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THE BLACK ROBE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

—AUTHOR OF—

"THE WOMAN IN WHITE," "THE MOON STONE," "AFTER DARK," "NO NAME," "MAN AND WIFE," "THE LAW AND THE LADY," "THE NEW MAGDALEN," ETC., ETC.

BOOK THE THIRD.

"Do you like dogs, Mr. Romayne?" he asked. "I see my spaniel's eyes saying that he likes you, and his tail begging you to take some notice of him."

Romayne caressed the dog rather absently.

His new friend had unconsciously presented to him a new view of the darker aspect of his own life. Winterfield's refined pleasant manners, his generous readiness in placing the treasures of his library at a stranger's disposal, had already appealed irresistibly to Romayne's sensitive nature. The favorable impression was now greatly strengthened by the briefly bold treatment which he had just heard of a subject in which he was seriously interested.

"I must see more of this man," was his thought, as he patted the companionable spaniel.

Father Benwell's trained observation followed the vivid changes of expression on Romayne's face, and marked the eager look in his eyes as he lifted his head from the dog to the dog's master. The priest saw his opportunity and took it.

"Do you remain long at Ten Acres Lodge?" he said to Romayne.

"I scarcely know as yet. We have no other plans at present."

"You inherit the place, I think, from your late aunt, Lady Berrick?"

"Yes."

The tone of the reply was not very encouraging; Romayne felt no interest in talking of Ten Acres Lodge. Father Benwell persisted.

"I was told by Mrs. Eyrecourt," he went on, "that Lady Berrick had some fine pictures. Are they still at the Lodge?"

"Certainly. I couldn't live in a house without pictures."

Father Benwell looked at Winterfield.

"Another taste in common between you and Mr. Romanye," he said, "besides your liking for dogs."

This at once produced the desired result. Romayne eagerly invited Winterfield to see his pictures.

"There are not many of them," he said. "But they are really worth looking at. When will you come?"

"The sooner the better," Winterfield answered, cordially. "Will to-morrow do—by the noonday light?"

"Whenever you please. Your time is mine."

Among his other accomplishments Father Benwell was a chess-player. If his thoughts at that moment had been expressed in language they would have said, "Check to the queen."

CHAPTER IV.—THE END OF THE HONEYMOON.

On the next morning Winterfield arrived alone at Romayne's house. Having been included, as a matter of course, in the invitation to see the pictures Father Benwell had made an excuse, and had asked leave to defer the proposed visit. From his point of view he had nothing further to gain by being present at a second meeting between the two men in the absence of Stella. He had it, on Romayne's own authority, that she was in constant attendance on her mother, and that her husband was alone. "Either Mrs. Eyrecourt will get better or she will die," Father Benwell reasoned. "I shall make constant inquiries after her health, and in either case I shall know when Mrs. Romayne returns to Ten Acres Lodge. After that domestic event the next time Mr. Winterfield visits Mr. Romayne I shall go and see the pictures."

It is one of the defects of a super-subtile intellect to trust too implicitly to calculation, and to leave nothing to chance. Once or twice already Father Benwell had been (in the popular phrase) a little too clever—and chance had thrown him out. As events happened chance was destined to throw him out once more.

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Of the most modest pretensions in regard to numbers and size the pictures collected by the late Lady Berrick were masterly works of modern art. With few exceptions they had been produced by the matchless English landscape painters of half a century since. There was no formal gallery here. The pictures were so few that they could be hung in excellent lights in the different living-rooms of the villa. Turner, Constable, Collins, Danby, Calicott, Linnell—the master of Beaupark house passed from one to the other with the enjoyment of a man who thoroughly appreciated the truest and finest landscape art the world has yet seen.

"You had better not have asked me," he said to Romayne, in his quaint-humored way. "I can't part here, I'm afraid, good-humored way. "I can't part ly good those pictures when I say good-bye with them. You will find me calling here to-day and again, till you are perfectly sick of the sight of me. Look at this sea piece. Who thinks of the brushes and palette of that painter? There, truth to nature and poetical feeling go hand in hand together. It is absolutely lovely—I could kiss that picture."

They were in Romayne's study when this odd outburst of enthusiasm escaped Winterfield. He happened to look toward the writing-table next. Some pages of manuscript, blotted and interlined with corrections, at once attracted his attention.

"Is that the forthcoming history?" he asked. "You are not one of the authors who perform the process of correction mentally—you revise and improve with the pen in your hand."

Romayne looked at him in surprise.

"I suspect, Mr. Winterfield, you have used your pen for other purposes than writing letters."

"No, indeed; you pay me an undeserved compliment. When you come to see me in Devonshire I can show you some manuscripts and corrected proofs, left by our great writers, collected by my father. My knowledge of the secrets of the craft has been gained by examining these literary treasures. If the public only knew that every writer worthy of the name is the severest critic of his own book before it ever gets into the hands of the reviewers, how surprised they would be! The man who has worked in the full fervor of composition yesterday, is the same man who sits in severe and merciless judgment to-day on what he has himself produced. What a fascination there must be in the art which exacts and receives such double labor as this!"

Romayne thought—not unkindly—of his wife. Stella had once asked him how long a time he was usually occupied in writing one page. The reply had filled her with pity and wonder.

"Why do you take all that trouble?" she had gently remonstrated. "It would be just the same to the people, darling, if you did it in half the time."

By way of changing the topic Romayne led his visitor into another room.

"I have a picture here," he said, "which belongs to a new school of painting. You have been talking of hard work in one art; there it is in another."

"Yes," said Winterfield; "there it is—the misdirected hard work which has been guided by no critical faculty, and which doesn't know where to stop. I try to admire it; and I end in pitying the poor artist. Look at that leafless felled tree, in the middle distance. Every little twig, on the smallest branch, is conscientiously painted—and the result is like a colored photograph. You don't look at a landscape as a series of separate parts; you don't discover every twig on a tree—you see the whole in nature, and you want to see the whole in a picture. That canvas presents a triumph of patience and pains, produced exactly as a piece of embroidery is produced, all in little separate bits, worked with the same mechanically complete care. I turn away from it to your shrubbery there, with an ungrateful sense of relief."

He walked to the window as he spoke. It looked out on the grounds in front of the house. At the same moment the noise of rolling wheels became audible on the drive. An open carriage appeared at the turn of the road. Winterfield called Romayne to the window.

"A visitor," he began, and suddenly drew back without saying a word more.

Romayne looked out and recognized his wife.

"Excuse me for one moment," he said; "it is Mrs. Romayne."

On that morning an improvement in the fluctuating state of Mrs. Eyrecourt's health had given Stella another of those opportunities of passing an hour or two with her husband which she so highly prized. Romayne withdrew to meet her at the door too hurriedly to notice Winterfield standing in the corner to which he had retreated like a man petrified.

Stella had got out of the carriage when her husband reached the porch. She ascended the few steps that led to the hall as slowly and painfully as if she had been an infirm old woman. The delicately-tinted color in her face had faded to an ashy white. She had seen Winterfield at the window.

For the moment Romayne looked at her in speechless consternation. He led her into the nearest room that opened out of the hall, and took her in his arms.

"My love, this nursing of your mother has completely broken you down!" he said, with the tenderest pity for her. "If you won't think of yourself, you must think of me. For my sake remain here, and take the rest that you need. I will be a tyrant, Stella, for the first time; I won't let you go back."

She roused herself and tried to smile, and hid the sad result from him in a kiss.

"I do feel the anxiety and fatigue," she said. "But my mother is really improving, and if it only continues the blessed sense of relief will make me strong again." She paused and roused all her courage in anticipation of the next words—so trivial and so terrible—that must sooner or later be pronounced. "You have a visitor," she said.

"Did you see him at the window? A really delightful man. I know you will like him. Under any other circumstances I should have introduced him. You are not well enough to see strangers to-day."

She was too determined to prevent Winterfield from ever entering the house again to shrink from the meeting.

"I am not so ill as you think, Lewis," she said, bravely. "When you go to your new friend, I will go with you. I am a little tired, that's all."

Romayne looked at her anxiously. "Let me get you a glass of wine," he said.

She consented—she really felt the need of it. As he turned away to ring the bell, she put the question which had been in her mind from the moment when she had seen Winterfield.

"How did you become acquainted with this gentleman?"

"Through Father Benwell."

She was not surprised by the answer—her suspicion of the priest had remained in her mind from the night of Lady Loring's ball. The future of her married life depended on her capacity to check the growing intimacy between the two men. In that conviction she found the courage to face Winterfield.

How should she meet him? The impulse of the moment pointed to the shortest way out of the dreadful position in which she was placed—it was to treat him like a stranger. She drank her glass of wine, and took Romayne's arm. "We mustn't keep your friend waiting any longer," she resumed. "Come!"

As they crossed the hall she looked suspiciously toward the house-door. Had he taken the opportunity of leaving the villa? At any other time she would have remembered that the plainest laws of good breeding compelled him to wait for Romayne's return. His own knowledge of the world would tell him that an act of gross rudeness, committed by a well-bred man, would inevitably excite suspicion of some unworthy motive—and might, perhaps, connect that motive with her unexpected appearance at the house. Romayne opened the door and they entered the room together.

"Mr. Winterfield, let me introduce you to Mrs. Romayne."

They bowed to each other, they spoke the conventional words proper to the occasion—but the effort that it cost them showed itself. Romayne perceived an unusual formality in his wife's manner, and a strange disappearance of Winterfield's easy grace of address. Was he one of the few men, in these days, who are shy in the presence of women? And was the change in Stella attributable, perhaps, to the state of her health? The explanation might, in either case, be the right one. He tried to set them at their ease.

"Mr. Winterfield is so pleased with the pictures that he means to come and see them again," he said to his wife. "And one of his favorites happens to be your favorite, too."

She tried to look at Winterfield, but her eyes sank. She could turn toward him, and that was all. "Is it the sea piece in the study?" she said to him, faintly.

"Yes," he answered, with formal politeness; "it seems to be one of the painter's finest works."

Romayne looked at him in unconcealed wonder. To what flat commonplace Winterfield's lively enthusiasm had sunk in Stella's presence! She perceived that some unfavorable impression had been produced on her husband, and interposed with a timely suggestion. Her motive was not only to divert Romayne's attention from Winterfield, but to give him a reason for leaving the room.

The little water-color drawing in my bedroom is by the same artist," she said. "Mr. Winterfield might like to see it If you will ring the bell, Lewis, I will send my maid for it."

Romayne had never allowed the servants to touch his works of art since the day when a zealous housemaid had tried to wash one of his plaster casts. He made the reply which his wife had anticipated.

"No, no!" he said, "I will fetch the drawing myself." He turned gayly to Winterfield. "Prepare yourself for another work that you would like to kiss." He smiled and left the room.

The instant the door was closed Stella approached Winterfield. Her beautiful face became distorted by a mingled expression of rage and contempt. She spoke to him in a fierce, peremptory whisper.

"Have you any consideration for me left?"

His look at her, as she put that question, revealed the most complete contrast between his face and hers. Compassionate sorrow was in his eyes, tender forbearance and respect spoke in his tones, as he answered her.

"I have more than consideration for you, Stella—"

She angrily interrupted him.

"How dare you call me by my Christian name?"

He remonstrated with a gentleness that might have touched the heart of any woman.

"Do you still refuse to believe that I never deceived you? Has time not softened your heart to me yet?"

She was more contemptuous toward him than ever.

"Spare me your protestations," she said; "I heard enough of them two years since. Will you do what I ask of you?"

"You know that I will."

"Put an end to your acquaintance with my husband. Put an end to it," she repeated, vehemently, "from this day, at once and forever! Can I trust you to do it?"

"Do you think I would have entered this house if I had known he was your husband?" He made that reply with a sudden change in him—with a rising color and in firm tones of indignation. In a moment more his voice softened again, and his kind blue eyes rested on her sadly and devotedly. "You can trust me to do more than you ask," he resumed. "You have made a mistake."

"What mistake?"

"When Mr. Romayne introduced us you met me like a stranger—and you left me no choice but to do as you did."

"I wish you to be a stranger."

Her sharpest replies made no change in his manner. He spoke as kindly and as patiently as ever.

"You forget that you and your mother were my guests at Beaupark two years ago—"

Stella understood what he meant, and more. In an instant she remembered that Father Benwell had been at Beaupark house. Had he heard of the visit? She clasped her hands in speechless terror.

Winterfield gently reassured her.

"You must not be frightened," he said. "It is in the last degree unlikely that Mr. Romayne will ever find out that you were at my house. If he does, and if you deny it, I will do for you what I would do for no other human creature—I will deny it, too. You are safe from discovery. Be happy—and forget me."

For the first time she showed signs of relenting—she turned her head away and sighed. Although her mind was full of the serious necessity of warning him against Father Benwell, she had not even command enough over her own voice to ask how he had become acquainted with the priest. His manly devotion, the perfect and pathetic sincerity of his respect, pleaded with her, in spite of herself. For a moment she paused to recover her composure. In that moment Romayne returned to them with the drawing in his hand.

"There!" he said. "It's nothing this time but some children gathering flowers on the outskirts of a wood. What do you think of it?"

"What I thought of the larger work," Winterfield answered. "I could look at it by the hour together." He consulted his watch. "But time is a hard master, and tells me that my visit must come to an end. Thank you, most sincerely."

He bowed to Stella. Romayne thought his guest might have taken the English freedom of shaking hands.

"When will you come and look at the pictures again?" he asked. "Will you dine with us, and see how they bear the lamplight?"

"I am sorry to say I must beg you to excuse me. My plans are altered since we met yesterday. I am obliged to leave London."

Romayne was unwilling to part with him on these terms.

"You will let me know when you are next in town?" he said.

"Certainly!"

With that short answer he hurried away.

Romayne waited a little in the hall before he went back to his wife. Stella's reception of Winterfield, though not positively ungracious, was, nevertheless, the reverse of encouraging. What extraordinary caprice had made her insensible to the social attractions of a man so unaffectedly agreeable? It was not wonderful that Winterfield's cordiality should have been chilled by the cold welcome that he had received from the mistress of the house. At the same time some allowance was to be made for the influence of Stella's domestic anxieties, and some sympathy was claimed by the state of her health. Although her husband shrank from distressing her by any immediate reference to her reception of his friend, he could not disguise from himself that she had disappointed him. When he went back to the room Stella was lying on the sofa, with her face turned toward the wall. She was in tears, and she was afraid to let him see it. "I won't disturb you," he said, and withdrew to his study. The precious volume which Winterfield had so kindly placed at his disposal was on the table waiting for him.

Father Benwell had lost nothing by not being present at the presentation of Winterfield to Stella. He had witnessed a plainer betrayal of emotion when they met unexpectedly in Lord Loring's picture-gallery. But if he had seen Romayne reading in his study and Stella crying secretly on the sofa he might have written to Rome by that day's post, and might have announced that he had sown the first seeds of disunion between husband and wife.

CHAPTER V.—FATHER BENWELL'S CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Secretary S. J., Rome.

I.

"In my last few hasty lines I was only able to inform you of the unexpected arrival of Mrs. Romayne while Winterfield was visiting her husband. If you remember, I warned you not to attach any undue importance to my absence on that occasion. My present report will satisfy my reverend brethren that the interests committed to me are as safe as ever in my hands.

"I have paid three visits, at certain intervals. The first to Winterfield (briefly mentioned in my last letter); the second to Romayne; the third to the invalid lady, Mrs. Eyrecourt. In every case I have been rewarded by important results.

"We will revert to Winterfield first. I found him at his hotel enveloped in clouds of tobacco smoke, and looking like a gloomy and dissatisfied man. Assuming not to notice this I asked him how he liked Romayne's pictures.

"'I envy him his pictures.' That was the only answer.

"'And how do you like Mrs. Romayne?' I inquired next.

"He laid down his pipe and looked at me attentively. My face (I flatter myself) defied discovery. He inhaled another mouthful of tobacco and began to play with his dog. 'If I must answer your question,' he burst out suddenly, 'I didn't get a very gracious reception from Mrs. Romayne.' There he abruptly stopped. He is a thoroughly transparent man; you see straight into his mind, through his eyes. I perceived that he was only telling me a part (perhaps a small part) of the truth.

"'Can you account for such a reception as you describe?' I asked. He answered, shortly, 'No.'

"'A lady's prejudices,' I proceeded, in the friendliest way, 'are never taken seriously by a sensible man. You have placed Mr. Romayne under obligations to your kindness—he is eager to improve his acquaintance with you. You will go again to Ten Acres Lodge?'

"He gave me another short answer. 'I think not.'

"I said I was sorry to hear it. 'However,' I added, 'you can always see him here, when you are in London.'

"He puffed a big volume of smoke and made no remark. I declined to be put down by silence and smoke. 'Or perhaps,' I persisted, 'you will honor me by meeting him at a simple little dinner at my lodgings?' Being a gentleman, he was of course obliged to answer this. He said: 'You are very kind; I would rather not. Shall we talk of something else, Father Benwell?'

"We talked of something else. He was just as amiable as ever, but he was not in good spirits.

"'I think I shall run over to Paris before the end of the month,' he said.

"'To make a long stay?' I asked.

"'Oh, no. Call in a week or ten days, and you will find me here again.'

"When I got up to go he returned with his own accord to the forbidden subject. He said: 'I must beg you to do me two favors. The first is, not to let Mr. Romayne know that I am still in London. The second is, not to ask me for any explanations.'

"The result of our interview may be stated in very few words. It has advanced me one step nearer to discovery. Winterfield's voice, look and manner satisfied me of this—the true motive of his sudden change of feeling toward Romayne is jealousy of the man who has married Miss Eyrecourt. Those compromising circumstances which baffled the inquiries of my agent are associated, in plain English, with a love affair. Remember all that I have told you of Romayne's peculiar disposition, and imagine if you can what the consequences of such a disclosure will be when we are in a position to enlighten the master of Vange Abbey!

"As to the present relations between the husband and wife, I have only to tell you next what passed when I visited Romayne a day or two later. I did well to keep Penrose at our disposal. We shall want him again.

(To be continued.)

Fringes of the most elegant description have appeared, and, combined with the new passementerie bands and beaded gimps, will prove a strong rival to lace as a garniture for elegant costumes, both for the house and the promenade.

TRICKS UPON JEWELERS.

Some of the Ingenious Practices of Rogues Who Steal Valuables.

"Of all the tricks, devices, subterfuges, sharp dodges or deceptions I ever saw," said Jeweler J. H. Johnston to a New York *Sun* reporter, "was one by which a sharp fellow stole from me three pairs of diamond earrings. He evidently knew when I was not in the store. He came in one day and said to one of my clerks:

"'Is Mr. Johnston in?'

"'No,' was the reply.

"'I am sorry for that,' he said. 'I wish to buy a pair of diamond earrings for my wife.'

"This was repeated on four or five successive days. The last time he said he would not wait to see me, but would look at some earrings. The clerk showed him an assortment, and he finally selected three pairs, valued at $450, and said: 'I guess I will let my wife select from these. She will be at my store in an hour, and I want you to tell Mr. Johnston to bring these around himself, as he is acquainted with the goods.'

"'All right, sir,' [illegible] clerk.

"'By the way,' said the fellow, 'if you will permit me, I will write a note to Mr. Johnston.'

"'Certainly,' said the clerk, who showed him to a desk, and pointed out where he could get paper and envelopes. He sat down, wrote a short note, folded it and put it in an envelope directed to me. Then he went back to the counter, and said to the clerk. 'I think you had better put the three pairs of earrings in here and I will seal them up so that Mr. Johnston will be certain to bring the right ones.'

"Very well," said the clerk, who handed out the three pairs of earrings and the fellow dropped them into the envelope before the clerk's eyes and was apparently about to seal the envelope when he suddenly said:

"'Oh, I guess you may put in that other pair,' pointing to a pair which the clerk had laid on the shelf behind him. The clerk turned and got the other pair and handed them to the fellow, who dropped them apparently into the same envelope, sealed them up, handed them over, and said: 'Let Mr. Johnston bring the four pairs to my store as soon as he comes back,' he said, giving the address of a well-known store in the vicinity. Then he left, and the clerk laid the envelope one side until I returned. Of course we found but one pair of diamond earrings in the envelope, which was the last pair dropped in. The other three pairs were paste, about the same size. The fellow had taken two of my envelopes, and into one had placed the three bogus pairs. When the clerk turned to get the fourth pair the fellow had put the genuine in his pocket and substituted the others. We never saw him afterward, but heard that he practiced the same game in other places.

"Of course the imperative rule is to not let goods go out of your sight until you get the money. The trick of having goods sent to hotels and boarding houses with bills for collection is so stale that the undeviating rule is to keep your goods in sight. But a shrewd fellow once managed to get three watches from me by a clever dodge. A bright, sharp-looking customer came in one day and said: 'I am from Ohio, and have a commission to buy some goods for my sister, who is about to be married there.' He picked out a bill of $500 worth of various articles and said: 'Just send them around to my store in Broadway at 12 o'clock,' naming a well-known carpet store in Broadway. The goods were sent by a clerk, who found the customer apparently engaged in showing carpets, and perfectly at home. He recognized the clerk and said:

"'Ah! just step this way, and I will give you a check.' He went with the clerk to a desk, drew a check, and took the goods. He appeared to be so perfectly at home that the clerk had not the slightest suspicion. Of course the check was worthless, and we found that he had secured the desk privilege at the carpet store by pretending that he was buying a large stock of carpets among other purchases in the city. He fooled five jewelers in New York and others in other cities.

"One day a swarthy, foreign-looking well-dressed young man called on a brother jeweler and handed him his card—'Alexander Dumas, Prussian Legation, Washington.' He said he was with his wife and child at the St. Nicholas hotel, and wanted to buy some watches and jewelry, for which he would pay cash. He said his wife was too sick to leave the hotel, and wanted the goods sent with the bill. The jeweler thought he would make a sure thing of it and take the goods himself. He went to the St. Nicholas, was told that Mr. Dumas was stopping there, and was shown to his room. Mr. Dumas was busy writing, but welcomed the jeweler cordially.

"'Ah,' he said. 'I am glad you have come. I am sorry that my wife is confined to her bed. I will just step into the next room and let her make her selections.'

"The jeweler, in a moment of weakness, consented. After waiting five minutes he began to get nervous. He did not like to disturb a sick lady, but went to the office to make some inquiries. There he found that Mr. Dumas had just stepped out, and had no wife or child in the house. He was finally caught, after he had played the same game on a number of jewelers, and lodged in Sing Sing. When he was captured he tried to conciliate his last victim by the presentation of a beautiful overcoat. But the overcoat proved to have been stolen.

"In showing jewelry it is the custom to show only six watches at once, or some uniform number. If the customer wants to see another, one of those already on exhibition will be taken away. The same rule is observed with rings. The tray is always full, or with a known number of holes empty, so that if a ring were taken the loss would be instantly detected. Sometimes swindlers will watch an opportunity and slip in a worthless ring and take away a good one. One jeweler of my acquaintance found five plated rings thus substituted for plain gold rings in one day. The trick was played upon a number of jewelers about the same time, and then the rogue was captured.

"A common trick in buying goods on the installment plan is to give a wrong name, mentioning the name of some solvent person. The references will, of course, give a good report, and it will not be discovered until too late that the good character does not belong to the one who purchased the goods."

"One of the shrewdest and boldest tricks ever played on a jeweler was done by a woman of nerve in Cincinnati not long ago. One day a middle-aged woman, of fine personal appearance, well dressed, and of most attractive manners, called at a private lunatic asylum and asked to see the superintendent. That official met her in the parlor.

"'I wish to make arrangements for the confinement of a patient here,' she said. 'What are your terms and the conditions on which you receive your inmates?'

"'Our terms are $15 per week, and you must have the certificate of two physicians.'

"'Very well,' said the lady, 'I will pay you two weeks in advance. The patient is my son, who is insane on the subject of diamonds. He has a mania for selling my jewelry. I have not yet gotten the certificate of the physicians, but can easily do so. I will bring my son here in the afternoon, and if you will keep him an hour I will bring the physicians with the authority.'

"Then the lady entered her carriage and drove to a jewelry store. There she selected $4,000 worth of jewelry, which she said was intended for the trousseau of her daughter, about to be married. She gave the name of a wealthy family recently arrived in Cincinnati, and said to the proprietor: 'If you will let one of your clerks step into the carriage with me, I will go to my husband's store and give him the money for the goods.'

"The proprietor consented, and the clerk, with the goods in a box, entered the carriage with the lady, who said she wished to stop on the way and show her purchases to a friend. They drove to the asylum and were shown to the parlor. The superintendent entered, and the lady said quite calmly to the clerk: 'Just open the box and show the things to this gentleman.'

"The clerk unsuspectingly complied. Carelessly drawing near, the lady suddenly seized the box, and was walking [illegible] these goods go out of my [illegible] until I get the money.'

"The lady did not deign to notice the clerk, but turning to the superintendent of the asylum, said:

"'This is the young man I spoke to you about. He is getting a little violent. You had better secure him.'

"It was in vain that the clerk protested that a robbery was being committed. The superintendent was inexorable. He called his assistants and secured the clerk, while the lady walked to her carriage with the $4,000 worth of jewelry."

Pictures of Life in Mexico.

The dense population that is pressed together in the valley of Mexico, and the country-like character peculiar to many parts of the capital, a correspondent says brings always crowds of boorish people into Mexico's thoroughfares. Indians of pure blood, looking like disfigured gypsies, are constantly seen roving about. Husband, wife and child are trotting the same slow pace, stooping to the very ground and frequently carrying heavy loads, or the straw mattresses on which they have passed the previous night, on their way to the city. Passing the front of some ancient church or a decaying convent, we see the graves crowded with ugly-looking Indian women nursing their dirty little urchins. In the shade of some building we see a happy family sharing the frugal meal, consisting of "tortillas" (a cake baked of Indian corn) and some fruits; now and then they may even be seen indulging in the luxury of "trijolas" (reed beans,) the national dish of the Mexican; not very far from the happy "at home" we notice a crowd of shabby-looking young men lying on the ground smoking and gambling at cards; the monotony of the play is now and then interrupted by wild curses or a blow at him who has been found guilty of cheating his drowsy companions.

Indians and Mestizzos, the broad-brimmed sombrero on their dust-covered heads, are leaning against the walls of some "fonda" (inn); they are shepherds or muleteers, who have brought cattle and goods from the interior and who are now gazing at all the splendors of the capital and beholding the wonders of them. They are daring looking fellows, clad in dirty linen clothing and a parti-colored shawl, which they draw closely around their neck and head when the wind begins to blow, so that there is little to be seen of their defiant faces. Pickpockets and thieves, wearing a mixture of national and foreign garb, are seen spying out an opportunity favorable to their profession.

Men and women of all ages and complexions, boys and girls besiege the coffee houses, annoying the pedestrian with their shrill voices, pressing him to buy a lottery ticket and gain the five or ten thousand "piros" that are drawn on the coming morn; venders of matches and other trifles, follow you step by step till you get rid of them by spending a copper piece or two, but only to be annoyed by others who have watched your weakness and are anxious to have their turn also. More pleasant than these match and ticket sellers are those who offer for sale small objects of art, as waxen fruits of great beauty, artificial flowers and wooden charcoal figures of perfect workmanship; tiny little figures representing scenes of every-day life, beautiful birds on cardboard and different kinds of feather work are to be obtained at very low prices.

A charming picture are the flower girls, who are busy composing their abundant stock of the very finest flowers into tasteful nosegays, in which we find a great variety of roses and the ladies' favorite, the dark blue violet—flowers that nature offer us all the year round. Tasteful garlands, flower baskets that would make the New York florist rave, charm the buyer's eyes; nosegays of all dimensions and the delicate flower for the dandy's buttonhole are to be purchased at very low prices. For flowers the Mexican has a well-pleasing weakness, and the love of flowers is one of the qualities that the Spaniard has inherited from his Moorish conquerors and has brought with him to Mexico. Old matrons and young ladies eyeing the passers-by from the balcony, all have their hair and dress adorned with fresh flowers.

The fruit vender makes a fine display of his stock on the ground or in his primitive shops. Apples, pears, strawberries, peaches, apricots, Turkish and Indian figs, the growth of the temperate climate, are to be seen lying together with the golden orange, the yellow lemon, bananas, anenas, mangoes, and the delicious chirimoya, productions of the torrid zone. Those who are fond of a cooling draught may apply to one of the numerous water stands, where inoffensive mixtures of water and ananas, lemon and juices are served to the caller for two cents a glass. While sipping our nectar we noticed two or three old Indian women, half naked, who press with a round stone the juice out of the fruit. Chocolate and cocoa are served as well at the stand. Traveling cooks with their two-wheeled kitchens are to be found in every street, and they serve dishes to those who give them a call; yet a foreigner would scarcely be pleased with the acid Spanish pipkin or the baked sweet potatoes, and other dishes, as they are generally spiced with a good deal of dirt.

A Wise Horse.

The horse lives in Wilmington, Delaware, and the *Star* of that city tells this story of brute intelligence: A few Sundays ago he was running loose on the streets and passed in the neighborhood of a certain drug store, where the proprietor noticed that he had a severe sore on his back and several less serious eruptions on one of his shoulders, whereupon he put a suitable plaster on each of the wounds. The animal then went off and he saw no more of him until the next Sunday, when he again went to the door of the establishment, where he remained until his wounds were again dressed, and since then he has regularly appeared every Sunday at the door of the drug store to have the plasters put upon his back and shoulders, and the proprietor kindly accommodates him. It is supposed that his owner keeps him busy all the week and turns him loose on Sundays.

BADLY SCARRED.

The Story of Colonel Martinez, of Mexico—A Career of Blood.

The visitor at the Detroit House of Correction who catches a glimpse of Colonel Martinez, may go away feeling that he has seen one of the greatest heroes ever placed behind the bars and bolts of any modern prison. Less than three years ago he was a Colonel in the regular army of Mexico, while yesterday he had served exactly ten months on a sentence of two years. He is a short, stout man, with an eye which cuts like steel, and is one of the most orderly prisoners ever received.

Diaz had neglected to carry out the reforms promised when he was a candidate for the Presidency, and official corruption and mismanagement sowed the seeds of rebellion. Colonel Martinez was actuated by motives of patriotism in joining the revolters, and every dollar of his private fortune was invested in the purchase of arms for those who proposed to overthrow the government. While the discontent was widespread, [illegible] the other leaders failed to rally over 600 men to their standard. This band fought and defeated the government forces several times, but at length numbered less than 200 men and found itself obliged to retreat before an overwhelming force.

While the little band, led now by Martinez alone, was slowly retreating on the district of Sonora, a force of government troops got in their rear. A heavy force was coming in front, and surrender seemed inevitable. In this emergency the Colonel stated his intention of cutting his way out, and those who did not wish to share his further dangers were left free to retreat to the hills. One hundred and sixty-four men, all well mounted and nerves strung for desperate work, followed Martinez as he drew sabre and charged into a valley and straight upon a force of more than 6,000 men. Beyond the valley was the mountain pass by which retreat could be continued, but only fifty-eight of the patriots reached it. The remainder were left dead in the valley. The living had literally cut their way through walls of flesh and steel. More than 300 dead men resulted from that desperate dash, and some of those who got out were terribly cut. The Colonel yesterday turned back his shirt and exhibited a sabre cut on either shoulder, a third on the head and a bullet-wound in the arm as mementoes of that charge.

Being persistently pursued by the government forces, the patriots retreated into a sandy desert more than 200 miles in breadth. Diaz was determined to capture Martinez at any cost, and the pursuit was continued across the sands. The sufferings of both parties from heat and lack of water were great, but the patriots were the worst off. They entered upon the barren waste without a single ration or a spoonful of water, while the government forces had a moderate supply of both.

The pursuit lasted till evening, and after the government forces had gone into camp for the night, Martinez rode back alone to scout and spy. When he ascertained that the pursuit was to be maintained to the bitter end he crept among the wagons and stabbed a dozen mules before the alarm was given. Being pursued by three mounted men, he killed two, wounded the other and drove the horses into his own camp. At a later hour he returned with his force and charged through the camp of 2,000 men, killing a score or more, losing three men, and carrying off ten prisoners with their horses.

Next morning when the government forces took up the pursuit, the ten prisoners were found dead on the sands, each having been killed by the thrust of a lance.

"Had they captured any of my men they would have been hacked to pieces at once," said the Colonel, in extenuation. "We had more bitterness towards each other than we would have had towards a foreign foe, and had I been captured they would have roasted me alive."

Next morning the pursuit was continued. Nearly 2,000 men pursued fifty-five. It was known that he had neither water nor food, and there was reason to believe that his band must surrender in a few hours.

At the close of the second day several horses were killed and the men satisfied their thirst by drinking the blood. Fires could not be kindled for want of fuel, and the meat was devoured raw. Some of the horses licked at the blood; and others dug great holes in the sand and cooled their tongues on the damp earth.

At the end of the third day a water hole was reached and here the patriots remained one whole day, repulsing three attacks of the government forces, and being reduced in numbers to forty-one men. When they left the spot they had but thirty horses, and every animal which carried double was overhauled in the next day's pursuit, and the prisoners killed as soon as captured. When they finally crossed the Colorado river into American territory Martinez had less than twenty men with him.

The Colonel claims that his band came as refugees, intending to remain as peaceful citizens of the United States until they could safely return home. Some of his men had hired to ranchmen, and others were looking for employment when arrested by the authorities as filibusters. The Mexican Government demanded them, and knowing they would be shot if given up they pleaded guilty to the charge and received sentences of two years each. As the present ruler of Mexico has issued a proclamation pardoning all whilom rebels and conspirators, and as profound peace reigns along the border, the Colonel hopes to be set at liberty at the end of the year. All his men have families, and being among strangers and unable to speak our language, their imprisonment has gone hard with them. They are a quiet lot, finding no fault and obeying every rule of the prison, and they have made many friends.

"The Colonel has more scars than any other man living," said the deputy at the close of the interview. "Perhaps he will exhibit some of them."

The interpreter made the request, and after considerable hesitation the Colonel removed his shirt. Exclamations of surprise were in order. There stood a man who had two sabre-cuts on the head, two on the left shoulder and one on the right, a lance wound in his right arm, another in his breast, a third in his shoulder blade, a cut on his right leg near the knee, and nearly a dozen scars on other parts of his body made by bullets and daggers. Three of the pistol bullets shot into him are still in the flesh. When first arrested he had five unhealed wounds, and it is only in the last three months that his last wound healed over. Some of his scars date back twenty years, and he is indebted to the Indians for five or six of them. From head to waist he has eleven prominent scars, and enough on his legs to make the full number crowd twenty pretty closely. After the Colonel had retired one of the lieutenants was asked what sort of a fighter Martinez was, and he replied:

"He has killed more men with the lance and sabre than any five officers in Mexico. He would charge a hundred men as quick as he would fight one."—*Detroit Free Press.*

A water spout is supposed to be caused by the passage of what would be called a whirlwind on land. Water is drawn up instead of dust and debris.

An Empress Among Peasants.

A correspondent gives the following incident of the recent visit of the Czar and Czarine of Russia, to Moscow and vicinity:

As we were going along the Volga, the boys had been promised to run on shore, and so at a spot where all seemed to promise privacy, the empress, Miss O., a lady of honor, Nicholas Alexandrovitch and George, his younger brother, Count V., Mrs. S. and Prince S., started on an excursion. I was kindly invited to join the party. We clambered up a steep precipice of sand and loose gravel, and after some difficulty reached the summit. We crossed a plowed field and came to some cottages, made of logs. At the door of one of these stood an old woman with one eye. The empress approached her and asked her if she could have a little milk for she was thirsty. "Milk?" says the old woman; "milk?" "Yes; will you kindly let me have some?" But "Milk" was the only answer to be got. We all thought the old woman was crazed, so the empress entered the hut, [illegible] of three [illegible] up in a [illegible] cord attached to the rafters.

While her majesty was chatting affably with the young mother, the old woman came in with a bowl of very dirty-looking milk, and one spoon, for the whole company. "Haven't you got a better spoon, good woman?" A new one was found, painted in red and gold. The empress for form's sake, tasted the repulsive-looking beverage, and after some conversation, Mr. S. asked the old woman what she wanted for it. "Want for it?" she replied thoughtfully. "I want five kopecks silver." "That's too dear," he said, with a serious air. "The price is ruinous. Three?" "It's five kopecks silver," and the old woman drew the bowl nearer to her. "Three." "No, five. It's a shame for gentle folks to haggle about a few kopecks." "He is only joking," said the empress, coming to the rescue; "here are ten rubles for you." "But," interposed Count V., "you must give us nine rubles and ninety-five kopecks change." "Nine rubles and ninety-five kopecks, where am I to get it from?" she asked. "But they are joking, I tell you," said the empress; "the ten rubles are yours, don't you understand?" "The milk is five kopecks silver," she insisted, amid general laughter. "You greedy old woman, you get ten rubles, and now you want five kopecks more. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." "The milk is five kopecks silver," she repeated, doggedly. Prince S.—"Do you know who the lady is who has given you the ten rubles?" "No, I don't," she answered. "It's the Gos-ol darina." "Oh, yes! very likely," she sneered—the joke was a good one and the old woman enjoyed it—"very likely." "It really is the empress; don't you know the czar is on the river, and that all the people are gone to the town to see him?" It was no use. The old woman only laughed and patted the empress' arm. What was to be done? S., as a last resource, takes out his image. "You see I am a Christian man. I swear on this image [kissing it] that this lady is really our empress." The woman was only half convinced, but she had far too little time to realize the fact. "O matushka" (mother) she says, "Good matushka!" and pats more emphatically. The heat was suffocating; not a breath of air. The empress rose to go, wished the good people good-by, and thanked them for their hospitality.

We had not proceeded far when a small group of women and one or two men were observed following us. "Let us wait for them," said her majesty; "I like to talk with these good people." "How many are you in the village?" "Fifty," replied the person addressed. Many other questions were put and answered, but it was not until she gave them one hundred rubles that they believed it was really their "Matuska, their dear little mother," and kissed her feet. She could not escape. "Tell them not to kiss my feet," she said; "I don't like it." They were, however, all around her; they crossed themselves and her; they kissed the very ground on which she trod. But who is that hobbling so eagerly toward us? It is our old friend of the cottage. She has had time now to realize the fact that the kind stranger really was the real matushka; that she whom all the world had gone so far to see—she, the empress of all the Russias, the wife of the "white zar," had actually been in her poor hut—had spoken so kindly to her, and that she herself, a