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A SKETCH OF ALGERIA.

BY H. B.



THE Arabs compare the city of Algiers to a diamond set in emerald, and the approach from the sea justifies the comparison, the luxuriant foliage of the surrounding hills contrasting beautifully with the dazzling white of the houses. In sight of the high hills, amid whose variegated hues of green the city reposes, the voyager remembers that close by was the seat of the Carthaginian power that once contended so bravely and so long with Rome for the dominion of the world. The desert was not so near the great cities of the Carthaginian empire as it was to the populous regions of Egypt, while the tracts fitted for cultivation were a hundred times as extensive. In doubtful scale the balance hung between Carthage and Rome; who can tell what would have been the destiny of the world, had it been providentially decided that Carthage, and not Rome, Africa, and not Europe, should be its ruler, and the source of its civilization?

Hills piled on hills meet the view, yet the lines in which the ranges run are sufficiently distinct. First a lower range, then another rises called the Little Atlas, while beyond, the bare, bright peaks of the Greater Atlas—some of them cov-

ered with perpetual snow—show the limit of the horizon in that direction. The view is most beautiful and romantic, and the traveller, whose ideas of this continent were perhaps never raised to any high point of expectation, finds himself asking if this be Africa. If so, the pariah of the continents seems still worthy of being likened to the bride of Solomon, comely though dark in hue.

Amid the hills are embosomed what seem to be happy villages; many of these, however, on nearer inspection, will be seen to be in ruins, indicating a sparser population than appears to the eye of the stranger approaching by sea.

English families frequently resort to Algiers to spend the winter, and when we merely consider the novelty of the scenery, the queer old Moorish houses, the Turkish customs, and the new style of life that passes before them, we do not wonder at their choice. Experience shows, however, that among a population differing so greatly among themselves, and mostly possessing the traits of the slow and slothful Oriental, true comfort will be rare. And then the winters are wet, and not very hospitable. The region of the Atlas is liable in winter to violent

"Behind its bars the press no more
Is doomed to bow and cringe;
The gate of old Intolerance
Swings on its rusty hinge.

"And Art, no longer forced to serve
At Superstition's shrine,
Brings forth a new-born retinue
To swell her royal line.

"Religion, rising from the dark,
Her chains to earth has hurled,
And simple Truth and Liberty
Untrammelled walk the world."

"*Viva! Viva! Italia!*
Her Union spreads abroad
The invincible light of Freedom
In the infallible light of God!"

The following extract is from a letter written to a cherished friend in Philadelphia, H. S. T. The letter has been published entire in the pages of the *Evening Bulletin* since the death of Mr. Read. This shows the man.

"I want to tell you now and solemnly that a deep sense of my duty to my God, as well as to my fellow-man, has gradually been descending upon me. And it is to me a source of infinite pleasure that I can look back upon all the poetry I have ever written, and find it contains no line breathing a doubt upon the blessed Trinity and the great redemption of man.

When I have written my verses, I have been alone with my own soul and with God, and not only dared not lie, but the inspiration of the truth was to me so beautiful that no unworthy thought ever dared obtrude itself upon the page. This was entirely owing to the goodness of God, who saw what was to be, and saved me from subsequent mortification and regret."

Said he to one who watched his dying bed, "*Am I in the garden now?*" Perhaps he already caught visions of that fairer land to which he was so rapidly hastening, and saw the "green pastures beside the still waters," inviting him to rest from his labors. Cleared from the film of death, his eyes might, even at that moment, have looked upon the never-fading flowers of Paradise!

In death—call it not *death*, but an entrance into a higher *life*—his features wore that calm repose foreshadowed in his own beautiful lines:

"We nightly *die* ourselves to sleep—
Then wherefore fear we death?
'Tis but a slumber still more deep,
And undisturbed by breath.
We daily waken to the light,
When morning walks her way,
Then wherefore doubt death's longer night
Will bring a brighter day?"

THE MYSTERY OF AN OLD MANOR HALL.

BY MRS. JULIA M'NAIR WRIGHT.

IF hobbies are horses, Prudence Aubrey was the very queen of equestriennes. Her hobby was collecting, and she spent all her time and nearly all her income in giving this beloved steed free rein in every part of the country. Hobby-riding is held by Dr. John Brown to be quite as healthful as any other kind of horsemanship; and in indulging in it, Prudence had become as strong and beautiful a maiden as one might wish to see.

Regarding benevolently the feelings of

her friends, this damsel in outward equipment was delightfully modern and fashionable, but her soul was an antique. Prudence was the Nile-watching Sphinx, reappearing after thousands of years, clad in flesh instead of stone; wearing over-skirts and ruffles, and dwelling in the domains of Uncle Sam, instead of Rameses.

We would like to show how her favorite mania developed in her early days in the collection of broken crockery, acorns, pebbles, scraps, and trash of all sorts, but

we forbear, remembering that in this she was by no means different from other juveniles.

Left an orphan at seventeen, having plenty of pocket-money, and liberty for the most part to do as she pleased, Prudence Aubrey set up first as an humble disciple of William Beckford, and collected everything that came in her way. A visitor of Beckford said of Fonthill Abbey that the variety of its curiosities was infinite, containing something in everybody's favorite line; so did this young woman's assortment in an humble way.

We opine that if our dear Prudence had been acquainted with that mysterious region the kitchen, she would have set up in her museum a department for singular sorts of pots and saucepans; however, a kitchen was to her a *terra incognita*.

Beginning her *omnium gatherum*, Prudence had for a while given her attention to beetles, and had gained great cards covered with shining scarabæi, neatly glued into position; she had yielded to the pursuit of butterflies, and her reward was a huge case, looking as if it held a shattered rainbow. She doted on varieties of wood, and secured them like Walter Scott, a twig here, and a twig there. She haunted bookstalls of a grimy and dilapidated character, and purchased volumes that looked as if they might be full of all manner of contagious diseases. Even human bones did not come amiss to this monomaniac; and in short, her room became such a collection of horrors, that the maids connected frightful legends with it, and could not be persuaded to spend sufficient time there to put it thoroughly in order; therefore, her only resource was, when dust accumulated, to move with all her museum to some recently renovated spot.

Pursuing still at twenty-five her chosen business of collecting, Prudence had found her best winded hobby, and devoted herself rather to antiquities than to natural sciences. Her specimens must now be as ancient as possible, and have a history of some sort, which she generally set forth in their label.

We would by no means hint that Miss

Aubrey's prizes in *bric a brac* bore the most remote likeness to that famous collection of John Allen of New York; but we aver that she had put into it as much "industry, care and enthusiasm" as did ever that venerable citizen.

And here we are forced to the mournful confession that the grand passion of our heroine sometimes verged toward kleptomania, and if she could not get her valuables by fair manœuvres, she did not hesitate long about using foul ones, believing that the end justified the means.

Prudence was now visiting in Philadelphia, at the house of her brother-in-law, John Pils, (who, we are happy to state, was most appropriately a doctor.)

It was the theory of John, as it was of the Apostle Paul, that young women should marry, guide the house, and so forth; and he was nourishing some indignation against Prudence that she retained so long her independent estate.

To express wrath in set terms to this maiden, was simply impossible; she was so bright-eyed, so merry, so deliciously unconscious of ever offending.

"I suppose," said Doctor Pils to Prudence, "that while you are here I must take you to see the Manor Hall; Anna, my wife, tells me that it will just suit you."

"I wonder if I could get any relics," said Prudence, pursuing her especial idea.

"I wish you could give up your passion for relics, Prudence; I am sure you have enough of them to satisfy any reasonable person. I would rather see you painting in water-colors, or making tatting!"

"Why did you not say, doing embroidery? Then you would have left me no loophole of escape; for water-color painting and embroidery are both ancient arts, practised by the Egyptians, and I do dote on antiquity! As for tatting, it is a modern invention, and most absurd. I am convinced that my mission on earth is to be a collector. As to the Manor Hall, what is to be seen there? How old is it? Are there any ghosts belonging to it?"

"It is two hundred years old, and there are plenty of ghost stories; every old house has them, airy nothings."

"Charming. What else?"

"Why, Nollet, the Indian chief, was buried there. Some villain has broken open his grave."

"Splendid! Are there any bones lying about, doctor?"

"Bones?" Would you carry off some if there were?"

"Surely. You have no idea of the strength of my ruling proclivity. There is a shop on Eighth street which I never pass without breaking the tenth commandment, and only the window glass prevents my breaking the eighth."

"You are far gone indeed. Unless you take care you will end your days in a lunatic asylum. You ought to marry, Prudence; and, speaking of this, your sister tells me that you have kept a gentleman, Mr. Walford, waiting for three months for your reply to an offer of marriage. Now, Prudence, is that a proper, a kind, or a respectful way, to treat any man?"

"What does he bother me for, then," said Prudence, with an accession of pink in her round cheek. "Don't he know perfectly well that my whole soul is set on getting together a fine museum, and that I am so busy looking up curiosities that I cannot stop to determine whether I like him or not?"

"No; there is not a man living who would appreciate such a ridiculous state of mind."

"Tom, does," said Prudence; "he is as much of an antiquarian as I am."

Doctor Pils laughed aloud at this antiquarian, wearing little boots of the legitimate "pebbled goat," and whose white arms were set off with flowing sleeves, delicate Honiton, and gold bracelets.

"I don't mind if I tell you how I became acquainted with Tom Walford," said Prudence; "it was quite in my line, in fact an affair of a skeleton, old bones, and all that."

"Really, I am honored by your confidence," said Doctor Pils, settling himself to hear something which promised to be more congenial than the general line of Miss Prudence's observations.

"A year ago," began Miss Aubrey,

carefully studying the pattern of her lace, "I was visiting in a part of Ohio where there are mounds; real mysterious, unexplainable mounds. I went to spend the night with a friend, and met at her house an old gentleman, who, singularly enough, discerned my taste for antiquities."

"Prudence," cried the doctor, "it is a lovely afternoon, let us walk over to the Manor Hall, while you are telling me this exceedingly interesting story."

"How do you know that it is interesting until you hear it?" demanded Prudence, tying on her hat.

"All love tales are so—even the loves of antiquarians," replied the doctor, and, as they set out on their walk, he added, "I see nothing singular in that old gentleman's discovering your pet idiosyncrasy; you are forever making it known; you no sooner open your lips than out comes something to indicate this—this remarkable mental bias."

"However that may be," continued Prudence, amiably, "this old gentleman informed me that he could tell me where to find a great pleasure. An Indian mound had been opened on an adjacent farm, and he understood that relics had been discovered in it. The excavations had been made the preceding day, as I understood, by an elderly man, living with the land owner, who was happy enough to have mounds in his possession. The old gentleman further acquainted me with various singular facts concerning mounds. He said to open one is merely a respectable way of committing suicide; the Vandal who thus disturbs the monuments of the past immediately dying. My hostess combated this theory by mentioning people who had opened mounds and lived; but the old gentleman made it plain that those were exceptions and not the rule. He also told me of axe heads, bits of metal, isinglass, spear points, and shells, found in these tumuli; and stated that a large one had been opened in Marietta, Ohio, in the centre of which was a huge lump of clay, lying as the hub of a wheel, from which burial places diverged like so many spokes; this lump of clay being broken,

was found tenanted by a living toad, which *howled* its dissatisfaction at being disturbed in the sleep of centuries."

"Howled?" cried Doctor Pils. "A toad *howl*?"

"My friend objected, as you do, to the expression; but the deponent remarked that, 'if it didn't howl, it *breathed*,' and he had it in his hand. We see, then, doctor, that a toad in a mound is the true antitype of the famous Sleeping Beauty, so much be-sung and be-written by poets and fabulists. Our informant told us, furthermore, that his brother became owner of this toad, for which he would not have taken five hundred dollars; my hostess, like yourself, lacked antiquarian instinct, and protested that she would not give five dollars for the oldest toad that ever existed. This remarkable sample of *Batrachia* was stolen from its proud possessor."

"A great pity," said the doctor, drily.

"I thought so," returned Prudence, frankly. "I would have liked the opportunity of stealing it for myself. Of course I was anxious to see the mound, and, as no one at my friend's shared my curiosity, I went alone next day to the place indicated. The mound was some twenty-odd feet long and high, by fifteen wide. There was a large stump on the summit of it. On the west of this stump the explorer had begun his trench, making it some eighteen inches wide, and carrying it down the side of the knoll. He had struck upon a stone arch, and from thence widened his trench to three feet, so that one could walk in it easily; he had then removed part of this ancient mason work and laid bare a cavity, in which some unknown sachem had been, like the toad, asleep for some hundreds of years.

"When I reached the mound all was perfectly quiet. About the opening lay shells and bits of bone; the place was evidently deserted. I had come in my most compact array, intent on explorations, and I determined to penetrate these recesses, if perchance I might get a valuable souvenir. An opening from the beginning of the trench descended perpendicularly, and was a sort of skylight

to this queer old tomb. I took my hat in my hand, gathered my dress close, and went down into the dwelling of the dead. I had hoped to see a ghost, the spirit of the defunct chief, bewailing his desecrated ashes. Instead of this I found a stalwart young man, comfortably seated on the spot whence he had removed the skull. I regret to say that this explorer was solacing himself then and there with bread and cheese.

He made me welcome. I sat down where the toes of the ancient had crumbled to dust, and having inspected my fellow-searcher after relics, found that he was a good-looking and most attractive gentleman. Doing the hospitalities of the tomb, he offered me bread and cheese, which I ate in a spirit of harmony. I made known what I had come for, and he explained that he had been boarding at the farm for the sole purpose of opening mounds. We exchanged a list of our curiosities; he showed me how he had found the skeleton, lying due north and south, and that under the skull lay a heap of small charred bones, as of some animal offered in sacrifice. He even gave me my choice of fragments among the bones he had collected.

"Of course I saw that he was a kindred soul, a cognate of the ancients. We have since been the best of friends; have shared information and specimens, and got on delightfully until he began to make love to me."

"Indeed!" said Dr. Pils. "Well, this is a story of love and dry bones, sure enough. It is very fitting that you, forever grubbing among reliquaries with their tokens of the past, should find your lover in the grave of an Indian chief. Take my advice; leave your collecting mania, and marry."

Prudence shook her lovely head.

"He is every way eligible; good morals, good manners, good family, good fortune; but I had about made up my mind to die a spinster, possessor of a world-famous museum. Besides, doctor, you know during the tulip mania in Holland, marriages were made with the sole view of bringing divers rival bulbs into one family; and I have wondered whether

Tom Walford does not want my *collection* as much as he wants me."

"Jealous! jealous! as I live, of these very *disjecta membra* which you have been at so great pains to gather," cried the doctor. "But, Prudence, I am horrified at your cool manner of mentioning rifling graves and gathering bones."

"Satan reproving sin!" laughed Prudence. "Who but a doctor is guilty of studying his fellow mortals in the shape of *cadavera*?"

"That is for the sake of science," protested Doctor Pils.

"So am I laboring in behalf of science," said Prudence. "But now, if my antiquarian instinct does not deceive me, we have reached the entrance of the old Manor Hall."

The doctor held open the great gate for Prudence. She began at once a swift but critical examination of the premises.

Here is obviously a fine opportunity for hinting at a presentiment. But adhering strictly to truth, we can only chronicle that no coming events cast their shadows before upon the jubilant spirits of our Prudence.

The doctor walked on by himself, muttering:

"Bless my soul! If that is not an innovation on the popular idea of a love story; finding a lover in a tomb, eating bread and cheese! And she thinks he is after her treasures of antiquity! Well, few as pretty girls would take such a perfectly humble view of the affair."

"Doctor!" cried Prudence, running up and pulling at his coat sleeve, "do look at these bricks in the walk; there is such a queer mark on every one."

"They were brought from England. The mark, as you will see, is the impress of the maker's hand, as he turned the bricks when they were in a soft state."

"Only to think," said Prudence, "here is the imprint of a hand that has been dust these hundred and fifty years at least. How each of these cheap things has outlasted its maker. I wonder if he thought that he was leaving a trace of himself, to be seen by so many eyes in so many years!"

"Probably the brick-maker was not given to romancing," said Doctor Pils.

Prudence stooped down, and put her little hand into the ancient mark; it didn't fit.

"And look at the door step," cried Miss Aubrey, "it is like three millstones of different sizes, piled up and bound with iron. How many feet have gone over those great stones; little children and old people; beauty, virtue, devilry incarnate; brides and pall-bearers; besides all the revolutionary heroes, doubtless. Ah, see that woodbine, it looks nearly as old as the house!"

Prudence twisted off a twig, and put it in her waist-ribbon.

"There, this is a real English holly, brought from the ancestral home beyond the water." She put a sprig with her woodbine. "What ranges of sheds, offices, and granaries; everything for substantial comfort!"

Doctor Pils rapped on the back door; it was opened by a peony-faced woman, the tenant in charge, who readily consented to show them over the house.

This first room, which may have been the kitchen, was wainscoted to the ceiling with oak panels. The visitors passed through a hall to a longer room, the old dining saloon; thence to a front parlor, where was a huge iron fireplace for wood, with an iron hearth sweeping into the room like the half of a mill-wheel. Between this chamber and its counterpart, occupying the other half of the house front, was a large square hall, wainscoted, and having a brick paved floor, worn smooth and shining by the tread of feet. All the windows had cozy seats built in them.

We cannot say whether or not Prudence thought that one of them would just hold herself and Tom Walford, sitting to discuss the antiquities of the habitation.

"Would you be pleased to walk up stairs?" said the peony-faced woman.

The stairway was very broad, winding up into the third story. Said Prudence:

"It is wide enough for a lady in full dress to come down escorted by her cavalier. Let us imagine how those old-time

dames looked in wide hoops, brocaded petticoats, and long satin trains; hair powdered and puffed over a pillow; down cushions in their sleeves, short waists, low, square cut necks, high-heeled slippers, and clocked stockings; jewels in plenty, as became ladies of high degree; necklaces, rings, buckles in shoe and belt, and watches round and large as ordinary turnips. No oriole, though! The lace, too, I should like to have seen it; if I had been rich enough, I think I would have taken to laces, like Mrs. Bury Palisser! Then the gentlemen in wigs, short swords, knee-breeches, red, blue, orange, and white; ribbons, frills, and buckles. O doctor, don't you believe that this old house at night is full of the gorgeous apparitions of these fine people of the olden time?"

"If it is, I would not like to sleep here," said Doctor John, with gravity.

"I would, of all things. Ah, I wish I could stay here of a night, all alone by myself," cried the hapless Prudence.

The second story contained five rooms, and the large hall, from which the broad, memory-thronged stair-case ascended still. In the two rooms on the left hand were large chimney pieces, and fireplaces set about with small square porcelain tiles, each bearing a Scripture scene, in blue and white.

To Prudence these tiles were enchanting in their very hideousness. They had no more perspective nor artistic merit than Chinese productions; the legs and arms of the figures were put on in hardy defiance of the profession of Dr. Pils; Dame Nature would never have recognized a particle of landscape or vegetation. Here, to the contemplative eye of a dreamer before the winter fire, were set forth Samson slaying the lion, and David demolishing Goliath; the fall of Dagon; the amazed Balaam and his rarely gifted ass; Gideon and his fleece; Jephtha meeting his child; Ruth gleaning; Absalom swinging by long locks, causing one to wonder why he did not cleave them off with the sword hung conspicuously at his side; Judith holding Holofernes' head; Isaac meeting his bride; Jacob falling in love with a

hideous Rebecca; frightful old elders, with blue eyes, admiring a blue-haired Susannah; Daniel, in blue, before a Nebuchadnezzar who was a veritable Bluebeard; and Elijah by the brook in the blues indeed! Such were these precious tiles, and they awoke the cupidity of Prudence Aubrey.

The second of these fascinating fireplaces had lost some half dozen of its ornaments, and Prudence surreptitiously sounded the porcelain squares to see how firm they were, and examined the dividing lines. In the third room the tiles were plain white china.

Up now into the third story; here was the old-time linen room, suggesting goodly piles of sheets and pillow-cases laid up in lavender, dozens of fleecy, rose-bordered blankets, and pairs of French counterpanes, awakening housewifely instincts. Here still were queer and unexpected windows, each having the inviting seat, where one might rest and view the landscape. There was the housekeeper's room with its closets, and servants' dormitories in plenty. A stairway in the wall went up to the roof, where people might climb who desired a wide out-look.

The house having been explored, Prudence and her brother-in-law returned to the garden. Its beauty had departed. There were some unclipped evergreens, some long depressions where paths had been, a rotten ruin once an arbor, scrawny rose bushes, half wild descendants of royal flowers. Verily it was the Icha-bod of parterres!

"Doctor," said Prudence, when the door was shut, "I mean to have a tile."

"But how? They are all fast, and none of them yours."

"I'll break one off some day, see if I don't."

"But that would be sheer vandalism."

"All the same, I'll have one, sure."

"What! plunder the place, after the kindness shown in permitting us to visit it?"

"I cannot live without one of those tiles. A blue tile is at present the object of my life."

"Well, I *am* amazed. The family graveyard and vault lie just on the brow



of this hill, on the other side of the garden fence; I had meant to go there; but in your present frame of mind you would be ready to desecrate the last home of humanity."

"Certainly, for a blue tile, or anything else worth having in a museum," retorted Prudence, moving with alacrity toward the spot indicated.

"Mark my words, Prudence," said her brother, following, and speaking with the solemnity becoming a prophet, "if you continue this desperate and unreasonable pursuit of curiosities, you will one day meet some terrible misfortune."

"I dote on the terrible and on tiles," said Prudence.

"Consider, you may incur a judgment such as has turned people's hair white in a night," said the doctor, intensifying the pathos of his tone.

"That's better than having it get white by degrees. Transition states are odious. It would be worth while to be very aged, it is distressing to be growing old. The hair in those tiles is indigo blue. I'll have one!"

"Prudence," cried the doctor, in the manner of a judge delivering an obituary notice to a prisoner at the bar, "do be warned in time of the dangers of self-will."

"Doctor," said the young lady, standing on her tiptoes in front of the sage, and dancing along backwards, "doctor, hear me! A blue and white tile out of that front room chimney is indispensable to my future happiness. You may talk of reason; what is reason to a fixed resolution? You may talk of contentment with present possessions; contentment is a vile experience compared with the glowing ambition of a true collector! You may talk of what you call honesty; what is honesty compared to a blue and white tile for one's private museum? Nonsense; I will not hear of it!"

Then Prudence turned, waved her little fist toward the old Manor Hall, and apostrophized the unconscious peony-faced woman, "A tile, or your life!" As she did so, she came to a stand against the iron fence of the garden. Beyond this lay a substantial stone wall, old, smooth,

without a cranny open, rounded on the top, and as high as the eyes of Prudence, even when she stood on tiptoe. However, there was a gate, and the doctor had the key, borrowed of the human peony.

The graves of a household. You could trace the marriages and intermarriages of this family as easily on these white head-stones as you can follow up noble people in the book of the peerage. The brides who had blushed, the babes who had laughed and cried in the old Manor Hall, had come here at last, laid asleep in narrow beds under "low green tents."

Thus, one by one, the inhabitants of the Manor Hall had been carried out of the familiar doors, across the garden, and laid down here within a stone's throw of their kindred yet in the flesh. The song, the laugh, the echo of voices in the home forever floating out over those who should hear and reply no more.

"Some," said the doctor, "would think it melancholy to have their dead buried so near them. It would shadow their golden summers to see the grave-stones glimmer through the rose blossoms. You, sister Prudence, are not likely to have any ultra sentimentality about it, if you can make love and eat bread and cheese in graves."

"As to that, doctor," replied Prudence, "a great mound, the relic of an unknown race and age, does not appeal to one as do other burial places. Indian mounds and Westminster Abbey may be called the two extremes of mortuary structures, and both are looked at as, in some sort, curiosity shops. But," and Prudence's face grew grave and tender, "I do like to see graves of a family made near their dwelling. These white head-stones do not have for me the terror they convey to many.

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who hopeless lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!"

Doctor Pils had reached a flight of stone steps going down the abrupt side of the hill on which this small cemetery

had been laid out. He gave Prudence his hand to assist her, and passing around an enormous tree, they came to a low arched door-way, and immediately entered a large vault. The floor was the damp earth; in the mason work of the ceiling were set strong hooks on which, perhaps, to hang lanterns, but the labors which would have required the light were ended forever. The vault was so large that at least twenty persons could have stood in it to watch funeral obsequies. On either side three flat stones set in the wall showed where coffins had been sealed up. The central niche on the right had been the burial place of the Indian chieftain, Nollet, and here some heathen had removed the stone and made an excavation, whether with the result of finding coffin or bones, cannot be known. The great tree outside had sent a root across the opening thus laid bare. Prudence reached her arm into the cavity, but felt only the moist chill earth.

"Come," said the worthy doctor, "it is damp in here, and you have seen all that is to be seen. Let us go; you have visited a very old family mansion, and may weave whatever romance you choose about it, although it has not afforded you a relic."

"It will do that, though, before I let the matter drop," said Prudence, setting her lips firmly. "I shall have a tile."

"The pursuit of—let us say tiles—under difficulties, may result in great trouble," said Doctor Pils.

"Nothing venture, nothing have," retorted Prudence; "and I tell you that I value my curiosities in proportion to the trouble it costs me to obtain them."

If that were the case, the blue and white tile was about to prove a treasure indeed.

If Prudence had said she would do anything, that formed an ample reason for doing it. She had a resolution that mocked at obstacles in matters great or small.

The Sphinx has stared the Nile out of countenance, and puzzled all humanity for ages; if Prudence had avowed herself ready to do the same, she might probably have accomplished it. Instead

of any such mighty resolves, she had now merely set her mind on secretly obtaining a blue and white china chimney tile.

The following day she explored her sister's establishment, and possessed herself of an old case-knife, with the half of the blade gone, which she laid up in readiness for a return to the Manor Hall.

Doctor Pils, retaining a philanthropist's interest in her love affair, privately besought her, a few evenings after, to set the heart of Tom Walford at rest, by a letter, inviting him to come and receive a favorable answer to his proposal.

"I can't worry over that just now," said Miss Prudence; "not until that tile is safe in my possession."

"Now Prudence, if that bit of china is all that stands in your way, I'll get you one; I can go to the owner of the Manor Hall, or to the tenant in charge, and beg or buy one."

"That would never do," said Miss Aubrey. "What if you should be refused? I said I meant to get one for myself, and so I shall; I am making my plans. If you bought one it would rob the curiosity of half its interest."

"Have your way, wilful woman," quoth the doctor. And her way came in a wholly unexpected manner.

A party of friends were promised at the doctor's for a visit, and a few days after their arrival Prudence gave them an animated description of the Manor Hall, and proposed that they should visit it on a pleasant afternoon. It was a day when her brother-in-law was unusually busy; his wife went with her guests, and the enthusiastic Prudence was the head and life of the party.

Prudence was in royal good spirits; she had elaborated her tile-procuring plan, she had her knife in her pocket, and she would go home and flaunt her trophy in the face of her brother-in-law. But after that, why he, most persistent and provoking of men, would begin about Tom Walford again! Well, and if he did, there were two or three things Prudence could say about that; besides very likely the best end of all would be to answer "yes" to Tom. He had some very good specimens of antiques

in his museum, said this plausible Miss Prudence to herself, by no means admitting, even in her own mind, that it was Tom Walford the man, rather than the antiquarian, who dwelt in the thoughts of Miss Aubrey.

Prudence had made a plan and she had prepared for a contingency. If her plan failed in any point, she was ready, like a good general, to turn defeat to victory. To help matters, she had on the way to the house, been extolling the glorious view from the roof.

Miss Aubrey first led her friends to indulge, like Hervey, in a meditation among the tombs, thus giving them a chance to immortalize themselves, as he had done. They simply read the names and dates, and chattered like swallows. In the vault they cried out against the dampness, and hinted of goblins; the dearest wish of Prudence at that instant, would have been accomplished, if a goblin had appeared. She got all of such apparitions she wanted within the next twenty-four hours.

When they returned to the Manor Hall, Prudence amiably remarked to the Peony, that as she knew the house she would escort the party over it, and save Peony the trouble of going up stairs. She meant boldly to break off a tile, binding her company to silence. Perhaps the warder of this castle surmised a design against her china, for she stoutly asserted her willingness to accompany the visitors to the very roof.

Be it remembered that this woman and her husband, a farm laborer, lived alone in three of the first-floor rooms of Manor Hall, and Mr. Peony being about his work, madame, his wife, remained during the day sole garrison of the ancient mansion.

As the strangers ascended the wide staircase, Prudence lingered behind, her hand in her pocket touching the broken case-knife, and the thought paramount in her brain that she *would* have that tile before she left the Manor.

Undoubtedly she got it. But how, O Prudence, how?

When the second and third stories of Manor Hall had been explored, Miss

Aubrey's friends made ready to go up for the famous prospect from the house-top. Prudence tarried until all, including Mistress Peony, were on the stairs.

"Prudence!" cried her sister Anna.

"Go on," called Prudence, cheerily; "I will not go up to-day, I have a fine seat on this window-sill."

No sooner was the coast clear than Prudence flew down stairs, and entering the front room, applied her knife to a square of porcelain, whereon was depicted the stoning of Stephen. The proto-martyr was of the same cerulean tint as the sky and the angels waiting to receive him; he was being plentifully treated to huge masses of indigo, thrown by Pharisees, who were very blue, as indeed they should be, over their future prospects. Prudence got this precious bit of art off entire, put it and the knife in her pocket, and hastened up the stairs to the window seat she had mentioned. Unfortunately she saw a recess with a door leading from it—a queer, cobwebby, ill-looking nook, just the grimy hiding place for mouldy treasures of antiquity! Foolish as Fatima, Prudence resolved to carry on her good deeds in Manor Hall by exploring that closet. She found herself in a long cell running into the thick wall; there were some empty shelves high up, and on one a brown heap that seemed to be made of two or three ragged and dog-eared duodecimos.

Perhaps some long-forgotten family journal, diary of hopes, loves and disappointments, now blessedly laid asleep in in yonder vault. Perhaps an ancient housekeeper's book, with old-style recipes, bills of fare, expenses, wages, purchases, showing how they lived, how they entertained their friends, and what viands they set before General Washington, old Ben Franklin, the Marquis La Fayette, false Arnold while he yet stood well, and such notables as Alexander Hamilton, Lord Stirling, and Greene, with all that other band of worthies whose faces or signatures we may see in the historic State House.

Standing on tiptoe to get at these treasures, and to do her justice, fully expecting to ask Mistress Peony to allow

her to examine them at home, Prudence heard her gay comrades descending the stairs.

Not liking to be caught in the closet and laughed at, Miss Aubrey impulsively pulled the door shut. The party heard it, but thought it was the wind's work.

They came down calling Prudence.

They concluded she had returned to the first floor.

Prudence was quite silent, intending to let them go on, and then follow them.

When the laughing group had passed out of hearing, Miss Aubrey, having secured the dusty books, tried to open the closet door; she could find neither latch nor handle! She felt all over the door and wall; not a protuberance so big as a nail-head presented itself.

In nervous excitement she felt again and again, wildly remembering the men of Sodom, blinded by the angels, and unable for a Syrian night to find the door they sought. She strove to shake it, but that wretched panel, firm as the wall, would not move.

She cried out at the very top of her voice, but she felt the sound shut in by those thick walls returning on herself. She knocked on the wall, but that was folly.

She wondered if she would soon smother in this cell, and frantic at the idea, she stepped along its length and breadth. There was air enough, such as it was; it was indeed no worse than the black hole of Calcutta.

She was sure her friends would return to look for her; her strained ears seemed to catch faint echoes of her name sounding here and there. She "called aloud," as eagerly as that singular boy, Casabianca, but like him, got no satisfaction.

Weak and trembling at this new experience in her curiosity-hunting, Prudence sat upon the closet floor.

Then it came into her mind that she had engaged to spend a night with a friend on the other side of the city, and had warned her companions that she could not stay too long at Manor Hall, or she would be late for the car which was to take her to fill her engagement.

How often had she started away on

visits without informing any one of her intention; now they would think she had done the same thing again, through her false notions of independence, and had hurried away without the grace of asking to be excused.

Ah! this is what happened to people who did not heed the rules of society; they got shut up in closets, and nobody cared!

Perhaps if her company returned with Anna, easy in their minds about the erratic Prudence, Mrs. Peony might come up stairs and hear her calls.

But had not this woman said that she never went about the Manor alone, "being timorsome of uncanny sights supposed to be there," and that sometimes for three weeks or a month, she never penetrated to the second story; and here was Prudence, in a dim closet on the third floor! It would be the most natural thing in the world for her relatives to give themselves no trouble on her behalf for the next two or three days; she was so accustomed to go here and there without rendering any account of herself.

In that hour of distress Prudence resolved never again to behave after that fashion; she would make her plans known, and teach people to take an interest in her whereabouts.

"If I were married," thought the miserable Prudence, "I would know my husband would look me up at once; he would never leave the Manor until he found me."

To be sure, she had in her pocket two musty books and a tile, but what is a china tile to a person suddenly incarcerated without the comfort of a jailor, the benefit of *habeas corpus*, or any expectation of even so much as the least morsel of prisoner's fare, or any other viands.

Prudence began to calculate how long she could hope to live without food, drink, or fresh air. She called to her mind the painful experience of the lovely Venetian bride, who on her wedding-day accidentally shut herself in a big chest, where she turned to a relic, and was found some two hundred years after, a choice collection of bones, precious stones, and mouldered velvet.

Would some antiquary of a hundred years hence penetrate this closet, make prey of Miss Aubrey's remains, and carry a joint of her finger, a bit of her watch-chain, and a malachite button from her gown, as treasures for his museum? At such direful thoughts the usually lively and dashing Prudence Aubrey beat the immovable door until her little fists were bruised, and screamed until her musical tones were hoarse as the croak of a raven.

We, not being imprisoned with our heroine, may go down stairs, and hear the party wondering mildly over her disappearance, concluding she had found it time to hasten to meet her friends; remarking that Prudence "did such singular things;" Mrs. Pils gently wishing that "she didn't do so;" and one and all leaving the Manor Hall, and going home in a comfortable state of mind.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Peony sat on the doorstep, to darn a huge black stocking, and her thoughts partaking of the lugubrious hue of her work, she mused thus:

"Well! may be that young lady *dùl* go off home alone. But I have heard of a ghost in Manor Hall, that spirits off people to the vault, and buries 'em. So now! there's ghosts and ghostesses mayhap, and more queer doings in this world than people like to make mention of. I heard a deal about this place before I came here, but I must say for Manor Hall, that I never saw nor knew a thing in it out of the common line. If I had, I'd leave. O yes, I hope she's all right; I expect she is. I'd *know* it, if I saw it."

Meanwhile, good Mrs. Peony was careful to keep on her outer step in the sunshine, and in hearing of passers-by, until her husband came from work, and she had then to rattle among her pots and pans, getting supper.

All this time Prudence was in durance vile, above stairs.

Shut up for two hours in a darkness like the ninth plague of Egypt, Prudence had exhausted herself by calling aloud, and by pushing against the door. She now sat with her head on her knees, and through her excited brain hummed all that she had ever read or heard that bore on her present condition. The old song of

"The misletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch graced the old oak wall,"

wailed in her head like a dirge. The beloved legend of childhood, of Fatima the venturesome, and Sister Anna watching on the parapet for help, came to her in every minute particular. Miss Aubrey's sister Anna, instead of looking for aid, was doubtless now discoursing sweet music on her piano, and edifying her guests with the strains of

"On yonder rock reclining."

But even in her misery, Prudence was ready to be just, and admitted that this negligence was rather her own fault than her sister's.

Prudence had read of the Waldenses in their famous cave; indeed she had meant at some day to go to Switzerland and break a bit of rock from that memorable spot; but she was fain to consider herself worse off than these heroes of the faith, because they were many—she was alone, no one to solace her in misfortune. Then, there was the account of a hundred prophets in a cavern, in the land of Israel; but Obadiah visited them, bringing food; no one would come to her. People had been lost in the catacombs; others had wandered into the Mammoth Cave and never came back; some had been cast on desert islands and had met worse luck than Alexander Selkirk; but was it not far more bitter to be imprisoned in a dark closet, in reach of help, and yet beyond the possibility of it; to count one's days and know them few, each more wretched than the one before, and ending in a horrible death; to die of thirst, even while hearing rain patter on the shingles; to choke for air while the winds were souging about within three feet of you; to be hidden from sunlight while it burned the roof above your head; to starve within a furlong of waving corn and blushing fruits!

Misery made Prudence dull and half unconscious for a while. Then she roused herself and considered that she must have been at least twenty-four hours in the closet. It was time to do something; she would not die without an effort for freedom. She stood up,



and reaching high and stooping low, felt over the walls of her prison. She spent some minutes trying to wrench the shelf from its place, but could not move it, as it was so far over her head; the base-board proved equally obstinate. There was a nail in the wall, which, with a feverish desire to do something, she worked out and put in her pocket, a receptacle where she was wont to store away small possessions, in the fashion of a school-boy. The nail clinked on her tile. In these two hours the value of that curiosity was wonderfully lessened. Another long fit of despondency indulged in, lying on the floor. O for Tom Walford, that famous man, who could penetrate into the heart of an Indian mound and unearth a skeleton! Why had she not married Tom? Then she would not have been imprisoned like this, with no one to care for it.

Ah, she had hugged her idea of independence and self-sufficiency; she had prated of women's rights; what use of claiming women's rights for a small muscled creature, who could not get out of a closet when she was shut in!

What had this closet been made for? Was it built for the timely restraint of refractory servants or children? or had it been predestined and made, two centuries ago, solely for the destruction of Prudence Aubrey, maiden antiquarian? Brother John, your warnings have all come true.

Then, as drowning people think of everything, Prudence thought of her precious museum, about to be scattered to the four winds, no one mindful of its value. She had not even time to make a will, bequeathing it to Tom Walford. But what would Tom do with it? He would go and marry some yellow-curl'd creature who had no soul for antiquities, and Tom's romping children would tear her treasures to pieces. The little Hindoo gods would get their heads broken; the bones would be scattered; the remnants of mummies would go into the dust-bin; the Aztec remains would be built up in play-houses; the papers and parchments of the days of Elizabeth would be tied over the mouths of preserve jars! She must

make another effort. Prudence was as given to efforts as Mrs. Chick.

She started up and went about her prison on tiptoe, feeling the walls. Why, here was a hole, far up in a corner where a bit of plaster had been broken. Prudence thrust in her hand and it went against a chimney. She made her boots and dress into a bundle that she might raise herself a few inches by standing on it. Thus elevated, she broke off scraps of the wall and flung them down by the chimney space in the partition. Then she got three bits of loose brick, and dropped two of them, rattling as they went, every sound waking a thought of calling attention, and so escaping. The third morsel of brick she kept, and for half an hour hammered the chimney monotonously; it sounded like spirit-rappings, and Prudence, as she hammered, kept thinking of those manifestations; satisfied that no spirit ever had such need or right to rap as she herself.

Finding the hammering ineffectual, Prudence laid her quarter of a brick on the floor and sat down to rest, and to anthamitize the sound sleep of toilers like Mr. and Mrs. Peony.

Too tired to reach up to that hole again very soon, Prudence then took the brick and, as she sat, beat a tattoo on walls, floor and base-board.

Then she had an inspiration. She leaped up, clasped her hands into the broken place, by main strength pulled herself up until her mouth lay at the opening, and then she shrieked down it, varying her screams, trying every note in the gamut of agony and despair. What sounds were then in that chimney! It was enough to terrify even Prudence herself. A pack of starved wolves on the scent; a leash of sleuth-hounds in full cry; a grand chorus of all the owls that ever hooted; a full orchestra of asses; the bellowings of Polyphemus; the unearthly noises of the harpies; limbo let loose; the black air full of demons, drawn back to the abyss by some infinite decree; all these seemed set free in that wall and chimney, evoked by the larum of Miss Aubrey.

Prudence might have been willing, in

the circumstances, to pursue this study of acoustics indefinitely, but she was limited by the failing of her strength. There came a moment when she could no longer hang on the wall, shrilling into echoing space, and she dropped exhausted upon the floor. Now she became stoical in the excess of her misery. She placed her bundle for a pillow, laid herself down, decently composed her clothing, and folded her arms over her chest; she had, for the time, made up her mind to die, and she meant to do it as soon as possible.

But death does not come obediently at the beck of strong young people, who have lived moderately, kept good hours, had a hobby to ride, and have ridden it in the open air.

Mental and bodily exhaustion delivers such happy persons over to a semi-consciousness which they may deem precursor of death, but which is really nature's restorative process.

As Prudence lay thus, she lost knowledge of her present position; she was in the Manor Hall, but no longer in the dark closet. The partitions had melted away, she had the range of the house, it was night time, and all the spirits that throng old houses and are invisible in the day, were out in full power. The house walls became transparent; one could, at a glance, see all that passed without and within. Round and around the mansion went a sturdy figure in a blouse, leather breeches and wooden shoes, with a cap on his head. He bent down, laying his thick horny hand in the print in the bricks—it filled them exactly; then he laughed, and with marvellous ease turned the imbedded bricks, and lo, another hand print was on the under side, and he laid his fingers in it, chuckling, and left that side uppermost for the coming day. Thus this ancient brickmaker had been preserving traces of himself for two centuries. Prudence wondered if they did so at the Pyramids, and what singular multitudes thus thronged the mighty cone of Cheops.

A little maiden of eight summers, an old-style child, in a stiff gold-colored brocade, with high red-heeled slippers,

tripped along the walk, and stopping at the woodbine, touched its root. Then under her fingers it dwindled into a little slip just planted, and before her sweet eyes grew swiftly as Jonah's gourd, and draped the southwest corner of the Manor Hall. Then the little maiden returned to an upper room, laid by the gold brocade and the high-heeled slippers, clad herself all in white, and with a lily in her hand went meekly over the hillside and down to the vault doorway. There some gray-haired retainers in black laid her in a niche, walled up her grave, and filled the vault with sobs; but there was singing in the air overhead.

After this there stood at the vault door a tall dame in black, who had forgotten how to smile. She visited much the holly tree, and gathered its thorny leaves, and berries like blood drops, valuing them more than flowers, and used them to deck her room on Good Friday. This woman in black had no heart; she had buried it with the little maiden who planted the woodbine; and by-and-by those retainers unsealed the burial place, and laid her in with the small maid, and there were no sobs in the vault, but the singing went on overhead.

Then all the mansion blazed with wax candles; there was a feast spread in the dining saloon, and guests crowded in the parlors; the brick-paved hall was full of gentlemen wearing swords, cocked hats, wide shirt frills, and very gay attire. An upper room opened and a sweet perfume of many rare essences stole out, precursor of a most lovely bride, who outshone all the maidens who escorted her. Prudence saw how her rich lace veil swept to her feet; how her train was lined with white velvet; how she had necklace, zone, bracelets, and ear-jewels of pearls set in yellow gold, and on her bosom glowed a diamond, as if a star had lost its way and taken refuge there.

Prudence noticed how the prim garden was illuminated; how the guests feasted, danced and congratulated. She wondered if this woman's future would be as bright as her bridal.

She had time to see. Phantom nursemaids began to carry spirit babies about

the house; the bride, grown older and more demure, put costly caps on these baby-heads, gold chains on their necks, and gold bands in their sleeves; gave them coral and silver rattles to play with, kissed them, and was proud of them. But the babies, one and another, went through the garden, over the hillside, and nestled down under the grass, seeming to court rather the brown earth than their mother's bosom.

By-and-by a pair of quaint twin babies came; had no drawings to the hillocks so near at hand; trotted about merrily, grew and grew, were man and woman at last, and when the whilom bride and groom sat wearing cap and spectacles at the side of the wide fire-place, these younger two brought home one a wife, and the other a husband. But by the time another spectral nurse and babe appeared, the strong young man was carried in, wearing a blue coat with a bullet hole through the breast, and making no tarrying, was taken out the further door, and hidden in the vault beneath the hill.

Prudence saw the heroes of old time, the men who projected and established the Republic of the West. She heard them utter fears which were never realized, and hopes which have become realities. She saw also plenty of red-coated men, who fought very well for their king, but not so well as men who were spurred on by absolute certainty that they must conquer or die.

Under the oldest trees, wandering on the hills, regarding the Manor Hall with a melancholy but not an angry gaze, she saw also the lithe figure of a famous Indian chief; he loved his paint and feathers, his bow and arrows, and all his wild life and attire; but he yielded little by little to the example and persuasions of his pale-faced friends. He brought them game for their table; he smoked his pipe by their fire; he looked with tenderness on their children. He, too, was carried with all due respect, and buried in the family vault with those whose name he had assumed.

And now, as the elfin hours of their reign grew shorter, these shades of the past crowded faster and closer about the

scenes of their dwelling in the flesh. Each spectre in his garb and act revealed the darling ambition, and lived the crowning moment of his life. Silks rustled on the stairs, spurs rung along the paved ways; scholars studied unreal books; mock wines glowed in impish glasses; the venerable furniture was painted on the air; and one saw the dark mahogany, the gilded claw feet, the polished lacquering; even the stiff Dutch pictures lingered in spectral color on the walls.

Up and down, over the garden, through the woods, into the bed-chambers, and even into the closet where Prudence lay in semi-trance, they came, caring nothing for her.

Miss Aubrey saw that instead of being built and reserved peculiarly as a pitfall and trap for herself, this closet had been the rubbish corner of the house. Old books lay on the shelf, old shoes were piled in the distant angle; tarnished coats and gowns hung on the wall; boxes of unfashionable hats and bonnets; canes, whose owners had renewed their youth by passing through yon vault, and now trod a world where they needed props no longer—all these were put in this closet; and here young people and children came to ferret for garb in which to perform charades and tableaux. These goblin juveniles never touched the real bundle under Miss Aubrey's head, but they trampled over and on her, without seeing or oppressing her; and they heaped the garments they were assorting over her, and Prudence could smell the faint odors of musk, camphor, and red cedar, in which they had been kept. She heard these young folk making love, and she observed with a twinge of conscience, that the maidens were more gracious than she had been to Tom.

Now at this period, all unknown to Prudence, the tip of the Manor Hall chimneys caught the first faint streak of the summer dawn, and on a neighboring barn roof

"The cock his crested helmet bent,
And down his querulous challenge sent."

At once the gray-beard retainers who

waited at the vault dropped their shadowy spades and picks, and melted away; the singing grew mute in the air overhead, the choir had been drawn upward to the fading stars.

The garden settled to its loneliness and decay; the figures in the open air ceased their ghostly toils and vanished. The walls of the Manor House resumed their pristine impenetrability; the haunted halls and chambers grew vacant and silent; sprite after sprite departed, the house was like a hearth where the coals have died out, and even the ashes have been swept away; it was lonely, cold and still, a deserted habitation.

But though it took but a little time to accomplish this spiritual hegira, it was done gradually. The rooms were dismantled and shut up, the supernatural tenants went one by one, leaving it abandoned, just as it had really been left, by slow stages, by marked degrees; and as the last ghosts went out they went diverse ways, and a dark cloud filled all the house.

The darkness, the chill, the strange silence startled Prudence like an electric shock. She leaped to her feet, feeling that she had been imprisoned in the Manor Hall a full week, and expecting to find herself wasted, feeble, famished. She was hungry, that was certain; she was also frightened, but calmer than when she was first shut up. Being cold, she put on her dress and shoes. Then she quietly considered what to do.

People cast on a desert island have always a ship to supply them with the comforts and luxuries of life. They have gold and gems to awake the avarice of the reader of their fortunes, and tropic fruits which cause every one to wish to be shipwrecked.

Prudence in the Manor Hall had only her pocket to rely upon; but thanks to her unknown fairy godmother, that pocket was inexhaustible.

Prudence in the darkness unloaded her pocket, and felt its contents.

Two worm-eaten books.

She laid them on the floor.

That fatal tile.

She put it upon the books.

The broken knife.

Blessed fates! she might cut through the door. O, to be able to know the weakest part.

The nail she had twisted from the wall.

That might help the knife; and in addition, there were nine steel hair pins in her hair.

Her handkerchief.

That would do to wipe her eyes, if she had time to weep.

Three letters from poor Tom Walford. O dear!

A box, a metal box, with a roughness at either end. A box of matches! Joy, joy! what a thing is a pocket.

"I will be systematic," said Prudence. "I will sharpen this knife well, ready for use, on the rough side of my tile, and on the sole of my boot. When I am ready for work, I will light a match, and burn one of those envelopes of Tom's letters. I will twist it tight, and it will burn the longer. I must also be careful not to get on fire. How frightful to burn to death in this closet! I have three envelopes, and I can burn the letters, too, if need be. Tom won't care. I'll treat Tom right well if ever I get out of this!"

All this while she was sharpening the broken knife and twisting the envelope into lighters, and now finding herself prepared for work she struck a match and ignited her humble torch. A careful examination of the door showed where the latch was screwed upon the outer side. Prudence thought if she could cut through here, even a narrow slip, she could lift up the latch by means of the knife-blade or a hair-pin.

"I'll never go anywhere without a good sharp pocket-knife, after this," muttered Miss Aubrey, with a loving reminiscence of several such edge tools lying in her trunk. She fixed her hard twisted bit of paper in the crack of the door, and it lighted her dimly as she worked. When it was out, she toiled on in the dark for some minutes, then sacrificed another envelope. The door was thick and hard, the knife wretchedly dull, and the hand that wielded it far from skilful.

As Prudence began to work for her deliverance, she peeped at her watch; it was four o'clock.

"I wonder whether it is to-morrow or next day, or how long I have been here?" she sighed.

The envelopes went to black dust; the letters followed them; if she ever got out, Tom Walford could write her some more; if she died a prisoner, nothing beyond that mattered very much. The matches one by one disappeared. So did the dismal duodecimos which had wrought so much trouble.

True to her prevailing instinct, Prudence did not burn these books until she found that one was a ragged Virgil, printed in the present century, and the other, an Iliad of but a year or two older.

They were not antiquities, fortunately. If they had been she might have clung to them somewhat longer.

At last, by cutting and breaking, prying off splinters and using all her strength, she penetrated the door, she felt the knife-blade go through, she peeped into the hole and found a gleam of daylight.

But she had not come at the latch. However, with a ray of light to tell where to keep on cutting, and a broken place to start from, she got on bravely, making havoc of the door, and finally she put forth a bent hair-pin, touched and rattled the latch, but could not lift it.

She clipped and cut in the right direction now, and presently got her finger outside.

There; in a moment the work was done, she pushed up the heavy latch, the door swung open as easily as it had closed upon her, and she was standing in the hall.

With freedom, our Prudence regained all her equanimity. She was herself again.

She dusted her dress, smoothed necktie and collar, directed her attention to the appearance of her hat and gloves, refilled her pocket, not forgetting the tile, and lamented that the battered classics had been sacrificed in her behalf.

She then went down the stair-case, wondering what the pair of Peonys would think of her unexpected appearance, and what would be a felicitous mode of explaining her recent adventure.

Manor Hall was as still as a tomb. Not a sound. Mistress Peony must be milking, and her husband off at his work, said Prudence. Again she consulted her watch, it was six o'clock.

Six o'clock of a dewy, shining, fragrant, mellow summer morning.

No one in the house, and Prudence opened the back door. It did not strike her as singular that she had to unbolt it.

No one about the yards.

Prudence went into the house again.

"They are off early. It is a mile to my sister's, and I have had nothing to eat since yesterday noon. I am starved. I must help myself, and pay what the treat is worth afterwards."

Prudence washed her face, smoothed her hair, felt much refreshed, and hungrier than ever. No one had appeared, so our damsel in distress speedily found the pantry, and it proved to be well supplied.

Bread and butter, rounds of pink corned beef, a pan of gingerbread, and a basin of milk covered with cream. Prudence applied herself to these viands as harmoniously as she had to the bread and cheese wherewith Tom Walford had initiated his love-making.

Thus restored to life and its comforts, Miss Aubrey did not like to depart leaving Mrs. Peony's house unlocked and her cupboard plundered; therefore she sat on the doorstep whereon that good woman had rested to darn black hosiery, and waited to see if some one would not come.

It was a glorious day, and Prudence, after her night of wonders, was in a happy frame of mind. A halo of romance rested softly over this old mansion, a tender grace was upon yon dwelling of the dead; she mused on all the visions of the darkness.

Suddenly she became conscious of rude sounds, and looking up, saw Mr. and Mrs. Peony approaching their habitation through a lane. The warden of Manor Hall bore a knotted club; his wife, modestly behind him, was armed with an umbrella: a heavy Irishman in a red shirt swung a poker; his wife was weaponed with a broom: a negro closed the

line of march with a scythe in his hand and a ferocious expression in his eye, though his lagging steps might have betokened cowardice.

Prudence Aubrey wished herself at home.

The party drew near, and stopped, bewildered at the sight of the lady on the door-step.

"Why, Miss! it is early you are here," cried Mr. Peony.

"Did you see nothing?" screamed his wife.

"What should I see?" asked Prudence.

"Luck be to you! The Manor Hall is haunted, sure enough," exclaimed the Irishman.

"Such a night as we spent!" cried Mrs. Peony; "we would not live it again, or we'd be all dead men, me and me husband. O, Miss, they warned me, but I did never believe the half of it. Now I do—O, I do!"

"But what is it? Please explain," said Prudence.

"It begun in the evening, when once we were fairly set down quiet, and the chores done up. A noise like a woodpecker, maybe, and a thrimbling of the wall, and a wee, faint cry like.

"Sure now, *that* was the wailing soul of a poor babe, unbaptized—mercy upon it!" said Mrs. Peony's neighbor.

"Well, from that it just went on," continued Mrs. Peony. "Sometimes a shriek quite plain, that made me blood run cold, and knocks, and so on. It sounded overhead like, at first."

Prudence began to have a glimmering consciousness of what this courageous couple had heard.

"Finally," said Mrs. Peony, looking apprehensively at the house, "it got into the wall side."

"What got in?" asked Prudence.

"The ghost, Missis," explained the negro; and Mrs. Peony, nodding her assent, proceeded with her story.

"There's been a murder in Manor Hall some time, I know, for *it* went rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle, like the bones of a skeleton dropping to pieces. Ah, evil deeds will out! Then the rapping began. Says me man, 'Speak spirit, if

you must,' and it rapped, and rapped. Says I, 'in the name of Peter, Paul, and all the saints with Moses and the Baptist, are you in trouble, spirit?' And it rapped and rapped."

"Very likely it *was* in trouble," said Prudence, grimly.

"Then, me man, he rose up and said the Lord's Prayer, and that laid the spirit for a long time, and it did not rap any more. So we went to bed, but fearsome, to be sure."

"Well you might be," said Patrick.

"Pity you had no holy water handy," said Mrs. Patrick.

"A murder, sure enough," said the negro.

The tone of horror deepened through Mrs. Peony's speech.

"We went to bed, and by-and-by we heard a cry; a long, horrid scream—O, it sounded, you can't tell *how* it sounded."

"I think I can," said Prudence.

"Ah, but Miss, this was a death wail; a fearsome shriek from an Evil One—such sounds! filing saws and firing cannon, and dogs with tin pans on their tails, and crazy cats, all made in one, would never equal it. Me man, he rises up, and he says:

'Peter, Paul, Luke and John,
Acts of Postles every one,
Bless the bed that I lie on.'

Then it hushed up for a minute, and we two were a-dressing as fast as we could. Then it began again, Miss, *such* yells. The hair would have riz on your head with terror. We just ran like wild creatures, Miss, over to our neighbors here. We locked the front door as we went, and I was just done out, and like to die when I got to safety. Millions of money, Miss, would not keep me in this house over another night. We have just come back by daylight to move our goods. And oh, Miss, you sittin' there so innocent like, on the very step of this awful place, I just wonder you're left alive—and, and, me door is open! O, I won't go in—I won't, I won't. It is a ghost, sure enough. No—I'll never go in, not for all the goods in wide creation!"

"I wonder I am alive," said Prudence, calmly. "I was left up stairs shut in a closet yesterday, when our party visited the house. The door closed fast, and kept me in. Those noises you heard I made, trying to get some one to come and let me out. I got my breakfast just now in your pantry, ma'am, and there is pay for it."

Prudence reached home as the family were finishing breakfast, and had the satisfaction of being regarded as a heroine.

"What are you doing?" asked the doctor, finding her busy in the library about noon.

"I'm writing to Tom," said Miss Aubrey, with defiance of something in

her tones. "I mean to have one person who will care and know whether I get lost or not."

"And what is to become of that tile?"

"I shall have it set in gold, sir, and present it to Tom in lieu of my miniature!" exclaimed our damsel.

"Since your love affair was inaugurated in a tomb, with the concomitants of bread and cheese, I recommend that the denouement be a matter of magnificence, with church services and French millinery," cried Doctor Pils.

Prudence rested her head on her hand, and said, softly:

"I wish I might look as beautiful as that Phantom Bride whom I saw last night in the old Manor Hall."

AMONG THE HEMLOCKS.

BY REV. T. HEMPSTEAD.

THEY stir, and all the air is thronged with sound,
 Vague, subtle, immemorial litanies
 Harped to the hollow winds and chilly stars
 Before the axe along these valleys rung,
 Or man had wandered to these nameless shores.

Just over where their huge arms meet, the sky
 Stoops with a smile to kiss their bearded crowns
 As if in their rough, rugged forms it saw
 The children of a common Father's care:
 A sigh comes quivering from the long, deep vale,
 The dim, mysterious vale that sleeps below,
 And round the splintered crags that jut half way
 Up the steep mountain side, I hear a moan.

Above, around, how dim and vast they spread,
 These awful arches of the fanes of God!
 I stand beneath their whispering roof in awe,
 And shudder as I pause to look behind
 For fear that I may meet some pale, sad face,
 Some melancholy and grief-smitten eye
 That has been dust for many a long, long year.
 What are these mighty groves, these dusky paths,
 And tapering columns on whose mossy sides
 The chisel never sounded? Are they woods
 No more? fields where the deer may rove and browse
 Whilst the sly panther, crouching just above,