It is only fair to say that if "Die Schöpfung" is typical of Herr Heinzelmacher's work, our English composers must look to their laurels. The Symphony, as its name implies, is founded upon that most sublime of themes, the Creation of the World, and is suitably divided into six movements, each representing a day of the Creator's busiest week. The first (Andante) movement opens most originally with four completely silent bars during which nothing is heard but the faint fluttering of the conductor's baton, doubtless symbolical of the beating wings of that Angel of Peace which hovered over the deep, ere Time was and Life began. Gradually through the stillness one hears (from a single bassoon, admirably played by Mr. Josiah Basley) the faint indeterminate beatings of some antediluvian monster rising from its primordial ooze, and typifying Matter's first vain attempt at self-creation. After a marvellously manipulated cadenza comes a sudden roll on the kettle-drums—handled with his usual verve by Mr. Blodge, the doyen of tympanists, whom we are glad to see back after his recent bereavement. This is followed by a deafening crash from the cymbals, frightening the reign of Chaos and old Night, and signifying the thunderous anger of a jealous Providence. And presently the strings, woodwind, and brass join in, and the movement is carried to a stately conclusion when the evening and the morning are the first day, and it is all very good.

It must be admitted that the critics were not all as enthusiastic as this writer. Indeed, Sir Rollo Posner wrote indignantly to The Musical Times to say that "Die Schöpfung" was obviously the work of a charlatan who was not above deliberately stealing his motifs from earlier English composers. The Evening Mail, too, likened the bassoon solo to the squeakings of an embittered albatross, but I paid no attention to this piece of impertinence.

At about eleven o'clock my telephone-bell rang. I took off the receiver and heard a well-known and once-loved voice.

"Hullo!" it said. "Is that you?"

"Yes," I answered, trying to appear cold and distant. "It's me."

"I felt I just must ring you up," said Florrie.

"Really?"

"I had no idea! It was too wonderful!"

"What was?"

"Your playing, of course."

"Oh, that," I answered nonchalantly. "Yes, I remember you said it would be—wonderfully funny!"
“Darling, I’m sorry I was such a beast. Won’t you forgive me?”

“Oh, well . . .” I began, for my feelings were still a little sore.

“I’m not actually on my knees,” she went on, “because the telephone’s too high up to reach like that, but I do want to ask you a favour.”

“Go ahead,” I said, slightly mollified by the tenderness of her tone.

“Will you come round to tea today?” she asked.

“If you really want me to.”

“There’s nothing I want more. Nothing!”

“Florrie!”

“And you’ll bring your bassoon and play it to me, won’t you?”

“Darling!”

“At four o’clock, then! Good-bye!”

My cup of happiness was full. I hung up the receiver with a sigh of content, and went off to the boxroom to look for my bassoon.

“That,” said Reginald, as he gulped down a glass of old brandy, “is the end of my remarkable story.”

“I congratulate you,” I said.

“What on?”

“Aren’t you going to marry the girl?” I asked.

“Marry her? Me? Oh no!”

“Doesn’t she——?”

“No, I’m afraid not.”

“Why not?” I said. “Didn’t you go to tea?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

“I took my bassoon.”

“Yes?”

“And I played it to her,” he explained.

“Oh, I see!”

“Charles,” Biffin called to the waiter, “bring two more large double brandies, and go on bringing them till I tell you to stop!”
THE TREASURE HUNT

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
MARY ROBERTS RINEHART was born at Pittsburg, Pa. She trained to become a nurse and her experience in this field served as a background for several of her detective stories. She is very well known in America as a humorous writer and as a playwright, and the following story will show how well she combines her detection and her humour.
THE TREASURE HUNT

HAD we not been so anxious about our dear Tish last summer, I dare say it would never have happened. But even Charlie Sands noticed when he came to our cottage at Lake Penzance for the week-end that she was distinctly not her old self.

"I don't like it," he said. "She's lost her pep, or something. I've been here two days and she hasn't even had a row with Hannah, and I must say that fuss with old Carpenter yesterday really wasn't up to her standard at all."

Old Carpenter is a fisherman, and Tish having discovered that our motor-boat went better in reverse than forward, he had miscalculated our direction and we had upset him.

As it happened, that very evening Tish herself confirmed Charlie's fears by asking about Aggie's Cousin Sarah Brown's Chelsea teapot.

"I think," she said, "that a woman of my age should have a hobby—one that will arouse interest at the minimum of physical exertion. And the collection of old china——"

"Oh, Tish!" Aggie wailed, and burst into tears.

"I mean it," said Tish. "I have reached that period of my life which comes to every woman, when adventure no longer lurks around the next corner. By this I do not refer necessarily to amorous affairs, but to dramatic incidents. I think more than I did of what I eat. I take a nap every day. I am getting old."

"Never!" said Aggie valiantly.

"No? When I need my glasses nowadays to see the telephone directory!"

"But they're printing the names smaller, Tish."

"Yes, and I dare say my arm is getting shorter also," she returned with a sad smile. She pursued the subject no further,
however, but went on knitting the bedroom slippers which are her yearly contribution to the Old Ladies’ Home, leaving Charlie Sands to gaze at her thoughtfully as he sipped his blackberry cordial.

But the fact is that Tish had outgrown the cottage life at Penzance, and we all knew it. Save for an occasional golf-ball from the links breaking a window now and then, and the golfers themselves who brought extra shoes done up in paper for us to keep for them, paying Hannah something to put them on the ice, there was nothing to rouse or interest her.

Her mind was as active as ever; it was her suggestion that a clothes-pin on Aggie’s nose might relieve the paroxysms of her hay fever, and she was still filled with sentiment. It was her own idea on the anniversary of Mr. Wiggins’ demise to paint the cottage roof a fresh and verdant green as a memorial to him, since he had been a master roofer by profession.

But these had been the small and simple annals of her days. To all outward seeming, until the night of the treasure hunt, our Tish was no longer the Tish who with our feeble assistance had captured the enemy town of X— during the war, or held up the band of cut-throats on Thundercloud, or led us through the wilderness of the Far West. An aeroplane in the sky or the sound of the Smith boys racing along in their stripped flivver may have reminded her of brighter days, but she said nothing.

Once, indeed, she had hired a horse from the local livery stable and taken a brief ride, but while making a short cut across the Cummings estate the animal overturned a beehive. Although Tish, with her customary presence of mind, at once headed the terrified creature for the swimming-pool, where a number of persons were bathing and sunning themselves in scanty apparel about the edge, the insects forsook the beast the moment horse and rider plunged beneath the surface, and a great many people were severely stung. Indeed, the consequences threatened to be serious, for Tish was unable to get the horse out again and it was later necessary to bring a derrick from Penzance to rescue him. But her protests over the enormous bills rendered by the livery man were feeble, indeed, compared to the old days.

“Twenty dollars!” she said. “Are you claiming that
that animal, which should have been able to jump over a beehive without upsetting it, was out ten hours?"

"That's my charge," he said. "Walk, trot, and canter is regular rates, but swimming is double, and cheap at that. The next time you want to go out riding, go to the fish pier and I reckon they'll oblige you. You don't need a horse, lady. What you want is a blooming porpoise."

Which, of course, is preposterous. There are no porpoises in Lake Penzance.

She even made the blackberry cordial that year, a domestic task usually left to Aggie and myself, but I will say with excellent results. For just as it was ready for that slight fermentation which gives it its medicinal quality, a very pleasant young man came to see us, having for sale a fluid to be added to home-made cordials and so on which greatly increased their bulk without weakening them.

"But how can one dilute without weakening?" Tish demanded suspiciously.

"I would not call it dilution, madam. It is really expansion."

It was a clear, colourless liquid with a faintly aromatic odour, which he said was due to juniper in it, and he left us a small bottle for experimental purposes.

With her customary caution, our dear Tish would not allow us to try it until it had been proved, and some days later, Hannah reporting a tramp at the back door, she diluted—or rather expanded—a half-glass of cordial, gave him some cookies with it, and we all waited breathlessly.

It had no ill effect, however. The last we saw of the person he was quite cheery; and, indeed, we heard later that he went into Penzance, and, getting one of the town policemen into an alley, forced him to change trousers with him. As a matter of record, whether it was Tish's efforts with the cordial itself, or the addition of the expansion matter which we later purchased in bulk and added, I cannot say. But I do know that on one occasion, having run out of petrol, we poured a bottle of our blackberry cordial into the tank of the motor-boat and got home very nicely indeed. I believe that this use of fruit juices has not heretofore been generally known.

Tish, I know, told it to Mr. Stubbs, the farmer who brought us our poultry, advising him to try cider in his car
instead of feeding his apples to his hogs. But he only stared at her.

"Feed apples to hogs these days!" he said. "Why, lady, my hogs ain't seen an apple for four years! They don't know there is such a thing."

Occupied with these small and homely duties, then, we went on along the even tenor of our way through July and August, and even into September. In August, Charlie Sands sent us a radio, and thereafter it was our custom at 7.20 a.m. to carry our comforters into Tish's bedroom and do divers exercises in loose undergarments.

It is to this training that I lay Tish's ability to go through the terrible evening which followed with nothing more serious than a crack in a floating rib.

And in September, Charlie Sands himself week-ended with us, as I have said; with the result of a definite break in our monotony and a revival of Tish's interest in life, which has not yet begun to fade.

Yet his visit itself was uneventful enough. It was not until Mrs. Ostermaier's call on Saturday evening that anything began to develop. I remember the evening most distinctly. Our dear Tish was still in her dressing-gown, after a very unpleasant incident of the morning, when she had inflated a pair of water-wings and gone swimming. Unluckily, when some distance out she had endeavoured to fasten the water-wings with a safety-pin to her bathing-garments and the air at once began to escape. When Charlie Sands reached the spot only a few bubbles showed where our unfortunate Tish had been engulfed. She had swallowed a great deal of water, and he at once suggested bailing her out.

"By and large," he said, "I've been bailing you out for the last ten years. Why not now?"

But she made no response save to say that she had swallowed a fish. "Get me a doctor," she said thickly. "I can feel the thing wriggling."

"Doctor nothing!" he told her. "What you need is a fisherman, if that's the case."

But she refused to listen to him, saying that if she was meant to be an aquarium she would be one; and seeing she was firm, he agreed.

"Very well," he said cheerfully. "But why not do the
thing right while you're about it? How about some pebbles and a tadpole or two?"

The result of all this was that Tish, although later convinced there was no fish, was in an uncertain mood that evening as we sat about the radio. She had, I remember, got Chicago, where a lady at some hotel was singing "By the Waters of Minnetonka". Turning away from Chicago, she then got Detroit, Michigan, and a woman there was singing the same thing.

Somewhat impatiently, she next picked up Atlanta, Georgia, where a soprano was also singing it, and the same thing happened with Montreal, Canada. With a strained look, our dear Tish then turned to the national capital, and I shall never forget her expression when once more the strains of "Minnetonka" rang out on the evening air.

With an impatient gesture she shoved the box away from her, and the various batteries and so on fell to the floor. And at that moment Mrs. Ostermaier came in breathless, and said that she and Mr. Ostermaier had just got Denver, and heard it quite distinctly.

"A woman was singing," she said. "Really, Miss Carberry, we could hear every word! She was singing——"

"'The Waters of Minnetonka'?" asked Tish.

"Why, however did you guess it?"

It was probably an accident, but as Tish got up suddenly, her elbow struck the box itself, and the box fell with a horrible crash. Tish never even looked at it, but picked up her knitting and fell to work on a bedroom slipper, leaving Mrs. Ostermaier free to broach her plan.

For, as it turned out, she had come on an errand. She and Mr. Ostermaier wished to know if we could think of any way to raise money and put a radio in the State penitentiary, which was some miles away along the lake front.

"Think," she said, "of the terrible monotony of their lives there! Think of the effect of the sweetness disseminated by 'Silver Threads Among the Gold' or 'By the Waters of——'"

"Mr. Wiggins always said that music had power to soothe the savage breast," Aggie put in hastily. "Have you thought of any plan?"

"Mr. Ostermaier suggested that Miss Tish might think of something. She is so fertile."
But Tish’s reaction at first was unfavourable.

"Why?" she said. "We’ve made our gaols so pleasant now that there’s a crime wave so people can get into them."
But she added: "I’m in favour of putting one in every prison if they’d hire a woman to sing ‘The Waters of Minnetonka’ all day and all night. If that wouldn’t stop this rush to the penitentiaries, nothing will."

On the other hand, Charlie Sands regarded the idea favourably. He sat sipping a glass of cordial and thinking, and at last said:

"Why not? Think of an entire penitentiary doing the morning daily dozen! Or laying out bridge hands according to radio instructions! Broaden ’em. Make ’em better citizens. Send ’em out fit to meet the world again. Darned good idea—’Silver Threads Among the Gold’ for the burglars and ‘Little Brown Jug’ for the bootleggers. Think of ‘Still as the Night’ for the moonshiners, too, and the bedtime stories for the cradle-snatchers. Why, it’s got all sorts of possibilities!"

He then said to leave it to him and he would think up something, and, falling to work on the radio, soon had it in operation again. His speech had evidently had a quieting effect on Tish, and when the beautiful strains of "The Waters of Minnetonka" rang out once more she merely placed her hands over her ears and said nothing.

It was after his departure on Monday that he wrote us the following note, and succeeded in rousing our dear Tish:

Beloved Maiden Ladies,

I have been considering the problem of the radio for our unfortunate convicts. How about a treasure hunt—à la Prince of Wales—to raise the necessary lucre? I’ll write the clues and bury a bag of pennies—each entrant to pay five dollars, and the profits to go to the cause.

Oil up the old car and get out the knickerbockers, for it’s going to be a tough job. And don’t forget, I’m betting on you. Read the "Murders in the Rue Morgue" for clues and deductive reasoning. And pass me the word when you’re ready.

Devotedly, C.S.

P.S. My usual terms are twenty per cent, but will take two bottles of cordial instead. Please mark "Preserves" on box. C.
II

We saw an immediate change in Tish from that moment. The very next morning we put on our bathing-suits and, armed with soap and sponges, drove the car into the lake for a washing. Unluckily a wasp stung Tish on the bare knee as we advanced and she stepped on the gas with great violence, sending us out a considerable distance, and, indeed, rendering it necessary to crawl out and hold to the top to avoid drowning.

Here we were marooned for some time, until Hannah spied us and rowed out to us. It was finally necessary to secure three horses and a long rope to retrieve the car, and it was some days in drying out.

But aside from these minor matters, things went very well. Mr. Ostermaier, who was not to search, took charge of the hunt from our end and reported numerous entrants from among the summer colony, and to each entrant the following was issued:

1. The cars of the treasure hunters will meet at the Rectory on Saturday evening at eight o’clock.
2. Each hunter will receive a password or sentence and a sealed envelope containing the first clue.
3. This clue found, another password and fresh sealed envelope will be discovered. And so on.
4. There are six clues.
5. Participants are requested to use care in driving about the country, as the local police force has given notice that it will be stationed at various points to prevent reckless driving.
6. After the treasure is discovered, the hunt will please meet at the Rectory, where light refreshments will be served. It is requested that if possible the search be over before midnight in order not to infringe on the Sabbath day.

In view of the fact that certain persons, especially Mrs. Cummings—who should be the last to complain—have accused Tish of certain unethical acts during that terrible night, I wish to call attention to certain facts:

(a) We obeyed the above rules to the letter, save possibly number five.
(b) There was no actual identification of the scissors.
(c) If there was a box of carpet-tacks in our car, neither Aggie nor I saw them.
(d) The fish pier had been notoriously rotten for years.
(e) We have paid for the repairs to the motor-cycle, and so on.
(f) Dr. Parkinson is not permanently lamed, and we have replaced his lamps.
(g) Personally, knowing Tish’s detestation of crossword puzzles, I believe the false clues were a joke on the part of others concerned.
(h) We did that night what the local police and the sheriff from Edgewater had entirely failed to do, and risked our lives in so doing. Most of the attack is purely jealousy of Letitia Carberry’s astute brain and dauntless physical courage.

I need say no more. As Tish observed to Charlie Sands the next day, when he came to see her, lifting herself painfully in her bed:

“I take no credit for following the clues; they were simplicity itself. And I shall pay all damages incurred. But who is to pay for this cracked rib and divers minor injuries, or replace poor Aggie’s teeth? Tell me that, and then get out and let me sleep. I’m an old woman.”

“Old!” said Charlie Sands. “Old! If you want to see an aged and a broken man, look at me! I shall have to put on a false moustache to get out of town.”

But to return to the treasure-hunt.

On the eventful day we worked hard. By arrangement with Mr. Stubbs, our poultry-man, he exchanged the licence plates from his lorry for ours in the morning, and these we put on, it being Tish’s idea that in case our number was taken by the local motor policeman, Mr. Stubbs could prove that he was in bed and asleep at the time. We also took out our tail-light, as Tish said that very probably the people who could not unravel their clues would follow us if possible, and late in the afternoon, our arrangements being completed, Tish herself retired to her chamber with a number of envelopes in her hand.

Lest it be construed that she then arranged the crossword puzzles which were later substituted for the real clues, I hasten to add that I believe, if I do not actually know, that
she wrote letters concerning the missionary society at that time. She is an active member.

At 9:30 we had an early supper and one glass of cordial each.

"I think better on an empty stomach," Tish said. "And I shall need my brains tonight."

"If that's what you think of Aggie and myself, we'd better stay at home," I said sharply.

"I have not stated what I think of your brain, Lizzie, nor of Aggie's either. Until I do, you have no reason for resentment."

Peace thus restored, we ate lightly of tea, toast, and lettuce sandwiches; and, having donned our knickerbockers and soft hats, were ready for the fray. Aggie carrying a small flask of cordial for emergencies and I a flashlight and an angel-food cake to be left at the Rectory, we started out on what was to prove one of the most eventful evenings in our experience.

Tish was thoughtful on the way over, speaking occasionally of Poe and his system of deductive reasoning in solving clues, and also of Conan Doyle, but mostly remaining silent.

Aggie, however, was sneezing badly, due to the dust, and this annoying Tish, she stopped where some washing was hanging out and sent her in for a clothes-pin. She procured the pin, but was discovered and chased, and undoubtedly this is what led later to the story that the bandits—of whom more later—had, before proceeding to the real business of the night, attempted to steal the Whitings' washing.

But the incident had made Aggie very nervous and she took a second small dose of the cordial. Of this also more later on.

There was a large group of cars in front of the Rectory. The Smith boys had brought their flivver, stripped of everything but the engine and one seat for lightness, and the Cummingses, who are very wealthy, had brought their racer. Tish eyed them both with a certain grimness.

"Not speed, but brains will count, Lizzie," she said to me. "What does it matter how fast they can go if they don't know where they're going?"

After some thought, however, she took off the enginehood and the spare tyre and laid them aside, and stood gazing at Aggie, now fast asleep in the rear seat.

"I could leave her too," she said. "She will be of no help whatever. But, on the other hand, she helps to hold the rear springs down when passing over bumps."
Mrs. Ostermaier then passed around glasses of lemonade, saying that every hunt drank a stirrup-cup before it started, and Mr. Ostermaier gave us our envelopes and the first password, which was "Ichthyosaurus".

It was some time before everyone had memorized it, and Tish utilized the moments to open her envelope and study the clue. The password, as she said, was easy; merely a prehistoric animal. The clue was longer:

Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink.
Two twos are four, though some say more, and i-n-k spells ink.

"Water?" I said. "That must be somewhere by the lake, Tish."

"Nonsense! What's to prevent your drinking the lake dry if you want to? I-n-k! It may be the stationer's shop; but if it ever saw water, I don't believe it. 'Two twos are four, though some say more!' Well, if they do, they're fools, and so is Charlie Sands for writing such gibberish."

What made matters worse was that the Smith boys were already starting off laughing, and two or three other people were getting ready to move. Suddenly Tish set her mouth and got into the car, and it was as much as I could do to crawl in before she had cut straight through the canna bed and out on to the road.

The Smith boys were well ahead, but we could still see their tail-light, and we turned after them. Tish held the wheel tightly, and as we flew along she repeated the clue, which with her wonderful memory she had already learned by heart. But no light came to either of us, and at the cross-roads we lost the Smith boys and were obliged to come to a stop. This we did rather suddenly, and Mr. Gilbert, who is a vestryman in our church, bumped into us and swore in a most unbecitting manner.

"Where the hell is your tail-light?" he called furiously.
"You ought to know," said Tish calmly. "Somewhere in your engine, I imagine."

Well, it seemed that everyone had been following us, and no one except the Smith boys apparently knew where to go from there. And just then a policeman came out of the bushes and asked what the trouble was.

"Ichthyosaurus," said Tish absently. "'Water, water
everywhere, nor any drop to drink. Two twos are four, though some say more, and——’"

"Don’t try to be funny with me," he said. "For a cent I’d take the whole lot of you into town for obstructing traffic. You’ve been drinking, that’s what!"

And just then Aggie sat up in the back seat and said: "Drinking yourself! Go on, Tish, and run over him. He’sh a nuishance."

Well, I will say her voice was somewhat thick, and the constable got on the running-board and struck a match. But Tish was in her seat by that time, and she started the car so suddenly that he fell off into the road. As the other cars had to drive round him, this gave us a certain advantage; and we had soon left them behind us, but we still had no idea where to go. Matters were complicated also by the fact that Tish had now extinguished our headlights for fear of again being molested, and we were as often off the road as on it.

Indeed, once we brought up inside a barn and were only saved from going entirely through it by our dear Tish’s quick work with the brakes; and we then had the agony of hearing the other cars pass by on the main road while we were backing away from the ruins of a feed-cutter we had smashed.

We had also aroused a number of chickens, and as we could hear the farmer running out and yelling, there was nothing to do but to back out again. Just as we reached the main road a load of buckshot tore through the top of the car, but injured nobody.

"Luckily he was shooting high," said Tish as we drove on. "Lower, and he might have cut our tyres."

"Luckily!" said Aggie, from the rear seat. "He’sh taken the crown out of my hat, Tish Carberry! It was nish hat too. I loved my little hat. I——"

"Oh, keep still and go to sleep again," said Tish. "‘Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink. Two twos are four, though some say more, and i-n-k spells ink.’"

"So it did when I went to school," said Aggie, still drowsily. "I-n-k, ink; p-i-n-k, pink; s——"

Suddenly Tish put her foot on the gas and we shot ahead once more.

"School-house of course," she said. "The school-house by the water-tower. I knew my sub-conscious mind would work it out eventually."
III

Unfortunately, we were the last to get to the school-house, and we had to witness the other cars streaming triumphantly down the road as we went up, shouting and blowing their horns. All but the Simmonses’ sedan, which had turned over in a ditch and which we passed hastily, having no time to render assistance.

Miss Watkins, the school-teacher, was on the porch, and as we drew up Tish leaped out.

“Pterodactyl!” she said.

“Warm, but not hot,” said Miss Watkins.

“Plesiosaurus!”

“The end’s all right.”

“Ichthyosaurus!” said Tish triumphantly, and received the envelope. Aggie, however, who had not heard the password given at the Ostermaiers’, had listened to this strange conversation dazedly and now burst into tears.

“There’sh something wrong with me, Lizzie!” she wailed. “I’ve felt queer ever since we started, and now they are talking and it doesn’t sound like sensh to me.”

It was some time before I was able to quiet her, but Tish had already received the second password, or sentence, which was “Prevention is better than cure, ting-a-ling”, and was poring over the next clue.

Always first in danger, always last to go,
Look inside the fire-box and then you’ll know.

I still think that had she taken sufficient time she could have located this second clue easily and without the trouble that ensued. But finding herself last when she is so generally first had irritated her, and she was also annoyed at Miss Watkins, it having been arranged that the last car was to take her back into town.

“Mr. Ostermaier said the clue’s in town anyhow. And he didn’t think the last car would have much chance, either,” she said.

“Who laughs last laughs best,” said Tish grimly, and started off at a frightful speed. Miss Watkins lost her hat within the first mile or two, but we could not pause, as a
motor-cycle policeman was now following close behind us. Owing to Tish's strategy, however, for when he attempted to come up on the right of us she swerved in that direction and vice versa, we finally escaped him, an unusually sharp swerve of hers having caught him off guard, so to speak, and upset him.

Just when or where we lost Miss Watkins I have no idea. Aggie had again dozed off, and when we reached the town and slowed up, Miss Watkins was gone. She herself does not know, as she seems to have wandered for some time in a dazed condition before reaching home.

But to the hunt.

I still think our mistake was a natural one. One would think that the pass sentence, "Prevention is better than cure, ting-a-ling", certainly indicated either a pharmacy or a medical man and a door-bell, and as Tish said, a fire-box was most likely a wood-box. There being only two doctors in the town, we went first to Dr. Burt's; but he had already retired, and spoke to us from an upper window.

"We want to examine your wood-box," Tish called.

"Wood-box?" he said, in a stupefied voice. "What do you want wood for? A splint?"

"We're hunting treasure," said Tish sharply. "'Prevention is better than cure, ting-a-ling.'"

The doctor closed the window violently; and although we rang for some time, he did not appear again.

At Dr. Parkinson's, however, we had better luck, discovering the side entrance to the house open and finding our way inside with the aid of the flashlight. There was only one wood-box on the lower floor, and this we proceeded to search, laying the wood out carefully on to a newspaper. But we found no envelopes, and in the midst of our discouragement came a really dreadful episode.

Dr. Parkinson himself appeared at the door in his nightclothes, and, not recognizing us because of our attire and goggles, pointed a revolver at us.

"Hands up!" he cried in a furious tone. "Hands up, you dirty devils! And be quick about it!"

"Prevention is better than cure, ting-a-ling," said Tish.

"Ting-a-ling your own self! Of all the shameless proceedings I've ever——"

"Shame on you!" Tish reproved him. "If ting-a-ling means nothing to you, we will leave you."

S.C.H.
“Oh no, you don’t!” he said most unpleasantly. “Put up your hands as I tell you or——”

I do not now and I never did believe the story he has since told over the town—that Tish threw the fire-log she was holding at his legs. I prefer to credit her own version—that as she was trying to raise her hands the wood fell, with most unfortunate results. As a matter of fact, the real risk was run by myself, for when on the impact he dropped the revolver, it exploded and took off the heel of my right shoe.

Nor is it true, as he claims, that having been forced out of his house, we attempted to get back in and attack him again. This error is due to the fact that, once outside, Tish remembered the revolver on the floor, and, thinking it might be useful later, went back to get it. But the door was locked.

However, all is well that ends well. We had but driven a block or two when we perceived a number of the cars down the street at the engine-house, and proceeded to find our next clue in the box of the local fire-engine.

The password this time was “Prohibition”, and the clue ran:

Just two blocks from paradise and only one from hell,
Stranger things than truth are found in the bottom of a well.

The Smith boys had already gone on, but we were now at last on equal terms with the others, and as the sleep and the cold night air had by now fully restored Aggie, Tish called a consultation.

“So far,” she said, “the Smiths have had the advantage of superior speed. But it is my opinion that this advantage is an unfair one, and that I have a right to nullify it if opportunity arises.”

“We’ll have to catch them first,” I observed.

“We shall catch them,” she said firmly, and once more studied the clue.

“Paradise,” she said, “should be the Eden Inn. To save time we will circumnavigate it at a distance of two blocks.”

This we did, learning later that Hell’s Kitchen was the name locally given to the negro quarter, and once more Tish’s masterly deciphering of the clue served us well. Before the other cars had much more than started, we espied the Smiths’ stripped fit and outside the Gilbert place, and to lose no time
drove through the hedge and on to the lawn. Here, as is
well known, the Gilberts have an old well, long disused, or so
supposed. And here we found the Gilberts’ gardener stand-
ing and the Smith boys drawing up the well bucket.

“Give the word and get the envelope,” Tish whispered to
me, and disappeared into the darkness.

I admit this. I admit, too, that, as I have said before, I
know nothing of her actions for the next few moments.
Personally, I believe that she went to the house, as she has
stated, to get the Gilbert cook’s recipe for jelly roll; and, as
anyone knows, considerable damage may be done to an
uncovered engine by flying stones. To say that she cut certain
wires while absent is to make a claim not borne out by the
evidence.

But I will also say that the Smith boys up to that moment
had had an unfair advantage, and that the inducing of a brief
delay on their part was not forbidden by the rules, which are
on my desk as I write. However . . .

As Mr. Gilbert is not only prominent in the church but is
also the local prohibition officer, judge of our surprise when,
on the well bucket emerging, we found in it not only the clues
but some bottles of beer which had apparently been put there
to cool. And Mr. Gilbert, on arriving with the others, seemed
greatly upset.

“Hawkins,” he said to the gardener, “what do you mean by
hiding six bottles of beer in my well?”

“Me?” said Hawkins angrily. “If I had six bottles of
beer, they’d be in no well! And there aren’t six; there’s only
four.”

“Four!” said Mr. Gilbert in a furious voice. “Four!
Then who the dev——” Here, however, he checked himself;
and as Tish had now returned we took our clues and departed.
Hawkins had given us the next password, which was “Good
evening, dearie,” and the clue, which read:

Down along the lake front, in a pleasant place,
Is a splendid building, full of air and space.
Glance within a closet, where, neatly looped and tagged,
Are the sturdy symbols of the game they’ve bagged.

Everybody seemed to think it meant the Duck Club, and in
a few moments we were all off once more except the Smith
boys, who were talking loudly and examining their engine. But Tish was not quite certain.

"These clues are tricky," she said. "They are not obvious, but subtle. It sounds too much like the Duck Club to be the Duck Club. Besides, what symbols of dead ducks would they keep? I've never seen anything left over but the bones."

"The feathers?" Aggie suggested.

"They wouldn't keep feathers in a closet. And besides, there's nothing sturdy about a feather. What other large building is on the lake front?"

"The fish-cannery," I said.

"True. And they might keep boards in a closet with the outlines of very large fish on them. But the less said about the air there the better. However, we might try it."

Having made this decision, as soon as we were outside of Penzance we began once more to travel with extreme rapidity, retracing for some distance the road we had come in on, and thus it happened that we again saw the motor-cycle policeman with his side-car. He was repairing something and shouted angrily at us as we passed, but we did not even hesitate, and soon we arrived at the fish-cannery.

None of the others had apparently thought of this possibility, and when we reached it there was no one in sight but a bearded watchman with a lantern, sitting on a barrel outside. Tish hopefully leaped from the car and gave him the password at once.

"'Good evening, dearie.'"

But the wretch only took his pipe out of his mouth and, after expectorating into the lake, replied:

"Hello, sweetheart. And what can I do for you?"

"Don't be impertinent," said Tish tartly. "I said 'Good evening, dearie,' as a signal."

"And a damned fine signal I call it," he said, rising. "Let's have a look at you before the old lady comes along with my supper."

"I have given you the signal. If you haven't anything for me, say so."

"Well, what is it you want?" he inquired, grinning at us in a horrible manner. "A kiss?"

As he immediately began to advance towards Tish, to this action on his part may be laid the misfortune which almost at once beset us. For there is no question that had it not discom-
posed her she would never have attempted to turn by backing on to the fish pier, which has been rotten for years. But in her indignation she did so, and to our horror we felt the thing giving way beneath us. There was one loud sharp crack followed by the slow splintering of wood, and the next moment we were resting gently on some piles above the water, with the shattered framework of the pier overhead and the watchman yelling that the company would sue us for damages.

"Damages!" said Tish, still holding to the steering-wheel, while Aggie wailed in the rear. "You talk of damages to me! I'll put you and your company in the penitentiary if I have to—"

Here she suddenly checked herself and turned to me.

"The penitentiary, of course!" she said. "How stupid of us! And I dare say they keep the ropes they hang people with in a closet. They have to keep them somewhere. Speaking of ropes," she went on, raising her voice, "if that old fool up there will get a rope, I dare say we can scramble out."

"Old fool yourself!" cried the watchman, dancing about.

"Coming here and making love to me, and then destroying my pier! You can sit there till those piles rot, far's I'm concerned. There's something queer about this business anyhow; how do I know you ain't escaped from the pen?"

"My dear man," said Tish quietly, "the one thing we want is to get to the penitentiary, and that as soon as possible."

"Well, you won't have any trouble getting there," he retorted. "I'll see to that. Far's you're concerned, you're on your way."

He then disappeared, and one of the piles yielding somewhat, the car fell a foot or two more, while Aggie wailed and sneezed alternately. But Tish remained composed. She struck a match, and leaning over the side inspected the water and so on below us.

"There's a boat down there, Lizzie," she said. "Get the towrope from under Aggie and fasten it to something. If we can get down, we'll be all right. The penitentiary isn't more than a half-mile from here."

"I slide down no rope into no boat, Tish Carberry," I said firmly.

But at that moment we heard the engine of a motor-cycle coming along the road and realized that our enemy the policeman had followed us. And as at that same instant the car
again slipped with a sickening jar, we were compelled to this heroic attempt after all.

However, it was managed without untoward incident, Aggie even salvaging the flask of blackberry cordial. But the boat was almost filled with water, and thus required frantic bailing with our hats, a matter only just accomplished when the motor-cycle policeman came running on to the pier.

Whether the watchman had failed to tell him of the break or not, I cannot say, but we were no more than under way when we heard a splash followed by strangled oaths, and realized that for a time at least we were safe from pursuit.

Wet as we now were, we each took a small dose of the cordial and then fell to rowing. Tish’s watch showed only ten o’clock, and we felt greatly cheered and heartened. Also, as Tish said by way of comforting Aggie, the licence plates on the car belonging to Mr. Stubbs, it was unlikely that we would be further involved for the present at least.

IV

Owing to the fact that the cars still in the hunt had all gone to the Duck Club, the brief delay had not lost us our lead, and we proceeded at once, after landing near the penitentiary, to the gate. Our halt there was brief. Tish merely said to the sentry at the entrance, “‘Good evening, dearie.’”

“The same to you and many of them,” he replied cheerfully, and unlocked the gate. We then found ourselves in a large courtyard, with the looming walls of the building before us, and on ringing the bell and repeating the phrase were at once admitted.

There were a number of men in uniform, who locked the grating behind us and showed us into an office where a young man was sitting at a desk.

I had an uneasy feeling the moment I saw him, and Aggie has since acknowledged the same thing. Instead of smiling as had the others, he simply pushed a large book towards us and asked us to sign our names.

“Register here, please,” was what he said.

“Register?” said Tish. “What for?”

“Like to have our guests’ names,” he said solemnly. “You’ll find your cells all ready for you. Very nice ones—
view of the lake and everything. Front, show these ladies to their cells."

Aggie gave a low moan, but Tish motioned her to be silent.

"Am I to understand you are holding us here?"

"That's what we're here for. We specialize in holding, if you know what I mean."

"If it's that fish pier——"

"Is it the fish pier?" the young man asked of two or three men around; but nobody seemed to know.

Tish cast a desperate glance about her.

"I may have made a mistake," she said, "but would it mean anything to you if I said: 'Good evening, dearie'?"

"Why, it would mean a lot," he said politely. "Any term of—er—affection, you know. I'm a soft-hearted man in spite of my business."

But Tish was eying him, and now she leaned over the desk and asked very clearly:

"Have you got a closet where, neatly looped and tagged,
You keep the sturdy symbols of the game you've bagged?"

Suddenly all the guards laughed, and so did the young man.

"Well, well!" he said. "So that's what brought you here, Miss Carberry? And all of us hoping you'd come for a nice little stay! Jim, take the ladies to the closet."

Well, what with the accident and the hard rowing, as well as this recent fright, neither Aggie nor I was able to accompany Tish. I cannot therefore speak with authority; but knowing Tish as I do, I do not believe that Mrs. Cummings' accusation as to what happened at this closet is based at all on facts.

Briefly, Mrs. Cummings insists that having taken out her own clue, Tish then placed on top of the others a number of similar envelopes containing cross-word puzzles, which caused a considerable delay, especially over the Arabic name for whirling dervishes. This not, indeed, being solved at all, somebody finally telephoned to Mr. Ostermaier to look it up in the encyclopaedia, and he then stated that no cross-word puzzles had been included among the clues. Whereupon the mistake was rectified and the hunt proceeded.

As I say, we did not go with Tish to the closet and so cannot be certain, but I do know that the clue she brought us was perfectly correct, as follows:
Password: “All is discovered.”

“Where are you going, my pretty maid?”
“’Most anywhere else,” said she.
“Behind the grille is a sweet young man,
And he’ll give my clue to me.”

We had no more than read it when we heard a great honking of horns outside, and those who had survived trooped in. But alas, what a pitiful remnant was left! Only ten cars now remained out of twenty. The Smith boys had not been heard of, and the Phillipses had been arrested for speeding. Also Mr. Gilbert had gone into a ditch and was having a cut on his chin sewed up, the Jenningses’ car had had a flat tyre and was somewhere behind in the road, and the Johnstons were in Backwater Creek, waiting for a boat to come to their rescue.

And we had only just listened to this tale of woe when Mrs. Cummings sailed up to Tish with an unpleasant smile and something in her hand.

“Your scissors, I believe, dear Miss Carberry,” she said. But Tish only eyed them stonily.

“Why should you think they are my scissors?” she inquired coldly.

“The eldest Smith boy told me to return them to you, with his compliments. He found them in the engine of his car.”

“In his car? What were they doing there?”

“That’s what I asked him. He said that you would know.”

“Two pairs of scissors are as alike as two pairs of pants,” Tish said calmly, and prepared to depart.

But our poor Aggie now stepped up and examined the things and began to sneeze with excitement.

“Why, Tish Carberry,” she exclaimed, “they are your scissors! There’s the broken point and everything. Well, if that isn’t the strangest thing!”

“Extraordinary!” said Mrs. Cummings. “Personally, I think it a matter for investigation.”

She then swept on, and we left the penitentiary. But once outside the extreme discomfort of our situation soon became apparent. Not only were we wet through, so that Aggie’s sneezing was no longer alleviated by the clothes-pin, but Tish’s
voice had become hardly more than a hoarse croaking. Also, we had no car in which to proceed. Indeed, apparently the treasure hunt was over as far as we were concerned. But once again I had not counted on Tish's resourcefulness. We had no sooner emerged than she stopped in the darkness and held up her hand.

"Listen!" she said.

The motor-cycle was approaching along the lake road, with that peculiar explosive sound so reminiscent of the machine-gun Tish had used in the capture of X—during the war.

It was clear that we had but two courses of action—one to return to the penitentiary and seek sanctuary, the other to remain outside. And Tish, thinking rapidly, chose the second. She drew us into an embrasure of the great wall and warned us to be silent, especially Aggie.

"One sneeze," she said, "and that wretch will have us. You'll spend the night in jail."

"I'd rather be there than here any day," said Aggie, shivering. However, she tried the clothes-pin once more, and for a wonder it worked.

"He'll hear by teeth chatterig, I'b certaid," she whispered.

"Take them out," Tish ordered her, and she did so.

How strange, looking back, to think of the effect which that one small act was to have on the later events of the evening. How true it is that life is but a series of small deeds and great results! We turn to the left instead of the right and collide with an omnibus, or trip over the tail of an insignificant teagown, like my Cousin Sarah Pennell, and fall downstairs and break a priceless bottle of medicinal brandy.

So Aggie took out her teeth and placed them in her ulster pocket, and tied her scarf over her mouth to prevent taking cold without them, and later on . . .

However, at the moment we were concentrated on the policeman. First he discovered and apparently examined the boat on the shore, and then, pushing and grunting, shoved his machine past us and up to the road. There he left it, the engine still going, and went toward the penitentiary, whistling softly and plainly outlined against the lights of the cars outside. A moment later Tish had led us to the motor-cycle and was examining the mechanism by the aid of the flashlight.

"It looks easy enough," she said in her usual composed manner. "Lizzie, get into the side-car and take Aggie on your
lap—and hold on to her. I wish no repetition of the Miss Watkins incident."

We watched for a short time, hoping the policeman would go inside; but he was talking to the Cummingss' chauffeur, who seemed to be pointing in our direction. Seeing then that no time was to be lost, Tish hastily adjusted her goggles and pulled down her hat, and being already in knickerbockers, got quickly into the saddle. With the first explosion of the engine the motor-cycle officer looked up, and an instant later began to run in our direction.

But I saw no more. Tish started the machine at full speed, and to a loud cry from Aggie we were off with a terrific jerk.

"By deck's broked!" she cried. "Stop her! By deck's broked!"

Her neck was not broken, however, I am happy to say, and the osteopath who is attending her promises that she will soon be able to turn her head.

How shall I describe the next brief interval of time? To those who have ridden in such fashion, no description is necessary; and to those who have not, words are inadequate. And, in addition, while it was speedily apparent that we were leaving our pursuers behind—for the Cummingss' car followed us for some distance, with the policeman on the running-board—it was also soon apparent that our dear Tish had entirely lost control of the machine.

Unable to turn her eyes from the road to examine the various controls, an occasional flash of lightning from an approaching storm showed her fumbling blindly with the mechanism. Farmhouses loomed up and were gone in an instant; on several curves the side-car was high in the air, and more than once our poor Aggie almost left us entirely. As the lightning became more frequent we could see frightened animals running across the fields; and finally, by an unfortunate swerve, we struck and went entirely through some unseen obstacle which later proved to be a fence.

However, what might have been a tragedy worked out to the best possible advantage, for, another flash revealing a large haystack near by, Tish turned the machine toward it with her usual far-sightedness and we struck it fairly in the centre. So great was our impact, indeed, that we penetrated it to a considerable distance and were almost buried, but we got out without difficulty and also extricated the machine. Save for
Aggie's neck, we were unhurt; and, the rain coming up just then, we retired once more into the stack and with the aid of the flash again read over the clue:

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"
"'Most anywhere else,' said she.
"Behind the grille is a nice young man,
And he'll give my clue to me."

"Going?" said Tish thoughtfully. "'Most anywhere else'? There's no sense to that." The hay, however, had brought back Aggie's hay-fever, and as sneezing hurt her neck, she was utterly wretched.

"There's a heap of sedse," she said in a petulant voice. "Bost adywhere else would suit be all right. Ad if you're goig to try that dabbed bachide agaid, Tish Carberry, I ab dot."

"If you must swear, Aggie," Tish reproved her, "go outside, and do not pollute the clean and wholesome fragrance of this hay."

"I'd have said worse if I knew andythig worse," said Aggie. "And bobbe this hay is wholesobe, but if you had by dose you wouldn't thig so."

"Grille?" said Tish. "A nice young man behind a grille? Is there a grill-room at the Eden Inn?"

But we could not remember any, and we finally hit on the all-night restaurant in town, which had.

"'Most anywhere else' must refer to that," Tish said. "The food is probably extremely poor. And while there we can get a sandwich or so and eat it on the way. I confess to a feeling of weakness."

"Weakness!" said Aggie bitterly. "Thed I dod't ever wadt to see you goig strog, Tish Carberry!"

It was owing to Aggie's insistence that Tish test out the mechanism of the motor-cycle before any of us mounted again that our next misfortune occurred. So far, when one thing failed us, at least we had been lucky enough to find a substitute at hand, but in this instance we were for a time at a loss.

It happened as follows: As soon as the rain ceased, Tish, flashlight in hand, went to the machine and made a few experiments with it. At first all went well, but suddenly something happened, I know not what, and in a second the motor-cycle had darted out of our sight and soon after out of
hearing, leaving our dear Tish still with a hand out and me holding a flashlight on the empty air. Pursuit was useless, and, after a few moments, inadvisable, for as it reached the main road it apparently struck something with extreme violence.

"If that’s a house it’s docked it dowd," Aggie wailed.

But as we were to learn later, it had not struck a house, but something far more significant. Of that also more later on.

Our situation now was extremely unpleasant. Although the storm was over, it was almost eleven o’clock, and at any time we expected to see the other cars dashing past toward victory. To walk back to town was out of the question in the condition of Aggie’s neck. Yet what else could we do? However, Tish had not exhausted all her resources.

"We are undoubtedly on a farm," she said. "Where there’s a farm there’s a horse, and where there’s a horse there is a wagon. I am not through yet."

And so, indeed, it turned out to be. We had no particular mischance in the barn, where we found both a horse and a wagon, only finding it necessary to connect the two.

This we accomplished in what I fear was but an eccentric manner, and soon we were on our way once more, Aggie lying flat in the wagon-bed because of her neck. How easy to pen this line, yet to what unforeseen consequences it was to lead!

As we wished to avoid the spot where the motor-cycle had struck something, we took back-lanes by choice, and after travelling some three miles or so had the extraordinary experience of happening on the motor-cycle itself once more, comfortably settled in a small estuary of the lake and with several water-fowl already roosting upon it.

But we reached the town safely, and leaving Aggie, now fast asleep, in the rear of the wagon, entered the all-night restaurant.

V

There was no actual grille to be seen in this place, but a stout individual in a dirty-white apron was frying sausages on a stove at the back end and a thin young man at a table was waiting to eat them.

Tish lost no time, but hurried back, and this haste of hers added to the dirt and so on with which she was covered and
the huskiness of her voice, undoubtedly precipitated the climax which immediately followed. Breathless as she was, she leaned to him and said:

"'All is discovered.'"

"The hell you say!" said the man, dropping the fork.

"I've told you," she repeated. "'All is discovered.' And now no funny business. Give me what you've got; I'm in a hurry."

"Give you what I've got?" he repeated. "You know damn' well I haven't got anything, and what I'm going to get is twenty years! Where are the others?"

Well, Tish had looked rather blank at first, but at that she brightened up.

"In the penitentiary," she said. "At least——"

"In the pen!" yelped the man. "Here, Jose!" he called to the person at the table. "It's all up! Quick's the word!"

"Not at all," said Tish. "I was to say 'All is discovered', and——"

But he only groaned, and throwing off his apron and grabbing a hat, the next moment he had turned out the lights and the two of them ran out the front door. Tish and I remained in the darkness, too astonished to speak, until a sound outside brought us to our senses.

"Good heavens, Lizzie!" she cried. "They have taken the wagon—and Aggie's in it!"

We ran outside, but it was too late to do anything. The horse was galloping wildly up the street, and after following it a block or two, we were obliged to desist. I leaned against a lamp-post and burst into tears, but Tish was made of stronger fibre. While others mourn, Tish acts, and in this case she acted at once.

As it happened, we were once more at Dr. Parkinson's, and even as we stood there the doctor himself brought his car out of the garage, and leaving it at the kerb, limped into his house for something he had forgotten. He was wearing a pair of loose bedroom slippers, and did not see us at first, but when he did he stopped.

"Still at large, are you?" he said in an unpleasant tone.

"Not through any fault of yours," said Tish, glaring at him. "After your dastardly attack on us——"

"Attack!" he shouted. "Who's limping, you or me? I'm going to lose two toenails, and possibly more. I warn you,
whoever you are, I’ve told the police, and they are on your track.”

“Then they are certainly travelling some,” said Tish coldly.

He then limped into the house, and Tish caught me by the arm.

“Into the car!” she whispered. “He deserves no consider-ation whatever, and our first duty is to Aggie.”

Before I could protest, I was in the car and Tish was starting the engine; but precious time had been lost, and although we searched madly, there was no trace of the wagon.

When at last in despair we drove up to the local police-station it was as a last resort. But like everything else that night, it too failed us. The charge room was empty, and someone was telephoning from the inner room to Edgewater, the next town.

“Say,” he was saying, “has the sheriff and his crowd started yet? . . . Have, eh? Well, we need ’em. All the boys are out, but they haven’t got ’em yet, so far’s I know. . . . Yes, they’ve done plenty: Attacked Dr. Parkinson first. Then busted down the pier at the fish-house and stole a boat there, and just as Murphy corralled them near the pen, they grabbed his motor-cycle and escaped. They hit a car with it and about killed a man, and a few minutes ago old Jenkins, out the Pike, telephoned they’d lifted a horse and wagon and beat it. And now they’ve looted the Cummings house and stolen Parkinson’s car for a getaway. . . . Crazy? Sure they’re crazy! Called the old boy at the fish-cannery ‘dearie’! Can you beat it?”

We had just time to withdraw to the street before he came through the door-way, and getting into the car we drove rapidly away. Never have I seen Tish more irritated; the unfairness of the statements galled her, and still more her inability to refute them. She said but little, merely hoping that whoever had robbed the Cummings house had made a complete job of it, and that we would go next to the railway station.

“It is possible,” she said, “that the men in that restaurant are implicated in this burglary, and certainly their actions indicate flight. In that case the wagon—and Aggie—may be at the depot.”

This thought cheered us both. But, alas, the waiting-room was empty and no wagon stood near the tracks. Only young
George Welliver was behind the ticket window, and to him Tish related a portion of the situation.

"Not only is Miss Pilkington in the wagon," she said, "but these men are probably concerned in the Cummings robbery. I merely said to them 'All is discovered', when they rushed out of the place."

Suddenly George Welliver threw back his head and laughed.

"Well!" he said. "And me believing you all the time! So you're one of that bunch, are you? All that rigmarole kind of mixed me up. Here's your little clue, and you're the first to get one."

He then passed out an envelope, and Tish, looking bewildered, took it and opened it. It was the next clue, right enough. The password was "Three-toed South American sloth", and the clue as follows:

Wives of great men all remind us,
   We can make our wives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
   Footprints on the sands of time.

"That ought not to be difficult," said Tish. "If only Aggie hadn't acted like a fool——"

"It's the cemetery," I said, "and I go to no cemetery tonight, Tish Carberry."

"Nonsense!" said Tish briskly. "Time certainly means a clock. I'm just getting the hang of this thing, Lizzie."

"'Hang' may be right before we're through. And when I think of poor Aggie——"

"Still," she went on, "sands might be an hour-glass. Sands of time, you know."

"And if somebody broke it by stepping on it, it would be footprints on the sands of time!" I retorted. "Go on! All we have to do is to find an hour-glass and step on it. And in the meantime Aggie——"

However, at that instant a train drew in and a posse from Edgewater, heavily armed, got out of it and made for a line of waiting motor-cars. Never have I seen a more ruthless-looking lot of men, and Tish felt as I did, for as they streamed into the waiting-room she pushed me into a telephone-booth and herself took another.

And with her usual competency she took advantage of
the fact to telephone Hannah to see if Aggie had returned home; but she had not.

As soon as the posse had passed through we made our escape by the other door and were able to reach the doctor’s car unseen, and still free to pursue our search. But I insist that I saw Tish scatter no tacks along the street as we left the depot. If she did, then I must also insist that she had full reason; it was done to prevent an unjustified pursuit by a body of armed men, and not to delay the other treasure hunters.

Was it her fault that the other treasure seekers reached the station at that time? No, and again no. Indeed, when the first explosive noises came as the cars drew up she fully believed that the sheriff was firing on us, and it was in turning a corner at that time that she broke the fire-plug.

Certainly to assess her damages for flooded cellars is, under these circumstances, a real injustice.

But to return to the narrative: Quite rightly, once beyond pursuit, Tish headed for the Cummings property, as it was possible that there we could pick up some clue to Aggie, as well as establish our own innocence. But never shall I forget our reception at that once-friendly spot.

As the circumstances were peculiar, Tish decided to reconnoitre first, and entered the property through a hedge with the intention of working past the sundial and so towards the house. But hardly had she emerged into the glow from the windows when a shot was fired at her and she was compelled to retire. As it happened, she took the shortest cut to where she had left me, which was down the drive, and I found myself exposed to a fusillade of bullets, which compelled me to seek cover on the floor of the car. Two of the car windows were broken at once and Letitia Carberry herself escaped by a miracle, as a bullet went entirely through the envelope she held in her hand.

Yes, with her customary astuteness she had located the fresh clue. The Ostermaier boy had had them by the sundial, and had gone to sleep there. She fell over him in the darkness, as a matter of fact, and it was his yell which had aroused the house afresh.

There was clearly nothing to do but to escape at once, as men were running down the drive and firing as they ran. And as it seemed to make no difference in which direction we went, we drove more or less at random while I examined
the new clue. On account of the bullet-holes, it was hard to decipher, but it read much as follows:

The password was "Keep your head down, boy," and the clue was as follows:

      Search where affection ceases,
      By soft and —— sands.
      The digit it increases,
      On its head it stands.

"After all," Tish said, "we have tried to help Aggie and failed. If that thing made sense I would go on and locate the treasure. But it doesn’t. A digit is a finger, and how can it stand on its head?"

"A digit is a number too."

"So I was about to observe," said Tish. "If you wouldn’t always break in on my train of thought, I’d get somewhere. And six upside down is nine, so it’s six we’re after. Six what? Six is half a dozen. Half a dozen eggs; half a dozen rolls; half a dozen children. Who has half a dozen children? That’s it probably. I’m sure affection would cease with six children."

"Somebody along the water-front. It says: ‘By soft and something-or-other sands.’"

We pondered the matter for some time in a narrow lane near the Country Club, but without result; and might have been there yet had not the sudden passing of a car which sounded like the Smith boys’ flivver toward the Country Club gate stimulated Tish’s imagination.

"I knew it would come!" she said triumphantly. "The sixth tee, of course, and the sand-box! And those dratted boys are ahead of us!"

Anyone but Tish, I am convinced, would have abandoned hope at that moment. But with her, emergencies are to be met and conquered, and so now. With a "Hold tight, Lizzie!" she swung the car about, and before I knew what was on the tapis she had let in the clutch and we were shooting off the road and across a ditch.

VI

So great was our momentum that we fairly leaped the depression, and the next moment were breaking our way
through a small wood which is close to the fourteenth hole of the golf-links, and had struck across the course at that point. Owing to the recent rain, the ground was soft, and at one time we were fairly brought to bay—on, I think, the fairway to the eleventh hole, sinking very deep. But we kept on the more rapidly, as we could now see the lights of the stripped flivver winding along the bridle-path which intersects the links.

I must say that the way the greens committee has acted in this matter has been a surprise to us. The wagon did a part of the damage, and also the course is not ruined. A few days' work with a wheelbarrow and spade will repair all damage; and as to the missing cup at the eighth hole, did we put the horse's foot in it?

Tish's eyes were on the lights of the flivver now winding its way along the road through the course, and it is to that that I lay our next and almost fatal mishap. For near the tenth hole she did not notice a sand-pit just ahead, and a moment later we had leaped the bunker at the top and shot down into it.

So abrupt was the descent that the lamps—and, indeed, the entire fore part of the doctor's car—were buried in the sand, and both of us were thrown entirely out. It was at this time that Tish injured one of her floating ribs, as before mentioned, and sustained the various injuries which laid her up for some time afterward, but at the moment she said nothing at all. Leaping to her feet, she climbed out of the pit and disappeared into the night, leaving me in complete darkness to examine myself for fractures and to sustain the greatest fright of my life. For as I sat up I realized that I had fallen across something, and that the something was a human being. Never shall I forget the sensations of that moment, nor the smothered voice beneath me which said:

"Kill be at odce ad be dode with it," and then sneezed violently.

"Aggie!" I shrieked.

She seemed greatly relieved at my voice, and requested me to move so she could get her head out of the sand. "Ad dod't screab agaid," she said pettishly. "They'll cobe back ad fidish us all if you do."

Well, it appeared that the two men had driven straight to the golf-links with the wagon, and had turned in much
as we had done. They had not known that Aggie was in
the rear, and at first she had not been worried, thinking
that Tish and I were in the seat. But finally she had
learned her mistake, and that they were talking about loot
from some place or other, and she was greatly alarmed. They
were going too fast for her to escape, although once or
twice they had struck bunkers which nearly threw her out.

But at last they got into the sand-pit, and as the horse
climbed up the steep ascent our poor Aggie had heard her
teeth drop out of her pocket and had made a frantic clutch
at them. The next moment she had alighted on her head in
the sand-pit and the wagon had gone on.

She was greatly shaken by her experience and had taken a
heavy cold; but although we felt about for the blackberry
cordial, we could not find it, and could only believe it had
miraculously remained in the wagon.

As she finished her narrative our dear Tish slipped quietly
over the edge of the pit and sat down, panting, in the sand.
The storm being definitely over and a faint moon now show-
ing, we perceived that she carried in her hand a canvas sack
tied with a strong cord, and from its weight as she dropped it
we knew that at last we had the treasure.

It was a great moment, and both Aggie and I then set
about searching for the missing teeth. But as Tish learned of
Aggie's experience she grew thoughtful.

"Undoubtedly," she said, "those two men are somehow
concerned in this robbery tonight, and very probably the
rendezvous of the gang is somewhere hereabouts. In which
direction did they go, Aggie?"

"They've parked the wagod over id those woods."

"Then," said Tish, "it is our clear duty—""

"To go hobe," said Aggie sharply.

"Home nothing!" said Tish. "Gaol is where we go
unless we get them. There are fifteen policemen and a sheriff
coming for us at this minute, and—" But here she stopped
and listened intently. "It is too late," she said, with the first
discouragement she had shown all evening. "Too late, my
friends. The police are coming now."

Aggie wailed dismally, but Tish hushed her and we set
ourselves to listen. Certainly there were men approaching,
and talking in cautious tones. There was a moment when
I thought our dear Tish was conquered at last, but only a
moment. Then she roused to incisive speech and quick action.

"I do not propose to be dug out of here like a golf-ball," she stated. "I am entitled to defend myself and I shall do so. Lizzie, see if there are any tools in the car there, and get a wrench." She then took a firm hold of the treasure-bag and swung it in her hand. "I am armed," she said quietly, "and prepared for what may come. Aggie, get the clothes-pin, and when I give the word point it like a pistol."

"Ab I to say 'bag'?"

But before Tish could reply, the men were fairly on us. We had but time to get behind the car when we could hear their voices. And suddenly Aggie whispered, "It's theb! It's the badits! Ad they've beed at the cordial!"

And Aggie was right; they had indeed, as we could tell by their voices.

"It wash Bill, all righ'," said one man. "I shaw the litsh of hish car."

"Well, wheresh he gone to? No car here, no anything. Black ash hell."

One of them then began to sing a song in which he requested a barman to give him a drink, but was quickly hushed by the others, for there were now three of them. Whether it was this one or not I do not know, but at that instant one of them fell over the bunker at the top of the pit and came rolling down at our feet, and Tish, with her customary readiness, at once struck him on the head with the bag of pennies. He was evidently stunned, for he lay perfectly still, and the men above seemed puzzled.

"Hey, Joe!" they called. "Where are you?"

On receiving no reply, one of them lighted a match, and Tish had only time to retire behind the car before it flared up.

"Well, can you beat that? He'sh broken hish neck!"

But the man with the match was sober, and he saw the car and stared at it.

"If that's Bill's car," he said, as the match went out, "we're up against it. Only—where the devil's Bill?"

"He'sh dead too, mosht likely," said the other. "Everybody'sh dead. S'terrible night. Car'sh dead too; buried in a shea of shand. Shinking rapidly. Poor ole car! Women and children first!"
He then burst into tears and sat down apparently, for
the other man kicked him and told him to get up, and then
came sliding into the pit and bent over Joe, striking another
match as he did so. Hardly had he done so when Tish's
weapon again descended with full force, and he fell beside
his unconscious partner in crime.

We had now only the drunken man to deal with; and as
Tish wished no more bloodshed, she managed him in a
different manner.

In a word, she secured the towrope from the rear seat
of the doctor's car and, leaving Aggie and myself to watch
the others, climbed out and approached him from the rear.
It was only the work of a moment to pinion his arms to his
sides, and as Aggie immediately pointed her impromptu
weapon and cried "Hads up!" he surrendered without a
struggle. Having securely roped him, we then rolled him
into the sand-pit with the others, who showed no signs of
coming to.

Fatigued as we were by that time, and no further danger
threatening for the moment, we rested for a brief time on
the ground and ate a few macaroons which I had carried in a
pocket against such an emergency. But by "we" I mean
only Tish and myself, as poor Aggie was unable to do so—
and, indeed, has been living on soft food ever since. Then
retrieving the sack containing the Cummings jewels and
silver which the burglars had been carrying, we prepared to
carry our double treasure back to the town.

Here, however, I feel that our dear Tish made a tactical
error, for after we had found the horse and wagon—in the
undergrowth just beyond 'the seventh hole'—instead of
heading at once for the police-station she insisted on going
first to the Ostermaiers'.

"It is," she said, examining her watch by the aid of the
flashlight, "now only half past eleven, and we shall not be
late if we hurry. After that I shall report to the police."

"And what is to prevent those wretches from coming to
and escaping in the interval?" I asked dryly.

"True," Tish agreed. "Perhaps I would better go back
and hit them again. But that would take time also."

In the end we compromised on Tish's original plan and
set out once more. The trip back across the links was un-
eventful, save that on the eighth green the horse got a foot
into the hole and was only extricated with the cup still clinging to his foot.

We had no can-opener along, and it is quite possible that the ring of the tin later on on the macadam road led to our undoing. For we had no sooner turned away from the town toward the Ostermaiers' cottage on the beach than a policeman leaped out of the bushes and, catching the animal by the bridle, turned a lantern on us.

"Hey, Murphy!" he called. "Here they are! I've got 'em! Hands up, there!"

"Stand back!" said Tish in a peremptory voice. "We are late enough already."

"Late!" said the policeman, pointing a revolver at us. "Well, time won't make much difference to you from now on—not where you're going. You won't ever need to hurry again."

"But I must deliver this treasure. After that I'll explain everything."

"You bet you'll deliver it, and right here and now. And your weapons too."

"Aggie, give up your clothes-pin," said Tish in a resigned voice. "These yokels apparently think us guilty of something or other, but my conscience is clear. If you want the really guilty parties," she told the policeman, "go back to the sandpit by the tenth hole and you will find them."

"April fool your own self," said the one called Murphy. "I've been following you for two hours and I don't trust you. You're too resourceful. Is the stuff there?" he asked the first man, who had been searching in the wagon.

"All here."

"Then we'll be moving along," he said; and in this fashion did we reach the town once more, and the police-station.

Never shall I forget that moment. Each of us handcuffed and hustled along by the officers, we were shoved into the police-station in a most undignified manner, to confront the sheriff and a great crowd of people. Nor shall I ever forget the sheriff's face when he shouted in an angry voice:

"Women, by heck! When a woman goes wrong she sure goes!"

The place seemed to be crowded with people. The fish-pier man was there, and a farmer who said we had smashed
his feed-cutter. And Dr. Parkinson, limping about in his bedroom slippers and demanding to know where we had left his car, and another individual who claimed it was his horse we had taken, and that we'd put a tin can on his off forefoot and ought to be sued for cruelty to animals. And even Mr. Stubbs, because his licence plates were on our car—and of course the old fool had told all about it—and the Cummings butler, who pointed at Tish and said that after the alarm was raised she had tried to get back into the house again, which was, of course, ridiculous.

I must say it looked bad for us, especially when the crowd moved and we saw a man lying in a corner with an overcoat under his head and his eyes shut. Tish, who had not lost an ounce of dignity, gazed at him without expression.

"I dare say," she said, "that you claim that that is our work also."

"Just about killed him, you have," said the sheriff. "Went right through him with that motor-cycle you stole. Murder—that's what it's likely to be—murder. D'you get his name, Doctor?"

"Only roused enough to say it was Bill," said Dr. Parkinson. "I wish myself to lodge a complaint for assault and battery against these women. I am per——"

But Tish interrupted him.

"Bill?" she said. "Bill?"

Without a word she pushed the crowd aside, and, bending over Bill, with her poor manacled hands she examined him as best she could. Then she straightened herself and addressed the crowd with composure.

"Under this man's shirt," she said, "you will find what I imagine to be a full set of burglar's tools. If your hands are not paralysed like your brains, examine him and see."

And they found them! The picture of that moment is indelibly impressed on my mind—the sheriff holding up the tools and Tish addressing the mob with majesty and the indignation of outraged womanhood.

"Gentlemen, this is one of the gang which robbed the Cummings house tonight. Through all this eventful evening, during which I regret to say some of you have suffered, my friends and I have been on their track. Had the motor-cycle not wrecked that ruffian's car, they would now have safely escaped. As it is, when we were so unjustly arrested I had
but just recovered the Cummings silver and jewels, and alone and unaided had overcome the remainder of the gang. I am exhausted and weary; I have suffered physical injury and mental humiliation; but I am not too weak or too weary to go now to the sand-pit at the tenth hole on the golf-links and complete my evening’s work by handing over to the police the three other villains I have captured.”

“Three cheers for the old girl!” somebody called in the crowd. “I’m for her! Let’s go!”

And this, I think, concludes the narrative of that evening’s events. It was almost midnight when, our prisoners safely gaolèd, we arrived at the Ostermaiers’ to find all the treasure hunters except the Cummingses there, and eating supper, and our angel-food cake gracing the centre of the table. Our dear Tish walked in and laid the sack of pennies on the table.

“Here is the treasure,” she announced. “It has been an interesting evening, and I hope we shall soon do it again.”

Mr. Ostermaier took up the bag and examined it.

“I have the honour of stating,” he said, “that this, as Miss Carberry claims, is the treasure, and that Miss Carberry wins the hand-painted candlestick which is the prize for the event.” He then examined the bag more carefully, and added:

“But this sack seems to be stained. Perhaps our good sister will explain what the stains are.”

Tish eyed the bag with an expressionless face.

“Stains?” she said. “Oh yes, of course. I remember now. They are blood.”

Then, leaving them staring and speechless with astonishment, she led the way out of the house, and home.
RELIQUES DE L'AMIRAL CHASSÉ

ANTHONY TROLLOPE
Anthony Trollope was for many years a Post Office Surveyor in Ireland, where he acquired the taste for hunting which is revealed in many of his stories. He was an indefatigable writer, publishing forty-seven novels, the majority of them with political or ecclesiastical settings. It is on the latter—the Barchester series—that his fame is principally based.
RELICS OF GENERAL CHASSÉ

A TALE OF ANTWERP

THAT Belgium is now one of the European kingdoms, living by its own laws, resting on its own bottom, with a king and court, palaces and parliament of its own, is known to all the world. And a very nice little kingdom it is; full of old towns, fine Flemish pictures, and interesting Gothic churches. But in the memory of very many of us who do not think ourselves old men, Belgium, as it is now called—in those days it used to be Flanders and Brabant—was a part of Holland, and it obtained its own independence by a revolution. In that revolution the most important military step was the siege of Antwerp, which was defended on the part of the Dutch by General Chassé, with the utmost gallantry, but nevertheless ineffectually.

After the siege Antwerp became quite a show place; and among the visitors who flocked there to talk of the gallant general, and to see what remained of the great effort which he had made to defend the place, were two Englishmen. One was the hero of this little history; and the other was a young man of considerably less weight in the world. The less I say of the latter the better; but it is necessary that I should give some description of the former.

The Rev. Augustus Horne was, at the time of my narrative, a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England. The profession which he had graced sat easily on him. Its external marks and signs were as pleasing to his friends as were its internal comforts to himself. He was a man of much quiet mirth, full of polished wit, and on some rare occasions he could descend to the more noisy hilarity of a joke. Loved by his friends, he loved all the world. He had known no care and seen no sorrow. Always intended for holy orders, he had entered them without a scruple, and remained within their
pale without a regret. At twenty-four he had been a deacon; at twenty-seven a priest, at thirty a rector, and at thirty-five a prebendary; and as his rectory was rich and his prebendal stall well paid, the Rev. Augustus Horne was called by all, and called himself, a happy man. His stature was about six feet two, and his corpulence exceeded even those bounds which symmetry would have preferred as being most perfectly compatible even with such a height. But nevertheless Mr. Horne was a well-made man; his hands and feet were small; his face was handsome, frank, and full of expression; his bright eyes twinkled with humour; his finely cut mouth disclosed two marvellous rows of well-preserved ivory; and his slightly aquiline nose was just such a projection as one would wish to see on the face of a well-fed, good-natured dignitary of the Church of England. When I add to all this that the reverend gentleman was as generous as he was rich—and the kind mother in whose arms he had been nurtured had taken care that he should never want—I need hardly say that I was blessed with a very pleasant travelling companion.

I must mention one more interesting particular. Mr. Horne was rather inclined to dandyism, in an innocent way. His clerical starched neckcloth was always of the whitest, his cambric handkerchief of the finest, his bands adorned with the broadest border; his sable suit never degenerated to a rusty brown; it not only gave on all occasions glossy evidence of freshness, but also of the talent which the artisan had displayed in turning out a well-dressed clergyman of the Church of England. His hair was ever brushed with scrupulous attention, and showed in its regular waves the guardian care of each separate bristle. And all this was done with that ease and grace which should be the characteristics of a dignitary of the established English Church.

I had accompanied Mr. Horne to the Rhine; and we had reached Brussels on our return, just at the close of that revolution which ended in affording a throne to the son-in-law of George the Fourth. At that moment General Chassé’s name and fame were in every man’s mouth, and, like other curious admirers of the brave, Mr. Horne determined to devote two days to the scene of the late events at Antwerp. Antwerp, moreover, possesses perhaps the finest spire, and certainly one of the three or four finest pictures, in the world. Of General Chassé, of the cathedral, and of the Rubens, I had
heard much, and was therefore well pleased that such should be his resolution. This accomplished, we were to return to Brussels; and thence, via Ghent, Ostend, and Dover, I to complete my legal studies in London, and Mr. Horne to enjoy once more the peaceful retirement of Ollerton rectory. As we were to be absent from Brussels but one night we were enabled to indulge in the gratification of travelling without our luggage. A small sac-de-nuit was prepared; brushes, combs, razors, strops, a change of linen, &c. &c., were carefully put up; but our heavy baggage, our coats, waistcoats, and other wearing apparel were unnecessary. It was delightful to feel oneself so light-handed. The reverend gentleman, with my humble self by his side, left the portal of the Hôtel de Belle Vue at 7 a.m., in good humour with all the world. There were no railroads in those days; but a cabriolet, big enough to hold six persons, with rope traces and corresponding appendages, deposited us at the “Golden Fleece” in something less than six hours. The inward man was duly fortified, and we started for the castle.

It boots not here to describe the effects which gunpowder and grape-shot had had on the walls of Antwerp. Let the curious in these matters read the horrors of the siege of Troy, or the history of Jerusalem taken by Titus. The one may be found in Homer, and the other in Josephus. Or if they prefer doings of a later date there is the taking of Sebastopol, as narrated in the columns of The Times newspaper. The accounts are equally true, instructive, and intelligible. In the meantime allow the Rev. Augustus Horne and myself to enter the private chambers of the renowned though defeated general.

We rambled for a while through the covered way, over the glacis and along the counterscarp, and listened to the guide as he detailed to us, in already accustomed words, how the siege had gone. Then we got into the private apartments of the general, and, having dexterously shaken off our attendant, wandered at large among the deserted rooms.

“It is clear that no one ever comes here,” said I.

“No,” said the Rev. Augustus; “it seems not; and to tell the truth, I don’t know why anyone should come. The chambers in themselves are not attractive.”

What he said was true. They were plain, ugly, square, unfurnished rooms, here a big one and there a little one, as is usual in most houses;—unfurnished, that is, for the most
part. In one place we did find a table and a few chairs, in another a bedstead, and so on. But to me it was pleasant to indulge in those ruminations which any traces of the great or unfortunate create in softly sympathizing minds. For a time we communicated our thoughts to each other as we roamed free as air through the apartments; and then I lingered for a few moments behind, while Mr. Horne moved on with a quicker step.

At last I entered the bedchamber of the general, and there I overtook my friend. He was inspecting, with much attention, an article of the great man’s wardrobe which he held in his hand. It was precisely that virile habiliment to which a well-known gallant captain alludes in his conversation with the posthumous appearance of Miss Bailey, as containing a Bank of England 5/- note.

"The general must have been a large man, George, or he would hardly have filled these," said Mr. Horne, holding up to the light the respectable leathern articles in question. "He must have been a very large man,—the largest man in Antwerp, I should think; or else his tailor has done him more than justice."

They were certainly large, and had about them a charming regimental military appearance. They were made of white leather, with bright metal buttons at the knees and bright metal buttons at the top. They owned no pockets, and were, with the exception of the legitimate outlet, continuous in the circumference of the waistband. No dangling strings gave them an appearance of senile imbecility. Were it not for a certain rigidity, sternness, and mental inflexibility—we will call it military ardour—with which they were imbued, they would have created envy in the bosom of a fox-hunter.

Mr. Horne was no fox-hunter, but still he seemed to be irresistibly taken with the lady-like propensity of wishing to wear them. "Surely, George," he said, "the general must have been a stouter man than I am"—and he contemplated his own proportions with complacency—"these what’s-the-names are quite big enough for me."

I differed in opinion, and was obliged to explain that I thought he did the good living of Ollerton insufficient justice.

"I am sure they are large enough for me," he repeated, with considerable obstinacy. I smiled incredulously, and then
to settle the matter he resolved that he would try them on. Nobody had been in these rooms for the last hour, and it appeared as though they were never visited. Even the guide had not come on with us, but was employed in showing other parties about the fortifications. It was clear that this portion of the building was left desolate, and that the experiment might be safely made. So the sportive rector declared that he would for a short time wear the regimentals which had once contained the valorous heart of General Chassé.

With all decorum the Rev. Mr. Horne divested himself of the work of the London artist's needle, and, carefully placing his own garments beyond the reach of dust, essayed to fit himself in military garb.

At that important moment—at the critical instant of the attempt—the clatter of female voices was heard approaching the chamber. They must have suddenly come round some passage corner, for it was evident by the sound that they were close upon us before we had any warning of their advent. At this very minute Mr. Horne was somewhat embarrassed in his attempts, and was not fully in possession of his usual active powers of movement, nor of his usual presence of mind. He only looked for escape; and seeing a door partly open he with difficulty retreated through it, and I followed him. We found that we were in a small dressing-room; and as by good luck the door was defended by an inner bolt, my friend was able to protect himself.

"There shall be another siege, at any rate as stout as the last, before I surrender," said he.

As the ladies seemed inclined to linger in the room it became a matter of importance that the above-named articles should fit, not only for ornament but for use. It was very cold, and Mr. Horne was altogether unused to move in a Highland sphere of life. But alas, alas! General Chassé had not been nurtured in the classical retirement of Ollerton. The ungracious leather would stretch no point to accommodate the divine, though it had been willing to minister to the convenience of the soldier. Mr. Horne was vexed and chilled; and throwing the now hateful garments into a corner and protecting himself from the cold as best he might by standing with his knees together and his body somewhat bent so as to give the skirts of his coat an opportunity of doing extra duty, he begged me to see if those jabbering females were not going to leave him
in peace to recover his own property. I accordingly went to
the door, and opening it to a small extent I peeped through.

Who shall describe my horror at the sight which I then
saw? The scene, which had hitherto been tinted with comic
effect, was now becoming so decidedly tragic that I did not
dare at once to acquaint my worthy pastor with that which
was occurring,—and, alas! I had already occurred.

Five country-women of our own—it was easy to know
them by their dress and general aspect—were standing in the
middle of the room; and one of them, the centre of the group,
the senor of the lot, a maiden lady—I could have sworn to that
—with a red nose, held in one hand a huge pair of scissors and in
the other—the already devoted goods of my most unfortunate
companion! Down from the waistband, through that good-
ly expanse, a fell gash had already gone through and through;
and in useless, unbecoming disorder the broadcloth fell
pendent from her arm on this side and on that. At that
moment I confess that I had not the courage to speak to Mr.
Horne,—not even to look at him.

I must describe that group. Of the figure next to me I
could only see the back. It was a broad back done up in
silk not of the newest. The whole figure, one may say, was
dumpy. The black silk was not long, as dresses now are worn,
nor wide in its skirts. In every way it was skimpy, consider-
ing the breadth it had to cover; and below the silk I saw the
heels of two thick shoes, and enough to swear by of two
woollen stockings. Above the silk was a red-and-blue shawl;
and above that a ponderous, elaborate brown bonnet, as to
the materials of which I should not wish to undergo an examina-
tion. Over and beyond this I could only see the backs of her
two hands. They were held up as though in wonder at that
which the red-nosed holder of the scissors had dared to do.

Opposite to this lady, and with her face fully turned to
me, was a kindly-looking, fat motherly woman, with light-
coloured hair not in the best order. She was hot and scarlet
with exercise, being perhaps too stout for the steep steps of the
fortress; and in one hand she held a handkerchief, with which
from time to time she wiped her brow. In the other hand
she held one of the extremities of my friend’s property, feeling
—good, careful soul!—what was the texture of the cloth. As
she did so, I could see a glance of approbation pass across her
warm features. I liked that lady’s face, in spite of her untidy
hair, and felt that had she been alone my friend would not have been injured.

On either side of her there stood a flaxen-haired maiden, with long curls, large blue eyes, fresh red cheeks, an undefined lumpy nose, and large good-humoured mouth. They were as like as two peas, only that one was half an inch taller than the other; and there was no difficulty in discovering, at a moment's glance, that they were the children of that overheated matron who was feeling the web of my friend's cloth.

But the principal figure was she who held the centre place in the group. She was tall and thin, with fierce-looking eyes rendered more fierce by the spectacles which she wore; with a red nose as I said before; and about her an undescrivable something which quite convinced me that she had never known—could never know—aught of the comforts of married life. It was she who held the scissors and the black garments. It was she who had given that unkind cut. As I looked at her she whisked herself quickly round from one companion to the other, triumphing in what she had done, and ready to triumph further in what she was about to do. I immediately conceived a deep hatred for that Queen of the Harpies.

"Well, I suppose they can't be wanted again," said the mother, rubbing her forehead.

"Oh, dear, no!" said she of the red nose. "They are relics!"

I thought to leap forth; but for what purpose should I have leaped? The accursed scissors had already done their work; and the symmetry, nay, even the utility of the vestment was destroyed.

"General Chassé wore a very good article;—I will say that for him," continued the mother.

"Of course he did!" said the Queen Harpy. "Why should he not, seeing that the country paid for it for him? Well, ladies, who's for having a bit?"

"Oh, my! you won't go for to cut them up," said the stout back.

"Won't I?" said the scissors; and she immediately made another incision. "Who's for having a bit? Don't all speak at once."

"I should like a morsel for a pin-cushion," said flaxen-haired Miss No. 1, a young lady about nineteen, actuated by a general affection for all sword-bearing, fire-eating heroes. "I

S.C.H.
should like to have something to make me think of the poor general!"

Snip, snip went the scissors with professional rapidity, and a round piece was extracted from the back of the calf of the left leg. I shuddered with horror; and so did the Rev. Augustus Horne with cold.

"I hardly think it's proper to cut them up," said Miss No. 2.

"Oh, isn't it?" said the harpy. "Then I'll do what's improper!" And she got her finger and thumb well through the holes in the scissors' handles. As she spoke resolution was plainly marked on her brow.

"Well, if they are to be cut up, I should certainly like a bit for a pen-wiper," said No. 2. No. 2. was a literary young lady with a periodical correspondence, a journal, and an album. Snip, snip went the scissors again, and the broad part of the upper right division afforded ample materials for a pen-wiper.

Then the lady with the back, seeing that the desecration of the article had been completed, plucked up heart of courage and put in her little request: "I think I might have a needle-case out of it," said she, "just as a sumner of the poor general"—and a long fragment cut rapidly out of the waistband afforded her unqualified delight.

Mamma, with the hot face and untidy hair, came next. "Well, girls," she said, "as you are all served, I don't see why I'm to be left out. Perhaps, Miss Grogram"—she was an old maid, you see—"perhaps, Miss Grogram, you could get me as much as would make a decent-sized reticule."

There was not the slightest difficulty in doing this. The harpy in the centre again went to work, snip, snip, and extracting from that portion of the affairs which usually sustained the greater portion of Mr. Horne's weight two large round pieces of cloth, presented them to the well-pleased matron. "The general knew well where to get a bit of good broadcloth, certainly," said she, again feeling the pieces.

"And now for No. 1," said she whom I so absolutely hated; "I think there is still enough for a pair of slippers. There's nothing so nice for the house as good black cloth slippers that are warm to the feet and don't show the dirt." And so saying, she spread out on the floor the lacerated remainders.

"There's a nice bit there," said young lady No. 2, poking at one of the pockets with the end of her parasol.
“Yes,” said the harpy, contemplating her plunder. “But I’m thinking whether I couldn’t get leggings as well. I always wear leggings in the thick of the winter.” And so she concluded her operations, and there was nothing left but a melancholy skeleton of seams and buttons.

All this having been achieved, they pocketed their plunder and prepared to depart. There are people who have a wonderful appetite for relics. A stone with which Washington had broken a window when a boy—with which he had done so or had not, for there is little difference; a button that was on a coat of Napoleon’s, or on that of one of his lackeys; a bullet said to have been picked up at Waterloo or Bunker’s Hill; these and suchlike things are great treasures. And their most desirable characteristic is the ease with which they are attained. Any bullet or any button does the work. Faith alone is necessary. And now these ladies had made themselves happy and glorious with “relics” of General Chassé cut from the ill-used habiliments of an elderly English gentleman!

They departed at last, and Mr. Horne, for once in an illhumour, followed me into the bedroom. Here I must be excused if I draw a veil over his manly sorrow at discovering what fate had done for him. Remember what was his position, unclothed in the castle of Antwerp! The nearest suitable change for those which had been destroyed was locked up in his portmanteau at the Hôtel de Belle Vue in Brussels! He had nothing left to him—literally nothing, in that Antwerp world. There was no other wretched being wandering then in that Dutch town so utterly denuded of the goods of life. For what is a man fit—for what can he be fit—when left in such a position? There are some evils which seem utterly to crush a man; and if there be any misfortune to which a man may be allowed to succumb without imputation on his manliness, surely it is such as this. How was Mr. Horne to return to his hotel without incurring the displeasure of the municipality? That was my first thought.

He had a cloak, but it was at the inn; and I found that my friend was oppressed with a great horror at the idea of being left alone; so that I could not go in search of it. There is an old saying, that no man is a hero to his valet de chambre,—the reason doubtless being this, that it is customary for his valet to see the hero divested of those trappings in which so much
of the heroic consists. Who reverences a clergyman without his gown, or a warrior without his sword and sobriety? What would even Minerva be without her helmet?

I do not wish it to be understood that I no longer reverenced Mr. Horne because he was in an undress; but he himself certainly lost much of his composed, well-sustained dignity of demeanour. He was fearful and querulous, cold, and rather cross. When, forgetting his size, I offered him my own he thought that I was laughing at him. He began to be afraid that the story would get abroad, and he then and there exacted a promise that I would never tell it during his lifetime. I have kept my word; but now my old friend has been gathered to his fathers, full of years.

At last I got him to the hotel. It was long before he would leave the castle, cloaked though he was; not, indeed, till the shades of evening had dimmed the outlines of men and things, and made indistinct the outward garniture of those who passed to and fro in the streets. Then, wrapped in his cloak, Mr. Horne followed me along the quays and through the narrowest of the streets; and at length, without venturing to return the gaze of anyone in the hotel court, he made his way up to his own bedroom.

Dinnerless and supperless he went to his couch. But when there he did consent to receive some consolation in the shape of mutton cutlets and fried potatoes, a savoury omelet, and a bottle of claret. The mutton cutlets and fried potatoes at the "Golden Fleece" at Antwerp are—or were then, for I am speaking now of well-nigh thirty years since—remarkably good; the claret, also, was of the best; and so, by degrees, the look of despairing dismay passed from his face, and some scintillations of the old fire returned to his eyes.

"I wonder whether they find themselves much happier for what they have got?" said he.

"A great deal happier," said I. "They'll boast of those things to all their friends at home, and we shall doubtless see some account of their success in the newspapers."

"It would be delightful to expose their blunder—to show them up. Would it not, George? To turn the tables on them?"

"Yes," said I. "I should like to have the laugh against them."

"So would I, only that I should compromise myself by
telling the story. It wouldn't do at all to have it told at Oxford with my name attached to it."

To this also I assented. To what would I not have assented in my anxiety to make him happy after his misery?

But all was not over yet. He was in bed now, but it was necessary that he should rise again on the morrow. At home, in England, what was required might perhaps have been made during the night; but here, among the slow Flemings, any such exertion would have been impossible. Mr. Horne, moreover, had no desire to be troubled in his retirement by a tailor.

Now the landlord of the "Golden Fleece" was a very stout man—a very stout man indeed. Looking at him as he stood with his hands in his pockets at the portal of his own establishment, I could not but think that he was stouter even than Mr. Horne. But then he was certainly much shorter, and the want of due proportion probably added to his unwieldy appearance. I walked round him once or twice wishfully, measuring him in my eye, and thinking of what texture might be the Sunday best of such a man. The clothes which he then had on were certainly not exactly suited to Mr. Horne's tastes.

He saw that I was observing him, and appeared uneasy and offended. I had already ascertained that he spoke a little English. Of Flemish I knew literally nothing, and in French, with which probably he was also acquainted, I was by no means voluble. The business which I had to transact was intricate, and I required the use of my mother-tongue.

It was intricate and delicate, and difficult withal. I began by remarking on the weather, 'but he did not take my remarks kindly. I am inclined to fancy that he thought I was desirous of borrowing money from him. At any rate he gave me no encouragement in my first advances.

"'Vat misfortune?" at last he asked, when I had succeeded in making him understand that a gentleman upstairs required his assistance.

"He has lost these things," and I took hold of my own garments. "It's a long story, or I'd tell you how; but he has not a pair in the world till he gets back to Brussels—unless you can lend him one."

"Lost hees br——?" and he opened his eyes wide, and looked at me with astonishment.
“Yes, yes, exactly so,” said I, interrupting him. “Most astonishing thing, isn’t it? But it’s quite true.”

“Yes hees money in de pocket?” asked my suspicious landlord.

“No, no, no. It’s not so bad as that. His money is all right. I had the money, luckily.”

“Ah, dat is better! But he have lost hees b——?”

“Yes, yes”; I was now getting rather impatient. “There is no mistake about it. He has lost them as sure as you stand there.” And then I proceeded to explain that as the gentleman in question was very stout, and as he, the landlord, was stout also, he might assist us in this great calamity by a loan from his own wardrobe.

When he found that the money was not in the pocket, and that his bill therefore would be paid, he was not indisposed to be gracious. He would, he said, desire his servant to take up what was required to Mr. Horne’s chamber. I endeavoured to make him understand that a sombre colour would be preferable; but he only answered that he would put the best that he had at the gentleman’s disposal. He could not think of offering anything less than his best on such an occasion. And then he turned his back and went his way, muttering as he went something in Flemish, which I believed to be an exclamation of astonishment that any man should, under any circumstances, lose such an article.

It was now getting late; so when I had taken a short stroll by myself, I went to bed without disturbing Mr. Horne again that night. On the following morning I thought it best not to go to him unless he sent for me; so I desired the boots to let him know that I had ordered breakfast in a private room, and that I would await him there unless he wished to see me. He sent me word back to say that he would be with me very shortly.

He did not keep me waiting above half an hour, but I confess that that half-hour was not pleasantly spent. I feared that his temper would be tried in dressing, and that he would not be able to eat his breakfast in a happy state of mind. So that when I heard his heavy footstep advancing along the passage my heart did misgive me, and I felt that I was trembling.

That step was certainly slower and more ponderous than usual. There was always a certain dignity in the very sound of his movements, but now this seemed to have been enhanced.
To judge merely by the step one would have said that a bishop was coming that way instead of a prebendary.

And then he entered. In the upper half of his august person no alteration was perceptible. The hair was as regular and as graceful as ever, the handkerchief was white, the coat as immaculate; but below his well-filled waistcoat a pair of red plush began to shine in unmitigated splendour, and continued from thence down to within an inch above his knee; nor, as it appeared, could any pulling induce them to descend lower. Mr. Horne always wore black silk stockings—at least so the world supposed—but it was now apparent that the world had been wrong in presuming him to be guilty of such extravagance. Those, at any rate, which he exhibited on the present occasion were more economical. They were silk to the calf, but thence upwards they continued their career in white cotton. These then followed the plush; first two snowy, full-sized pillars of white, and then two jet columns of flossy silk. Such was the appearance, on that well-remembered morning, of the Rev. Augustus Horne, as he entered the room in which his breakfast was prepared.

I could see at a glance that a dark frown contracted his eyebrows, and that the compressed muscles of his upper lip gave a strange degree of austerity to his open face. He carried his head proudly on high, determined to be dignified in spite of his misfortunes, and advanced two steps into the room without a remark, as though he were able to show that neither red plush nor black cloth could disarrange the equal poise of his mighty mind!

And after all what are a man’s garments but the outward husks in which the fruit is kept, duly tempered from the wind?

The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.

And is not the tailor’s art as little worthy, as insignificant as that of the king who makes

A marquis, duke, and a’ that?

Who would be content to think that his manly dignity depended on his coat and waistcoat, or his hold on the world’s esteem on any other garment of usual wear? That no such
weakness soiled his mind Mr. Horne was determined to prove; and thus he entered the room with measured tread and stern dignified demeanour.

Having advanced two steps his eye caught mine. I do not know whether he was moved by some unconscious smile on my part; for in truth I endeavoured to seem as indifferent as himself to the nature of his dress; or whether he was invincibly tickled by some inward fancy of his own, but suddenly his advancing step ceased, a broad flash of comic humour spread itself over his features, he retreated with his back against the wall, and then burst out into an immoderate roar of loud laughter.

And I—what else could I then do but laugh? He laughed, and I laughed. He roared, and I roared. He lifted up his vast legs to view till the rays of the morning sun shone through the window on the bright hues which he displayed; and he did not sit down to his breakfast till he had in every fantastic attitude shown off to the best advantage the red plush of which he had so recently become proud.

An Antwerp private cabriolet on that day reached the yard of the Hôtel de Belle Vue at about 4 p.m., and four waiters, in a frenzy of astonishment, saw the Rev. Augustus Horne descend from the vehicle and seek his chamber dressed in the garments which I have described. But I am inclined to think that he never again favoured any of his friends with such a sight.

It was on the next evening after this that I went out to drink tea with two maiden ladies, relatives of mine, who kept a seminary for English girls at Brussels. The Misses Macmanus were very worthy women, and earned their bread in an upright, painstaking manner. I would not for worlds have passed through Brussels without paying them this compliment. They were, however, perhaps a little dull, and I was aware that I should not probably meet in their drawing-room many of the fashionable inhabitants of the city. Mr. Horne had declined to accompany me; but in doing so he was good enough to express a warm admiration for the character of my worthy cousins.

The elder Miss Macmanus, in her little note, had informed me that she would have the pleasure of introducing me to a few of my “compatriots”. I presumed she meant Englishmen; and as I was in the habit of meeting such every day.
of my life at home, I cannot say that I was peculiarly elevated by the promise. When, however, I entered the room, there was no Englishman there—there was no man of any kind. There were twelve ladies collected together with the view of making the evening pass agreeably to me, the single virile being among them all. I felt as though I were a sort of Mohammed in Paradise; but I certainly felt also that the Paradise was none of my own choosing.

In the centre of the amphitheatre which the ladies formed sat the two Misses Macmanus—there, at least, they sat when they had completed the process of shaking hands with me. To the left of them, making one wing of the semicircle, were arranged the five pupils by attending to whom the Misses Macmanus earned their living; the other wing consisted of the five ladies who had furnished themselves with relics of General Chassé. They were my “compatriots”.

I was introduced to them all, one after the other; but their names did not abide in my memory one moment. I was thinking too much of the singularity of the adventure, and could not attend to such minutiae. That the red-nosed harpy was Miss Grogram, that I remembered; that, I may say, I shall never forget. But whether the motherly lady with the somewhat blowzy hair was Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Green or Mrs. Walker, I cannot now say. The dumpy female with the broad back was always called Aunt Sally by the young ladies.

Too much sugar spoils one’s tea; I think I have heard that even prosperity will cloy when it comes in overdoses; and a schoolboy has been known to be overdone with jam. I myself have always been peculiarly attached to ladies’ society, and have avoided bachelor parties as things execrable in their very nature. But on this special occasion I felt myself to be that schoolboy—I was literally overdone with jam. My tea was all sugar, so that I could not drink it. I was one among twelve. What could I do or say? The proportion of alloy was too small to have any effect in changing the nature of the virgin silver, and the conversation became absolutely feminine.

I must confess also that my previous experience as to these compatriots of mine had not prejudiced me in their favour. I regarded them with—I am ashamed to say so, seeing that they were ladies—but almost with loathing. When last I had seen them their occupation had reminded me of some obscene feast of harpies, or almost of ghouls. They had brought down to the
verge of desperation the man whom of all men I most venerated. On these accounts I was inclined to be taciturn with reference to them—and then what could I have to say to the Misses Macmanus’s five pupils?

My cousin at first made an effort or two in my favour, but these efforts were fruitless. I soon died away into utter unrecognized insignificance, and the conversation, as I have before said, became feminine. And indeed that horrid Miss Grogram, who was, as it were, the princess of the ghouls, nearly monopolized the whole of it. Mamma Jones—we will call her Jones for the occasion—put in a word now and then, as did also the elder and more energetic Miss Macmanus. The dumpy lady with the broad back ate tea-cake incessantly; the two daughters looked scornful, as though they were above their company with reference to the five pupils; and the five pupils themselves sat in a row with the utmost propriety, each with her hands crossed on her lap before her.

Of what they were talking at last I became utterly oblivious. They had ignored me, going into realms of muslin, questions of maid-servants, female rights, and cheap under-clothing; and I therefore had ignored them. My mind had gone back to Mr. Horne and his garments. While they spoke of their rights, I was thinking of his wrongs; when they mentioned the price of flannel I thought of that of broadcloth.

But of a sudden my attention was arrested. Miss Macmanus had said something of the black silks of Antwerp, when Miss Grogram replied that she had just returned from that city and had there enjoyed a great success. My cousin had again asked something about the black silks, thinking, no doubt, that Miss Grogram had achieved some bargain; but that lady had soon undeceived her.

“Oh no,” said Miss Grogram, “it was at the castle. We got such beautiful relics of General Chassé! Didn’t we, Mrs. Jones?”

“Indeed we did,” said Mrs. Jones, bringing out from beneath the skirts of her dress and ostensibly displaying a large black bag.

“And I’ve got such a beautiful needle-case,” said the broad-back, displaying her prize. “I’ve been making it up all the morning.” And she handed over the article to Miss Macmanus.

“And only look at this duck of a pen-wiper,” simpered
flaxen-hair No. 2. "Only think of wiping one's pens with relics of General Chassé!" and she handed it over to the other Miss Macmanus.

"And mine's a pin-cushion," said No. 1, exhibiting the trophy.

"But that's nothing to what I've got," said Miss Grogram. "In the first place, there's a pair of slippers—a beautiful pair—they're not made up yet, of course; and then—"

The two Misses Macmanus and their five pupils were sitting open-eared, open-eyed, and open-mouthed. How all these sombre-looking articles could be relics of General Chassé did not at first appear clear to them.

"What are they, Miss Grogram?" said the elder Miss Macmanus, holding the needle-case in one hand and Mrs. Jones's bag in the other. Miss Macmanus was a strong-minded female, and I reverenced my cousin when I saw the decided way in which she intended to put down the greedy arrogance of Miss Grogram.

"They are relics."

"But where do they come from, Miss Grogram?"

"Why, from the castle, to be sure; from General Chassé's own rooms."

"Did anybody sell them to you?"

"No."

"Or give them to you?"

"Why, no; at least not exactly give."

"There they were, and she took 'em," said the broadback.

Oh, what a look Miss Grogram gave her! "Took them! Of course I took them! That is, you took them as much as I did. They were things that we found lying about."

"What things?" asked Miss Macmanus, in a peculiarly strong-minded tone.

Miss Grogram seemed to be for a moment silenced. I had been ignored, as I have said, and my existence forgotten; but now I observed that the eyes of the culprits were turned towards me—the eyes, that is, of four of them. Mrs. Jones looked at me from beneath her fan; the two girls glanced at me furtively, and then their eyes fell to the lowest flounces of their frocks. Miss Grogram turned her spectacles right upon me, and I fancied that she nodded her head at me as a sort of answer to Miss Macmanus. The five pupils opened their mouths and
eyes wider; but she of the broad back was nothing abashed.
It would have been nothing to her had there been a dozen
gentlemen in the room. "We just found a pair of black ——.
"The whole truth was told in the plainest possible language.
"Oh, Aunt Sally!" "Aunt Sally, how can you?" "Hold
your tongue, Aunt Sally!"
"And then Miss Grogram just cut them up with her
scissors," continued Aunt Sally, not a whit abashed, "and gave
us each a bit, only she took more than half for herself." It
was clear to me that there had been some quarrel, some
delicious quarrel, between Aunt Sally and Miss Grogram.
Through the whole adventure I had rather respected Aunt
Sally. "She took more than half for herself," continued Aunt
Sally. "She kept all the——"
"Jemima," said the elder Miss Macmanus, interrupting
the speaker and addressing her sister, "it is time, I think, for
the young ladies to retire. Will you be kind enough to see
them to their rooms?" The five pupils thereupon rose from
their seats and courtesied. They then left the room in file,
the younger Miss Macmanus showing them the way.
"But we haven't done any harm, have we?" asked Mrs.
Jones, with some tremulousness in her voice.
"Well, I don't know," said Miss Macmanus. "What
I'm thinking of now is this: to whom, I wonder, did the
garments properly belong? Who had been the owner and
wearer of them?"
"Why, General Chassé, of course," said Miss Grogram.
"They were the general's," repeated the two young ladies;
blushing, however, as they alluded to the subject.
"Well, we thought they were the general's, certainly;
and a very excellent article they were," said Mrs. Jones.
"Perhaps they were the butler's?" said Aunt Sally. I
certainly had not given her credit for so much sarcasm.
"Butler's!" exclaimed Miss Grogram, with a toss of her
head.
"Oh! Aunt Sally, Aunt Sally! How can you?" shrieked the two young ladies.
"Oh, laws!" ejaculated Mrs. Jones.
"I don't think that they could have belonged to the
butler," said Miss Macmanus, with much authority, "seeing
that domestics in this country are never clad in garments of
that description; so far my own observation enables me to
speak with certainty. But it is equally sure that they were never the property of the general lately in command in Antwerp. Generals, when they are in full dress, wear ornamental lace upon their—their regimentals; and when . . . “ So much she said, and something more, which it may be unnecessary that I should repeat; but such were her eloquence and logic that no doubt would have been left on the mind of any impartial hearer. If an argumentative speaker ever proved anything, Miss Macmanus proved that General Chassé had never been the wearer of the article in question.

“But I know very well they were his!” said Miss Grogram, who was not an impartial hearer. “Of course they were; whose else’s should they be?”

“I’m sure I hope they were his,” said one of the young ladies, almost crying.

“I wish I’d never taken it,” said the other.

“Dear, dear, dear!” said Mrs. Jones.

“I’ll give you my needle-case, Miss Grogram,” said Aunt Sally.

I had sat hitherto silent during the whole scene, meditating how best I might confound the red-nosed harpy. Now, I thought, was the time for me to strike in.

“I really think, ladies, that there has been some mistake,” said I.

“There has been no mistake at all, sir!” said Miss Grogram.

“Perhaps not,” I answered, very mildly; “very likely not. But some affair of a similar nature was very much talked about in Antwerp yesterday.”

“Oh, laws!” again ejaculated Mrs. Jones.

“The affair I allude to has been talked about a good deal, certainly,” I continued. “But perhaps it may be altogether a different circumstance.”

“And what may be the circumstance to which you allude?” asked Miss Macmanus, in the same authoritative tone.

“I dare say it has nothing to do with these ladies,” said I; “but an article of dress, of the nature they have described, was cut up in the castle of Antwerp on the day before yesterday. It belonged to a gentleman who was visiting the place; and I was given to understand that he is determined to punish the people who have wronged him.”

“It can’t be the same,” said Miss Grogram; but I could see that she was trembling.
"Oh, laws! What will become of us?" said Mrs. Jones.

"You can all prove that I didn't touch them, and that I warned her not," said Aunt Sally. In the meantime the two young ladies had almost fainted behind their fans.

"But how had it come to pass," asked Miss Macmanus, "that the gentleman had——"

"I know nothing more about it, cousin," said I; "only it does seem that there is an odd coincidence."

Immediately after this I took my leave. I saw that I had avenged my friend, and spread dismay in the hearts of those who had injured him. I had learned in the course of the evening at what hotel the five ladies were staying; and in the course of the next morning I sauntered into the hall, and finding one of the porters alone, asked if they were still there. The man told me that they had started by the earliest diligence. "And," said he, "if you are a friend of theirs, perhaps you will take charge of these things, which they have left behind them?" So saying, he pointed to a table at the back of the hall, on which were lying the black bag, the black needle-case, the black pin-cushion, and the black pen-wiper. There was also a heap of fragments of cloth which I well knew had been intended by Miss Grogram for the comfort of her feet and ankles.

I declined the commission, however. "They were no special friends of mine," I said; and I left all the relics still lying on the little table in the back hall.

"Upon the whole, I am satisfied!" said the Rev. Augustus Horne, when I told him the finale of the story.
THE STATUE
OF THE COMMANDER

ST. JOHN LUCAS
St. John Lucas is a barrister by profession, but his chief interests have always been literary. During the war he was attached to the staff of the British Military Mission to Italy, a country which he knows well and which has provided the setting for several of his stories.
THE STATUE OF THE COMMANDER

THE pleasant hamlet of Chelsea, which lies south-west of the city London, has given shelter to many whose names are famous in art and politics; but we may doubt that any of its most renowned inhabitants possessed the inestimable virtue, winning address, and consummate personal charm of Mr. William Binns, the son of John Binns, the son of Esdras, the son of Augustus Algernon, who took to sherry-cobbler, and came down in the world from genteel heights.

Concerning the family history of this prince of men and incomparable personage little is known. Probably, as in the case of other ancient lines, there was more family than history. It is generally believed, however, that the primeval and patriarchal Augustus Algernon was of aristocratic birth; Mr. Binns, in moments of convivial expansiveness, would allude to him as the intimate friend of good King Billy, but the identity of this monarch is uncertain. At any rate, it is a fact that Augustus, shortly before he took to sherry-cobbler, married beneath him, lost all his money, property, and reputation at the card-tables of his royal or noble friends, and thenceforward led an undistinguished life in Chelsea until gin completed that which sherry-cobbler had begun. He assumed the name of Binns from motives of secrecy rather than of shame, and his relatives never gave themselves the pleasure of coming to call on him.

His son Esdras (he was born after his father's death, and the name was chosen by his mother, a devout and melancholy woman) was quite unremarkable, and followed the monotonous profession of a dealer in scrap-iron. To him was born a male child, John, who developed into a man of spirit, amorous, pugilistic, and great-thewed. John Binns very soon exhibited a strong distaste for the scrap-iron trade, and was in a fair way

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to becoming a prodigal and wastrel, when a chance meeting with a certain strangely garbed, long-haired gentleman with dreamy eyes averted this fate and decided the destiny of his descendants. Art had come to abide in Chelsea, and the long-haired gentleman, who was one of her chief votaries, needed a model. John Binns had the figure of a Greek athlete, and a bargain was soon struck. But the painter realized very soon that the irregular existence of a model would be fatal to a young man whose gallant and bibulous tendencies were already precociously developed, and after long argument he persuaded him to become apprenticed to a maker of picture-frames, and to pose only on Sundays and in the evenings. John Binns became a respectable member of society, and when he had grown too obese to be of any further use as a model he found himself in possession of a flourishing business which eventually descended to his son William, the famous, the incomparable, the hero of this strange brief history.

Mr. Binns in no way resembled a Greek athlete. He was short and stout, and when he had reached the mellow age of fifty he had a remarkable likeness to the picture of the spectacled old sheep who sits at a counter in a tiny shop in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. His head (except its summit, which was brilliantly bald) was covered with short, very curly white fleece; this fleece decorated also his cheeks and throat, and when he emerged into the world from his workshop it was frequently adorned with tiny particles of gold leaf, so that he had the aspect of a woolly victim that had been gilded for the sacrifice. His face was very large and round and benevolent, and his eyes shone with a bright and infantine candour through the spectacles that were always slipping down his short, blunt nose. He had a wonderful air of bland, pink innocence, and his loquacity was amazing. He had theories on everything under the sun, and uttered his opinions with an eager artlessness that was quite irresistible.

Yet it must not be supposed that this prodigy of nature and prince of picture-framers was a mere butterfly of comic opera who flitted from studio to studio in quest of the honey of appreciative laughter. His popularity did not interfere with his attention to business; he worked heartily, and a great part of his leisure was consecrated to a high and serious pursuit. He had a passion for reading poetry and history; a real passion, though, perhaps, his study of the first was slightly
influenced by his pride in being able to produce an apt quota-
tion at any moment—a gift that did not desert him even in
moments of grave personal danger. Who does not remember
the famous occasion when three insane bullocks ravened up
and down the Embankment on a Sunday morning, causing all
the promenaders on that pleasant shore to fly helter-skelter to
their homes or Battersea Park? Mr. Binns was there, but he
did not fly. Instead, he struck a superb attitude, glanced up
and down the deserted street, and murmured:

"This little town
Is hemptied of its folk this pious morn,"

displaying a coolness which so greatly impressed the besotted
kine that they passed by him and devoted all their energies to
pursuing a lady bicyclist in bloomers. With regard to history,
he was a decided specialist. He had read Gibbon and could
quote him copiously, but his real interest lay in ancient Greece;
he had maps of that divine land all over his parlour, and
Pericles was his hero of heroes. (He called him Perikels.)
He was an expert on mythology; Homer, whom he read in
Mr. Lang's remarkable translation, pleased him more than all
the mighty mouthings of Miss Corelli or Mr. Caine; and the
exploits of the Gods of Olympus afforded, as he said, subjects
of conversation for every kind of society in which he happened
to find himself. He read a paper on the battle of Salamis
(Salamis pro bac vice) at the "Bargeman's Friend", and had made
and gilded a large model trireme which always turned turtle
two minutes after it was launched in the Round Pond. He
was almost a pagan in soul though he went to church every
Sunday. When his brother was married he composed an
ode to Aphrodite (rhyming with night) which so deeply
scandalized the bride's mother and aunts that they left the room
during the course of its recital.

This was the master-passion of his existence. For the rest
he was an excellent husband and father, very fond of children,
and always ready to help honest men who had fallen behind
in the struggle for life. He possessed plenty of shrewd
worldly wisdom, as certain rogues who thought him a fool
because he quoted poetry and exhorted them to read 'Omer
discovered to their cost. He had two weaknesses; the first
was a love of port—a taste inherited, perhaps, from the
primeval Augustus—and the second was an excessive pride in his family. But the first was a public vice—Mr. Binns was no lonely drinker—and the second was a secret failing which manifested itself mainly in the contemplation of a large family tree when his wife and children were in bed. Who cares if there are two threadbare patches on the shining robe of genius? Mr. Binns was admired in all the studios, and in return he watched the careers of his various employers with benevolence and pride. All kinds of pleasant legends were current concerning him; it was even hinted that he had saved several struggling geniuses from starvation or the river. At any rate, it is a fact that the great Whistler pronounced him to be "fondrement bon".

Now concerning the interest in sculpture manifested by this very noble personage, and of his consequent discovery of his famous relative, and of the wife of the latter, and of his humiliation, and his wrath, and the affair of the port, and the conspicuous vengeance that he devised and executed, this is the only true chronicle.

II

There came to Chelsea, in the spring of the year 1905, a young man named Geoffrey Cave. He was a sculptor by trade, and no bungler in that difficult métier; for five years he had worked in Paris, and after a long spell of the gregarious poverty which is quite amusing when youth is flying towards attainment with the pair of wings that are called health and hope, he achieved considerable fame, and held an exhibition on his own account which resulted in the sale of nearly all his work. His renown reached London; he sent several statues to the International Society's exhibitions, and received many letters from friends urges him to return to England. It had always been his intention to do this, and now that he had emerged from obscurity the appropriate moment seemed to have arrived. He hired a studio in Chelsea, and the Boulevard St. Michel knew him no more.

As he was not a painter he had no need of picture-frames, and did not employ the great Binns. But the fame of this paragon soon reached him—there was no escape from it between the King's Road and the river!—and at length he
met the phenomenon himself in the studio of a painter friend. This painter had executed a work of art which depicted a youthful priestess in Greek dress feeding pigeons under an Ionic portico. Mr. Binns, who had brought a frame for the picture, stood before the latter for several minutes in mute contemplation. Occasionally he made a kind of natural telescope of his hands and applied it to his left eye.

"Now, there's a pretty subject!" he said at last, purring over the adjective. "There's what I call a really pretty subject. Give me Greece, say I, 'Ellas, as they call it in the books, and you may keep your modern fine ladies and knights in armour and gents in silk 'ats for them that likes 'em. Ho yes, there's subjects! You might paint away all your life at things in 'Omer and never get more than a tenth of the way through. Beautiful old stories! But who cares for 'em now? Mr. Price gave me a pass for the New English the other day, and I couldn't find anything but skeleton ladies with 'ats the size of an 'ansom-cab wheel and green fogs and the church of Montrooee-sor-mair—I know the name, for I saw it forty-two times in the catalogue. I went to the British Museum afterwards and did a rest-cure amongst the Parthenon figures.

"Next day, I think it was, I took a frame to Mr. Sargent's in Tite Street, and there he was, painting away at a great, gaunt lady with a smile like a hungry tiger, and I says to him, 'With your talent, sir, begging your pardon, I wonder why you don't paint one of those Greek gods or goddesses; Venus or Aphrodight or Zeeus with his thunderbolt, or Cupid and Sick."* But he turned on me as fierce as you please, and he says, 'If you want that kind of thing, Binns, you take a bus,' he says, 'to Grove End Road, St. John's Wood, N.W.' I didn't say any more, but I went off feeling bad. A great man like that, and throwing away his chances, all to paint sour-looking dukes and duchesses and 'Ebrews in opera 'ats. I tell you one thing about your picture, sir, you might write Salve on the doorstep of the Temple. It was usual in Greece. It means, I understand, 'Ail.'

"I was always told that it meant 'Please wipe your boots,'" said the painter.

"Sandals, sir, sandals," Mr. Binns corrected him gently, with a scholarly shudder.

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* Psyche?
“Do you know the Greek things in the museum very well?” asked Geoffrey Cave. Mr. Binns turned towards him and spoke with emotion.

“Considerably, sir,” he said; “but no one can know them very well, for they’re a mystery; they’re different every time; they’re like strange, beautiful ghosts come back from some lovely world. Sometimes they make me almost frightened, and sometimes—I ain’t what you’d call a religious man, sir, but they make me want to pray. That Demeter of Something especially, sir: the great calm goddess in the little alcove-place all by herself. They sit there all day listening to the buzz of the motors outside, and watching the schoolgirls, and the giggling idiots who come because they think things with no clothes on are funny, and the poor devils who sneak in to get out of the rain, and the learned gents who stare at them with spectacles, but no one knows what’s going on inside their ‘earts; they know some secret that they’ll never tell—it’s of that they think. Lord love you, they don’t notice us! They look through us as if we was glass. But my tongue’s given me the slip as usual, sir. I beg your pardon. Do you ’appen to take an interest in them yourself?”

“I’m a sculptor,” said the young man. “And I believe,” he added, regarding Mr. Binns very gravely—“I believe that you’re a poet.”

“Oh, bless my soul, nothing of the sort, sir!” cried Mr. Binns, looking intensely pleased, however. “It’s true that on a certain occasion, my poor brother’s marriage—he came to grief soon afterwards—I turned off a little thing: an ode to the great Goddess of Love. But it was not well received. May I ask if you sculpture antiques, sir?”

“Not often,” Cave answered, “but I have done a—a Venus. You can come to see it if you care about that kind of thing.” He gave Mr. Binns the address of his studio.

“It will be a great pleasure,” said Mr. Binns. “Allow me to say, sir, that you are on the right lines. One can’t say it of most people in Chelsea. Good day, sir. Twenty-eight by twelve, you said, I think. Good afternoon, gentlemen.”

He came to Geoffrey Cave’s studio and gazed with enthusiasm on his works, though he displayed obviously
THE STATUE OF THE COMMANDER

more interest in their subject than in their treatment. Over
the Aphrodite, which was of heroic size, he became ecstatic;
and it was certainly a noble work of art, though far too large
to be seen to advantage in so limited a space. He was very
indignant when he heard that the statue had been refused by
every exhibition to which its creator had sent it.

"It’s a shame, sir, a shame," said Mr. Binns in a thrilling
voice. "If it wasn’t that it was new you might set it in that
big room at the museum along of the Phidases and Eljin
Marbles. I ain’t flattering you, sir; it’s as fine a thing as I
ever saw. Have you sent it to the International Society?"

"They said they couldn’t afford to take the Albert Hall
for their show," said Cave. "I’m sick of the thing; no
one’ll buy it and no society will show it, and it can’t be seen
here. I’ve a good mind to give it to you if you’ll promise to
set it up on the tomb of your deceased maiden aunt. Even
in a cemetery it would have some chance of being seen."

Mr. Binns made consolatory gestures. "Don’t you be
down’sear ted, sir," he said impressively. "Mark my words,
the day will come. Nowadays people think they’ve banished
these old gods and goddesses, but they keep on coming back,
and Venus in especial. She was the child of Zeeus to start
with, and she’ll live longer than any of her brothers and
sisters. No cemeteries for her! But I should like to see the
faces of my family if she was put where you said, sir. She’s
immortal all right, and she won’t let us forget it."

"A poet said something the same," murmured Geoffrey.

"Ah, Mr. Swinburne!" said Mr. Binns. "I knew ’im."
He became reminiscent. But at intervals he returned to gaze
at the great Aphrodite. "Ma’am," he said at last, addressing
it, "you’re a marvel! Don’t you be afraid that you’re going
to stay for ever in a studio. You shall be set in some wide
place, and the little men shall go up and down, up and down
past you, all day long. They may not turn their silly heads to
look at you, but they’ll feel that you’re there. That’s what I
want!" he added, turning abruptly to Cave. "I want all those
poor prisoners, as you might say, in the museum to be let
out and put in the sun, to stand on great cliffs over the sea, to
sit in the market-places of towns where everyone could see
’em without their labels and away from the fog and the
bad air. Sir," he concluded with a majestic sweep of his arm,
"the moral effect on the nation would be tremendous!" He
strode in front of the goddess, pointed towards her with one hand, and to himself with the other.

"We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,
Thou art noble and nude and antique,"

he declaimed.

Cave nearly collapsed when he tried to imagine Mr. Binns in the act of shifting, bedecking, and bedraping, but he realized the sincerity that prompted the man’s somewhat grotesque enthusiasm, and conquered his impulse towards laughter.

"It’s a gem, sir, a gem," concluded Mr. Binns, "and its setting should be 'Yde Park."

That night, in the bosom of his family and in twentieth-century Chelsea, Mr. Binns (in shirt-sleeves, with gold leaf in his hair) solemnly drank the health of Cytherean Aphrodite. We regret to have to record the fact that Mrs. Binns, a stout lady with very placid eyes, raised no kind of objection to this pagan orgy.

"Binns always was cracked about them 'eaten goddesses," she remarked cheerfully to Mr. Jenks, the assistant, who was engaged to her youngest daughter Luna.

"There now!" exclaimed Mr. Jenks, idiotically and with equal cheerfulness.

"You were one yourself once, old lady," said Mr. Binns, beaming at her, with his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat. "And your name was Demeter—Demeter or Sybeel."

"Oh, get on with yer!" responded Mrs. Binns. And Mr. Binns poured a libation to the Berecynthian.

III

He soon became a regular visitor to Geoffrey Cave’s studio, for the sculptor needed someone to pack up work which he happened to be sending away, and Mr. Binns had long practised this function. The more Geoffrey saw of the man the more he was amused by him. Mr. Binns was not invariably loquacious; he could be quite silent when Geoffrey was at work, and he contrived to be paternal without being in the least offensive. On one occasion Geoffrey forgot to tell him to pack up a small relief which was due to be sent off on that particular evening, and had taken it to Mr. Binns' abode. There he was introduced to the reincarnation of Demeter and
initiated into the mysteries of the family tree, over which Mr. Binns happened just then to be poring. The heir of all the ages held forth at some length on his ancient lineage, but displayed a decent modesty.

"Of course it's very pleasant," he said. "Very pleasant to know that you've got twenty generations at the back of you, but many a rank waster has more, and though I've as many ancestors as anyone could want, lord, they were most of them rotters. Sometimes I feel as if I'd swap the lot of them for three hundred a year in consols, but I suppose if the chance came I wouldn't. Still, twenty generations and not one famous name isn't much to be proud of. There's one of the family now who's rather celebrated, but he's only a collateral. We're direct line."

"Don't you believe him, sir," said Mrs. Binns. "He's as proud as proud of his pedigree. But he never told me about it for years. My father was a chimney-sweep in the Borough, they say."

"A fine, active profession," said Mr. Binns; "not exactly intellecshal, but beneficent, when you come to think of it. My father was an artist's model and founded my business; his great-grandfather was an earl, and I know which of the two was the better man. Not that I'm against earls; I'm all for the picturesque and against dead levels and socialism and every public-house loafer as good as yourself and thinking himself better when he's sober and a king when he's drunk. But what says the poet? 'The rank is but the guinea's stamp.' You've read the poem, I expect, sir. By Burns, the divine ploughman."

Mr. Binns rolled up his pedigree. "Old stuff," he said, jerking a thumb towards it. "Makes you feel as if you'd been prowling about family vaults. But a consolation at times—a consolation. May I take the liberty of asking if you belong to the Caves of Cave Castle, sir?"

"Not that I know of," Geoffrey answered.

"Ah!" said Mr. Binns. He was silent for a moment. "They call cousin with Us," he remarked.

IV

Now the coming of the Commander was in this wise: The males of Geoffrey Cave's family had been soldiers for
many generations, and he himself had created a great scandal by refusing to follow the profession of arms. He bore the annoyance of his relatives with equanimity, though he was fully aware that they regarded him as lapsed and lost, and spoke of him as "poor Geoffrey" during his sojourn in Paris. When he had reached a certain celebrity, however, their attitude was modified, and one of them even managed to obtain him the commission for a regimental war memorial. But they persisted in thinking that a sculptor was only a glorified kind of stone-mason, and they visited him seldom—a sin of omission for which Geoffrey was truly thankful.

One morning late in April he was sitting on an inverted wine-case in his studio, smoking a pipe and contemplating the result of three hours' hard labour on a small statue of a boy. He wore a very old blue French blouse, and his face was agreeably decorated with patches of modelling clay. He was satisfied on the whole with his work, and at intervals, without removing his pipe, he broke into short outbursts of song.

The loudest of these was brought to an abrupt conclusion by a series of heavy blows on his door. He looked out, and discovered two figures standing in the bright spring sunshine: the first belonged to a man, and was short and fat, but unmistakably military; the second was that of a woman, very well dressed, and of decidedly acidulated aspect.

The fat man stared at Geoffrey as if he were a ghost from the grave, and certainly, if you were unaccustomed to frequenting the studios of sculptors, Geoffrey's appearance was astounding.

"I wish to see Mr. Cave," said the fat man. He spoke as if he were giving the order to fire a volley. The lady looked at Geoffrey with disapproval.

"I am Mr. Cave," said Geoffrey. "Won't you come in?"

The fat man stared at him fiercely for a moment, and the lady uttered a brief exclamation of surprise.

"The son of Colonel Cave?" she demanded. And when Geoffrey had answered in the affirmative, she said, "Really!" and then closed her lips to a thin line. Geoffrey realized at once that she was a friend of his family.

They entered the studio, and he apologized for the general disorder. The fat man instantly assumed that the apology was for his personal appearance, and accepted it patronizingly.
This annoyed Geoffrey. "Confound them, do they think I ought to work in a frock-coat and patent-leather boots?" he growled internally. The fat man ceased his astonished inspection of the studio and turned to him: "I don't think there is any necessity for me to introduce myself," he said.

"No?" said Geoffrey vaguely, wondering why on earth there wasn't. The lady came forward. She spoke in a high staccato voice. Her nose was excessively aquiline.

"There appears to be," she said icily. "My husband is General Sir John Barrington Bing." The words issued from her lips in strong crescendo, and Geoffrey felt as if he had received them full in the face. But he knew his man now. The General was one of several whose reputations had been made at the War Office and lost during the last important war. He had been recalled from the field of action, and a certain daily paper had greatly increased in circulation by fomenting a hubbub about the justice or injustice of this disgrace. He apologized for not recognizing the famous man, excusing himself by asserting that he had never seen any portraits of him in mufti.


There was a pause, and he stared at Geoffrey's various works of art.

"You don't seem to be doing quite the sort of thing I thought of," he said at last. "Do you ever make portraits of people—in stone and marble and that kind of thing, I mean?" Public statues. Eh?"

"I've done a good many," Geoffrey answered, "though I haven't got any in the studio at present. Do you want one of Lady Bing?"

He caught the lady's eye, and found that she was glaring at him. "No, indeed!" she said. "Then I must conclude," she went on, "that you haven't even heard of the resolution passed by the people at Market Clayford."

Geoffrey smiled deprecatingly and shook his head.

"It is my husband's home," said Lady Bing; "the family has been there since fourteen-fifty."

"Really!" murmured Geoffrey, unconsciously mimicking her accent, and staring at the General's chin. He decided that it resembled a sea-lion's. "Intimarriges, I suppose," he said to himself.
“Since you come of a family that has always been in the Service, Mr. Cave,” said Lady Bing, “you can’t be ignorant of what has happened—of the cruel injustice that has been done to my poor husband. Intrigues have been hatched against him; old friends have turned from him; but I am thankful and proud to say that his own people have remained staunch.”

“Very proper of them,” said Geoffrey vaguely. He had an idea that her remarks were taken from some speech that she had made in Market Clayford.

“The Mayor and Corporation,” she went on, “after consulting privately with the people, have decided to commemorate my husband’s career with a memorial, which is to be erected in the market-place. They wrote to the General and told him that this was their resolution, and that he was to choose the sculptor and the kind of memorial that he preferred. The Mayor suggested a drinking-fountain, with a medallion of my husband on one side and one of himself on the other, but for various reasons we consider this unsatisfactory. After much consideration we have decided on an equestrian statue.”

“Was the General in the cavalry?” asked the foolish Geoffrey.

The General snorted, and Lady Bing looked at the young artist with obvious contempt.

“General officers do not usually go on foot,” she said.

“It seems as well, after all, that you didn’t join the Service, sir,” said the former. “But let us talk business. Colonel Cave told us that you were becoming quite a sculptor. Will you have a shot at this statue? Of course, if we don’t like it, or the Mayor and Corporation don’t like it, we can’t take it.”

Geoffrey almost lost his temper. “I’ll make a model first,” he said; “but of course when once the thing is finished it would be rather a nuisance to me if it sat always in the studio. I’ve one thing that does that already.” And he pointed to the Aphrodite.

“Oh, at any rate it will be a good advertisement of your work,” said Lady Bing. “Better than that!”

When Mr. Binns came into the studio an hour later he found Geoffrey chewing an empty pipe and in a state of intense depression.

“Binns,” said the young sculptor, “I’ve been an ass.”
"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Binns, contradicting gently. "But may I ask what's the matter?"

"I've promised to do an equestrian statue," explained Geoffrey, "a statue of a General, a fat man and an evil, a bad type with a liquorish eye and a chin like a sea-lion's. He has a wife, Binns, oh, a wife! She's a combination of a Government official and the Day of Judgment. And I feel like a huckster, and I wish I were dead," he concluded.

"A General," said Mr. Binns, musing. "Now that's bad. Generals are necessary, no doubt of it, but they ain't as a rule picturesque. Portly men, sir. All right, of course, but not graceful, not Greek. No fluency; no soft curves. I'm sorry you took it on, sir—I am indeed. What might be the General's name?"

"His name you have heard," said Geoffrey. "It is Sir John Barrington Bing. He made an awful ass of himself at Dirk's Drift. And I don't like the look of him. It'll be a failure."

Mr. Binns started melodramatically when Geoffrey pronounced the General's name. "Sir John Barrington Bing!" he echoed.

"Yes. What's the matter? Do you know him?" asked Geoffrey.

Mr. Binns was silent for a moment.

"No, sir, no," he said at length. "That is, only by reputation. But I've seen his pictures in the papers." He gazed thoughtfully at the Aphrodite, then shook his head.

"He'll be a bad subject, a bad subject," he said. "No line. No contour. Eh, what a pity!" And he relapsed into thoughtful silence.

After great argument it was decided that the memorial, instead of being a statue of the General in full uniform seated on his charger, should display him, in the less gorgeous trappings which he had worn on active service, standing on a rock and shading his eyes with one hand as he stared across the veldt. Geoffrey made a journey to Market Clayford for the purpose of inspecting the future site of his work, and met the
Mayor of that city, a wonderful and horrible personage with whiskers, who patronized him most offensively.

The General came to the studio nearly every day. He improved on acquaintance. His wife did not improve; she often came with him, and on each occasion when she did so Geoffrey had great difficulty in keeping his temper. She carped at every new detail in the large clay model on which the sculptor was working, lamented the slowness of his method—she had expected, apparently, that the marble effigy would be finished in a fortnight!—and reviled the unfortunate General because he so soon grew tired of standing. Sometimes, however, the warrior came alone, and after he had posed for half an hour would drink a couple of whiskies-and-sodas and wax communicative. He never spoke of the campaign which had ended his career, but cursed the War Office with blasphemous fluency. Wine, women, and the War Office, indeed, seemed to be the only subjects on which he would willingly converse, but after a while Geoffrey discovered that he was immensely proud of his family, which was extremely ancient, and of the old castle which it had inhabited for nearly five hundred years.

The sculptor decided that he was pompous, self-indulgent, and stupid; but he was good-natured, in a torpid kind of way, and he probably possessed a great amount of rather pig-headed personal courage. Geoffrey did his best to express the latter quality in his model, but though he tried persistently to tone down the vanity and greed that were so plainly written in the General’s features, those unfortunate defects kept on asserting themselves beneath his fingers while he worked. He had an uneasy sense that the figure’s attitude was not that of a commander who scans the horizon for the advancing foe, but that of an esurient old gourmand on the look-out for a belated provision wagon. As the work went on, his dissatisfaction increased. He invited Mr. Binns to criticize the work, and Mr. Binns was not consoling.

“Of course it’s clever,” said Mr. Binns, after long contemplation—“it’s clever and real. But it don’t uplift me; it ain’t ideal. It’s a pity you did it, sir, if you’ll excuse me, for it’s off the right lines. Even you can’t do anything with a subject like that, except make a portrait.” He sighed mournfully.

“Of course the General isn’t beautiful or noble to look
upon," said Geoffrey. "But there's something in him that I tried to express. It's authority; it's conviction—probably wrong; it's courage, of a kind. But I don't seem to have got it."

"No, sir," said Mr. Binns. "You ain't got it. He looks to me very like a man who sells sausages at that little shop in the World's End. It's a great pity."

"Oh, well," said Geoffrey. "Perhaps it'll look all right in marble. I told you they were going to stick it up in a market-place for all the world to admire, Binns?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Binns without enthusiasm. He turned from the offending clay and gazed at the Aphrodite. "Ah, if you were only going to be set up in a market-place, my beauty!" he murmured. "That would give them something to look at; and it'd make you famous all over the world, sir," he added, turning to Geoffrey.

"Oh, there's no doubt of that!" Geoffrey answered, laughing.

Lady Bing was no more enthusiastic than Mr. Binns. "It's like him in a way," she said, holding her nose high and surveying the finished model through her pince-nez, "but it misses all his distinction, his aristocracy." Geoffrey hated her, yet he felt that she was right, though she used the wrong words to express her sensations.

The General, however, thought the statue "wasn't half bad". "He's toned down my complexion, anyhow," he said. The Mayor of Market Clayford, too, who paid a visit to the studio, was of the opinion that, though the model didn't impress him at all, the marble statue would look well in front of the Jubilee Clock Tower. The detail of a work of art, according to the Mayor, didn't matter much; it was the setting that was important. Clayford market-place was an 'istic spot.

It was with mixed feelings that Geoffrey got to work on his block of marble.

VI

A month later, in spite of the depression of Geoffrey, the criticisms of Lady Bing, and the disapproval of Mr. Binns, the statue of the Commander was almost finished. It was
arranged that Sir John Barrington Bing was to give Geoffrey
two more sittings, and that as soon as the figure was completed
it was to be sent at once to Market Clayford.

Now it befell that on the day of the first of these sittings,
Geoffrey travelled by a train on the underground, which
stuck fast for a quarter of an hour and made him late for his
appointment. When he reached the studio he found the
General and Lady Bing waiting for him. He noticed that
they both seemed strangely morose; the General had all the
air of being about to preside over a court-martial, and Lady
Bing was pacing to and fro with a most formidable scowl
brooding like a thunderstorm over the precipitous ridge of her
nose. Geoffrey supposed that they were annoyed at being
kept waiting. He thought the annoyance rather absurd, but
he apologized and explained the reason of the delay. They
did not seem to hear him. Lady Bing went to the General
and said something to him in a low voice, and the General
said, “Better tell him now, my dear, then he can finish it off
today.” There was a pause, and then Lady Bing strode
towards Geoffrey.

“Mr. Cave,” she said, “I am obliged to tell you that this
is the last occasion on which my husband will be able to
come to your studio.” Her lips tightened convulsively; she
seemed to be on the verge of a nervous crisis. Geoffrey looked
at her with some astonishment.

“Oh, I’m sorry!” he answered. “But I don’t think there
is any necessity for another day, really. I can pull through,
General, if you don’t mind staying a little longer than usual.
Are you going out of London?”

“No, sir, we are not!” said the General, puffing like a
traction-engine. “The fact is,” he continued, between the
puffs, “my wife considers that we have been insulted—
insulted in your studio. She won’t hear of me coming near
the place again. Personally, I think she rather overrates the
affair. However, if you can finish me off today it will be
convenient.”

Geoffrey stared at them. “Insulted!” he cried. “What
on earth is it? Have I done anything to annoy you? I assure
you that I had absolutely no intention——”

Lady Bing silenced him with an uplifted hand.

“You have not insulted us, Mr. Cave,” she said solemnly.
“It happened before your arrival. When we came here this