A THOUGHT OF SUMMER.

I would be a cloud
Half-way up to Heaven;
Not aloft and proud,
Nor too low and driven
In a whirl of rain
O'er the shivering plain.

But a cloud all white
In a heaven all blue,
Hanging in men's sight
Half a long day through,
And, when daylight goes,
Dying in soft rose.

F. W. BOURDILLON.

THE COLONEL'S BOY.

A stranger, coming upon the colonel as he sat in the morning-room of the club regarding his newspaper with an angelic smile, would have sought out another copy of the paper and searched its columns with pleasant anticipations. But I knew better. I knew that the colonel, though he had put on his glasses and was pretending to cull the news, was really only doing what I verily believe he did after luncheon and after dinner, and after he got into bed, and, indeed, at every one of those periods when the old campaigner, with a care for his digestion and his conscience, selects some soothing matter for meditation. He was thinking of his boy; and I went up to him and smacked him on the shoulder. "Well, colonel," I said, "how's Jim?"

"Hullo! Why, it's Jolly Joe Bratton!" he replied, dropping his glasses and gripping my hand tightly—for we did not ride and tie at Inkerman for nothing. "The very man I wanted to see."

"And Jim, colonel? How is the boy?" I asked.

"Oh, just as fit as a—a middy on shore!" he answered, speaking jollily, yet, as it seemed to me, with an effort, so that I wondered whether there was anything wrong with the boy—a little bill or two, or some small indiscretion, such as might well be pardoned in as fine a lad as ever stepped, with a six-months-old commission, a new uniform, and a station fifty minutes from London. "But come," the colonel continued before I could make any observation, "you have lunched, Joe? Will you take a turn?"

"To be sure," I said; "on one condition—that you let Kitty give you a cup of tea afterward."

"That is a bargain!" he answered heartily; and we went into the hall. Every one knows the "Junior United" hall. I had reached my hat down, and was in the act of stepping back from the rack, when some one coming downstairs two at a time—that is the worst of having any one under field rank in a club—hit me sharply with his elbow. Perhaps my coat fits a bit tightly round the waist nowadays, and perhaps not; anyway, I particularly object to being poked in the back—it may be a fad of mine, or it may not—and I turned round sharply, muttering, "Confound——"

I did not say any more, seeing who had done it; but my gentleman stammered some confused apology, and taking from the colonel, who had politely picked it up, a letter, which it seemed I had knocked out of his hand, he passed into the morning-room with a red face. "Clumsy scoundrel!" I said, but not so loudly that he could hear it.

"Hullo!" the colonel exclaimed, standing still and looking at me with undisguised wonder.

"Well?" I said, perhaps rather testily. "What is the matter?"

"You are not on good terms with young Farquhar, then?"

"I am not on any terms at all with him," I answered grumpily.

The colonel whistled. "Indeed!" he said, looking down at me with a kind of wistfulness in his eyes; Dick is tall, and I am—well, I was up to standard once. "I thought—that is, Jim told me—that he was a good deal about your house, Joe. And I rather gathered that he was making up to Kitty, don't you know."

"You did, did you?" I grunted. "Well, perhaps he was, and perhaps he wasn't. Anyway, she is not for him. And he would not take an answer, the young whippersnapper!" I continued, giving my anger a little vent, and feeling all the better for it. "He came persecuting her, if you want to know, and I had to show him the door."

I think I never saw a man—certainly on the steps of the "Junior United"—look more pleased than did the colonel at that moment. "Gad!" he said, "then Jim will have a chance?"

"Ho! ho!" I answered, chuckling. "So the wind sets in that quarter, does it? A chance? I should think he would have a chance, colonel!"

"And you do not object?"

"Object?" I said. "Why, it would make me the happiest man in the world, Dick. Are we not the oldest friends? And I have only Kitty and you have only Jim. Why it is—it is just Inkerman over again."

Really it was, and we stumped down the steps in high delight. Only I felt a little anxious about Kitty's answer, for, though I had a strong suspicion that her affections were inclined in the right direction, I could not be sure. The gay young soldier might not have won her heart, as he had mine; so that I was still more pleased when the colonel informed me that he believed Jim intended to put it to the test this very afternoon.

"She is at home," I said, standing still.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he responded, taking my arm to lead me on.

But I declined to move. "I'll tell you what," I said, "it is a quarter to 4; if Jim has not popped the question by now, he is not the man I think him. Let us go home, colonel, and hear the news."

He demurred a little, but I had him in a hansom in two shakes, and we were bowling along Piccadilly in half-a-dozen more. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation, and, following the direction of his hand, I was just in time to catch a glimpse of Jim's face—no other's—as he shot past us in a cab going eastward. It left us in no doubt, for the lad's cheeks were flushed, and his eyes shining, and as he swept by and momentarily saw us, he raised his hat with a gesture of triumph.

"Gad!" exclaimed the colonel, "I'll bet a guinea he has kissed her. Happy dog!"

"Tra! la! la!" I answered. "I dare swear we shall not find Kitty in tears."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when the cab swerved suddenly to one side, throwing me against my companion. I heard our driver shout, and caught sight of a bareheaded man mixed up with the near shaft. The next moment we gave a great lurch and stopped, and a little crowd came round us. The colonel was the first out, but I joined him as quickly as I could. "I do not think he is much hurt, sir," I heard the policeman say. "He is drunk, I fancy. Come, old chap, pull yourself together," he continued, giving a slight shake to the gray-haired man whom he and a bystander were supporting. "There, hold up now. Here is your hat. You are all right."

And sure enough the man, whose red nose and shabby attire seemed to lend probability to the policeman's accusation, managed, when left to himself, to keep his balance—with some wavering. "Hullo!" he muttered, looking uncertainly upon the crowd round him. "Is my son here to take me home? Isaac? Where is Isaac?"

"He is a bit shaken," said the policeman, viewing him with an air of experience, "and three parts drunk, besides. He had better go to the station."

"Where do you live?" said the colonel.

"Greek-st., Scho, number 27, top floor"—this was answered glibly enough. "And I'll tell you what," the man added, with a drunken hiccough and a sudden reel which left him on the policeman's shoulder—"if any gentleman will take another gentleman home, I will make him rich beyond the dreams of avarice. I'll present him his weight in gold. That I will. His weight in gold!"

"I think——" the colonel began, turning and meeting my eye.

"His weight in gold," murmured the drunken man.

"Quite so," I said, accepting the colonel's unspoken suggestion. "We will see him home all right, policeman." And paying our cabman, I hailed a crawling four-wheeler, into which the officer promptly bundled our man. We got in, and in a moment were jolting eastward again at a snail's pace.

"Perhaps we might have sent some one else with him," said the colonel, looking at me, apologetically.

"Not at all," I answered. I have no doubt that we both had the same feeling, that being happy ourselves it would not ill become us to do a good turn to this poor old wretch, whose shaking hands and tattered clothes showed that he had almost reached the bottom of the hill. I have seen more than one brother officer, once as gallant a lad as Jim, brought as low, and perhaps, but for Providence, old Joe Bratton himself——. But there, it may have been some such thought as this, or it may have been an extra glass of sherry at lunch, made us take the man home. We did it: and the Lord only knows why fellows do things—good or bad.

"Hauling out our charge at the door of No. 27, we lugged him up the dingy stairs, the gibberish which he never ceased to repeat about the dreams of avarice and our weight in gold sounding ten times as absurd on the common staircase of this dirty tenth-rate lodging-house. The attic gained, he straightened himself, and, winking at us with drunken gravity, laid his hand upon the latch of one of the doors. "You shall see—what you shall see!" he muttered, and throwing open the door he stumbled into the room. The colonel raised his eyebrows in a protest against our folly, but entered after him, and I followed.

There was only one person in the garret, which was as miserable and poverty-stricken as room could well be, and he rose and confronted us with an exclamation of anger. He was a young fellow, twenty years old, perhaps, of middle size, sallow and dark-eyed, and to my thinking, half-starved. The drunken man seemed unaware of his feelings, however, for he balanced himself on the floor between us, and waved his hand toward him.

"Here you are, gentlemen!" he cried. "I'm a man of my word! Allow me to introduce you! My son, Isaac Gold. Did not I tell you? Present you—your weight in gold—or nearly so."

"Father," said the lad, eyeing him gloomily, "go and lie down."

"Ha! ha! Your weight in gold, gentlemen!"

"Your father was knocked down by a cab," the colonel said quietly, "and finding that he was not able to take care of himself we brought him home."

The young man looked at us furtively, but did not answer. Instead, he took his father by the arm and forced him gently to a mattress which lay in one corner, half hidden by a towel-rail—the latter bearing at present a shirt, evidently home-washed and hung out to dry. Twice the old fool started up muttering the same rubbish; but the third time he went off into a heavy sleep. There was something pitiful to my eyes in the boy's patience with him; so that when the lad at last turned to us and, with eyes which fiercely resented our presence, bade us begone if we had satisfied our curiosity, I was not surprised that the colonel held his ground. "I am afraid you are badly off," he said gently.

"What's that to you?" was the other's insolent answer. "Do you want to be paid for your services?"

"Steady! steady, my lad!" I put in. "You get nothing by that."

"I think I know you," the colonel continued, regarding him steadily. "There was a charge preferred against you, or some one of your name, at a police office a few weeks ago, of personating a candidate at the examination for commissions in the army. The charge failed, I know."

The young man's color rose as the colonel spoke; but his manner indicated rather triumph than shame, and his dark eyes sparkled with malice as he retorted: "It failed? Yes, you are right there. You have been in the army yourself, I dare say?"

"I have," said the colonel, gravely.

"An honorable profession, is it not?" the lad continued in a tone of biting mockery. "How many of your young friends, do you think, passed in honestly? It is a competitive examination, too, mind you. And how many do you think employed me—me—to pass for them?"

"You should be ashamed to boast of it," said the colonel, "even if you are not afraid."

"And what should they be? Tell me that!"

"They are low, mean scoundrels, whoever they are."

"So! so! You think so!" laughed the young fellow triumphantly. And then all at once the light seemed to die out of his keen, clever face, and I saw before me only a half-starved lad, with his shabby clerk's coat buttoned up to his throat to hide the want of a shirt. The same change was visible, I think, to the colonel's eye, for he looked at me and muttered something about the cab; and understanding that he wanted a word with the young fellow alone, I went to the window and for a moment or so pretended to gaze through its murky panes. When I turned, the two men were talking by the door; the drunken father was snoring behind his improvised screen; and on a painted deal table beside me I remarked the one and only article of luxury in the room—a small soiled album. With a grunt I threw it open. It disclosed the portraits of two lads, simpering whiskerless faces, surmounting irreproachable dog-collars and sporting pins. I turned a page and came on two more bearing a family resemblance in features, dog-collars and pins to the others. I turned again, with a pish! and a pshaw! and found a vacant place, and opposite it—a portrait of Jim!

I stared at it for a moment in unthinking wonder, and then in a twinkling it flashed across me what these portraits were, and above all, what this portrait of Jim placed in this scoundrel's album meant. I remembered how anxious the colonel had been as the lad's examination drew near; how bitterly he had denounced the competitive system, and vowed a dozen times a day that, what with pundits and crammers and young officers who should have been girls and gone to Girton, the service was going to the dogs—"To the dogs, do you hear me, sir!" And then I recalled his great relief when the boy came out quite high up; ay, and the vast change which had at once taken place in his sentiments: "We must move with the times, sir; it is no good running your head against a brick wall," and so forth. And—well, I let fall a pretty strong word, at which the colonel turned sharply.

"What is it, major?" he said. But, seeing me standing still by the window, he turned again and added to the young man beside him: "Well, you think about it, and let me know at that address. "Now," he continued, advancing toward me, "what is it, Joe?"

"What is what?" I said grumpily. I had shut the album by this time, and was standing between him and the table on which it lay. I do not know why—perhaps it came of the kindness he had just been doing—but I noticed in a way I had never noticed before what a fine figure of a man, tall and straight and noble, my old comrade still was. And a bit of a dimness, such as I have experienced once or twice lately when I have taken a third glass of sherry at lunch, came over my sight. "Confound it!" I said.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Something in my eye!"

"Let me get it out," he said—always the kindest fellow under the sun.

"No! I'll get it out myself!" I snarled like a bear with a sore head. And on that, without stopping to explain, I plunged out of the room and down the stairs. The colonel, wondering no doubt what was the matter with me, followed more leisurely, pausing to say a last kindly word to that young rascal at the door, whom I had not had the patience to speak to; so that I had already closed a warm dispute with the cabman, by sending him off with a flea in his ear and his fare to a sixpence, when he overtook me.

"What is up, Joe?" he asked, laying his hand on my shoulder.

"That d——d dizziness—but there, I have always said the '73 sherry at the club is not sound—came over me again. I do not feel quite up to the mark," I continued with perfect truth. "I think I will go home alone, colonel, if you do not mind."

"I do mind," said he, stoutly. "You may want an arm." But somehow I made it clear to him that I would rather be alone, and that the walk would do me good, and he got at last into a hansom and drove off, his gray mustache and fine old nose peering at me round the side of the cab, until a corner hid him altogether.

I had walked on a few paces, waving my umbrella cheerfully; but there I stopped, and, retracing my steps, mounted the staircase of twenty-seven, and without parley opened the door. The young fellow we had left was pacing the floor restlessly, turning over in his mind, I suspected, what the colonel had said to him. He stood still on seeing me, and then glanced round the room. "Have you forgotten anything?" he said.

"Nothing, young man," I answered. "I want to ask you a question."

"You can ask," he replied, eyeing me askance.

"That album," I said, pointing to it—"it contains, I suppose, the photographs of the people you have been employed to personate?"

"Possibly."

"But does it?"

"I did not know," he said slowly, in the most provoking manner, "that I had to do with a detective. What is the charge?"

"There is no charge," I answered, keeping my temper really admirably. "But I have seen the face of a friend of mine in that book, and I'll—in a word, I'll be hanged, young man, if I don't learn all about it!" I continued. "All—do you hear? So there! Now, out with it, and do not keep me waiting, you young rascal!"

He only whistled and stared; and finding I was perhaps getting a little warm, I took out my handkerchief, and wiping my forehead, sat down, the thought of the colonel's grief taking all the strength out of me. "Look here," I said in a different tone, "I'll take back what I have just said, and I give you my word of honor I do not want to harm the young man. But I have seen his portrait, and, if I know no more, must think the worst. Now I will give you a ten-pound note if you will answer three questions."

He shook his head; but I saw that he hesitated. "I did not show you the portrait," he said. "If you have seen it, that is your business. But I will name no names."

"I want none," I answered hurriedly. I threw open the album at the tell-tale photograph, and laid my trembling finger on the face. "Was this sent to you that you might personate the original?"

He nodded.

"From what place?"

He considered a moment. Then he said reluctantly: "From Frome, in Somerset, I think."

"Last year?"

He nodded again. Alas! Jim had been at a crammer's near Frome. Jim had passed his examination during the last year. I took out the money and gave it to the man; and a minute later I was standing in the street with a sentence heard more than once at mess in the old days ringing in my ears: "Refer it to the colonel! He is the soul of honor."

The soul of honor! Umph! What would he think of this? The soul of honor!—and his son, his son Jim, had done this! I walked through the streets in a kind of amaze. I had loved the boy right well myself, and was ready to choke on my own account when I thought of him. But his father—I knew that his father was wrapped up in him. His father had been a mother to him as well, and that for years—had bought him toys as a lad, and furnished his quarters later with things of which only a mother would have thought. It would kill his father.

I wiped my forehead slowly as I thought of this, and put my latch-key into the door in Pont Street. I walked in with a heavy sigh—I do not know that I ever entered with so sad a heart—and the next moment, with a flutter of skirts, Kitty was out of the dining-room, where I do not doubt she had been watching for me, and in my arms. Before Heaven! until I saw her I had not thought of her—I had never considered her at all in connection with this matter, or how I should deal with her, until I heard her say, with her face on my shoulder, and her eyes looking up to mine: "Oh, father, father, I am so happy! Please, wish me joy."

Wish her joy! I could not. I could only mutter, "St! wait, girl—wait, wait!" and lead her into the dining-room, and, turning my back on her, go to the window and look out—though for all I saw I might have had my head in a soot-bag.

She was alarmed, of course—but to save her that I could not face her—and came after me and clung to my arm, asking me again and again what it was.

"Nothing, nothing," I said. "There, wait a minute; don't you know that I shall lose you?"

"Father," she said, sharply, trying to look into my face, "it is not that. You know you will not lose me. There is something else the matter. Ah! Jim went in a cab, and——"

"Jim is all right," I answered roughly, feeling her hand fall from my arm. "In that way, at any rate."

"Then I am not afraid," she answered stoutly, "if you and Jim are all right."

"Look here, Kitty," I said, making up my mind, "sit down; I want to talk to you."

And she did sit down, and I told her all. With some girls it might not have been the best course, but Kitty is not like most of the girls I meet nowadays—one-half of whom are blue stockings, with no more aptitude for the duties of wives and mothers than the statuettes in a shop window, and the other half are misses in white muslin, who are always either giggling pertly or sitting with their thumbs in their mouths. Kitty is a companion, a helpmeet; God bless her! She knows that Wellington did not fight at Blenheim, and she does not think that Lucknow is in the Crimea. She knows no Greek, and she loves dancing—her very eyes dance at the thought of it. But she would rather sit at home with the man she loves than waltz at Marlborough House. And if she has not learned a little fortification on the sly, and does not know how many men stand between Jim and his company, I am a Dutchman. Lord! when I see a man marry a girl for a pretty face—not that Kitty has not a pretty face, and a sweet one, too, no thanks to her father—I wonder whether he has considered what it will be to sit opposite my lady, at, say, 20,000 meals on an average. Phaugh! That is the test, sir.

So I told Kitty all, and the way she took it showed me that I was right. "What!" she exclaimed, when I had finished the story, to which she had listened breathlessly, with her face half turned from me, and her arm on the mantelpiece, "is that all, father?"

"My dear," I said sadly, "you do not understand." I remembered how often I had heard—ay, and sometimes noticed—that women's ideas of honor differ from men's.

"Understand!" she retorted, fiery hot. "I understand that you think Jim has done this thing—this mean, miserable, wretched thing. Father," she continued, turning with sudden earnestness and laying both her hands on my shoulders, so that her brave, gray eyes looked into my eyes, "if three people came to you and told you that I had gone into your bedroom and taken money from the cashbox in your cupboard to pay some bills of mine, and that when I had done it I had kept it from you, and told stories about it—if three, four, five people told you that they had seen me do it, would you believe them?"

"Never, Kitty," I said, smiling against my will, "not though five angels told me so, my dear. It would be absurd. I know you too well."

"And this is absurd—absurd, do you hear, father? Do you think I do not know him—and love him?"

And the foolish girl, who had begun to waltz round the room like a mad thing, stopped suddenly, and looked at me with tears in her eyes and her lips quivering.

I could not but take some comfort from her confidence.

"Certainly," I said. "The colonel brought him up, and it seems hardly possible that the lad should turn out so bad. But the photograph, my girl—the photograph? What do you say to that? It was Jim, I can swear. I could not be mistaken. There could not be another so like him."

"There is no one like him," she answered softly.

"Very well. And then I have noticed that he has been in bad spirits lately. A bad conscience, I fear."

"You dear old donkey!" she answered, shaking me with both her little hands. "That was about me. He has told me all that. He thought Mr. Farquhar—Mr. Farquhar, indeed!"

"Oh, that was it, was it?" I said. "Well, that may account for his depression of spirits. But look you here, Kitty; was he not rather nervous about his examination?"

"A little," she answered with reluctance.

"And, nevertheless, did he not come out tolerably high?"

"Seventeenth. Thirteen thousand four hundred and twenty-six marks," Kitty replied glibly.

"Umph! And if he had failed he would have suffered in your eyes?"

"Not a scrap. And, besides, he did not fail," she retorted.

"But he may have thought he would suffer," I answered, "if he failed. That would be a sharp temptation, Kitty."

She did not reply at once. She was busy rolling up some ribbon of her frock into the smallest possible compass, and unrolling it again. At last she said:

"I know that he did not do it, but that is all I do know. I cannot prove to you that white is not black, but it is not, and I know it is not."

"Well, my dear, I hope you are right," I answered. And it cheered me to find that she at least was worthy of confidence.

She promised readily to let me have the first word with the lad when he called next day; and as for undertaking to have nothing more to do with him if the charge should prove to be true, she made nothing of that—because, as she said, it really meant nothing.

"A Jim who had done that would not be my Jim at all," she explained gayly, "but quite a different Jim—a James, sir."

Certainly, a girl's faith is a wonderful thing. And hers so far affected me that I regretted I had not taken a bolder course, and, showing the photograph to the colonel, had the whole thing threshed out on the spot. Possibly I might have saved myself a very wretched hour or two. But no, on second thoughts I could not see how the boy could be innocent. I could not help piecing the evidence together—the damning evidence, as it seemed to me—the certain identity of Jim with the original of the photograph, the arrival of the letter from Frome, where the lad had spent the last weeks previous to his examination, the fears he had expressed before the ordeal, and his success beyond his hopes at it; these things seemed almost conclusive. I had only the boy's character, his father's training and his sweetheart's faith to set against them.

His sweetheart's faith, did I say? Ah, well! when I came down to breakfast next morning whom should I find in tears—and she, as a rule, the most equable girl in the world—but Kitty.

"Hullo!" I said. "What is all this?"

At the sound of my voice she sprang to her feet; she had been kneeling by the fireplace, groping with her hands inside the fender. Her cheeks were crimson, and she was crying—yes, certainly crying, although she had tried by a hasty dab of the flimsy thing she calls a pockethandkerchief to remove the traces.

"Well!" I said, for she was dumb. "What is it, my dear?"

"I have—torn up a letter," she answered, a little sob dividing the sentence into two.

"So I see," I answered dryly. "And now, I suppose, you are sorry for it."

"It was a horrid letter, father," she cried, her eyes shining like electric lamps in a shower—"about Jim."

"Indeed," I said, with a very nasty feeling inside me. "What about Jim? And why did you tear it up, my dear? One half of it, I should say, has gone into the fire."

"It was from—a woman!" she answered.

And presently she told me that the letter, which was unsigned, accused Jim of having played with the affections of the writer, and warned Kitty to be on her guard against him, and not to be a party to the wrong he was doing an innocent girl.

"Pooh!" I said, with a contemptuous laugh. "That cock will not fight, my dear. It has been tried over and over again. You do not mean to say that that has made you cry? Why, if so, you are—you are just as big a fool as any girl I ever knew." And, indeed, I was surprised to find that Kitty's faith in her lover, which had been proof against a charge made on good evidence, failed before an uncorroborated, unsigned accusation, because, forsooth, it mentioned a woman. "What postmark did it bear?" I asked.

"Frome," she murmured.

This was certainly odd—very odd. Pretty devilments I knew these fellows at crammers' were up to sometimes. Could it be that we were all mistaken in Master Jim, as I have once or twice known a lad's family and home friends to be mistaken in him? Was he all the time an out and out bad one? Or had he some enemy at Frome plotting against his happiness? This seemed a romantic notion, and absurd besides, since we had lit upon Isaac Gold by chance, and on the portrait by a chance within a chance, and no enemy, however acute—not Machiavelli himself—could have foreseen the rencontre or arranged the circumstances which had led me to the photograph. Therefore, though the anonymous letter might be the work of an ill-wisher, I did not see how the other could be. However, I gathered up the few fragments of writing which had escaped the fire, and put them carefully aside, to serve, if need be, for evidence.

Indeed, I had just made up my mind sternly and sorrowfully that I must put an end to all matters between Jim and my girl unless he should clear himself of these suspicions—when what should I hear but his voice, and his father's in the hall. There is something in the sound of a familiar voice which so recalls our past knowledge of the speaker that I can think of nothing which pierces the cloud of doubt more thoroughly. At any rate, when the two came in, I jumped up and gave a hand to each. Behind Jim's back one might suspect him; confronted by his laughing eyes, and his brown, honest, boyish face—well, by the Lord! I would as soon have suspected my old comrade, God bless him!

"Jim," I found myself saying, his hand in mine, and every one of prudent resolutions gone to the wind, "Jim, my boy, I am a happy man. Take her and be good to her, and God bless you! No, colonel, no," I continued in desperate haste, "I do not ask a question. Let the lad take her. If your son cannot be trusted no one can. There, I am glad that it is settled."

I verily believe I was almost blubbering; and though I meant to say only what I should have said if this confounded matter had never arisen, I let drop, it seems enough to set the colonel questioning, for in five minutes I had told him the whole story of the photograph.

It was pleasant to observe his demeanor. Though he never for a moment lost his faith in Jim—mind, he had not seen the portrait—and his eyes continued to shoot little glances of confidence at his son, he drew back his chair and squared his shoulders, and altogether assumed a judicial air.

"Now, sir," he said, with his hands on his knees, "this must be explained. We are much obliged to the major for bringing it to our notice. You will be good enough to explain, my lad."

Jim did explain; or rather, when he answered frankly that he had never heard Isaac Gold's name before, and certainly had never given him a photograph, I believed him; and when he jumped up with his usual impetuosity and proposed to go at once to Gold's house and see the photograph, I was delighted. In half a minute we were in a cab, and in ten more had the good luck to discover only old Gold at home. A five shilling piece slipped into the drunkard's hand sufficed to obtain for us the view we desired.

"I suppose it is a likeness of me," Jim murmured, looking hard at the photograph.

"Certainly it is!" replied the colonel rather curtly. Up to this moment he had thought me deceived by some chance resemblance.

"Then let us see who took it, and where it was printed," Jim answered in a matter-of-fact tone. "I do not believe I have ever been taken in this dress. See, it bears no photographer's name; probably an amateur has taken it. Let me think."

While he thought, old Gold pottered about the open door of the room on the watch for Isaac's return. "Yes," said Jim at last, "I think I have it. I was photographed in this dress as one of a group before a meet of the hounds at old Bulcher's."

"At Frome?"

"Yes. And this has been enlarged, I have no doubt, from the head in the group. But why, or who has done it, or how it comes to be here, I know no more than you do."

At this moment young Gold's footsteps were heard outside. He seemed to have some suspicion that his secrets were in danger, for he came up the stairs three at a time, and bounced into the room, looking for a moment, as his eyes lit on us and the open album, as if he would knock us all down. When his glance fell on Jim, however, a change came over him. It was singular to see the two looking at one another, Jim eyeing him with the supercilious stare of the boy officer, and he returning the look with a covert recognition in his dark defiant eyes. "Well," said Jim, "do you know me?"

"I have never seen you before to my knowledge."

"Perhaps you will explain, then, how you came by this photograph?"

"That is my business!" said Gold sternly.

"Oh, is it?" retorted Jim, with fire. "We will see about that." I think it annoyed him, as it certainly did me, to detect in the other's glance and tone a subtle meaning—a covert understanding. "If you do not explain, I'll—I will call in the police, my man."

But here the colonel interfered. He told me afterwards that he felt some sympathy for Gold. He summarily silenced Jim, and, telling the other that he should hear from him again, led us downstairs. I noticed that, as we passed out into the street, he slipped his arm through his son's, and I have no doubt he managed to convey to the young fellow as plainly as by words that his faith in him was unshaken.

Very naturally, however, Jim was not satisfied with this or with the present position of things, which was certainly puzzling. "But, look here!" he said, suddenly standing still in the middle of the pavement, "what is to be done, sir?" That fellow believes, or pretends to believe, though he will not say a word, that I have used him to do my dirty work. And I have not! Then why the deuce should he parade my photograph? Do you think—by George! I believe I have got it—do you think it is a case of blackmail?"

"No," said the colonel with decision, "it cannot be. We came upon the photograph of ourselves and by the purest accident. It was not sent to us, or used against you. No! But look here, I say!" The colonel in his turn stopped suddenly in the middle of the pavement and struck the latter with his stick. He had got his idea. His eyes sparkled.

"Well?" he said.

"Suppose some other fellow employed Gold to pass the examination, and, having this very fear of being blackmailed in his mind, got a photograph of a friend tolerably like himself, and sent it up instead of his own? What then?"

"Ho! ho! What then? Precisely!" I said. We all nodded to one another like so many Chinese mandarins, and the colonel looked proudly at his son, as though saying, "Now what do you think of your father, my boy?"

"I think you have hit it, sir!" said Jim, answering the unspoken question. "There were nearly thirty fellows at Bulcher's."

"And among them there was a low rascal—a low rascal, sir," replied the colonel, his eyes sparkling, "who did not even trust his own companion in iniquity, but arranged to have an answer ready if his accomplice should turn upon him! 'I suborned him?' he would say when charged—'I deny it. He has my name pat enough, but has he any proof? A photograph? But that is not my photograph?' Do you see, major?"

"I see," I said. "And now come home with me, both of you, and we will talk it over with Kitty."

By this time, however, it was 2 o'clock. Jim, who had only arranged for a flying visit, found he must resign all hope of seeing Kitty to-day, and take a cab to Charing Cross if he would catch his train back. The colonel had a luncheon engagement—for which he was already late—and so we separated then and there in somewhat of a hurry. When I got back the first question Kitty—who, you may be sure, met me in the hall—asked me was: "Where is Jim, father?" The second: "And what does he say about the letter?"

"God bless my soul!" I exclaimed, "I never gave a thought to it. I am afraid I never mentioned it, my dear. I was thinking about the photograph. I fancy we have got nearly to the bottom of that."

"Pooh!" she said. And, upon my word, she pretended to take very little interest in the explanation I gave her, though—she sly little cat!—when I dropped the subject, she was quite ready to take it up again, rather than not talk about Jim at all.

I am sometimes late for breakfast; she rarely or never. But next morning on entering the dining-room I found the table laid for one only, and Matthews the maid waiting modestly before the coffee-pot. "Where is Miss Bratton?" I said grumpily, taking "The Times" from the fender. "Miss Kitty had a headache," was the answer, "and was taking a cup of tea in bed." "Ho! ho!" thought I, "this comes of being in love! Confound the lads! Sausage? No, I won't have sausage. Who the deuce ordered sausages at this time of year? Bacon? Umph!—seems half done. This coffee is thick. There, that will do. Don't rattle those cups and saucers all day! Confound the girl!—do you hear? You can go!" The way women bully a man when they get him alone is a caution.

When I returned from my morning stroll, I heard voices in the dining-room, and looked in to see how Kitty was. Well, she was—in brief, there was just a scene going on. Miss Kitty, her cheeks crimson and her eyes shining, was standing with her back to the window; and facing her, half angry and half embarrassed, was Jim. "Hoity toity, you two," I said, closing the door behind me. "These are early times for this kind of thing. What is up?"

"I'll be hanged if I know, sir," said Jim, looking rather foolish.

"What have you got there, my dear?" I continued, for Kitty had one hand behind her, and I was not slow to connect this hand with the scornful expression on her pretty face.

"He knows," she said, trembling with anger—the little vixen.

"I know nothing," returned Jim, sheepishly. "I came in, and when I—Kitty flew out and attacked me, don't you see, sir?"

"Very well, my dear," I answered, "if you do not feel able to explain, Jim had better go. Only, if he goes now, of course I cannot say when he will come back."

"I will come back, Kitty, whenever you will let me," said the young fool.

"Shut your mouth," I replied. "Now, Kitty, attend to me. What is it?"

"Ask him—to whom he gave his photograph at Frome," she said, in a breathless sort of way.

"His photograph? Why, that is just what we were talking about yesterday," I replied sharply. "I thought it did not interest you, my girl, when I told you all about it, last night."

"That photograph"—with withering contempt—"I do not mean that! Do you think I suspect him of that?" She stepped forward as though to go to him, and her face altered wonderfully. Then she recollected herself, and fell back. "No," she said, coldly, "to what woman, sir, did you give your photograph at Frome."

"To no woman at all," he said, emphatically.

"Then look at this," she said. She held out as she spoke a photograph, which I identified at once as the portrait we had seen at Gold's, or a copy of that one. I snatched it from Jim with an exclamation. "Where did you get this, my girl?" I asked, briskly.

"It came this morning, with another letter from that woman," she murmured.

I think she began to feel ashamed of herself, and in two minutes I got the letter also from her. It was written by the same hand as the letter of the day before, and was, like it, unsigned. Its purport was merely that the writer, in proof of her good faith, enclosed a photograph which Master Jim—that gay Lothario! if the lady was to be believed—had given her. We were still looking at the letter when the colonel came in. I explained the matter to him, and I will answer for it, before he at all understood it, Kitty was more ashamed of herself than ever.

"This photograph and the one at Gold's are fac-similes," said he, thoughtfully. "That is certain. And both come from Frome. My conclusion is that the gentleman who obtained Jim's photograph for his own purpose last year—to send to Gold, I mean—printed off more than one copy; and having this one by him, and wishing for some reason to cause mischief between Kitty and Jim, he thought of this and used it. The sender is, therefore, some one who passed his examination last year and is still at Frome."

Jim shook his head.

"If he passed, sir, he would not be at Bulcher's now," he said.

"On second thoughts, he may not be," replied the colonel. "He may have sent the two letters to Frome to some confidential friend with orders to post them. Wait—wait a minute," my old chum added, looking at me with a sudden light in his keen eyes. "Were have I seen a letter addressed to Frome—within the last day or two? Eh? Wait a bit."

We did wait, and presently the colonel announced his discovery in a voice of grim triumph. "I have it," he said; "it is that scoundrel, Farquhar."

"Farquhar?" I said; "what do you mean, colonel?"

"Just that, major. Do you remember him knocking against you in the hall at the club the day before yesterday? He dropped a letter, and I picked it up. It was addressed—I could not help seeing so much—to Frome."

"Well," said Jim, slowly, "he was at Bulcher's, and he passed last year. And I remember now that no one else from Bulcher's went up at the same examination."

"And the letter," continued the colonel, in his turn, "was in a large envelope—one that would contain a cabinet photograph."

There was a dead silence in the room. Kitty's face was hidden. Jim moved at last—toward her? No, toward the door. He had his hand on it when the colonel observed him.

"Stop!" he said sharply. "Come back, my boy. None of that. The major and I will deal with him."

Jim still lingered.

"Well, sir," he said, "I will only——"

"Come back!" roared the colonel, imperiously, but with the most gracious smile in his eyes as he looked at his boy. "You will stop here, you lucky dog, you. And I hope this will be a lesson to you not to give your photograph to young ladies at Frome."

If Kitty squirmed a little in her chair at that, well, she deserved it. I said before that a woman's faith is a wonderful thing. But when there is another woman in the case—umph!

"Mr. Farquhar, sir? Yes, sir, he is in the house," said the club porter, turning in his glass case to consult his book. "I believe he went upstairs to the drawing-room, sir."

"Thank you." The colonel replied, and he glanced at me and I at him; and then, fixing our hats on tightly, and grasping our sticks, we went upstairs.

We were in luck, as it turned out, for not only was Farquhar in the drawing-room, but there was no one else in the long, still, splendid room. He looked up from his writing, and saw us piloting our way toward him between the chairs and tables, and I think he turned green. At any rate, my last doubt left me at sight of his conscience-stricken face.

"A word with you, Mr. Farquhar," said the colonel, grimly, keeping a tight hand on my arm, for I confess I had been in favor of more drastic measures. "It is about a photograph."

"A photograph?" said the startled wretch, his mouth ajar.

"Well, perhaps I should have said two photographs," replied the colonel, gravely; "photographs of my son which are lying, one in the possession of Major Bratton, and one in the album of a certain friend of yours, Mr. Isaac Gold."

He tried to frame the words, "A friend of mine," and to feign astonishment, and stare us down, but it was a pitiable attempt, and his eyes sank. He could only mutter, "I do not know him. There is some mistake."

"Perhaps so," said the colonel, smoothly. "I hope there is some mistake. But let me tell you this, Mr. Farquhar. Unless you apply within a week for leave to resign your commission in Her Majesty's service I shall lay certain facts concerning these photographs before the Commander-in-Chief, and before the mess of your regiment. You understand me, I think? Very well. That is all I wish to say to you."

Apparently he had nothing to say to us in return, and we were both glad, I think, to turn our backs on that baffled, spiteful face, in which the horror of discovery strove with the fear of ruin. It is ill striking a man when he is down, and I was glad to get out of the house and breathe purer air.

We had no need to go to the Commander-in-Chief. Lieutenant Farquhar applied for leave to resign within the week, and Her Majesty obtained, I think, a better bargain in Private Isaac Gold, who, following the colonel's advice, enlisted about this time. He is already a corporal, and, aided by an education rare in the ranks, bids fair to earn a sergeant's stripes at an early date. He has turned over a new leaf—the colonel always maintained that he had a keen sense of honor, and I feel little doubt that if he ever has the luck to rise to Farquhar's grade, and bear the Queen's commission, he will be a credit to it and to his friend and brother officer—the colonel's boy. Not, mind you, that I think he will ever be as good a fellow as Jim. No, no.—The Cornhill.

"HIS EPITAPH SET UP."

WHAT IS THIS PRETTY THING?

This graceful object, manufactured by a well-known firm of jewellers and silversmiths in London, is a crematory urn of the latest fashion. The bowl is made of the finest crystal glass mounted in beautifully decorated silver. A crest surmounts the urn, which, moreover, shows Masonic emblems and two shields for

inscriptions. It is undoubtedly a pretty thing, but most people probably would prefer an urn of silver or bronze, which would shield "the ashes of their sires" from view.

FEMININE CLEVERNESS.

"Bab," in The Philadelphia Times.

What is really a clever woman?

A clever woman is one who looketh well after the ways of her own household.

A clever woman is one who undertakes nothing that she does not understand.

A clever woman is one who is mistress of tact, and knows how to make the social wheels run smoothly.

A clever woman is one who makes the other woman think herself the cleverest.

A clever woman is one who acts like hot water on tea; she brings the sweetness and strength out of everybody else.

A clever woman is one who always makes the best of any situation.

A clever woman is one whose ability is never unpleasantly felt by the rest of the world.

A clever woman is one who acknowledges her neighbor's right to live, who doesn't believe that she alone is the motive power of the world.

A clever woman is the one who is at ease in any place and among any people.

A clever woman is the woman, my friend, that you and I should want for a guide, counsellor and friend.

The fact that the daughter of Jeff Davis is going to marry the grandson of a hounded Abolitionist, seems to create considerable surprise. It shouldn't. All the pretty "rebel" girls in the South, when it comes to the State of matrimony, are in favor of the Union—to a man.—(Norristown Herald.

ENGLISH RULE IN EGYPT.

A TALK WITH AN AMERICAN TRAVELLER.

JEREMIAH LYNCH TELLS OF THE HEAVY TAXATION NEEDED TO PAY INTEREST ON THE BONDS—THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM—HIS CHAT WITH STANLEY.

Few if any other Americans have made as thorough a study of Egypt and the Egyptian question as has Jeremiah Lynch, ex-president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange and of the Geographical Society, who returned to this country a few days ago after spending the autumn and the winter in "The Land of the Nile." He has written a book entitled "Egyptian Sketches," embodying the result of his observations and studies and giving a picture of Egypt and of Oriental customs, which has been published in London by Edward Arnold, of Warwick Square, and which will be issued this week by a well-known firm in this city.

"My opportunity to study the natives and learn their sentiments and manner of thinking," said Mr. Lynch to a Tribune reporter in the course of a conversation on Egypt, "was unusually good. I took a house in the native quarter of Cairo, hired native servants and mingled freely with all classes of people. Cairo is becoming a fashionable resort for Europeans and Americans. Last season the influenza drove multitudes to the city, and the hotels along the Nile were crowded with people. It is a charming place for a winter sojourn, and it certainly is as free from diseases of a contagious nature as any part of Europe. There is now, by the way, only one American in the service of Egypt. That is Mason Bey, of Virginia, formerly an officer in the Confederate Army.

"I am greatly indebted to Eugene Schuyler, our representative in Egypt," added Mr. Lynch, "who gave me every aid in his power during my stay. Mr. Schuyler has been in the employ of the Government in various capacities for fifteen years. He is the best equipped man America has for service in the East, understanding Russian, Turkish and Arabic in addition to the European languages. He has secured for Americans in Egypt and the Levant that consideration to which they are entitled, but which, I regret to say, former consuls failed to secure.

AMERICAN CONSULS IN THE EAST.

"The American consuls in the Orient are an underpaid set of men. Their colleagues of the European powers receive much higher salaries. Therefore the American representatives suffer by comparison. Most of them spend more than their salary in order to sustain the honor of the Nation. If Civil Service rules exist, they should govern our diplomatic service. After a consul has acquired the language and customs of the place to which he has been sent, he should not be removed for political reasons. Our consular and diplomatic service should be reformed.

"In company with Mr. Schuyler," continued Mr. Lynch, "I went up the Nile as far as Thebes, having an excellent chance to see how the people live, how the country is governed, and what the natives now think of the English rule.

"There is only one answer to the last-named question: the native Egyptians do not want the English. Neither do they wish anybody else. They are in favor of home rule. 'Egypt for the Egyptians' is the cry of the urban population at least. But the Egyptians, with the lympathic temperament of the Oriental, have no sense of responsibility. They are almost incapable of reasoning upon matters connected with the well-being of nations. They simply have the idea that if the English were away they would be contented.

THE FEELING TOWARD THE ENGLISH.

"But," added Mr. Lynch, "they could not get along without foreign aid. They do not look far enough into the future. They remember the days of Ismail Pacha, however, which, to them, was an ideal period. But the English sway is fast and firm. The upper classes, the army and the common people all want the old 'dolce far niente' manner of life. The action of the English in displacing native useless and corrupt officials by young Englishmen causes, naturally, some ill-feeling among them. This, however, hardly extends to the fellaheen or peasantry. They, in fact, do not care. All they wish is to be let alone. Their lot, however, is not an enviable one. They labor almost incessantly and pay exorbitant taxes. They never change, however, no matter what happens in the country. They are the same to-day as their ancestors, three thousand years ago."

The presence of the English people in Egypt, Mr. Lynch continued, had had no effect upon the position of women there. The Egyptian women are treated as so many cattle; yet strange to say, they did not seem to be discontented with their lot. This submission was due to a long-established usage and the total ignorance of the respect paid to women in Christian countries. They could be married or divorced at the will of the husband without rhyme or reason. He often took advantage of this privilege also. The Koran allowed him to have four wives, but he could always vary them, if he desired.

THE TAXATION HEAVY.

Regarding the effect of the English rule upon the fellaheen, Mr. Lynch said: "Ten million pounds is raised every year, half of which goes to pay the interest on bonds. That is really more than ought to be levied in a country of only five million acres and six million people. In bad years, which come frequently in Egypt, this bears heavily upon the fellaheen. A total failure of the crops, however, is almost impossible about the Delta, owing to the system of canal irrigation adopted by the English. The system has not been extended to Upper Egypt, however, and the crops there, where the Nile is either too low or too high, the crops are damaged of course. The poor fellah is obliged to part with his cattle to pay his taxes when the crop fails. Egypt might be made as fertile as in the days of the Pharaohs if the taxes were not so excessive and the English had the money to better the canal system."

Mr. Lynch was not greatly impressed with the talents of the Khedive. "He is a courteous and elegant gentleman," he said, "but he has little force of character. He has only one wife and no odalisques, for which he is to be commended. He is an orthodox Mussulman, and although he has the respect of his subjects, he does not inspire their admiration. His father one said of him: 'He has no heart and no head.' He might have made a good farmer, but his present office is beyond him. In meeting Arabi Pacha and the English, he had not force enough to resist them. Still he is popular and is liked by everybody. The ruler of Egypt to-day is, in fact, not the Khedive, but Sir Evelyn Baring. His influence is good, without doubt, and he is as popular among the natives as it is possible for a foreigner to be."

THE BONDHOLDERS GET EVERY THING.

When asked whether he could suggest any way out of the present financial difficulty in Egypt, Mr. Lynch answered: "No, I cannot say that I can. It is easy to see, however, that far too much money is forced from the people. The English raise £60,000,000 sterling from £50,000,000 people in India, and in Egypt they raise £10,000,000 from about 6,000,000 people, or about five times as much in proportion as in India. To what is this due? It is due to the great amount of money that has to be paid to the bondholders and not to the extravagance of the administration. Do not forget that the bondholders did not give more than half of the par value of the bonds. But a fraction of that, too, was expended upon the works. While, in my opinion, the English rule is undoubtedly beneficial, it is a shame to the whole civilized world to make the poor people pay interest on these bonds. The English may not be able to help it, but it looks really as if it did not go there to better the condition of Egypt or its inhabitants, but for the benefit of the bondholders alone.

"The bonds have changed hands so frequently that it would be unfair, however, to repudiate them. The conversion, which the French are opposing, will effect a saving of about £150,000, but that is a mere mite compared with the whole. In fact, the only relief to the fellaheen which seems possible to me now is the extension of the system of irrigation, which, I believe, is now under serious consideration. Water is there in plenty, if it can be distributed. On the Delta five crops are raised every two years, while in Upper Egypt, which contains one-half the population, they get but one crop a year. If the system of irrigation, however, were more perfect and more complete, and two crops were raised in the year, the production would be doubled and the taxes then might be met. The present result is that the fellaheen and at the same time run the Government. Had the hundred millions of nominal debt been expended for the benefit of Egypt, there would be a good showing. As it is, there is nothing but the 220 miles of railway between Cairo and Assiout. That is not run efficiently, and I am not even certain that it pays interest on the expended capital."

EGYPTIANS AND THE FRENCH.

Mr. Lynch said that he had noticed at present a preference for the French in Egypt over the English. "But," he added, "if French rule were established they would have a different opinion in a year. They want Egypt for the Egyptians. The English have a strong foothold now, and they would be foolish indeed to give that up. The army is well disciplined. The English officers enforce and preserve good order and discipline. The armaments are of the latest type, and include even a Krupp gun of 1887."

Before leaving Cairo Mr. Lynch met Stanley, who then had just returned from his African tour. "I had," he said, "a long conversation with the explorer, whom I found in the best of health. His eyes are bright and his cheeks are as rosy as a young English girl's. Yet he is a man whose whole nature has been influenced by the responsibilities which he has borne and the dangers to which he has been exposed. He told me that he never went to bed without reading something during his long tour. He went to bed as early as 9 o'clock, rose at 4.30, and at 5 was again on the march through the wilderness."

Mr. Lynch will remain in the East a short time before going to his Western home. When asked whether he would again take part in politics, he answered: "That is a question for the future to determine."