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"APRIL'S LADY."

A NOVEL OF OUR OWN DAY.

Written for The Sun by "The Duchess."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"AT SIXES AND SEVENS."

Pol.—"What do you read, my lord?"
Ham.—"Words, words, words."

She sighs heavily, as the door closes on her brother. A sense of weakness, of powerlessness oppresses her. She has fought so long, and for what? Is there nothing to be gained; no truth to be defended anywhere, no standard of right and wrong. Are all men—all—base, selfish, cowardly, dishonorable? Her whole being seems aflame with the indignation that is consuming her, when a knock sounds at the door. There is only one person in the house who knocks at her boudoir door. To every one, servants, guests, child, it is a free land; to her husband alone it is forbidden ground.

"Come in," says she, in a cold tone.

"I know I shall be terribly in your way," says Baltimore, entering, "but I must beg you to give me five minutes. I hear Beauclerk has returned, and that you have seen him. What kept him?"

Now Lady Baltimore—who a moment ago had condemned her brother heartily to his face—feels, as her husband addresses her, a perverse desire to contradict openly all that her honest judgment had led her to say to Beauclerk. That sense of indignation that was burning so hotly in her breast as Baltimore knocked at her door still stirs within her, but now its fire is directed against this latest comer. Who is he, that he should dare to question the honor of any man; and that there is annoyance and condemnation now in Baltimore's eyes is not to be denied.

"The weather," returns she shortly.

"By your tone I judge you deem that an adequate excuse for keeping Miss Kavanagh from her home for half a day and a night."

"There was a terrible storm," says Lady Baltimore calmly; "the worst for months."

"If it had been ten times as bad he should, in my opinion, have come home."

The words seem a mere repetition to Lady Baltimore. She had, indeed, used them to Beauclerk herself, or some such, a few minutes ago. Yet she seems to repudiate all sympathy with them now.

"On such a night as that? I hardly see why: Joyce was with an old friend. Mrs. Connolly was once a servant of her father's, and he——"

"Should have left her with the old friend and come home."

Again her own argument, and again perversity drives her to take the opposite side—the side against her conscience.

"Society must be in a very bad state if a man must perforce encounter thunder, rain, lightning; in fact, a chance of death from cold and exposure, all because he dare not spend one night beneath the roof of a respectable woman like Mrs. Connolly, with a girl friend, without bringing down on him the censures of his entire world."

"You can, it appears, be a most eloquent advocate for the supposed follies of any one but your husband. Nevertheless, I must persist in my opinion that it was, to put it very charitably indeed, inconsiderate of your brother to study his own comfort at the expense of his girl friend. I believe that is your way of putting it, isn't it?"

"Yes," immovably. She has so far given way to movement, however, that she has taken up a feather fan lying near, and now so holds it between her and Baltimore that he cannot distinctly see her face.

"As for the world you speak of—it will not judge him so leniently as you do. It can talk. No one is so good a witness of that as I am."

"But seldom," coldly, "without reason."

"And no one is a better witness of that than you are! That is what you would say, isn't it? Put down that fan, can't you?" with a touch of savage impatience. "Are you ashamed to carry out your argument with me face to face?"

"Ashamed!" Lady Baltimore has sprung suddenly to her feet, and sent the fan with a little crash to the ground. "Oh! shame of you to mention such a word."

"Am I to be forever your one scapegoat? Now take another one, I beseech you," says Baltimore with that old, queer, devilish mockery on his face that was never seen there until gossiping tongues divided him from his wife. "Here is your brother, actually thrown to you, as it were. Surely he will be a proof that I am not the only vile one among all the herd. If nothing else, acknowledge him selfish. A man who thought more of a dry coat than a young, a very young, girl's reputation. Is that nothing? Oh! consider, I beseech you!" his bantering manner, in which there is so much misery that it should have reached her but does not, grows stronger every instant. "Even a big chill from above would not have killed him, whereas we all know how a little breath from the world below can kill many a ——"

"Oh! you can talk, talk, talk," says she, that late unusual burst of passion showing some hot embers still. "But can words alter facts?" She pauses; a sudden chill seems to enwrap her. As if horrified by her late descent into passion she gathers herself together, and defies him once again with a cold look. "Why say anything more about it?" she says. "We do not agree."

"On this subject, at least, we should," says he hotly. "I think your brother should not have left us in ignorance of Miss Kavanagh's safety for so many hours. And you," with a sneer, "who are such a martinet for propriety, should certainly be prepared to acknowledge that he should not have so regulated his conduct as to make her a subject for unkind comment to the county. Badly," looking at her deliberately, "as you think of me, I should not have done it"

"No?" says she. It is a cruel—an unmistakable insulting monosyllable. And, bearing no other word with it—is the more detestable to the hearer.

"No," says he loudly. "Sneer as you will—my conscience is at rest there, so I can defy your suspicions."

"There!" says she.

"My dear creature," says he, "we all know there is but one villain in the world, and you are the proud possessor of him—as a husband. Permit me to observe, however, that a man of your code of honor, and of mine for the matter of that—but I forget that honor and I have no cousinship in your estimation—would have chosen to be wet to the skin rather than imperil the fair name of the girl he loved."

"Has he told you he loved her?"

"Not in so many words."

"Then from what do you argue?"

"My dear, I have told you that you are too much for me in argument! I, a simple onlooker, have judged merely from an every-day observance of little unobtrusive facts. If your brother is not in love with Miss Kavanagh, I think he ought to be. I speak ignorantly, I allow. I am not, like you, a deep student of human nature. If, too, he did not feel it his duty to bring her home last night, or else to leave her at Falling and return here himself, I fail to sympathize with him. I should not have so failed her."

"Oh, but you!" says his wife, with a little contemptuous smile; "You are such a paragon of virtue, it would not be expected of you that you should make such a mistake!"

She has sent forth her dart impulsively, sharply, out of the overflowing fulness of her angry heart—and when too late, when it has sped past recall—perhaps repents the speeding!

Such repentances, when felt too late, bring vices in their train; the desire for good, when chilled, turns to evil. The mind, never idle, if debarred from the best, leans inevitably toward the worst. Angry with herself, her very soul embittered within her, Lady Baltimore feels more and more a sense of passionate wrong against the man who had wooed and won her, and sown the seeds of gnawing distrust within her bosom.

Baltimore's face has whitened. His brow contracts.

"What a devilish unforgiving thing is a good woman," says he, with a reckless laugh. "That's a compliment, my lady—take it as you will. What! are your sneers to outlast life itself? Is that old supposed sin of mine never to to be condoned? Why—say it was a real thing, instead of being the myth it is. Even so, a woman all prayers, all holiness, such as you are, might manage to pardon it!"

Lady Baltimore, rising, walks deliberately toward the door. It is her usual method of putting an end to all discussions of this sort between them—of terminating any allusions to what she believes to be his unfaithful past—that past that has wrecked her life.

As a rule, Baltimore makes no attempt to prolong the argument. He has always let her go, with a sneering word, perhaps, or a muttered exclamation; but to-day he follows her, and, stepping between her and the door, bars her departure.

"By heavens! you shall hear me," says he, his face dark with anger. "I will not submit any longer, in silence, to your insolent treatment of me. You condemn me, but I tell you it is I who should condemn. Do you think I believe in your present attitude toward me? Pretend as you will, even to yourself, in your soul it is impossible that you should give credence to that old story, false as it is old. No! you cling to it to mask the fact that you have tired of me."

"Let me pass."

"Not until you have heard me!" With a light, but determined grasp of her arm, he presses her back into the chair.

"That story was a lie, I tell you. Before our marriage, I confess, there were some things—not creditable—to which I plead guilty, but——"

"Oh! be silent!" cries she, putting up her hand impulsively to check him. There is open disgust and horror on her pale, severe face.

"Before, before our marriage," persists he passionately. "What! do you think there is no temptation—no sin—no falling away from the stern path of virtue in this life? Are you so mad or so ignorant as to believe that every man you meet could show a perfectly clean record of——"

"I cannot—I will not listen," interposes she, springing to her feet, white and indignant.

"There is nothing to hear. I am not going to pollute your ears," says he, with a curl of his lip. "Pray be reassured. What I only wish to say is that if you condemn me for a few past sins you should condemn also half your acquaintances. That, however, you do not do. For me alone, for your husband, you reserve all your resentment."

"What are the others to me?"

"What am I to you, for the matter of that?" with a bitter laugh. "If they are nothing I am less than nothing. You deliberately flung me aside all because—— Why, look here!" moving toward her in uncontrollable agitation, "say I had sinned above the Galileans—say that lie was true—say I had out-Heroded Herod in evil courses, still am I past the pale of forgiveness? Saint as you are, have you no pity for me? In all your histories of love and peace and perfection is there never a case of a poor devil of a sinner like me being taken back into grace—absolved—pardoned?"

"To rave like this is useless. There is no good to be got from it. You know what I think, what I believe. You deceived—wronged—— Let me go, I tell!"

"Before—before," repeats he, obstinately. "What that woman told you since, I swear to you, was a most damned lie."

"I refuse to go into it again."

She is deadly pale now. Her bloodless lips almost refuse to let the words pass.

"You mean by that, that in spite of my oath you still believe that I am lying to you?"

His face is livid. There is something almost dangerous about it, but Lady Baltimore has come of too old and good a race to be frightened into submission. Raising one small, slender hand, she lays it upon his breast, and, with a little haughty upturning of her shapely head, pushes him from her.

"I have told you I refuse to go into it," says she, with superb self-control. "How long do you intend to keep me here? When may I be allowed to leave the room?"

There is distinct defiance in the clear glance she casts at him.

Baltimore draws a long breath, and then bursts into a strange laugh.

"Why, when you will," says he, shrugging his shoulders. He makes a graceful motion of his hand toward the door. "Shall I open it for you? But a word still let me say—if you are not in too great a hurry! Christianity, now, my fair saint, so far as ever I could hear or read, has been made up of mercy. Now, you are merciless! Would you mind letting me know how you reconcile one——"

"You perversely mistake me—I am no saint. I do not"—coldly—"profess to be one. I am no such earnest seeker after righteousness as you maliciously represent me. All I desire is honesty of purpose, and a decent sense of honor—honor that makes decency. That is all. For the rest, I am only a poor woman who loved once, and was—how many times deceived? That probably I shall never know."

Her sad, sad eyes, looking at him, grow suddenly full of tears.

"Isabel! My meeting with that woman that time"—vehemently—"in town was accidental! I—— It was the merest chance——"

"Don't!" says she, raising her hand, and with such a painful repression of her voice as to render it almost a whisper: "I have told you it is useless. I have heard too much to believe anything now. I shall never, I think," very sadly, "believe in any one again. You have murdered faith in me. Tell this tale of yours to some one else—some one willing to believe—to"—with a terrible touch of scorn—"Lady Swansdown, for example."

"Why do you bring her into the discussion?" asks he, turning quickly to her. Has she heard anything? That scene in the garden that now seems to fill him with self-contempt. What a bêtise it was! And what did it amount to? Nothing! Lady Swansdown, he is honestly convinced, cares as little for him as he for her. And at this moment it is borne in upon him that he would give the embraces of a thousand such as she for one kind glance from the woman before him.

"I merely mentioned her as a possible person who might listen to you," with a slight lifting of her shoulders. "A mere idle suggestion. You will pardon my saying that this has been an idle discussion altogether. You began by denouncing my brother to me, and now——"

"You have ended by denouncing your husband to me! As idle a beginning as an end, surely. Still, to go back to Beauclerk. I persist in saying he has behaved scandalously in this affair. He has imperilled that poor child's good name."

"You can imperil names, too!" says she, turning almost fiercely on him.

"Lady Swansdown again, I suppose," says he, with a bored uplifting of his brows. "The old grievance is not sufficient, then; you must have a new one. I am afraid I must disappoint you. Lady Swansdown, I assure you, cares nothing at all for me, and I care just the same amount for her."

"Since when?"

"Since the world began—if you want a date!"

"What a liar you are, Baltimore!" says his wife, turning to him with a sudden breaking out of all the pent-up passion within her. Involuntarily her hands clench themselves. She is pale no longer. A swift, hot flush has dyed her cheeks. Like an outraged, insulted queen she holds him a moment with her eyes, then sweeps out of the room.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"Since thou art not as these are, go thy ways;
Thou hast no part in all my nights and days.
Lie still—sleep on—be glad As such things be
Thou couldst not watch with me."

Luncheon has gone off very pleasantly. Joyce, persuaded by Lady Baltimore, had gone down to it, feeling a little shy, and conscious of a growing headache. But everybody had been charming to her and Baltimore, in especial, had been very careful in his manner of treating her, saying little nice things to her, and insisting on her sitting next to him, a seat hitherto Lady Swansdown's own.

The latter had taken this so perfectly, that one might be pardoned for thinking it had been arranged beforehand between her and her host. At all events Lady Swansdown was very sympathetic, and indeed everybody seemed bent on treating her as a heroine.

Joyce herself felt dull—nerveless. Words did not seem to come easily to her. She was tired, she thought, and of course she was, having spent a sleepless night. One little matter gave her cause for thankfulness. Dysart was absent from luncheon. He had gone on a long walking expedition, Lady Baltimore said, that would prevent his returning home until dinner hour—until quite 8 o'clock. Joyce told herself she was glad of this—though why she did not tell herself. At all events the news left her very silent.

But her silence was not noticed. It could not be, indeed, so great and so animated was the flow of Beauclerk's eloquence. Without addressing anybody in particular, he seemed to address everybody. He kept the whole table alive. He treated yesterday's adventure as a tremendously amusing affair, and invited every one to look upon it as he did. He insisted on describing Miss Kavanagh and himself in the same light as he had described them earlier to his sister, as the modern Babes in the Wood, Mrs. Connolly being the Robin. He made several of the people who had dropped in to luncheon roar with laughter over his description of that excellent innkeeper. Her sayings—her appearance—her stern notions of morality that induced her to bring them home "personally conducted"—the size of her waist—and her heart—and many other things. He was extremely funny. The fact that his sister smiled only when she felt she must to avoid comment, and that his host refused to smile at all, and that Miss Kavanagh was evidently on thorns all the time, did not for an instant damp his overflowing spirits.

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It is now seven o'clock; Miss Kavanagh, on her way upstairs to dress for dinner, suddenly remembering that there is a book in the library, left by her early in the afternoon on the central table, turns aside to fetch it.

She forgets, however, what she has come for when, having entered the room, she sees Dysart standing before the fire, staring apparently at nothing. To her chagrin, she is conscious that the unmistakable start she had made on seeing him, is known to him.

"I didn't know you had returned," says she awkwardly, yet made a courageous effort to appear as natural as usual.

"No? I knew you had," says he slowly.

"It is very late to say good morning," says she with a poor little attempt at a laugh, but still advancing and holding out her hand.

"Too late!" replied he, ignoring the hand. Joyce, as if struck by some cruel blow, draws back a step or two.

"You are not tired, I hope?" asks Dysart courteously.

"Oh, no." She feels stifled; choked. A desire to get to the door, and escape—lose sight of him forever—is the one strong longing that possesses her; but to move requires strength, and she feels that her limbs are trembling.

"It was a long drive, however. And the storm was severe. I fear you must have suffered in some way."

"I have not suffered," says she, in a dull, emotionless way. Indeed, she hardly knows what she says, a repetition of his own words seems the easiest thing to her, so she adopts it.

"No?"

There is a considerable pause, and then ——

"No! It is true! It is I only who have suffered," says Dysart, with an uncontrollable abandonment to the misery that is destroying him. "I alone."

"You mean something," says Joyce. It is by a terrible effort that she speaks. She feels thoroughly unnerved—unstrung. Conscious that the nervous shaking of her hands will betray her, she clasps them behind her tightly. "You meant something just now when you refused to take my hand. But what? What?"

"You said it was too late," replies he. "And I—agreed with you."

"That was not it!" says she feverishly. "There was more—much more! Tell me"—passionately—"what you meant. Why would you not touch me? What am I to understand——"

"That from henceforth you are free from the persecution of my love," says Dysart deliberately. "I was mad ever to hope that you could care for me—still—I did hope. That has been my undoing. But now——"

"Well?" demands she faintly. Her whole being seems stunned. Something of all this she had anticipated, but the reality is far worse than any anticipation had been. She had seen him in her thoughts, angry, indignant, miserable, but that he should thus coldly set her aside—bid her an everlasting adieu—make up his mind deliberately to forget her—this had never occurred to her as being even probable.

"Now you are to understand that the idiotic farce played between us two the day before yesterday is at an end. The curtain is down. It is over. It was a failure—neither you, nor I, nor the public, will ever hear of it again."

"Is this—because I did not come home last evening in the rain and storm?" Some small spark of courage has come back to her now. She lifts her head and looks at him.

"Oh! be honest with me here, in our last hour together," cries he vehemently. "You have cheated me all through—be true to yourself for once. Why pretend it is my fault that we part? Yesterday I implored you not to go for that drive with him, and yet—you went. What was I—or my love for you in comparison with a few hours' drive with that scoundrel?"

"It was only the drive I thought of," says she piteously. "I—there was nothing else, indeed. And you; if"—raising her hand to her throat as if suffocating—"if you had not spoken so roughly—so—"

"Pshaw!" says Dysart, turning from her as if disgusted. To him, in his present furious mood, her grief, her fear, her shrinkings, are all so many movements in the game of coquette, at which she is a past mistress. "Will you think me a fool to the end?" says he. "See here," turning his angry eyes to hers. "I don't care what you say. I know you now. Too late, indeed—but still I know you! To the very core you are one mass of deceit."

A little spasm crosses her face. She leans back heavily against the table behind her. "Oh, no, no," she says in a voice so low as to be almost unheard.

"You will deny, of course," says he mercilessly. "You would even have me believe that you regret the past—but you, and such as you never regret. Man is your prey! So many scalps to your belt is all you think about. Why," with an access of passion, "what am I to you? Just the filling up of so many hours' amusement—no more! Do you think all my eloquence would have any chance against one of his cursed words? I might kneel at your feet from morning until night, and still I should be to you a thing of naught beside him."

She holds out her hands to him in a little dumb fashion. Her tongue seems frozen. But he repulses this last attempt at reconciliation.

"It is no good. None! I have no belief in you left, so you can no longer cajole me. I know that I am nothing to you. Nothing! If," drawing a deep breath through his closed teeth, "if a thousand years were to go by I should still be nothing to you if he were near. I give it up. The battle was too strong for me. I am defeated, lost, ruined."

"You have so arranged it," says she in a low tone, singularly clear. The violence of his agitation had subdued hers, and rendered her comparatively calm.

"You must permit me to contradict you. The arrangement is all your own."

"Was it so great a crime to stay last night at Falling?"

"There is no crime anywhere. That you should have made a decision between two men is not a crime."

"No! I acknowledge I made the decision—but——"

"When did you make it?"

"Last evening—and though you——"

"Oh! no excuses," says he with a frown. "Do you think I desire them?"

He hesitates for a minute or so, and now turns to her abruptly. "Are you engaged to him finally?"

"No."

"No!" In accents suggestive of surprise so intense as to almost enlarge into disbelief. "You refused him then?"

"No," says she again. Her heart seems to die within her. Oh, the sense of shame that overpowers her. A sudden wild, terrible hatred of Beauclerk takes her into possession. Why, why, had he not given her the choice of saying yes, instead of no, to that last question?

"You mean—that he——" He stops dead short as if not knowing how to proceed. Then, suddenly, his wrath breaks forth. "And for that scoundrel, that fellow without a heart, you have sacrificed the best of you—your own heart! For him, whose word is as light as his oath, you have flung behind you a love that would have surrounded you to your dying day. Good heavens! What are women made of? But——" He sobers himself at once, as if smitten by some sharp remembrance, and, pale with shame and remorse, looks at her. "Of course," says he, "it is only one heartbroken, as I am, who would have dared thus to address you. And it is plain to me now that there are reasons why he should not have spoken before this. For one thing, you were alone with him; for another, you are tired, exhausted. No doubt to-morrow he——"

"How dare you?" says she in a voice that startles him, a very low voice, but vibrating with outraged pride. "How dare you thus insult me? You seem to think—to think—that because—last night—he and I were kept from our home by the storm——" She pauses; that old, first odd, sensation of choking now again oppresses her. She lays her hand upon the back of a chair near her, and presses heavily upon it. "You think I have disgraced myself," the words coming in a little gasp from her parched lips. "That is why you speak of things being at an end between us. Oh——"

"You wrong me there," says the young man, who has grown ghastly. "Whatever I may have said, I——"

"You meant it!" says she. She draws herself up to the full height of her young, slender figure, and, turning abruptly, moves toward the door. As she reaches it, she looks back at him. "You are a coward!" she says, in a slow, distinct tone alive with scorn. "A coward!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
The beginning of love,
The season of kisses and sighs,
And the end thereof."

Miss Kavanagh put in no appearance at dinner. "A chill," whispered Lady Baltimore to everybody, in her kindly, sympathetic way; "caught during that miserable drive." She hoped it would be nothing, but thought it better to induce Joyce to remain quiet in her own room for the rest of the evening, safe from draughts and the dangers attendant on the baring of her neck and arms. She told her small story beautifully, but omitted to add that Joyce had refused to come down stairs, and that she had seemed so wretchedly low-spirited that at last her hostess had ceased to urge her.

She had, however, spent a good deal of time arguing with her on another subject—the girl's fixed determination to go home—"to go back to Barbara"—next day. Lady Baltimore had striven very diligently to turn her from this purpose, but all to no avail. She had even gone so far as to point out to Joyce that the fact of her thus leaving the Court before the expiration of her visit, might suggest itself to some people in a very unpleasant light. They might say she had come to the end of her welcome there—been given her congé, in fact—on account of that luckless adventure with her hostess's brother.

Joyce was deaf to all such open hints. She remained obstinately determined not to stay a moment longer there than could be helped. Was it because of Norman she was going? No; she shook her head with such a look of contemptuous indifference, that Lady Baltimore found it impossible to doubt her and felt her heart thereby lightened. Was it Felix?

Miss Kavanagh had evidently resented that question at first, but finally had broken into a passionate fit of tears, and when Lady Baltimore placed her arms round her had not repulsed her.

"But, dear Joyce, he is leaving to-morrow."

"Oh, let me go home. Do not ask me to stay. I am more unhappy than I can tell you," said the girl brokenly.

"You have had a quarrel with him?"

Joyce bowed her head in a little quick, impatient way.

"It is Felix then, Joyce; not Norman? Let me say I am glad—for your sake; though that is a hard thing for a sister to say of her brother. But Norman is selfish. It is his worst fault, perhaps, but a bad one. As for this little misunderstanding with Felix, it will not last. He loves you, dearest, most honestly. You will make up this tiny——"

"Never!" said Joyce, interrupting her and releasing herself from her embrace. Her young face looked hard and unforgiving, and Lady Baltimore, with a sigh, decided on saying no more just then. So she went down stairs and told her little tale about Joyce's indisposition, and was believed by nobody. They all said they were sorry, as in duty bound, and perhaps they were, taking their own view of her absence; but dinner went off extremely well, nevertheless, and was considered a success.

Dysart was present, and was apparently in very high spirits; so high, indeed, that at odd moments his hostess, knowing a good deal, stared at him. He, who was usually so silent a member, to-night outshone even the versatile Beauclerk in the lightness and persistency of his conversation.

This sudden burst of animation lasted him throughout the evening, carrying him triumphantly across the hour and a half of drawing-room small talk, and even lasting till the more careless hours in the smoking room have come to an end, and one by one the men have yawned themselves off to bed.

Then it died. So entirely, so forlornly as to prove it had been only a mere passing and enforced exhilaration after all. They were all gone; there was no need now to keep up the miserable farce—to seek to prevent their coupling her name with his, and therefore discovering the secret of her sad seclusion.

As Dysart found himself almost the last man in the room, he too rose, reluctantly, as though unwilling to give himself up to the solitary musings that he knew lay before him; the self-upraidings, the vague remorse, the terrible dread lest he had been too severe, that he knows will be his all through the silent darkness. For what have sleep and he to do with each other to-night?

He bade his host good night and, with a pretence of going up stairs, turned aside into the deserted library and, choosing a book, flung himself into a chair, determined, if possible, to read his brain into a state of coma.

* * * * * * *

Twelve o'clock has struck, slowly, painfully, as if the old timekeeper is sleepy, too, and is nodding over his work. And now one—as slowly, truly, but with a startling brevity that prevents one's dwelling on its drowsy note. Dysart, with a tired groan, flings down his book, and, rising to his feet, stretches his arms above his head in an utter abandonment to sleepless fatigue that is even more mental than bodily. Once the subject of that book had been of an enthralling interest to him. To-night it bores him. He has found himself unequal to the solving of the abstruse arguments it contains. One thought seems to have dulled all others. He is leaving to-morrow! He is leaving her to-morrow! Oh! surely it is more than that curt pronoun can contain. He is leaving, in a few short hours, his life, his hope, his one small chance of heaven upon earth. How much she had been to him, how strong his hoping even against hope had been, he never knew till now, when all is swept out of his path forever.

The increasing stillness of the house seems to weigh upon him, rendering even gloomier his melancholy thoughts. How intolerably quiet the night is, not even a breath of wind is playing in the trees outside. On such a night as this ghosts might walk and demons work their will. There is something ghastly in this unnatural cessation of all sound.

"What a strange power," says Emerson, "there is in silence." An old idea, yet always new. Who is there who has not been affected by it—has not known that curious, senseless dread of spirits present from some unknown world that very young children often feel? "Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake," says Job in one of his most dismal moments; and now to Dysart this strange, unaccountable chill feeling comes. Insensibly, born of the hour and the silence only, and with no smallest dread of things intangible.

The small clock on the mantelpiece sends forth a tiny chime, so delicate that in broad daylight, with broader views in the listeners it might have gone unheard. Now it strikes upon the motionless air as loudly as though it were the crack of doom. Poor little clock! struggling to be acknowleged for twelve long years of nights and days, now is your revenge—the fruition of all your small ambitious desires.

Dysart starts violently at the sound of it. It is of importance, this little clock. It has wakened him to real life again. He has taken a step toward the door and the bed, the very idea of which up to this has been treated by him with ignominy, when—a sound in the hall outside stays him.

An unmistakable step, but so light as to suggest the idea of burglars. Dysart's spirits rise. The melancholy of a moment since deserts him. He looks round for the poker—that national, universal mode of defence when our castles are invaded by the "masked man."

He has not time, however, to reach it before the handle of the door is slowly turned—before the door is as slowly opened, and——

"What is this?"

For a second Dysart's heart seems to stop beating. He can only gaze spellbound at this figure, clad all in white, that walks deliberately into the room, and seemingly directly toward him. It is Joyce! Joyce!

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to forgive."

Is she dead or still living? Dysart, calmed now, indeed, gazes at her with a heart contracted. Great Heaven! how like death she looks, and yet—he knows she is still in the flesh. How strangely her eyes gleam. A dull gleam and so passionless. Her brown hair—not altogether fallen down her back, but loosened from its hairpins, and hanging in a soft heavy knot behind her head—gives an additional pallor to her already too white face. The open eyes are looking straight before them, unseeing. Her step is slow, mechanical, unearthly. It is only indeed when she lays the candle she holds upon the edge of the table, the extreme edge, that he knows she is asleep, and walking in a dreamland that to waking mortals is inaccessible.

Silently, and always with that methodical step, she moves toward the fireplace, and still a little further, until she stands on that eventful spot where he had given up all claim to her, and thrown her back upon herself. There is the very square on the carpet where she stood some hours ago. There she stands now. To her right is the chair on which she had leaned in great bitterness of spirit, trying to evoke help and strength from the dead oak. Now, in her dreams, as if remembering that past scene, she puts out her hands a little vaguely, a little blindly, and, the chair not being where in her vision she believes it to be, she gropes vaguely for it in a troubled fashion, the little trembling hands moving nervously from side to side. It is a very sad sight, the sadder for the mournful change that crosses the face of the sleeping girl. The lips take a melancholy curve; the long lashes droop over the sightless eyes, a long, sad sigh escapes her.

Dysart, his heart beating wildly, makes a movement toward her. Whether the sound of his impetuous footstep disturbs her dream, or whether the coming of her fingers in sudden contact with the edge of the table does it, who can tell; she starts and wakens.

At first she stands as if not understanding, and then, with a terrified expression in her now sentient eyes, looks hurriedly around her. Her eyes meet Dysart's.

"Don't be frightened," begins he quickly.

"How did I come here?" interrupts she, in a voice panicstricken. "I was up stairs; I remember nothing. It was only a moment since that I—— Was I asleep?"

She gives a hasty furtive glance at the pretty loose white garment that enfolds her.

"I suppose so," says Dysart. "You must have had some disturbing dream, and it drove you down here. It is nothing. Many people walk in their sleep."

"But I never. Oh! what is it?" says she, as if appealing to him to explain herself to herself. "Was," faintly flushing, "any one else here? Did any one see me?"

"No one. They are all in bed; all asleep."

"And you?" doubtfully.

"I couldn't sleep," returns he slowly, gazing fixedly at her.

"I must go," says she feverishly. She moves rapidly toward the door; her one thought seems to be to get back to her own room. She looks ill, unstrung, frightened. This new phase in her has alarmed her. What if, for the future, she cannot even depend upon herself?—cannot know where her mind will carry her when deadly sleep has fallen upon her? It is a hateful thought. And to bring her here. Where he was. What power has he over her? Oh! the sense of relief in thinking that she will be at home to-morrow—safe with Barbara.

Her hand is on the door. She is going.

"Joyce," says Dysart suddenly, sharply. All his soul is in his voice. So keenly it rings, that involuntarily she turns to him. Great agony must make itself felt, and to Dysart, seeing her on the point of leaving him forever, it seems as though his life is being torn from him. In truth she is his life, the entire happiness of it—if she goes through that door unforgiving, she will carry with her all that makes it bearable.

She is looking at him. Her eyes are brilliant with nervous excitement; her face pale. Her very lips have lost their color.

"Yes?" says she interrogatively, impatiently.

"I am going away to-morrow—I shall not——"

"Yes, yes—I know. I am going, too."

"I shall not see you again?"

"I hope not—I think not."

She makes another step forward. Opening the door with a little light touch, she places one hand before the candle and peers timidly into the dark hall outside.

"Don't let that be your last word to me," says the young man, passionately. "Joyce, there must be some excuse for me."

"Excuse?" says she, looking back at him over her shoulder, her lovely face full of a curious wonder.

"Yes—yes! I was mad! I didn't mean a word—I swear it! I—— Joyce, forgive me!"

The words, though whispered, burst from him with a despairing vehemence. He would have caught her hand but that she lifts her eyes to his—such eyes!

There is a little pause, and then:

"Oh, no! Never—never!" says she.

Her tone is very low and clear—not angry, not even hasty or reproachful. Only very sad and certain. It kills all hope.

She goes quickly through the open doorway, closing it behind her. The faint, ghostly sound of her footfalls can be heard as she crosses the hall. After a moment even this light sound ceases. She is indeed gone! It is all over!

* * * * * * *

With a kind of desire to hide herself, Joyce has crept into her bed, sore at heart, angry, miserable. No hope that sleep will again visit her has led her to this step, and, indeed, would sleep be desirable? What a treacherous part it had played when last it fell on her!

How grieved he looked—how white! He was evidently most honestly sorry for all the unkind things he had said to her. Not that he had said many, indeed, only—he had looked them. And she, she had been very hard—oh! too hard. However, there was an end to it. To-morrow would place more miles between them, in every way, than would ever be recrossed. He would not come here again until he had forgotten her—married, probably. They would not meet. There should have been comfort in that certainty, but, alas! when she sought for it, it eluded her—it was not there.

In spite of the trick Somnus had just played her, she would now gladly have courted him again, if only to escape from ever growing regret. But though she turns from side to side in a vain endeavor to secure him, that cruel god persistently denies her, and with mournful memories and tired eyes, she lies, watching, waiting for the tender breaking of the dawn upon the purple hills.

Slowly, slowly comes up the sun. Coldly, and with a tremulous lingering, the light shines on land and sea. Then sounds the chants of birds, the rush of streams, the gentle sighings of the winds through herb and foliage.

Joyce, thankful for the blessed daylight, flings the clothes aside, and with languid step, and eyes, sad always, but grown weary, too, with sleeplessness and thoughts unkind, moves lightly to the window.

Throwing wide the casement, she lets the cool morning air flow in.

A new day has arisen. What will it bring her? What can it bring, save disappointment only and a vain regret? Oh! why must she, of all people, be thus unblessed upon this blessed morn? Never has the sun seemed brighter—the whole earth a greater glow of glory.

"Welcome, the lord of light and lamp of day;
Welcome, fosterer of tender herbis green;
Welcome, quickener of flourish'd flowers' sheen.

Welcome, depainter of the bloomit meads;
Welcome, the life of everything that spreads!"

Yet to Joyce welcome to the rising sun seems impossible. What is the good of day when hope is dead? In another hour or two she must rise, go down stairs, talk, laugh, and appear interested in all that is being said—and with a heart at variance with joy—a heart heavy as lead.

A kind of despairing rage against her crooked fortune moves her. Why has she been thus unlucky? Why at first should a foolish, vagrant feeling have led her to think so strongly of one unworthy (and now hateful to her) as to prejudice her in the mind of the one really worthy. What madness possessed her? Surely she is the most unfortunate girl alive? A sense of injustice bring the tears into her eyes, and blots out the slowly widening landscape from her view.

"How happy some o'er other some can be!"

Her thoughts run to Barbara and Monkton. They are happy in spite of many frowns from fortune. They are poor—as society counts poverty—but the want of money is not a cardinal evil. They love each other; and the children are things to be loved as well—darling children! well grown, and strong, and healthy, though terrible little Turks at times—God bless them! Oh! that she could count herself as blessed as Barbara, whose greatest trouble is to deny herself this and that, to be able to pay for the other thing. No! to be poor is not to be unhappy. "Our happiness in this world," says a writer, "depends on the affections we are able to inspire." Truly she—Joyce—has not been successful in her quest. For if he had loved her, would he ever have doubted her? "Perfect love," says the oldest, grandest testimony of all, "casteth out fear." And he had feared. Sitting here in the dawning daylight, the tears run softly down her cheeks.

It is a strange thing, but true, that never once during this whole night's dreary vigil do her thoughts once turn to Beauclerk.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Oh, there's mony a leaf in Atholl wood,
And mony a bird in its breast
And mony a pain may the heart sustain
Ere it sab itsel' to rest."

Barbara meets her on the threshold, and draws her with loving arms into the room.

"I knew you would be here at this hour. Lady Baltimore wrote me word about it. And I have sent the chicks away to play in the garden as I thought you would like to have a comfortable chat just at first."

"Lady Baltimore wrote?"

"Yes, dear. Just to say you were distressed about that unfortunate affair—that drive, you know—and that you felt you wanted to come back to me. I was glad you wanted that."

"You are not angry with me, Barbara?" asks the girl, loosening her sister's arms the better to see her face.

"Angry! No, how could I be angry?" says Mrs. Monkton, the more vehemently in that she knows she *had* been very angry just at first. "It was the merest chance. It might have happened to anybody. One can't control storms!"

"No—that's what Mrs. Connolly said, only she called it 'the illimints,'" says Joyce, with quite a little ghost of a smile.

"Well, now you are home again, and it's all behind you. And there is really nothing in it. And you must not think so much about it," says Barbara, fondling her hand. "Lady Baltimore said you were too unhappy about it."

"Did she say that? What else did she say?" asks the girl, regarding her sister with searching eyes. What had Lady Baltimore told her? That impulsive admission to the latter last night had been troubling Joyce ever since, and now, to have to lay bare her heart again, to acknowledge her seeming fickleness, to receive Barbara's congratulation on it, only to declare that this second lover has, too, been placed by Fate outside her life, seems too bitter to her. Oh, no—she cannot tell Barbara.

"Why, nothing," says Mrs. Monkton, who is now busying herself removing the girl's hat and furs. "What was there to tell, after all?" She is determined to treat the matter lightly.

"Oh—there is a good deal," says Joyce, bitterly. "Why don't you tell me," turning suddenly upon her sister, "that you knew how it would be all along? That you distrusted that Mr. Beauclerk from the very first, and that Felix Dysart was always worth a thousand of him?" There is something that is almost defiant in her manner.

"Because, for one thing, I very seldom call him Felix," says Mrs. Monkton, with a smile, alluding to the last accusation. "And because, too, I can't bear the 'I told you so' persons. You mustn't class me with them, Joyce, whatever you do."

"I shan't be able to do much more, at all events," says Joyce presently. "That's one comfort, not only for myself, but for my family. I expect I have excelled myself this time. Well," with a dull little laugh, "it will have to last, so——"

"Joyce," says her sister, quickly, "tell me one small thing. Mr. Beauclerk—he——"

"Yes?" stonily, as Barbara goes on a rock.

"You—you are not engaged to him?"

Joyce breaks into an angry laugh.

"That is what you all ask," says she. "There is no variety; none. No, no, no; I am engaged to nobody. Nobody wants me, and I——'I care for nobody, not I; for nobody cares for me.' Mark the heavy emphasis on the 'for.' I beg you, Barbara!"

She breaks entirely from her sister's hold and springs to her feet.

"You are tired," says Mrs. Monkton, anxiously, rising too.

"Why don't you say what you really mean?" says Joyce, turning almost fiercely to her. "Why pretend you think I am fatigued when you honestly think I am miserable, because Mr. Beauclerk has not asked me to marry him. No! I don't care what you think. I am miserable! And though I were to tell you over and over again it was not because of him, you would not believe me, so I will say nothing."

"Here is Freddy," says Mrs. Monkton, nervously, who has just seen her husband's head pass the window. He enters the room almost as she speaks.

"Well, Joyce, back again," says he, affectionately. He kisses the girl warmly. "Horrid drive you must have had through that storm."

"You, too, blame the storm, then, and not me," says Joyce, with a smile. "Everybody doesn't take your view. It appears I should have returned in all that rain and wind and——"

"Pshaw! Never listen to extremists," says Mr. Monkton, sinking lazily into a chair. "They will land you on all sorts of barren coasts if you give ear to them. For my part I never could see why two people of opposite sexes, if overcome by nature's artillery, should not spend a night under a wayside inn without calling down upon them the social artillery of gossip. There is only one thing in the whole affair," says Mr. Monkton, seriously, "that has given me a moment's uneasiness."

"And that?" says Joyce, nervously.

"Is how I can possibly be second to both of them. Dysart, I confess, has my sympathies, but if Beauclerk were to appear first upon the field and implore my assistance I should have a delicacy about refusing him."

"Freddy," says his wife, reprovingly.

"Oh, as for that," says Joyce, with a frown. "I do think men are the most troublesome things on earth." She bursts out presently. "When one isn't loving one is hating them."

"How many of them at a time?" asks her brother-in-law, with deep interest. "Not more than two, Joyce, please. I couldn't grasp any more. My intellect is of a very limited order."

"So is mine, I think," says Joyce, with a tired little sigh. Monkton, although determined to treat the matter lightly, looks very sorry for her. Evidently she is out of joint with the whole world at present.

"How did Lady Baltimore take it?" asks he, with all the careless air of one asking a question on some unimportant subject.

"She was angry with Mr. Beauclerk for not leaving me at the inn, and coming himself."

"Unsisterly woman!"

"She was quite right, after all," says Mrs. Monkton, who had defended Beauclerk herself, but cannot bear to hear another take his part.

"And, Dysart—how did he take it?" asks Monkton, smiling.

"I don't see why he should take it, any way," says Joyce, coldly.

"Not even with soda water?" says her brother-in-law. "Of course, it would be too much to expect him to take it neat. You broke it gently to him, I hope."

"Ah, you don't understand Mr. Dysart," says the girl, rising abruptly. "I did not understand him until yesterday."

"Is he so very abstruse?"

"He is very insolent," says Miss Kavanagh with a sudden touch of fire, that makes her sister look at her with some uneasiness.

"I see," says Mr. Monkton, slowly. He still, unfortunately, looks amused. "One never does know anybody until he or she gives way to a towering passion. So he gave you a right good scolding for being caught in the rain with Beauclerk. A little unreasonable, surely; but lovers never yet were famous for their common sense. That little ingredient was forgotten in their composition. And so he gave you a lecture?"

"Well, he is not likely to do it again," says she slowly.

"No? Then it is more than likely that I shall be the one to be scolded presently. He won't be able to content himself with silence. He will want to air his grievances, to revenge them on some one, and if you refuse to see him, I shall be that one. There is really only one small remark to be made about this whole matter," says Mr. Monkton with a rueful smile, "and it remains for me to make it. If you will encourage two suitors at the same time, my good child, the least you may expect is trouble. You are bound to look out for 'breakers ahead,' but (and this is the remark) it is very hard lines for a fourth and most innocent person to have those suitors dropped straight on to him without a second's notice. I'm not a born warrior; the brunt of the battle is a sort of gayety that I confess myself unsuited for. I haven't been educated up to it. I——"

"There will be no battle," says Joyce, in a strange tone, "because there will be no combatants. For a battle there must be something to fight for, and here there is nothing. You are all wrong, Freddy. You will find that out after awhile. I have a headache, Barbara, I think," raising her lovely but pained eyes to her sister. "I should like to go into the garden for a little bit. The air there is always so sweet."

"Go, darling," says Barbara, whose own eyes have filled with tears. "Oh, Freddy," turning reproachfully to her husband as the door closes on Joyce, "how could you so have taken her? You must have seen how unhappy she was. And all about that horrid Beauclerk."

Monkton stares at her.

"So that is how you read it," says he at last.

"There is no difficulty about the reading. Could it be in larger print?"

"Large enough, certainly, as to the unhappiness, but for 'Beauclerk' I should advise the printer to insert 'Dysart.'"

"Dysart? Felix?"

"Unless, indeed, you could suggest a third."

"Nonsense!" says Mrs. Monkton, contemptuously. "She has never cared for poor Felix. How I wish she had. He is worth a thousand of that other; but girls are so perverse."

"They are. That is just my point," says her husband. "Joyce is so perverse that she won't allow herself to see that it is Dysart she preferred. However, there is one comfort, she is paying for her perversity."

"Freddy," says his wife, after a long pause, "do you really think that?"

"What? That girls are perverse?"

"No, no! That she likes Felix best?"

"That is indeed my fixed belief."

"Oh, Freddy!" cries his wife, throwing herself into his arms. "How beautiful of you. I've always wanted to think that, but never could until now—now that——"

"My clear judgment has been brought to bear upon it. Quite right, my dear, always regard your husband as a sort of demi-god, who——"

"Pouf!" says she. "Do you think I was born without a grain of sense? But really, Freddie —— Oh! if it might be! Poor, poor darling! how sad she looked. If they have had a serious quarrel over her drive with that detestable Beauclerk—why—I——" Here she bursts into tears, and with her face buried on Monkton's waistcoat, makes little wild dabs at the air with a right hand that is only to be appeased by having Monkton's handkerchief thrust into it.

"What a baby you are!" says he, giving her a loving little shake. "I declare, you were well named. The swift transitions from the tremendous 'Barbara' to the inconsequent 'Baby,' takes but an instant, and exactly expresses you. A moment ago you were bent on withering me; now, I am going to wither you."

"Oh, no! don't," says she, half laughing, half crying. "And besides, it is you who are inconsequent. You never keep to one point for a second."

"Why should I?" says he, "when it is such a disagreeable one. There, let us give up for the day. We can write 'To be continued' after it, and begin a fresh chapter to-morrow."

* * * * * * *

Meantime, Joyce, making her way to the garden with a hope of finding there, at all events, silence, and opportunity for thought, seats herself upon a garden chair, and gives herself up a willing prey to melancholy. She had desired to struggle against this evil, but it had conquered her, and tears rising beneath her lids are falling on her cheeks, when two small creatures emerging from the summer house on her left catch sight of her.

They had been preparing for a rush, a real Redshank, painted and and feathered, descent upon her, when something in her sorrowful attitude becomes known to them.

Fun dies within their kind little hearts. Their Joyce has come home to them—that is a matter for joy, but their Joyce has come home unhappy—that is a matter for grief. Step by step, hand in hand, they approach her, and even at the very last, with their little breasts overflowing with the delight of getting her back, it is with a very gentle precipitation that they throw themselves upon her.

And it never occurs to them, either, to trouble her for an explanation; no probing questions issue from their lips. She is sorry, that is all. It is enough for their sympathies.

Joyce herself is hardly aware of the advent of the little comforters, until two small arms steal round her neck, and she finds Mabel's face pressed close against her own.

"Let me kiss her, too," says Tommy, trying to push his sister away, and resenting openly the fact of her having secured the first attempt at consolation.

"You mustn't tease her, she's sorry. She's very sorry about something," says Mabel, turning up Joyce's face with her palm. "Aren't you, Joyce? There's droppies in your eyes?"

"A little, darling," says Joyce brokenly.

"Then I'll be sorry with you," says the child, with all childhood's divine intuition that to sorrow alone is to know a double sorrow. She hugs Joyce more closely with her tender arms, and Joyce, after a battle with her braver self, gives way, and breaks into bitter tears.

"There now! you've made her cry right out! You're a naughty girl," says Tommy to his sister in a raging tone, meant to hide the fact that he too, himself, is on the point of giving way; in fact, another moment sees him dissolved in tears.

"Never mind, Joycie. Never mind. We love you!" sobs he, getting up on the back of the seat behind her, and making a very excellent attempt at strangulation.

"Do you? There doesn't seem to be any one else, then, but you!" says poor Joyce, dropping Mabel into her lap, and Tommy more to the front, and clasping them both to her with a little convulsive movement.

Perhaps the good cry she has on top of those two loving little heads does her more good than anything else could possibly have done.

To be Continued.

WHISKEY AND ITS PRICES.

WHEN YOU PAY TWENTY CENTS IT IS NOT FOR THE DRINK ALONE.

The Story of the Fluid from the Corn Field to the Art Room Bar—Some Points Concerning the Real Factors of Cost.

Some man who has got into a controversy on the subject writes to THE SUN asking how much one must pay for a drink of whiskey at the Hoffman House bar. For the benefit of this inquirer and all others who may be in doubt on this subject, so important to many a young man from the country who is in New York seeing the sights, and is wondering what it will cost him to have a drink of the creature at this celebrated resort, and incidentally look upon the magnificent decorations of the noted art café, THE SUN answers that the cost is 20 cents. Should the young man sit at one of the many tables and have his drink brought to him by a white-aproned young cup bearer with a rose in his buttonhole, he would be expected to pay a tip of 5 cents to the waiter.

There is no barroom in the city where whiskey (unless it is some particularly wonderful brand) sells for more than 20 cents a glass. In most of the public resorts the regular rate is 15 cents. At Delmonico's, up-town, the price is 20 cents; at his down-town place it is 15 cents. In some places, although this is true more particularly in Philadelphia and other cities than New York, you may buy whiskey until you can't see at the rate of two drinks for a quarter. This does not mean that a man may stand at the bar and order the two drinks for himself and pay only a quarter, but that two men together may obtain that reduction. In the saloons in the less important streets in this town whiskey costs 10 cents a glass. There are some places where a lightning fluid, miscalled whiskey, may be bought for 5 cents a drink. Down in Water street, and along other lanes where the toper very frequently passes his last days, he may get the stuff as low as 3 cents; but this in truth is fire water, and no one except the tramp in the last state of desperation and yielding to the worst appetite would touch such a vile compound.

The principal factor in the selling price of a glass of whiskey is not the original cost of the materials from which the drink is made, nor, indeed, the cost of manufacture, but rather the expense which comes after the whiskey has been put into barrels. The next time you drink a glass of really good Bourbon, stop and think before you have sipped the light brown liquor what the process has been by which that drink has come before you. In the summer of 1883, when the leaves were waving over the cornstalks of the great Nebraska farms, the whiskey maker was taking his first step toward getting that drink for the New York city bar. The whiskey maker's establishment is in Kentucky. He finds that the corn crop in Nebraska is good and that prices will be low. From the dealers in corn he buys the product of thousands and thousands of acres. Sometimes there comes thirty bushels from an acre, sometimes forty, and once in a while fifty bushels. An ordinary distillery will use 6,000 bushels of corn a day, the yield of a farm of 120 to 140 acres. Right here it may be said, however, that a great many people make a mistake in thinking that a large proportion of the annual corn crop goes into the distilleries. As a matter of fact, only about three per cent. of all corn raised in the United States is used in making whiskey. Some of it comes from the Western States and some from Kentucky.

The corn of the summer of 1883 brought from the Nebraska farm to the Kentucky whiskey maker finds itself in May, 1884, in his distillery. First it is ground, and in a day or two the whiskey is in the barrels. Bourbon whiskey is made from a compound of corn, rye, and barley malt mixed in certain proportions, there being about seventy-five per cent. of corn, and the rest being of the small grains. This mixture is placed in a mash tub, scalded and thoroughly blended. After it has cooled and water has been added, the process of fermentation begins. This takes from forty-eight to seventy-two hours. It is on the care with which the fermentation is managed that the quality of the liquor depends. The alcohol is formed entirely during the process of fermentation. After it has been developed the liquor is drawn from the still, the first and last parts drawn being rejected because of the impurities. The middle part contains from 30 to 35 per cent. alcohol. The liquor is pumped into a doubler and redistilled, thus raising the strength of the alcoholic product. What finally comes from the doubler is your whiskey, but not by any means ready for consumption. Its color is white; in taste it is somewhat sharp. The liquor is run into barrels, which are bunged up and stored in warehouses.

Now come the changes in color and quality which age alone can bring. A curious chemical process is first wrought by the thin layer of wood between the exposed charred surface and the unaffected parts of the staves. The white liquor is changed by the influence of the wood and becomes pinkish and then a light brown. The full rich color is not gained until three or four years have elapsed. If the barrels are kept in heated warehouses the coming of the color may be hastened, but the quality of the whiskey will not be so good as if it had been left to time to do the work.

Up to this period the maker has had to pay no tax, except that for the license to manufacture. Now, however, after the whiskey has been stored in the warehouses a tax is levied upon whatever quantity of whiskey is barrelled up. This is 90 cents on a gallon, and is due at the end of three years, although the owner has the privilege of paying it before in case he wishes to sell the whiskey. When the bonded period has expired the barrels are rolled out of the storehouses and put upon the market, or in case there is no demand they may still be kept in storage. To make and to put into the barrels in May, 1884, that whiskey which you may drink any of these nights at any of the swell metropolitan resorts, assuming that the Bourbon given to you is six years old, costs from 30 to 35 cents a gallon. The rate at which the retail dealer sells it to you, 20 cents a glass, makes it cost you $12.40 a gallon. Somewhere, then, between the time the whiskey was barrelled and the time when it was poured into the glass before you, there has been $12.05 added to the original cost. This addition begins in the warehouse where the whiskey is first kept. There are the items of storage, insurance, interest on money invested, the wages of laborers who must inspect each barrel every day of the year, and, especially, the item of leakage or evaporation. This is considerable. The first year that whiskey is in a barrel it will lose 2½ gallons, and every succeeding year 1½ gallons, so that at the end of six years there remains only about two-thirds or three-fourths of the original quantity. Another item which goes to make up the final cost of $12.40, which the men about town pay when they buy their whiskey by the drink, is the bonded warehouse tax of ninety cents a gallon. After this come more items of storage, insurance, and other expenses of this kind.

Few distillers make whiskey except upon contract. A contractor bargains with the distiller to make for him a certain number of thousands of barrels. The contractor, after having kept the liquor for two, three or four years, sells it to merchants in lots of 2,000 or 3,000 barrels. The merchant sells it in smaller quantities to another dealer, who sells it in still smaller quantities to the retailer. Retailers to the fashion finally pay from $5 to $8 a gallon for whiskey which they expect to sell for twenty cents a drink. Sometimes the whiskey which you pay twenty cents for costs the retailer $7 or $8 a gallon. There are sixty-two drinks to a gallon. The wholesale dealers, from the contractor down to the last one, have made fair profits, but the largest profit is that which the retailer gets. Much of his profit, though, is spent in the maintenance of his establishment, for rent, furniture, pictures, bric-à-brac, glassware, luncheons, and the wages of bartenders and waiters.

Before the war whiskey that now sells for ten cents cost five; that which now you pay fifteen for cost ten; and what then cost fifteen is now the twenty-cent kind. Whiskey as a beverage is popular in the United States, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Spirits as a rule are not liked in France, Italy, Germany, or the other countries of the Continent of Europe. While we make most of our whiskey from corn or rye, the whiskey for John Bull's use, which is made principally in Scotland, is from barley. Queen Victoria's subjects pay only a little more than half as much for their whiskey as Uncle Sam's sons do for theirs. Something which resembles whiskey is made in Germany from potatoes and beets, and in France from corn, molasses, and beets, and in Austria from potatoes.

The foreigners use these products principally for fortifying wines. Just when whiskey was first made is pretty hard to tell. A learned man in Bagdad in the tenth century obtained a distillation which, if he had treated it properly, would have been whiskey. He did not do that, however, and what he discovered was only alcohol. The old Celts made a drink which they called usquebaugh, meaning strong water. That was whiskey, and from the word usquebaugh (pronounced wiskey bay) we have the word now in use, whiskey.