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MAY.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

BEYOND the bursting greenness of the woods,
Unto the misty, mountain solitudes,
Has April breathed her sweet and changeful moods.

But in the folded buds and leaves, and higher,
Where rest the small birds in the fir-tree's spire,
Through all the world there breathes a soft desire!

A mystic influence broods o'er hidden things!
The caterpillar, in his drowsy rings,
Dreams purple pictures of his future wings.

A sweet presentiment fills the intense
Clear air. The brooks hang in suspense
Among the rocks. The small grass feels a sense

Prophetic of a joy most strange and dear,
For lo! May lifts the door-latch of the year!

Deep out of sight, where Earth's great mystery lies,
Shut up within her heart forever, files
A thrill along the unseen arteries.

Within the tangled roots of beech and lime
The sweet saps pulsate as they blindly climb,
And sprout their tasselled greenness ere it's time.

Along the stream the whispering rushes say
To one another, How the gentle May
Brings in the sunshine of a dearer day!

And to the sweet-breathed violets that blow
An azure margin to their silver flow,
The garrulous ripples tatter as they go.

Sick with desire the lily-bells turn pale;
The wondering cow-slips peep from every dale;
And daisies stand on tiptoe through the vale.

The amorous boughs bend toward her, far and near,
While May stands in the door-way of the year.

At her charmed coming, at the far South, where
It lingered for her bidding calm and fair,
The sunshine flows through all the happy air.

Aerial arches, of the sunset dyes,
O'er the enchantment of her presence rise
And span the glory of the bending skies.

Now roll the minutes to the golden hour,
And now the bud fulfils the perfect flower;
Now Earth puts on her beauty's crown and power.

From the low casement of the cottage room,
To the far distance where the dim hills loom,
The lengths of meadow-land burst into bloom.

A hundred brooks, down-leaping whence they hung,
And seeming mad, with many a silver tongue,
Sing sweeter songs than ever yet were sung.

The birds call her welcome, blithe and clear,
While May comes through the door-way of the year.

HOMICIDAL HEROINES.

THE authors and authoresses of the day are going in for crimes of every description, from murder downward, in a manner that is most startling, and Mr. Mudie's lending library will soon become a sort of Newgate Calendar. What with lovely murderesses, and accomplished bigamists, and spies, and forgers, and here and there an occasional attorney who is on their trail, works of romance seem in a fair way to be very lively reading before long. The effect produced on sensible and unimaginative people ought to be to render them suspicious of their nearest acquaintances. The young lady who is kind enough to teach one's daughters French and music looks and talks like an ordinary being; but it is very likely, if we only knew all, that she has got a murderess in manuscript in her bedroom, at the elaboration of whose career she is working all her spare hours, and through the vivid delineation of whose amatory and homicidal performances she hopes herself to attain to literary fame. It is difficult to believe how anybody who is to all outward appearance so harmless, and who takes her meals with such regularity, can be engaged in the manufacture of all the frightful sentiments and harrowing plots to the production of which she retires, for anything we can tell, when the music lessons and the French are over for the day. If the authoress was in the habit of depicting criminals in tragedy costume, with cloaks over their shoulders and daggers peeping from underneath, haunting some lonely wayside inn or galloping across country on the back of some spirited horse, one would not be so much surprised. Such would seem the natural accessories of horror in which feminine fancy dresses great culprits. But this is not at all the conventional thing. Romantic writers have far too much *savoir vivre* to make their murderers or murderesses do anything so outlandish or absurd. That was the fault of taste committed by writers of an older date who did not know the world, and were always thinking that criminals went about with a dagger or a bowl. Experience of life teaches the fair novelist, as well as her masculine rivals, that if one wishes to find crime, one has not got to go to the wayside inns, or to watch for shadows alongside garden walls, or to listen for a stealthy footstep on the staircase when the clock is striking midnight; nor can she expect to catch her criminal hero or heroine in modern times performing in this violent and affected style. The murderess of romance now-a-days wears balmoral boots, and goes religiously to kettle-drums. Her beauty is the most dazzling of all the beauty in the ball-room; her step the lightest, and her smile the sweetest, in the waltz. She loves and is beloved, and the husband who in the first volume leads to the altar the fair, innocent creature of nineteen, will discover years after, and in the third volume, that before he married her she had already had, and possibly put an end to, a husband or so in private, forged perhaps a casual will, and led the county police a dance for a whole week. The mixture of crime and crinoline gives a reality to the story that is enough to take away the breath of any quiet, middle-aged gentleman who takes up such great works of fiction. He knows, from imaginative people like Shakespeare and others, how poison is supposed to be administered in high, fictitious life; that some prince catches another prince sleeping in a bower, and pours it in his ear, or that some beautiful Lucretia, after a festal banquet, hands a jewelled goblet containing it to a faithless lover. On the Turf, and among the lower classes, he is aware indeed that the operation is performed in a less theatrical way; but as he is neither a prince nor a faithless lover, nor a Dove, nor a Palmer, he concludes that he is tolerably safe and at some distance from all such stirring incidents.

But when he peruses the latest novel from the circulating library he is recalled to a sense of his insecure position. Bowers and poisoned goblets are all moonshine and nonsense. The thing is done every day much more simply, and with less ostentation, at a picnic. Blanche finished off Augustus when she handed him the cold pigeon pie with a joke about his appetite, and a hope that he would tell her if he felt inclined for more. When Marion stayed behind ostensibly to gather a wild rose in the hedge, she was in reality delayed for a minute or so in the occupation of stabbing Reginald and burying his body in a ditch. When she skips up, rose in hand, a quarter of an hour later, her laugh is just as genial as ever, and she will distribute five o'clock tea to her friends the same afternoon without a cloud on her sweet sunny brow. Such is the teaching of the novel of the age. A quiet man thinks all this very terrible, and opines that the book must have been written by a she fiend. Nothing of the kind. It has been written by the wife of the curate in an adjoining parish, or by a clever governess, or an amiable blue-stocking, whose time hangs heavy on her hands, and who composes this sort of thing when she is tired of composing hymns. It would indeed be unjust to represent the literary performances of this kind as coming from feminine pens only. Male writers turn out lovely murderesses also, but not so well got up, or so piquante or dashing, and they cannot, at best, help making their heroine look a little ghastly in spite of all effort. The homicidal heroine of "Armadale"—with respect to Mr. Wilkie Collins be it spoken—is not so fresh or so virginal or so natural as, let us say, Miss Braddon would have made her. *Dux femina facti.* Authoresses have led off in this line of late years, and any attempt on the part of authors to cope with or to imitate them is visited with the failure it deserves. The picnic and poison school is a feminine school of art, though masculine proselytes are admitted. This makes it all the more bewildering, as we have said, to ordinary observers. Assuming that incidents of this kind are not the more real or common because they are so commonly described, what are we to think of the imagination that loves to brood on them? In what strange grooves his feminine genius begun to travel!

The three-volume homicidal heroine may or may not have been, in the beginning, an attempt to introduce into the educated market an article which has been found productive of much emolument in a lower walk of literature, by the London *Journal* and other periodicals of the sort. If so, the adventure has been justified by success. If Belgravia and Mayfair did not tolerate tales of murder and of moonshine, the lending libraries would cease to patronize them; and the homicidal heroine, after walking the literary market in vain, would be compelled to fall back into her accustomed columns in the penny weeklies. As long as she fetches a price in the higher circles, she will continue to be produced with a rapidity and facility that is in itself a mark of some cleverness. Looking at the phenomenon from the economomical point of view, its occurrence is capable therefore of explanation. As it is in other things, so it is in three-volume novels. The supply keeps pace with the sale, and if the table-talk of Asmodeus would sell, whole editions of it would be written, printed, and published without any serious difficulty. But there are doubtless other causes that account for the manufacture of homicidal heroines. A romance must have something to hang itself upon. It may turn on the delineation, whether humorous or sentimental, of the shades of human life and character, or it may depend on the delineation of passion, or, lastly, it may be strong in incident of a sensational kind; but it must be one of the three, or it is no romance at all.

The gift of knowledge of the shades of life and character is not an ordinary one. It presupposes in the fortunate possessor either a keen observation of men and manners, coupled with some experience of both, or else, in some singular and exceptional cases, a rich and sensitive imagination, which makes up for want of experience of life by drawing on its own admirable resources. A real artist who labors at this class of creations does not necessarily attempt a universal portrait of mankind. If wise, he bounds his ambition by his powers or his experience, and confines himself to what he has studied, or seen, or felt himself. Within narrow limits, therefore, women are often really successful in this line. They cannot photograph the wide world; for one-hundredth part of its follies or vices or pursuits, unless they are unusually unlucky, they never can have observed. But give a first-rate authoress her own village or her own fireside, which she has seen, and she will produce upon them an admirable, and, occasionally, a humorous work. The creators of homicidal heroines are debarred from this field of operation for the simple reason that they have, as a rule, neither delicacy of perception nor humor. The homicidal heroine never comes to us in the shape of the heroine of a character novel, and no ray of humor ever penetrates into the pages that are devoted to the chronicling of her exploits. She would find herself more in place in a romance which turned upon human passion. Passion stands nearer to crime than humor or sentiment does, and Medea or Clytemnestra or Lady Macbeth would serve as heroines either in a passionate or purely sensational piece.

But the authoress who deals in homicidal heroines is met here again by the old difficulty. To draw any passion in a refined way requires refinement. It is no use dressing up lust or vanity or revenge in crinoline, or in uniform, and calling it a human being. To be a successful picture, the lust or the vanity, or whatever, in short, is the passion to be portrayed, ought to be superinduced upon a real substratum of human character—not to be made in a naked sort of way, to stand as the whole of the character itself. Othello is not jealousy, nor is Ophelia love. The former is a man overwhelmed with jealousy, and the latter is a woman, if not a lady, underneath all her affection. To make a good passionate romance, one ought accordingly to be able to construct a man or a woman, after doing which one may put the passion on. The homicidal heroine schools have not shown that they can draw a man or a woman, and no attempts at giving with fidelity the shrieks or the extravagant gestures of passion would ever make up for the deficiency. They are thrown back, accordingly, on the last remaining resource—that of supplying in incident what is wanting in sentiment, humor, and passion. And when they are thus driven to incident, and incident alone, they ought not perhaps be severely blamed for liking to have their incident of a good, downright startling kind. As the firing is to consist entirely of blank cartridge, they prudently put plenty of powder in, or else there would be no bang.

The least examination of the sensational romances which we are discussing will show even a superficial critic that they are devoid of the qualities that are to be found in better works. It is not merely that they are sensational. They are without humor, and unfinished as sketches of character and life. It is to a certain extent providential that it should be so. Heaven, which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, also fits the workman for his task. Homicidal heroines could not be turned out by humorous writers. Such writers would be shocked at the extravagance of their own conceptions, and common sense and humor would tone the heroine down till she was hardly homicidal, or at all events hardly sensational at all. Becky Sharp, in "Vanity Fair," is an instance in point. Mr. Thackeray's humor enabled him to put her into a novel without making the novel ridiculous or sensational. Take away Mr. Thackeray's humor and knowledge of character, and Becky Sharp would soon approximate to the Aurora Floyds or the Miss Gwilts of the day. As it is, she is as unlike them as a human being is unlike a ghoul. A strong proof of the inferiority of the modern article is afforded by the blunders in matters of detail into which the homicidal heroine-maker almost invariably falls. Having to do with murderers and murderesses, he has naturally something to say to the police and to the law.

Now it so happens that the procedure of a criminal court of justice is by no means complicated. A very little trouble and attention would be enough to familiarize anybody with it. Yet the homicidal heroine-maker never seems able to take this simple trouble, such as it is. His judges and his counsel and his attorneys are as little like the real thing as his murderers and murderesses are like the murderers and murderesses that figure in the dock. Balzac would have been twenty times as careful over details that played a far less striking part in his story. The accuracy of Balzac in minutiæ is often overrated, but, taken at its lowest, is wonderful enough, considering the range of subjects which he has handled.

The result is that the homicidal heroine cannot even succeed in being brought to justice with decent regularity. Deprive her of this last accessory, and as she is not set off humorously or characteristically, or even as real criminals are set off, with proper legal formalities, what is she, and what is the novel that tells us about her, at the best? It has certainly a plot, and often an ingenious one. But for this it would be a simple waxwork show. Two kinds of amusements are, however, to be derived from it—first, the amusement deducible from a clever conundrum or charade; and, secondly, the amusement that can be had for a shilling at Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. If Madame Tussaud could contrive a series of waxwork figures which would begin by looking like virtuous and lovely waxworks, and end by turning into wax murderesses, she would have accomplished in wax all that homicidal heroine-makers accomplish ordinarily upon paper. As a matter of taste we prefer the waxworks to the murderesses with balmoral boots and devilish eyes that stare at the public out of so many works of fiction. They are quite as natural, and they do not degrade literature. Nor are they laughable, although they may be monstrous; which cannot be said of all the crime and crinoline to which we are daily introduced with extraordinary gravity, and even conical solemnity, by some writers of the present generation.

A LOCKSMITH'S STORY.

I LIVE in San Francisco, and am a locksmith by trade. My calling is a strange one, and possesses a certain fascination, rendering it one of the most agreeable of pursuits. Many who follow it see nothing in it but labor—think of nothing but its returns in gold and silver. To me it has other charms than the money it produces. I am called upon almost daily to open doors and peer into long neglected apartments; to spring the stubborn locks of safes, and gloat upon the treasure piled within; to quietly enter the apartments of ladies with more beauty than discretion, and pick the locks of drawers containing peace-destroying missives, that the dangerous evidences of wandering affection may not reach the eye of a husband or father in possession of the missing key; to force the fastenings of cash boxes and depositories of records, telling of men made suddenly rich, of corporations plundered, of orphans robbed, of hopes crushed, of families ruined. Is there no charm in all this?—no food for speculation?—no scope for the range of pleasant fancy? Then, who would not be a locksmith, though his face is begrimed with the soot of the forge, and his hands are stained with rust?

But I have a story to tell—not exactly a story either—for a story implies the completion as well as the beginning of a narrative—and mine is scarcely more than the introduction to one. Let him who deals in things of fancy write the rest. In the Spring of 1856—I think it was in April—I opened a little shop on Kearney Street, and soon worked myself into a fair business. Late one evening a lady, closely veiled, entered my shop, and pulling from beneath a cloak a small japanned box, requested me to open it. The lock was curiously constructed, and I was all of an hour in fitting it with a key. The lady seemed nervous at the delay, and at length requested me to close the door. I was a little surprised at the suggestion, but of course complied. Shutting the door and returning to my work, the lady withdrew her veil, disclosing as sweet a face as can well be imagined. There was a restlessness in the eye and a pallor in the cheeks, however, which plainly told of a heart ill at ease, and in a moment every emotion for her had given place to that of pity.

"Perhaps you are not well, madam, and the night air is too chilly?" said I, rather inquisitively.

I felt a rebuke in her reply: "In requesting you to close the door, I had no other object than to escape the attention of persons."

I did not reply, but thoughtfully continued my work. She resumed: "That little box contains valuable papers—private papers—and I have lost the key, or it has been stolen. I should not wish to have you remember that I ever came here on such an errand," she continued, with some hesitation, and giving me a look which it was no difficult matter to understand.

"Certainly, madam, if you desire it. If I cannot forget your face, I will at least attempt to lose the recollection of ever seeing it here."

The lady bowed rather coldly at what I considered a fine compliment, and I proceeded with my work, satisfied that a sudden discovered partiality for me had nothing to do with the visit. Having succeeded, with much filing and fitting, in turning the lock, I was seized with a curiosity to get a glimpse at the precious contents of the box, and suddenly raising the lid, discovered a bundle of letters and a daguerreotype, as I slowly passed the box to its owner. She seized it hurriedly, and placing the letters and picture in her pocket, locked the box, and drawing the veil over her face, pointed to the door. I opened it, and as she passed into the street she merely whispered—"Remember!" We met again, and I have been thus particular in describing her visit to the shop to render probable a subsequent recognition.

About two o'clock in the morning, in the latter part of May following, I was awoke by a gentle tap upon the window of the little room back of the shop in which I lodged. Thinking of burglars I sprang out of bed, and in a moment was at the window with a heavy hammer in my hand, which I usually kept at that time within convenient reach of my bedside.

"Who's there?" I inquired, raising the hammer, and peering out into the darkness—for it was as dark as Egypt when under the curse of Israel's God.

"Hist!" exclaimed a figure, stepping in front of the window; "open the door, I have business for you."

"Rather past business hours, I should say; but who are you?"

"No one that would harm you," returned the voice, which I imagined was rather feminine for a burglar's.

"Nor no one that can," I replied, rather emphatically, by way of warning, as I tightened my grip upon the hammer, and proceeded to the door. I pushed back the bolt, and slowly opening the door, discovered the stranger already upon the steps.

"What do you want?" I abruptly inquired.

"I will tell you," answered the same soft voice, "if you dare open the door wide enough for me to enter."

"Come in," said I resolutely, throwing the door ajar, and proceeding to light a candle. Having succeeded, I turned to examine the visitor. He was a small and neatly dressed gentleman, with a heavy Raglan around his shoulders, and a blue navy cap drawn suspiciously over the eyes. As I advanced toward him he seemed to hesitate a moment, then he raised the cap from his forehead and looked me curiously in the face. I did not drop the candle, but I acknowledge to a little nervousness as I hurriedly placed the light upon the table, and silently proceeded to invest myself with two or three very necessary articles of clothing. As the Lord liveth, my visitor was a lady, and the same for whom I had opened the little box about a month before! Having completed my hasty toilet I attempted to stammer an apology for my rudeness, but utterly failed. The fact is I was confounded.

Smiling at my discomfiture, she said: "Disguise is useless; I presume you recognize me?"

"I believe I told you, madam, I should not soon forget your face. In what way can I serve you?"

"By doing half an hour's work before daylight to-morrow, and receiving five hundred dollars for your labor," was the reply.

"It is not ordinary work," said I, inquiringly, "that commands so munificent a compensation."

"It is labor common to your calling," returned the lady. "The price is not so much for the labor, as the condition under which it must be performed."

"What is the condition?" I inquired.

"That you will submit to being conveyed from and returned to your own door blind-folded."

Ideas of murder, burglary, and almost every other crime to villainy, hurriedly presented themselves in succession, as I politely bowed, and said: "I must understand something more of the character of the employment, as well as the conditions, to accept your offer."

"Will not five hundred dollars answer in lieu of an explanation?" she inquired.

"No, nor five thousand!"

She patted her foot nervously on the floor. I could see she had placed entirely too low an estimate on my honesty, and I felt some gratification in being able to convince her of the fact.

"Well, then, if it is absolutely necessary for me to explain," she replied, "I must tell you that you are required to pick the lock of a vault, and—"

"You have gone quite far enough, madam, with the explanation," I interrupted; "I am not at your service."

"As I said," she continued, "you are required to pick the lock of a vault, and rescue from death a man who has been confined there for three days."

"To whom does the vault belong?" I inquired.

"My husband," was the somewhat reluctant reply.

"Then why so much secrecy? or rather, how came a man confined in such a place?"

"I secreted him there to escape the observation of my husband. He suspected as much, and closed the door upon him. Presuming he had left the vault, and quitted the house by the back door, I did not dream, until to-day, that he was confined there. Certain suspicious acts of my husband this afternoon convince me that the man is there, beyond human hearing, and will be starved to death by my barbarous husband unless immediately rescued. For three days he has not left the house. I drugged him less than an hour ago, and he is now so completely stupified that the lock can be picked without his interference. I have searched his pockets, but could not find the key; hence my application to you. Now you know all; will you accompany me?"

"To the end of the world, madam, on such an errand."

"Then prepare yourself; there is a cab waiting at the door."

I was a little surprised, for I had not heard the sound of wheels. Hastily drawing on a coat, and providing myself with the required implements, I was soon at the door. There, sure enough, was the cab, with the driver in his seat, ready for the mysterious journey. I entered the vehicle, followed by the lady. As soon as I was seated she produced a heavy handkerchief, which, by the faint light of an adjacent street lamp, she carefully bound round my eyes. The lady seated herself beside me, and the cab started. In half an hour the vehicle stopped, in what part of the city I am entirely ignorant, as it was evidently driven in anything but a direct course from the point of starting.

Examining the bandage, to see that my vision was completely obscured, the lady handed me the bundle of tools with which I was provided; then taking me by the arm led me through a gate into a house which I knew was of brick, and after taking me along a passage-way which could not have been less than fifty feet in length, and down a flight of stairs into what was evidently an underground basement, stopped beside a vault, and removed the handkerchief from my eyes.

"Here is the vault, open it," said she, springing the door of a dark lantern, and throwing a beam of light upon the lock.

I seized a bunch of skeleton keys, and after a few trials, which the lady seemed to watch with the most painful anxiety, sprang the bolt. The door swung upon its hinges, and my companion, telling me not to close it, as it was self-locking, sprang into the vault. I did not follow. I heard the murmur of low voices within, and the next moment the lady reappeared, and leaning upon her arm a man, with a face so pale and haggard that I started at the sight. How he must have suffered during the three long days of his confinement!

"Remain here," she said, handing me the lantern; "I will be back in a moment."

The two slowly ascended the stairs, and I heard them enter a room immediately above where I was standing. In less than a minute the lady returned.

"Shall I close it, madam?" said I, placing my hand upon the door of the vault.

"No! no!" she exclaimed, hastily seizing my arm; "it awaits another occupant!"

"Madam, you certainly do not intend to—"

"Are you ready?" she interrupted, impatiently holding the handkerchief to my eyes. The thought flashed across my mind that she intended to push me into the vault, and bury me and my secret together. She seemed to read the suspicion, and continued: "Do not be alarmed; *you* are not the man!"

"I could not mistake the truth of the fearful meaning of the remark, and I shuddered as I bent my head to the handkerchief. My eyes were as carefully bandaged as before, and I was led to the cab, and thence driven home by a more circuitous route, if possible, than the one by which we came. Arriving in front of the house the handkerchief was removed, and I stepped from the vehicle. A purse of five hundred dollars was placed in my hand, and in a moment the cab and its mysterious occupant had turned the corner and were out of sight.

I entered the shop, and the purse of gold was the only evidence I could summon in my bewilderment that all I had just done and witnessed was not a dream.

A month after that I saw the lady and the gentleman taken from the vault walking leisurely along Montgomery Street. I do not know, but I believe the sleeping husband awoke within the vault, and his bones are there to-day! The wife is still a resident of San Francisco.

ORGAN-GRINDERS.

A NEW YORK paper says the appearance of the organ-grinder in any city indicates, like the presence of the swallow, the welcome approach of the Summer. Like the fly, he remains in a state of torpor during the cold spell, as Merriam would have it; and he imitates the ant and the spider by shielding himself in his nest from the storms which he scents in advance. This description, however, applies only to one section of the Italians who move the handles of the hurdy-gurdy. There are others—and they are the most numerous—who rush in advance of the Winter season to more genial climes, where the palm, the cedar, and the lily flourish; and thus, by the strategy of travel, enjoy not only perpetual summer, but an ample reward for their musical labors.

The members of the latter class have just made their *debut* in this city for the Spring season. They returned during the past month, and immediately joined their families in their old settlement in Baxter Street. The re-unions in some instances were curious and strange. Monkeys who had been left behind united with their kindred in greeting their old masters, who had comfortably provided for them in various boarding-houses in the Points devoted exclusively to the care of the ring-tailed tribe, the cost of living for each ranging from one dollar to one dollar and a half per week. Nearly all these monkeys are trained in Paris by Italians, and their prices vary from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty dollars, the latter quotations ruling for such monkeys as can tumble, dance, and discharge pistols.

There are about one hundred and fifty organ-grinders now in this city, who decide each week the musical routes they shall take, in order to avoid any possible interference with each other. But few of these own organs; they are generally rented at from two to three dollars a week by a joint-stock company, who have made a large fortune by the business. They live economically, their earnings—about ten or twelve dollars a week—requiring them to do so. They have adopted a peculiar mode of avoiding high rents, for several families occupy one room, undivided by a partition, the bounds of each so distinctly understood as to avoid all possibility of trespass on another's section. General Jackson never hated paper money more than these self-same organ-grinders; they love pennies and silver and gold. In many instances their children have been taught to play the violin and sing in the streets, a calling which brings them three dollars a week. Living exclusively on maccaroni, their board costs them but a trifle, and they are accordingly enabled to hoard up riches for old age. Although they carefully avoid burthening themselves with the privilege of citizenship, they give the law but little trouble, an arrest among them taking place about once a year.

Such are the men who are now playing "Annie Laurie," the "Marseillaise," and the "Wearing of the Green" in our streets.

OLD LETTERS.

NEVER burn kindly-written letters; it is so pleasant to read them over when the paper is yellow with age, and the hands that traced the friendly words are folded over the heart that prompted them, under the green sward. Above all, never burn love-letters. To read them in after years is like a resurrection of one's youth. The elderly spinster finds in the impassioned offer foolishly rejected twenty years ago a fountain of rejuvenescence. Glancing over it she realizes that she was once a belle and a beauty, and beholds her former self in a mirror much more congenial to her taste than the one that confronts her in her dressing-room. The "widow indeed" derives a sweet and solemn consolation from the letters of the beloved one who has journeyed before her to the far-off land, from which there comes no message, and where she hopes one day to join him. No photograph can so vividly recall to the memory of the mother the tenderness and devotion of the children who have left at the call of Heaven as the epistolary outpourings of their love. The letter of a son or daughter to a true mother is sometimes better than an image of the features; it is a reflex of the writer's soul. Keep all loving letters. Burn only the harsh and cruel ones; and in burning them forgive and forget them.

LONDON BOYS.

THIS affliction of the streets has grown up to its present monster proportions within the current century; and it continues growing. It would be against the grain of reason to suppose that in the old stately ages of our history, or even in the jaunty days of Ranelagh, boys could have been what they are now. We take it for granted that they were born with an entirely different set of notions of themselves, and of the surrounding world in which they were permitted to expand. Probably the low posterns; or the dim lattice windows; or the narrow causeways; or the mighty farthingales that created awe wherever they moved; or the long waste stretches of ground, relieved here and there by gardens and orchards that interposed between the patches of streets, may have had something to do with it; but it is not to be conceived that in times when there were great city processions and masques and mummeries on the highway; when there were sights to be seen out of doors which filled the eyes and thoughts of old and young; and when reverence was paid to functions and offices which have since fallen into contempt, it is not to be conceived that boys had it all their own way, and maintained such a reign of terror as they do now. From the earliest ages they have been wiser than men; but that seems to be a providential arrangement, by which practical lessons are, as it were, taken by storm out of life in the first ardor of youth, that could not be obtained by the natural process of growth. We do not object to their supremacy as philosophers, because that is a dispensation which, whatever social disturbance it may occasion, is pretty sure to come right in the end. But we do object to their violent assertion of exclusive rights on the pavement of the metropolis. Old heads upon young shoulders is one thing; but heads with brass throats and a corresponding supply of implements of war is another. We are ready to admit that "Youth's the season made for joys;" but we strenuously object to the new reading, "Youth's the season made for noise."

Why the existing generation should be more riotous than its predecessors is a question that we will not undertake to solve. Perhaps the diffusion of knowledge is implicated in the responsibility, or the rapid increase of population by which the young may be destined to force the old off the scene, as the enlightened white man pushes forward on the hunting grounds of the Indian; but whatever may be the cause the fact is patent. Take an example or two.

THE WOMEN OF DAMARA.

BAINES, the traveller in Southwest Africa, in describing female costume, says of that of the Damara women: "The bonnets are very elaborate pieces of furniture. The head-piece is of stout hide, bent while still soft to fit the head, and kept in form by rows of ornamental stitching; the ears seem to be slightly thinner, and are also stitched in such patterns as to give them the proper hollow. The curtain, or sunshade, or 'ugly,' in front, is of very soft leather, and is rolled more or less back at pleasure; and the long strings of the iron tubing pendent down the back were formerly made of good, thick, honest iron, purchased, like their assagais and other ornaments of metal, from the Ovambo. Now, however, since the country has been visited by Englishmen, pieces of hoop and tin are generally substituted. The weight of such a head-dress is no trifle, and thinking on one occasion that my sister must be weary, I told her to leave her bonnet with me and go to my hut—about the most fearful breach of etiquette, I presently found, a Damara woman could be guilty of; for Dikkop, if he did not die of shame at seeing her shaven head uncovered, would infallibly kill her for appearing before him in such dishabille. Actual infidelity would be laughed at compared with such offence against the conventionality of Damara land. The iron ornaments worn like gaiters on the ankle are also generally of Ovambo make. The sandals, which in a picture might appear too large, are purposely made so, the pointed ends projecting three or four inches beyond the toe and heel; the thong passes up through the sole between the great toe and the next, encircles the heel, and is confined about the middle of the foot by a smaller thong on each side knotted through the sole.

HE who, without call or office, industriously recalls the remembrance of past errors, to confound him who has sincerely repented of them, is heedless and unfeeling.