aug 26 1887

MAKE THE BURDEN LIGHTER.

"Let me carry your pail, my dear,
Brimming over with water!"
"No I'll take hold, and you take hold."
Answered the farmer's daughter.

And she would have her own sweet way,
As her merry eyes grew brighter;
So she took hold and he took hold,
And it made the burden lighter.

And every day the burden seemed
Lighter by being divided;
For he took hold, and she took hold,
By the self-same spirit guided.

Till by and by they learned to love,
And each trust in the other,
Till she for him, one twilight dim,
Left father and left mother.

When storm and sunshine mingled they
Would seldom trouble borrow,
And when it came they met the same
With bright hope of to-morrow.

And now they're at the eve of life,
While Western skies grow brighter,
For she took hold, and he took hold,
And it made the burden lighter.

—Boltimorean.

A STEADFAST FLAME.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS

The time referred to was near 20 years ago. I was then private secretary or general factotum of the millionnaire, John Rawlinson. How and where he picked me up and attached me to him is of no consequence, for the story has no relation to myself. Yet the episode may be of some value as showing something of him.

It happened at the Parker House, Boston. I had come to the city to look up a rich relative, from whom I had reason to expect profitable employment. Standing at the desk I registered in that large, round backhand that is part of me. I turned to step away and saw that a heavy man with a dull-looking face, relieved by piercing little gray eyes, had been looking over my shoulder.

"Hold on sir," he said. "I want to see you."

He seized the pen, scored off the name "John Rawlinson" in a crabbed hand, and asked me to step into the reading-room with him.

He motioned me to a chair, and took one himself. Then without a word, he stared at me for a full minute.

The oddity of the thing struck me. I laughed.

"You'll know me when you see me again, I hope," was my remark.

"You write just as old Max Bert used to," he said. "Max was my confidential clerk years ago. He fell into the lake at Chicago and was drowned. I want you to write my letters. Who are you, anyway?"

I told him.

"Poor young fellow; no relatives; college-bred—eh!"

"No relations but the uncle I came here to look for, and I'm not sure that he will acknowledge me. I never saw a college; and as for poverty—when I pay for my dinner, I don't know where I shall get another."

The strange man deliberately ended his inspection of me.

"I rather like your face; I certainly like your account of yourself. I haven't any relatives, either; they do a man no good. I hate colleges, because they take bright young fellows and make conceited asses out of them. I started poor, and I like to see others do the same. Do you want good employment?"

"Above all things, sir."

"I'll give you $500 the first year, and pay your expenses to go with me, write for me and attend to my interests generally."

I accepted the offer on the spot.

"You ought to understand, sir, that I'm called eccentric; and when a man worth a million gets that name, there must be something in it. And then I'm traveling about all the time. You'll go where I go. Does this change your mind?"

"No, sir."

"Very well. Come into dinner. I pay the bills."

Before the end of that year we had journeyed many thousands of miles by railroad, steamboat and stage in thirteen states. My business connections with him lasted almost three years.

During all the time I had never discovered that John Rawlinson had a permanent home. We stopped at hotels. I never knew him to make a visit to any person except strictly in the way of business. I soon began to see that he was avoiding the people who had known him in the past years. He never breathed a word to me of his previous life, nor did he encourage my talk on anything except business. I found abundant occupation in writing his letters, reading and briefing up his mail, which followed him over the country, and taking careful notes of all the information that he collected. His business was entirely the seeking of promising investments in real estate. I have understood, since then, some of his shrewdness and foresight. Dozens of thriving cities exist now, where in that day was nothing but the virgin forest or prairie; very few of them but were marked in advance by Mr. Rowlinson's keen eye as promising sites; and I have no doubt that these timely investments have increased his millions ten fold.

One day at a hotel in a southwestern city a gentleman accosted him, spoke his name and offered his hand. Mr. Rawlinson returned his salutation indifferently, made some casual remark and turned abruptly away.

I followed the stranger out on the street.

"Tell me something of that man you spoke to," I said. "I have been in his employ for months, and I can't learn anything about him."

"He was a grain operator in Chicago. They said that he had made money there, and knew enough to quit with it. That,s all I know of him."

"Hasn't he had some trouble?"

"Some family difficulty, I believe. His wife died, if I remember right. But I can't recall anything of it."

When business did not occupy him, and often on our journeys he was habitually plunged into the depths of absorbing thought. At such times his face would assume a sombre cast, and an expression of the deepest melancholy would overspread it. But his reflections were kept to himself. He gave me no confidence outside of business affairs, in which I was implicitly trusted.

The end of employment was reached through a curious adventure which must be told in detail.

We were in a half-fledged town in Missouri. It is a great city now. The railroads had then just commenced to reach out for it, and its "boom" was but mildly started. Everything was in a kind of chaos. There were ungraded and muddy streets, with brick and plank sidewalks, and no sidewalks at all; there were promiscuous stocks of goods from St. Louis tumbled in retail stores together to meet the pressing demands of the increasing population, hardware and calico being sold over the same counter; and there were two or three great canvasaries of hotels, well dressed gentlemen struggled with red-shirted, long-booted sons of the border for a seat at the table. And there was a traveling theatrical company in town. Great colored pictorial bills announced that the play of "Ingomar, the Barbarian," would be presented that night, with the great London tragedian, Mr. Templemore in the title role, while the beautiful and accomplished Miss Gertrude Devereaux would assume the part of Parthenia.

That night Mr. Rawlinson, contrary to all my experience of him, was restless and uneasy. If I was superstitions, I would say with him, "coming events cast their shadows before." Supposing that he wished my company no more than he ever had at the close of the day, I was about to withdraw from the hotel, when he asked me, with chasteristic abruptness, "Where are you going?"

"Merely to walk about town."

"I'll go with you."

As we went along the streets he made an effort to talk, but I could see that it was only his uneasy frame of mind breaking through his usual abstraction. We passed a crowd in front of a great board building, where flaring colored lights illuminated the posters of "Ingomar."

"What's this?" he asked.

"A play," I replied.

"Theater?—yes, I used to go often. I havn't seen a play for many years. Let's go up."

"You'll hardly see anything in there to please you," I demurred.

"No matter I feel like most anything for diversion."

We paid our 25 cents respectively, and ascended the dirty stairs. We entered a hall furnished with wooden benches, where 500 people, seven-eighth of them men, were seated on the same level, smoking, talking and "chaffing" the performers. On a scantily furnished stage a loud-mouth, brawling Ingomar was holding torth to the captive Myron and the outlaws about him. Mr. Rawlinson and I obtained seats with some difficulty. He glanced at the stage and the audience, and then became absorbed in his thoughts. Not anticipating the slightest pleasure from the performance, I continued to look idly at Ingomar, and was not long in detecting in his voice that peculiar horseness that results from indulgence in spirits.

Presently Parthenia appeared. To the crowd around us all acting was the same; and I certainly was not impressed with the lady's power as an actress. Her lines were delivered coldly and correctly. There was not the slightes feeling manifested in any thing she uttered. But she had one quallity that impressed me at once; she had the true stage presence. She was tall and shapely, though rather thin, and neither paint nor powder could hide the fact that she was still beautiful. The rude audience were impressed just as I was, and respectfully refrained from any "guying" of the lady.

As the play proceeded I became aware that my companion was becoming deeply interested in it. He bent forward and kept his eyes fixed on the stage. Once or twice I whispered to him, but he made no reply. From this time his attention never flagged till the curtain was finally rung down. Then, amid the bosterous stamping, clapping and unearthly cat-calls that summoned the Barbarian and his bride before the curtain, Mr. Rawlinson shouted in my ear:

"Where do these actors stay?"

"At the Windsor, I believe."

"Come and show me."

The exit to the street was narrow and unlighted, so that the performers had reached their quarters by the back passage some time before we could get there. Mr. Rawlinson called for the manager of the troupe, and a gross-looking man in velveteen with a profusion of jewelry, came to the sitting room.

"I have business with your leading lady—Miss Devereaux," said Mr. Rawlinson, quietly, referring to the playbill. "Can I see her?"

The manager was plainly no gentleman himself, but he knew one when he saw him. Something in the manner of the other impressed him.

"That's Ned Blake's wife," he said. "The fact is," and the manager laughed. "Ned is as a jealous fool, and makes all kind of rows in the company. I'll speak to him.

Three minutes after the Ingomar of half an hour before entered. The interval between the stage and real one had been a brief one; but not too brief to allow Mr. Blake to become decidedly drunk. His eyes were bloodshot, his tongue thick, his gait uncertain.

"Wha-a you want o' my wife?" he blustered. At the sight of Mr. Rawlinson his legs and his voice abruptly paused.

"I want Ethel—not you. Send her here."

He left the room at once. When he next entered he was following Parthenia in a diffident way.

With the paint and powder removed, she was still a handsome woman of thirty, pale and thin, with great speaking eyes which at once made me understand the chief charm of her stage presence.

She saw Mr. Rawlinson; she gave a cry and started toward him with open arms.

"O, father!"

"Wait!"

"He stood with his arms folded. She paused. He spoke very gently but firmly, as I had never heard him speak.

"I want to take you back, my child; my heart is hungry for you. But you must leave this worthless creature. Will you?"

She looked from father to husband. The struggle was fierce but brief. She went to Blake as he leaned against the wall and clasped her hands on his shoulder.

"He is my husband," she simply said.

"Strike the old man for money!" I plainly heard from him, in a sepulchral whisper.

John Rawlinson groaned as he left the room and the house, looking neither to the right nor left. I followed him in silence. As he strode on, and as I bestirred myself to overtake him, a shout followed us. I looked back and saw Edward Blake lurching heavily along.

"Can't you do something for a fellow, Mr. Rawls?" he hiccoughed. "Say a fifty—or—or—"

Something like an oath came from the man addressed, as he disappeared in the darkness.

He had already gone up to his room when I reached the hotel, and I did not disturb him—as, indeed, I had no excuse to do so. He came down to breakfast the next morning, looking as solid and impassive as usual. But the bootblack told me afterward that as he went his rounds very early, he heard somebody in room 17 walking the floor and groaning.

Two men sitting opposite us conversed so loudly that we heard all they said.

"Hear the play last night?"

"Yes I reckon the afterpiece was rather better."

"Afterpiece? There wasn't any?"

"It happened over at the Windsor, where the actors stop. The leading man is a drunken brute; the women with the fine figure and eyes is his wife. It appears her father, some rich old hunks, hunted her up, and wanted her to come back home to him. She wouldn't leave her husband—just like a woman!—and he got into a drunken rage because she wouldn't strike the old man for money. He chased her through the hall, and fell down stairs. The scoundrel broke his neck—and it served him right."

"Kill him?"

"Yes."

With pale and rigid face Mr. Rawlinson rose from the table. He looked toward me. I understood it. We walked over to the Windsor without a word. In the room where we had left her the night before we found Ethel Blake, sitting by her worthless clay as it waited for the coffin. She saw her father, and this time she fell upon his breast. I saw there what I would not have believed the day before could ever happen.

John Rawlinson cried!

"O Ethel, what misery you have caused!" the strong man sobbed. "You broke your poor mother's heart. You ruined our happy home. You made me a wretched wanderer. What did you get for all this?"

Should the years of Methusaleh be mine, I shall never forget how she turned to her dead, and, laying her hand on his forehead, said;

"He was my husband; I loved him. He was the father of the two precious darlings that were torn from us. If he could come back to me I would love him still."

The years are not many since, at Mr. Rawlinson's urgent request, I made him a visit at his beautiful home in the suburbs of Chicago. Rich "beyond the dreams of avarice," with his daughter restored to him, and with nothing to cloud the future but the shadow of the dreary past, it seemed to me that he might now be happy. I said so to him.

"If Ethel would consent to marry again I should be. She is charming still, as you see, and less than 40; it goes without saying that there are a dozen splendid men who are dying for her. Will you believe me, sir—she'll have nothing to do with any of them! She will cherish the memory of that worthless vagabond as long as she lives and die with his picture next to her heart. I'll be hanged it I can make out anything about a woman any how!"

I looked at her as she came to call us to tea—sweet and beautiful in her sadness—and thought of the lines:

Man's love is of man's life a thing a part;
'Tis woman's whole existence.

A Coffin Story From Boston.

A year ago last April a firm of manufacturing undertakers in this vicinity were given the most extraordinary commission which they had ever received. They were told to make two mahogany caskets of a particular design, to be above the usual size, and in many parts fully six inches in thickness. They were cautioned not to say a word to any one about what they were doing. The caskets were made as ordered. It required $700 worth of mahogany to complete them. When they were ready to be shipped from the factory a photograph was taken, and an inkling of the affair got out in this way. They were taken from the factory in two two horse wagons, each one making a heavy load for a pair of horses to draw. Outside cases of the same material were also provided. The owner of the caskets had them taken to his estate and placed in a building which he had erected on purpose. In that building two of the best wood carvers to be obtained have worked on the caskets steadily for the past 14 months, add they have nomhere near finished the first one. They were carving into the mahogany the most wonderful and intricate designs which you could imagine, all from sketches furnished by eminent artists. There is a spider in the centre of a web, so delicate that one's breath would almost seem to move it; skulls, from which life-like serpants are crawling; owls, hourglasses and a hundred other things with symbolic meanings. At the rate the carvers are progressing it will take several years to finish their work. I should think $10,000 would be a low figure for both caskets. The insides will contain silken hammocks, in which the bodies will lie. The gentleman who is having the caskets made has purchased an entire knoll in one of the most beautiful of our cemeteries, and, it is said, will spend $125,000 on the tomb. He is a gentleman connected with the medical profession, having an office in Boston. His wife, who takes, if possible, more interest in the caskets then himself, is said to be the grand-daughter of a baron.—Boston Herald.

Man the Last of the Series.

John Burroughs in the Epoch.

There can be but little doubt that the earth has at last reached the maturity of her powers. She is like a ripe apple upon the bough. Henceforth its excellenc must slowly decline. The game of life upon this planet has been essentially played. That is, no new developmente remain, no new species on any extended scale, as in the past, are to appear. The bird has been evolbed from the reptile, but the bird is doubtless the top of that branch of our tree of life; no new form is to be evolved from the bird. We know pretty well the descent of of the horse; he has arissen through various lower and lesser forms, but probably nothing is to come after the horse. The same with other forms. No higher form is to succeed man, as he has succeeded the lower. Monkeys and ourangs are left behind; they will not give birth to a being superior to themselves; they are twigs that have been outstripped by other and more favored branches. Man is the last of the series.

A LETTER.

W. J. Henderson, in New York Tribune.

Only an old-time letter;
But from each faded line
There breathes a tender passion
That once was only mine.
Only an old-time letter;
But from each yellow page
There comes a woe of long ago—
The ghost of a sweeter age.

Only an old-time letter.
Dark with the stain of years;
But oft that withered writing
Has bloomed beneath my tears,
But oh! that dream is shattered—
The fount of grief run dry;
To-day the sad remembrance
Wakes but a passing sigh.

Yes, the page is old and yellow;
And the moss is on thy grave,
Where the pale moon nightly silvers
The shadows of wind-blown wave:
Where the long and silent river
Ends in the moaning sea,
As thy sweet life is vanished
Into eternity.

LAUREL CAMP.

From the Somerville Journal.

"Oh, boys, how I wish I were going with you!" and dainty Bess Fleming perched herself disconsolately on the arm of the lounge in what her brothers called their "boudoir," and gazed with big, wistful gray eyes on the animated scene before her.

The festive preparations are indeed almost enough to make one wish one had been born a boy. Floor, chairs and table are covered with a choice but varied collection of hunting boots, fishing tackle, entomologist's paraphernalia of waxen-headed pins, chloroform bottles and butterfly nets, favorite authors, hammocks, and other evidences of a "right royal good time." The masculine occupants of the room were all so very deeply engrossed that their envious sister's plaintive wish fell on almost unheeding ears.

Hal muttered: "W-wish you could!" Tom gazed at her through the microscope glass he was polishing, with an eye enormously enlarged thereby, and smiled in conscious masculine superiority and only good-natured Steeple paused in his struggles with his knapsack (which seemingly declined to accommodate his blanket, a work on atonomy, a gossamer coat, and a dismembered gun) sufficiently long to say with genuine brotherly good will:

"And you should go in a minute, Popity—it would be worth ten seasons to you—if it were not for Val Graham."

"Val Graham! Who is he? Let him stay at home, then. To make coffee in a dear little kettle swung on three sticks, to sleep in a hammock and be outdoors all summer!" cries Miss Fleming enthusiastically. "Oh, I will go! What's the matter with Mr. Graham? Is he one of your fossilized professors who would petrify a simple maiden? I don't care what he is, you need not imagine I would find time to look at him. I (magnimously) won't mind him a bit."

"But, b-b-bless you, my child," ejaculated Hal, energetically, "it's not a question of whether you would mind Val. The boot is on the other leg. It's Val would mind you. There's some romantic story about his being brought up by an uncle who had been cruelly treated by some lovely flirt. Youthful affections trampled on, and all that kind of thing. Takes to the life of a hermit and educates the ingenious Valentine to regard with horror the whole female sex. Val would sooner face a 'wenomous wiper, than a women, and I am confident that it he suspected we meditated such treason as the introduction of the dreaded element, he would flee to the uttermost parts of the earth rather than go with us; and he the prime suggester of the camping scheme, too! Lastly and finally, how could such a luxurious little lady rough it with a lot of boys among the jungles of New York State? It is impossible."

"Oh, you can say impossible; but I could go, and you would take me, if it were not for that odious creature! How I hate him!" cried Bess, stormily.

"A letter for you Mr. Stephen," and the dignified butler steps solemnly over the debris, and looks with stern disapproval at the disordered room.

"From Val himself, is it not, Steenie?" asked Tom.

"Yes. Too bad, he can't go, after all—attack of malarial fever—knows you will have a jolly time. 'Almost desperate when I think of your starting without me,' reads Steenie, disjointedly.

"Now, I am going!" and Bess starts up impetuously.

"How can you?"

"You'll see. I'll take Martha to take care of me. I'll be ready in an hour, Martha and her budgets included," and Bess vanished like a small whirlwind, leaving the trio too much astonished to do aught but stare at each other in silence.

Did she accomplish it? Of course; what other result was possible to so much energy and spirit? By the time the others had finished their remarkable masculine packing, Bess bubbling over with merry anticipations, was soothing the dazed Martha, who was vibrating between a feeling of gypsyish delight at what seemed to her a mad escapade and gloomy presentiments of inevitable rheumatism.

* * * * * * *

The scene shifts to the wilds of the Empire State and a camp established in their depths. This is no mere fashionable tabernacle in the wilderness, but a real camp, with amateur cooks, with spicy hemlock bed, and with a smoke blackened kettle hanging over a snapping fire, the smoke of which curls lazily upwards, making misty the delicate tracery of the waving trees against the soft summer sky, and hammocks swinging like huge cocoons between the trees, inviting to drowsy repose.

A few yards away an unseen mountain brook tumbles its ice-cold water into the rocky river, and the two sing together in low monotone, telling of fern-fringed pools and gliding trout. Through archways cut in the glossy laurel thicket can be seen the paths that the feet of the strying campers have already worn to the woodland haunts beyond.

But the glory of the camp is the structure variously known as the "house" "shanty" or "Laurel Lodge." Built against a little knoll, its supports living trees, its roof of slabs (which the busy little river obligingly strews a long its banks from lumber regions farther north), slopes almost to the ground at the back. Its sides are a thicklywoven mat of hemlock boughs, held in place by horizontal boards. The facade of the building presents a portal of magnificent proportions from which the portiere of gorgeous quilt (early English) is looped aside, disclosing a floor of slabs, the knapsacks and stores and odorous region beyond. The dining room is a leafy roof under which a table is made with the smooth side of the ubiquitous slab uppermost, the support being trees sawed off at the needed height. Along the sides of the table seats are arranged, and occupying these seats just at present are the campers, finishing the noonday meal and discussing with absorbing interest plans for securing a great store of logs and planks which Steenie had discovered in a bend of the river wedged in among the rocks. To raft them down and bring them in to add to the large pile already drying a few feet from the fire (protected by sloping slabs) against the proverbial rainy day, would be an afternoon's work for the boys. Careful Martha, pail in hand, has started for the blackberry patch a few rods away.

Left to her own sweet company Miss Fleming proceeded to enjoy herself in her own way. With an armful of books within reach, she ensconced herself in her own pareicular hammock, with Czar (who was evidently overburdened with a sense of his responsibility in this usual state of affairs), very wide awake, lying on the ground at her side.

Dipping here and there, now into one book, then into another, and varying the mononohy by occasionally slipping out to replenish the fire, she finally became enamored of "Hiawatha" and read steadily to the end. Folding her idle little hands under ner fanciful little head, she was soon lost in a waking dream, in a repose that was almost sleep. The lofty trees were the forest primeval, the "lodge" a wigwam, and she herself a dusky maiden awaiting the return of the stately redskin warriors from the chase.

She was roused from her reverie by a low growl from the watchful Czar; in the one moment she heard the crackling of twigs, and the next saw, with startled eyes, a masculine fignre emerge from one of the side paths and heard a surprised, "I beg your pardon, madam, but I have been wandering in this infer—this beastily laurel thicket the greater part of the day. Can you direct me to the—"

By this time Bess, fully awakened, had decided with womanly intuition that the intruder was a gentleman in the fullest sense of the word, and noting the weariness in the quiet words and the steady brown eyes she rose quickly with hospitable purpose intent, but with her thoughts still tinged with "Hiawatha," she said, whimsically:

"If the pale-faced stranger tarry by this camp-fires until the warriors return, they will guide him through the forest to the wigwam he seeks."

"I think I will not trouble you—" began the other, uneasily; but the brave daughter of the forest, made as usual more determined by opposition, said firmly:

"But the child of the bald-headed eagle will be obeyed," and seconded by Czar, who was plainly divided between the conflicting desire to swear eternal friendship to the newcomer or to spring upon him with fell intent, she motioned him to the hammock she had just left.

Bess watched him with puzzled eyes as he flung himself upon her cushions. Seeing the pallor about the firm mouth that told of physical suffering, an inspiration, born of her experience as the sister of three brothers, came to the rescuse, and with hopeful face she said: "Watch him, Czar," and moved quickly away.

In a few minutes the fragrant oder of coffee was wafted to the straggler with such reviving effect that he opened widely his nearly closed eyes and gazed with deep interest on the busy figure at the fire before him. Aside from her occupation, so pleasing to the manly contemplation, the figure itself was well worthy of study. The slim, lithe young form was clothed in a dark green flannel, without furbelows or snarles of any kind to perplex the eye. The rebellion dark hair hung in a heavy braid behind, and escaped in wavy locks on the smooth forehead. The fire had flushed the sweet face that was brooding with such absorbed expression over the coffee pot.

In a second more the coffee pot was steaming on a hot stone by the fire, and Miss Flemming disappeared in the direction of the murmuring river, to reappear with some bright little tin pails dripping with cool water. From one of these some trout were gayly spluttering over the cool fire then from a mysterious chest appeared fresh bread, and from other pails golden butter, cream and blackberries, and our traveller was soon partaking of a most appetizing little repast, under which reviving influence he forgot the embarrassment that had nearly consumed him. Soon a responsive chord was struck by two nature-loving hearts, and they were chatting like old friends. Bess produced a curious bug that puzzled her natural history, and the brown hair and the dark bent over it. At this thrilling moment the raftsmen, each with an armful of planks, arrived on the scene. The biologists turn.

"Boys this gentleman," began Bess.

"Val Graham!" exclaimed the three, in startled chorus.

"Who? Not Val Graham!" cried Bess, with horror-filled eyes and pallid cheek; but, reading confirmation in the faces before her, she drops hastily the precious bug, flashes an angry glance at the owner of that name, and turning runs swiftly into the woods.

"What have I done? Who is she?" he asks, with a perplexing look.

"Why, it's our Bess, and she knows you hate girls, and won't want her here. How did you happen to come?

Thought you were sick!" questioned the boys altogether.

"So I was, but I am better; only I lost myself in this maze and nearly tramped myself to death—if it hadn't been for her coffee," he continues, awkwardly. "How could I hate to have her here?" he adds so enthusiastically that Hal retires suddenly behind the house and remarks, "Well, I'll be b b blest!" to his boots.

How can the days that follow be described? Golden, sunshiny days, filled with simple pleasures. But, as a reliable chronicler, I am very sorry that I cannot say Miss Fleming's temper was all serene. Towards the unoffending Valentine she bore an enmity that neither time nor familiarity seem to soften. Occasionally she would unbend so far as to allow that gentleman to assist in her investigations into the flora of the region of the country in which they were.

Can you guess what a revelation this sweet, tantalizing girl was to a young man who had never known a woman's love? Day after day to watch her merry petting of those big brothers, and then to recall his lonely childhood and youth. Is not the fate of this poor Val easily surmised?

Tramping alone by the river side, Val at last discovers and acknowledges to himself the cause of the vague wretchedness of the past weeks—acknowledges with a sickening realization that his happiness for life is in the hands of a girl who has only an unreasoning hatred, or at best a supreme indifference, to give him; and he grinds his boot-heel into the soft turf as he goes slowly towards the camp.

A sudden turn around a camp of fringe-hung birches, and Mr. Graham beholds a spectacle which drives away from him all thoughts of his own troubles.

Upon a gnarly old tree, leaning far out over the river, sits Miss Bess, plainly disconsolate. In the pool below her hat is slowly sailing around like a gondola of new design. At the sound of footsteps she raises her head, but as her eyes meet his the welcoming gleam of hope in them gives way to a flash of ire, and she says petulantly:

"Oh, I hoped you were Steenie."

"I'm sorry," he says gently, "but Steenie would not help you more gladly than I would were it in my power."

After a pause, durlng which the girl's tears puzzled him, he continued quietly:

"Let us go home to the boys and our camp-fire. It is getting late. You will take cold there; and you have lost your hat too."

"Not at all," returns Bess. "I am only leaving it there till I come down. I am waiting for the sunset, but you need not wait too."

"But I should like to."

A long pause ensues. Miss Fleming apparehtly gives rapt attention to some soft, fluffy little clouds flushed to a rose-pink by the setting. Mr. Graham as intently gives his whole mind, aided by his good right arm, to the recovery of the truant hat, which eludes his impromptu fishing-pole with an agility which seems to prove it endowed with the spirit of its owner.

"I wish you would come down now," he breaks forth, landing as he speaks his dripping and somewhat dilapidated prize. "You don't look comfortable up there."

"Well, I'm not," she replied, with unlooked-for energy and a hysterical mingling of tears and laughter. "The branch that helped me up here broke off, and then floated down the river. Every time I have tried to get down I have nearly pitched into the water, so I have sat here for hours like a graven image, and my two feet fast asleep. I'd have jumped in long ago before you found me sitting here like an idiot," she concludes vehemently, "only it looks so deep down there."

As she finishes he has found a firm footing among the roots of her tree, and with a gravity which causes Bess to regard him with suspicion says in a business-like way:

"If you will lean forward a trifle I will place you on terra firma and we will go."

But Miss Fleming has resumed her contemplation of the sky, without glancing at him says wilfully:

"I told you before that I intended to stay here to see the sunset. You are evidently in haste; you may go. But be sure and tell Steenie I want him."

Valentine's arms fall, his face whitens, and his voice rings with passionate anger:

"So I may not even touch your hand, and I would give my life for you! You have nothing but undeserved contempt for me, and I—I love you."

He folds his arms upon the tree and drops his head upon them as if the end of all things had indeed come.

Bessie's eyes are looking far away, and within them a new, sweet light of self-revelatian grows and teepens.

The little clouds are growing gray; The cool twilight seems to creep closer with its soft, cool languor and its blurring shadows. The wind sighs through the trees in low, sad whispers, the murmur of the river sounds clear and loud. A saucy bird, very near, suddenly gives a shrill, startling cry, and Bess stirs uneasily, and with her eyes dropped to the helpless little boots, says, nervously, with an argumentative air:

"This out-of-door life is very healthful, don't you think?"

At this apparently irrelevent remark Valentin raises his head and looks at her in great amazement.

"I have grown so very stout and heavy," she continues, bravely, "that I do not think you could lift me down."

"I am quite willing to try," he says, with eager sarcasm; and with the color flushing her sweet face she leans towards him with outstretched hands.

I cannot tell you anything more, except that, as they came into camp arm in arm, with a new light in their faces, Hal's boots received an especial benediction; Martha knocked over the coffee-pot in a fit of bewilberment; Czar upset Steenie in the exuberence of his joy; while Tom, in an aside, asked "What will Uncle Ralph say?"

An Incident That Happened to a Member of the Fighting Fourteenth.

"He was the bravest soldier in the Fourteenth regiment!" exclaimed an old veteran when asked by a reporter if he knew "Shanty" McGuire. "Know him! I rather guess so. But I shall never forget the time when 'Shanty' thought he was wounded. We were running side by side and the bullets were whizzing thick around us. Suddenly 'Shanty' exclaimed, 'I'm hit and the blood is running down my leg into the shoe.' I caught him by the arm as he appeared to be in danger of falling, but he said that he guessed he was able to get along and limped to a clump of bushes by the road side. 'Let's see how bad I'm hurt,' said he, loosening his clothing. A examination of his body failed to reveal the wound, when suddenly we discovered that his canteen had been pierced by a bullet, and the water which it contained had trickled down his leg. The water was so warm that he had mistaken it for blood. Thoroughly disgusted he rearranged his clothing, and with the admonition not to make him the laughing stock of the company by telling the story, he seized his gun and started on again. He was in many a battle after that, but escaped with a whole skin and returned to Brooklyn.

The Thugs of India.

"Well," says the landlord of our hotel, the "half-way house" of the long journey from Bombay to Calcutta, "now that you've seen the ruins of the Hindu citadel, and been over the native cantonment, and visited the temple on the hill yonder, and gone round the 'marble rocks' of the Nerbuddha, there's nothing left for you to see here except the Thugs."

"Who are these Thugs, anyhow?" asks the American, as we move on again. "I just know that they're always murdering people, and that's all I do know."

"Well," said I, "most of what I know comes from Colonel Slieman and Colonel Meadows Taylor, who were the chief agents in putting them down. The original system, ages ago, was simply a continual human sacrifice to Kali, the goddess of murder, from whom Calcutta (Kali-Kuttah, or Kali's Temple) took its name. The theory was that the earth was over peopled, and that Kali's servants, the Thugs, had to clear off the superfluous population by a little judicious mudering every now and then. So whenever they could way lay any man in a lonely place, they strangled him with a silk handkerchief, and then buried him; and this they called 'the good work.'"

"I wonder what they'd call a bad work, then," mutters my companion.

"Well, this went on for ages upon ages, without any one having the least suspicion of it. Men kept disappearing here and there, and nobody knew how. At first the murders were simply a religious rite, without any after-thought of plunder, but afterwards they began to combine robbery with murder, and to pick out as victims those who were worth plundering. However, the English had been in India for years before anyone dreamed that 'Thuggee' existed. At last a Thug chief, being under sentence for some crime, betrayed his comrades to save his own life, and then the whole story came out and the Thugs were seized and imprisoned. At first the British commissioner of the district where the discovery was made wouldn't believe that all these horrors could have been going on so long without being found out, but when the old chief dug up thirteen skeletons on the very spot where the commissioner's tent was pitched he began to change his mind. But here we are at the place."

We halt suddenly before a tall, gray, gloomy building, at the door of which I announce myself as a newspaper correspondent, and we are at once admitted, although the hindoo janitor looks with no small wonder at Mrs. Ker as she enters and asks whether the bibi logue (lady) is a correspondent too.

On the other side of the road stands a high bamboo palisade, above which peer the grass thatches of a number of tiny native huts. The one narrow entrance of this enclosure is guarded by a magnificent Sikh soldier—tall, strong and shapely as a bronze statue of Hercules—whose bold, swarthy face and keen black eyes look very picturesque beneath his crimson turban. After exchanging a word or two with our conductor, he steps back with a military salute to let us pass in, and the next moment we are standing amid the most formidable gang of murderers upon the face of the earth.

The theory that every man wears on his countenance the stamp of his nature is, true only within certain limits. Many of the great criminals whom I have seen bore in their faces a terrible warning of what they were but with the Thugs of Japabur it is not so. These human vampires who now gather round me, every one of whom has taken more lives than any public executioner in Europe, are to the outward eye a set of a quiet, slouching, meagre old men, who might be a gang of beggars, a group of harmless village folk, a party of superannuated native workmen, or anything on earth but what they really are.

"That's the chief," whispers my guide, pointing to a small, lean, graybeard with a white turban, who is sitting before the nearest hut rocking a child on his knee, and stroking its thin little brown face with the hand that shed the blood of his fellow men like water.

"Ask him," rejoin I, "how many murders he has committed."

A momentary gleam of cunning twinkles in the sunken eyes. The old tiger is evidently suspicious, and stands on his guard.

"I can not tell," he answers, with an indifference which, under such circumstances, has in it something ghastly; "I didn't keep count of them beyond a hundred!"

"Pretty well," mutters the Inspector, "but Colonel Taylor's prisoner, Ameer Ali, owned to 700."

"He must have been a nice young man, that Ameer Ali," observed I. "You remember his saying, "Wefinaly decided to murber the men directly after our evening prayers."

Just then I noticed that the line of hovel has a gap in it every here and there, as if a hut had fallen or been pulled down, and the Inspector tells me, with a look of unwonted awe upon his bold blue face, that whenever one of these wretches dies his house is instantly razed to the ground, as if to efface his very memory from the earth.

"Now, before we go," says I to our conductor, "I mean to see for myself how the strangling was done. Oblige me by telling this man to put his noose round my wrist, for I don't care to trust him with my throat."

The savage eagerness with which the withered old skeleton obeys the call—as if filled with fresh life by even the make-believe show of murder—is fearful to see. Knotting a small coin into the corner of his handkerchief to give him a sure hold, he slips the noose round my arm, and then, bringing his knuckles together with a sudden twist, gives my wrist a squeeze that almost makes the bone crack.

The awful change that passes over his face at that moment baffles all description. His dull, flimy eyes seem to blaze with hell-fire, his sharp white teeth are laid bare in a wolfish grin, his shveled, corpse-like features quiver with a ferocious joy so fiendish that an actual demon starting up before me could scarcely be more appalling. The thought of that face bending over some helpless man in the gloomy depths of the forest, just as the fatal noose tightened, is altogether too much for my nerves and it is with a long breath of relief that I find myself outside the fatal inclosure once more.

DAVID KER.

Defective Page