THE COURIER.

BY H. J. FELTUS.

BLOOMINGTON, - INDIANA

COL. INGERSOLL is said to be troubled with a disease of the eyes so that he can not read.

GEN. BUTLER'S best eye is not in poor condition and it is feared he may become totally blind.

MRS. CATHERINE BRUCE of New York city has given $50,000 for a powerful photograph telescope for Harvard college.

AMONG the revolutionary relics exhibited at Paris is the mask of Marat, molded after the death of l'Ami du Peuple. The mask of Robespierre which is shown is thought not to be authentic.

IN the cemetery of Heiligenkreuz, near Vienna, a white marble headstone has just been placed over a grave on which the grass has hardly grown green. The inscription on the stone is: "Marie, Baroness de Vestzera, born March 19, 1871; died Jan. 30, 1889. 'Life is a flower; it opens and is plucked.'"

A BELGIAN journal gives an account of a beauty show held in Paris in 1655. In remembrance of the oldest competition of the kind the prizes were golden apples. The first prize was, of course, awarded to the queen of France, and the second was obtained with 1,725 points by a Mlle. Semure. Most of the prize winners were ladies from Normandy.

SENATOR EVARTS, now 71 years old and as blithe as a man of forty, is quoted as saying: "The reason I have never been sick a day in my life and, although a spare man, capable day by day of unremitting work, always able to dine freely in the evening and afterward to return to my writing table, is that I never take and never have taken any physical exercise."

THOMAS A. ADISON, the wizard of Menlo park, writes a neat and regular hand. He appears to be about 43 or 44 years of age, and is short and thick-set. His face, which is smoothly shaven, has a peculiarly wise look. In speech he is very deliberate. At present he is apt to wear an iron-gray suit and a soft felt hat. When traveling he registers from Orange, N. J.

THE mayor of the city of Philadelphia recently while at Johnstown sent a telegram to the Hon. Edwin H. Fitler, mayor of Philadelphia, and chairman of the citizens' permanent relief committee, ordering the shipment of a car-load of provisions, and signed the telegram "Edwin H. Fitler, Mayor of Philadelphia and Chairman of the Citizens' Permanent Relief Committee."

ON the occasion of her son Albert's marriage, Mme. Menier, the widow of the famous French chocolate manufacturer, invited her three sons to dinner. When about to sit down to the table she said: "I am so glad to have all three around me to-day, for you know how much I love you; pray be seated." When the young men had sat down they each discovered under their napkins a check for a million francs.

AT the dinner party given in honor of the emperor and empress of Germany by the Count and Countess von Waldersee the countess preformed with distinguished grace the difficult feat of walking backward before her imperial guests up the whole length of a high staircase, managing her train with truly aristocratic dexterity. The countess, who was formerly Miss Mary Lee of New York, is said to be one of the most elegant women in European court society.

TALMAGE IN NEBRASKA.

THE MASSES ENCHANTED BY HIS SPIRITUAL ENDEAVOR.

He Grasps His Sacred Topic and Wields It With Fervor.

His Able Discourse "Thou Art Weighed in the Balances, and Art Found Wanting," Received in Awed Silence.

The Rev. Talmage discourses to an immense audience at Omaha. His text was: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."—Daniel v. 27. The preacher said:

Babylon was the paradise of architecture, and driven out from thence the grandest buildings of modern times are only the evidence of her fall. The site having been selected for the city, two million men were employed in the rear of her walls and the building of her works. It was a city sixty miles in circumference. There was a trench all around the city, from which the material for the building of the city had been digged.

There were twenty-five gates on each side of the city; between every two gates a tower of defense springing into the skies; from each gate on the one side, a street running straight through to the corresponding street on the other side, so that there were fifty streets fifteen miles long. Through the city ran a branch of the River Euphrates. This river sometimes overflowed its banks, and to keep it from the ruin of the city a lake was constructed into which the surplus water of the river would run during the time of freshets, and the water was kept in this artificial lake until time of drought, and then this water would stream down over the city. At either end of the bridge spanning this Euphrates there was a palace—the one palace a mile and a half around, the other palace seven and a half miles around.

The wife of Nebuchadnezzar had been born and brought up in the country, and in a mountainous region, and she could not bear this flat district of Babylon; and so, to please his wife, Nebuchadnezzar built in the midst of the city a mountain four hundred feet high. This mountain was built out into terraces supported on arches. On the top of these arches a layer of flat stones, on the top of that a layer of reeds and bitumen, on the top of that two layers of bricks closely cemented, on the top of that a heavy sheet of lead, and on the top of that the soil placed—the soil so deep that a Lebanon cedar had room to anchor its roots. There were pumps worked by mighty machinery fetching up the water from the Euphrates to this hanging garden as it was called, so that there were fountains spouting into the sky.

Standing below and looking up it must have seemed as if the clouds were in blossom, or as though the sky leaned on the shoulder of a cedar. All this Nebuchadnezzer did to please his wife. Well, she ought to have been pleased. I suppose she was pleased. If that would not please her nothing would. There was in that city also the temple of Belus, with towers—one tower the eighth of a mile high, in which there was an observatory where astronomers talked to the stars. There was in that temple an image, just one image, which would cost what would be our fifty-two million dollars.

O what a city! The earth never saw anything like it, never will see anything like it. And yet I have to tell you that it is going to be destroyed. The king and his princes are at a feast. They are all intoxicated. Pour out the rich wine into the chalice. Drink to the health of the king. Drink to the glory of Babylon. Drink to a great future.

A thousand lords reel intoxicated. The king, seated upon a chair, with vacant look, as intoxicated men will—with vacant look stared at the wall. But soon that vacant look takes on intensity, and it is an affrighted look; and all the princes begin to look and wonder what is the matter, and they look at the same point on the wall. And then there drops a darkness into the room and puts out the blaze of the golden plate, and out of the sleeve of the darkness there comes a finger—a finger of fiery terror circling around and circling around as though it would write; and then it comes up and with a sharp tip of flame it inscribes on the plastering of the wall the doom of the king: "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting." The bang of heavy fists against the gates of the palace are followed by the breaking in of the doors. A thousand gleaming knives strike into a thousand quivering hearts. Now Death is king, and he is seated on a throne of corpses. In that hall there is a balance lifted. God swing it! On one side of the balance are put Belshazzar's opportunities, on the other side of the balance are put Belshazzar's sins. The sins come down. His opportunities go up. Weighed in the balances—found wanting.

There has been a great deal of cheating in our country with false weights and measures and balances, and the government, to change that state of things appointed commissioners whose business it was to stamp weights and balances, and a great deal of the wrong has been corrected. But still, after all, there is no such thing as a perfect balance on earth. The chain may brake, or some of the metal may be clipped, or in some way the equipose may be a little disturbed.

You cannot always depend upon earthly balances. A pound is not always a pound, and you may pay for one thing and get another; but in the balance which is suspended to the throne of God, a pound is a pound, and right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a soul is a soul, and eternity is eternity. God has a perfect bushel and a perfect peck and a perfect gallon. When merchants weigh their goods in the wrong way, then the Lord weighs the goods again. If from the imperfect measure the merchant pours out what pretends to be a gallon of oil and there is less than a gallon, God knows it, and He calls upon His recording angel to mark it: "So much wanting in that measure of oil." The farmer comes in from the country. He has apples to sell. He has an imperfect measure. He pours out the apples from this imperfect measure. God recognizes it. He says to the recording angel: "Mark down so many apples too few—an imperfect measure." We may cheat ourselves and we may cheat the world, but we cannot cheat God, and in the great day of judgement it will be found out that what we learned in boyhood at school is correct; that twenty hundred weight make a ton, and one hundred and twenty solid feet make a cord of wood. No more, no less, and a religion which does not take hold of this life as well as the life to come is no religion at all. But, my friends, that is not the style of balances I am to speak of today, that is not the kind of weights and measures. I am to speak of that kind of balances which can weigh principles, weigh churches, weigh men, weigh nations and weigh worlds. "What!" you say, "is it possible that our world is to be weighed?" Yes. Why, you would think if God put on one side the balances suspended from the throne the Alps, and the Pyrenees, and the Himalayas, and Mount Washington, and all the cities of the earth, they would crush it. No, no. The time will come when God will sit down on the white throne to see the world weighed, and on one side will be the world's opportunities, and on the other side the world's sins. Down will go the sins and away will go the opportunities, and God will say to the messengers with the torch: "Burn that world! weighed and found wanting!"

So God will weigh churches. He takes a great church. That great church, according to the worldly estimate, must be weighed. He puts it on one side the balances, and the minister and the choir and the building that cost its hundreds of thousands of dollars. He puts them on one side the balances. On the other side of the scale he puts what that church ought to be, what its consecration ought to be, what its sympathy for the poor ought to be, what its devotion to all good ought to be. That is on one side. That side comes down, and the church, not being able to stand the test, rises in the balances. It does not make any difference about your magnificent machinery. A church is built for one thing—to save souls. If it saves a few souls when it might save a multitude of souls, God will spew it out of his mouth. Weighed and found wanting! So God estimates nations. How many times he has put the Spanish monarchy into the scales, and found it insufficient and condemned it! The French empire was placed on one side the scales, and God weighed the French empire, and Napoleon said: "Have I not enlarged the boulevards? Did I not kindle the glories of the Champs Elysees? Have I not adorned the Tuileries? Have I not built the gilded Opera house?" Then God weighed the nation, and he put on one side the scales the emperor, and the boulevards, and the Tuileries, and the Champs Elysees, and the gilded Opera house, and on the other side he puts that man's abominations, that man's libertinism, that man's selfishness, that man's godless ambition. This last came down, and all the brilliancy of the scene vanished. What is that voice coming up from Sedan? Weighed and found wanting!

But I must become more individual and more personal in my address. Some people say they do not think clergymen ought to be personal in their religious address, but ought to deal with subjects in the abstract. I do not think that way. What would you think of a hunter who should go to the Adirondacks to shoot deer in the abstract? Ah! no. He loads the gun, he puts the butt of it against the breast, he runs his eye along the barrel, he takes aim, and then crash go the antlers on the rocks. And so, if we want to be hunters for the Lord, we must take sure aim and fire. Not in the abstract are we to treat things in religious discussions. If a physician comes into a sick room, does he treat disease in the abstract? No; he feels the pulse, takes the diagnosis, then he makes the prescription. And if we want to heal souls for this life and the life to come, we do not want to treat them in the abstract. The fact is, you and I have a malady which, if uncured by grace, will kill us forever. Now, I want no abstraction. Where is the balm? Where is the physician?

People say there is a day of judgment coming. My friends, every day is a day of judgment, and you and I to-day are being canvassed, inspected, weighed. Here are the balances of the sanctuary. They are lifted, and we must all be weighed. Who will come and be weighed first? Here is a moralist who volunteers. He is one of the most upright men in the country. He comes. Well, my brother, get in—get in the balances now, and be weighed. But as he gets into the balances, I say: "What is that bundle you have along with you?" "Oh," he says, that is my reputation for goodness, and kindness, and charity, and generosity, and kindliness generally." "O my brother! we cannot weigh that; we are going to weigh you—you. Now, stand in the scales—you, the moralist. Paid your debts?" "Yes," you say, "paid all my debts." Have you acted in an upright way in the community?" "Yes, yes," "Have you been kind to the poor? Are you faithful in a thousand relations in life?" "Yes." "So far, so good. But now, before you get out of this scale, I want to ask you two or three questions. Have your thoughts always been right?" "No," you say; "no." Put down one mark. "Have you loved the Lord with all your heart, and soul, and mind and strength?" "No," you say. Make another mark. "Come now, be frank, and confess that in ten thousand things you have come short—have you not?" "Yes." Make ten thousand marks. Come now, get me a book large enough to make the record of that moralist's deficits. My brother, stand in the scales, do not fly away from them. I put on your side the scales all the good deeds you ever did, all the kind words you ever uttered; but on the other side the scales I put this weight which God says I must put there—on the other side the scales and opposite to yours I put this weight: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Weighed and found wanting.

Still, the balances of the sanctuary are suspended and we are ready to weigh any who come. Who shall be the next? Well, here is a formalist. He comes and he gets into the balances, and as he gets in I see that all his religion is in genuflexions and in outward observances. As he gets into the scales I say: "What is that you have in this pocket?" "Oh!" he says, "that is Westminster Assembly Catechism." I say: "Very good. What have you in the other pocket?" "Oh!" he says, "that is the Heidelberg Catechism." "Very good. What is that you have under your arm, standing in this balance of the sanctuary?" "Oh!" he says, "that is a church record." "Very good. What are these books on your side the balances?" "Oh!" he says, "those are 'Calvin's Institutes.'" "My brother, we are not weighing books; we are weighing you. It cannot be that you are depending for your salvation upon your orthodoxy. Do you not know that the creeds and the forms of religion are merely the scaffolding for the building? You certainly are not going to mistake the scaffolding for the temple. Do you not know that men have gone to perdition with a catechism in their pocket?" "But," says the man, "I cross myself often." "Ah! that will not save you." "But," says the man, "I am sympathetic for the poor." "That will not save you." Says the man, "I sat at the communion table." That will not save you. "But," says the man, "I have had my name on the church record." "That will not save you." "But I have been a professor of religion forty years!" "That will not save you. Stand there on your side the balances, and I will give you the advantage—I will let you have all the creeds, all the church records, all the Christian conventions that were ever held, all the communion tables that were ever built, on your side the balances. On the other side the balances I must put what God says I must put there. I put this million pound weight on the other side the balances: "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away." Weighed and found wanting!

Still the balances are suspended. Are there any others who would like to be weighed or who will be weighed? Yes; here comes a wording. He gets into the scales. I can very easily see what his whole life is made up of. Stocks, dividends, percentages, "buyer ten days," "buyer thirty days." Get in, my friend, get into these balances and be weighed—weighed for this life, and weighed for the life to come. He gets in. I find that the two great questions in his life are, "How cheaply can I buy these goods?" and "How dearly can I sell them?" I find he admires heaven because it is a land of gold, and money must be "easy."

I find from talking with him that religion and the Sabbath are an interruption, a vulgar interruption, and he hopes on the way to church to drive up a new customer! All the week he has been weighing fruits, weighing meats, weighing ice, weighing coals, weighing confections, weighing worldly and perishable commodities, not realizing the fact that he himself has been weighed. On your side the balances, O worldling! I will give you full advantage. I put on your side all the banking houses, all the store houses, all the cargoes, all the insurance companies, all the factories, all the silver, all the gold, all the money vaults, all the safe deposits—all on your side. But it does not add one ounce, for at the very moment we are congratulating you on your fine house and upon your princely income, God and the angels are writing in regard to your soul: "Weighed and found wanting!"

But I must go faster and speak of the final scrutiny. The fact is, my friends, we are moving on amid astounding realities. These pulses which now are drumming the march of life, may, after a while, call a halt. We walk on a hair hung bridge over chasms. All around us are dangers lurking ready to spring on us from ambush. We lie down at night, not knowing whether we shall arise in the morning. We start out for our occupations, not knowing whether we shall come back. Crowns being burnished for thy brow or bolts forged for thy prison. Angels of light ready to shout at thy deliverance, or fiends of darkness stretching out skeleton hands to pull thee down into ruin consummate. Suddenly the judgment will be here. The angel with one foot on the sea and the other foot on the land, will swear by him that liveth for ever and ever that time shall be no longer: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Hark to the jarring of the mountains. Why, that is the setting down of the scales, the balances. And then there is a flash as from a cloud, but it is the glitter of the shinning balances, and they are hoisted, and all nations are to be weighed. The unforgiven get in on this side the balances. They may have weighed themselves and pronounced a flattering decision. The world may have weighed them and pronounced them moral. Now they are being weighed in God's balances that can make no mistake. All the property gone, all the titles of distinction gone, all the worldly success gone; there is a soul, absolutely nothing but a soul, an immortal soul, a never dying soul, a soul stripped of all worldly advantages, a soul—on one side the scales. On the other side the balances are wasted Sabbaths, disregarded sermons, ten thousand opportunities of mercy and pardon that were cast aside. They are on the other side the scales, and there God stands, and in the presence of men and devils, cherubim and archangel, he announces while groaning earthquake, and crackling conflagration, and judgment trumpet, and everlasting storm repeat it: "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

But, say some who are Christians: "Certainly you don't mean to say that we will have to get in the balances? Our sins are all pardoned, our title to heaven is secure. Certainly you are not going to put us in the balances?" Yes, my brother. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and on that day you are certainly going to be weighed.

O follower of Christ! you get into the balances. The bell of the judgment is ringing. You must get into the balances. You get in on this side. On the other side the balances we will place all the opportunities of good which you did not improve, all the attainments in piety which you might have had, but which you refused to take. We place them all on the other side. They go down, and your soul rises in the scale. You cannot weigh against all those imperfections.

Well, then, we must give you the advantage, and on your side the scales we will place all the good deeds you have ever done, and all the kind words you have ever uttered. Too light yet! Well, we must put on your side all the consecration of your life, all the holiness of your life, all the prayers of your life, all the faith of your Christian life. Too light yet! Come, mighty men of the past, and get in on that side the scales. Come, Payson, and Doddridge, and Baxter, get in on that side the scales and make them come down, that this righteous one may be saved. They come and get in the scales. Too light yet! Come, the martyrs, the Latimers, the Wickliffes, the men who suffered at the stake for Christ. Get on this side the Christian's balances, and see if you cannot help him weigh it aright. They come and get in. Too light! Come, angels of God on high. Let not the righteous perish with the wicked. They get in on this side the balances. Too light yet!

I put on this side the balances all the scepters of light, all the thrones of power, all the crowns of glory. Too light yet. But just at that point, Jesus, the son of God, comes up to the balances, and he puts one of his scarred feet on your side, and the balances begin to tremble from top to bottom. Then he puts both of his scarred feet on the balances, and the Christian's side come down with a stroke that sets all the bells of heaven ringing. That rock of Ages heavier than any other weight.

But says the Christian: "Am I to be allowed to get off so easily?" Yes. If some one should come and put on the other side the scales all your imperfections, all your cavices, all your jealousies, all your inconsistencies of life, they would not budge the scales with Christ on your side the scales. Go free! There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Chains broken, prison houses opened, sins pardoned. Go free! Weighed in the balances, and nothing, nothing wanted.

Oh! what a glorious hope. Will you accept it this day? Christ making up for what you lack. Christ the atonement for all your sins. Who will accept him? Will not this whole audience say: "I am insufficient, I am a sinner, I am lost by reason of my transgressions, but Christ has paid it all. My Lord, and my God, my life, my pardon, my heaven. Lord Jesus, I hail thee." Oh! if you could only understand the worth of that sacrifice, this whole audience would this moment accept Christ and be saved.

We go away off, or back into history, to get some illustration by which we may set forth what Christ has done for us. We need not go so far. I saw a vehicle behind a runaway horse dashing through the street, a mother and her two children in the carriage. The horse dashed along as though to hurl them to death, and a mounted policeman with a shout clearing the way, and the horse at full run, attempted to seize those runaway horses and to save a calamity, when his own horse fell and rolled over him. He was picked up half dead. Why were our sympathies so stirred? Because he was badly hurt, and hurt for others. But I tell you to-day of how Christ, the Son of God, on the blood red horse of sacrifice came for our rescue, and rode down the sky and rode unto death for our rescue. Are not your hearts touched? That was a sacrifice for you and me. O thou who didst ride on the red horse of sacrifice! come this hour, and ride through this assemblage on the white horse of victory.

Once Enough.

Conductor (after a collision in which everybody got bounced half way across the car, but no one was hurt)—"Gentlemen, I find that no great harm has been done. We ran into the rear end of a freight train; and if some of you will come out and help clear the track, we can procede on our journey."

Fat Passenger—"Conductor, are there any more freight trains ahead?"

"Oh, I suppose so."

"Well, let's stay where we are."—New York Weekly.

Just Bloomed.

Come, Marie, take your feathered hat,
And shoulder-cape and piquant muff,
Some repartees, a laugh, a glance,
And in your sleeve a sly rebuff,—
Come, Marie, come!

Come dancing down the stairs, and call
Some trite remark that sounds divine;
Be saucy at your mother's care
About your wraps; my aid decline
About your glove.

I know not why a foolish girl
Should seem so wise—to be so sweet;
Nor why, without a glimpse of soul,
You are a creature quite complete,
And somewhat rare.

Let me but gaze upon your cheek,
And catch the fervor of your eye,
And note the dimple at your lip
When I declare that I shall die
Without your love!

—Rose Hawthorne Lathrop in the Century.

NOTHING GOES HARD WITH ME.

'Twas but a workman on his way
From toilsome work to tea,
Yet in a cheery tone he sang:
"Nothing goes hard with me."

I noted well the rough-hewn look,
The awkward, untaught air;
The spade and shovel on his back,
The tangled, unshorn hair.

And these the thoughts that came uncalled,
Unto my musing mind:
Where in the higher walks of life,
Can we contentment find?

Content in such a great degree,
As this poor workman proves,
Dwells constantly within the walks
Wherein he daily moves.

How many, of the toilsome task
That each new day must bring,
Could learn from that poor laborer
To be content and sing!

And find how light the work would fall—
No matter what it be—
While cherishing the workman's words—
"There's nothing goes hard with me."

TOO LATE.

A Story of St. Valentine's Day.

CHAPTER III.

Nell could not be persuaded; she remained a recluse from the September that saw the departure of Lyon Leslie to the opening of the Christmas following. People nodded and whispered. Some said she was engaged to the handsome soldier, others that she was pining in secret; but Nell made no sign. She was cheerful as ever in manner, if not so buoyant as of yore, and performed her usual routine of parish duty; but, besides persistently refusing to mix in the towns entertainments, she sought less and less the society of the companions with whom she had been intimate. She took her rides alone, and her walks too, at least, so far as human fellowship went, but with a goodly company of dogs, her twin brother's special property and trust to her. Wanderings of hours they took together, but wanderings that brought no roses to the girl's pale cheek, nor added vigor to her limbs. Her eyes seemed to grow larger, and their inner light more earnest. At times too, she was fretful, and day by day grew more silent and abstracted.

Mrs. Thanet was disturbed; she did not think it wise to force her daughter's confidence; still, she felt that the present condition of things could not be permitted to continue without a word, and a very difficult word to speak she felt that word would be. Intuitively she knew that, whatever had passed between her daughter and Lyon Leslie, no definite engagement had been entered into. She mistrusted the man. But, like the prudent woman she was, she bided her time, and that arrived suddenly.

A note from Mrs. Kennett to her sister-in-law informed her of their arrival at the Hall for Christmas. The next day Mrs. Kennett, accompanied by Janet, drove into Thorpe and stayed to luncheon with her relatives.

Janet, keen as a hawk, espied a change in her cousin.

"You are mooning after Randall," she said. "You are to come to the Hall for Christmas, and Randall too. Uncle Nettle"—her respectful diminutive for Squire Nettlethorpe—"says so, mamma says so, and I say so; so it is *un fait accompli*."

At the Hall Nell always shared the same room with her cousin. This had hitherto been a great enjoyment to both girls. Now Nell would have wished it otherwise, but she fell into the usual arrangement without a hint of her desire.

It was the most confidential hour in the twenty-four, the hour before lying down to rest. Then the girls, arrayed in their dainty dressing-gowns, sat over the cheery fire and exchanged confidences. The confidence of these cousins differed essentially from those usually indulged in by the average young lady of the period. Men played a subordinate part, and persons generally. They used to build castles in the air, to sketch out "great things to do," to criticize their current reading, discuss authors and artists, and bewail the proscribed lot of their own sex.

Nell's hair was long and wavy, dark brown, with a golden sheen. Janet's was black as raven's wing, straight and glossy. They sat, brush in hand, idly drawing it over their silky tresses, anon letting it fall into their laps and, throwing the rebellious locks back from their faces, looking into the gleaming ash.

Nell spoke first.

"You must have lots to tell me, Janet; you have been everywhere."

"Which amounts practically to nowhere. I have no distinct recollections of any place in particular, Dresden and Dussendorf suggest—well, colored canvas. From gallery to gallery we were trotted, catalogues in hand, and impovers behind. It didn't elevate my scriptural conceptions. I assure you; things got mixed, and for the life of me I couldn't recollect Biblical facts apart with heathen myths."

"But Paris? Oh, how I long to see Paris!"

"Well, Paris is charming, but, my dear, disillusionising. When I shut my eyes and think, I seem to see nothing but architecture, and to hear the Marseillaise."

"The Rhine, Janet, and Switzerland, and Italy! Are you weary of those, too?"

"Yes, and no. There are bits of the Clyde the Rhine can never touch; there are passages and torrents and glens in the Highland all the grand Alps cannot show; and Italy sent me to sleep."

"You are such a home bird, Janet; you are insular."

"Well, you see, Nell—Janet took up her brush and began to draw it over her hair—"you see it was all in the way of education. It was to expand our minds, mamma said, and all that sort of thing. Now, if you were given some favorite lollypop and told it contained a tonic, would you enjoy it? No—emphatically no!"—and the brush worked with a will.

"I wish you and I could go off together," said Nell, "on from island unto island. But then I have no money. I wish we could; Randall would go with us and write a grand poem."

"Poetry's only good for the gods," announced her cousin. "I am practical."

"So am I, Janet, more so than you perhaps; but one may stand on earth and look at heaven."

"Nell, you have become quite romantic, and I want to know the reason why," Janet asked regarding the other critically.

Nell blushed rosy red, and, with sudden vigor, began to brush her wavy locks.

"What nonsense you talk, Janet! I suppose, if I repeated one of Tupper's platitudes, you'd call me a philosopher. There is just as much analogy between supposed philosophy as between me and romance."

"I thought we were bosom-friends, Nell, real bosom friends. I know I never had a secret from you, and you used never to have one from me."

"I have no secret, Janet; there is nothing to tell."

"Nothing to tell when there is everything to suspect? Ah, Nell, absence does not make the heart grow fonder! You have grown cold to me."

Nell turned her great mournful eyes to her cousin in some such way as a half-frightened deer. She wondered how much Janet knew.

"You would have been the very first I would have told," continued Janet, still in a tone of reproach. "When Mr. Anclive did me the honor to say he was 'willin', before I even gave him his *congé*—the idiot!—I told you."

"But no one has laid such valuables at my feet, Janet. You have been listening to idle gossip."

"Hasn't he? Then he is a mean, good-for-nothing, mercenary, cruel—"

Nell put her hand on her cousin's mouth.

"How can you, Janet! What have you heard? And do you for a moment suppose I could ever even waste a thought on anyone deserving such insinuations? I could not love unworthily."

Nell spoke very calmly, but coldly. Janet's heart was on fire. She feared for her cousin, and she was hurt at her reticence.

"I know your estimate, your high-flown idea of love," she cried, pushing Nell's hand aside not a little roughly. "You would believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things." Her voice took a tone of scorn.

"You go too far, Janet," returned Nell haughtily. "I would never give my love unsought; once given, it would be forever, and I would endure nothing derogatory to my self-respect. Even in friendship endurance has its limits."

"Nell, I will not be frozen out of your heart." The unwilling tears stood in Janet's eyes; she felt, if this appeal failed, Nell would never give her her confidence, and her heart was full of dread for her cousin. "You are far, far cleverer than I am, Nell, far, far more beautiful; I am only pretty, and your judgment is clearer; but, oh, Nell, darling, all this is but in part, all this vanishes away at the little word, 'love'! Love blinds such as you, Nell, for such as you love transcendentally. They make for themselves an ideal, a fetish, and thus worship with blind idolatry. Such as I, Nell, love through the heart and common-sense, and with eyes wide open, and we are safe. You make shipwreck of all."

With a sudden resolve, Nell threw her shrouding hair back, caught it deftly in her hands, and wound it in a great sheaf, letting it fall so, semi-confined, on her shoulders. Then, cold and pale, she rose to her feet and said softly, yet sternly—

"You are right, Janet; I owe our friendship confidence; you must never recur to the subject until I give you leave. I'll tell you all. I have to tell you now, and, believe me, I am stronger than you give me credit for. Lyon Leslie loved me and I loved him—that is all. He will come back some day and take me away."

"Nell, did he say he would?"

"No; why should he? Love has not many words, love does not need many words. I know he will."

"One more question, Nell, and I've done. Did he ask you to be his wife? That does not take many words."

"No; why should he? He said he loved me, and he knew I loved him. What else can such love end in but union here and hereafter?"

There was a faint down of color on the girl's pale cheek, and her eyes literally glowed with light.

For the moment Janet was awed. Such faith, such love, were beyond her ken. She recovered herself with a groan. Clutching her brush aggressively, she said mentally—

"If he plays her false, I'll—" What she would do she did not express further; she let the brush drop from her hand, and flung herself into her cousin's arms with a burst of tears.

"My darling, my darling," she cried, "may he prove worthy of the heart he has won! I will hope with you."

She asked nothing further, and in this she was wise. Unconsciously to herself Nell felt relieved by what had passed; her burden seemed lighter and hope fairer.

There was quite a heap of Christmas cards on Nell's plate when she came down to breakfast on Christmas morning—some gifts more substantial, too. One more than the others attracted comment. It was a massive gold locket, of barbaric design, covered with raised hieroglyphics, and attached to a slight chain of linked rings. There was nothing inside the locket, nor did word on imitation accompany it. It was an anonymous gift. The address on the wrapping was in the handwriting evidently of the tradesman from whom it had probably been bought. It went the round of the table; every one but Janet had a suggestion as to the donor. Nell, too, was silent here. She did not know—how could she, when there was neither note or initial to help her? Perhaps her new brother-in-law sent it, she suggested; he had not given her a bridesmaid's token, and had promised to make up for his omissions some day.

"Yes, some day," cried Randall. "I know what Barton's some day means; it means to-day. He's just the biggest screw between John o' Groat's and Land's End, and would as soon think of buying an uninteresting creature like a sister-in-law a magnificent locket like that as of getting himself a new hat; a thing he hasn't done, his own brother says, since his head stopped growing.

Nell could have boxed her brother's ears with a will.

"I shall have a letter in a day or two," she said, returning the locket to its case with trembling fingers. "I have a rich godmother, I believe."

"What, Lady Morton?" again put in the unlucky Randall. "Why, Nell, you are making bad shots! Why, she never even sent you a mug at your christening—mother said so! Besides, I'm sure she's dead."

"No," said Nell, not a little put out, "she is alive and well. Papa sent her a Persian kitten lately."

Then Janet came to the rescue.

"I've got something mysterious, too," she cried: and she showed up an onyx brooch, with a beautifully executed jay in diamonds, set in the center.

"Not much mystery in that!" exclaimed one of her sisters. "It's the Baron, I'm sure. Do get a pebble, Jan, and have a gander done in brilliants, and send it to him."

"I like the Baron, Cis," was Janet's reply, "and I do foind de brooch ver' lovely." All laughed at the mimicry.

Loyal Janet made no allusion to Nell's gift. It disappeared from sight and was soon forgotten in the divergencies of Christmas-tide—forgotten by all but the recipient and Janet.

A close scrutiny, when by herself, revealed to Nell a secret spring within the apparently void case. She touched it and a thin layer of gold flew back, disclosed a tiny ring of dark hair, fastened with a gold thread.

With passionate kisses the girl replaced it in its hiding-place, then laid the locket to her heart and looked upwards, her eyes radiant with joy and her bosom heaving. Before putting it away, till she could devise a plan of wearing it unseen, she examined the delicate chain, holding it up to the light, and within each ring she discovered, in fine but clear tracery the words "Dinna forget." No happier eyes closed in rest that Christmas night in Nettlethorpe's overflowing Hall than beautiful Nell Thanet's.

The last day of December was the twins' birthday. On that day they were nineteen years old. They had wished to return home to spend it with their parents, but the cousins would not hear of it. In the morning they rode into Thorpe, a merry party of four, received felicitations and loving offerings from their family, and returned, little loath, to the luxurious Hall.

There had been an arrival in the interim, a most unexpected and awkward arrival—the Baron von Melkenburg. He had followed quickly in the wake of his messenger bird, the brilliant jay.

In Mrs. Nettlethorpe's boudior there was not a little commotion. Mrs. Kennett denied having given any special invitation to the gentleman. He had seemed to be an admirer of horses, and she had once said, in quite a casual way, that, if he ever came to England, she would like him to see her brother's stud, never dreaming that he would take her at her word in this off-handed fashion.

"If he were not a foreigner," said the lady of the house, slightly molified, "I should give him his *congé* at once; but foreigners have different codes of etiquette to ours, and, according to his, he may be quite *en regle*. Jasper"—alluding to her husband—"will be in shortly, and I shall hand over the intruder to him."

At this juncture, Janet, followed by Nell and Randall, joined the conclave in the boudoir. She was even more surprised than her mother and sisters at the occurrence, and much more irate, for it had been she whom the Baron had honored with his addresses, and she was conscious that she had shown him in a plain enough manner that they were distasteful; she had been amused, and perhaps just a little flattered. It was a most awkward situation.

"Where is he?" she asked much distressed.

"In the drawing-room," said her young sister Polly, not a little mischievously. "He has been there all by himself, for the last half-hour. He came in a carriage and pair, like a grand seigneur, from Thorpe. And Calton—their maid—says he has brought a lot of luggage,

The good-natured squire, when he heard of the Baron's advent, desired that his unbidden guest should be entertained, promising that in the meantime he would endeavor to ascertain more of his *status* in society than the Kennetts appeared to know.

The Baron appeared quite at his ease. The Squire had joined him in the drawing-room, and had given him a courteous welcome, if not a hearty one. But he, at first sight, disliked the man. There was an effrontery in his ease, an affectation of equality that sat awkwardly, and a certain sharpness of glance that repelled the simple downright Englishman.

"A man to guard against," he thought; but nothing more.

At dinner the Baron appeared in an elaborate toilet, with much jewelry and profuse perfume. Nell said very little; but she made him her close study the whole evening. She was in better spirits than she had been since Lyon Leslie's departure. Her wit was bright to-night.

In the drawing-room later, Andrew attached himself to Nell; he had lately shown symptoms of succumbing to his beautiful cousin's attractions.

A hint of this he ventured in her ear, resting by her side in the noble conservatory which, this night a blaze of light, opened out of the drawing room. The girl was in no mood for whispers of that sort. She felt as one feels when a strange foot approaches a spot sacred to some cherished memory; but she liked her cousin, so warned him off gently, but firmly.

"Now, be sensible, Andrew," she said; "if you want to keep your hand in, there is Lady Bab"—indicating with her fan the Lady Barbara Merville, a neice of the Squire, a large blonde, handsome, and an heiress—"she is always ready, you know."

"Nell," he said, fairly turning his back on the lady in question—"Nell, we have always been good friends."

"Always, cousin mine; let us remain so."

"I have the lock of hair you gave me two years ago. I was looking at it this evening before dinner. Your hair has changed Nell; it hasn't the true goldenstint it had—is it a symbol of your heart?"

"I have yours too," she said, lightly and evasively. "It was done up in a sweeping sheaf with Lucy's, Polly's and Janet's, and set in a gold-rimmed brooch. Tibbs"—the Thorpe jeweler—"did it, and I kept it for home adornment."

He bit his lip.

"Do you know," he said, "I think you country girls are much more accomplished flirts than town belles? You make a fellow feel awfully small. I've thought so much of you, Nell. Do you remember the kiss you gave me one Christmas under the mistletoe? I do." And he looked into her averted face appealingly, imploringly.

"And so do I, coz"—meeting his love-lorn eyes frankly. "And, if you're good you shall have another this Christmas, under the mistletoe;" and she held up her face playfully.

"I would rather have it under the rose," he said, pulling forward a branch of a Marshal Niel in bloom, and arching it between them.

She laughed, ignoring his more serious intent.

"You are such a boy, Andrew!" she said. "Do be sensible, that's a good fellow. I wanted to ask you about that baron, and here you are rehearsing a flirtation with me."

"No," said Nell, not a little put out, "she is alive and well. Papa sent her a Persian kitten lately."

Andrew's jealousy was fired.

"Oh, I'll tell you all you want to know!" he cried. "He's rich—that's the main point; he says he's been in the Prussian Guards, and he sings like a nightingale—not one of which recommendations I possess."

"You dear old goosey-gander," said Nell, with frank affection, "do be sensible—this is the third time of asking. I like your little finger better than his whole baronial *corpus*"—she made a gesture of dislike. "It is so hard, when I want a friend, to find a-a spoon;" and her laugh rang out merrily.

Poor Andrew was in earnest; he showed signs of sulks.

"It's all that recruiting fellow," he muttered. "I know him; he has fooled no end of girls."

Nell was equally determined not to quarrel with her cousin; but she bit her lip.

"There's the piano," she said; "they're going to dance. Come, I'll give you the first." He seized her hand. "Wait a moment," she cried, "I want to say something first—that man who calls himself a baron is no more a baron than I am a baroness, or, what's more, he's not even a gentleman—never was — in any country, civilized or uncivilized."

"Well, there are not many gentlemen in Africa;" and, a little mollified by the depreciation of a possible rival, he laughed.

"I beg your pardon, Andrew; some savages would put many of our fine gentlemen in the shade."

"Naturally so, being dusky," he replied, teasingly.

"He's not even a foreigner," she continued, taking not the slightest notice of his facetiousness. "His broken English is put on. Don't you notice, when he's off his guard, how shaky his 'h's' are?"

"Very likely; fellows of that sort never turn up trumps; but he's a first class lady's man, and he's rich—What does it matter? Come, the Waltz will be over."

"But it does matter, Andrew. If he is not what he represents himself to be, he is an imposter, and I advise you to give the Squire a hint to look after his silver spoons."

"Nell! Are you off your head?"

"No, sir, my head is as sound as my heart, and likely to remain so; only I have eyes, and know how to use them"—Andrew ventured a suggestive sod—"and ears, which are often to more purpose, and not open to idle gossip"—Andrew winced. "Besides, I have one gift—I have a second sight. Janet owns I am a witch."

"So do I; but you won't listen. Don't I tell you you are bewitching?"

"Andrew, you're a foolish boy—there, it's out! That's my plain unvarnished opinion of you—just a foolish boy. Come, we're in time for a couple of rounds; but, mind, I've warned you."

It was strictly a family party, the only foreign element being the intruding Baron. But, by the time the second dance was over, he had ingratiated himself with the entire company—all excepting Nell. His air had assumed the familiarity of an established and approved intimate, and even Mrs. Nettlethorpe acknowledged that