

with which their countenances were liberally smudged.

"Oh, what'll I do? Oh, maister, maister, dinna kill me! Och, och none! Mercy, maister, I couldna help it! Vanished, clean gae'd aff like a shadow, and never set my een on him mair. Oh, maister, dinna hang me! The precious lamb—the dear creature—whisk'd awa' frae my verri hauns!"

Incoherently, Betty, on her knees, roared and wrung her hapts together; Tommy rolled on the floor; and Agnes resumed the bleat she had nigh ceased from on the appearance of Galen.

"In the name of wonder, woman: what have you done? What does all this mean?" scolded Galen, with his eyes staring almost out with intense anxiety, clutching the prostrate domestic by the arms. "Speak buzzy, can't you speak?"

"Oh, it was a' my fault! But, mercy, maister! Ane stown awa', anither pushioned, an' me at the bottom o't! Oh, gudeness, I'll be hang't for it! Mercy, Maister, spare me! Dinna gie me up yet!"

"Hag, jade, wretch! Can't you tell me what you've done, or what's gone wrong? Can nobody tell me—will nobody speak to me?" screamed the father.

"Oh, winna ye kill me when you come to ken?" gasped the domestic.

"Confound you, speak; speak, I command you; I entreat you. Do you hear?"

Betty recounted her story of disasters. While walking in the forenoon, she had lost John suddenly at a fruitshop window. She came home, left the others, and set out alone in search of him. On returning, half-distracted and unsuccessful, she found Tommy, allured by its taste, had swallowed nearly the whole of the new medicine, inadvertently left on the table; Agnes had scalded her foot in the pursuit of knowledge, by overturning a pot on the fire; and the youngest lot had secured the liberty of the press, and like all others in the early possession of a hitherto denied privilege, had abused it.

The father gave a fearful groan as the summary of his miseries was recapitulated; he sank on a seat, and gazed a moment at the scene. Tommy's yells brought him round, however, to a sense of duty. Clutching that unfortunate up in his arms, he roared to Betty to run for a doctor.

Betty ran, and speedily returned, dragging after her a pale-visaged apothecary, who, after being brought to understand the case and examining the contents of the phial yet unconsumed, delivered an opinion to the effect that the dose would be more inconvenient than deadly and its worst effects would be entirely counteracted by a nice little prescription he would make up and send. Tommy soon got the nice prescription, and felt his pangs considerably allayed.

The next matter was the recovery of the missing one, and this was found rather more difficult of accomplishment. Information was lodged with the police, and parties set on his track, but for a time to no purpose. Night set dimly in on the family; everything had gone wrong, and was rapidly going worse.

Betty was almost stupid—Tommy moaning in bed because he got no dinner—Agnes performing the same feat by the fire—the more juvenile; ill with too much sweets, undergoing a physicking—and the father distracted with anxiety and a swollen face. About ten o'clock a rap came to the door, and a gruff policeman carried in poor Johnny rolled up in a great coat. He had been found crying on a deserted stairhead, whether some one had enticed him and disencumbered him of every article of loose clothing—these being everything save his shirt and a bit of flannel round his throat, put there by his father to prevent catching cold. The charity was rewarded and dismissed, and John plunged into a hot bath, preparatory to being nigh smothered in bed and comforted with scalding gruel. By and by all were got safely stowed away, and the father left alone in his misery; what his reflections particularly were we know not, but the conclusion of them was, 'I wish Martha was here.'

Next day the unhappy parent was again dragged at an untimely hour out of the bed to dress his family, such of them as could get up, for John was in a fever, and Tommy and Agnes unable to rise, or unwilling. These, of course had to be seen to and prescribed for, as well as the residue who were sick from yesterday's enjoyment and unable to eat breakfast. There are few things more annoying in life than a family of really sick children. They form a domestic misery sufficient to test the patience and fortitude of the most philosophic mind. Galen experienced the truth of this. Previously he had experimented a little in medicine, and believed hard in his own sufficiency, but now that the trial was fairly come, his philosophy and experience both completely forsook him; and besides, the toothache had fairly prostrated all moral energy. He had tied a bag of hot sand up his cheek, burned his throat with brandy, half suffocated himself with tarred cotton, sickening himself with smoking, tied on a stocking dipped in cold water, applied a hot iron, which had blackened outside, now swollen and disfigured, but all in vain. Absolutely miserable he went out that day, and, a martyr to the most dismal forebodings, gumbled away the hours till the time of his return home.

"Bless me, what's all this uproar about?" exclaimed he rushing up stairs to ascertain the cause of a fearful hubbub that greeted his ears on entering the house.

The room door opened with a fearful crash of falling chairs, as he pushed his way in. On the floor the table lay inverted, and part of the youngsters playing with some ornamental

inside of it; the chairs were strewn on their backs, doing the duty of hobby-horses; the contents of an inkstand improving the pattern of the carpet; and some books with illuminated bindings, converted into the foundation of a house built with chips of coal and cinder. To add to the confusion two of the hopefuls had been fighting, and now set apart, the one holding a bloody nose and the other blubbering at intervals.

"Was ever father so tormented?" roared Galen. "I'll teach you other tricks, I wager. Take that you little rascal, and that," continued he, administering kicks and cuffs all round with a hearty good will. A momentary calm ensued, but only to prelude to a fearful storm of yelling and screaming.

"Hold your jabbering tongues and be silent, will you, or I'll drub the life out of you," shouted the parent. "Confound it, but I'll see what the meaning of all this. Betty, come here!"

"Was ye wantin' me, sir," said the maid popping in immediately.

"What do you mean girl, by allowing such goings on when I'm absent. Do you think I can for a moment tolerate them? or allow any person, got for the very purpose of taking charge over these children, to remain here, who doesn't seem to care a straw about doing their duty?"

"Really, sir, I canna."

"I tell you what, you need not try to put me off. It's all a pretence, you're going to forge your own remissness. But you'll walk out to this. I'm not going to be imposed upon. Get your things packed then, and set off. You don't stay here longer."

"Much obliged t'ye sir. Hope ye may be lang able to guide your ain. I'll be ready to gwang in an hour or twa."

The maid was gone by the appointed time, and Galen left master of all he surveyed. He scowled fumed and fretted, ill pleased now with himself, and worse satisfied with every other body. By dint of some perseverance, and considerable ingenuity, he managed to get an impromptu dinner, and saw it administered properly, for his ruling passion was still unsubdued; and, with an equally creditable degree of skill, contrived to have tea prepared by the proper time, and saw it also safely disposed of. But a chill smote through his heart at night, as, sitting alone, he reflected he must now wash up all the dishes, scrub the knives, and brush nearly a dozen pair of shoes, for children whom he must get up to dress shortly after daylight. Secretly he cursed his own imprudence in despatching Betty so summarily, and as he looked at the waning fire, which he knew he must kindle next morning, he half involuntarily muttered, 'Martha must come back.'

Tremendous next day, were the struggles of Peste to do his duty. He found himself in that state popularly termed a 'mess.' Everything went wrong that he did, and a score of things required to be done which he could not. He put wrong dresses on wrong bodies, and made them worse trying to right them; he administered physic by mistake, and upset a dozen boxes of different kinds of pills on the floor; he brushed shoes with black lead; could not get the fire kindled at first, and when it did kindle could not find coals to burn; broke the dishes in trying to clean them; cut his fingers with the knives; spoiled his clothes with grease, upset pails of water, and mopped himself in mopping it up, cooked a breakfast and brought up hot water instead of tea, cuffed the children and coaxed them into silence, sent for an elderly female to keep the house, whom he found drunk on his return, and the house nearly on fire by her management; gave her in charge to policeman and sent for another. By night the cup of his miseries was nigh full, and his nerves completely shaken. He could have wished himself at the bottom of the Thames or the Serpentine, but had not courage requisite to secure such a lodging. His good genius came to his aid, and he resolutely resolved, 'I'll write Martha this night.'

"Forgive me for any thing harsh I have said to you; I was very wrong. Do return if you have any love for me or your children. I am heartily ashamed of my conduct. Unless you return I will take leave of absence, and bring them all down to Margate to you."

So the letter ran Mrs Peste received next day. The natural impulse of the wife and mother was to hasten home, but she was better advised by her sister, and the result of that counsel was, that Galen received an answer thus:—

MY DEAR HUSBAND,—I am very glad you feel your error, and are sorry for it. So you find I am of some use after all. But I feel it would be wrong of me to return just to occupy my old position. That was not my right one, Galen, and unless you agree that I am to be mistress as well as mother of my family, I cannot indeed think of it. Now tell me, will you agree to burn the whole contents of your laboratory, give no physic unless the doctor orders it, and allow me the whole management of their food, clothing, and exercise. If you say you will, I am sure no wife will be happier to forget all her wrongs, and love her husband more truly than—**MARTHA PESTLE.**

"This was a bitter pill for Galen, worse than any new or old medicine he ever read of, or tasted or administered. But it was the only efficacious one, and its result, after a little more misery and conscious helplessness was,

MY DEAR WIFE,—I agree to your terms. You are quite right. The laboratory is all destroyed. I am coming down to-morrow with the children.—**GALEN PESTLE.**

Martha's sister and her husband saw Galen tied down fairly to the terms of reconciliati-

on that night, and Martha herself with tearful eyes and a glad heart, welcomed her spouse and little ones. In Galen, for a while, there was a hard struggle to overcome his old propensities of physicking, coddling, and administering to his successors, and a strong instinct to be overcome in the way of poking himself in the kitchen and interfering with the maids. But time and resolution conquered all; and were you dear sister or brother, to know the Pestles as we once knew them and to know them now, you would hardly believe that the half-plethoric gentleman, who carries the big stick and wears a flower in his button-hole, is the once lean and anxious father; and these children, some of whom are starting into man and womanhood, but all so fresh and hearty, made up the group of once sickly exotic-like humanities.

What moral then, reader, may you declare—you who think that every story should have one. Just this, if you read it aright. As in nature they are providential laws, by which no part of its machinery can supply another section, so in the social relations of life are the same happy and wise principles of adjustment existing, by which man and woman have their own spheres of duty, and when the one interferes with the other, that interference must be a violation of a true position, unhappy in its workings and mischievous in its results.

THE EXILE'S RETURN.

BY J. E. CARPENTER.

ALL—all are changed, each old familiar place,  
Each bright green spot where I in childhood played,  
The woods are green, but yet they give no trace  
Of those lone paths where I so oft have strayed;  
There is afar a bright and sunny land,  
Where, through long years, I lived from all estranged—  
Yet my heart yearned once more again to stand  
Near my old home—I come—and it is changed.

All, all are changed—the friends I loved of yore,  
The dear companions of my boyhood's day,  
They pass as strangers by my father's door,  
Round which each summer's eve we used to play;  
Oh, that the world should have such power to blight  
Each sunny future that the past arranged,  
That youth should be a vision of the night  
From which we wake to find, that—all is changed.

All, all are changed—my gentle sister's voice,  
I bear not now its tones of happy glee!  
Where are my brothers: will they not rejoice?  
If friends prove cold, they still will welcome me!  
Not they have gone before me to the land  
Of unknown realms, by mortals never ranged;  
I am a stranger in my native land,  
Home—kindred—old companions—all are changed.

THE PRECIOUS METALS.

MONEY, in some form or other, has in all time been so intimately associated with the business and pleasure of the world, with the public and private policy of nations and of individuals, as to have engaged the attention of philosophers and legislators, poets and philanthropists, as well as the votaries of the giddy goddess who regard it merely as the vehicle of enjoyment. Whatever the material of which the circulating medium is composed, its potency has varied but little, if at all, from the universal standard. Some people have considered that there was 'nothing like leather,' and impressed a stamp upon bits of hide; others have declared in favour of iron, brass, bronze; in short, all the metals, as they were known, have been legitimatised into currency. In some countries yet unvisited by the schoolmaster, we are told that the natives use bullocks instead of bank notes, with sheep by way of small change; others again, recognise only lumps of salt, or shells. Still as before observed, whatever the materials, the conventional currency appears to be every where pretty much the same as among our day book and ledger communities:

—The only power  
That all mankind falls down before;  
Money, that like the swords of kings,  
Is the last reason of all things.

By common consent of all nations who have been able to obtain the precious metals, gold and silver have superseded all other materials of currency—always excepting paper. These occupy so small a space, admitting of being conveniently hoarded and preserved, as to have commended themselves especially to popular instinct in remote and unsettled ages. At the time of the conquest of Persia by the Greeks, the gold accumulated by successive monarchs of that country amounted to about £80,000,000 sterling. The whole or greater portion of this large sum was transferred to Greece by the victories of Alexander, besides which there were several mines of gold and silver within the Grecian territory. The influx of such enormous wealth would necessarily tell on the manners of the people, and on prices, and accordingly in the days of Demosthenes, gold and silver were five times less valuable than under Solon. Whatever be the amount circulating in a country, there is a constant tendency towards diminution, the immense accumulations would be widely scattered

in foreign wars or intestine convulsions. How great must have been the dispersion of precious metals on the downfall of Rome, and afterwards of Byzantium. From the date of the latter event, down through the middle ages; and even to the present century, large sums have been totally lost, from the practice of burying money for safe keeping, as in many instances the owners died, and carried their secret with them to the tomb. When to these causes is added the loss by shipwreck, and other casualties, the result appears in the magnitude of the diminution. Just before the discovery of America, gold was at an enormous value, but subject to great and frequent fluctuations.

The amount of coined money circulating in the whole of Europe at the close of the fifteenth century has been estimated at £34,000,000 sterling. The quantity coined in England in 237 years ending in 1509, was equal to nearly £7,000 annually, present value; but from 1,603 to 1823, the average was £819,415 or 122 times greater than before the supply from the mines of the new world. In addition to the causes of diminution above described, there is the mechanical wear of the money in passing from hand to hand. This loss has been variously estimated, according to Mr McCulloch it is 1 per cent. per annum. If this be correct, £40,000,000 coined at the beginning of a century, would be reduced to £15,000,000 at the end, in two centuries £6,000,000 would remain, and in five centuries to £300,000 only. Taking Mr Jacob's estimate of the annual wear at 1-360th part, what was £200,000,000 under Constantine would be reduced to £12,000,000 in the time of Edward I.

The discovery of the mines of Potosi, above all other acquisitions made by Europeans in South America, effected an important change in the commercial relations of the old world. Purchasers found it necessary to go to market with more and more money in their hands, such was the progressive increase of prices. To many persons the rise was a source of exultation, but the greater part regarded it with suspicion and discontent; they could not understand why wheat should be doubled, and in some instances quadrupled, in price in the course of a few years. The dissatisfaction was not confined to the poorer classes—it excited attention in higher quarters; and Latimer, in one of his sermons preached before Edward VI. and the court, animadverted upon the change in no very mild terms. In reality, mankind were benefited, not injured, by having more gold than they had before, just as they would be benefited by an increase in the amount of their ward-robes, or growing timber, or any other tangible possession.

The present importations of silver into Europe are about 40 to 1 compared to those of gold. According to all the accounts, we are to see greater ebanges in the course of a few years, from the influx of the precious metals, than any that have yet been produced. The application of European science and industry to the exploration of the hitherto imperfectly-worked mines of the South American States, will doubtless effect some notable difference in the proceeds. In those countries, wheelbarrows and vehicles for transport are scarcely known, and in most cases mule tracks are the only roads. The workmen generally employed in mining operations possess no other tools or machinery than their ten fingers, a lasso, and a knife. The loss and waste consequent upon such a state of things may be easily imagined. Mercury, as is well known, is an essential element in amalgamations of gold and silver, and in their separation from the ore; the quantity annually required for these purposes by the American mines is about 3,000,000 of pounds. Of this the greater portion is imported; and its transmission into the interior of the country is in the hands of monopolists; by whom the price is raised to so excessive an amount, as to leave but little room for profit to the miner. Various attempts have from time to time been made to effect the operations in which mercury is employed by other methods: at Freyberg, in Saxony, the amalgamation is accomplished in revolving cylinders, which complete the process in fewer hours than the days consumed in the operation in Mexico and Peru, with a much smaller consumption of the quick-silver. In Europe, mercury is used to recombine the silver after its separation.

Recent and present researches in electro-chemistry render it certain that before long this resistless agency will supersede the use of quicksilver in the working of metals: its power over the elements of the most intimate combinations of metallic and other bodies is well known; The experiments of M. Bequerrel in this branch of science has as yet been the most successful, and although not so effective as is to be desired, they have acquired an industrial character. Some of the experiments undertaken in Paris were tried upon nearly 10,000 pounds of silver ore from Mexico, and with a favourable result. A method of amalgamation has also been discovered, by means of which five-sixths of the mercury now considered essential to the process will be saved. About forty ounces of silver are obtained from 1000 pounds of ore; the pulverisation or trituration of the latter is effected in South America by the feet of men and mules, instead of water or other power. Human skill, in fact, seems to be deficient in proportion to the riches of nature. A machine somewhat similar to the mortar-crusher was introduced at Potosi to supply the place of animal labour by a European. With this instrument, one man and a mule costing five shillings per day, could do as much work as twenty Indians, for whom the charge was three pounds. Although this machine was constructed more than twelve years ago, not