

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE.

The Remarkable London Institution Which Was Suggested by a Novel.

All the good people who are interested in modern forms of philanthropy and the progress of the universal brotherhood idea point to the People's Palace in London as the great work accomplished through nineteenth century reform. It is situated on the Mile End road in London. The people of the neighborhood bore a striking resemblance to the mass of working people everywhere. They were not vile and degraded, but their lives were hopelessly dull, without mental or spiritual interests, excitements and pleasures. Walter Besant looked upon this state of the working people—wretched and stunted in all their enjoyments existing together with some degree of prosperity. He thought the matter over and wrote a novel. This book, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," advanced the idea of a people's palace of innocent amusement and social recreation for the poor. The tale made a deep and lasting impression, and the people's palace of London is the result of it. It is called the greatest attempt ever made in England to elevate the taste, promote the amusement and raise the social, scientific and aesthetic tastes of all the working people. At present the palace is in full swing. Nearly three thousand students work daily in the schools and lecture-rooms. Great concerts are given, sometimes as many as four thousand men and women of the so-called lower orders listening to a high order of music. There are swimming baths for men and boys, a gymnasium, a skating rink, a magnificent winter garden of tropical plants, a library and reading-room.

They have all sorts of good times there—the Mile End road people. Not only do the men and women develop their muscles and expand their chests with the apparatus provided for those purposes; not only do lecturers, classes, laboratories and all sorts of complicated mental machinery do as much for the minds as the gymnastic appliances for the bodies, but amusement, pure and simple, does also. Pure and simple that has no hidden improvement in it—sugar that does not coat a pill. Of course, the improving amusements are many. Music delights the Mile End ear and elevates the Mile End musical taste. High art pleases the Mile End ear and elevates the Mile End nature of the Mile End. But there are amusements beneath whose smiling exterior no lesson is hidden.

There are balls. A ball in the people's palace is a thing to remember. It doesn't differ so very much from balls elsewhere, except that the floor is better, the hall-room larger and lighter and the music more inspiring. The young men do not all wear dress suits. Indeed, dress suits are so few that the unhappy wearer of one is apt to feel himself rather conspicuous. The young women's gowns are not all delectable, but they flutter with ribbon and gauze in the approved style of other ball-rooms. The black-coated swains fill up their programmes of dances with the same easy air that prevails elsewhere. They circle about with no more bumping and no more collisions than other dancers. And their supper is a delicious one of sandwiches, pastry puffs, lemonade, tea, coffee and ices. Mild flirtations are indulged in at a people's palace ball, and are reported to be as wholesome an educational influence as lectures and gymnasium appliances.—N. Y. World.

How Vultures Were Fooled. Last week some sports took place at a station in Upper Burma, one of the events being what is popularly known as a "Victoria Cross race"—that is, the competitors have to ride some distance, taking to or three hurdles on their way, to a point where there are arranged a number of figures stuffed in cases, shaped like human bodies; they then dismount, fire a round of blank cartridge, pick up a dummy each and race back. In this case, after the sports were over, the dummies were left on the ground, and in about half an hour after the ground was deserted. I noticed a vulture settle on the ground close to the dummies; in about another five minutes more than thirty had collected. The birds seemed much puzzled as they circled about the each lay figure, walking from one to the next all along the line, and eventually, after sitting in a circle for a short time, flew away. These birds must have discovered the dummies by sight, though I have often heard that vultures rely on their sense of smell as well.—Spectator.

The Washbone Luncheon. A pretty idea in the way of bridal luncheon is the "washbone." Directly over the table, suspended from the chandelier, is a large washbone of white roses and smilax, the smilax, twined with roses, being carried to the four corners of the table. All of the decorations of the table a floral washbone rests on two parallel bands of satin ribbon, which extend the length of the table, ending in large bows. The menu cards are white and gilt-edged. The guests' cards are square, and at one side is a genuine washbone, gilded and fastened to the card by a bow of narrow satin ribbon. Extending the length of the bone, in small gilt letters, are the words: "A golden wish for you." The favors are gold washbone stickpins.—N. Y. Sun.

Ambiguous. Miss Sweetly—I think your writings resemble some works of the greatest writers. Young Scribbler (delighted)—In what manner? Miss Sweetly—You will not live to see them appreciated.—Jury.

Why, of Course. Podsnap—This newspaper says that Pope Leo own a fine farm. Mrs. P. Now, who should a pope want a farm? Mrs. P.—Why, I suppose, Podsnap, he has to pasture his bulls somewhere.—Truth.

Mrs. Huswife—Why does the baker's young man hurry away in that absurd fashion, Sarah? He hardly gives himself time to deliver the bread. Exceptionally Flirtatious—No, mum. You see, it's leap year, mum.—Fanny Folks.



BY WILLIAM WESTALL.

CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

"I must tell you that at the outbreak of the revolution the regiment to which I belonged joined the rebels. As I could not turn my sword against the king, I left the army, and, escaping from Paris by the skin of my teeth, reached the chateau de Gex, in the romantic Jura country, which the flood of sedition and treason had not yet reached. My father had always dwelt among his people, and so confident was he in their loyalty that, although the peasants in other parts of the province were burning down the chateaux and murdering the seigneurs, he felt sure that no harm would befall him or his. I did not agree with him; I knew that sooner or later our place would be attacked like the others; and I prevailed on him to send my mother and my sister to Geneva, where, as I thought, they would be safe. But my father refused to budge. He was resolved to stay at Gex and defend his property to the last; and, albeit the result was disastrous, I think he was right. If French gentlemen, instead of deserting their posts at the first alarm, had stayed at home and done their duty, the revolution, though it might not have been averted, would have been shorn of half its terrors. The canaille were left to themselves, and the republic they set up has become one of the vilest tyrannies since the world began.

"After awhile we heard that a band of miscreants from Lyons were marching northward, stirring up the peasants to insurrection and murdering and plundering in the name of liberty. Still my father did not believe that they would trouble us, and it was only when they were in the next commune that he allowed me to prepare for the worst. I did all I could—furnished up our arms, got in supplies of food and ammunition, barricaded doors and windows, and organized a small garrison, consisting of the gamekeepers and three or four old servants, whose loyalty was beyond doubt.

"The old chateau, though strongly built, was, of course, quite incapable of withstanding artillery, but to a force armed only with muskets and pitchforks it could offer a stout resistance. We were in the next commune that he allowed me to prepare for the worst. I did all I could—furnished up our arms, got in supplies of food and ammunition, barricaded doors and windows, and organized a small garrison, consisting of the gamekeepers and three or four old servants, whose loyalty was beyond doubt.

"The next day we were beset by the Lyons mob, reinforced by several hundred peasants, among whom were many of our neighbors and tenants. "The last thing they expected was resistance. All the other seigneurs had either left their houses to take care of themselves, or yielded at the first summons; and when we answered their demand to surrender with a volley of musketry the second day, they were chaff before the wind. But, quickly rallying, they returned to the charge and opened a regular siege. A great deal of gunpowder was burnt, and, though little impression was made on the chateau, we were kept continually on the alert and forced to expend our ammunition at a rate that rendered our defeat a mere question of time, and a very short time. And we had nothing to hope from the authorities; they were against us; and the number of our assailants increased every hour.

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"I don't know yet. I have not seen my room. But men have got out of stronger places than this, and what others can do we can do." "It is impossible; the windows are barred and the prison well guarded both within and without." "All the same I mean to try. I made up my mind to escape within five minutes of my capture; I have been on the lookout for an opportunity ever since, and I know that it will come." "Very likely; but I fear that it will not come soon enough to save my life. We cannot escape by a coup de main. We need time, patience, opportunity, and this day may be my last. I can think of only one possibility which offers a gleam of hope, and that is so remote as not to be worth thinking about—the immediate overthrow of the directory by Gen. Bonaparte."

old servant to whom I made myself known had not betrayed me; I should have succeeded. "I need not go into details. I was arrested, sent to Paris, and ten days ago sentenced to death as a returned emigrant. "You see now why I require a trustworthy friend. My sister and mother are eating the bitter bread of exile—when they can get it—yet there is property at Gex, rightly ours, a small property which would render them independent for life. But I cannot help them; my days, my very hours, are numbered. Will you undertake the enterprise in which I have failed—the saving of the treasure?"

"You forget that I am a prisoner like yourself, Moreover— "A prisoner of war, sure sooner or later to be exchanged. But hear my proposal. I do not ask you to do this merely for the sake of two women that you never saw and for whom you cannot care. The collection at Gex is worth, at the worst, fifty thousand pounds sterling, and would find ready purchasers in London. Half this sum will make my mother and sister more than happy. The other half I offer to you as a compensation for your risk and trouble; and if you succeed you will richly deserve it. I may also weigh somewhat with you that by agreeing to my proposal you will lift a heavy load from the mind of a doomed man, and confer a great favor on two forlorn women, who, I can promise you, will not be ungrateful."

CHAPTER III. Truly a tempting offer. Twenty-five thousand pounds, the gratitude of two noble ladies, and the sense of satisfaction that comes from a good action, and all I had to do for it was the recovery of a treasure the whereabouts of which were well known and would be imparted to me.

It seemed almost too good to be possible; but there were several little difficulties in the way which the chevalier had seemingly taken into account. "What I can do to oblige the ladies and yourself I will, was my answer; "but you forget that I also am a prisoner." "You will be exchanged." "When it pleases the directory, and that may not be for a long time. And though I were exchanged I should not like to abandon a career which I prefer to any other, and in which I hope to gain distinction, even for twenty-five thousand pounds."

"You could get leave." "No, my ship is in commission, and as she is one of the smartest frigates in the service will remain so as long as the war lasts. Besides, I should lose my chance of promotion, to say nothing of the chance of being arrested and shot as a spy." "The war will not last." "You think so?" "Yes. The royalist feeling is gaining ground daily, and I have reason to believe that Gen. Bonaparte will play the part of monk and bring back the king."

"In that case your mother and sister will come back with him and claim their own." "Unfortunately there is nothing for them to claim. The chateau and estates were confiscated by the national convention and are now the property of various occupying owners, who would perish rather than give up possession. My mother's right to the treasure would be contested and she would end by getting nothing, even though she had the wherewithal to fight a protracted lawsuit. No, it can be recovered only through stratagem and address, and by a man of energy and resource like yourself."

"You are pleased to be complimentary; but never mind that," I said, after a moment's thought. "To the point. Apart from any advantage to myself, I should be ready to help Mme. de Gex and her daughter, their own lives and I promise you that as soon as the war is over, or sooner if opportunity should offer, I will make the attempt; and the first time I am in England I will see these ladies."

"That is all I can expect," exclaimed the chevalier, grasping my hand. "I will draw a little sketch of the chateau and show you where the treasure is concealed. I must also give you a letter to my mother, in which I shall set forth our agreement, as expressed, however, that only you and herself will understand its purport. Perhaps I had better do this to-day; I may not be here to-morrow." "I could not help shuddering. I was beginning to like the man; he had a winning way with him; and it made me feel bad to think that within twenty-four hours he might have to lay his head on the block.

"I am sure you will be here to-morrow; and I don't believe this shameful sentence will be carried out. It would be sheer murder." "My dear sir, the directory don't stop at murder, and to returned emigrants they show no mercy. I have abandoned hope." "You have done a very bad thing. I would not abandon hope though I were on my way to the scaffold. Why shouldn't we try to escape?" "Escape! How?" "I don't know yet. I have not seen my room. But men have got out of stronger places than this, and what others can do we can do." "It is impossible; the windows are barred and the prison well guarded both within and without." "All the same I mean to try. I made up my mind to escape within five minutes of my capture; I have been on the lookout for an opportunity ever since, and I know that it will come." "Very likely; but I fear that it will not come soon enough to save my life. We cannot escape by a coup de main. We need time, patience, opportunity, and this day may be my last. I can think of only one possibility which offers a gleam of hope, and that is so remote as not to be worth thinking about—the immediate overthrow of the directory by Gen. Bonaparte."

"Yes, I will see Mme. Bonaparte. She is a Creole of Martinique; my mother is a Creole of Martinique. They knew each other when they were girls. I will see her on short leave just before the 15th, and I will ask her if my mother was talking of her old friend Josephine de la Pagerie, and the strange fortune which made her the wife of one general who died on the scaffold and of another who was marching from victory to victory. I will write to Mme. Bonaparte, tell her who I am, and ask for an interview—which she is sure to grant—and when she receives me I will ask her to get me exchanged and you relieved."

"Ma foi! you also mean to march from victory to victory, I think. Still, it is possible though I doubt whether even Bonaparte has the power to revoke a regular sentence. And there is a serious preliminary difficulty. How will you forward your letter to Mme. Bonaparte? If in the ordinary way and openly, it may be detained by the directors' prisons, and as likely as not, never reach its destination. You will also have an agent of police here, and perhaps be interrogated; for these gentlemen of the directory are terribly jealous of Bonaparte."

"And time is of the utmost importance. How would it do to give one of the warders a five-franc piece and ask him to put the letter in the post?" "He will take the money and keep the letter, or get credit for himself by handing it to the governor." "Well, it must be arranged somehow. My letter must reach Mme. Bonaparte this very day, or, at latest, to-morrow morning, and I have no other idea. You know Mme. Carmine?" "The governor's daughter."

"Yes, I breakfasted with her this morning. She is good-looking, and, better still, has kindly ways and sympathetic eyes. I think I could persuade her to help us, either by taking my letter to Mme. Bonaparte herself or sending it by a sure hand. Would it be possible to see her, do you think?" "Did I not say you were a man of resource? I put a good deal of thought, first time relaxing into a smile. "A man of ideas, too. And I should not be at all surprised if you have made an impression on Mme. Carmine's heart. She is dark and you are fair, and I have noticed that brunettes always take kindly to blonde men, and vice versa, like yourself. As for seeing her, there is nothing easier. I will manage that. But first of all write your letter."

As to this there was no difficulty, for, being political prisoners, we were treated with every indulgence compatible with our safe-keeping. When the letter, into the composition of which I put a good deal of thought, was written, De Gex called the warder on duty, and slipping a pour-boire into his hand, asked him to inform Citoyenne Carmine, with his compliments, that the English gentleman, Citoyen Roy, would very much like to see her; he had found the answer to the conundrum which she asked him at breakfast.

The warder answered with a knowing look that he understood perfectly (which I am sure he did not), and he would see Citoyenne Carmine as soon as possible, and let us know what she said. "You on earth did you say that?" I asked De Gex, when the man was gone. "There was nothing about a conundrum." "To puzzle the warder and pique the lady's curiosity. She will scent a mystery and send for you at once."

De Gex proved a true prophet. The warder returned in a few minutes and said that Citoyenne Carmine would receive me in the salon. But he must ask me to give him my parole d'honneur not to attempt to escape; unless I did, it would be his duty to assist me at the interview.

I gave my parole and told him to lead the way; and as we walked across the court to the governor's apartments I made up my mind to be perfectly frank with the citoyenne, and try to obtain her cooperation in my enterprises. After ushering me into a little salon and saying he would return for me in half an hour, the warder withdrew. "My dear sir, what a strange message is this you send me!" said the citoyenne, who just then entered the room. "A conundrum, indeed! You have set me a conundrum. What does it mean?"

"Ah, mademoiselle—" "It is against regulations." "Never mind the regulations; we are en tete-a-tete, and mademoiselle is ever so much prettier than 'citoyenne,' don't you think? As for the conundrum—well, it was absolutely necessary for me to see you."

"And so you made me the victim of a trick." "Ah, mademoiselle, I am sure that when you know my object you will forgive me. Those beautiful eyes bespeak a tender heart." "And with that I took her hand. Though not in the first bloom of youth, she was a fine young woman, and in her director's dress, which showed her beautifully-rounded arms, looked really charming. "And your object is, monsieur—" she said, making a not very energetic effort to free her hand. "Your object is—" "To save the life of a brave man." "Who?" "The Chevalier de Gex." "It is useless, monsieur. He is condemned. Nothing can save him." "I can, mademoiselle—with your help." "If I can help you?" "By conveying this letter to Mme. Bonaparte. See you can read it. I have no secrets from you." "It is making a not very energetic effort to free her hand. "Your object is—" "To save the life of a brave man." "Who?" "The Chevalier de Gex." "It is useless, monsieur. He is condemned. Nothing can save him." 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