KATHARINE NORTH.

XVI.

YOUNG MR. LLANDAFF HAS HIS WAY.

Copyright, 1892: By The Tribune Association.

"Owen," said Mrs. Llandaff the morning after her return from her second visit to Feeding Hills.

As this single word was not immediately followed by any other remark the young man made no reply. He sat waiting what should come next.

The two were at their particular end of a table in the dining-room of the hotel. It was after 9 o'clock. Katharine had not yet formed the habit of rising late and she had breakfasted more than an hour ago. At this moment she was sitting on the rocks near the water. She confidently believed that she could never get tired of sitting there.

She had not seen Llandaff since her return. She rather shrank from meeting him. He must think her a strange being to have been so nearly tragic the day before, and to have spoken thus of having one more look at the ocean.

She blushed at the recollection of how she had felt and seemed; and here she was back again after a few hours of absence.

Perhaps he would consider her a mild kind of lunatic, if he thought of her at all. He had been very kind.

At the breakfast table Miss Wyckham had not yet appeared. Llandaff sat where he could, by raising his eyes, see the door through which she would come. He sat there watching for her, though he did not seem to be thinking of anything but his coffee and the Boston daily he had unfolded beside his plate. He dreaded to hear the sound of her step along the hall and the swish of her trailing breakfast gown. He knew precisely the difference between the sound of that gown and the sound of all the other gowns which were likely to be dragged across the floors. And the click of her shoes—here he took a sip of coffee.

He was a man who did not shirk in his own mind the genuine answers to questions.

He knew he shrank with painful sensitiveness from meeting Miss Wyckham. And he knew that this sensitiveness had sprung into a more active existence the day before on one of the balconies which overlooked the sea.

He faced the fact that he had not been able for one waking moment to forget Miss North's face or voice.

At first, for a little, he arranged a manful fight against this tendency, which was even now more than a tendency.

He fought a few hours. Then the fight suddenly became absolutely futile and senseless.

He was lying on the sand in a remote part of the Cohasset shore.

"I might as well fight with my own breath," he had said.

Having come to this conclusion, he pulled his hat over his eyes and gave himself up to the memories that came with an overwhelming rush upon his soul.

Perhaps it is quite plain now why he dreaded to hear Miss Wyckham's step in the hall. And why, being a person of honorable instincts, he was becoming acquainted with a sense of stinging self-contempt.

It was a peculiarly detestable fate that had led him to decide at just this time that Miss Wyckham would be the proper wife for him, and that had prompted him to tell her so. If he had only considered the matter still longer before he had spoken.

"Owen," said Mrs. Llandaff again, having apparently forgotten that she had just pronounced his name, "I'm thinking of leaving here immediately."

"But it is earlier than you usually go to the mountains."

"One can't always keep on doing what one usually does," was the reply.

"True; particularly if one is a woman."

"Don't be disagreeable."

Llandaff was silent. He again began to listen intently for the approach of Miss Wyckham. And now he had a faint hope that perhaps she would not come to breakfast at all. But he must stay; he knew she would expect him to be there.

And if Mrs. Llandoff went away her niece would accompany her.

This sentence suddenly stood out in his consciousness with a kind of ferocious distinctness.

"I don't know that I am obliged to go to the mountains merely because I leave the South Shore," calmly went on Mrs. Llandaff, who had not yet really looked at her step-son. "I want to take Kate somewhere. She has been troubled of late about affairs at home. I want to get her out of the way. I suppose you, of course, will stay here, since Miss Wyckham remains longer."

The two were practically alone at this end of the table, and Mrs. Llandaff could speak thus if she chose, without fear of being overheard.

She now turned her glance upon the man opposite her. His features were absolutely calm, but when he lifted his eyes to met hers she said again, and this time with startled quickness:

"Owen!"

He laughed.

"Well? You almost appear as if you saw signs of incipient smallpox. I thought I was looking quite fit when I contemplated myself in the glass before leaving my room this morning."

"Yes, to others. But I know you very well, Owen."

"I am almost willing that you should know me," he said, with a sudden warm earnestness which affected his listener more keenly than she could fully understand. Then he added instantly and lightly:

"But I'm not an interesting subject. Where are you going?"

"I have several places in mind; I think I shall toss up a penny for a decision, for there is really no choice. Here is Miss Wyckham at last."

Llandaff had heard her step with the keen sense of love, or dread.

He reviled himself as a hypocrite as he now devotedly applied himself to seeing that her wants were supplied.

"I was beginning to think you had a headache and were not coming," he said. But his glance swept over her face, and he could not force it to linger an instant.

Mrs. Llandaff had finished her breakfast, but she remained a few moments to study her step-son while she appeared to look over the paper he had given her.

She could not tell what had taken place in that young man's mind; she only knew that something had happened.

Miss Wyckham's countenance and bearing were serene and satisfied. Her lover had in his manner a trifle more of impressiveness than usual.

She was accustomed to impressiveness in a man's manner to her, and somehow she thought Llandaff's eyebrows gave a delightful flavor to his presence.

Mrs. Llandaff must have tossed up her penny for her decision immediately upon going to her room, for an hour later Llandaff was requested by a servant to call at that room.

The door was open and trunks were going out on the shoulders of a porter.

"I suppose you don't forbid my visiting you—unless you are going into an absolutely exclusive spot."

As he spoke, Katharine came from the inner room. She blushed slightly as she saw him. She was thinking again how sensational she must have seemed to him, bidding good-bye to the ocean, and then returning immediately to it. She felt ridiculous.

"No," said Mrs. Llandaff. "You needn't take the trouble to visit us. You'll be fully occupied here."

The young man flung up his head in a rebellious way his stepmother had known since his boyhood.

"But you mean to tell me where you are going?" he asked.

She was drawing on her gloves. But at that instant she raised her eyes and saw Llandaff turn unconsciously toward the girl who stood at the end of the room near a window.

It was a very slight movement. She was sure that no one else would have noticed it; and it was repressed instantly. But it revealed a possibility which made her shrink into herself with fear. At that moment she wished that she did not know Owen so well. His nature had always attracted her and she had studied it with love from his boyhood. And if you study a person with love you will know the secret impulse of his actions.

Mrs. Llandaff's eyes went instantly to the girl. She saw that Katharine was ignorant; her very attitude showed that she considered her aunt's stepson almost in the light of a stranger.

"It is well we are going away," she thought.

"You really don't mean that you are not to tell me where you will stop?"

Llandaff spoke with some authority and he gazed in the same way at Mrs. Llandaff, who, having drawn on her gloves was now smoothing them. He advanced and deftly fastened the gloves As he did so he continued:

"I'm not going to be treated in this way. And what if the world wants to be addressed by the great public speaker? And what if I should be obliged to say I didn't know where the great public speaker was? I should die of humiliation. And what would be the state of the world?"

Katharine had turned and was gazing at Llandaff and smiling. The man's eyes seemed to slide off of the elder face and rest upon the younger one. He was saying to himself with a kind of reckless exultation that he could not, he would not fight against the vivid delight it gave him to look at that face.

Katharine had never heard any one talk nothings in that light kind of a way. She was amused; and she had a dim kind of feeling that this man was veiling something by this manner: she did not know what it was. Perhaps he was impatient to get away to that girl to whom he was engaged. But that made no difference to her. She met his gaze frankly, as she would have met her Aunt Kate's. She noticed how much light there seemed to be in his eyes.

"I've no idea what the state of the world will be," remarked Mrs. Llandaff, "but I'm not going to speak again this summer."

"Not even for the Ladies' United Association?"

"Not even for that."

"Oh, desolate world!" he cried. Llandaff was watching for the smile on Katharine's face. He went on:

"You may try to elude me, but I shall be like the vengeance of the villain in a novel. Must I say good-bye now, or will you let me go to the boat with you? Of course you really make your start from Boston; so you will still be safe from my pursuit if I see you leave this wharf."

Without waiting for a reply Llandaff took Mrs. Llandaff's handbag. He opened the door for the two, he followed them down the stairs and he entered the carriage after he had helped them to their seats.

Mrs. Llandaff, during the short drive to the landing, could not quite read the meaning of their escort's face, well as she knew it.

But when the boat started and he had not gone ashore, she said in a low voice to him as he stood behind the camp chair he had placed for her:

"Owen, you should not have come. You can't return for several hours."

"But I know my way round in Boston," he replied.

She said nothing more until they had reached the wharf in town. She did not like the persistence with which he kept by her side. She felt that she was getting nervous. Worse than that, she could almost have said she was conscious of a kind of superstition, as if something were going to happen.

Llandaff said very little to her, and nothing to Katharine; still he was scrupulously attentive.

He secured a carriage at the wharf and conducted them to it. As he held the door open he asked:

"Where did you say you would be taken, Mrs. Llandaff?"

"Owen, this is too bad," was the response with a slight laugh.

"Where did you say?" inclining his head respectfully toward her.

Katharine looked at him and laughed also. But he did not appear to notice her.

"Of course it really makes no difference, since you are a gentleman," suddenly remarked Mrs. Llandaff. "But I sometimes believe in presentiments, or convictions. And I had a conviction that it was my duty to take flight and leave no trace behind."

As she spoke she had taken her seat and had signed to her niece to sit beside her. Now she added, "To the Boston and Maine station."

Llandaff repeated the direction to the driver. And again he sat down opposite the two.

"I suppose," he said, "you had an object in reminding me that I am a gentleman?"

His tone was very serious. But his face did not show any signs of a change of purpose.

"I meant to convey that I had a general feeling of reliance upon you," replied Mrs. Llandaff.

"Thanks. I shall not ask you if you sincerely wish me not to know where you are going, because I mean to know."

The young man's mouth closed with a sternness which did not seem called for by the circumstances.

The carriage went winding in and out among the vehicles on the street. Sometimes it stopped. On these occasions Mrs. Llandaff would take out her watch.

Katharine followed the movements of every carriage as long as she could see it. She had a strange feeling as if her mind were almost a blank, and that she could not guess what would next be written upon it. She did not care where her aunt took her. She was sure of the one important thing, that the place would be strange, and that it would help to put the past month or two farther behind her, and then she should forget Mr. Grove. She was so eager to forget him. The vividness with which she received impressions would help her to that.

She was glad that she did not know where she was going. That was one of the enchanting things about her aunt Kate—that she did not do things like other people.

She turned to look at the woman beside her. As she did so her eyes swept over Llandaff's face. He was gazing out into the street, but his eyes came instantly to meet hers.

His effort to speak was visible even to the girl, and she wondered at it.

"It's a mysterious expedition to you too, Miss North?"

"Yes," she answered; "I like it for that. But even if I knew the name of the place where we are going that would tell me nothing, since I have never been anywhere."

"Never been anywhere? You don't know how you are to be envied. If I hadn't been everywhere I might be a happier man this day. But just now I am in the same position with you, Miss North. I don't know where I'm going. Still the sensation isn't delightful to me. Mrs. Llandaff has reminded me that I am a gentleman. You know what that means? It means that she thinks I am not acting like a gentleman. I don't mind explaining to you, Miss North"—here the speaker bent forward that he might be the better heard in the roar of the street—"that I am sacrificing myself in this instance. Mrs. Llandaff is in my care. I am responsible for her safety—you see she is shrugging her shoulders at that idea—still it is true. She will soon forgive me. She always does. She thinks I am officious now, but she will in the end do me justice."

Having said this the young man sank back on his seat and resumed his contemplation of the moving street scenes.

When the party were in the waiting-room at the station he informed Mrs. Llandaff, with the manner of touching upon the subject for the first time, that he really should not be what people called "easy in mind," if she did not allow him to go with her and see her established. Surely she could trust him? Surely she knew he would keep a secret if she wished one kept. Tortures could not make him divulge where she was. The Ladies' United Association might go to eternal nothingness for lack of one speech from her before he would open his lips.

"You know you need me. You know I am invaluable to you. I promise not to stay unless you feel as if you couldn't live without me. But you must give me permission to go with you."

Two or three times since her knowledge of Owen Mrs. Llandaff had seen him look like this, and at those times she had had an intuitive sense that she must yield to him.

She had that sense now. They started for a little hamlet on the coast of Maine, and long before the journey's end she told herself that that fleeting fear she had suddenly felt was utterly without foundation. She wondered that she had felt it. And yet she was a woman of intuitions; a woman who could read the slightest lifting of an eyebrow in a face she knew.

It is a curious fact that sometimes, in moments the most full of significance, the keenest-sighted become blind.

The last of the journey was a stage ride of two hours and the settlement where that stage stopped was made up of half a dozen houses on a cliff overlooking the sea. A place more remote, more desolate to look at one could hardly imagine.

"I spent a month here once," said Mrs. Llandaff. "And I rested all the time. I had to rest for there was nothing else I could do. Now I have come that I might have a chance to get acquainted with my niece. And I don't think any one here knows that I am a great public speaker. That in itself is a recommendation. Cap'n Marble's wife boarded me that summer. She boarded Cap'n Marble at the same time. She said she 'didn't make no money outer him' and she should be obliged to make all the more out of me. She charged $1.75 per week and I had to pay extra for laundry work. Besides paying so much in money I answered her questions. I wish I had made a note of all the questions I answered that summer. She asked how old I was. Think of asking that of a woman of my age, Owen!"

Owen looked quizzically at his step-mother.

"I have always longed to know," he said, "What did you tell her?"

"I quoted that convenient phrase that 'a woman is as old as she looks and a man as old as he feels.' You should have seen her face. But I made a point of replying literally to everything else, even to the size of shoes I wore and how long ago it was that my hair began to grow noticeably gray, and how much this diamond ring cost, and why I used a file on my nails generally rather than a penknife, and if I ever had the same dream three nights running and many other things which might not interest this audience to hear."

"Cries of 'good!' 'Go on!'" exclaimed Llandaff whose spirits were now in an effervescent state.

But Mrs. Llandaff did not go on, though she caught Katharine's laughing, eager eyes upon her.

Mrs. Llandaff had learned what Owen had also learned, that there was this peculiarity about Katharine that even when she did not speak she often had the effect of having done so, and that there was something subtly stimulating in the mere fact that she was present and was listening. If she were in a room the air held a property that was sensibly felt.

Mrs. Llandaff who liked to study unusual effects soon began to study this subject.

Just now, however, the three were walking along the one street of the hamlet. And every inhabitant along the street was looking at them.

They were on their way to Cap'n Marble's, and Cap'n Marble's was the last house, the one perched nearest to the edge of the cliff and from which a flight of steps went down almost from the door-step to the beach below.

There was another entrance to the house, however, familiarly known as the "end door," and from this opening there now emerged a thin old man clothed in much faded pantaloons and an equally faded blue woollen shirt. He put up his hand to shade his eyes, although in his position he could only have been dazzled by the effulgence of his visitors, as the sun had gone down below the horizon.

But if he were dazzled he was in no way abashed. Cap'n Marble was not afflicted with shyness. He used to ask if he wa'n't 's good's anybody? And he would always answer his own question by the immediate assertion that he was as good, if he behaved as well, 'n' he gen'rally calklated to behave.

This man now waited for the newcomers to approach. When they had reached him he put out a hand and said huskily:

"I guess it's Mis' Llandaff. You ain't changed a grain. Walk right in. My wife's ben havin' one of her turns, but she's comin' to now. Want to git board? We've had to rise on our price. Mebby you won't want to pay $2. My wife said she couldn't scrub her fingers to the bone for no less. We ain't had anybody yet. Come in, I say. She's a' most out of her turn."

He spoke in a level, husky voice not much above a whisper, and he was one of those who do not seem to expect any reply.

He led the way in through the end door to the other side of the house where he had left Mrs. Marble engaged in coming out of her turn.

Apparently she had fully emerged, for she came forward with the utmost alacrity, stared intently for a moment, and then said that she guessed 'twas Mis' Llandaff and that she hadn't changed a grain, adding that her husband had risen on the price of board, because he wouldn't go on fishing for no strangers at $1.75 any more.

Here Cap'n Marble chuckled hoarsely.

The three were invited to sit down, which they did with great solemnity, and Mrs. Llandaff proceeded to arrange for the two upstairs room for herself and niece.

Meanwhile, through an open window the east wind was rushing in as if the house were a ship under full sail, and as if one might be liable to be sea-sick.

There was no sound in the universe but the sound of wind and water, and no odor but that deep, strong fragrance from the ocean which filled one's lungs and went thrilling through one's blood.

Katharine, as if impelled by a sudden vigor and joy born of that salt wind and that diapason of sound, rose from her chair and walked out of the house. She sat on those steps which led to the beach. It was nearly high tide. There was an almost painful fullness of life in the girl's pulses.

She was safe on this strange shore with her Aunt Kate.

There had been the ocean at Nantasket, but in comparison with this it seemed as if that had been toned some way by all those crowds which flocked to it.

Here was the primeval wilderness.

"Miss North."

She started to her feet. Llandaff had come out and was standing upon the upper step.

"Can you give a mere human being your attention long enough to say good-bye?"

She looked up at him from her place below.

"But you can't go to-night," she said quickly. "There's no stage and no train and no boat. You'll have to stay and be bored."

"No: I'm going to escape. Cap'n Marble knows a man who owns a horse. If I start in a quarter of an hour with that horse and that man I can reach somewhere where I can catch a train, which will stop somewhere else where I can take a night train to Boston. You see, I shall not be obliged to be bored, after all. Good-by, Miss North."

"Good-by, Mr. Llandaff." He walked a few steps away; then he came back, and said, quickly:

"Miss North, don't be troubled about anything. Perhaps you exaggerate. It is so easy to do that, you know. I'm sure you're going to be happy—sure of it," with an uncalled-for earnestness that almost made his voice unsteady.

"Oh, thank you," she said, eagerly; "but you know, Mr. Llandaff, it isn't necessary to be happy. I used to think so"—as if she were now old—"but I've given that up. And, really, it isn't necessary."

"Isn't it?" he asked, and his voice was now actually tremulous. He stood irresolutely a moment, looking down at her. But she was gazing off toward where the coast curved toward its most eastern point.

Then he said "Good-bye" again, and this time he did not return.

"Was Owen saying something pretty about the ocean?" presently asked Mrs. Llandaff's voice from the doorway above.

"Oh, no. He said he hoped I wouldn't be troubled about anything."

"Did he? That boy is nothing if not sympathetic. I have tried to make him understand that it is weak to be too ready with sympathy. And he'll get into no end of a mess if he isn't careful."

Katharine joined her aunt in the door. She put her hand through Mrs. Llandaff's arm. Her face was radiant.

"Do let the boy give his sympathy," she exclaimed; "he is so charming when he is sorry for one."

"Oh, is he?"

The long breath Mrs. Llandaff drew was one of infinite relief. After an instant's silence she added: "I don't think Ella Wyckham will need much of that emotion from any one. She is one of those women who don't need anything; she is fully equipped."

"What a thing it must be to be that," said Katharine. "Only to think of it! If I lived a thousand years I know I should never be fully equipped."

Mrs. Llandaff smiled. She noted with a little surprise in her admiration the keen life in the face beside hers.

"I will confide to you, Kate," she returned, "if you will never betray me, that the people to whom I have been most drawn in my life have been those who have somehow missed that equipment."

Meanwhile Llandaff was journeying as fast as a large, hay-fed horse could carry him, which was not fast at all, toward his betrothed. And as he journeyed he was thinking chiefly of one face.

For Summer Cookery

ROYAL Baking Powder

will be found the greatest of helps. With least labor and trouble it makes bread, biscuit and cake of finest flavor, light, sweet, appetizing, and assuredly digestible and wholesome.

PRIVATE SECRETARIES.

THEIR PROMISE AND POTENCY.

Were I to be asked to indicate the surest road to fame, future and eminence in England, I should unhesitatingly declare that it was to be found in the fulfilment of the varied, delicate and multifarious duties of a private secretary to some man who has either already achieved distinction or else who is on the eve of doing so. It is indispensable, however, that the private secretary in question should be a person of birth and breeding, possessed of the same degree of refinement and education, as well as of the same code of honor and social usage as his chief. Only then can he become the alter ego of his principal, and appreciate men and things from a similar standpoint, and relieve him not only of much work, but also of all excessive strain upon the mental faculties. Indeed a good private secretary should not only render it unnecessary for his master to give specific instructions, except in matters of great importance, but should even, as far as possible, do his thinking for him, and act as a species of living and perambulating memorandum book. In one word a private secretary should constitute the memory of his chief.

I am led to make these remarks by the signal honors which have just been bestowed upon two men in England, who have spent the most notable and largest portion of their respective career in the capacity of private secretary. Sir Philip Currie, who has been decorated by the Queen with the Grand Cross of the Bath, only four years after having received the Knight Commandership, or second class, of that ancient order, was for many years the private secretary of Lord Salisbury, while Mr. Alfred Milner, who has been appointed to the presidency of the Board of Inland Revenue—an office carrying with it a salary of $12,000 a year—won his spurs as private secretary of Mr. Goschen, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Rapid as has been the advancement of Sir Philip, who is now the permanent head of the Foreign Office establishment, the career of Mr. Milner affords a yet more striking illustration of the advantages that may be derived from a private secretaryship. Mr. Milner has not until now been a member of the civil service. He acted as sub-editor of The Pall Mall Gazette after leaving Oxford, and only abandoned journalism to become the private secretary of Mr. Goschen. So efficient and faithful were his services to the latter that when the Under Secretaryship of State for Finance in Egypt became vacant, Mr. Goschen at once nominated him for that lucrative post. At Cairo his work and his tact—that sine qua non in the baggage of every private secretary—gave great satisfaction to the Khedive's Government, as well as to the authorities in Downing-st., and now that Lord Iddesleigh has retired from the chairmanship of the Board of Inland Revenue, which is regarded as one of the chief plums of the British civil service, young Mr. Milner, who is barely thirty-seven, has been appointed, on the nomination of Mr. Goschen, to the office.

The latter was held up till about eighteen months ago by Sir Algernon West, who was long one of the favorite private secretaries of Mr. Gladstone. Another of the Grand Old Man's former private secretaries is Sir Reginald Welby, the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, a post which carries with it a salary of $14,000 a year. Yet another of Mr. Gladstone's private secretaries is Permanent Under Secretary of State for India, while the Crown Agent in London for the colonies, Sir Frederick Ommanney, was a private secretary of the late Lord Carnavon, when the latter was Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Controller Generalship of the National Debt, the Secretaryship of the Postoffice, several of the Commissionerships of Prisons, the Secretaryship of the Government Department of Public Works, and indeed almost every one of the best berths in the civil service of the British Crown are held by men who are indebted for their good fortune to the fact of their having fulfilled the duties of private secretary to some statesman or politician of influence and power. The late Earl of Beaconsfield, as is well known, even went to the length of persuading the Queen to confer a peerage upon his private secretary "Monty" Cowry, now Lord Rowton.

Lord Rowton is by no means the only ex-private secretary who possesses a seat in the upper house of Parliament. Indeed, there is scarcely a single peer taking an active part in politics who has not "learnt the ropes" of public life in the position of a private secretary; and whenever a young man of family is destined by his relatives for a political career, he is usually attached to the person of some statesman or administrator as assistant private secretary.

The best known, and, to my mind, the most perfect of all private secretaries, is Sir Francis Knollys, who has been with the Prince of Wales for more than a quarter of a century. The very personification of discretion, loyalty and disinterestedness, he is untiring in his devotion to his royal master, and his one object in life seems to be to spare the Prince all worry, annoyance and anxiety, and to shield him from harm. His sentiments toward the Prince are due, not alone to the feelings of affection which the British Heir Apparent inspires in all his entourage, but also to gratitude. For many years the Controllership of the Prince's household was in the hands of the late General Sir William Knollys. The latter, although a most gallant soldier and the very soul of honor, was but a poor administrator, and so loose was the surveillance which he exercised over the various branches of the royal establishment that one of the chief clerks of the financial department was enabled to embezzle an enormous sum before being discovered. Although the losses sustained by the Prince in the matter amounted to nearly half a million of dollars, neither old Sir William, nor his son Francis, nor yet his daughter, who is the favorite Lady in Waiting of the Princess, ever heard a single word of complaint, censure or protest from the royal couple. If anything, the latter were even more gracious and more affectionate in their attitude toward the three Knollys, who formed part of their household, than ever before. Sir William immediately resigned, but only to be invested with the lucrative sinecure of Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Lords, which the Prince procured for him. Sir Francis, a man of exquisite tact and refinement, has been able to appreciate to its fullest extent the delicacy and consideration of his royal master in the matter, and manifests in return a devotion to the Prince which can only be likened to that of some faithful and intelligent collie. The Prince trusts him blindly and implicitly, and has no secrets from him, and the result is that Sir Francis is able to fulfill the duties of a private secretary in an absolutely ideal manner, constituting the memory, and sometimes, too, the conscience, of his royal chief.

Another conspicuous and influential private secretary is General Sir Henry Ponsonby, who has charge of the Privy Purse and of the correspondence of Queen Victoria. Few persons outside the immediate Court circle are aware of the extent of his influence, which is exercised in the most unobtrusive and discreet manner. In many of the great political crises, it is he, who, sometimes in the name of the Queen, and sometimes in his own private capacity, but always in the interests of Her Majesty, has acted as mediator between conflicting interests and between the rival parties. Many are the quarrels and disputes within the royal family itself which he has smoothed over. With the exception of a couple of years in the Crimea, where he greatly distinguished himself by his gallantry in the conflict with the Russians, he has been all his life a private secretary. Shortly after joining the Coldstream Guards he was appointed private secretary to Lord Clarendon, the Viceroy of Ireland, and he kept his position as such under Lord Carlisle and at least two other of the Lord Lieutenants. On his return from the Crimean war, he was attached to the household of the late Prince Consort, and subsequently strengthened his position at Court by marrying one of the Queen's favorite Maids of Honor. On the death of General Sir Thomas Biddulph in 1870 he became the principal private secretary of the Queen. Unlike Sir Francis Knollys, who is somewhat the reverse of good-looking, Sir Henry is a very handsome, soldierly-looking old man of sixty-eight, with short-cut gray beard, regular features, and tall, erect figure.

Were the Queen to be deprived at the present moment of the services of Sir Henry Ponsonby, or the Prince of Wales, of those of Sir Francis Knollys, the loss would prove irreparable. For both of these royal personages have become so much accustomed to have the various aspects of each matter thought over for them and presented to them by their efficient private secretaries that they have almost entirely lost the habit of doing their own thinking. They content themselves with doing the deciding.

Columns more could be written about the importance of the private secretaries and of the influence which they exercise. Always by their master's side, unobstrusively guiding and directing his thoughts and his acts, and discussing everything with him, it is easy to understand the extent of their power. And the more trust that their chiefs place in them, the more valuable their services are certain to become. Indeed, the labors and responsibilities of the employers diminish in the proportion to the degree of confidence which they extend to their private secretaries.

EX-ATTACHE.

THE LATE "ROB ROY" MACGREGOR.

From The London Times.

Mr. John MacGregor, better known as "Rob Roy" MacGregor, died at his residence, Lindel, Boscombe, Bournemouth, on the 16th inst. Mr. MacGregor was the eldest son of the late General Sir Duncan MacGregor, K.C.B. He was born at Gravesend, January 24, 1825, and a few weeks after his birth, his parents, with their infant son, embarked on board the Kent, East Indiaman, which afterward took fire in the Bay of Biscay. Young MacGregor was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and at seven other schools, in consequence of the frequent removals of his father's regiment. Later he was sent to Trinity College, Dublin, and afterward to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated as B.A. and a Wrangler. In 1845 Mr. MacGregor wrote and sketched for "Punch," and during the Revolution of 1848 he visited Paris. Two years later he made a tour through Europe and the Levant, and also visited Egypt and Palestine. On his return in 1851 he was called to the Bar. Being of a restless disposition, however, he soon left for Russia, visiting likewise every other country in Europe, as well as Algeria and Tunis, and subsequently the United States and Canada. He published an interesting account of his wanderings. In 1865 he undertook his first canoe voyage, and in the ensuing year his memorable log-book appeared, under the title of "A Thousand Miles in the Rob Roy Canoe on the Rivers and Lakes of Europe." This work passed through thirteen editions in less than twenty years. It was succeeded by various other accounts of canoe voyages, all of which enjoyed considerable popularity. Mr. MacGregor was twice elected a member of the London School Board, for the division of Greenwich; and he acted as chairman of the Industrial Schools Committee, rendering signal service in that capacity. His leisure he employed in contributing articles on marine propulsion and other subjects to the reports of the British Association, and he worked on the committees for erecting various memorial statues to public men. He married in 1873 a daughter of Admiral Sir Richard Caffin, K.C.B. Mr. MacGregor had been in failing health for some time before his death, and in consequence settled a few years ago to Bournemouth.

DYING MADE EASY.

From The London Globe.

It is said that the guillotine has recently been introduced by the French into their colony of Tonquin. Our neighbors, as all the world is aware, have had, and still have, plenty of work to do in the way of exterminating piracy in that vast and as yet unremunerative possession. And the method by which they endeavor to exterminate the pirate (when they catch him, which, as a rule, they do not) is that of decapitation. That ceremony has, hitherto, been performed in the primitive and rather barbarous native way. The culprit, being placed in a convenient position, used to light a cigarette and wait for the executioner to take a shot at his neck with a big sword. Sometimes the headsman aimed straight and sometimes he did not, and a feeling has long existed among gentlemen of the piratical profession that an execution thus executed was distinctly an unpleasant process for the patient. Consequently the introduction of the "wood of justice" has by no means produced the effect which the French authorities desired and expected. Instead of being impressed with the horror of this mode of execution, the natives of Tonquin are said to be highly delighted with it. In fact, they regard the guillotine as a most ingenious article de Paris, and they have already witnessed one execution with every demonstration of enthusiasm. Dying, they say, is made so delightfully easy by this admirable invention of the superior European intelligence. The result is that considerable satisfaction is expressed in piratical circles, and it is confidently anticipated that piracy will shortly increase very considerably, as nobody in Tonquin would mind being abbreviated instantaneously by the guillotine. Death, in short, has lost most of its terror because the process of dying has been rendered so simple.

BOOKS AND COSTUMES.

From The London Graphic.

A lady of fine artistic taste has discovered that at church-parade her prayer-book, by its incongruous color, entirely ruined the effect of a carefully-conceived costume. It struck a discord in an otherwise perfectly harmonious dress. This has been remedied by having a cover to her prayer-book which shall be perfectly in accord with the leading tone of her garments. The prayer-book cover will henceforth receive as attentive consideration as the bonnet, the gloves and the sunshade, and no jarring note of color will be introduced by means of a volume bound in blue velvet or in scarlet morocco. If this rule be applied to everyday garments and to any volume that a lady may feel inclined to read, the business in fancy book-covers cannot fail to be extensive. For it is easy enough to imagine that the most artistic arrangement of color may be at once ruined by its wearer happening to take in hand some garishly bedizened novel of to-day.

THE GOSSIP OF PARIS.

A RISING MONARCHY IN FRENCH SOUDAN—A NOVELTY IN SUMMER FASHIONS.

Paris, July 22.

Some time ago a novel was published in the United States relating the adventures of a reporter who had become a king. Truth is, however, often more romantic than fiction, for news has just been received here that Mademba-Seye, a native of Senegal, who began life as an operator in the employment of the Franco-Eastern Telegraph Company, has become monarch of a kingdom which is twice as large as France.

Mademba-Seye, or rather His Majesty, Mademba I, is a man of great intelligence and wonderful talent, and he may be numbered among the founders of the French Soudan. Together with Colonel Borgnis-Desbordes, Colonel Gallien and Colonel Archinard, he contributed by his courage and energy to the creation of this great dependency. In 1883, when the French troops entered Bammako, and took possession for the first time of the Niger, Mademba organized a telegraph service, placing this new French possession in communication with the mother country. Colonel Desbordes, in his official report, says that it was entirely through Mademba's efforts, courage and perseverance that the telegraphic line between Basonlabe and the Niger (427 kilometres) had been successfully constructed. In 1883, while the line from Kita to Bammako was being built, the warriors of the Samory tribe stole the greater part of the wire destined for telegraphic purposes. Mademba immediately repaired to the camp of Colonel Borgnis-Desbordes, and requested to be allowed to join in the engagements which took place daily between the French soldiers and the Sofas of Almany. Permission having been granted to him, he put himself at the head of a score of subordinate telegraph employes, and he, three days later, managed to penetrate into the enemy's camp, and to recover the missing wire.

This feat was only the beginning of a long series of similar acts of military prowess, and in 1886 Mademba-Seye was decorated by the President of the French Republic with the Cross of the Legion of Honor as a reward for his exceptional services. In 1890 the ex-telegraph operator was placed in command of a large corps of native troops, which accomplished wonders and was known as the Mademba column. This army corps, for such it must be called, was entirely composed of colored men, who, followed by their wives and belongings, formed a most imposing tout ensemble, preceded as it was by jugglers, sorcerers and medicine-men in picturesque costumes; Mademba, himself a black, realizing that in order to maintain his influence over his men, it was indispensable that he should retain a certain portion of their customs.

Colonel Archinard, seeing the wonderful power wielded by Mademba, conceived the project of creating a large kingdom comprising all the different territories on the left bank of the Niger, and of confining its management to the man who had given so many proofs of absolute devotion to France. This plan, having found great favor in the eyes of the French Government, Mademba-Seye started about a year ago to take possession of his kingdom, where, after a perilous voyage, he was enthusiastically proclaimed "Fama of Sansanding," which was the title used by the ancient Bambara sovereigns of Segou, who were, in times gone by, dethroned by the great Ul-Hadj-Oumar. The post he occupies is both dangerous and difficult, but Mademba holds it securely, and his power is daily increasing. It would seem from this that telegraphy as well as journalism can lead to royal thrones.

The Chambers have adjourned, and the Government is now safe, at least until the opening of the autumn term. There was, however, still a great deal of work to be accomplished during the last days of the session, and the Senate held two sittings, most of the last afternoon being devoted almost entirely to the passage of the bill for the reconstruction of the Opera-Comique on the old site on the Place Boieldieu. The Chamber has thus at length adopted the only practical means of removing the eyesore produced by the unsightly vacant space occupied by the burned theatre, and has, moreover, earned the good will of all the music-loving public by taking steps to bring the Opera-Comique within reach of the fashionable districts.

Paris has had many opera-houses during the present century. Grand opera has had its home in three different houses, and every other form of lyric drama from the once popular Italian opera to the flimsiest species of opera bouffe, has at different times had its special theatre. But the old Opera-Comique was unquestionably dearer to the average Parisian than any of them. Opera-comique, as the French understand it, is a very comprehensive term, and includes works of varied styles and dimensions—from such one-act trifles as "Bon Soir, Monsieur Pantalon" to Gounod's "Faust," "Romeo et Juliette," Meyerbeer's "Dinorah" and "L'Etoile du Nord." These latter, in fact, and other operas generally regarded as belonging to the more serious school, were first heard on the stage of the theatre on the Place Boieldieu. Since the unfortunate fire which destroyed the theatre in 1887, this favorite form of entertainment has had to find a temporary home elsewhere, and the complications of the old proprietary at one time seemed to render it doubtful whether a new Opera-Comique would ever again arise on the old site. The rights of private persons and of the city of Paris and the partial control of the State contributed to these difficulties, some of which were of a formidable character. But, thanks to the good will and energy of M. Bourgeois, the Minister of Public Instruction, and to the co-operation of the Legislature, they have all been practically dealt with, and there is every reason to believe that in a short time a new theatre will be built, and that Paris will have in its Opera-Comique a house provided with every modern improvement.

The anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus will be celebrated in October. Spain will commemorate the event by festivities and by a Congress at San Lucar, as well as by a grand exhibition at Madrid. France is unwilling to remain behindhand in the celebration of a discovery which has exercised so important an influence on the destinies of the universe, and accordingly the Minister of Public Instruction has organized and opened at the Bibliotheque Nationale, an exposition of charts and maps with manuscripts relating to America, which are of the highest possible interest. Among the number are some marine charts dating from the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as well as a reproduction of the globe, by Martin Behaim, executed in 1492, before the return of Christopher Columbus, which makes no mention of America. There is also a series of geographical globes, very beautifully made and of extreme rarity, showing the progress of discovery during the years 1513, 1527 and 1530. There are also ancient plans of New-York, when it still bore the name of Manathe, of Boston, of Montreal, of Porto Rico, of Rio de Janeiro, of Philadelphia and of Quebec; a sketch by La Condamine and an original chart of the course of the Amazon, by the Rev. Father Samuel Fritz. The exhibition likewise includes the earliest charts of the explorers Champlain, Father Marquette, and many others of equal rarity and historical value. Such an exhibition has never before taken place and is not likely to occur again, consequently the Bibliotheque is daily crowded with French and foreign visitors, the majority of the latter being, of course, Americans.

Among the queer institutions of Paris, of whose existence the ordinary American visitor with all his zeal for exploration has no notion is the Dog Market, which is held every Sunday in a corner of the Marche aux Chevaux. It is a duly authorized market that brings into the exchequer of the city an annual sum equivalent to $500. This, says a correspondent, proves that a great deal of business is done by the sale of dogs in the course of the year. A tax of fifteen centimes is levied upon the head of each animal that is brought to market. The number of entries averages 14,000 annually, but the exhibition is said to have injuriously affected the dog business, for there was a marked decrease last year. The market is also said to have suffered from the competition of those who sell dogs in the streets and take large families of them every Sunday into the Champs-Elysees and the Bois de Boulogne under the pretext that they need air and exercise, but really in hope of negotiating their sale.