The Mistress of the Mine;

OR,

A WOMAN INTERVENES.

By ROBERT BARR,

Author of "The Face and the Mask," "In the Midst of Alarms," &c.

Copyright, 1895, by Robert Barr.

CHAPTER XIX.

"What name, please?"

"Tell Mr. Wentworth a lady wishes to see him."

The boy departed rather dubiously, for he knew that this message was decidedly irregular in a business office. People should give their names.

"A lady to see you, sir," he said to Wentworth, and then, just as the boy had expected, his employer wanted to know the lady's name. Ladies are not frequent visitors at the offices of an accountant in the City, so Wentworth touched his collar and tie to make sure they were in their correct position, and, wondering who the lady was, asked the boy to show her in.

"How do you do, Mr. Wentworth?" she said, advancing toward his table and holding out her hand. Wentworth caught his breath, took her extended hand somewhat limply, then he pulled himself together and said:

"An unexpected pleasure, Miss Brewster."

Jennie blushed very prettily and laughed a laugh that Wentworth thought was like a little ripple of music from a mellow flute.

"It may be unexpected," she said, "but you don't look a bit like a man suffering from an overdose of pure joy. You didn't expect to see me, did you?"

"I did not, but, now that you are here, may I ask in what way I can serve you?"

"Well, in the first place you may ask me to take a chair, and in the second place you may sit down yourself, for I have come to have a long talk with you."

The prospect did not seem to be so alluring to Wentworth as one might have expected when the announcement was made by a girl so pretty and dressed in such exquisite taste, but the young man promptly offered her a chair, and then sat down with the table between them. She placed her parasol and a few trinkets she had been carrying on the table, arranging them with some care; then, having given him time to recover from his surprise, she flashed a look at him that sent a thrill to the finger tips of the young man. Yet a danger understood is a danger half overcome; and Wentworth, unconsciously drawing a deep breath, nerved himself against any recurrence of a feeling he had been trying to forget, with but indifferent success, saying grimly, but only half convincingly, to himself, "You are not going to fool me a second time, my girl, lovely as you are."

A glimmer of a smile hovered about the red lips of the girl, a smile hardly perceptible but giving an effect to her clear complexion, as if a sunbeam had crept into the room and its reflection had lit up her face.

"I have come to apologize, Mr. Wentworth," she said at last. "I find it a very difficult thing to do, and, as I don't know just how to begin, I'll plunge right into it."

"You don't need to apologize to me for anything, Miss Brewster," replied Wentworth rather stiffly.

"Oh, yes, I do. Don't make it harder than it is by being too frigidly polite about it, but say you accept the apology, and that you're sorry—no—I don't mean that—I should say that you're sure I'm sorry, and that you know I won't do it again."

Wentworth laughed, and Miss Brewster joined him.

"There," she said, "that's ever so much better. I suppose you've been thinking hard things of me ever since we last met."

"I've tried to," replied Wentworth.

"Now that's what I call honest; besides I like the implied compliment. I think it's very neat, indeed. I'm really very, very sorry that I—that things happened as they did. I wouldn't have blamed you if you had used strong language about it at the time."

"I must confess that I did."

"Ah," said Jennie, with a sigh, "you men have so many comforts denied to us women. But I came here for another purpose; if I had merely wanted to apologize I think I would have written. I want some information which you can give me, if you like."

The young woman rested her elbows on the table, with her chin in her hands, gazing across at him earnestly and innocently. Poor George felt that it would be impossible to refuse anything to those large beseeching eyes.

"I want you to tell me about your mine."

All the geniality that had gradually come into Wentworth's face and manner vanished instantly.

"So this is the old business over again," he said.

"How can you say that!" cried Jennie, reproachfully. "I am asking for my own satisfaction entirely, and not for my paper. Besides, I tell you frankly what I want to know, and don't try to get it by indirect means—by false pretences—as you once said."

"How can you expect me to give you information that does not belong to me alone? I have no right to speak of a business which concerns others without their permission."

"Ah, then there are at least two others concerned in the mine," said Jennie. "Kenyon is one. I know; who is the other?"

"Miss Brewster, I will tell you nothing."

"But you have told me something already. Please go on and talk, Mr. Wentworth—about anything you like—and I shall soon find out all I want to know about the mine."

She paused, but Wentworth remained silent, which, indeed, the bewildered young man realized, was the only safe thing to do.

"They speak of the talkativeness of women," Miss Brewster went on, as if soliloquizing, "but it is nothing to that of the men. Once set a man talking and you learn everything he knows—besides ever so much more that he doesn't."

Miss Brewster had abandoned her very taking attitude, with its suggestion of confidential relations, and had removed her elbows from the table, sitting now back in her chair gazing dreamily at the dingy window which let the light in from the dingy court. She seemed to have forgotten that Wentworth was there, and said more to herself than to him:

"I wonder if Kenyon would tell me about the mine?"

"You might ask him."

"No, it wouldn't do any good," she continued, gently shaking her head. "He's one of your silent men, and there are so few of them in this world! Perhaps I had better go to William Longworth himself; he's not suspicious of me."

As she said this she threw a quick glance at Wentworth, and the unfortunate young man's face at once told her that she had hit the mark. She bent her brow over the table and laughed with such evident enjoyment that Wentworth, in spite of his helpless anger, smiled grimly.

Jennie raised her head, but the sight of his perplexed countenance was too much for her, and it was some time before her merriment allowed her to speak. At last she said:

"Wouldn't you like to take me by the shoulders and put me out of the room, Mr. Wentworth?"

"I'd like to take you by the shoulders and shake you."

"Ah, that would be taking a liberty, and could not be permitted. We must leave punishment to the law, you know, although I do think a man should be allowed to turn an objectionable visitor into the street."

"Miss Brewster," cried the young man, earnestly, leaning over the table toward her, "why don't you abandon your horrible inquisitorial profession, and put your undoubted talents to some other use?"

"What, for instance?"

"Oh anything."

Jennie rested her fair cheek against her open palm again and looked at the dingy window. There was a long silence between them. Wentworth absorbed in watching her clear-cut profile and her white throat, his breath quickening as he feasted his eyes on her beauty.

"I have always got angry," she said at last, in a low voice, with the quiver of a suppressed sigh in it, "when other people have said that to me; I wonder why it is I merely feel hurt and sad when you say it? It is so easy to say, 'oh—anything' so easy, so easy. You are a man, with the strength and determination of a man, yet you have met with disappointments and obstacles that have required all your courage to overcome. Every man has, and with most men it is a fight until the head is gray and the brain weary with the ceaseless struggle. The world is utterly merciless; it will trample you down relentlessly if it can, and if your vigilance relaxes for a moment it will steal your crust and leave you to starve. When I think of this incessant, sullen contest, with no quarter given or taken, I shudder and pray that I may die before I am at the mercy of the pitiless world. When I came to London I saw for the first time in my life that hopeless melancholy promenade of the sandwich men, human wreckage drifting along the edge of the street, as if they had been cast up there by the rushing tide sweeping past them. They—they seemed to me like a tottering procession of the dead—and on their backs was the announcement of a play that was making all London roar with laughter—the awful comedy and tragedy of it! Well, I simply couldn't stand it! I had to run up a side street and cry like the little fool I was, right in broad daylight."

Jennie paused and tried to laugh, but the effort ended in a sound suspiciously like a sob and she dashed her hand with quick impatience across her eyes, from which Wentworth had never taken his own, watching them dim as the light from the window proved too strong for them, and finally fill as she ceased to speak. Searching ineffectually about her dress for a handkerchief, which lay on the table beside her parasol, unnoticed by either, Jennie went on with some difficulty.

"Well, these poor forlorn creatures were once men, men who had gone down, and if the world is so hard on a man, with all his strength and resourcefulness, think—think what it is for a woman to be thrown into this inhuman human turmoil—a woman without friends—without money—flung among these relentless wolves—to live if she can—or—to die—if she can."

The girl's voice broke and she buried her face in her arms, which rested on the table.

Wentworth sprang to his feet and came round to where she sat.

"Jennie," he said, putting his hand on her shoulder.

The girl, without looking up, shook off the hand that touched her.

"Go back to your place!" she cried in a smothered voice. "Leave me alone!"

"Jennie," persisted Wentworth.

The young woman rose from her chair and faced him, stepping back a pace.

"Don't you hear what I say? Go back and sit down. I came here to talk business; not to make a fool of myself. It's all your fault, and I hate you for it; you and your silly questions."

But the young man stood where he was in spite of the dangerous sparkle that lit up his wistful eyes and swept on his brow. A frown gathered on his brow.

"Jennie," he said slowly, "are you playing with me again?"

The swift anger that blazed up in her face, reddening her cheeks, dried the tears.

"How dare you say such a thing to me?" she cried hotly. "Do you flatter yourself that because I came here to talk business, I have also some personal interest in you? Surely even your self-conceit doesn't run so far as that!"

Wentworth stood silent, and Miss Brewster picked up her parasol, scattering, in her haste, the other articles on the floor. If she expected Wentworth to put them on the table again she was disappointed, for, although his eyes were upon her, his thoughts were far away upon the Atlantic Ocean.

"I shall not stay here to be insulted," she cried resentfully, bringing Wentworth's thoughts back with a rush to London again. "It is intolerable that you should use such an expression to me. Playing with you, indeed!"

"I had no intention of insulting you, Miss Brewster."

"What is it but an insult to use such a phrase? It implies that I either care for you or——"

"And do you?"

"Do I what?"

"Do you care for me?"

Jennie shook out the lace fringes of her parasol and smoothed them with some precision. Her eyes were bent on what she was doing, and did not meet those of her questioner.

"I care for you as a friend, of course," she said at last, still giving much attention to the parasol. "If I had not looked on you as a friend I would not have come here to consult with you, would I?"

"No, I suppose not. Well, I am sorry I used words that displeased you, and now, if you will permit it, we will go on with the consultation."

"It wasn't a pretty thing to say."

"I'm afraid I'm not good at pretty things."

"You used to be." The parasol being arranged to her liking she glanced up at him. "Still you said you were sorry, and that's all a man can say; or a woman either, for that's what I said myself when I came in. Now, if you will pick up those things from the floor—thanks—we will talk about the mine."

Wentworth seated himself in his chair again and said:

"Well, what is it you wish to know about it?"

"Nothing at all."

"But you said you wanted information?"

"What a funny reason! And how a man misses all the fine points of a conversation! No; just because I asked for information, you might have known that it was not what I really wanted."

"I'm afraid I'm stupid. I hate to ask baldly what you did want, but I would like to know."

"I wanted a vote of confidence. I told you I was sorry because of a certain episode. I wanted to see if you trusted me, and you didn't. There."

"I think that was hardly a fair test. You see the episode did not believe in me alone."

Miss Brewster sighed and shook her head.

"That wouldn't have made the least difference, if you had really trusted me."

"Oh, I say! You couldn't expect a man to——"

"Yes, I could."

"What, merely a friend?"

Miss Brewster nodded.

"Well, all I can say," remarked Wentworth, with a laugh, "is that friendship has made greater strides in the States than it has in this country."

Before Jennie could reply the useful boy knocked at the door and brought in a tea tray which he placed before his master, then silently departed, closing the door noiselessly.

"May I offer you a cup of tea?"

"Please. What a curious custom this drinking of tea is in business offices. I think I shall write an article on 'A Nation of Tea Tipplers.' If I were an enemy of England, instead of being the great friend, I would descend with my army on this country between the hours of 4 and 5 in the afternoon, and so take the population unawares while it was drinking tea. What would you do if the enemy came down on you during such a sacred national ceremony?"

"I would offer her a cup of tea," replied Wentworth, suiting the action to the phrase.

"Mr. Wentworth," said the girl, archly, "you're improving. That remark was distinctly good. Still, you must remember that I come as a friend, not as an enemy. Did you ever read the Babes in the Wood?" It is a most instructive but pathetic work of fiction. You remember the wicked Uncle, surely. Well, you and Mr. Kenyon remind me of the babes, poor, innocent little things, and London—this part of it—is the dark and pathless forest. I am the bird hovering about you, waiting to cover you with leaves. The leaves, to do any good, ought to be checks fluttering down on you, but, alas! I haven't any. If negotiable checks only grew on trees life would not be so difficult."

Miss Brewster sipped her tea pensively, and Wentworth listened to the musical murmur of her voice, which had such an entrancing effect on him, that he paid less heed to what she said than a man should when a lady is speaking. The tea drinking had added a touch of domesticity to the tête-à-tête that rather went to the head of the young man. He clinched and unclinched his hand out of sight under the table and felt the moisture on his palm. He hoped he would be able to retain control over himself, but the difficulty of his task almost overcame him when she now and then appealed to him with glance or gesture, and he felt as if he must cry out, "My girl, my girl, don't do that, if you expect me to stay where I am."

"I see you are not paying the slightest attention to what I am saying," she said, pushing the cup from her. She rested her arms on the table, leaning forward, and turning her face full upon him. "I can tell by your eyes that you are thinking of something else."

"I assure you," said he, with a deep breath, "I am listening with intense interest."

"Well, that's right, for what I am going to say is important. Now, to wake you up, I will first tell you all my plans, so that you will understand I did not need to ask any one for information regarding it."

Here, to Wentworth's astonishment, she gave a rapid and accurate sketch of the negotiations and arrangements between the three partners and the present position of affairs.

"How do you know all this?" he asked.

"Never mind that, and you mustn't ask how I know what I am now going to tell you, but you must believe it implicitly and act upon it promptly. Longworth is fooling both you and Kenyon. He is marking time, so that your option will run out; then he will pay cash for the mine at the original price, and you and Kenyon will be left to pay two-thirds of the debt incurred. Where is Kenyon?"

"He has gone to America."

"That's good. Cable him to get the option renewed. You can then try to form the company yourselves in London. If he can't obtain a renewal, you have very little time to get the cash together, and if you are not able to do that then you lose everything. This is what I came to tell you, although I have been a long time about it. Now I must go."

She rose, gathered her belongings from the table, and stood with the parasol pressed against her. Wentworth came around to where she was standing, his face paler than usual, probably because of the news he had heard. One hand was grasped tightly around one wrist in front of him. He felt that he should thank her for what she had done, but his lips were dry and somehow the proper words were not at his command.

She, holding her fragile lace-fringed parasol against her with one arm, was adjusting her long neatly fitting glove, which she had removed before tea. A button, one of many, was difficult to fasten, and as she endeavored to put it in its place her sleeve fell away, showing a round white arm above the glove.

"You see," she said, a little breathlessly, her eyes upon her glove, "it is a very serious situation, and time is of great importance."

"I realize that."

"It would be such a pity to lose everything now, when you have had so much trouble and worry."

"It would."

"And I think that whatever is done should be done quickly. You should act at once and with energy."

"I am convinced that is so."

"Of course it is. You are of too trusting a nature; you should be more suspicious, then you wouldn't be tricked as you have been."

"No. The trouble is I have been too suspicious, but that is past. I won't be again."

"What are you talking about?" she said, looking quickly up at him. "Don't you know you'll lose the mine if—" "Hang the mine!" he cried, flinging his wrist free and clasping her to him before she could step back or move. "There is something more important than mines or money."

The parasol broke with a snap, and the girl murmured, "Oh," but the murmur was faint.

"Never mind the parasol," he said, pulling it from between them and tossing it aside. "I'll get you another."

"Reckless man!" she gasped. "You little know how much it cost. And I think, you know, I ought to have been consulted—in an—in an affair of this kind—George."

"There was no time. I acted upon your own advice—promptly. You are not angry, Jennie, my dear girl, are you?"

"I suppose I'm not, though I think I ought to be, especially as I know only too well that I held my heart in my hand the whole time, almost offering it to you. I hope you won't treat it as you have treated the sunshade."

He kissed her for answer.

"You see," she said, putting his necktie straight, "I liked you from the very first, far more than I knew at the time. If you—I'm not trying to justify myself, you know—but if you had—well—just coaxed me a little yourself, I would never have sent that cable message. You seemed to give up everything, and you sent Kenyon to me, and that made me angry. I expected you to come back to me, but you never came."

"I was a stupid fool. I always am, when I get a fair chance."

"Oh, no, you're not, but you do need some one to take care of you."

She suddenly held him at arm's length.

"You don't imagine for a moment, George Wentworth, that I came here for—for this."

"Certainly not," cried the honest young man with much indignant fervor, drawing her again toward him.

"Then it's all right. I couldn't bear to have you think such a thing, especially—well, I'll tell you why, some day. But I do wish you had a title. Do they ever ennoble accountants in this country, George?"

"No, they knight only rich fools."

"Oh, I'm so glad of that, for you'll get rich on the mine, and I'll be Lady Wentworth yet."

She drew his head down until her laughing lips touched his.

CHAPTER XX.

Although the steamship that took Kenyon to America was one of the speediest in the Atlantic service, yet the voyage was inexpressively dreary to him. He spent most of his time walking up and down the deck thinking about the other voyage of a few months before. The one consolation of his present trip was its quickness.

When he arrived at his hotel in New York, he asked if there was any message there for him, and the clerk handed him an envelope, which he tore open. It was a cable despatch from Wentworth, with the words, "Longworth at Windsor. Proceed to Ottawa immediately. Get option renewed. Longworth duping us."

John knitted his brows and wondered where Windsor was. The clerk, seeing his perplexity, asked if he could be of any assistance.

"I have received this cablegram, but don't quite understand it. Where is Windsor?"

"Oh, that means the Windsor Hotel. Just up the street."

Kenyon registered, and told the clerk to assign him a room and send his baggage up to it when it came. Then he walked out from the hotel and sought the Windsor.

He found that colossal hostlery, and was just inquiring of the clerk whether a Mr. Longworth was staying there when that gentleman appeared at the desk and took some letters and his key.

Kenyon tapped him on the shoulder.

Young Longworth turned round with more alacrity than he usually displayed, and gave a whistle of surprise when he saw who it was.

"In the name of all the gods," he cried, "what are *you* doing here? Then, before any reply, he said, "Come up to my room."

They went to the elevator, rose a few stories, and passed down an apparently endless hall, carpeted with some noiseless stuff that gave no echo of the footfall. Longworth put his key into the door and opened it. They entered a large and pleasant room.

"Well," he said, "this *is* a surprise. What is the reason of your being here? Anything wrong in London?"

"Nothing wrong so far as I am aware. We received no cablegram from you, and thought there might be some hitch in the business; therefore I came."

"No, I wired I cabled over to your address and said I was staying at the Windsor for a few days. I sent a cablegram almost as long as a letter, but it didn't appear to do any good."

"No; I did not receive it."

"What did you think was wrong over here?"

"That I did not know. I knew you had time to get to Ottawa and see the mine in twelve days from London. Not hearing from you in that time, and knowing the option was running out, both Wentworth and I became anxious, and so I came over."

"Exactly. Well, I'm afraid you've had your trip for nothing."

"What do you mean? Is not the mine all I said it was?"

"Oh, the mine is all right; all I meant was, there was really no necessity for your coming."

"But, you know, the option ends in a very short time."

"Well, the option, like the mine, is all right. I think you might quite safely have left it in my hands."

It must be admitted that John Kenyon began to feel he had acted with unreasonable rashness in taking his long trip.

"Is Mr. Melville here with you?"

"Mr. Melville has returned home. He had not time to stay longer. I think he wanted to do was to satisfy himself about the mine. He was satisfied, and he has gone home. If you were in London now you would be able to see him."

"Did you meet Mr. Von Brent?"

"Yes, he took us to the mine."

"What did you say anything about the option to him?"

"Well, we had some conversation about it. There will be no trouble about the option. What Von Brent wants is to sell his mine, that is all."

There was a few moments' silence, then Longworth said, "When are you going back?"

"I do not know. I think I ought to see Von Brent. I am not at all easy about leaving matters as they are. I think I ought to get a renewal of the option. It is not wise to risk things as we are going. Von Brent might at any time get an offer for his mine, just as we are forming our company, and, of course, if the option had not been renewed, he would sell to the first man who put down the money. As you say, all he wants is to sell his mine."

Longworth was busy opening his letters and apparently paying very little attention to what Kenyon said. At last, however, he spoke:

"If I were you, Kenyon, I would take my advice. I would go straight back to England. You will do no good here. I merely say this to save you any further trouble, time, and expense."

"Don't you think it would be as well to get a renewal of the option?"

"Oh, certainly; but, as I told you before, it was not at all necessary for you to come over. I may say, furthermore, that Von Brent will not again renew the option without a handsome sum down, to be forfeited if the company is not formed. Have you the money to pay him?"

"No, I have not."

"Very well, then, there will not be the slightest use in your seeing Von Brent."

Young Mr. Longworth arched his eyebrows and gazed at John through his eyeglass. "I will tell you have my third of the money if that will do any good."

"How much money does Von Brent want?"

"How should I know? To tell you the truth, Mr. Kenyon, and truth never hurts, or oughtn't to, I don't at all like this visit of yours to America. You and Mr. Wentworth have been good enough to be suspicious about me from the very first. You have not taken any pains to conceal it, either of you. Your appearance in America at this particular juncture is nothing more nor less than an insult to me. I intend to receive it as such."

"I have no intention of insulting you," said Kenyon, "if you are dealing fairly with me."

"There it is again. That remark is an insult. Everything you say is a reflection upon me. I wish to have nothing more to say to you. I give you my advice that it is better for you, and cheaper, to go back to London. You need not act on it unless you like. I have nothing further to say to you, and so this interview may as well be considered closed."

"And how about the mine?"

"I imagine the mine will take care of itself."

"Do you think this is courteous treatment of a business partner?"

"My dear sir, I do not take my lessons in courtesy from you. Whether you are pleased or displeased with my treatment of you is a matter of supreme indifference to me. I am tired of living in an atmosphere of suspicion, and I have done with it, that's all. You think some game is being played on you—both you and Wentworth think that—and yet you haven't the 'cuteness,' as they call it here, or sharpness to find it out. Now a man who has suspicions he cannot prove should keep those suspicions to himself until he can. That is my advice to you. I wish you good-day."

John Kenyon walked back to his hotel more suspicious than ever. He wrote a letter to Wentworth detailing the conversation, telling him Melville had sailed for home, and advising him to see that gentleman. He stayed in New York that night and took the morning train to Montreal, in due time he arrived at Ottawa and called on Von Brent. He found that gentleman in his chambers, looking as if he had never left the room since the option was signed. Von Brent at first did not recognize his visitor, but, after gazing a moment at him, he sprang from his chair and held out his hand.

"I really did not know you," he said; "you have changed a great deal since I saw you last. You look haggard and not at all well. What is the matter with you?"

"I do not think anything is the matter. I am in very good health, thank you. I have had a few business worries, that is all."

"Ah, yes," said Von Brent. "I am very sorry you failed to form your company."

"Failed!" echoed Kenyon.

"Yes; you haven't succeeded, have you?"

"Well, I don't know about that; we are in a fair way to succeed. You met Longworth and Melville who came out to see the mine. I saw Longworth in New York, and he told me you had taken them out there."

"Are they interested with you in the mine?"

"Certainly; they are helping me to form the company."

Von Brent seemed amazed. "I did not understand that at all. In fact, I understood the exact opposite. I thought you had attempted to form a company and failed. They showed me an attack in one of the financial papers upon you, and said that killed your chances of forming a company in London. They were here, apparently, on their own business."

"And what was their business?"

"To buy the mine."

"Have they bought it?"

"Practically, yes. Of course, while your option holds good, I cannot sell it, but that, as you know, expires in a very few days."

Kenyon, finding his worst suspicions realized, seemed speechless with amazement, and, in his agony, mopped from his brow the drops collected there.

"You appear to be astonished at this," said Von Brent.

"I am very much astonished."

"Well, you cannot blame me. I have acted perfectly square in the matter. I had no idea Longworth and the gentleman who was with him had any connection with you whatever. Their attention had been drawn to the mine, they said, by that article. They had investigated it, and appeared to be satisfied there was something in it—in the mine, I mean, not in the article. They said they had attended a meeting which you had called, but it was quite evident you were not going to be able to form the company. So they came here and made me a cash offer for the mine. They have deposited £20,000 here, and, on the day your option closes, they will give me a check for the amount."

"Serves me right," said Kenyon. "I have been cheated and duped. I had grave suspicions of it all along, but I did not act upon them. I have been too timorous and cowardly. This man Longworth has made a pretence of helping me to form a company. Everything he has done has been to delay me. He came out here apparently in the interests of the company I was forming, and now he has got the option for himself."

"Yes, he has," said Von Brent. "I may say I am very sorry indeed for the turn affairs have taken. Of course, as I have told you, I had no idea how the land lay. You see you had placed no deposit with me, and I had to look after my own interests. However, the option is open for a few days more, and I will not turn the mine over to them till the last minute of the time has expired. Isn't there any chance of your getting the money before then?"

"Not the slightest."

"Well, you see, in that case I cannot help myself. I am bound by a legal document to turn the mine over to them on receipt of the £20,000 the moment your option is ended. Everything is done legally, and I am perfectly helpless in the matter."

"Yes, I see that," said John. "Good-by." He went to the office and sent a cablegram.

Wentworth received the despatch in London the next morning. It read: "We are cheated. Longworth has the option on the mine in his own name."

(To be continued.)

ENGLISH NOVELS IN FRANCE.

Renewed Interest Shown in American and British Literature.

French current literature is just now exhibiting a marked change of attitude toward British and American fiction. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* started the movement with some admirable translations of British and American short stories. Sarah Orne Jewett's sketch, "Decoration Day," was one of the earliest. Two Kansas stories of Frank Harris, owner and editor of the *Saturday Review*, "Elder Conklin" and "A Modern Adyl," were recently published in the *Revue*. It is noteworthy that these stories, though thus picked out for translation by a conspicuous French periodical and much praised in Great Britain, have had no marked popularity in the United States. The same periodical has published one of Mrs. Rebecca Harding Davis's stories as "Une Histoire Inachévée." Mme. De Bentzon, who has been publishing in the *Revue* a series of articles on the status of woman in the United States, has also translated for it the "Merry Men" of Stevenson, under the title "Les Gais Compagnons." Kipling's "Light that Failed" and "The Drums of Fore and Aft" were published as "La Lumière qui s'Éteint" and "Deux Petit Tambours." His "Eyewitnesses" was published in the new *Revue de Paris*. Kipling's style offers many pitfalls to the French students of English, but these translations are eminently successful, the peculiarities of the original being admirably suggested in excellent idiomatic French.

Even the conservative *Journal des Débats* has just published "Le Prisonnier de Zenda," by "M. Anthony Hope," and the same periodical is now publishing as a feuilleton Marcus Clark's Australian story, "His Natural Life," under the title of "Condamné à Vie," and Mrs. Kingdon Clifford's "Aunt Anne" has been translated for the *Débats*. A popular French geographical weekly has been publishing for some weeks Stevenson's "Wrecker," and one of Mayne Reid's stories, both illustrated in a highly sensational fashion.

Doubtless the cheaper French publications use translations from the English from motives of economy, but the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the *Revue de Paris*, and the *Journal des Débats* will hardly be suspected of such a policy, and their new departure seems to indicate a conviction that their readers are likely to find the stories of British and American writers of better than the French productions, at least a welcome variation from the sort of thing that the French reading public has long been accustomed to expect. Few English or American novels have hitherto had much vogue in France, and yet there were notable exceptions in the history of the English novel. Richardson's "Pamela" and "Clarissa Harlowe" were, on their first coming out, almost as much read in Paris as in London, and Richardson exercised a strong influence upon his French contemporaries. Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" and "Tristam Shandy" were translated into French immediately upon their appearance in England. These books were read with avidity, and their author was enthusiastically received when he visited Paris. "The Sentimental Journey," in a tiny paper-bound French edition, is even now selling in the city of Wentworth while recall Congreve's resentment, as a gentleman, of Pritaire's desire to see him in his capacity of man of letters. The Frenchman, upon learning his English contemporary's attitude, said bluntly that his interest was solely in the writer and not at all in the gentleman.

"Robinson Crusoe" for a time recently was as popular with young France as with young England or young America, and it would be hard to persuade any French schoolboy that Crusoe was not a Frenchman. Scott passed through many editions in French, and Fenimore Cooper's stories are even now selling in cheap French editions, being published in parts. Poe is perhaps better known in France than any other writer, British or American. He has the advantage of an early translation by the poet, Charles Baudelaire, and through the medium of this translation his influence is still apparent in the younger writers of the very latest French school.

Between Scott and Poe and a few British and American writers of to-day there is a long hiatus in the popularity of British and American fiction in France. Dickens, Thackeray, Charles Reade, and their contemporaries had shared with Scott and Cooper the distinction of a popular paper-covered edition of famous novels published in French, but gathered from various nations, one finds amid many Russian and a few German, Norwegian, and Spanish writers, only six English novelists represented. Though the whole series comprises about 300 authors, the selection seems unreasonable enough. There are "Le Vicaire de Wakefield," "Voyages de Gulliver," Poe's "Contes Extraordinaires," Sterne's "Voyage Sentimental," Dickens's "Contes de Noël," and Hamilton's "Memoirs du Chevalier de Grammont," which perhaps should not be included among the representative works by English writers, since its English author originally wrote it in French. "Paradise Lost," by the way, is sold in a Frenchedition.

Hamilton's work may serve to recall the fact that several English authors have written in French and afterward translated their works into English. The historian Gibbon's first published work was written in French and afterward rewritten in English. Among British writers of to-day, George Moore has written novels in both tongues. So, too, has Ouida, and Oscar Wilde has been successful in French. Swinburne has published French sonnets, and Max O'Rell's books are published simultaneously in French and English.

It is noteworthy that French translations of British and American novels are almost invariably done in admirable fashion and with nice regard to the preservation of the flavor that marks the original productions. The French thus take a noble revenge for the miserably crude stuff foisted upon the British and more especially the American public as translations of Zola, Daudet, and other popular Frenchmen.

CHARACTER IN HAIR.

What a Hairdresser Thinks She Learns from Color and Texture.

"You can tell a great deal about a person by the hair," said a pretty little hairdresser to a customer that she was waiting on the other day. "It's astonishing what a revelation the hair is. Now wouldn't you like me to tell you something about yourself?" she asked as she brushed out the brown locks.

"Indeed, I would," answered the customer, "if you'll promise to be perfectly candid with me. I promise not to get angry, and I want to see if you really can read me."

"Well," said the hairdresser, "first of all, your ancestors have been ladies and gentlemen for many generations, and, if you are not, you could become a member of the Colonial Dames or Daughters of the Revolution without scratching around for months and months to fill out your papers. I know this because your hair is finer than silk. No child of common extraction ever has this very fine hair. Its locks may be a crown of glory, so far as quantity and color are concerned, but never when it comes to quality. You are refined in your taste and have rather an artistic temperament, but you are very moody and changeable. All women with fine brown hair with a tinge of gold in it have the same characteristics. They are up one minute and down the next, but cheerful spirits predominate. They are easily influenced by those whom they love, and love very hard, but get over it pretty easily. Now, you would never pine over a man, would you? You'd get another."

"I'm afraid I would," blushingly admitted the other. "But go on. You are right so far except in one thing. I'm not changeable where my friends are concerned."

"Yes, you are, but you won't own it even to yourself. Of course I suppose you will never go in business, but the women who have hair like yours make great successes in art, music, literature, and are fine managers, because they usually possess energy and adaptability."

"Tell me about some other kinds of hair," said the customer.

"I've been in this business a long time, and my experience is that women with fine red hair—light red, I mean—are very smart. They can do anything well that they attempt. They are invariably well mannered, and know how to charm, but they make things lively in their own families, for at home they are quarrelsome, selfish, and irritable. Those with rich, dark-red hair are more amiable.

"Nearly all red-headed people are smart, whether the hair is coarse or fine, but when you do run across one that isn't, he is the stupidest person under the sun. The women with pale blond hair, of the colorless, ashy kind, are impulsive, loving, fickle. They are not to be depended upon, but are usually good company while they like you. On the contrary, those with dark-brown hair are very loyal. They are full of sentiment and easily affected. They enjoy keenly and suffer in proportion.

"When it comes to coarse hair there is a great deal to be said. When I lived in Chicago I treated men's hair, and what is true of woman's hair is true of man's, of course allowing for the natural difference in the dispositions of the sexes. One day a conspicuous physician came to me. He had brown hair that was saved from being black by the tinge of red that an expert could detect in it. It was very coarse and quite curly. He didn't speak except to tell me what kind of a shampoo he wanted, but as soon as he went I said to the other girls: 'That man has a big name, but he is conceited until it is painful to talk to him; jealous until it would be madness for a man, woman, or child to arouse him; and he tells lies and is deceitful with friends as well as foes.' The woman at the head of the establishment overheard me, and she said: 'If you make such remarks about a customer again you will lose your place.' The man came back where a week for nearly a year, and always asked for me. He tipped me generously, but I had a perfect antipathy for him. Sure enough he was sued for a large amount for saying that another doctor stole some money. He was so insanely jealous of his wife that she got a divorce, and, although he was very smart, nobody believed him and nobody trusted him. A man with coarse, curly hair will bear watching, and so will a woman. They are not amiable husbands and wives. Coarse-haired people have vulgarity in their natures. Some may go through life and keep it hidden, but it's there. They are nearly always treacherous, too.

"Men with fine, light hair are smart, conceited, and if they do not marry until late in life are apt to grow cross and selfish. If a girl wishes to select a husband she should examine his hair very closely before accepting him, because it is a fine indication of what his disposition is. Men with fine brown hair, light or dark, make the best husbands. They are quick, but not to be selfish than their very light or very dark haired brothers. Those whose hair turns gray prematurely are nearly always good fellows. They are a little nervous, but are brainy, sympathetic, and very honorable. The hair turns white from being unscrupulous in money matters and friendships oftener than it does for grieving over one's shortcomings."

"But you haven't said one word about women with black hair," protested the customer.

"Women with fine black hair are high strung, and those with coarse black hair, if they are smart, are nearly always mean. All women with dark hair are more temperamental than those with light hair. The dark eyes and complexions that go with the different shades of dark brown and black hair denote strong feeling. They are also more faithful than light-haired women, and, dear me, they bubble over with sentiment."

MR. TAYLOR'S OLD GOOSE.

The Hon. James E. Jones's Recollections of a Remarkable Westchester Bird.

The Hon. James E. Jones of Westchester county, a Port Warden, the friend of President Cleveland, Senator Hill, Thomas C. Platt, ex-Collector Daniel Magone, and very many other prominent folks, read with interest the story printed in THE SUN of a goose thirty-two years old, and at the St. James's Hotel last night was moved to tell about another oldtimer in the goose line.

"On a prominent wooded crest jutting into one of the quiet little bays that indent the shores of Long Island Sound," he said, "lives a very old man by the name of Aleck Taylor, who was, until last spring, the owner in fee simple of the oldest goose that ever hissed upon this or any other continent. This goose, according to local traditions, was older and more venerable than many of Horace Porter's after-dinner jokes, and antedated lossism in New York politics. Local tradition has it that in the Harrison campaign in 1840 this venerable specimen of the feathered tribe was displayed in political procession as a genuine American eagle. Its color was similar and its whole demeanor was not unlike that favorite bird. At that time the late lamented Jimmy Husted had not gone into the bald eagle business, and the people were easily duped. From that fault they have not yet fully recovered.

"Just how Aleck became possessed of this wonderful bird is shrouded in mystery so deep that my antiquarian searches have availed me nothing. Its haunts and habits have not been in the usual goose line; it never flocked with the other geese, and seemed wholly unconscious of the 14th of February; it never chose a mate. Mr. Taylor partakes strongly of the G. A. R., and is a famous snare drummer—claims to have taken lessons from the original drummer boy of Waterloo. His friends came daily to view this wonderful and ancient feathered kinz, and all Mr. Taylor had to do was to beat the long roll, and the goose would appear with the precision of an English grenadier, and go through his usual antics, and becomingly partake of such nourishment as his generous owner would offer. After long years of regular habits he began to change color, and at the time of his death was a pure pond lily white.

"Mr. Taylor was a man of keen business habits, and when he failed enough to pluck a Wall street bird he would come directly home and pluck this dear old goose. It is estimated that during its long life it yielded fully 500 pounds of merchantable feathers worth 50 cents per pound.

"But passing away applies to geese as well as gold, so on a fine afternoon during the early summer, Mr. Taylor, in response to the wishes of some callers, beat the long roll with commendable skill, but not the usual effect or result. Old Times Rocks did not appear, and 'drummer, drummer, drummer rolled the roll of the drummer' with no response but silence. Search was then instituted in and about the temple, and poor Goosey was found dead under the shade of a clump of alders.

"A taxidermist was sent for and the skin neatly removed for preservation. In its stomach were found three links of trace chain, one large lobster claw, one worm of a corkscrew, one china egg, one seal ring.

"Mr. Taylor well remembered when he lost the corkscrew. Many years since he had rescued Col. James Duffy, Larry Jerome, and several other gentlemen from a shipwreck in the Sound with his catboat. They, from exposure and thirst, were nearly famished, thirst entering largely into their condition. It was in opening wine at this time that he broke the corkscrew, and the worm he now identifies."

NOTES ON SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

One of the notable examples of accuracy in the products of optical science at the present day is exhibited in the binocular telescope owned by D. W. Edgecombe of Newington, Conn. The instrument consists of twin telescopes of 6¼ inches aperture, which lie side by side, as do the tubes of an opera glass; their length is somewhat more than eight feet, a permanent mounting of the alt-azimuth pattern being employed for its use. The eye end presents a rather novel arrangement. The rays which are gathered by the large lenses are caught at the focus by prisms, two of these being employed for each tube, and, in passing through these, they indicate to the observer an erected image, as does the terrestrial eye-piece, although in this new construction some advantages are gained. The tubes which thus carry the prisms are free to rotate about the axis of the telescope, and by means of this the distance between the two individual eye-pieces may be graduated to exactly suit the space between the observer's eyes, which is, of course, different for each person.

The achievement is claimed by M. Tempère of Paris of a method for obtaining a product possessing all the properties of petroleum without its objectionable qualities, an achievement considered of decided value, in view of the fact that, even where refining in the most perfect manner of hydrocarbons is effected, the disagreeable odor characteristic of petroleum is still present, and that the addition of perfumes, which has been tried for overcoming such odor, has failed. Tempère's process is based on the employment of amylacetate or amylacetic ether, of which, it is remarked, the moderate price, agreeable odor, uninflammability, and high boiling point render the product practically superior, the quantity or proportion used being about ten grams per litre, according to