

and Anne pushed one forward: the first time for many years that he had been invited to take a seat in the house.

'John Ledbitter,' began the farmer, 'since I lay here I have had a great many things in my mind, that old business of yours is one of 'em, and something Anne has just been saying has brought it back again. So when you came to the door, in the very nick o' time, the thought came over me that I'd ask you, once again, if you could, or would, make things clearer. It's all over and done for now, however it might have been, but I should like to know the truth. I'm a dying man, John Ledbitter, and it would be a rest to my mind.'

A deep crimson hue dyed the face of John Ledbitter. Once, twice, he essayed to speak, and no words came, but when he did find speech it was that of a truthful, earnest-minded man.

'Six years ago—more now—when that happened, I denied my guilt to you, Farmer Sterling. I told you that I was innocent as you were; but you answered me derisively, and sneered me to silence. I was innocent.'

'What!' gasped the farmer, whilst Mrs Sterling rose in an upright position on her pillowed chair.

'I have not often been guilty of telling a lie; never that I can now recal to my recollection. But I could no more dare to assert one to you, hovering on the confines of the next world, than I could, were I myself on the brink of it. Farmer Sterling, as I said then, I repeat to you now—I never knew what became of the letter or the money; I never touched either. In the presence of God I assert this.'

'Then who did take it?' inquired the amazed farmer.

'I cannot tell; though my nights have been sleepless and my hair has grown gray with anxiety over this very point. Old Mr Grame affirmed the letter was in the bag when he delivered it to me. They were both to be trusted; they were both above suspicion; but I will affirm that the bag between those points was never opened or touched, or the box of the mail cart unlocked. It is a curious mystery, but a certainty has always rested upon me that time will unravel it.'

'But why not have proclaimed your innocence then, as you do now?' inquired Mrs Sterling.

'Dear madam, I did proclaim it,' he answered with emotion. 'To my relatives, to my friends, to the postmasters, to Mr Sterling; as earnestly, as solemnly, as I now assert it this day. Not one listened to me. I met, even from my brothers, with nothing but disbelief and contumely. They were impressed with the conviction that my innocence was an impossibility. I do not blame them; I should myself so have judged another, accused under the same circumstances; and even she, who was more to me than my own life, joined in the scorn and shook me off. I took an oath, a rash one, perhaps that I would never leave the country till my innocence was established. So I have lived since by the sweat of my brow, shunned by, and shunning my equals; never ceasing, in secret, my endeavours to trace, out the lost note, but as yet without success. I have spoken truth, Farmer Sterling.'

'I do believe you have,' murmured the dying man. 'May God make up to you the persecutions you have endured, John Ledbitter!'

Farmer Sterling died a man of substance, worth several thousand pounds, and John Ledbitter discarded his smock frock when he was appointed manager of the farm by Mrs Sterling. And thus a few weeks went by.

(To be continued.)

From Revelations of Prison Life; with an Inquiry into Prison Discipline and Secondary Punishments. By George Laval Chesterton.

FEMALE CHARACTERISTICS.

On the occasion of my first visit to the female side of the prison, the scene which I witnessed was calculated to create a good impression. I had been expected, and, consequently, there was a studied arrangement, and a decorum which seemed to indicate a judicious system of control I was ushered into, a yard occupied by "the long fines;" i. e., those prisoners who had to fulfil lengthened sentences. The measurement of this division of the prison was 66 feet long by 29 broad, and a curve in the order of muster, enabled some sixty females of various ages—by the majority decidedly young—to be ranged in single file. As I entered, they all curtsied in the most respectful manner, and with a nice precision, and I became favourably impressed with the scene before me. The principal part were clothed in the prison dress, consisting of a body and skirt of coarse blue cloth a common blue plaid neckerchief, and a plain white cap tied under the chin. The perfect silence of the group, the steadfast countenances, respectful salutation, and affected meekness of the entire body, were calculated to lull me into the belief that there stood arrayed before me the very concentration of gentleness and tractability. Nothing, however, could be more fallacious than such a supposition, nor was I allowed to remain many days under so pleasing a delusion. Upon this occasion I cast my eyes, for the first time, upon a selection of the choicest specimens of turbulence, pugnacity and hardihood that the canille of London could claim as its own. It would be a needless con-

sideration, and an utter waste of delicacy, to affect to disguise their names, or to designate them by initials. Their salient reputations stood confessed, and rendered all such punctilio superfluous. I will venture, therefore, upon a slight description of the more remarkable amongst this strange company. First, there was "Bet Ward," a young woman of real Amazonian form and stature and of distinguished beauty. She was one of a stamp rarely exceeded in whatever constituted strength and symmetry. The spoilt child of a weak mother (who still doated on her), she had been consigned to ruin by false indulgence. Equally irascible and fearless, she was the terror of the female officials; but as she possessed a somewhat generous disposition, she was not wont to carry her violence to a very dangerous extent. B. W. was the first to assail me with vituperative language, and to indicate that she might be disposed to pay but little respect to the person of the governor. I, therefore, observed a cautious distance whenever I perceived her ire to become ascendant. A few years sufficed to see this once fine young woman enter the prison, the mere wreck of what she originally had been. With withered features, and failing power, she exhibited the sure inroads of a licentious life, coupled with habitual drunkenness—its usual concomitant. The pride and fire of her eye were gone, and deep dejection occupied their place. From that time forth I saw her no more, and doubt not she fell an early sacrifice to a life of vice.

Mary Barry was also a young woman of great muscular strength, but possessing none of the rare beauty of Bet Ward. She was equal to any audacious enterprise, and would confront the male officers (who were sent to the aid of authority on occasions of an emeute) with the rage and fierceness of a tigress. In a memorable encounter it took six men to overpower her, and one of the number had cause to remember her resistance for many after days, so severely was he bruised. It is strange that a singular admixture should be noticeable in dispositions so apparently untameable, but these wayward creatures had become thus impulsive by the unchecked sway of temper in early life. I once administered to Mary Barry a gentle reproof for some casual fault, and being in a docile mood, she hung down her head and coloured deeply. Such a casual trait denoted some latent gentleness, which, in one so vitiated, it would have required too much pains and devotion, in the most persevering Samaritan, to have fanned into mature fruitfulness. A subsequent sentence of transportation severed Mary Barry from my further observation. There was a remarkable woman in this ward also, whose real name was Sullivan, but who was known by the appellation of "Slasher." She was Irish—resided, when free, in St. Giles, and cohabited with a pugilist. Slasher also was tall and of powerful build, and had acquired her sobriquet from the aptitude she displayed in the "art of self defence." A pitched battle was no unusual interlude in her recourse, when excited by drink: and upon such occasions, her attitude and tactics were said to be of the most approved order. In prison and debarred from spirituous liquor, she was the very type of peacefulness. This poor creature sank prematurely under the mortal blight of drunkenness—bequeating to our frequent care a younger sister, who resembled the elder in all respects but in her pugilistic celebrity.

A PRISON ROMANCE.

C. M. was in the service of Mrs N. as lady's maid to her daughter, who was at that time receiving the address of Captain J., of the R. N. Miss N. testified her regard for her lover, by working or decorating cambric handkerchiefs, and other such light presents, which she most injudiciously transmitted, with occasional billets dox, by the hands of her pretty maid, who on such occasions carried them to the captains lodgings. In time, the captain appears to have overstepped the bounds of prudence and propriety, and most reprehensibly to have cultivated such terms with his charming messenger as to lead him to present, and her accept, a few of the small offerings which Miss N. had designed for him alone. C. M. always emphatically insisted upon the perfect innocence of her little flirtation with Captain J., but there is quite sufficient in its outward aspect to justify reproof. However, pending his engagement with Miss N., Captain J. accepted the command of a frigate, and sailed to the coast of North America. He had not been long away when, on some luckless occasion, Miss N. in the absence of her maid, went to the room in search of something hastily required, and not finding what she sought, raised the lid of a box belonging to C. M. and, to her dismay, beheld, in the possession of her maid, several of the pretty presents worked by her own fair fingers for her lover. She ran to her mother with haste, imparted to her the startling fact, and not a little aroused the fierce anger of that matron. Retribution was instantly decided upon, a police constable was called in, and on her return, C. M. was handed over to him to undergo all the preliminary forms of law, and in due course to be arraigned at the bar of criminal justice. All this was accomplished, and the wretched girl—who could only plead in her defence, the free gift of Captain J., without a scintilla of proof to justify the assertion—was,

as I have shown, convicted, sentenced, and immured, without a voice being raised in her behalf. There was a modest suavity in her deportment which disposed every one in her favour, and although she spoke to me in fervid terms of her innocence yet that plea, so incessantly made, and so little to be relied upon, met with no greater credence from her. We treated C. M. with gentle forbearance and unceasing kindness, and she repaid us by exemplary behaviour and unwearied industry.—Through some channel, the fate of the poor girl reached the ears of Captain J., absent and on duty in America; and in the agony of his remorse, he wrote to the aged baronet, Sir F. O., implored of him to see her redressed, and fully confirmed the truth of her averment. In that letter, which was brought to me by the baronet, Captain J. used every expressive term to denote his grief and self-reproach, and affirmed that he could not rest day or night from dwelling on the wrongs of that unhappy girl. The baronet, however was one of those unimpassioned old gentlemen, who could not comprehend the captains anguish; he, therefore, assumed a jocular tone, and expressed himself very drily, and as he doubtlessly imagined, sagely, on the casual relation between a gentleman and a pretty girl. He saw C. M. coldly asked her a few unmeaning questions, and departed murmuring aphorisms, which resolved themselves into very common-place philosophy. Indeed, I regarded his careless demeanour, under such circumstances, as neither delicate nor generous. The declaration of the girl herself, supported now by the testimony of Captain J., necessarily wrought a strong impression upon my mind, and I began to regard her with deep sympathy. Still nothing could be effected in her behalf, since in cases of conviction founded upon sworn evidence, more epistolary explanations could avail little. Thus, Months rolled on, and the poor girl's fulfilment of her sentence seemed inevitable. Again, however, did Captain J. strive to interest a friend in her behalf, and Captain K. (who happened to be also a personal friend of my own), brought me a letter to peruse, couched in terms more strongly descriptive of the agony with which he reflected on the girl's unmerited fate. A consultation, however, between Captain K. and myself resulted in the conviction that we were powerless to serve her. In process of time, the term of sentence elapsed, and C. M. was discharged with such assistance as lay within the compass of the funds at our disposal, but still, such aid was necessarily limited. Not many days after her discharge, I was informed that a lady desired to see me, and a person entered the office so deeply veiled that it was impossible to discern her features. The stranger however upraised her veil, and there stood C. M. genteely attired, her hair disposed in ringlets, and her fine features seen to an advantage which the prison costume had little favoured. With tears she besought my advice and assistance, described her lack of friends, relative or pecuniary resources, and avowed her anxious desire to be saved from the ruin that seemed to menace her. Moved by her earnest solicitation, I recommended her to fly for council and assistance to a Samaritan lady, whom she had known as a prison visitor. I furnished her with the address, to which she forthwith repaired, and finding there a willing ear and Christian sympathy, C. M. entered an asylum, exactly suited to her condition, under the auspices of that kind patroness, from whence she was soon transferred to a family, to whose members the history of her severe afflictions, had been confided.

From Colburn's United Service Magazine, for July.

Reminiscence of Military Adventures in Portugal, furnishing the following amusing extract:—

THE FRUITS OF INTEMPERANCE.

It was our daily custom to take our dessert in the garden, whither we repaired to enjoy our cigars and wine. Da Costa sang exceedingly well, and was far from being an indifferent performer on the guitar. The sound of the instrument generally brought our fair friends to their balcony, and they would sometimes join their sweet voices to his in some of those charming though rather monotonous "modinhas," which, when not sung through the nose, fall so soothingly on the ear, especially after dinner. On these occasions the monkey used to sit listening with all the gravity of a connoisseur, now and then nodding his head in a most grotesque fashion, as if to mark the time. Da Costa who was always ripe for fun or mischief of any sort, observed to me one afternoon, that our behaviour "Senhor Macaco" was anything but courteous or hospitable, we had not even asked him to take a glass of wine, and he proposed that the gentleman should be in future admitted one of our mess. The motion was carried by acclamation, and by way of initiations we placed before him a moderate sized slop-basin half full of port wine, and after a prefatory speech from his countrymen, drank his health. Our new member looked attentively at the vessel for some time before he ventured to put his nose in it. The first taste did not appear to be at all satisfactory. He sneezed, coughed, and grinned horribly, and we thought he had no intention of tasting a second time; but he had tasted. After a long pause

he tried a second sip, than a shorter interval, and a third followed which seemed to resolve his doubts. In for a penny, in for a pound was evidently his maxim, and in a twinkling he had mopped up the whole. There could be no mistake, as to the goodness of the liquor, so he thought and so it proved. The effects soon became visible, and were such as might have been expected. He began to chatter and jump with a vivacity far surpassing his ordinary performances; after a while, his gait grew unsteady, his eyes assumed an expression of owl-like wisdom which gradually changed to a dull vacant stare, his stomach was manifestly in a very uneasy condition, and in fine, having passed through the various stages of inebriety, he tumbled off the block to which he was chained, made an effort to his seat, and in the act was buried in profound slumber. He was dead drunk.

On the following morning, I went down to examine into the state of the vinously defunct, and if the resemblance to drunken humanity had been striking the evening before, it was still more so during the process of recovery.—I found the miserable beast sitting on his block, his head resting in the palm of his paw, his body bent almost double, and his bleared and sodden eyes looking, as plainly as though he had spoken the words, "What a cursed headache!" I loosed his chain from the ring, gave him a basin of water, of which he drank eagerly and walked up and down the garden for half an hour, which appeared to be of great benefit to him, and I fancy he gave me a look of grateful reproach as if he thought that, although my treatment of him overnight was not very friendly, I had yet made the amende in the morning. By the evening his health seemed to be restored to its wonted state, and I was for letting well alone, but the Portuguese must needs make another experiment in natural philosophy. Another basin of wine was placed before him, on which he very unceremoniously turned his back; we affected to take no notice of him, and for a considerable time he remained in a state of quiescence. But the devil was busy with him, hinting, I suppose, about 'a hair of the dog that bit him.' After a while he turned his head stealthily over his shoulder, and as we continued our conversation apparently in utter unconsciousness of his proceedings, his body insensibly followed, until by degrees he reversed his position and looked his enemy boldly in the face. Alas! poor Pug! why should I harrow my memory with the recollection? The struggle was brief, the devil again victorious, and from that time forth his victim was a gone coon. As I have before stated, when I arrived at these quarters a more moral ape could scarcely be found—when I quitted them, for profligacy and drunkenness his parallel it would have been difficult to meet with in the wide world.

HOW WOLVES CAJOLE AND CAPTURE WILD HORSES.

WHEREVER several of the larger wolves associate together for mischief, there is always a numerous train of smaller ones to follow in the rear, and act as auxiliaries in the work of destruction. Two large wolves are sufficient to destroy the most powerful horse, and seldom more than two ever begin the assault, although there may be a score in the gang. It is no less curious than amusing to witness this ingenious mode of attack. If there is no snow, or but little on the ground, two wolves approach in the most playful and caressing manner, lying rolling and frisking about, until the too credulous and unsuspecting victim is completely put off his guard by curiosity and familiarity. During this time the gang, squatting on their hind quarters, look on at a distance. After some time spent in this way, the two assailants separate, when one approaches the horse's head, the other his tail, with a shyness and cunning peculiar to themselves. At this stage of the attack their frolicsome approaches become very interesting—it is in right good earnest; the former is a mere decoy, the latter is the real assailant, and keeps his eyes steadily fixed on the hamstring or flank of the horse. The critical moment is then watched, and the attack is simultaneous; both wolves spring at their victim at the same instant, one to the throat the other to the flank—and if successful, which they generally are the hind one never lets go his hold till the horse is completely disabled. Instead of springing forward or kicking to disengage himself, the horse turns round and round without attempting a defence. The wolf before then springs behind, to assist the other. The sinews are cut, and in half the time I have been describing it, the horse is on his side; his struggles are fruitless—the victory is won. At this signal the lookers-on close in at a gallop; but the small fry of followers keep at a respectable distance, until their superiors are gorged and then they take their turn unmolested.

PERSEVERE.

If a seaman should put about every time he encounters a head wind, he would never make a voyage. So he who permits himself to be baffled by adverse circumstances, will never make headway in the voyage of life. A sailor uses every wind to propel; so should the young man learn to trim his sails and guide his bark, that even adverse gales should fill its bellying canvass and send it forward on its onward course.