

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the London Working Man's Friend.
THE BREAKFAST PARTY.

BY MISS H. M. RATHBONE.
CHAPTER I.

'How pale and tired you look, Mary! I am very glad this good doctor is coming to tell us what is the matter; I only wish you would not feel so desponding about yourself.'

'I cannot help it, Charles; you know all the stuff I have taken from Jenkin's shop has done me no service, and I fancy the hardships of our way of life have most to do with my being so weak.'

A shadow passed over the brow of her brother as she spoke, for the same idea had at times painfully oppressed his own mind, but rousing himself from the troubled reverie into which her words had thrown him, he said, 'But, Mary, this gentleman is no common doctor, and you cannot think how skillfully he has cured some of the worst cases belonging to our theatre, and though he stands so high in his profession, that we could not possibly offer him any adequate remuneration, he consented, Mr Crowther told me, with the greatest alacrity to prescribe for you. I believe, too, he has proposed coming here to breakfast with us to-morrow, that by accepting our hospitality, he may the more easily decline the fee.'

'Do you know him by sight?'

'No, and I never happened to hear his name, or else I have forgotten it; tell me what have we got for breakfast, have you thought of what we can give him?'

'I bought half a pound of white sugar and a quarter pound of coffee to-day, and I told the baker to bring a fresh roll in the morning. Then we have a little bacon left and if I broiled a few slices very nicely, and made some toast from the old leaf, I fancied that would be sufficient. Indeed I shall not have a penny over after paying for a lock of meal for our own dinners next week, and the roll.'

'Well, I suppose we must be satisfied, but it seems a shabby turn out, and I do not at all like the idea of setting our vile salt butter, that is always rancid into the bargain, before him; can't you manage to get some fresh on credit, or stay, here is my neckhandkerchief. I will go out now and see what can be got for it, it is a silk one though much worn.' Giving his young sister a hasty kiss, Charles Gardener ran down stairs, and by the light of the lamps, Mary watched his well-formed, slight-made figure hastening down the street. She was only fifteen years old, and yet the charge of her widowed father and of her brother's comfort devolved wholly upon her, and so scanty were their united earnings, that it was no wonder toil, anxiety, and want of nourishment should have caused her health and spirits to fail. The Clerk of St. Paul's Church striking seven, obliged her to wrap herself in her old cloak, preparatory to encountering the keen night air; and after making up the little fire, so that her father who was asleep beside it with a worn, patient look on his face that made her heart ache, might not grow chilly, she followed her brother's example, and glided down into the still busy street. Her limbs felt very feeble as she walked, and she shuddered at the thoughts of standing on the stage for an hour together as one of those poor supernumeraries who compose the living ground-work of theatrical performances, and who are grudgingly rewarded by a shilling a day, for, all the time, labour, dress, and attending rehearsals, which such situations involve.

In general, Charles, who was five years her senior, accompanied her, and gave her the support of his arm, and her present deprivation of his aid made her feel additionally lonely and depressed. She could prevent the tears running over, as she took her customary place in a circle of smartly dressed smiling Swiss peasant girls, and the manager, on seeing them, harshly warned her that her attendance would be no longer required if she should again dare to disobey his positive orders.

Mechanically her lips resumed the set expression which was considered to represent a mirthful appearance, and her courage presently revived when she saw Charles enter as one of the Emperor's standard bearers, a department whose trouble and attendant expenses were paid like her own by a stipend of 6s weekly. Unfortunately for her, he was detained after her business had been concluded, and ever desirous to rejoin her father, she once more wended her solitary way, and busied herself on reaching home in preparing the small portion of soup-maigre which was to constitute the family supper. The little pot had just given tokens of boiling when she heard her brother's step below, but to her surprise, he seemed to be bringing some one else with him; and waking their father, who usually dozed from exhaustion most of the evening, they both turned round to see Charles enter, followed by a middle-aged female and a very young man, whose extreme ungainliness of appearance was but dimly compensated by his possessing a pair of very intelligent, piercing black eyes. Both the new comers looked weary, and bore evident marks of having just come off a journey which somewhat paved the way for Charles's introduction as he said, 'Father, this is Aunt Eliza and our cousin Ned Donovan, they have come up to London to look for employment,

and when they found we were not so rich as they had somehow fancied, Aunt Eliza wanted to go to the nearest boarding-house, but I pressed them to come in here for to-night at all events.'

'And you did quite right my son,' was Mr Gardener's reply, 'so long as I have a sixpence left, my sister and her child shall share it with me.'

We shall not now pursue the details of this family re-union, nor disclose minutely how the humble resources of the Gardeners were hospitably stretched to take in and minister to the wants of the two tired travellers; but we will look in for a moment into the sloping roof chamber six feet square, containing a flock bed on the boards, which afforded a narrow resting place for the young men. 'How comes it, Charles, that you are so badly off? Mother always thought my uncle had done very well in his profession, and that you and Mary were earning a good deal at the theatre. Is uncle ill?'

'No; but some years ago he got into difficulties by becoming surety to a brother of my poor mother's who died insolvent, and then he was forced to adopt scene painting as the readiest means of getting bread to eat. The manager of C—-theatre took advantage of his distress to engage his services on wretchedly low terms for five years, and so he has lost all his former patrons, and has been forced to abandon those higher branches of the art for which his fine talents and well-cultivated powers would so eminently fit him. Paint as hard as he will, he seldom makes more than 10s. a week, and that by an amount of labour that is fast wearing him out.'

'Do not you help him at all?'

'I can't Ned; and yet heaven knows I've done my best. I owe my excellent education entirely to my father, for he is an admirable scholar as well as artist, but not merely am I devoured by a passion for a theatrical career, in which I could assuredly produce a sensation if the manager would only give me an opportunity of proving my abilities, but I cannot to my father's great regret draw a line correctly. If I could, I need not say how willingly I would give up my own wishes to follow out his; and when one is twenty years of age it is bitter work to be gaining a miserable pittance that is hardly enough to keep myself, let alone helping those who are far dearer;—but tell me about yourself, and what you purpose doing in London?'

'I'm not like you, Charles; I would give all the world to be an artist, and we had thought my uncle could perhaps give me or help me to employment in this line. My mother has hitherto kept a small shop for fancy wares, and this, with a small annuity which my father left her of £30, kept us tolerably comfortable during my boyhood, when I attended the grammar school, and used to practice drawing at every leisure moment. But a few months since a new line of railroad opened that carried away our customers, and we were obliged to shut up shop, and have been going down hill ever since. I tried to obtain work on some farm, but without success, and at last I got a fishmonger's card to engrave, which I engaged to do for 7s., and I was paid in red herrings, which proved very acceptable, since my mother's funds could do little more than supply us with fuel and shelter. We lived on those for several weeks, and then we fixed to come here, and were stopped for want of money on reaching Warwick; but there I managed to pick up some weeks' work, for a heraldry engraver, and the proceeds enabled us to get places in the third class train which brought us last night to town. What we shall do now I can't conceive; but I want to know whether my pretty little cousin is out of health, or do all London girls look white like her?'

'I fear Mary is not at all well,' Charles answered rather shortly, for the subject was very painful; and the best advice has been beyond our reach hitherto, but to-morrow a very liberal and clever medical man is coming to breakfast with us, who, I trust, will be able to tell us if anything is seriously amiss.' Half an hour later the two cousins, one singularly handsome, and the other as singularly plain, but both warm-hearted and high-principled, had sunk to rest—the plain one to dream of glowing artistic visions, to be realised in London, the other of salt butter forced upon him by the manager of the theatre, who, as it seemed in his sleep, insultingly declared 'it was quite good enough for a doctor's breakfast!'

CHAPTER II.

The next morning, long before it was light, Mary rose early, and having carefully dusted every article of their shabby yet brightly kept furniture, she set out the sugar, the coffee, and the fresh roll upon a clean cloth, and as she did so, the poor girl felt pleased to think her aunt and cousin would partake of one good meal under her father's humble roof. The sacrifice of Charles's only silk handkerchief had enabled her to procure a small jug of what Londoners style cream, and a pot of butter, whose freshness looked very tempting to one accustomed to feed upon oatmeal and potatoes from one year's end to another, varied only by the Sunday evening's meal of tea with bread and butter. The toast and bacon were duly made ready and set by the fire to keep warm until their guest should arrive, and then Mary joined Charles in looking out to see him cross the street. The rest of the party were all assembled, when Mary exclaimed, 'See, there is some one gazing up at these windows; and now he is coming towards the house, but there is a lady with him, so it surely cannot be the doctor. I wish we knew his name.'

'I almost think it is Harrison,' said her brother, and at that moment a knock at the sitting room door was followed by the entrance of the same individuals upon whose appearance they had been commenting. A rather small person, with very white hair, and features in no respect remarkable, but whose every word and gesture marked their owner's high breeding and superior mental cultivation, came forward to Mr Gardiner, and, shaking him by the hand, said, 'You see I have accepted your kind invitation without any ceremony, and have brought my daughter with me as you requested.' Mr Gardiner felt a little surprised, but concluding his son had forgotten to mention the young lady's intention of so honouring them, he gave her a most courteous welcome, whilst his artist's eye dwelt with delight on a face of uncommon loveliness. Slightly naming his own daughter, sister, and nephew, to the newly arrived, he begged every one to sit down, and for a quarter of an hour, breakfast and conversation both proceeded very satisfactorily, though each minute, additionally convinced Mr Gardiner must have mixed habitually with the very best classes in society. The stranger took advantage of a pause to ask Mrs Donovan how her mother was. 'I thank you, sir, she is in very good health, though her eyesight is failing rapidly, and it is a great trial to her that she can no longer see to read her Testament even with her spectacles.' He looked quite disturbed as he slowly replied, 'Indeed! I am very much grieved to hear it, and the change in her eyes must have come on very rapidly, for when I last saw her, she was boasting of still being able to thread a fine needle without the aid of glasses.' Mrs Donovan wondered when he could have seen her old bed-ridden mother, who had never quitted Yorkshire in her life; but before she could ask the question, their guest went on: 'We must see what can be done, and whether some one can be regularly engaged to read to her twice a day. What is your son now employed upon? Again Mrs Donovan answered, though the question had in fact been addressed to Mr Gardiner, and as briefly as she could. She mentioned Edward's desire to become an engraver, and the degree of practice he had given himself in drawing. 'Ha! I thought the lad's fancy had been irrevocably fixed upon cabinet work, ever since he made that elegant jewel box which sold so well at the repository—but youth is privileged to be fickle, I suppose. Come, my boy, he continued, with an air of good humoured authority, 'take this piece of chalk, and show me what you are capable of in this new line, and if I can help you I will.' Greatly surprised by the whole of this speech, Ned Donovan went to his uncle's easel, and while the stranger stood over him, he drew, with a steady hand, a very tolerably correct outline of a group of bacchanic, which stood on an adjoining bracket. It was done indeed with so much spirit and fidelity, that his new patron clapped him on the shoulder, and told him it was a very clever design, and bidding him to persevere, declared he was sure to succeed. The colour flew into the youths' face, which glowed with gratified feeling, and with sparkling eyes but faltering voice he vainly attempted to express his grateful pleasure and deep sense of obligation, and the stranger then advised him to take the sketch he had just made to the society for the encouragement of Art, and promised if they pronounced him fit, he should at once become a student at the Royal Academy. Whilst this had been passing, both Mr Gardiner and Charles felt increasingly doubtful how to introduce the subject of Mary's health, and all the more so, that it never seemed to enter the mind of their guest, and that his attention appeared to be quite taken up, first by Ned Donovan and then by looking at the various designs for theatrical scenes which were up in one corner of the room, in different stages of progress. His remarks on their different merits, and his warm praise of their composition, gradually, however, opened the artist's heart, and a long talk ensued on pictures, in which the latter was eventually led to pour out the whole of his sorrowful history to a listener at once so appreciating and so sympathising. In the meantime, the beautiful young lady, with winning graceful manners that soon won Mary's confidence, had been engaged in drawing out the hopes and wishes of the delighted yet interesting girl, though she often made observations that perplexed Mary not a little, and to which she could offer no response.

At last she said, 'I am glad to observe that your mother seems in pretty good spirits; is she able still to go on with the clear starching she used to do so admirably? Mary's eyes filled with blinding tears, as she tremblingly answered, 'You mean my aunt, Mrs Donovan, I suppose, my own mother is in heaven.' The lady appeared much surprised, and not knowing how to remedy her mistake, she gently pressed Mary's cold hand, and whispering, 'Forgive me for being so inconsiderate,' rose and joined her father, to whom the artist was just saying, 'May I now ask you to fulfil your very friendly offer, and to consult you respecting my daughter's health? I wish particularly to know whether her liver is affected, as I have sometimes had reason to fear it might be.'

'Indeed!' the stranger replied, 'I am not at all qualified to judge. Has she been long in this state—I mean has she been long so thin?'

(To be continued.)

The Emperor of Russia has appointed the widowed princess of Leuchtenberg, President of the Imperial Academy of Arts, the office held by the late prince, her husband.

From Godey's Philadelphia Lady's Book.
DRESS, AS A FINE ART.

BY MRS. MERRIFIELD.

If the dress be cut low, the bust should be covered after the modest and becoming fashion of the Italian women, whose highly picturesque costume painters are so fond of representing. The white drapery has a peculiarly good effect, placed as it is between thin and richly colored bodies. Another hint may be borrowed from the Italian costume; we may just allude to it *in passant*. If bodices fitting to the shape must be worn, they should be laced across the front in the Italian fashion. By this contrivance the dress will suit the figure more perfectly, and as the lace may be lengthened or shortened at pleasure, any degree of tightness may be given, and the bodice may be accommodated to the figure without compressing it. We find by the picture in the Louvre, called sometimes 'Titian's Mistress,' that this costume is at least as old as Titian.

We have noticed the changes and transitions of fashion; we must mention one point in which it has continued constant from the earliest time until the present day, and which, since it has entailed years of suffering, and in many instances has caused death, demand our most serious attention. We allude to the pernicious practice of tight-lacing, which, as appears from contemporary paintings, was as general in Europe as in this country.

The savage Indian changes the shape of the soft and elastic bones of the skull of his infant by compressing it between two boards; the intelligent, but prejudiced, Chinese suffers the head to grow as nature formed it, but confines the foot of the female to the size of an infant's; while the highly intellectual and well-informed lady limits the growth of her waist by the pressure of the stays. When we consider the importance of the organs which suffer by these customs, surely we must acknowledge that the last is the most barbarous practice of the three.

We read in the history of France that the warlike Franks had such a dislike to corpulence that they inflicted a fine upon all who would not encircle their waists with a band of a certain length.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the whole of the upper part of the body from the waist to the chin was encased in a cuirass of whalebone, the rigidity of which rendered easy and graceful movement impossible. The portrait of Elizabeth by Zuccheri, with its stiff dress and enormous ruff, and which has been so frequently engraved, must be in the memory of all our readers. Stiffness was indeed the characteristic of ladies' dress at this period; the whalebone cuirass, covered with the richest brocaded silks, was united at the waist with the equally stiff vardingale or fardingale which descended to the feet in the form of a large bell, without a single fold.

There is a portrait of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots when quite young, in a dress of this kind, and one cannot help pitying the poor girl's rigid confinement in her stiff and uncomfortable dress.

With Henrietta Maria, dresses cut low in the front, and flowing draperies, as we find them in the Vandeyck portraits, came into fashion, but the figure still retained its stiffness around the waist, and has continued to do so through all the gradations and variations in shape and size of the hoop petticoat, and the scanty draperies of a latter period, until the present day.

The fardingale differed from the hoop in the following particulars: The hoop petticoat was gathered around the waist, while the fardingale was without a fold of any description. The most extraordinary instance we remember to have seen of the fardingale, are in two or three pictures of the Virgin in the Spanish gallery in the Louvre, where the fardingale in which the Virgin is dressed takes the form of an enormous mitre.

From Hogg's Edinburgh Instructor.

WORKING AND WAITING.

To act wisely, it is necessary to know how to act, and to refrain from acting. It is often as much the part of discretion, as well as of duty, not to act as to act, and often much more difficult to wait than to do. The grace of diligence has both dignity and value; but the steadfast purpose, the perseverance and control implied in a self-imposed restraint, involves a higher grade of virtue, and reveals a more resolute and well-tempered character. It is a great truth, that those who would have opportunities must make them; but it is also a great truth, that 'wise men bide their time;' and there may be a generalship in what Burke styled 'a masterly inactivity,' that the most dashing prowess can never equal. True Christian excellence combines and implies both; and the best character is that which best knows how both to act and to refrain—when to work and when to wait.

Providence often places us in circumstances where no efforts of our own can improve our condition—where the most and the best that can be done is to wait the revolutions of the master-wheel by which our little spheres are connected. We reach the limits of our agency, and all further struggle only tends to embarrass our prospects and defeat our aims. The part of wisdom in such cases clearly enough, is to hold still. Duty then resolves itself into doing nothing; instead of the active obedience, there is demand for the meeker virtues of patience and faith. The event will be more auspicious by waiting, and the moral discipline to be derived from the struggle lies altogether in the waiting and not in the doing. Such tying of the hands and feet is far from being uncommon in this