright moonlight, a light worsted shawl thrown over her head and shoulders, Spanish fashion, while D'Herbelot, with the torch, held high above his head—which cast grotesque figures upon the gray stone walls wherein the tall trees threw fantastic shadows—stood peering around. The men and maid servants were still following, but now keeping at a greater distance—evidently with their former fear returning—in dead silence, only broken by the chattering of Mollie's teeth, as she held frantically to the end of the butler's coat-tail.

Suddenly D'Herbelot lowered his torch.

"What is this? Stairs?"

"Yes," said Sir Lional, "these are unused stairs which lead to Miss Tarrant's rooms."

D'Herbelot stooped and beckoned me forward. Sir Lional was beside me.

"See," briefly was what he said; and upon the jagged stone steps were bright, red splashes of blood. Trembling, we looked in each other's faces.

"Sir Lional," said D'Herbelot, "no doubt this thing is in concealment at the top. Will you follow me? You and Rossiter. The servants and Miss Longnus may remain below."

We both promised to follow him, and together we mounted the solid moss-grown stairway, expecting to be soon confronted by a desperate, pain-maddened animal.

D'Herbelot reached the top and stopped. It was quite empty. Not a trace of—yes, there were large pools of blood. The beast must have bled frightfully, but we found nothing to reward us for our trouble.

"Will you permit us to search these rooms, Sir Lional?"

"Nonsense, nonsense," replied our host impatiently. "It is impossible for any animal to gain an ingress to those rooms. This door has not been unlocked nor opened for ages. My dear sir it is quite absurd to imagine such a thing. The animal, or whatever it was, has escaped down the stairs again. After all, it may have only been a rabbit which you shot."

"Sir Lional," responded D'Herbelot, gravely, "this thing has, I will vouch with my life, found concealment in those rooms within. Not that I wish to interfere in which concerns me nothing, but for the safety of all these people, your wife and children's lives included, this should be investigated. I should imagine Miss Tarrant would only be too willing to render all the assistance in her power by allowing us to search these rooms."

His words seemed to influence Sir Lional.

"Well," said he, "I shall request Miss Tarrant's permission. If it is granted you may search to your heart's content. But, remember, I do not wish her frightened nor annoyed in any way whatever."

"Certainly not," indignantly. "I prophecy the young lady will surely have the good sense to know that what is done is only for her own good."

Accordingly, permission was granted. But Miss Tarrant was ill, very ill, in bed, caused by the night's fright and excitement, so explained the ayah, pulling the heavy velvet curtains, which draped the bed, more closely together, and holding them from the floor, so that we could glance underneath, and, meanwhile, keeping her mistress jealously hid from vulgar prying eyes.

We searched faithfully every nook and corner of the spacious rooms—even taking the leopard skin from the floor and shaking it. As I proceeded to relay it D'Herbelot started forward.

"What is this?" he asked, pointing towards it. I looked, and, directly in the center, was a large, red blotch. He stooped and laid his hand upon it.

"It is wet. It is blood, see," holding his hand, palm upwards, stained with crimson blood.

He looked inquiringly at the old woman who stood regarding us with a dogged expression in her eyes, but now she instantly held up her left hand showing a gash across the wrist, from which the blood was flowing in a stream.

"My hand," she answered in her broken English, "cut, see."

"Strange," mused D'Herbelot. "I could take my oath your hand was unharmed a moment ago. How did it happen?"

She nodded towards a glass pitcher broken and scattered in a dozen pieces upon a table near by.

We prepared to depart, puzzled and as much mystified as when we entered.

"If she had a dog, wolf or leopard concealed, we would surely find it," I said, "for we have searched everywhere."

D'Herbelot regarded me a moment with a dry look.

"No, not everywhere, Rossiter, you forget. The most important place was forbidden us."

"And that was?" I asked.

"The bed."

I started, as the probability struck me forcibly for the first time.

"Don't you see?" he asked.

I nodded in the affirmative.

"You mark my word, it is a clever ruse to conceal a secret."

And that evening he again branched off regarding his pet theory—hypnotism.

CHAPTER VI.

The next morning D'Herbelot puzzled me more than ever with his dark hints regarding Miss Tarrant.

"To-day I go from here. Ah, Rossiter, human understanding may develop in wholly unforseen ways, and the possible and impossible may meet upon quite an even assumption."

I sat silent, not understanding one word nor the meaning thereof.

"Her name is Infern. I could add two more letters and spell it *Infernal*, for this woman possesses an infernal power—not human—more wonderful by far than hypnotism."

"How could she obtain such a power?" I asked.

"I have made a life-long study of this matter, and know how common has become such practice."

"And you, I presume, will be the future historian of this science—whatever you call it."

"Metaphysics—unrecognized as such—has played an important role in the religious mysticism of classical and medieval times. It is quite certain, for instance, that the extactics to which the old Indian and Hindoo devotees attain is something truly and fearfully wonderful."

I laughed immoderately, and inquired if he had read Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?

He arose angrily to his feet.

"Rossiter! have you the impudence to scoff at me?"

"No, no, not at you," I hastily said, "but some of your theories are, to say the least, a little far-fetched, and I find them difficult to believe or understand."

"Yes, perhaps, for you. When your hair is the color of mine, Rossiter, and you have arrived at one-half my years, you may then partly understand what I am now telling you, as sure as there is a Supreme Being. In some school of mysticism, to which she belongs, this woman has acquired and possesses a great deal more real knowledge concerning metaphysics than I, for with all my researches I cannot fill my cherished aspirations, and the result is torment; for I know the world as a matter of course, at any moment, may light upon some new method."

"And when it has worked out its new method it will amount to nothing of course," I replied *sotto voce*.

"It's not of the slightest use for you to sneer at me for believing in witchcraft. I have passed the best part of my days in Tibet and the East Indies. Jeer and laugh as you may, my life has not been spent in vain nor idle study. If I could spare the time, Rossiter, I would distill into your stubborn, unbelieving ears tales of truth mightier than any miracle you have ever heard or even read about."

I sat silent, the smile fading from my lips, regarding him in a sort of dumb awe, and against all my living faculties forced to believe him. Watching him in his swift, nervous movements up and down the room, his body seemed to know and be aware of unseen wonders, and his face possessed the face of true animal magnetism. He stopped suddenly before me and resumed:

"I would give the whole of my fortune willingly this very instant, and would fain exist upon one dry crumb a day, if, by so doing, I could procure that old woman's confidence, for it is she who is at the bottom of it all. That old woman in her priest lore is greater than I can ever hope to be. I must give up this, the best chance of my life, for it is impossible for me to remain here an hour longer. My return is uncertain, and it is with the bitterest reluctance I confess myself baffled, blindly baffled, for the first time in my life. But you, Rossiter, for our old friendship sake, keep a lookout and notify me if anything uncommon occurs again."

CHAPTER VII.

Some two weeks following D'Herbelot's departure Lady Dora passed gently away, her infant daughter serviving her but a few hours. Before her death she requested a private interview with her husband, which lasted, perhaps, half an hour. When he emerged from his wife's room his face was that of a corpse. He walked like a man stricken unto death. He locked himself in his own room and remained there until after the funeral.

What it was Sir Lional's wife said to him must forever remain a secret. I never knew.

Miss Tarrant I had not seen since before D'Herbelot's absence, until I was surprised to meet her one morning kneeling in front of Sir Lional's door. Upon observing me she raised to her feet with extreme difficulty, aided by a stout bamboo cane. She explained the reason by telling me it was rheumatism.

I had completed my arrangements to return to London upon the following morning, so knocked sharply upon Sir Lional's door, informing him at the same time of my intentions.

The door was instantly opened, and my host confronted me. I stepped back a space or two.

"For God's sake, man, what is it?" I asked.

His eyes were swollen and bloodshot; great, dark rings encircled them, and his luxuriant brown hair had turned white—snow white.

He stood regarding me with a slight, sad smile, for a moment, without speaking. His necktie had become unfastened and hung loosely in front of him. There was a crumpled yellow paper in his hand which he had just evidently finished reading. Before he had a chance to speak Miss Tarrant rushed past me.

"Oh! Lion! Lion!"

Her arms were around his neck, her lips eagerly seeking his, paying no attention to my presence whatever.

He stood, for a moment, as if wholly helpless and half dazed, her lips pressing his again and again. Then, as if suddenly awaking from a dream, he pushed her roughly aside.

Her arms dropped heavily to her sides. She regarded him longingly, yearningly, a pitiful flood of tears dimming the warm, yellow eyes.

Whatever else could be, this strange creature loved Sir Lional with a strong, overpowering, idolatrous affection. He drew suddenly away from her. She stood an instant with drooping head, and then walked slowly, limpingly away.

"Come with me," I said. "You have shut yourself up so long that you are becoming morbid. Come," taking him gently by the arm, "come."

He passed his hand confusedly back and forth across his eyes, and then answered me.

"Rossiter, have you ever undergone the hell of remorse? If so, you can, perhaps, form a slight idea what I am now suffering."

"Nonsense, man, bear up. Come, we will take a stroll until 11. Here, smoke this."

I offered him a cigar—a fine one. He took it absently, and followed me into the park. We paced slowly through the thickly-sheltered elm walk, along which the moonlight faintly struggled in quivering, tangled rays. I soon came to the end of my cigar, and, upon looking for my case, found, to my dismay, it was empty.

Sir Lional shook his head, showing he was also out of a weed.

"I will fetch the box," I replied, and hurried towards the court, leaving my friend continuing his walk, perhaps not even aware of my absence. Reaching my chamber I searched high and low for my case of cigars, and then remembered Broom, my valet, had most likely packed it away, no doubt in view of the morning's departure.

I must have one, so I proceeded heroically to work to find one, and, after a short search, was rewarded by finding the case at the bottom of my portmanteau.

"Saved," I muttered. After lighting a fresh cigar I filled my case and retraced my steps to join Sir Lional.

I was startled by what I fancied I heard, a deep groan, but after listening intently, feeling for my pistol and finding it all O. K. in my hip pocket, hurried forward to the elm walk. The golden dots of moonlight still sprinkled the elm walk, but there were no signs of Sir Lional.

"The ungrateful fellow has given me the slip," I muttered, not a little annoyed to find him gone. "Well, I will retire and take a good night's rest, and, perhaps, it is just as well."

Taking out my watch I could see plainly by the moonlight it was 14 minutes to 12.

So late! I turned upon my heel and had proceeded but a step, when I heard again, this time distinctly, a deep groan of pain. In an instant I turned in its direction, towards the south end. I hurriedly crossed the uneven winding walks and stopped, a horrible sight freezing my very breath and marrow. What I saw was Sir Lional, with both hands, trying to cover his eyes, a big, brown and yellow beast, standing over him with its teeth fastened in his throat, pulling and tearing great lumps of flesh from breast and neck. The poor wretch was striving to loosen the beast's teeth in vain, and trying to bar the horrible sight by covering his eyes with his hands. The agony he was enduring must have been frightful.

Without an instant's hesitation I sprang behind Sir Lional so as to face the brute, and, horror of horrors, I was confronted by the face of Miss Tarrant, her diabolical, beautiful face upon a nanimal's body. Catching sight of me she loosened her hold upon Sir Lional's throat, and her fierce, yellow eyes glared at me savagely, uttering a snarling, whining noise, showing her sharp, white teeth and red lips covered with crimson life-blood. Seeing the pistol she slowly dropped upon all-fours, the flesh from Sir Lional's throat still clinging to her narrow, long claws.

My eyes never strayed an instant from her own. I could hear the beating of my heart in thick, sickly, trembling throbs. My hand ached to use the pistol, but the dreadful woman's face, looking from the beast's body, unmanned me. I still pointed it towards the *thing*. It slowly walked backwards, backwards, soon gaining shelter beneath the tall grasses and ferns growing near by, slinking from its intended prey with gaping red lips and horrible protruding tongue, crawling, half limping, a look of baffled rag e and hate distorting the features, until, indeed, they resembled some frightful imaginations of the infernal region. I stood dreamily watching her disappear, probably to join the rest of her kind—of what?

I fired my pistol in quick succession into the moon-bright sky, summoning the retinue of servants. We carried him in, a bleeding, torn, pitiful sight and gently laid him upon a soft, comfortable couch. His cries of pain and agony were heart-rending to listen to.

Good, trained, skillful nurses watched by him faithfully all that night, but the next morning he was tossing in high delirium fever, stretching out his arms, crying "Golden eyes, you have come at last, at last. I am so tired, so tired of waiting for you. I am starving, famishing for your warm caresses."

He spoke in low, love-excited tones. Then changing suddenly would shout—

"Take her away. I can feel her strong teeth in my throat. She is eating me—devouring my flesh. Her breath is hot; burning hot. Her eyes glare into mine with the heat of hell. She is drinking my blood. She is drawing me to hades, Rossiter! Dora! save me, save me!"

Thus his never-ceasing voice ran on, raising in passionate, endearing tones one moment, in mortal terror the next, and, anon, sinking to a whining, pitiful, helpless whimper.

So this fearful scene dragged on—the most terrible I ever witnessed, and I pray God I may never see such another. I knew he must die, for blood-poisning had now set in; and upon the third morning Sir Lional Glandour's life ended. It was found upon reading the will I was appointed sole executor of the Glandour estates and guardian to little Cyral.

I have now given you a true and faithful account of what actually transpired at Glandour Court, unnatural, as it may seem, and fully believing what my old friend Herbelot said while visiting at the court. True to my promise in regard to writing, if anything unusual occurred, I wrote to him in Calcutta, where he then was still pursuing his studies. I gave him the particulars about Sir Lional's death, and in reply he sent me this letter; or more properly speaking this letter was sent to me by an utter stranger. I will here give it to you. It has left me just as much in the dark as ever. The following is D'Herbelot's letter:

CALCUTTA, January 15, 18—.

To Felix Rossiter, M. D.—MY DEAR ROSSITER: Your very kind favor at hand. In regard to the Glandouer Court mystery, I don't understake to account for it with any precision. In fact, no human creature could, and to you who have never followed up metaphysical study, if I explained my dearest theory, you might become a prey to delusions and fancies. Since seeing you I have chanced upon new lines of investigation, which grant me more details and explanations than ever before. You, Rossiter, regard hypnotism with fear and repulsion, because of the light in which it is held and used within the range of some departments of science. But there does most assuredly exist some power besides animal magnetism. I think you have a somewhat finer comprehension and appreciation than your neighbors, and you are in many instances far superior to some of your brethren. Some mysteries regarding nature's laws are as yet unexplored, though I am confident of being now in the right direction. The painful pleasure of thus knowing is almost maddening. Let me endeavor to make this idea plainer: Do you realize that by the acquisition of higher knowledge you could gaze upon this world a few hundred years hence? But you are a stubborn ass, Rossiter, so I will not attempt longer to convert you to my school of science; but as I remarked to you before, this woman and her attendant are a psychological problem and a very difficult study—in fact, one of the most remarkable I ever ran across.

Have you read "Karma," by A. P. Sinnett? I can repeat from memory what he says in that truly instructive book, which deals so clearly and extensively with the work I am now trying to describe. Sinnett remarks in his book: "It often strikes me that the limits to choose between different courses in life are very narrow." Apart altogether from the metaphorical argument: "There you are with your character, whatever it may be, inherited from your parents, or got it somehow, established as a very commanding impulse in your nature, and the environment in which you are placed are there also. With no choice of your own, how can a man or woman help following the bent of his nature?" Now, this theory I have faithfully studied, and science has very kindly come to my assistance. I am quite sure I understand the riddle, and will now explain, but as I write a trembling fear possesses me. Can it be that infernal ayah, or what? My hand refuses to obey, or guide the pen. I lay the pen down, stretch and rub my palm. I *will* make another effort, and tell you clearly, plainly, what the secret is. * * Rossiter, you may think me a coward; a simple, superstitious fool. I will write, though some power seems to hold my pen back. I see a long, narrow room, dimly lighted. * * A drip, drip, of falling water. A sickly, sweet perfume proceeding from an overturned vase of flowers. * * A woman stands before me, her shadowy form dimly outlined against a heavy yellow curtain. As I gaze, the vision becomes more distinct. * * I hold my breath * * her appaling beauty fills me with the ecstacy of youth. * * I am young again, for which gift I owe her my life. * * Young again! ha! ha! A youth! * * My heart beats exultantly. I have a powerful feeling—a reckless wish to defy the Almighty himself.

Ha, ha! how my pen runs. I am young, young! * * The vision becomes plainer, and plainer; her beauty fills me with a wild rapture, the fiery blood of youth is coursing through my veins, which have been chilled and clogged for years. Her eyes are fastened on mine with a strange, sad look of appeal. Crouching low at her side is some dark object, probably a dog. My eyes eagerly turn to her. The object raises on all fours to its feet; she still wears the sad, reproving look. Her eyes rest upon the paper beneath my burning hand. She comes towards me, the long, scant drapery shadowing, but not concealing the limbs. I lean forward eagerly. I almost clasp her with my disengaged arm. She still holds me with a look of pain. What can it be she wants? I am her slave; I would obey. Again her eyes rest upon the pen and paper, her lips mutter, her head shakes a faint negative and the hand is placed upon the lovely lips. Ah, now I understand—I must not write. * * I kiss the square, velvet chin, neck and throat, descending and ending at the round white breasts. There is madness in my brain. "I love you! I love you! * * I love * *" Rossiter, find the key to your own puzzle, I must be loyal to her * * my new found. * * I refuse to assist you. * * My pen drops—farewell—

This letter was forwarded to me by a gentleman in Calcutta, a friend of D'Herbelot's, together with a brief missive, which ran thus:

Felix Rossiter, M. D.—DEAR SIR: Inclosed you will find a letter directed to your name and address. The writer, D'Herbelot, had evidently expired while writing it, for he was found stiff and cold by an attendant. From appearances he must have been dead some hours when found. Trusting you will receive this letter in safety, I remain,

Yours truly, GEORGE RANSOME.

This is all that remains to be said. Never again at Glandour was seen a trace of the thing called Miss Tarrant, and the old ayah disappeared on the same night that the beast attacked Sir Lional.

THE END.

[For the SUNDAY UNION.]

"THWEET SPRING ITH HERE."

[BY DAISY THORNTON.]

[The manuscript of the following is the first of the spring showers of poetry that has struck us this year. It was decorated with blue baby ribbon and accompanied by such an enchanting little note that it must not die—but no more "spring poetry" will be printed in the SUNDAY UNION this season.]

I love the merry springtime,
With its wealth of buds and flowers,
I love the feathered minstrel's lay,
As he sings among the bowers,
Singing of the summer skies,
Undimmed by mist or cloud;
Singing to his happy mate
In cadence soft, then loud.
Singing of the sunshine bright,
The flowers, the buds, the bees,
Singing of the God above,
Who clothes with green the trees,
Who loves them for the love He gave,
To all things of this world,
When o'er creation's ebony stage,
The light of day unfurled.

I love the merry springtime,
With its wealth of buds and flowers,
With its fleecy clouds of summer rain,
That fall in cooling showers;
Then come, oh, come, sweet, gentle spring!
Come from the tropic isles
Far o'er the land, far o'er the sea,
We'll welcome thee with smiles,
And let thy touch dispel the gloom
Of winter's icy hand.
Come gentle spring, come gentle spring,
Come, hasten o'er the land;
The lark trills boldly to the sky,
His early matins loud and clear;
The snowdrop lifts its dewy head
To lisp "thweet spring ith here!"

LOOKING FOR HIS BROTHER.

He Had Been Boxed and Must Have Gone Away by 'Spress.

A ragged little colored boy, whose bronze-like toes seemed to gaze defiantly at the weather through the holes in his shoes, came timidly through the front door of a prominent crockery store on Pennsylvania avenue, says the Washington *Post*. He edged part way behind the open door, as if to make sure he would not be put out. One of the clerks who passed him stopped long enough to say:

"What's the matter, sonny? Are you lost?"

"No, sah," was the reply, as the urchin hung his head and squeezed his hat nervously in both hands, "I isn't los', het's my little bruddah Chris wots los'."

"Well, I don't think you'll find him here. Did he run away?"

"No, sah; he was sont. Ain dissher de place dey calls Robinson an' Comp'ny's glass stoh?"

"Yes."

"Is yoh suah yoh didn' get 'im?" and something like a sob accompanied the question. "Yoh see, Chris hesn' bin well foh two weeks, an' de oddah day he done went soun' asleep. De folks got some bohds and made er box. Dey put Chris in it, and dey wouldn't no one tell me what dey wuz gwine ter do wid 'im. But I seed dah wuz writin' on one of de bohds, so I copied it closed ez I could, and er white boy tol' me it wor Robinson and Comp'ny's dish stoh; so I cum up hyah ter see 'bout 'im. Is yoh suah yoh hesn't seed 'im?"

"Yes, sonny," said the clerk in a very gentle tone.

"Dey sens boxes fro de 'spress office. don't dey?"

"Yes."

"Well, I spose I bettah go dah an' quiah what de mattah is."

The clerk didn't have the heart to set him right, and the little fellow started down the street to find the "'spress office."

Miss Ella Ewing of Scotland County, Mo., is 18 years old, eight feet high and she weighs 245 pounds without carrying an ounce of surplus flesh. When she was born Ella tipped the beam at seven and one-half pounds. She is said to be the belle of Scotland County, and a New York reporter who saw her recently as she passed through the metropolis on her way to Europe, testifies that she is "exceedingly pretty." Her feet are eighteen inches long.

The largest order for a single advertisement in one paper, before the war, was given by the Fairbanks Scale Company to the New York *Tribune*, and it amounted to $3,000.

THE FANTAIL PIGEON.

The Domestic Pigeon Appears to Have Come to Us From India.

Stephen Beale, an English authority, writes the *Country Gentleman*, giving the history of the fantail pigeon. It is interesting, and from it we extract as follows:

This charming variety of the domestic pigeon appears to have come to us from India, where, one writer says, it is the commonest variety offered for sale. It would appear to have been known in that country for a very long period of time, but how long cannot be determined. Still, references to the fantail appears as far back as do any, so that the antiquity of the bird is undoubted. Its dissemination would begin as soon as trade began to be done, and as to-day the captains of ships trading between England and America and also Australia are constantly purchasing birds to sell them at the other end, so we can readily see how easy it would be for these birds to be scattered far and wide. It would seem that the fantail has been known in Britain for about two hundred years, the term given it being the "broad-tailed shaker," under which term it is described both by Willoughby and Moore. The former writer says they are "called shakers because they do almost constantly shake or wag their heads and necks up and down. Broad-tailed from the great number of feathers they have in their tails; they say not fewer than twenty-six. When they walk up and down they do for the most part hold their tails erect like a hen or turkey-cock. These also vary much in color."

Moore's description is very interesting, and goes into fuller detail. He says: "This pigeon has a beautiful long, thin neck, which bends like the neck of a swan, leaning toward the back; it has a frequent tremulous motion, or shaking in the neck, especially when salacious, which is the reason they are called shakers. It has a full breast, a very short back and a tail consisting of a great number of feathers; seldom less than four and twenty, which it spreads in a very elegant manner, like the tail of a turkey-cock, and throws it up so much that the head and tail frequently meet. They are called by some fantails, and I once saw one that had six and thirty feathers in its tail; but when they have so many feathers, it is apt to make them lop their tails; and not let it meet with their head, which is a very great fault. They are most commonly all white, though I have seen both black, blue, red and yellow Pieds, but the white ones have generally the best carriage in their tail and head. There are two sorts of these broad-tailed shakers, the one having a neck much longer and more slender than the other, but the longest neck is the most beautiful and most esteemed."

Lyell in his "Fancy Pigeons," the latest work on this subject, speaks at length of the Indian fantail, respecting which he is well qualified to speak, he having spent some years in the great dependency. Indian fantails, as found in Calcutta, are usually entirely white, with large, well-spread tails, long backs and without much tremulous motion in the neck. It is rare to get them both smooth-headed and free of leg-feather, most of them having peak-crested, or grouse-feathered legs, while some of them have both. Indian fanciers are fond of putting small brass bangles on the legs of fantails. This is done before the birds leave the nest, so that when full grown the ornaments cannot fall off. The bangles are hollow and open at the edges, and have small metal balls put into them; their edges are then brought close together, and as the birds walk about a tinkling sound is produced. In India the tail feathers of fantails are sometimes cut off short and the ends of peacocks' tail feathers introduced into the stumps. If well done this has a very pretty effect. After the entirely white fantails, whole blues and ash-colored, or barless blues are the commonest. The latter are nearly even in color all over. Mr. Lyell knew a fancier in Calcutta who had a breed of glossy green-lustered blacks, with peaked heads and feathered legs. And he had heard of some whole reds and yellows, but did not see them. They belonged to a doctor in the Government service at Dinapore, and at his death were advertised for sale, but they were immediately bought up by a native gentleman. It was also stated that fine colored reds and yellows could be got in the northwest provinces of India.

Some thirty years ago the fantail began to be taken up in Britain, and now it is popular, especially in Scotland, where greater attention has been paid to the motion than in England. The color also is different. The variety known as the English fantail is pure white, no colored feathers being under any circumstances allowed. The variety preferred in Scotland is known as the saddleback, in which the markings are the same as in the turbit. Of these there have been several colors. In the latter the wings, including the scapular feathers, are colored, all the rest being white. In addition to the pure white English fantails, blacks, blues, silvers, reds and yellows have been bred, but these are very seldom met with, the blacks being the least scarce. They must be entirely whole-colored, and free from white feathers.

Great anxiety is felt in Switzerland concerning the decadence of the watchmaking industry, which, next to the textile industry, is the mainstay of the inhabitants of the country. The profits are dwindling down, as the United States and England are every year becoming more powerful rivals in this field. The demand, too, for Swiss watches is falling off considerably in certain countries, notably in this country and in France.

Georgiana—"And, Flora, I forgot to tell you, last night Harry Davenport said you had the 'fatal gift of beauty.'" Flora—"Oh, Georgiana, did he?" Georgiana—"Yes, I told him you were being poisoned by cosmetics."—*Munsey's Weekly*.

A witness in a contested will case at Philadelphia said the testator was not a hard drinker, as "he only took twenty-five or thirty drinks a day."

Shoot the Spy.

A cough or cold is a spy which has stealthily come inside the lines of health and is there to discover some vulnerable point in the fortification of the constitution which is guarding your well-being. That point discovered the spy reports it to the enemy on the outside. The enemy is the changeable winter climate. If the cold gets in, look out for an attack at the weak point. To avoid this, shoot the spy, kill the cold, using **SCOTT'S EMULSION** of pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda as the weapon. It is an expert cold slayer, and fortifies the system against *Consumption, Scrofula, General Debility, and all Anæmic and Wasting Diseases (specially in Children).* Especially helpful for children to prevent their taking cold. **Palatable as Milk.**

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