PALM SUNDAY CEREMONIES

Observed in Medieval Style at St. Peter's in Rome.

Many Strangers Witness the Imposing Solemnities—A Multitude of Americans Thronging the Eternal City at the Present Time.

The quaint medieval customs attendant on Palm Sunday in the olden time have died away in most places, but the Eternal City is still the headquarters at this time of many pilgrims from all parts of the earth. The ceremonies of Easter at Rome—of what is there called "Holy Week"—commence on Palm Sunday. To witness these rites it is estimated that not fewer than four thousand foreigners are now assembled in the city, a large proportion of them Americans and Protestants. During Holy Week the stores are kept open, and concerts and other amusements are given; but theatrical performances are forbidden. The chief external differences are in the churches, where altars, crucifixes, and pictures are generally hung in mourning.

At about 9 o'clock on Palm Sunday morning, St. Peter's, having received a great crowd of people (which, however, is almost lost in that vast building), all in their best attire, one of the Papal regiments enters, and forms a clear passage up the central aisle. Shortly afterward the "noble guard," as it is called, of the Pope—a superior body of men—takes its place, and the corps diplomatique and distinguished ecclesiastics arrive, all taking their respective seats in rows in the space behind the high altar, which is tastingly draped for the occasion. The Pope's chief sacristan now brings an armful of palms, and places them on the altar. These are sticks or stalks, each about three feet long, resembling walking canes, with bleached palm leaves tied on them in a tasteful, but quite artificial way. The preparation of these substitutes for the natural palm is a matter of heritage, with which a story is connected. When Sixtus V (1585-90) undertook to erect in the open space in front of St. Peters the tall Egyptian obelisk which formerly adorned Nero's circus, he forbade anyone to speak on pain of death, lest the attention of the workmen should be diverted from their dangerous task. A naval officer of St. Remo, who happened to be present, foreseeing that the ropes would take fire from the friction to which they were subjected, cried out to "apply water." He was immediately arrested, and conducted before the Pontiff. As the cry had saved the ropes and prevented loss of life, Sixtus could not enforce the decree, and to show his munificence, he offered the transgressor his choice of a reward. Those persons who have visited Italy, have probably observed the great abundance of palms which grow in the neighborhood of St. Remo, between Nice and Genoa, and will not be surprised to hear that the wish of the officer was to enjoy the privilege of supplying the Pontifical ceremonies with palms. The Pope granted him the exclusive right, and it is still enjoyed by one of his family.

At 9:29 a burst of music is heard from the choir, the soldiers present arms, all are on the tip-toe of expectation, and a procession enters from a side chapel near the doorway. All eyes are turned in this direction, and the Pope is seen borne with the centre of the magnificent basilica in his "sedia gestatoria." This chair of state is fixed on two long poles covered with red velvet, and the bearers are twelve officials, six before and six behind. They bear the ends of the poles on their shoulders, and walk so steadily as not to cause any uneasy motion. On this occasion, and always keeping in mind that the church is in mourning, the Pope is plainly attired, and his mitre is plain white without ornament. There are also wanting the "flabelli," or large fans of peacocks' feathers, which are carried on Easter Sunday. Thus slowly advancing, and by the movement of his hands signifying that he is conferring his benediction on the multitude, the Pope is carried to the front of his throne at the further end of the church. Descending from his "sedia gestatoria," his Holiness, after some intermediate ceremonies and singing, proceeds to bless the palms which are brought to him from the altar. This blessing is effected by his reading certain prayers, and incensing the palms three times. An embroidered apron is now placed over the Pope's knees, and the Cardinals in turn receive a palm from him, kissing the palm, his right hand, and knee. The Bishops kiss the palm which they receive and his right knee; and the mitred abbots and others kiss the palm and his foot. Palms are now more freely distributed by sacristans, till at last they reach those among the lay nobility who may desire to have one. The ceremony concludes by reading additional prayers, and more particularly by chanting and singing. The "Benedictus qui venit" is very finely rendered. In conclusion low mass is said by one of the Bishops present, and the Pope, getting into his "sedia gestatoria," is carried in the same state back to the chapel whence he issued, and which communicates with his residence in the Vatican. The entire ceremony lasts about three hours, but many, to see it, endure the fatigue of standing five or six hours. Among the strangers present, ladies alone are favored with seats, but they must wear dark dresses, with black veils on their heads instead of bonnets.

CLOTHES MADE OF FISH SKINS.

An Exhibit Showing What Siberian Women Do.

(From the New York Sun.)

Several garments made entirely of fish skins, and made to be worn, too, are to be put on exhibition soon in the Museum of Natural History in Central Park in a remarkable collection of curios gathered in Eastern Siberia by Prof. Berthold Laufer, of the Jesup North Pacific expedition. These fish-skin clothes are the work of the women of the remote Gilyak and Gold tribes of the River Amur, and very odd garments they are.

The tribe live entirely by fishing and hunting. Salmon, which ascend the river to spawn, are their staple food, and the salmon skins, after being treated by the women, who are adepts, provide material for their clothes.

First the scales are removed so carefully that the skin is not broken. Then the skin is tanned and dressed to make it durable, and finally the women sew it into garments.

Salmon skin, when made into clothes by the Amur Indians is like kid in appearance and softness, but it is tougher than kid, in fact, almost as tough as parchment. It is dyed yellow and red and indigo and some of the garments into which it is made are highly ornate. Curiously enough most of the ornamentation is on the backs.

The garments are sewn together with fine thread, also made of fish skin. Still another use to which fish skin is put is to decorate the boots of both men and women, sections of highly colored skin being appliqued on the elk hide of which the boots are made.

One of the fish skin garments in the collection is a warm weather garment, for it is unlined. If it had been made in Paris it would be called a pelisse. Its front overlaps and it seems to have reached the ankles of the wearer.

In color it is a deep manilla yellow and it is highly ornamented. The outer edges are bordered with a fish skin band of dark indigo blue, and bleading this is a narrow strip of red. Up the side seams blue panels are appliqued in a graceful arabesque design.

The edges of the arabesques are fastened to the body with as minute stitches as if sewed by a machine. Bands of simpler design ornament the tops of the sleeves, and there are blue cuffs decorating in outlines.

Another gown shows three bands about two inches wide, in dark blue, yellow and red laid close together.

This garment is further ornamented with appliqued scroll figures in blue, each about two inches long, over the entire surface. Near the neck, in front, is a fair imitation of a rooster, tail feathers and all.

THE GLASS EYE INDUSTRY

The Greater Number of Them Made in France or Germany.

Following Nature No Two of the Counterfeits Are Exactly Alike. Brown Optics Easy to Fit—Artificial Organ Hard to Distinguish.

"We carry 10,000 eyes in stock," said the artificial eye fitter.

The woman who was waiting for her glasses was at once interested. "Tell me something about eyes," she said.

"What shall I tell you?" asked the eye man, who was opening one of the long cases at the far end of the room.

The woman laughed. "You might tell me all about them."

"If I could tell all about them I would be making them and making money," answered the eye man.

"You see, that is just the point," he continued. "There is something about artificial eyes we Americans want to know and it is something we don't seem to be able to find out. If we did it would not be necessary for us to buy our best eyes abroad. At present we buy everything abroad, from either France or Germany. Germany is the great eye country.

"Now, it isn't that the Americans can't make good eyes, for they can as far as they go. They get a splendid shape and an excellent color, but when it comes to the matter of glaze they are at sea. The glaze we put on an eye in this country is soft and without the lustre and durability the foreigners are able to get. It might not be possible for you to tell the foreign eye from the domestic article, but an expert can every time, and it is very apparent with wear."

"But why don't someone go over there and find out about it?" asked the woman, who had never been in business herself.

The eye man shook his head and thoughtfully polished a set of grey eyes.

"It couldn't be done," he explained patiently. "It isn't possible, although of course the time will come when we will know. You see, it is a secret of the trade and the eyemakers over there won't tell. I had a friend who spent two years and lots of money trying to discover the secret, but the workmen never breathed a word about it, although he lived in their families for months. They say they pass the knowledge down from father to son and the same men work in the same factory from the time they begin to work until they die."

The woman sat listening to what the eye man was saying and watching the tray after tray of eyes he laid on the table before her.

"There are 100 in a tray," the man told her, but this she could hardly believe. As she looked at them, each eye in its own pocket of purple velvet, there seemed to be 1,000 instead of 100. The woman looked at them and was fascinated by their varying moods, for they laughed at her, scolded her, wept before her, loved her. The longer she looked at them the more human they seemed and the more natural it seemed that they should be lying in their velvet cases.

There were blue eyes and green eyes and brown eyes and black eyes and all shades between. There were big eyes and little eyes and round eyes and flat eyes and kind eyes and cross eyes and every other kind of an eye.

"But they are all different," protested the woman.

"Why, certainly," said the eye man, as though that were quite proper. "We haven't two eyes in our entire stock exactly alike. You know, we never get two people with eyes alike; indeed, we very seldom find anyone with both eyes the same. When we are fitting an eye we work for the shape and expression. When the focus is exact and the eye matches as to size and shape it makes little difference whether the eyes matches color. It is very few people who will notice if it doesn't. Of course we don't send people off with a green artificial eye to match a blue eye, but I have known people with eyes that were misfits in color and even their relatives would not know it."

It is a general conception among people who do not wear artificial eyes themselves that they are round like marbles. Quite the reverse is really the case and if it were not for the pupils and the iris they would have the appearance of imitation seashells. And they are thin shells of porcelain hollowed into the shape of the eyeball and with the iris blown in the centre. Some of the most expensive have the white about the iris daintily handpainted and with the veins distinctly showing. For the deep hazel eyes there is a delicate pink shading, although this is only used for the eyes of negroes, the yellow or greenish yellow being more commonly seen.

"Brown eyes are easy to fit," said the eye man, when the woman had observed this. "They are usually one color, with the pupil simply a darker shade. It's the greys and grey-hazels and the blue-greys there is trouble about. You can see how varied their markings are, and how different each eye is from all the rest. The eyes may be exactly the same shade, but if the markings are different they will look different. We have our greatest trouble fitting grey-eyed people, and sometimes we have to send abroad to have special eyes made for them. It seems to me there is no end to the varieties of grey eyes. And they are all as different as can be."

"How long do people wear their glass eyes?" asked the woman, tearing herself from the fascination of the trays.

"That all depends," said the eye man. "It would be impossible to say any given time. Anywhere from three years to two months. I order six eyes a year for an actress and there is a dramatic reader who buys an eye every three months. Again some people wear an eye three years, and still it will not be badly worn. Of course, the actress is very particular because she is before the footlights all the time, and the slightest dullness would show. She has practiced until she uses the eye very well, and no one would know—in fact, I believe very few people do know—that she has an artificial eye. She can turn it without the least trouble. Her eyes are never worn when she lays them aside, but she does not take any chances on them."

The eye man further explained that the eyes were taken out of their sockets every night and put back in the morning, the owner using a little bent instrument like a hookin for the operation. The eye man demonstrated the trick on his own eye with ghastly reality.

"Do eyes ever break?" asked the woman, horrified at the mere suggestion.

To the eye man this was evidently an everyday consideration. "Oh, yes," he said in a matter of fact tone, "they often break, particularly if it is very cold weather. People enter a warm room from the cold outside and rush up to a hot stove. The sudden change is very apt to affect the eye; crack it goes, and out drop the pupils. We have a good many complaints from Michigan on that very thing. With their cold weather eyes are often breaking down here, of course, it seldom occurs.

"To make up for it we have a trouble in Chicago which is reported nowhere else. After the eyes have been worn a short time the line of the open lid is marked by a streak of dirt which is ground into the porcelain. The dirt which gets into the eyes wears them out much faster than they could be worn in the country. It grinds into the polished surface, leaving little dull specks."

"Well, I don't see how people turn these eyes," said the woman, still wondering.

The eye man laughed. "It's the easiest trick in the world when you know how, but it takes a lot of practice. They have a scheme now which is being very generally adopted in eye operations in the East. When an eye is removed a tiny glass ball is set into the socket and the flesh drawn over it. When this has grown in place it makes a bunch over which the glass eye sets and by means of which it can be moved with the greatest ease. It gives the person a natural control of the artificial eye, which is moved unconsciously and in harmony with the natural eye."

"Oh, dear," said the woman, "just think of it," and she went away wishing she might wear an artificial eye.

"It would be such fun to pick one out," she told a friend later.—The Chicago Chronicle.

PERILS OF THE AVALANCHE

Dangers That Ever Menace Travelers on Alpine Heights.

The Slightest Cause Sometimes Brings About Disaster — Experiences of the Late Prof. Tyndall. Resistless Force of Sliding Snow.

According to the experts, Alpine accidents ought never to happen, because rules have been laid down for avoiding them. This is true, just as it would be true to say that if a chessplayer never made a bad move he would never lose a game. But bad moves are made in the mountains no less than on the chessboard.

On the whole Alpine accidents are very real things. They mainly happen, first, when the climber falls off the mountains; second, when the mountain or some portion of it falls on the climber; third, when the climber loses his way or is weatherbound.

The simple fall, of course, is mainly an incident of rock-climbing. It is particularly frequent in the Dolomites, where many of the peaks that are ascended look rather more difficult to climb than prison walls. Sometimes it happens because foothold or handhold which seems secure gives way beneath the climber's weight, as was the case in the last terrible accident on the Dent Blanche.

The classical example of this sort of accident is the famous accident to Mr. Whymper's party on the Matterhorn. It is an old and well-known story, but one may venture to repeat it in the briefest possible outline.

It happened on the way down, at the point where the angle of inclination alters, and the mountain suddenly becomes steeper, so that the leaders of the party were hidden from those above them. Michel Croz, the guide, was in front. Then followed Mr. Hadow, Rev. Chas. Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas, the old and young Tangwalder, and Mr. Whymper himself. The lame duck of the party was Mr. Hadow. He was tired out and could hardly move. Croz was obliged to keep close to him in order to join his feet into the proper footholds. He slipped, fell against Croz, and knocked him, too, from his foothold. Croz fell ten or twelve feet through the air and then the shock came. Instantly Hudson and Lord Francis Douglas were dragged from their places, and the weight of the four falling men came upon the other three, who planted themselves firmly and clung to the rocks, the jerk coming on them as one man. Even then nothing could have saved them if the rope had held. But the rope broke, and its parted strands separated the living and the dead. There were four dead bodies on the glacier, 4,000 feet below, and three terror-stricken men clinging to the Matterhorn crags.

Lord Francis Douglas before his death on the Matterhorn had fallen off such an arete on the dangerous Ober-Gabelhorn. Happily his guide, seeing him fall, did the only thing possible to save both their lives. He leaped over the arete on the opposite side to that on which Lord Francis Douglas had fallen. The two men balanced each other as they lay slung across the ridge by the rope; they had not let go of their ice axes, and were presently able to scramble up on to it again. Other guides have been known to do the same thing on the arete of Monte Rosa and on certain aretes in the Engadine. It is the only thing to be done under the circumstances, but it is not easy while sitting at home to realize how much presence of mind is needed to do it.

Turning to the second group of accidents—the cases in which the accident occurs because something has fallen upon the climber—we have to do with the avalanches. These are avalanches of snow, of ice, and of rock, but the snow avalanches are the more frequent and the most important.

Canon Girdlestone, of Oxford, relates how he once sat down to lunch in the track of such an avalanche and had only just time to scurry out of the way before it whizzed past, and that great climber, Mr. Tuckett, once had a race with an avalanche on the Elger glacier.

This is one kind of avalanche accident. Another and more common kind is when the climbers themselves start the avalanche. They are traversing a slope of ice on which a certain amount of fresh snow has fallen; their footsteps loosen the snow and set it sliding. It trips them up and carries them down with it. The slide ends in a crevasse; the danger is that they will fall into it and that the snow will follow them and bury them alive. Yet there are men who have been carried away by such avalanches and escaped alive. The most famous man who underwent such experience was the late Prof. Tyndall.

It happened on the Piz Morteratsch, in the Engadine, in 1861. The professor, with two friends, Mr. Hutchinson and Lee Warner, and two guides named Jenni and Walter, had occasion to cross a gully filled with hard ice coated with new snow. The slope led straight down onto a glacier with yawning crevasses in it. Jenni, who was a very famous guide, ought to have known better than to venture in that gully. He had not led his party very far onto it when he realized the danger and warned the others to tread gingerly, as a "false step here might start an avalanche."

"The word," says Prof. Tyndall, "was scarcely uttered when I heard the sound of a fall behind me; then a rush, and in a moment my two friends and their guide, all apparently entangled together, whirred past me. I suddenly planted myself to resist their shock, but in an instant I was in their wake, for their impetus was irresistible. A moment afterward Jenni was whirled away, and thus, in the twinkling of an eye, all five of us found ourselves riding downward with uncontrollable speed on the back of an avalanche which a single slip had originated."

There was nothing to clutch at, no means of arresting the descent. They tried to put on the brakes by grinding the points of their alpenstocks into the ice, without the least result. In a sense, as it turned out, their very speed was their salvation. It caused them to shoot over the gaping crevasses into which they would have tumbled helpless if they had been going at a slower rate. But there were other crevasses lower down. Could they stop themselves before reaching these? It was just a chance, and the chance happened to be in their favor.

"We came to rest so near the brow that two or three seconds of our average motion of descent must have carried us over. Had this occurred we should have fallen into the chasms and been covered up by the tail of the avalanche. Hutchinson emerged from the snow with his forehead bleeding; Jenni had a bit of flesh removed from his hand by collision against a stone." * * * No one, however, was seriously hurt, though the professor found that he had lost his watch.

Finally, there are the incidents which are due to blizzards. Mount Blanc has been the principal scene of these, for on that the distances are great, the snow fields are wide, and the chance of losing your way is good. You may scoop yourself a sort of shelter in the snow and wait, but you may freeze to death while you are waiting. This is what happened only a few years ago to Prof. Nettleship of Oxford, though the weather lifted in time for the other members of the party to be saved. A still graver case occurred in 1870, when a party of three American travelers, with eight guides, all perished together in this manner. One of these, T. Beans—had scribbled a fragmentary diary of his experience, which was subsequently found lying beside him. We may end this article by quoting his concluding words:

"Sept. 7 (evening).—We have been on Mount Blanc for two days in a terrible snowstorm; we have lost our way and are in a hole scooped out of the snow at a height of 15,000 feet; I have no hope of descending. Perhaps this book may be found and forwarded. * * * We have no food; my feet are already frozen, and I am exhausted. I have only strength to write a few words. I die in the faith of Jesus Christ, with affectionate thoughts of my family. My remembrance to all. I trust we may meet in heaven."—Outing.

A WAR OF LONG DURATION

Little Peace Enjoyed in Achin for One Hundred Years.

The Dutch Believe They Have Conquered at Last—A Conflict About Which Little Is Known—A Struggle for Independence—Female Rulers.

South Africa, China, and the Philippines are not the only countries where war is in progress. In different parts of the world campaigns of long standing are being carried on daily. Some of them have never been heard of in this country; others have been forgotten.

Under the latter head comes Achin, where for years the Dutch have been striving to subjugate the natives, a race so important that at one time its rulers received embassies from the greatest potentates in Europe, that of England included.

Achin is probably the most war-ridden State in the world. For 100 years it has known little peace, first with one land, then with another, but principally with the Dutch.

The end of this protracted war is, however, believed to be within sight at last. During the last three years the Dutch have won repeated victories. Batoeilik, the strongest fortified garrison of the Achinese, is hard pressed, and its fall is expected to result in the surrender of the natives.

A race that can resist for a number of years a well organized invasion of European troops is worthy of some attention. The country is situated in the north of Sumatra. It is the only State in the island that still remains independent of the Dutch, but, as already foreshadowed, its independence appears to be now doomed. The population numbers about 328,000.

Before its decline, which commenced early in the eighteenth century, Achin was in close touch commercially with England. It was to the port of Achin that London merchants directed their first efforts toward securing trade in the Indies. Queen Elizabeth sent confidential communications to the King of Achin by special envoy, and James I also corresponded with the reigning monarch, who lived in such luxurious style that he had 900 state elephants.

To this day there stand near the gate of the King's palace a couple of brass cannon of extraordinary size. They were a present from James I to the ruler of Achin.

So considerable, in fact, was Achin's one-time power that to reduce Malacca it fitted out an armada of no fewer than 500 ships, 100 of which were larger than any then used in Europe. The ships carried 60,000 men, with the King himself in command.

Moreover, Achin at one time produced more gold than any other country in the East, excepting perhaps Japan. One chronicler fixes the annual output at 512,000 ounces.

For fifty-eight years female sovereigns reigned, and the foreign residents of Achin believe, though erroneously, that the Queen of Sheba was Queen of Achin.

The Achinese employ minted money, including gold coin stamped with Arabic characters.

Great stretches of the interior have not yet been explored, but from seaward two gigantic volcanic mountains rising to a height of about 11,000 feet are visible.

Little also is known of the language. This, perhaps, is not strange, notwithstanding the great career which Achin once had. Languages, like peoples and like greatness, wither away and are forgotten when there is a diminution in national vigor, or else they change so completely that they are unrecognizable.

Though once powerful enough to drive the Portuguese out of the island and to have a fleet and an army that were the envy of larger countries, Achin now appears destined to disappear from the map altogether.—The London Mail.

BOBALONG

It was somewhere about September when he descended on London, and in his own peculiar way began to make an impression there.

He was small and chunky built; with a cheerful little face like a winter-kept apple, a hopeful blue eye, and small, grey side-whiskers, and there was something about him which made you say "Horse!" the moment you set eyes on him.

The impression he made on P. C. 42 at Ladgate Circus was fairly representative of the impression he created elsewhere.

When he had stood for three mortal days alongside the obelisk there, P. C. 42, who had been keeping a wary eye on him to see what mischief he was up to, remarked jocularly from the height of his six-foot-two: "Lost something?"

And the little man turned the apple face up to him and said, "Well, yes, I have."

"Horse?" asked P. C. 42, instinctively.

"No, a man."

"Come up to look for him?"

"Well, yes, I have."

"Hope to find him?"

"Well, yes, I was hoping to."

"Expect to find him on a 'bus?"

"Well, I did rather, or maybe a cab."

"I see," said P. C. 42. "Big place, London."

"It's bigger'n I thought."

"Well," said P. C. 42, slowly setting himself in motion toward a kink in the traffic, "hope you'll find him."

"Thankee," said the little man, and turned his searchlights on a white Road Car which P. C. 42 had just quarantined with his forefinger.

"I reckon you'll know the hosses on this route pretty well in this time," said P. C. 42, as he scuntered back after releasing his capture.

"Know every one of 'em already," said the little man, with a short, pleased laugh. "I reckonize 'em quicker'n I do the drivers."

"Ah!" said P. C. 42. "I thought you knew a hoss when you saw one. An' who is it you're looking for?"

"A young man that's wanted at home very particular."

"An' you think he'll be driving a hoss somewhere in London?"

"That's it," said the little man, eagerly.

"Big place, London," said P. C. 42, graciously, once more. "Tried the Bank? Heap o' 'buses there."

"Aye; I was a week there."

"Tried the Elephant?"

The little man looked up at him sharply, but seeing no hint of humor in the official face, said, "No."

"Heap o' 'buses there, too."

"Where's it?"

"Cross the water—straight down there."

"Thankee; I'll do that next."

By degrees every policeman at every grand junction of the ways came to know him, and one and all regarded him with considerable enjoyment as the man who was looking for a man in London and really hoping to find him. One and all they would have helped him if they could, but no lo alone knew whom he was seeking, the most they could do for him was to pass a cheery word of greeting whenever they met, and to keep out of their faces any suspicion of a doubt as to his ultimate success.

If he disappeared for a day or two from their beats they only supposed him gone elsewhere, and when he turned up again it was:

"No luck yet?"

And the little man would reply cheerfully, "No luck yet. But he'll come."

But when at times he disappeared from his various beats and the policemen supposed him to be trying pastures new, they might have surprised him very far afield indeed.

If, by chance, they had wandered so far away themselves, which they never did, they might have seen the little man hie him away to King's Cross Station about twice in each month and take a third-class ticket there, and after a two hours' run get out of the train at a station where he was evidently well known. For the stationmaster, as soon as he had got rid of the train and was his own man again, would come up to him with a thin veneer of concern overlying a thick substratum of compassionate superiority in his face, and ask, "No news yet, Mr. Long?" and the little man would shake his head and say, "No news yet, Mr. Brown; but we'll find him all right," and would look as if he really believed it. At which the stationmaster would shake his head doubtfully and, standing gazing after the little man with nothing but compassion in his face as he pressed sturdily along the way to the village.

Beyond the village he would turn in at a pair of great iron gates, and a little, bright-faced woman, who was always waiting in the doorway of the trim stone lodge, would greet him with a cheerful:

"Well, Bob, my man, here you are, and glad I am to see you. I'm always thinking of you being run over in them London streets. No news yet?"

"No news yet, Lisbeth," the little man would say. "You all right?"

"Right as a trivet, my man. Only anxious about you—and him. Do you really think there's any hope of finding him, Bob?"

"I'm not going to give it up yet, Lisbeth. London's a mighty big place, you know. Let's have some tea. I haven't tasted anything as good as your tea and crumpets since I saw you last. There's no one in London can do 'em equal to you, old girl."

And tea was always just ready and the crumpets done to a turn, and over them Bob told his wife all the disappointing wonders of the time since his last visit. And his wife would listen with her eyes and mouth so very wide open that Bob always got the lion's share of the crumpets, which was just exactly what the astute old lady intended.

And after tea Bob would stroll up the darkening avenue among the firs and rhododendrons till it opened out in a great sweep before a mighty grey stone house which lay with closed eyes waiting for one to come and awaken it, and he for whom it lay waiting was lost in the wilds of London or elsewhere. And Bob Long, in spite of his hopeful looks and words, began to have a fear deep down in his little heart of gold that he was lost for ever.

So, now and again, when no one was about, he would heave a mournful sigh as he gazed at the beautiful old house, and then he would go round to the stables and rattle the boys up, just to keep his hand in and to feel his own grip. For there never was a fault he could find, since the boys were all of his own up-bringing, and every soul about Cleserest loved a horse next to himself, unless someone else happened to stray in between.

And whenever he went to the stables there came tripping out from the big house, as soon as she heard he was there, a dainty little lady wearing dark robes and a wistful face, and at sight of her old Bob's hat came off and his heart was sore as he stood bare-headed before her, and to her anxious "No news, Bobalong," he always replied, cheerily, "Not yet, Miss Mary, but it's a mighty big place, London, and it takes a lot o' working through. Nothing from the lawyers, I suppose, miss?"

"Nothing, Bobalong. They've been advertising for six months, and it's all done no good. I'm beginning to be afraid he's dead, Bobalong."

"Not a bit of it, missy. Master Charles ain't the kind to go and die like that just when we want him so bad."

He felt himself that it was rather weak as an argument, and Mary Cleserest only shook her head as though it did not carry absolute conviction to either heart or mind.

"You're going back, Bobalong?" she would ask, wistfully.

"Why, of course, missy. I'm going to go on looking till I find him," the old man would say, so stardily that Mary always felt a trifle comforted in spite of herself. She said to herself that she was afraid it was hopeless and that her brother was dead, but in any case she wasn't going to be beaten in hopefulness by old Bobalong.

It was three years since her brother Charles fell in love with Margaret Sannox, her governess and very dear friend. And when Sir Geoffrey in due course caught them at it, and expressed his feeling to the verge of apoplexy, Charles replied in the Cleserest spirit, and was promptly given his choice between home and sweetheart, and without a moment's hesitation chose the latter. And so, at much shorter notice than she could regally have claimed, Charles and Margaret disappeared from Cleserest, and not one single word had she heard of them since. For the furious old gentleman, forgetting his gentlemanliness in his fury, tore up every letter that appeared in the mailbag in either Charles' or Margaret's writing, no matter to whom it was addressed, and so in course of time he had no more letters to tear up, and the parting was complete.

Then the old man died and Geoffrey his son reigned in his stead. And Cleserest breathed more peacefully and lived in hopes of seeing master Charles once more. For they all loved him dearly, from old Mrs. Dane, the housekeeper, to old Jezebel, the mother of goats, who for three years had rooted dolefully in odd corners of the stables in search of him, and still ruminated with fixed, glassy stare and slowly moving jaws on his sad defection. For Jezebel looked with doubt and suspicion on all the world, including her own kids after they had attained a certain age; but for one tall, bright-faced young man whom she had known from his and her youth she had a strange affection which even three years had not sullied to wipe out.

Brother Geoff did his best to right the wrong. He advertised through the family lawyers, in the London papers, but he might as well have saved his money, for neither Charles Cleserest nor Mary ever was reading papers. He, because he was out in the Soudan with his regiment and a broken heart. She, because she was lying peacefully under a smooth green mound in a quiet Hampshire churchyard. And the sturdy, blue-eyed boy, whose coming to the east coast had crushed his father's life, was out at the landlady of the farm near Christchurch where Charles and Margaret Sannox—for he had cast off the old name with the old life and had taken the name of her he loved more than anything on earth—were stopping at the time of their son's birth. They had had a happy year together—life in its simplest and best, troubled only by thoughts of the separation from home and those they loved. Then the end came, swift and sudden, just as life seemed brightened to its fullest. And when all was over, and Charles' heart was buried in Christ Church yard—so that, for the time being, there was no heart left for the crowing, blue-eyed boy, who seemed to him to exult in the mischief he had wrought—he turned into each everything that was left him, save Margaret's wedding ring, paid for Charles Junior's board and lodging for the next two years, left with the farm wife a sealed envelope, to be opened in case of his own death, and enlisted in the Twenty-first Lancers. Eighteen months later he was in Egypt, and when the fighting came at last he fought as men do fight when the ties have all been snapped and life is less than nothing to them. He got sorely damaged, and found cause for regret in that the damage was only partial and landed him in Netley Insane, for the shallow trench at Omdurman. He would have preferred remain in Egypt as a permanent pendant to the country. Discharged at last—cured he went over to Christchurch to look at his boy, and found him such a beauty that his heart shook off its sickness and woke to its responsibilities.

Charles Junior adopted the big, quiet, brown-faced man at once, and delighted in him exceedingly. They stopped for a fortnight at the farm to complete the "cure," and then it behooved them to find some means of livelihood. He turned to London, as a matter of course, and duly arrived there early in November, with as splendid a two-year-old boy as the whole of England could show, with a respected leg which unlimited him for any very active employment, a wounded lung which gave him pause now and again, and a pension of nothing a week.

This part of Charles Cleserest's story is so very commonplace that there is no need to enlarge upon it. He lies many things which he never forgot. He diligently answered many advertisements—in person, as a rule, in order to save the postage—and thereby came to the knowledge that there are a great many more people seeking places in this world than there are places wanting persons. He learned, too, that a University education, without practical experience in any special line, counts for less than nothing, and that, to the mind of a plain business man, military service unlike one who has bled for his country or the ordinary duties of civilized life. It was heartbreaking work, but the idea of applying for assistance at home—well, yes, it occurred to him certainly, but only to be kicked out instantly. He would sooner die, Cleserests break, but never bend. He had done his duty in writing home after his marriage, and no single word had he or Margaret received in reply to their letters. We know why. They desired no communication with him. So be it. Unfortunately, he never set eyes on any single one of the lawyer's advertisements in the "Times" and "Morning Post." He had very soon found that the most likely papers for advertisements within his compass were the "Chronicle" and "Telegraph," and even in them he wasted no time on the personal columns.

The thought of a commissaire's uniform began to haunt his dreams like a nightmare. Sooner drive a 'bus or a cab, a 'bus from choice as being less speculative. The idea grew upon him. He parted with almost all he had to raise the necessary £5 and went along to Scotland Yard. As to his capabilities as a driver of horses there was not a moment's doubt.

"That's your own name?" asked the official who had witnessed his performance, glancing up at the bronzed, high-bred face as he handed him his documents.

"It's the name I fought under at Omdurman," said Charles.

"What regiment?"

"Twenty-first Lancers."

"Ah! wounded?"

"Leg and back."

"If ever I can be of any service to you he, me know," and he handed his card to Charles, who thanked him for it.

But as it was in the offices so it was here, and so it is everywhere. There were many more men wanting to drive 'buses than there were 'buses to drive, and he had to wait his turn. Perhaps his friend at Scotland Yard put in a word for him, perhaps there fell a sudden mortality in the higher ranks of the profession. Anyhow, the call came just in time, and none too soon. He was down to his very last shilling when a letter came from the L. G. O. Co.'s yardmaster telling him he could start work the following Monday morning. The shilling bridged the intervening days, and Charles the Younger, at all events, knew no lack in the matter of bread and milk.

He was a sturdy little fellow, thanks to his life on the Hampshire farm, and his wants were of the simplest. He was a huge delight and a mighty consolation to his father, and was already developing an intelligent family interest in horses. They were great chums, those two, and during those long days of waiting they tramped together through many a mile of West End Streets and deserted parks, starting on four feet, and, as a rule, completing the journey on two. And if their pockets were empty their hearts were also light—one of them, at all events, and the other was not going to be beaten by a two-year-old—and the love that grew between them was very strong and very true and very beautiful. So deep and sweet a thing was it to one of them, that had choice lain between all that the world could give him and the little head that lay on the pillow beside him at night and laughed into his eyes in the morning with eyes that were so very like those other eyes that had gone, he would have counted the world well lost compared with the love of the bright-faced boy.

And so if their life was narrow it was also very wide, and no man's life is the worse for having passed under the yoke.

And all this time little Bob Long, autocrat of the stables at Cleserest, was searching the great scattered haystack of London for this missing needle, with the patience and dogged perseverance of a self-willed old man who, having got an idea into his head, refused to have it beaten out of him by so small a thing as simple want of success.

Bob Long—Bobalong always to the Cleserest children—had taught Geoff and Charles and Mary to ride as soon as their tiny legs could stretch across a saddle or curl round a pommel. When Charles disappeared he sorrowed greatly, but could do no more. When Sir Geoff came to the throne and showed every wish to heal the breach and recover the fugitive Bob's hopes rose. Then Geoff himself was killed in the hunting-field ten days before his wedding day, and the discovery of Charles became an imperative necessity.

Bob's great idea came into his mind during one of many discussions he had with Mary Cleserest about that time. Mary, knowing nothing of the causes of it, had wondered at the mysterious and unbroken silence of her dear Charles and her almost equally dear Margaret Sannox. When their father died her entreaties had urged Geoff to continuous exertions for the discovery of the wanderers. But nothing came of it all. Many times she and Bob discussed the matter.

"I cannot think how they can be living, Bobalong," said Mary, "for Charles had nothing of his own and cannot have taken much with him, and I can't imagine what work he could do."

"There's not many knows as much about horses as he does, Miss Mary," said Bob, with conviction.

"Yes, of course he knows horses," mused Mary, "but I don't see how that would help him, Bob."

"London's mighty big place for horses, missy. I've heard say that the Earl of Beltress, Lord Kasherton he was then, drove a hansom in London for three months once——"

"Oh, Bobalong, you don't think our dear Charles is driving a hansom?"

"He was worse, missy, but we'll hope he's doing better."

"My poor Charles!—and Margaret! I wonder why they never wrote to me?"

"Maybe, Miss Mary——" began Bob, who had not served the old baronet for forty years without getting a pretty shrewd insight into his character.

"Maybe what, Bobalong?" asked Mary, when he drew rein.

"I've heard tell of letters not getting through to people," said Bob, sturdily.

"Why, what do you mean, Bodalong?"

"Well, it wasn't like Mr. Charles never to write to you, now was it, missy?"

"No, Bobalong, it wasn't, and I can't understand why he didn't."

"Well, maybe he did and maybe the letters was lost."

"I'd sooner think that than that he'd never written."

"Of course, missy. I'd just think it, if I was you. Can't do no harm, anyways."

A few days later he came to her with a request.

"You're not greatly needing me at present, Miss Mary?" She was not, for in the stress of her bereavements—the sudden death of Geoff and the uncertainty respecting Charles—she had no heart for visiting beyond her pensioners, whom her personal griefs allowed to suffer no lack.

"I want to go to London," continued Bob.

"To London, Bobalong? To look for Charles?"

"Yes, missy. It's in my mind that I might find him there."

She felt very doubtful, knowing what a vast warren London was. But she would not show it. Any chance contained a spark of hope.

"James Scath, he's a good lad, and he'll keep things right in the stables and see to you as careful as I would myself——"

"Nobody could do that, Bobalong; but Jim is a good boy, and he can do all I want."

"And I'll come back every now and then to see things are going all right. I can't sit still thinking of Mr. Charles, missy, and that's a fact."

So Bob went to London and made the acquaintance of many 'bus and cab horses, and incidentally of their drivers and the drivers' keepers—the gentlemen in blue. And as the months passed and there was no fruit for all his labors he began to grow doubtful, but would not show it; and Mary began to grow doubtful, too, but would not for the world have let Bob imagine it. And so these two, with scarce a hope between them, still wore the semblance of it, each for the benefit of the other, and at times succeeded in deceiving one another, and almost in deceiving themselves, into the belief that there was still room for hope.

It would have been much to be deplored if so faithful an endeavor and so steadfast a hope had had to go unrewarded.

Charles had been put on a suburban cross-country route to begin with, and was steadily, and with an extremely cheerful heart, driving his 'bus between Acton and Hanwell, while little Bob Long was vainly lying in wait for him at Piccadilly Circus, and Ludgate Hill, and the Bank, and so, in the nature of things, they never met.

Charles had taken lodgings out at Hanwell, and little Charles found no lack of fresh air and outdoor amusements, of a very juvenile character, of course, right along into the winter. The old woman in whose house they lived had taken to him mightily and watched over him with grandmotherly care. And Charles Cleserest, with the great house lying all asleep for want of its master, and many warm hearts aching to get word of him, found himself more than content—having no disturbing knowledge of these things—in the fact that he was earning his living and paying his way, and that his boy was growing up strong and sturdy, and daily increasing in favor with man and the goddesses who ride on the tops of 'buses.

Just three days before Christmas one of the drivers on the main route from Hammersmith to Liverpool Street fell sick of rheumatics, and his 'bus was given tentatively to Sannox to see how he would manage the obstacle race to the city.

He got along first rate the first two days. It was on the third day, the afternoon of Christmas Eve, that he ran into a van at the corner of Old Bailey and took the hind wheel off as clean as a whistle; but Charles always maintains that the fault was in no wise his, and divides the honors between Bob Long and the van driver, with a bias in favor of Bob Long.

For that day Charles had taken his boy along with him as a special Christmas treat, and little Charley, well wrapped up in the front garden seat at his