KATHARINE NORTH.

VIII.

"AUNT KATE."

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Katharine did not see Mrs. Llandaff until she had served out her chowder and her fish. Then as she drew back to look hurriedly at the rest of her special province to see if other orders were waiting, she was aware that a lady sat down at the nearest table and that she beckoned to her.

She was also aware, with a sudden quickening interest, that it was the same lady who had asked her a few questions.

She walked up to Mrs. Llandaff and stood with one hand on the table, her empty waiter in the other, looking down at her. And the woman for the first instant could not speak. She was possessed by that ridiculous notion that this was her former self, projected on the canvas of the present, and looking at her as if there had been no years between her youth and now.

Katharine's eyes were on her, clear, unconscious and with something pathetic in them. It is terrible to see pathos in eyes so young. It has no right to be there.

Mrs. Llandaff moved uneasily.

Some one at the next table tapped a tumbler imperatively. Katharine turned, took an order and hurried away to obey it.

The elder woman sat there. She was saying to herself:

"It is absurd that she should be Roxy's child. She should have been mine. How I could have understood her! She should have shared her very soul with me. Roxy's child! What was God thinking of to give the child to her?"

Katharine came back again with her tray laden. She glanced with a slight deprecating smile at Mrs. Llandaff as if to apologize for neglect. In a moment she came back and waited once more.

"I want—" the lady paused, "bring me something—anything."

Katharine smiled again. She hesitated slightly, then she said:

"Everything has a tin spoon in it here."

She laughed a little, meeting the stranger's understanding glance.

"I know it. I really came to see you." The girl flushed deeply. "But bring me some cake and tell me when you will be at liberty. I want you to come up to the Atlantic. No, I will take you out driving; that will be better. Tell me when you have a spare hour. I want a long talk with you. I can't say anything here. Oh, that woman wants something. You must go."

The girl turned away. She mechanically went back and forth for the next five minutes obeying calls. She jostled against Joanna at the order window.

"Ain't it funny?" said Joanna, "there's the public speaker again. Did you know it?"

"Yes, I know it," answered Katharine.

"I thought she had enough of it here last time. She couldn't eat a thing. What does she want now?"

"Some cake," in a low voice.

"Oh, dear; I'm glad I ain't got to wait upon her. Take her all kinds. But she wont want any. I sh'd think she'd stay away. Where's the young man?"

"What young man?"

"The one that was with her the other time."

"Oh, I don't know."

The two hurriedly separated.

"When are you at liberty?" immediately repeated Mrs. Llandaff as the girl came again.

Katharine could hardly put from her the feeling that this stranger was making a mistake: that she would soon discover the mistake and that would be the end of the matter.

But she answered with shy promptness:

"This week I have from eight until nine in the morning. I might be at liberty some other times, but I should not be sure of it. That is very early."

Mrs. Llandaff acknowledged that it was very early. She was rarely at her breakfast before nine. But she could always be governed by an impulse, provided the impulse were strong enough. And in this case it was.

"I will call for you at eight," she said.

Then she walked out and came near forgetting to pay for her order.

Joanna, half running by the empty chair and the untouched plate of cake, had occasion to say "I declare!" again, and more strongly than ever. She confided to Emma Taft, and also to Katharine at the first opportunity, that she guessed public speakin' wasn't good for women. It seemed to take away their wits, somehow. And she wondered if that Llandaff woman was going to keep coming and ordering things. What was she up to any way?

Katharine looked at Joanna as she talked. She wondered "what a person must be made of" who could speak of that lady as "that Llandaff woman." She controlled the impulse she had felt to tell Joanna every word which had been said to her. And besides, deep in the girl's mind, was a strong doubt as to whether any one would call for her to drive in the morning.

Everything was too strange. She tried to put the whole affair away from her; and as a result of this endeavor she thought of it more than before, if possible.

She could not sleep, save by little unrestful snatches, during which she dreamed of Mr. Grove and her mother.

She was surprised that in her waking moments she could think of Mr. Grove so little. She had supposed she should never stop thinking of him. And he hardly came into her mind, save when some tall man suddenly entered the restaurant.

Then her pulses would give a sickening jump, and seem to stop, until she knew beyond a doubt that the tall man was not Marcellus Grove.

He had said that he wasn't going to plague the life out of her.

It had been hard for him to consent that she should come down here with Joanna. Still when he was convinced that she would come, whether he gave his consent or not, he gave it. There was a maddening sense of helplessness in his heart when he walked away from Mr. North's after that interview.

He had only remained in New-York two days.

Contrary to Katharine's expectations her mother had wished her to stay at home. The shrewd woman saw very well that if the girl remained at home she would be under her own eye, and would be where Mr. Grove might visit her.

But Mrs. North announced openly that she didn't pretend to have any right now to tell Kate what she must do or mustn't.

When a woman had a husband she must look to him for guidance.

At this remark Colburn North had not been able to restrain a satirical grunt. But he knew too much to make any articulate sound.

Mrs. North went right on to remark that if a husband couldn't tell his wife what was best she didn't know what the world was coming to.

So Katharine took the place as waiter-girl which Joanna secured for her.

And her father drove her and her little trunk to the station.

Her mother kissed her a dutiful and very loud kiss on her left cheek, and she told her to be sure and see that her clothes were aired well before she put them on.

Katharine was very unhappy all through the drive. She sat with her hand tucked under her father's arm. They did not speak a word save to say good-bye as the cars came up.

When she was in the train, however, she gradually emerged from the deepness of the gloom upon her.

But her father, driving back to his thrifty and comfortable home, felt that the blackness was growing thicker about him.

He thought of the man over in the next part of the town who had been found hanging dead to a rope hitched to a beam in his barn.

He could almost have told himself that he envied that man. He had made an end to things.

Mr. North leaned his chin on his hand as his horse sauntered through a lonely piece of road.

"No," he thought, "I can't tie a rope to my neck as long as my little girl lives. She might need me. Though it's precious little I can do. Perhaps, though, just knowing I'm alive is a comfort to her. God knows I want to be a comfort to her. It's all there is in the world."

When Katharine rose the next morning at five o'clock, Joanna, who shared the bed with her, groaned that it was not time to get up yet.

"I know it. But I can't sleep. I'm going to the beach."

She dressed herself carefully to be ready in case that lady should remember that she had said she would call.

Then she hurried out on to the shore. It was low tide. In ten minutes the waves would experience that mysterious change which should put life in them.

Now the ocean had withdrawn itself; it was sobbing a little in an undertone. The water rolled lazily, like oil, swashing faintly upon the sand and falling back languidly.

There was not a human being in sight as Katharine walked down the slope.

Some sandpipers ran in their peculiar gliding way on before her. When she came too near they flew, then settled again on the sand.

There was no blue sky. Everything was softly gray. There was no wind; only a faint breath of air came from the east; it was as full of the odor of salt as it touched Katharine's cheeks as if she held a handful of that just tossed up Irish moss to her face.

The girl liked such days as these. They soothed her, without her knowing what it was that was so comforting. One of these gray, salt days was like the presence of a friend who likes you and approves of you. So Katharine felt it.

She need not be back at the cafe before half-past six. She strolled on and on. The space she had passed was just like the space that lay ahead of her. Sometimes there was a little stronger puff from the ocean.

She could not see the water, save the line where it touched the shore. But occasionally there came the sound of oars in rowlocks, of a man's voice giving some order, of the splash of water on a boat's side far off in the bay.

Katherine already knew how early the perchers and codders sometimes went out to catch for the hotel tables. On clear days she saw them start from the stony beach which curved between two bluffs off at the right, as she stood in front of the cafe and gazed about her when there was a lull in the orders.

Everything was very different from Feeding Hills. It was like being in another world.

She almost thought that it might be possible that she herself was another girl. That would be so lovely—to be another girl—and to begin life free.

Not that she was particularly conscious of not being free. A chain may be so light and loose that it seems not to fetter.

And Katharine's spirits were now unusually high; she was so young and healthy and busy, and in a new place. There was only Joanna to remind her of anything disagreeable; and Joanna had plenty of subjects of her own for thought, the chief among them being the travelling salesman. Besides, Joanna was fond of Kate in that superficial, thoughtless kind of a way in which a girl who has a travelling salesman may be fond of one who is not so fortunate.

This morning Joanna was tired, as she told herself, that Kate should have taken a notion to get up in this way. And she could not go to sleep again because she happened to ask herself if anything were the matter. Kate was so different. That was the most provoking thing. She was different, and yet—

Having come, after many yawns, to this last phrase, Joanna sat up in bed.

It was a room only a few feet larger than the bed which stood in it. It had a window in the roof which was tilted up on an iron support.

Joanna put her head to this window and sniffed. She looked out upon the ocean.

"It's just as cloudy as it can be," she said petulantly. "And I wonder where Kate has gone to. I don't know what she can want to walk on such a beach as that for. I wonder if that is her," as her eyes lighted on one figure moving slowly toward Point Allerton. "I shouldn't wonder if she walked clean over to Hull."

Joanna dressed. She twisted her hair back and set her hat firmly down over the small wads of hair that were confined by her crimpers. It was "terrible hard to keep one's hair in crimps at the shore."

She thought she should buy one of those little fringes of hair such as some of the other girls wore. She could lay it across her forehead and the dampness didn't seem to affect it.

She hurried down over the heavy, clogging sand until she came to the hard, wet floor of the beach. It was lonesome to her without any people round, and no band playing. And how disagreeable that kind of a moaning noise the water made sounded! She wished that she hadn't come out. She kept going on.

Yes, certainly, that must be Kate; she was just turning up to that old, half-buried wreck. She would probably sit down there and if Joanna did not go and call her she might keep on sitting there and not be "on hand" to wait upon the folks between seven and eight. There were some people who always came to breakfast then and Kate was one of the waiters. Joanna herself didn't go on until an hour later.

It was Katharine who was sitting on the wreck. And she was in a mood by this time which fully justified her friend in thinking that she might forget to come back to wait upon the seven o'clock "mealers."

"If I hadn't got her here I s'pose I shouldn't feel so kind of responsible," said Joanna as she walked squarely on, not looking at water or land, and wishing as she went that this kind of air did not take the curl out of her hair so quick.

It was rather a long walk, and it was many minutes before the wreck seemed to grow any nearer, and Katharine's figure to become more defined and recognizable.

When Joanna was within a few rods of her friend, a horse cantered into sight from behind one of the hills. The horse bore a man on his back and was coming on rapidly.

Joanna half paused. A glow of anger mingled with the glow of exercise on her face.

Katharine was certainly very queer. Had she come out here to meet some one?

The next moment she had grasped Kate's arm and had said angrily that she hoped Kitty wouldn't lead her such a chase again. And who was that man, any way?

Katharine turned a bewildered, absent face toward this sudden questioner. She rose and seemed to throw off some power which had held her.

"Is it time for me to tend the tables?" she asked. "I forgot. But it can't be time either."

But Joanna did not reply. She was looking toward the horseman, and now she said:

"Why, it's the public speaker's young man, ain't it?"

It certainly was Owen Llandaff. He had ridden over to Hull by the road, and he was now coming back by the beach.

He unconsciously slackened his horse's pace somewhat when he saw the two girls at the wreck.

They stood holding each other's hands, staring undisguisedly at him. And he stared at them, though not nearly so undisguisedly; and, if the truth must be strictly stated, he saw only one of them, Katharine.

There was still left on her face the glow, and the rapt, introverted kind of look which had come to it while she sat there "communing with nature" as the old phrase has it. There are some of the old phrases which still have rather a startling degree of meaning in them at times.

And young Llandaff was startled.

He said to himself "It is that cafe girl"; the mentally he contradicted his own assertion.

He made his horse caracole and under cover this manoeuvre he came still nearer.

Yes, it certainly was that cafe girl. He h

had no idea that she had a face like that. It was a face like—his horse thundered off over the hard sand and its rider did not finish his sentence. But the fact that it was not finished, but must be finished sometime, remained nebulously with him as something decidedly agreeable.

"Odd, ain't it?" remarked Joanna after a moment.

"What is it that's odd?"

"Why, that that young man should be on the beach this morning."

"Oh, they're everywhere," returned Katharine. "I suppose it's just as odd that we're here, don't you?"

She took Joanna's arm and the two began to walk quickly back.

"I was worried," said Joanna in an aggrieved tone, "because it seemed so strange for you to go out on the beach in a cloudy, dull morning like this. It's just's lonesome's it can be."

"Cloudy? Lonesome?"

Katharine took her hat off and shook back her hair. "I think it's beautiful. It's——"

Her ardent voice stopped. She bethought herself in time that her companion might think she was crazy if she went on in that way. Joanna was quite likely to think any one was crazy who saw things in a very different way from what she herself saw them.

Katharine was in season for her morning duties.

As she distributed fried perch she thought she had never disliked the odor of hot grease as she did this morning. She ought to have been hungry after her walk; but she could not eat.

The sense of expectancy upon her was so eager that it was almost poignant.

Of course that lady would not remember. When it was ten minutes after eight the girl was suffering so that it seemed as if she must cry aloud. But she did not. She stood outside on the platform, her pale face and hot eyes turned steadily, but quietly, toward the head of the beach.

She did not know in what kind of a carriage Mrs. Llandaff would come, if she came.

Katharine had known that she cared, but she was surprised now to find that she cared so much.

Five minutes went by. A sharp despair was settling on the girl's heart. How worse than foolish it was for her to have expected anything!

And yet it was strange that that lady should have done such a thing.

"Oh Kate!" exclaimed Joanna's awe-struck voice close to her. Joanna seized her arm. "What do you think? That public speaker is right out here. She's after you. She said she wanted Katharine North. I s'pose that's you. Though I don't know what the deacon would say to that"—here Kate shrank visibly—"and she's telling Mr. Jackson that he must excuse you if you are not back by nine, and Mr. Jackson is smiling 'n' squirming no end, 'n' saying 'yes, ma'am, yes. We c'n easy put another girl in her place.' Oh, my! Aint you in luck? I wonder if you'll see her young man. Tell us all about him if you do, be sure."

At this point Katharine had twisted her arm free and now she hurried round to the other door.

There was Mrs. Llandaff in a light single carriage, holding the lines herself, and alone.

"Get right in," she said with that sort of suave abruptness which she sometimes used. "I'm a little late; but I've arranged with this gentleman," here profuse smiles from Mr. Jackson, "and we need not hurry back."

She turned the horse skilfully. The creature shook his head and started joyfully along the road.

Joanna stood a moment gazing. She was joined presently by Emma Taft.

They agreed that it beat all. And they accounted for this state of things by the fact that Mrs. Llandaff was at once a woman and a public speaker. Therefore it must not be accounted strange that she had come and taken Kate off in this way.

In the carriage Mrs. Llandaff remarked:

"We will get away from these people."

And then she said nothing more until they were on one of those roads in Cohasset that are still comparatively lonely, even in "boarder time."

As for her companion she sat perfectly still. Sometimes she glanced shyly down at the perfectly fitting gauntlets on the hands that were holding the lines. But she did not look any further, and she did not speak.

It did not seem to her necessary that anything should be said. Even the extreme curiosity that had possessed her was gradually giving place to a sensation of comfort and happiness such as she had not before known.

Suddenly Mrs. Llandaff broke the silence. But first she guided the horse from the road to the shelter of a pine tree. The sun had by this time driven away the easterly clouds.

She turned toward the girl and looked at her steadily, almost intensely, so close was the scrutiny she gave.

"You ought to know me," she said. She smiled slightly. "It would be one of the sweetest things that ever happened to me if you should look in my face now and call me—tell me; have you no idea what you ought to call me?"

At the sound of that voice in that cadence, saying such words to her, the girl turned slowly toward the woman beside her.

Occasionally in our lives things happen that seem so unreal that no effort on our part can at first make them seem otherwise. And yet they are as real as the most ordinary, sordid everyday act.

In fact, reality is often so very beautiful that it would be immediately rejected as "material" by a "realist."

Katharine's hands involuntarily clasped themselves together on her lap.

"No," she said, "it is impossible. That would be truly impossible."

She was gazing steadily into Mrs. Llandaff's face.

"Would you like it if it were possible?" asked the elder woman.

"Oh, yes!" whispered Katharine.

"Well?" said Mrs. Llandaff.

"Then you are my Aunt Kate?"

"Yes. Truly, I am. You are sure you're not sorry?"

"Sorry?"

Katharine made a slight movement toward Mrs. Llandaff. There was sometimes about the girl an entire absence of self-consciousness.

She bent her head until her forehead touched the woman's shoulder.

"How lovely it is!" she said, still in a whisper.

"Do you think so?"

Mrs. Llandaff's face was softly radiant.

"Oh, yes!" again, and still in a whisper.

She kept her head where she had placed it. She closed her eyes as if she were keeping a vision within them.

As for the elder woman, some unaccustomed and stinging tears came to her eyes; they shut out the landscape and seemed to shut her in with this girl who was so near of kin to her, and so very near in heart.

She put her arm about the slender figure.

"It was cruel to keep from me the knowledge that you were in the world," she said at last.

It was natural that she should not at first blame herself in the least for all her ignorance of affairs in Feeding Hills.

"Didn't you know there was such a person?"

Katharine now lifted her head. She spoke with more animation.

She already had an exquisite sense, and for the first time in her life, of what it was like to be with one with whom she was free to be herself, safe not to be misunderstood.

"No. I didn't even know your mother had married. But," she added, "I suppose I am to blame for my ignorance."

"And you are Aunt Kate? Aunt Kate?"

Katharine moved her hand until her fingers touched the edge of the light wrap which her companion wore.

"I used to dream about my Aunt Kate," she said. "I always dreamed such beautiful things, too. I wished that I could make the dreams come oftener, but I couldn't. My mother used to tell me that—"

Here Katharine paused and blushed. But she went on:

"She would say to me, 'that was just like your Aunt Kate', and that I 'took after my aunt.' I don't know why, but I was always proud when she said so."

"But she said it when you had displeased her?"

"Yes," reluctantly.

"That being the case you can understand that your mother and I didn't get on well together. And perhaps neither was to blame."

"Oh, I can understand that so well," eagerly. "I don't know how it is, but mother—"

Here the girl paused and inhaled a long breath.

It seemed to her that she was talking very easily and freely. But she could not help it.

"I know your mother perfectly well."

Mrs. Llandaff's tones had a slight ring in them which she had not intended should be there.

"Finally I asked father," said Katharine, "what there was about my aunt Kate. You see, I suppose you know that mother didn't exactly approve of you, somehow."

Katharine stroked Mrs. Llandaff's mantle and looked up in Mrs. Llandaff's face which was now turned quickly toward her as its owner asked:

"And what did your father say?"

"He said you were all right." Katharine laughed gently.

"I'm much obliged to your father. And what is your own impression of me, little one?"

"Oh, you know very well."

"But we sometimes like to be told what we may already guess."

Mrs. Llandaff drew her arm more tightly about

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the girl. She was surprised at the depth of pleasure this interview gave her, intent upon bringing it about as she had been. But then she had had experience enough to know that the things we seek most strenuously do not always reward us in the having.

"What is your impression of your aunt Kate now that you are face to face with her? Does she disappoint you?"

The young eyes and the older eyes met each other for a moment.

Katharine's lips were parted in that way which gives such a touching and ardent expression to a youthful face.

"Oh, aunt Kate," she said after a silence. "As though a woman like you could disappoint any one!" She clasped her hands again as she went on, "You are—you are lovelier even than I had dreamed you were. I haven't any words. I don't know why I was let to know you, I'm sure. Perhaps it was to—to make up to me, you know. But you don't know. I don't want to think of anything but happiness now."

"Now you are wise," responded Mrs. Llandaff. "Let us think only of happiness."

But the smile which accompanied these words was a somewhat tremulous one.

SOME ANTE-BELLUM RELICS.

ABANDONED SLAVE QUARTERS IN THE SOUTH.

PLEASING MEMORIES OF UNCLE CHUGGER—TYPICAL NEGRO CABINS OF THE NEW SOUTH.

"Who'll pick de cotton? Dat cotton am nebber gwyne be picked, boss!" said the colored driver.

The Southern negro has substituted "boss" for the old familiar "marso," and his use of "boss" seems to gave a kind of verbal bird's-eye view of the wonderful change in the negro's status since the war. The traveller was looking across an unkempt cotton-field—more tares than cotton—and wondering why even this small portion of the great Southern staple should be allowed to go to waste. For you can bank on cotton in the South.

Across the field was a clump of stately trees and in their shadow were two rows of dilapidated looking cabins with their crumbling mud chimneys. The driver, seeing that the stranger's eyes rested on these cabins remarked: "Dose am de old field-niggers' quarters. But der am no niggers dar now—no one to pick de cotton." Among the trees in the distance to the right was the old mansion with its stately Grecian columns, weather-stained and apparently in the advanced stages of decay, the old garden a mass of rank weeds, the shrubs a tangle of brush. Out through the rickety gate which hung on a single hinge, rode a negro on a "mountain canary," as they call the mule, the solitary guardian of what had been one of the typical old Southern homes near an Alabama town. In the rear of the mansion were several two-story houses—the quarters of the "house-niggers" as the driver called them, explaining that the "house niggers" held their heads very high above the "field niggers."

TYPICAL CABIN OF TO-DAY.

The traveller made his way through an old lane along the edge of the neglected cotton-field toward the abandoned slave quarters under the trees. The wind was sighing among the branches as if mourning for the sounds of other days—the twang of the banjo and the voices that were wont to join in the song now long since hushed. One of the doors of the double cabin was swinging free and creaking on its hinges, boards had rotted away from the front and shingles dropped from the roof. There it stood, a relic of a regime that has passed away—an abandoned slave cabin of an ante-bellum home, that home itself as bad as abandoned. Inside were only the bare mud-plastered walls and mud floor, all in keeping with the dilapidated exterior and the uncared for cotton-field.—"Who'll pick de cotton!"

Not long after this visit to these abandoned slave-quarters the writer chanced to meet a number of Southerners whose fathers had been slave holders and whose childhood and youth had been passed on the plantations with slaves about them. They had the kindliest memories of their old servitors and also seemed to take a deeper interest in the welfare of the negro race than the younger generation of Southern whites; for they appeared to look upon the negroes as their proteges and to consider themselves in a certain sense responsible for a race that had been thrown untutored upon the world; and to remember how in the old plantation days the slaves were cared for as if they were children. In the North people are likely to think of the slaves as working, working and working and receiving nothing in return for their labor. In point of fact, every want was supplied them and there usually existed between the slave-holder's family and the slaves an "entente cordiale" often lacking in Northern households.

To the lady of the mansion the slaves were a constant source of thought. She was obliged to have each season's supply of clothing ready so that between seasons the spinning room always presented a busy scene. She also saw to it that good provisions were supplied to the quarters. If there was a sudden change in the weather she would send for the children from the quarters and ascertain if they had been properly clothed by their mothers; and the health of the slaves and their families was a constant source of solicitude to her. It often happened that, when a slave who had been particularly faithful married, the marriage was solemnized in the parlor of the planter's mansion, the family going to great trouble to arrange it for the ceremony and the dance which followed. When a child was born in the quarters the incident was registered in the family Bible and the child was brought up to the house to be named. In more remote localities an itinerant clergyman would visit the plantation once a year and conduct marriage, funeral and baptismal services, no matter how long before his visit the incidents covered by the services had occurred.

ABANDONED SLAVE QUARTERS.

The threat of being sold was the most direful that could be held over a recalcitant slave's head. For, if sold, be passed into the hands of the negro-trader or "speculator." In regard to the cruel treatment of slaves the writer was assured by disinterested people that, while there were undoubtd instances of cruelty toward slaves, planters who were guilty of it and their families lost all social standing in their neighborhood. Nothing worse could be said of a planter than that he was "cruel to his niggers."

The sale of a slave would often separate a married couple but as there was considerable laxity in the quarters the partner left behind did not long remain single. The writer was told of a middle-aged negress who, when her husband, a slave on a neighboring plantation, was to be sold, was so loud in her lamentations that her master to assuage her grief bought the slave at a high price, for he was a mechanic. When she heard of this the negress suddenly ceased crying and exclaimed. "Lor', Marse! Wa' for you buy that no account nigger! I was a gwyne to marry Cy!"

In almost all households there were slaves who had been given when children to children of the family and had grown up with them, regarding them with the most sincere affection. One instance told was of a former slave now grown old, who was supporting the dissipated and impoverished son of his old "marse." Then there were the "family niggers," as the slaves who had belonged to the planter's father or grandfather were called. To them were allowed many privileges. They might even "argufy" with members of the family and expected considerable immunity from work. The writer was told of one old "family nigger" on a Tennessee plantation, whose name was Uncle Chugger and who always pleaded extreme age as an excuse for not working. When accused of exaggerating his age he would reply: "Marse, you'se doan' know how ole dis nigger am. When was it, marse, dat Washington made de retreat on Moscow?—For I was dar!—I was dar!" Of course there was no "argufying" against such a plea.

Once when he was roundly scolded for letting the cattle get into the corn he "argufied" himself out of it as follows: "Marse! You'se no right to abuse dis nigger. It weren't de cattle, it were de hogs he let get into de corn!"

This same Uncle Chugger said to his master, who was considering what orders to give the old man for the day: "Well, marse, while you'se cultivatin' your mind I'll go cultivate de potatoes!"

The Southern negro has a curious habit of roaming over the country at night. This is not because (as the saying goes) "any nigger can make an honest living stealing chickens and corn," but because an old habit of slave-holding days still clings to the race. In the old days the only spare time which the slave had was at night. They would then steal away to neighboring plantations and there exchange news. In this manner news of important affairs would be carried between plantations twenty miles apart over night, the slaves meeting at some half-way quarters.

There are among even the younger negroes of the South many characters as amusing as old Uncle Chugger. The writer remembers ordering at dinner at a hotel in Memphis turkey with cranberry sauce. The waiter brought the turkey but served stewed tomatoes instead of cranberry sauce, explaining that as the cranberry sauce was all out he had brought stewed tomatoes as the nearest to it. This same waiter appeared at a colored wedding wearing eye-glasses not because he required them but because he thought it the "swell thing" to do. He had as a scarf pin a large glass diamond, a veritable Kohinoor. A few days later the waiter at an adjoining table appeared with a similar pin. When the first waiter was twitted about it he replied: "'Pears to me he am infringing on my prerogaments!"

The Southern negroes appear to be increasing in thrift and the more intelligent and industrious among them own little cabins, mostly "shanghai"—i. e., one story and no extension—on the outskirts of the towns. The front is adorned with semi-tropical-looking castor-bean plants and with the cabin there usually go a patch of corn and one of cotton. The cabins are, as a rule, painted white and, if not substantial, are at least thrifty looking and present a great contrast to the abandoned slave quarters. There is no doubt who'll "pick de cotton" that grows about the new cabins. There is also no doubt in some people's minds that the thrifty negroes have already raised themselves to a higher level than the "poor whites."

BERNHARDT'S SCRAP-BOOK.

A PIQUANT COMPILATION.

From The St. James's Gazette.

Few artists there have been whose doings and sayings have attracted more attention or aroused greater curiosity than those of Madame Sarah Bernhardt. Her striking personality, her whims, fancies, and vagaries, her comings and goings, and last, but not least, her incontestable genius, have all furnished copious matter for debate and critisim. About the unknown there is always a certain, if undefinable, charm; and Madame Bernhardt's movements partake sufficiently of that quality to excite the interest with which the advent of the unexpected is generally awaited. No disappointment, however, is likely to be experienced by those who are now looking forward to her reappearance next Saturday at Mr. D'Oyly Carte's handsome theatre, the Royal English Opera House, where already a little army of carpenters, painters and workmen are busily employed preparing for the event. Nearly two years have elapsed since the great French tragedienne was last seen in London; and during that interval she has completed a tour extending over most of the principal cities in the United States, Canada and Australia. New-York, Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Montreal, San Francisco, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney—to mention only a few of her resting points—have in each in turn been visited, and enjoyed the privilege of laying their tributes at the feet of the famous actress; whose dresses, voice, tastes, habits, manners and talents have everywhere been discussed with a freedom and an amplitude that leave nothing to be desired. And yet Madame Sarah, as she is invariably called by all around her, is not entirely happy. "I don't care so much for notoriety," she herself declares, "as people think. The papers have said a good many disagreeable things about me. They have invaded my private life to throw their poisoned arrows. I don't like so much publicity, nor am I anxious to have words put into my mouth that I never say. There is but one way for an actress to advertise herself, and that is always to act her best. Mere advertising dodges won't do any good if you do not regard your art as highest of all." From this it may be judged that Madame Bernhardt takes little or no pleasure in the society of the ubiquitous interviewer. Fortunately, however, she is found in practice to be somewhat less obdurate than she appears in theory; and the world is so much the richer by many a shrewd remark and pointed epigram.

If ever it happens that the art of dramatic criticism becomes a dead letter, there will assuredly be woe and lamentation in the ranks of the theatrical profession. For, say what they will, there are few actors and actresses who can plead not guilty to the weakness of carefully scanning and religiously hoarding the "notices" of their various performances. In Madame Bernhardt's case the custom can only be regarded as a singularly happy one, inasmuch as it has resulted in the formation of a scrap-book compiled under her own eye, which, in point of fact, offers a compendious record of her experiences during the last eighteen months. The contents may be taken to have received Madame Bernhardt's own cachet, and thus acquire an interest which otherwise they might want. In turning over the pages of the volume one is immediately struck by the spirit of impartiality that has prompted the inclusion of every kind of criticism. Notices there are of all sorts—good, bad and indifferent, although it is merely justice to state that the first constitute an overwhelming majority. Still, one cannot but admire the courage which allows the following weighty indictment, uttered by a leading New-York critic, to stand. "No impulse other than that of colossal vanity would prompt, or would permit, any woman to come into public view in such a character as that of Sardou's Cleopatra. The part has not a shred of decency to cover it, and, worse still, it has not one fibre of nobility to exalt it, or one touch of poetry to beautify it, or one thrill of heroism to redeem it." Or, again: "It is because I desire to see my fellow-men freed from the social curses of immorality and sensuality that I take up my parable against these French plays. I feel it to be nothing short of moral degradation to make the unchecked and protracted storms of human passion, which are presented with such fascinating attractiveness by Madame Sarah Bernhardt, to stand for or to represent human love. It is a travesty of the truth. Nay, more—these delineations are utterly false, and all the more dangerous because of the exceptional ability with which 'the great tragedienne' invests her characters with this supposed possession." Such attacks, however, it may not unfairly be surmised, contain, in spite of their severity, just enough of what is complimentary to the genius of the actress to render them not altogether unpalatable.

By way of frontispiece to the scrap-book Madame Bernhardt has inserted a portrait of herself flanked on each side by one of her pets, the Danish bloodhound Myrtah, and Star, the small Skye terrier. These two along with the little girl Madeline, whom she recently adopted in New-York, are her constant companions. Another object of her solicitude is the box containing the snakes which figure in "Cleopatra." Unhappily on their arrival in New-York these were found apparently to be inanimate, but by dint of much rubbing and warming two were at last restored to life by their anxious mistress. "I like snakes," was her curious admission to a friend, "they are so cold and clammy." The qualities, it is to be suspected, are hardly of a kind that would recommend them to any one less eccentric. In another direction Madame Bernhardt's predilections are equally decided. Of oysters she confesses she cannot have too many, nor of milk too much. Her opinions regarding her fellow-artists are also interesting. Miss Mary Anderson she considers very beautiful and graceful, and a—a good actress, but not great. Mrs. Langtry is beautiful, beautiful! "But Ellen Terry is the artist I love. Oh, she is a great artist, a grand artist—so graceful, so bewitching; and Mr. Irving is an artist too—more artist, however, than actor." If any of these criticisms should be considered a little disparaging, their sting is, at any rate, in some measure deadened by the subsequent remark that there are very few really great artists in any country.

Madame Bernhardt holds that as a general rule an actor should withdraw from the boards when he has reached the age of fifty. "But," she continues, "I have seen many who should have retired at five-and-twenty." Touching the vexed question of realism on the stage, she affirms: "Of one thing I feel certain; and that is, that the actor must feel the part he plays and not be utterly without emotion. I must disagree with Diderot on this point. In playing an emotional part I think the actor should enter into it body and soul, and feel the suffering that he simulates just as though it were actually occurring in real life. If an actor has to die upon the stage, it is not necessary for him to die without the possibility of revival, but his simulation of death should be so near the real thing that he will almost convince himself that he has departed from life. If he has the art to carry this simulation through sincerely, he will come very near convincing the audience that his death is real. This is a higher attainment than the cold-blooded struggle for effect with which Delsarte's name and theory are connected. And that is my view of this phase of art," concludes Madame Bernhardt, with an emphatic gesture which precludes the possibility of any further argument.

HANDEL'S BIRTHPLACE.

From The London Standard.

The house in which Handel was born, at Halle, on the 23d of January, 1685, is to be sold, and seems likely to be bought by a brewer who already uses the grounds as a beer garden. The great composer's admirers desire, however, to have the house converted into a Handel Museum, as has been done with the birthplaces of Goethe, Beethoven and other famous men, and are collecting funds for the purpose.

WHOLESALE DUELLING.

FOUR FIGHTS IN ONE MORNING—THE BICYCLE IN FRANCE.

Paris, May 20.

Since the exploits of Ravachol it is not easy to startle Paris. Nevertheless we were well roused up yesterday by the account of a "quadruple duel" having been fought in the Bois de Boulogne by a M. Roulez, a well-known electrician. The quarrel originated at the first representation of "Salammbo," and the fight came off in public at 9 o'clock in the morning, when the fine people are in the Bois to take horseback and cycling exercise. The wood rangers did not interfere to stop this extraordinary encounter, though there is a rangers' barrack close to the spot where it occurred. The danseuse who is thus suddenly lifted to notoriety is Mlle. Morgan. The electrician is about fifty. He was in the wings chatting with Mlle. Morgan' when three younger men, all subscribers to the opera, came up and made use of insulting language to him, all speaking at once. He retorted. They then successively struck him in the face, and after a wrangle, in which every one came to fisticuffs, the matter was referred to seconds, of whom there were six in all. M. Roulez, as the offended party, had the choice of weapons, and, being an accomplished fencer, chose the sword. In the first duel Blondel received almost at once a stab in the chest, the sword going into the top of the right lung. Dumoulin, the next comer, was soon disposed of, Roulez's foil piercing through his biceps and skewering it to the chest as cooks fasten the pinions of a fowl to the bird's body. It was all so quickly done as to leave no time for the bystanders to feel surprise. Leclerc adopted other tactics, and thrust forward constantly. This duel went on for a quarter of an hour, and might have lasted longer had not Roulez gradually driven Leclerc against a tree and when he got him there wounded him badly in the face. M. Aviraguet, who had come as a second to Blondel, getting furious, advanced toward Roulez and said, "I want to avenge my friends and challenge you to fight me." The signal was given for the fourth duel at twenty minutes past 9. Roulez was less the master of his weapon than in the previous encounters. He sent his sword into the right maxillary, almost grazing the carotid artery.

By this time there were many ladies on horseback behind the crowd that had gathered. They were intensely agitated and interested during the last duel. Turning to the other seconds, the quadruple victor in a loud voice called out: "If any among you, gentlemen, want to try further conclusions, I am ready for him." Nobody answering, he flung the sword that had done him such good service on the ground.

A curious gambling case has been before the Court of Cassation. Last September in the conversation room of the Casino, a player threw a 1,000 frs. note on the table as a game of baccarat was going forward. The bank won, and as the croupier was raking up the stakes, the "punter" of the 1,000 frs. whipped it up furtively, and sticking it in his pocket, walked away. He was noticed doing this, but insisted on keeping the money. It was ascertained that his antecedents were those of a professional blackleg. Taking this into consideration, the Correctional Tribunal sentenced him to six months for theft and for riotous conduct in having defended himself with his fists on being held by a servant of the Casino as a thief in taking back his 1,000 frs. note.

Cycling, which I remember in its infancy here, is now the source of a vast business, or rather of vast and various trades. It is cutting out the race course. The home manufacture of cycles and the import trade in them have taken an extension that nobody could have foreseen when the Prince Imperial, in the closing days of the Empire, used to practise cycling in the Tuileries Garden with the late King of Spain, who was then Prince of Asturias—and in exile. The old fashioned lumbering cycle, requiring strong foot pressure, was absurdly ungraceful. The pedal action of a good cycle is now so easy that the rider of a steel horse, bowling along on a smooth, dry road, shoots forward with a lightness and ease which have the gracefulness of the flight of a swallow. Ladies in this country are alive to this, and even young girls of birth and breeding are taken to riding schools where they can compete in cycle races against lady professionals. In the grounds of many chateaus there are long board alleys made on purpose for cycling racing, in which brothers and sisters are often rivals. Doctors order cycling as a holiday exercise for the young people. The French neologism for the amusement, is "veloce-sport." The cyclist is a "veloce-man" and the lady cyclist a "veloce-woman." There are "veloce-tailors," and it may be added "veloce-dressmakers" and "veloce-hatters." It is agreed that the last half of no matter what composite word relating to trade connection with cycling should be English. One can even say "veloce-factory."

In the fresh, early morning, when the weather is good, one finds the broad alleys of the Bois de Boulogne alive with veloce-men and veloce-women. Americans prevail among the latter. But young French married ladies as well as professionals are intent on the sport. Most of them do full justice to the veloce tailors and hatters, and are at ease on their steel horses. A scarfy arrangement of lace technically known as "angels' wings" adds wonderfully to the impression of fleet, graceful motion of the veloce-women. Nun's veiling, made up into a blouse and a short skirt, is just now the favorite material for the outer garments of the lady cyclist. Lord Dufferin is the first ambassador who has taken to the steel horse in public. Brisk exercise is a means of getting rid of the bad effect of India on his liver. He dislikes horseback exercise, and is not fond of walking. So, at the age of sixty-four, he took to cycling, serving his apprenticeship on the smooth parts of the Roman Campagna.

The General Postoffice here has taken up the steel horse to organize an extra service for letters posted after the mail cars go to the railway termini to catch the mail trains. The utmost delay at the General Postoffice used to be 7 p. m. It is now, thanks to le Veloce-Post, extended to 7:15.

A great cycling centre in all sorts of weather is the Machines Hall at the Exhibition Palace in the Champs de Mars. A veloce-photographer has a studio in the building. Cadets from the military school are assiduous in learning how to cycle, M. de Freycinet having decided that army corps are to be interlinked by means of cyclist brigades, and that there are to be cyclist eclaireurs. A special uniform is being designed. It is to be of jersey-hose with colored facings.

E. C.

WHY M. DUMAS SOLD OUT.

From The London Daily News.

M. Alexandre Dumas sold his gallery, our Paris correspondent says, because he was tired of seeing pictures cover every wall in his house. There was not a spot anywhere, but in the kitchen, where they were not hung, and they were piled up in the garret. He thought of keeping a few things, but was told if he did the others would not sell well. People would say that he only sent to the hammer things by forgers.

THE MOTHERS OF GREAT MEN.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.

A great deal has been written about "the Mothers of Great Men." We imagine, however, that the folk of Leonberg, in Wurtemberg, have started a precedent by erecting memorials to a series of mothers of great men. This little township of about 2,000 inhabitants was the birthplace of Paulus, the famous Rationalist theologian, of Schelling, the equally famous philosopher, and of Hochstetter, the naturalist. It was also the dwelling-place of the mother of the poet Schiller from 1796 to 1801, and of the mother of the astronomer Kepler two centuries earlier, though three villages in the neighborhood contend for the honor of having been Kepler's birthplace. The town council of the "Town of Mothers," as it proudly calls itself, has affixed tablets to the walls of the old castle of Duke Ulrich the Well-beloved, where the Magna Charta of Wurtemberg liberties was signed by the Duke, in honor of the mothers of the poet and the astronomer. We presume that the patriotic town councillors will not stop short at these two honorable women, but will extend similar tokens of respect to the other mothers of whom they are so justly proud.