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Putnam's Library of Choice Stories.

THE BAKED HEAD,

And Other Tales.

Now first Collected,

And forming the Second Volume of "Putnam's Story Library."

New York:
G. P. Putnam & Co., 321 Broadway.
1856.

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Story of the Baked Head.

THE present Khon-khor* of Roum is a staunch Mussulman, and a rigid upholder of the true faith. Upon his coming to the throne, he announced his intention of doing away with many customs common to the infidels, which had crept into the administration of the state during the reign of his predecessor; and he thought it his duty to endeavor to restore things to their primitive simplicity, and to adopt a mode of government purely Turkish. Accordingly he resumed a custom which had almost got into disuse—that of going about the city in *tebdil*, or disguise; and he was so careful about the disguises which he adopted, and the people whom he admitted into his secrets on these occasions, that he took all sorts of precautions, and invented all sorts of schemes of secresy, in whatever related to his dresses, and the characters in which he chose to appear.

It is not long ago that considerable discontent prevailed throughout Turkey, and rebellion threatened to break out

* *Khon-khor*, literally "blood drinker;" so the sultan of *Roum*, or Turkey, is styled in Persia.

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in Constantinople itself. He was then very anxious to ascertain the temper of the public mind; and, in his usual wary manner, determined to get a suit made that would make him undiscoverable by even his own immediate attendants.

He usually sent for different tailors at different times, and in different places. On this occasion, he ordered his favorite slave, the white eunuch, Mansouri, to bring him one of no repute, with all the requisite secresy, at midnight, in order that he might receive instructions about a dress.

The slave, in great humility, made his *bash ustum* (on my head be it), and went his way to execute the command.

Close to the gate of the *Bezesten*, or cloth-market, he saw an old man in a stall so narrow that he could scarce turn himself about in it, who was taken up in patching an old cloak. He was almost bent double with constant labor at his shop-board; and his eyes seemed not to have benefited by his application, for a pair of glasses were mounted on his nose. "This is precisely the man I want," said the slave to himself: "I am sure he can be of no repute." So intent was he upon his work, that he did not heed the salutation of "Peace be with you, friend!" with which Mansouri accosted him; and when he did look up, and saw the well-dressed personage who he thought had spoken, he continued his work without making the usual reply; for he could not suppose that the salutation was meant for such a poor devil as he.

However, finding that he was the object of the eunuch's attention, he doffed the spectacles, threw away his work, and was about getting on his legs, when he was stopped, and requested not to disturb himself.

"What is your name?" said Mansouri.

"Abdallah," said the tailor, "at your service; but I am

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generally called Babadul by my friends, and the world at large."

"You are a tailor, are you not?" continued the slave.

"Yes," said the other; "I am a tailor as well as the muezzin at the little mosque in the fish-market. What more can I do?"

"Well, Babadul," said Mansouri, "have you a mind for a job—a good job?"

"Am I a fool," answered the old man, "that I should dislike it? Say what it is."

"Softly, my friend," remarked the eunuch; "we must go on slow and sure. Will you suffer yourself to be led blindfolded, at midnight, wherever I choose to take you, for a job?"

"That's another question," said Badabul; "times are critical, heads fly in abundance, and a poor tailor's may go as well as a vizier's or a capitan pacha's. But pay me well, and I believe I would make a suit of clothes for Eblis, the foul fiend, himself."

"Well, then, you agree to my proposal?" said the eunuch, who at the same time put two pieces of gold in his hand.

"Yes, most surely," said Babadul, "I agree. Tell me what I am to do, and you may depend upon me."

Accordingly they settled between them that the eunuch was to come to the stall at midnight, and lead him away blindfolded.

Babadul, being left alone, continued his work, wondering what could be the job upon which he was to be so mysteriously employed; and, anxious to make his wife a partaker of the news of his good luck, he shut up his stall earlier than usual, and went to his house, that was situated not far from the little mosque in the fish-market, of which he was the muezzin.

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Old Dilferîb, his wife, was almost as much bent double as her husband; and in consequence of the two gold pieces, and in contemplation of more which they expected to receive, they treated themselves to a dish of smoking *kabobs*, a salad, dried grapes, and sweetmeats, after which they consoled themselves with some of the hottest and most bitter coffee which the old woman could make.

True to his appointment, Babadul was at his stall at midnight, where he was as punctually met by Mansouri. Without any words, the former permitted himself to be blindfolded, whilst the latter led him away by the hand, making many and devious turns, until they reached the imperial seraglio; there, stopping only to open the private iron gate, Mansouri introduced the tailor into the very heart of the sultan's private apartments. The bandage over his eyes was taken off in a dark chamber, lighted up only by a small lamp, which stood on the shelf surrounding the top of the room, but which was splendidly furnished by sofas of the richest brocade, and by carpets of the most costly manufacture. Here Babadul was commanded to sit, until Mansouri returned with a bundle, wrapped in a large shawl handkerchief; this being opened, a sort of dervish's dress was displayed to the tailor, and he was requested to look at it, to consider how long he would be making such a one, and then to return it again, duly folded up, to its shawl covering. In the meanwhile, Mansouri told him to stay there until he should return to take him away again, and then left him.

Babadul, having turned the dress over and over again, calculated each stitch, and come to its proper conclusions, packed it up in the handkerchief as he had been commanded; but no sooner had he done this, than a man of lofty demeanor and appearance, whose look made the poor tailor shrink within himself, came into the room, took up

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the bundle, and walked away with it, without uttering a single word.

A few minutes after, as Babadul was pondering over the strangeness of his situation, and just recovering from the effects of this apparition, a door opened in another part of the apartment, and a mysterious figure, richly dressed, came in, bearing a bundle, equally covered with a shawl, about the size of that which had just been taken away; and making the lowest prostrations before the tailor, in great apparent trepidation, approached him, placed it at his feet, kissed the ground, and retreated without saying a word, or even looking up.

"Well," said Babadul to himself, "this may be something very fine, and I may be some very great personage, for aught I know; but this is very certain, that I had rather be patching my old cloak in the stall than doing this job, however grand and lucrative it may be. Who knows what I may have been brought here for? These comings in and goings out of strange-looking people, apparently without tongues in their heads, do not argue well. I wish they would give me fewer bows and a greater supply of words, from which I might learn what I am to get by all this. I have heard of poor women having been sewn up in sacks and thrown into the sea. Who knows? perhaps I am destined to be the tailor on such an occasion."

He had scarcely got thus far in his soliloquy, when the slave Mansouri re-entered the room, and told him, without more words, to take up the bundle; which having done, his eyes were again blindfolded, and he was led to the spot from whence he came. Babadul, true to his agreement, asked no questions, but agreed with the slave that in three days the dress should be ready for delivery at his stall, for which he was to receive ten more pieces of gold.

Having got rid of his companion, he proceeded with all

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haste to his house, where he knew his wife would be impatiently waiting his return; and as he walked onwards he congratulated himself that at length he had succeeded in getting indeed a job worth the having, and that his fate had finally turned up something good for his old age. It was about two o'clock in the morning when he reached the door of his house. He was received by his wife with expressions of great impatience at his long absence; but when he held up the bundle to her face, as she held up the lamp to his, and when he said, "*Mujdeh*, give me a reward for good news: see, I have got my work, and a handsome reward we shall get when it is finished," she was all smiles and good humor.

"Leave it there till we get up, and let us go to bed now," said the tailor.

"No, no," said the wife; "I must look at what you have got before I retire, or I shall not be able to sleep;" upon which, whilst he held up the lamp, she opened the bundle. Guess, guess at the astonishment of the tailor and his wife, when, instead of seeing a suit of clothes, they discovered, wrapped in a napkin, in its most horrid and ghastly state, a human head!

It fell from the old woman's hands, and rolled away some paces, whilst the horror-struck couple first hid their faces with their hands, and then looked at each other with countenances which nothing can describe.

"Work!" cried the wife, "work, indeed! pretty work you have made of it! Was it necessary to go so far, and to take such precautions, to bring this misfortune on our heads? Did you bring home this dead man's head to make a suit of clothes of?"

"*Anna senna! Baba senna!* Curses be on his mother! Perdition seize his father!" exclaimed the poor tailor, "for bringing me into this dilemma. My heart misgave me as

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that dog of an eunuch talked of blindfoldings and silence to me: I thought, as true as I am a Turk, that the job could not consist only in making a suit of clothes; and sure enough this dog's son has tacked a head to it. Allah! Allah! what am I to do now? I know not the way to his home, or else I would take it back to him immediately, and throw it in his face. We shall have the bostangi bashi, and a hundred other bashis, here in a minute, and we shall be made to pay the price of blood; or, who knows, be hung, or drowned, or impaled! What shall we do, eh, Dilferîb, my soul, say?"

"Do!" said his wife; "get rid of the head, to be sure: we have no more right to have it palmed upon us than anybody else."

"But the day will soon dawn," said the tailor, "and then it will be too late. Let us be doing something at once."

"A thought has struck me," said the old woman. "Our neighbor, the baker, Hassan, heats his oven at this hour, and begins soon after to bake his bread for his morning's customers. He frequently has different sorts of things to bake from the neighboring houses, which are placed near the oven's mouth over night: suppose I put this head into one of our earthen pots and send it to be baked; nobody will find it out until it is done, and then we need not send for it, so it will remain on the baker's hands."

Badabul admired his wife's sagacity, and forthwith she put her plan into execution. When the head had been placed in a baking-pan, she watched a moment when nobody was at hand, and set it on the ground, in the same row with the other articles that were to be inserted in Hassan's oven. The old couple then double-barred the door of their house, and retired to rest, comforting themselves with the acquisition of the fine shawl and napkin in which the head had been wrapped.

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The baker Hassan and his son Mahmûd were heating their oven, inserting therein thorns, chips, and old rubbish, at a great rate, when their attention was arrested by the extraordinary whinings and barking of a dog, that was a constant customer at the oven for stray bits of bread, and much befriended by Hassan and his son, who were noted for being conscientious Mussulmans.

"Look, Mahmûd," said the father to the son; "see what is the matter with the dog; something extraordinary is in the wind."

The son did what his father bade him; and seeing no reason for the dog's noises, said, "*Bir chey yok*, There is nothing," and drove him away.

But the howlings not ceasing, Hassan went himself, and found the dog most extremely intent upon smelling and pointing at the tailor's pipkin. He jumped upon Hassan, then at the pot, then upon Hassan again, until the baker no longer doubted that the beast took great interest in its contents. He therefore gently drew off the lid, when, need I mention his horror and surprise at seeing a human head staring him in the face?

"Allah! Allah!" cried the baker; but being a man of strong nerves, instead of letting it fall, as most people would have done, he quietly put on the lid again, and called his son to him.

"Mahmûd," said he, "this is a bad world, and there are bad men in it. Some wicked infidel has sent a man's head to bake; but, thanks to our good fortune, and to the dog, our oven has been saved from pollution, and we can go on making our bread with clean hands and clear consciences. But since the devil is at work, let others have a visit from him as well as ourselves. If it be known that we have had a dead man's head to bake, who will ever employ us again? We must starve, we must shut up our oven; we shall get

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the reputation of mixing up our dough with human grease, and if perchance a hair is found, it will immediately be said that it came from the dead man's beard."

Mahmûd, a youth of about twenty, who partook of his father's insensibility and coolness, and who, moreover, had a great deal of dry humor and ready wit, looked upon the incident in the light of a good joke, and broke out into a hearty laugh when he saw the ugly picture which the grinning head made, set in its earthen frame.

"Let us pop it into the shop of Kior Ali, the barber opposite," said the youth: "he is just beginning to open it; and as he has but one eye, we shall be better able to do so without being seen. Do, father," said Mahmûd, "let me; nobody shall discover me; and let it be done before there is more daylight."

The father consented; and Mahmûd, catching the moment when the barber had walked to the corner of the street to perform certain ablutions, stepped into his shop, and placed the head on a sort of *takcheh*, or bracket on the wall, arranged some shaving towels about it, as if it had been a customer ready seated to be shaved, and, with a boy's mischief in his heart, stepped back to his oven again, to watch the effects which this new sort of customer would have upon the blind barber.

Kior Ali hobbled into his shop, which was but ill lighted by a glimmering of daylight, that hardly pierced through the oil-papered windows, and, looking about him, saw this figure, as he supposed, seated against the wall, ready to be operated upon.

"Ha! peace be unto you!" said he to it; "you are rather early this morning; I did not see you at first. My water is not yet hot. Oh! I see you want your head shaved; but why do you take off your *fese* (skull-cap) so soon? you will catch cold." Then he paused. "No

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answer," said the barber to himself. "I suppose he is dumb, and deaf too, perhaps. Well, I am half blind, so we are nearly upon equal terms; however, if I were even to lose my other eye," addressing himself to the head, "I dare say, my old uncle, I could shave you for all that; for my razor would glide as naturally over your head, as a draught of good wine does over my throat."

He went methodically about his preparations; he took down his tin basin from a peg, prepared his soap, then stropped his razor on the long bit of leather that was fastened to his girdle. Having made his lather, he walked up to the supposed customer, holding the basin in his left hand, whilst his right was extended to sprinkle the first preparation of water on the sconce. No sooner had he placed his hand on the cold head, than he withdrew it as if he had been burnt. "Eh! why, what's the matter with you, friend?" said the barber; "you are as cold as a piece of ice." But when he attempted a second time to lather it, down it came with a terrible bounce from the shelf to the floor, and made the poor shaver jump quite across his shop with the fright.

"Aman! aman! O mercy! mercy!" cried Kior Ali, as he thrust himself into the furthermost corner without daring to move. "Take my shop, my razors, my towels—take all I have; but don't touch my life! If you are the *Shaitan*, speak; but excuse my shaving you!"

But when he found that all was hushed after the catastrophe, and that nothing was to be feared, he approached the head, and taking it up by the lock of hair at the top, he looked at it in amazement. "A head, by all the imams!" said he, accosting it; "and how did you get here? Do you want to disgrace me, you filthy piece of flesh? but you shall not! Although Kior Ali has lost one eye, yet his other is a sharp one, and knows what it is

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about. I would give you to the baker Hassan there, if his rogue of a son, who is now looking this way, was not even sharper than this self-same eye; but now I think of it, I will take you where you can do no harm. The Giaour Yanaki, the Greek *kabobchi** (roast-meat man), shall have you, and shall cut you up into mincemeat for his infidel customers." Upon this, Kior Ali, drawing in one hand, in which he carried the head, through the slit on the sides of his *beniche*, or cloak, and taking up his pipe in the other, walked down two streets to the shop of the aforesaid Greek.

He frequented it in preference to that of a Mussulman, because he could here drink wine with impunity. From long practice, he knew precisely where the provision of fresh meat was kept; and, as he entered the shop, casting his eye furtively round, he threw the head in a dark corner, behind one of the large sides of a sheep that was to be used for the kabobs of the day. No one saw him perform this feat; for the morning was still sufficiently obscure to screen him. He lighted his pipe at Yanaki's charcoal fire, and, as a pretext for his visit, ordered a dish of meat to be sent to him for breakfast; a treat to which he thought himself fully entitled after his morning's adventure.

Yanaki, meanwhile, having cleaned his platters, put his skewers in order, lit his fires, made his sherbets, and swept out his shop, went to the larder for some meat for the shaver's breakfast. Yanaki was a true Greek—cunning, cautious, deceitful; cringing to his superiors, tyrannical towards his inferiors; detesting with a mortal hatred his proud masters, the Osmanlies, yet fawning, flattering, and

* The *kabob* shops at Constantinople are eating-houses, where, at a moment's notice, a dish of roast meat, and small bits of meat done on skewers, are served up to whoever asks for them.

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abject, whenever any of them, however low in life, deigned to take notice of him. Turning over his stock, he looked about for some old bits that might serve the present purpose, muttering to himself that any carrion was good enough for a Turk's stomach. He surveyed his half sheep from top to bottom; felt it, and said, "No, this will keep;" but as he turned up its fat tail, the eye of the dead man's head caught his eye, and made him start, and step back some paces. "As ye love your eyes," exclaimed he, "who is there?" Receiving no answer, he looked again and again; then nearer—then, thrusting his hand among sheep's heads and trotters, old remnants of meat, and the like, he pulled out the head—the horrid head—which he held extended at arm's length, as if he were afraid that it would do him mischief. "Anathemas attend your beard!" exclaimed Yanaki, as soon as he discovered, by the tuft of hair on the top, that it had belonged to a Mussulman. "Och! if I had but every one of your heads in this manner, ye cursed race of Omar! I would make kabobs of them, and every cur in Constantinople should get fat for nothing. May ye all come to this end! May the vultures feed on your carcases! and may every Greek have the good fortune which has befallen me this day, of having one of your worthless skulls for his football!" Upon which, in his rage, he threw it down and kicked it from him; but, recollecting himself, he said, "But after all, what shall I do with it? If it is seen here, I am lost for ever: nobody will believe but what I have killed a Turk."

All of a sudden he cried out, in a sort of malicious ecstasy, "'Tis well I remembered—the Jew! the Jew!—a properer place for such a head was never thought or heard of; and there you shall go, thou vile remnant of a Mahomedan!"

Upon which he seized it, and, hiding it under his coat,

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ran with it down the street to where the dead body of a Jew lay extended, with its head placed immediately between its legs.

In Turkey, when a Mahomedan is beheaded, his head is placed under his arm, by way of an honorable distinction from the Christian or Jew, who, when a similar misfortune befalls them, have theirs inserted between their legs, as close to the seat of dishonor as possible.

It was in that situation, then, that Yanaki placed the Turk's head, putting it as near, cheek by jowl, with the Jew's as the hurry of the case would allow. He had been able to effect this without being seen, because the day was still but little advanced, and no one stirring; and he returned to his shop, full of exultation at having been able to discharge his feelings of hatred against his oppressors, by placing one of their heads on the spot in nature, which, according to his estimation, was the most teeming with opprobrium.

The unfortunate sufferer on this occasion had been accused of stealing and putting to death a Mahomedan child (a ceremony in their religion which they have been known to practise both in Turkey and Persia), and which created such an extraordinary tumult among the mob of Constantinople, that, in order to appease it, he had been decapitated. His execution had taken place purposely before the door of a wealthy Greek, and the body was ordered to remain there three days before it was permitted to be carried away for interment. The expectation that the Greek would be induced to pay down a handsome sum, in order that this nuisance might be removed from his door, and save him from the ill luck which such an object is generally supposed to bring, made the officer intrusted with the execution prefer this spot to every other. But, careless of the consequences, the Greek shut up the

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windows of his house, determined to deprive his oppressors of their expected perquisite; and so the dead Jew remained exposed his full time. Few excepting those of the true faith ventured to approach the spot, fearful that the Mahomedan authorities would, in their wanton propensities to heap insults upon the Giaours, oblige some one of them to carry the carcase to the place of burial; and thus the horrid and disgusting object was left abandoned to itself, and this had given an opportunity to the kabobchi, Yanaki, to dispose of the head in the manner above related, unseen and unmolested. But when, as the day advanced, and as the stir of the streets became more active, this additional head was discovered, the crowd which gathered about it became immense. It was immediately rumored that a miracle had been performed; for a dead Jew was to be seen with two heads. The extraordinary intelligence flew from mouth to mouth, until the whole city was in an uproar, and all were running to see the miracle. The Sanhedrim immediately pronounced that something extraordinary was about to happen to their persecuted race. Rabbins were to be seen running to and fro, and their whole community was now poured around the dead body, in expectation that he would perhaps arise, put on his heads, and deliver them from the gripe of their oppressors.

But as ill luck would have it for them, a Janissary, who had mixed in the crowd, and had taken a close survey of the supernumerary head, exclaimed, in a mixture of doubt and amazement, "Allah, Allah, il Allah! these are no infidels' heads. One is the head of our lord and master, the Aga of the Janissaries." Upon which, seeing more of his companions, he called them to him, and making known his discovery, they became violent with rage, and set off to communicate the intelligence to their Orta.

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The news spread like wildfire throughout the whole of the corps of the Janissaries, and a most alarming tumult was immediately excited; for it seems that it was unknown in the capital that their chief, to whom they were devotedly attached, and one of their own selection, had been put to death.

"What!" said they, "is it not enough to deal thus treacherously with us, and deprive us of a chief to whom we are attached; but we must be treated with the greatest contempt that it is possible for men to receive? What! the head of our most noble Aga of the Janissaries to be placed upon the most ignoble part of a Jew! what are we come to? We alone are not insulted; the whole of Islam is insulted, degraded, debased. No. This is unheard of insolence, a stain never to be wiped off, without the extermination of the whole race. And what dog has done this deed? How did the head get there? Is it that dog of a Vizier's work, or have the Reis Effendi and those traitors of Frank ambassadors been at work?—*Wallah*, *Billah*, *Tallah!* by the holy Caaba, by the beard of Osman, and by the sword of Omar, we will be revenged!"

We must leave the tumult to rage for a short time; we must request the reader to imagine a scene, in which Jews are flying in all directions, hiding themselves with great precaution against enraged Turks, who, with expressions like those just mentioned in their mouths, are to be seen walking about in groups, armed to their teeth with pistols and cimeters, and vowing vengeance upon everything which came in their way. He must imagine a city of narrow streets and low houses, thronged with a numerous population, in dresses the most various in shape and the most lively in colors, all anxious, all talking, all agog as if something extraordinary was to happen; in the midst of whom I will leave him, to take a look into the interior of

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the sultan's seraglio, and to inquire in what his eminency himself had been engaged since we last noticed him.

On the very same night of the tailor's attendance, the sultan had given a secret order for taking off the head of the aga of the Janissaries (the fomenter of all the disturbances which had lately taken place among his corps, and consequently their idol); and so anxious was he about its execution, that he had ordered it to be brought to him the moment it was off. The man intrusted with the execution, upon entering the room where he had been directed to bring the head, seeing some one seated, naturally took him for the sultan, and, without daring to look up, he immediately placed the burden at his feet, with the prostrations which we have already described as having been performed before the tailor. The sultan, who not a minute before had taken away the bundle containing the dervish's dress, had done so in the intention of deceiving his slave Mansouri himself—so desirous was he of being unknown in his new disguise even to him—and intended to have substituted another in its stead; but not calculating either upon the reception of the head, or upon Mansouri's immediate return to the tailor, he was himself completely puzzled how to act when he found the tailor was gone, led off by his slave. To have sent after them would have disconcerted his schemes, and therefore he felt himself obliged to await Mansouri's return, before he could get an explanation of what had happened; for he knew that they would not have gone away without the dress, and that dress he had then in his possession. In the meanwhile, anxious and impatient to know what had become of the expected head, he sent for the officer who was intrusted with the execution; and the astonishment of both may be imagined when an explanation took place.

"By my beard," exclaimed the sultan, having thought

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awhile within himself; "by my beard, the tailor must have got the head!"

His impatience for Mansouri's return then became extreme. In vain he fretted, fumed, and cried, "Allah! Allah!" It did not make the slave return a minute the sooner, who, good man, would have gone quietly to rest had he not been called upon to appear before the sultan.

As soon as he was within hearing, he called out, "Ahi! Mansouri, run immediately to the tailor—he has got the head of the aga of the Janissaries instead of the dervish's dress—run, fetch it without loss of time, or something unfortunate will happen!" He then explained how this untoward event had occurred. Mansouri now, in his'turn, felt himself greatly embarrassed; for he only knew the road to the tailor's stall, but was totally unacquainted with his dwelling-house. However, rather than excite his master's anxiety in a higher degree, he set off in quest of the tailor, and went straight to his stall, in the hopes of hearing from the neighbors where his house was. It was too early in the day for the opening of the Bezestan, and except a coffee-house that had just prepared for the reception of customers, where he applied and could gain no intelligence, he found himself completely at a stand-still. By the greatest good luck, he recollected Babadul had told him that he was the muezzin to the little mosque in the Fish Market, and thither he immediately bent his steps. The azan, or morning invitation to prayers, was now chanting forth from all the minarets, and he expected that he might catch the purloiner of the head in the very act of inviting the faithful to prayers.

As he approached the spot, he heard an old broken and tremulous voice, which he imagined might be Babadul's, breaking the stillness of the morning by all the energy of his lungs; and he was not mistaken, for as he stood under

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the minaret, he perceived the old man walking round the gallery which encircles it, with his hand applied to the back of his ear, and with his mouth wide open, pouring out his whole throat in the execution of his office. As soon as the tailor saw Mansouri making signs to him, the profession of faith stuck in his throat; and between the fright of being brought to account for the head, and the words which he had to pronounce, it is said that he made so strange a jumble, that some of the stricter Mussulmans, his neighbors, who were paying attention to the call, professed themselves quite scandalized at his performance. He descended with all haste, and locking the door after him which leads up the winding staircase, he met Mansouri in the street. He did not wait to be questioned respecting the fate of the horrid object, but at once attacked the slave concerning the trick, as he called it, which had been put upon him.

"Are you a man," said he, "to treat a poor emir like me in the manner you have done, as if my house was a charnel-house? I suppose you will ask me the price of blood next?"

"Friend," said Mansouri, "what are you talking about? do not you see that it has been a mistake?"

"A mistake, indeed!" cried the tailor, "a mistake done on purpose to bring a poor man into trouble. One man laughs at my stupid beard, and makes me believe that I am to make a suit of clothes for him—another takes away the pattern—and a third substitutes a dead man's head for it. Allah! Allah! I have got into the hands of a pretty nest of rogues, a set of ill-begotten knaves!"

Upon which Mansouri placed his hand upon the tailor's mouth, and said, "Say no more, say no more; you are getting deeper into the dirt. Do you know whom you are abusing?"

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"I know not, nor care not," answered Babadul; "all I know is, that whoever gives me a dead man's head for a suit of clothes can only be an infidel dog."

"Do you call God's vicegerent upon earth, you old demi-stitching, demi-praying fool, an infidel dog?" exclaimed Mansouri in a rage, which entirely made him forget the precaution he had hitherto maintained concerning his employer. "Are your vile lips to defile the name of him who is the *Alem penah*, the refuge of the world? What dirt are you eating, what ashes are you heaping on your head? Come, no more words; tell me where the dead man's head is, or I will take yours off in his stead."

Upon hearing this, the tailor stood with his mouth wide open, as if the doors of his understanding had just been unlocked.

"*Aman*, *aman*, mercy, mercy, O aga!" cried Babadul to Mansouri, "I was ignorant of what I was saying. Who would have thought it? Ass, fool, dolt, that I am, not to have known better. *Bismillah!* in the name of the Prophet, pray come to my house; your steps will be fortunate, and your slave's head will touch the stars."

"I am in a hurry, a great hurry," said Mansouri. "Where is the head, the head of the aga of the Janissaries?"

When the tailor heard whose head it had been, and recollected what he and his wife had done with it, his knees knocked under him with fear, and he began to exude from every pore.

"Where is it, indeed?" said he. "Oh! what has come upon us! Oh! what cursed *kismet* (fate) is this?"

"Where is it?" exclaimed the slave, again and again, "where is it? speak quick!"

The poor tailor was completely puzzled what to say,

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and kept floundering from one answer to another until he was quite entangled as in a net.

"Have you burnt it?"

"No."

"Have you thrown it away?"

"No."

"Then, in the name of the Prophet, what have you done with it? Have you eat it?"

"No."

"Is it lying in your house?"

"No."

"Is it hiding in any other person's house?"

"No."

Then at last, quite out of patience, the slave Mansouri took Babadul by his beard, and shaking his head for him, exclaimed with a roar, "Then tell me, you old dotard! what is it doing?"

"It is baking," answered the tailor, half choked. "I have said it."

"Baking! did you say?" exclaimed the slave, in the greatest amazement; "what did you bake it for? Are you going to eat it?"

"True, I said; what would you have more?" answered Babadul, "it is now baking." And then he gave a full account of what he and his wife had done in the sad dilemma in which they had been placed.

"Show me the way to the baker's," said Mansouri; "at least we shall get it in its singed state, if we can get it in no other. Who ever thought of baking the head of the aga of the Janissaries? *Allah il Allah!*"

They then proceeded to the baker Hassan's, who was now about taking his bread from his oven. As soon as he became acquainted with their errand, he did not hesitate in telling all the circumstances attending the transmission

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of the head from the pipkin to the barber's bracket; happy to have had an opportunity of exculpating himself of what might possibly have been brought up against him as a crime.

The three (Mansouri, the tailor, and the baker) then proceeded to the barber's, and inquired from him what he had done with the head of his earliest customer.

Kior Ali, after some hesitation, made great assurances that he looked upon this horrid object as a donation from Eblis himself, and consequently that he had thought himself justified in transferring it over to the Giaour Yanaki, who, he made no doubt, had already made his brother infidels partake of it in the shape of kabobs. Full of wonder and amazement, invoking the Prophet at each step, and uncertain as to the result of such unheard-of adventures, they then added the barber to their party, and proceeded to Yanaki's cook-shop.

The Greek, confounded at seeing so many of the true believers enter his house, had a sort of feeling that their business was not of roast meat, but that they were in search of meat of a less savory nature. As soon as the question had been put to him concerning the head, he stoutly denied having seen it, or knowing anything at all concerning it.

The barber showed the spot where he had placed it, and swore it upon the Koran.

Mansouri had undertaken the investigation of the point in question, when they discovered symptoms of the extraordinary agitation that prevailed in the city in consequence of the discovery which had been made of the double-headed Jew, and of the subsequent discovery that had produced such great sensation among the whole corps of Janissaries.

Mansouri, followed by the tailor, the baker, and the

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barber, then proceeded to the spot where the dead Israelite was prostrate; and there, to their astonishment, they each recognised their morning visitor—the head so long sought after.

Yanaki, the Greek, in the meanwhile, conscious of what was likely to befall him, without loss of time gathered what money he had ready at hand, and fled the city.

"Where is the Greek?" said Mansouri, turning round to look for him, in the supposition that he had joined his party; "we must all go before the sultan."

"I dare say he is run off," said the barber. "I am not so blind but I can see that he it is who gifted the Jew with his additional head."

Mansouri now would have carried off the head; but, surrounded as it was by a band of enraged and armed soldiers, who vowed vengeance upon him who had deprived them of their chief, he thought it most prudent to withdraw. Leading with him his three witnesses, he at once proceeded to the presence of his master.

When Mansouri had informed the sultan of all that had happened, where he had found the head of the aga of the Janissaries, how it had got there, and of the tumult it had raised, the reader may better imagine than I can describe the state of the monarch's mind. To tell the story with all its particulars he felt would be derogatory to his dignity, for it was sure to cover him with ridicule; but at the same time to let the matter rest as it now stood was impossible, because the tumult would increase until there would be no means of quelling it, and the affair might terminate by depriving him of his crown, together with his life.

He remained in a state of indecision for some time, twisting up the ends of his mustachios, and muttering "Allah! Allah!" in low ejaculations, until at length he ordered the prime vizier and the mûfti to his presence.

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Alarmed by the abruptness of the summons, these two great dignitaries arrived at the imperial gate in no enviable state of mind; but when the sultan had informed them of the tumult then raging in the capital, they resumed their usual tranquillity.

After some deliberation it was resolved, that the tailor, the baker, the barber, and the kabobchi, should appear before the tribunal of the mûfti, accused of having entered into a conspiracy against the aga of the Janissaries, and stealing his head, for the purposes of baking, shaving, and roasting it, and that they should be condemned to pay the price of his blood; but as the kabobchi had been the immediate cause of the tumult by treating the head with such gross and unheard-of insult, and as he was a Greek and an infidel, it was further resolved that the mûfti should issue a *fetwah*, authorizing his head to be cut off, and placed on the same odious spot where he had exposed that of the aga of the Janissaries.

It was then agreed between the sultan and his grand vizier, that, in order to appease the Janissaries, a new aga should be appointed who was agreeable to them, and that the deceased should be buried with becoming distinction. All this (except killing the Greek, who had fled) was done, and tranquillity again restored to the city. But it must further be added, to the honor of the sultan, that he not only paid every expense which the tailor, the baker, and the barber were condemned to incur, but also gave them each a handsome reward, for the difficulties into which they had so unfortunately been thrown.

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The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.

CLEMATIS Cottage, in the suburbs of a little market-town, which we, for many and good reasons, shall call Brackenbury, acknowledging it to be an alias for its real name, had been vacant many months. The Brackenbury Journal profited thereby; for every week there appeared in its front page an advertisement headed "Delightful Abode" in capital letters, and assuring anybody and everybody who wished to enjoy life in a cottage at a "low figure," that Clematis Cottage was the *ne plus ultra* of small convenient houses. It was pleasantly situated in its own grounds, consisting of a quarter of an acre laid out in the most scientific manner. It was detached from all other houses, but was conveniently situated near to an inn, where good accommodation was offered to man and beast, and where there was a good ordinary provided every Sunday at two o'clock. Moreover, it had the most desirable of all desirables, a pump of excellent water.

The Brackenburyans in general, like the landlord of Clematis Cottage in particular, were surprised that no one answered this enticing advertisement. Was the world blind? or was the circulation of the Brackenbury Journal

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too limited? The owner of the desirable premises thought it was possible; so, without apologizing to the editor, he spent "seven bob," as he called seven shillings, on an advertisement in the "Times."

The first advertisement brought several applicants, but as the owner of the cottage, Mr. Punks, asked the extravagant rent of forty pounds a year, nobody would take it. Mr. Punks then sent to the Times a "pious" advertisement, to see if better luck would attend that plan. The pious advertisement appeared, and Punks read it to his wife, as follows.

"TO PIOUS PEOPLE.—In Brackenbury the pure Word is preached. A seat in the Ebenezer Chapel may be procured, and a comfortable cottage, within five minutes' walk of it, rented at a moderate price, by applying to Percival Punks, deacon of the said chapel."

"What do you think of that, marm?" asked Punks of his wife.

"No go," said the lady. "Seven shillings thrown away."

"You'll see, marm, you'll see," said Punks. "Keep an eye on the shop. I'll return the paper and be off to the railway."

"I think there may be something in it, after all," said Mrs. Punks, musingly. "There is nothing like gammon in this world. How would Spiffen & Co. have avoided bankruptcy if they had not sold three-shilling blankets for five shillings each for the use of the poor slaves in the West Indies? We never did much ourselves till we gave up—that is, pretended to give up—slave-grown sugars. Punks, you are right for once. Gammon for ever!"

So much was the mind of the groceress engaged in spe-

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culating on the result of her husband's ingenuity, that she inadvertently committed many grievous errors during the day. She supplied her customers with common congou at three-and-nine for the best gunpowder at six-and-three, and substituted coarse lump at ten-and-a-half, for best loaf at thirteen-and-a-farthing—all her errors were fortunately on the right side for her.

While his wife was giving way to this profitable state of mental aberration, Punks was walking up and down the platform of the Brackenbury station, waiting the arrival of the down trains. He eagerly inspected every one that got out, but without success. He knew all the arrivals to be inhabitants of the town or its neighborhood, and was aware that all of them were suited with houses.

At last the five o'clock train arrived at twenty-five minutes and a half past that hour. From a first-class carriage alighted a middle-aged gentleman, who was followed by a middle-aged lady. They were both of them modestly attired in dark suits, plainly made up, but of the best materials. As the gentleman drew out his silk-handkerchief from his pocket, he drew out with it sundry bits of printed paper, which fluttered about the platform in all directions.

Punks picked up one that fell at his feet, and saw that it was a religious tract.

"That's my man," said Punks. "I'm off home to receive him; has he brought any luggage, I wonder?"

He saw two very large portmanteaus extracted from the luggage-van, and deposited at the feet of the pious pair, and ran off home.

"All right," said Punks, as he entered his back parlor. "They'll be here in a minute."

"Who'll be here in a minute?" inquired Mrs. Punks.

"My new tenants—as nice a pair of pious, middle-aged

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ones as you ever set eyes on. Give me a clean cravat and my best coat," said Punks.

"Have you told them the rent?" asked his wife.

"I haven't spoke to them," said Punks, undressing himself as far as his coat and neckcloth went.

"How do you know, then, that they are coming about the cottage?" asked his wife.

"By instinct—but you'll see. Shall I do? Do I look like a deacon, eh?" said Punks.

"Comb your hair down, straighten and tuck in your shirt-collar—there, that will do. Bless me, here are a gentleman and lady, nice, solid-looking people, crossing the road to our door," said Mrs. Punks.

"Show them in here," said Punks, sitting down before a monthly Missionaries' Magazine, and pretending to be deep in its contents.

"If you can spare the time, my dear," said Mrs. Punks, "a lady and gentleman wish to speak to you."

"I am busy, very busy in spiritual matters, but if they cannot call to-morrow or next week, I will lay aside my occupations, and hear what they have to say," said Punks in awfully solemn tones.

"They are come about the cottage, my dear," said Mrs. Punks, still holding the little parlor door in her hand, and having her applicants close to her elbow.

"Cottage?—what cottage?" said Punks.

"Clematis Cottage, I suppose," replied his wife.

"Dear, dear, oh, dear!" groaned Punks, "the number of applications that I have had for that sweet little spot! really it is very tiresome—but admit them."

The gentleman and lady entered the little back-parlor, and took the chairs to which Punks pointed.

"I am here," said the gentleman, "in consequence of an—"

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"Advertisement in the Times, you would say. I am really very sorry you did not make an earlier application," said Punks.

"Why, I came down the moment I read it in the papers," said the man.

"Four trains in before you came," said Punks. "Not less than forty or fifty applicants for Clematis Cottage in each of them."

"Is it let then?" inquired the lady.

"Why, not exactly let, marm; references of respectability required, you know, and all that sort of thing—but the beauty and conveniency of the spot, and——"

"We do not care for them, sir," said the gentleman, solemnly. "Its approximation to a place of worship, where the pure word can be heard, was our chief inducement to come down and visit it."

"The rent is really very moderate," said Punks, "and the water remarkably salubrious."

"Could we see the premises?" asked the lady.

"Undoubtedly, marm; wearied as I am with walking over it so often to-day, I will show it to you myself," said Punks.

"Perhaps you would allow us to deposit our trunks in your warehouse," said the gentleman. "If the cottage should suit us, and you are inclined to accept us as your tenants, we should much like to take possession of it at once."

"But furniture, my dear sir?"

"You have tradesmen—upholsterers in Brackenbury, I presume."

"Lots," said Punks.

"And of the right way of thinking?" asked the lady.

"Independents to the back-bone, who submit to have their goods seized rather than pay a church-rate," said Punks.

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"Worthy men," said the gentleman; "lead on, sir."

Punks led the way, and made many pious remarks as they walked along. He was delighted at the reception which his remarks met with from his hearers, and after expatiating on the merits of the preacher at Ebenezer, which he pointed out to them as he passed it, he proceeded to launch out in praise of the cottage to let.

"There's a room for a hymn, marm," said he, letting them into the little front-parlor. "There's a something holy in the very echo!"

"Nice little place enough," said the lady, "and the floor very clean considering the number of people that have inspected it, and that there is no door-mats and a very bad scraper."

"A-humph!" coughed Punks, for he did not know what to say, and so pretended that he did not hear the remark.

"A very retired and very pleasant spot, suited to sober meditation. What say you, Martha? will it do?" said the gentleman.

"It wants a deal of repair," said the lady.

"Consider the rent, marm! only sixty pounds a year, and within five minutes' walk of Ebenezer, where the pure word is preached, and a seat secured," said Punks.

"Say fifty," said the gentleman.

Punks shook his head negatively.

"That is too much by twenty pounds," said the lady. "Let us look a little further."

"Make it guineas and it's yours," said Punks, "provided the references are satisfactory."

The gentleman and lady talked together for a few minutes, during which Punks was trying to appear cool and unconcerned, though in reality he was in a state of nervous agitation, difficult to be disguised.

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"We think it very highly rented," said the gentleman, "but as money is no object to us——"

"I wish I had stuck to sixty," said Punks to himself.

"And in consideration of the blessed advantages attached to it——"

"Pump of splendid water!" said Punks aloud.

"And of obtaining immediate possession of it, we will close with you. Here is my card."

"Ahem!—Mr. Jabez Worthington—good name," said Punks. "Alderbury—respectable place. Name your friend."

"The firm, sir, of which I am senior partner; Worthington, Dubs, and Trumps—general agents—call there and ask for Trumps, and if he don't satisfy you of my respectability, nobody else can do it," said Mr. Worthington.

"That'll do—up by train to-morrow. Meanwhile, what will you do?" said Punks.

"Put up at the inn," said Mrs. Worthington.

"No, no; good accommodations for man and horse, but not for a respectable married couple. Our first floor is now to let, and is unoccupied. You shall have it till the cottage is furnished. Ten shillings a day, maid and cooking included, won't hurt you," said Punks, always on the lookout for a chance.

"We are deeply indebted to you, sir," said Mrs. Worthington.

"Now, marm, now, sir, we will return and put you in possession of your snug little apartments," said Punks, as he locked the door of Clematis Cottage, put the key in his pocket, and led the way to his shop.

As the rooms were quite ready, Mr. and Mrs. Worthington walked into them at once, and desired that their luggage—merely the few things that they had brought down with them for a change or two—might be carried upstairs.

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The heavy porter and shop-boy were set to work to effect their removal, but the trunks were so heavy, they could scarcely accomplish their task.

"Supper, marm?" said Punks, his civility greatly increased by the report of the weight of the trunks.

"A little tea, if you please," said Mr. Worthington. "We trust you have family devotions and will allow us to join in them."

"Delightful people!" said Punks to his wife. "But I wish I had held out for sixty. I have no doubt they would have given it, they appear to be so very rich, and so—so—simple."

"Seen their money? got any trinkets, rings, watches, or jewels, and that sort of things?" said Mrs. Punks.

"Why, really, when you come to ask—no," said Punks; "but they look like it, eh? don't they?"

"I'll take up the tea-things myself," said Mrs. Punks, looking very mysteriously. Her husband sat deeply and anxiously involved in thought till her return.

"Well—how? what do you think?"

"All right," said Mrs. Punks, smoothing her black silk apron. "The man has got a gold repeater as large as a cheese-plate, and the woman a pretty little Geneva fastened to a long gold chain, and her hands are positively covered with rings."

Punks rubbed his hands with delight, and sent the porter out to the expounder of the Ebenezer, and begged him to come down to be introduced to the new occupant of Clematis Cottage, who would doubtless be a liberal contributor to the chapel, and sundry charities attached thereto.

It is needless to say the call was obeyed. The evening was passed in a most orderly manner. The pastor was delighted with the new addition to his flock, and Punks was so taken with the sobriety of their manners, and their atten-

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tion to the exercises of the evening, that he had made up his mind not to go to town to question their referee, but to be content with their evident respectability.

Mrs. Punks, however, was a cautious woman, and insisted upon the interview with Trumps; she, moreover, bade him ask a few questions about the respectability of the firm in general; "for," as she observed, "piety is all very well, but pay is better."

Punks was annoyed at her suspicions, and took a little hot rum-and-water with the pastor to quiet his nerves.

Punks was up early and off to London by the first train, and at ten o'clock presented himself at the place of reference.

"Mr. Trumps at home?" said Punks.

"I am Mr. Trumps, sir, pray walk in. Now what can we do for you?" said a sleek man, throwing open an overgrown ledger, clad in parchment, with green cuffs and collar.

"I am referred to you, sir, for the respectability and the responsibility of Mr. Worthington," said Punks.

"Eh? oh, I know—Clematis Cottage—how does my respected friend like it?" asked Trumps.

"So much that he has hired it," said Punks; "that is, if references are all right."

"Right, sir? Isn't he at the head of this firm, sir? Don't take my word for his respectability—go upon Change—inquire in Mark-lane—ask at the India-House—merely whisper his name at Lloyd's, that's all. Worthington respectable and responsible? it's a d—d deal too good!" said Trumps, as he laughed triumphantly.

"He seems to be a pious man, and punctual in his payments," said Punks, "and his wife is—"

"An angel, sir!—not fit to live upon this earth, sir. Go to Clapham and ask—but you need not ask—there is

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not a benefaction board attached to any chapel or infant school, that does not bear upon its black surface the name of Dorothea Worthington, engraved in gold characters, with a magnificent donation attached to it," said Trumps.

"Dorothea? I thought he called her Martha," said Punks.

"For brevity's sake, sir, merely for brevity's sake," replied Trumps. "You are a lucky man, Mr. What's-your-name."

"You think I'm safe, then?" asked Punks.

"Shall I give you a check for a twelvemonth's rent in advance?" said Trumps, opening a desk, and taking out a long, slim book.

"Oh, dear, no; no occasion for that," said Punks.

"Well, my dear sir, can I do anything more for you? Sorry to hurry you, but business, you know, must be attended to. Good bye—remember me to Worthington and his angelic wife," said Trumps, as he bowed Punks out of his office.

As Punks returned home in a third-class carriage, there was one thing that rather puzzled him—how was it for so old a firm—a firm that had existed ever since the waiter at the coffee-house had administered to the comforts of its customers—the furniture of the office should be so remarkably new? He had almost made up his mind to return and ask the question, when the idea occurred to him that the old was worn out by excessive use, and had just been replaced.

"Well, my dear, is it all right?" whispered Mrs. Punks to her husband, when he had gained the little back parlor.

"Right, marm? yes, I should think it was, too—a great deal more than right. We are highly favored, marm," said Punks; "two such angelic people are not be found every day, I can tell you."

"Tell me all about them," said the groceress.

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Punks tried to do so, but, to his own surprise, was obliged to draw largely upon his inventive faculties; for, when he summed up in his brain all the evidence he had collected, it only amounted to this—that Worthington was a partner in a general agent's office, and that his wife was an angel, as far as being a liberal patroness to the chapels and charities at Clapham went—upon the *ipse dixit* of the junior partner, Mr. Trumps. This was a pretty strong peg, however, to hang a story upon, and Punks availed himself of it. His imagination was fertile, and Mrs. Punks was satisfied; especially when she heard that Trumps had tendered a cheque for a twelvemonth's rent in advance; though she could not help calling her husband a fool for not having taken it.

"You are quite satisfied, I hope, Mr. Punks?" said Mrs. Worthington, as he entered the front drawing-room.

"More than satisfied, marm; delighted to have such worthy people as my tenants," replied Punks, quite overjoyed; for he saw a purse, a large, green, netted purse, lying on the table, filled full of sovereigns.

"Then we can take possession and furnish the cottage immediately," said Mr. Worthington.

"We had better remain here, my love, until the house is fit to receive us," said Mrs. Worthington.

"Oh! by all means. In the meanwhile, Mr. Punks will have the goodness, perhaps, to introduce me to some respectable and pious tradesmen in Brackenbury, who will put the place in order for us?" said Worthington.

"Too happy, sir, too happy," said Punks.

"You will take care, sir, not to introduce me to any tradesman of the wrong way of thinking," said Mr. Worthington sternly.

"Trust me for that—we hang together like—"

"Trust! sir? I don't know the meaning of the word, as I told you before. I pay for everything in ready money or by

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bill at two months, which is just the same," said Mr. Worthington, as he put his hands into his breeches-pockets, and rattled sundry coins about.

"Just the same," said Punks, "if it's duly honored."

"*Shall* I pay you in advance, sir?" asked Mrs. Worthington, angrily, and proceeded to open the green netted purse. "If you have a doubt—"

"Oh! dear me, marm, no—excuse me, pray excuse me, if I have offended you. I really beg pardon," said Punks, in very humble tones.

"It is granted, sir," said the lady; "but I must confess that I was very much hurt to think that it was possible for a Worthington to dishonor a bill."

"Say no more about it, my dear. Come with me, and Mr. Punks will kindly introduce us to some *good* tradespeople," said Worthington.

"And perhaps he will have the goodness to show us over the British school and the Infant school? I am anxious to add my mite to the contributions of the charitably-disposed," said Mrs. Worthington, as she dropped the heavy purse into her reticule.

"Angelic woman!" said Punks, just loudly enough to enable the lady to hear him, as he led the way through the private passage into the town.

The schools were duly inspected. The pious pair put down their names as annual subscribers of £20 each, and gave the heads of each department a sovereign, to be spent in tea and buns for their scholars.

"What charming people! quite an acquisition to Brackenbury!" exclaimed the pious ladies and gentlemen who visited the schools in the course of the morning.

The report of the benevolent characters of the new tenants of Clematis Cottage was spread like wild-fire, and before they reached the upholsterer's, to whom Punks intro-

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duced them, that individual was longing to have their custom. He shook Punks by the hand, whispered something about a *doshure*, and undertook to furnish the cottage within two days.

"You will do it well, sir, and reasonably. Make a fair profit out of me, but don't impose upon me. I shall examine your bill rigidly, for I pay for everything in ready money, or by bill at two months," said Mr. Worthington, and so he said to the ironmonger, the silversmith, the wine-merchant, and all other tradesmen, to whom he gave most liberal orders.

In the course of a week Clematis Cottage was elegantly furnished. Its cellars were well stored, its larder supplied, and the new tenants, who had won golden opinions of everybody of their own way of thinking, were only waiting to decide which of the services of plate, sent in to them for inspection and approval, they should purchase. It was a delicate question, and Worthington and his wife resolved, as they told Mr. Punks, not to rely on their own judgment in so momentous a matter, but to ask a few friends to a tea-party, and submit the different services to their inspection, and take their opinions upon them.

On the afternoon of the Saturday—the day on which the tea-party was invited—Worthington and his lady, who had been visiting the poor, and liberally supplying them with tracts, walked into Punks's shop. Punks and his wife were already dressed for the party, and Mrs. Worthington paid the groceress many compliments on the very becoming neatness of her dress. They were, of course, asked into the little back-parlor, but Worthington declined the invitation, under the plea that they must hurry home to be ready to receive their friends.

"By the by," said Worthington, "have you any cash in the house, Mr. Punks?"

Punks smirked, and confessed he had.

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"Then I will trouble you, sir," said Worthington, very sternly, "for change for that check, 54*l.* 9*s.* 10*d.*, on Coutts and Co. It is crossed regularly, as you will see."

"Our outlay has been enormous—so many little things that one never dreams of—I have not a sovereign left out of fifty or sixty—I forget exactly which—that I put in my purse when I came down here," said Mrs. Worthington; "really our three or four thousand a year, at this rate, will never do. We shall be ruined."

"Oh, dear no, marm; not by no means—it's only the first outlay. When you are settled down in Clematis Cottage, you'll live for a mere nothing—there's the money, sir; five, four, nine, ten," said Punks; "you'll find it all right."

"Excuse me, sir; but I am particular in money matters—I make it a rule to count the change if it's only for a sixpence," said Mr. Worthington.

"And very proper, too," said Mrs. Punks.

"It is quite right, sir: you'll excuse my very great particularity—I know you will—you are a man of business, Mr. Punks, and as such, will give me credit for not meaning to offend you."

Punks put the cheque on Coutts into his japanned box, and bowed most obsequiously.

"If you are ready to walk to the cottage, sir, allow me to offer my arm to Mrs. Punks, and do you take care of my good lady," said Worthington.

"My dear sir, ready in a minute," said Punks, as he popped into the parlor, and sought his best hat.

Happy Punks! happy Mrs. Punks! There they were, arm-in-arm, in the High-street of Brackenbury, with the wealthy, charitable, pious tenants of the Clematis Cottage. Punks enjoyed it amazingly, but thought Mr. Worthington walked very much too fast. He wanted to prolong his triumph.

The tea—Punks' best gunpowder at six-and-ten—was

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excellent; the toast—buttered with purest fresh at fifteen-and-a-half from Punks's shop, was duly appreciated, and a heartier meal was never made. Mrs. Worthington was so very kind and attentive, and Worthington's conversation was so instructive, that hours passed like minutes, and it was getting late when the silversmith ventured to allude to the object of their meeting.

"Really, my worthy brethren, your society has proved so agreeable—"

"Fascinating, my love."

"Don't interrupt me, Mrs. W.—so very agreeable, that I had forgotten all about the plate. Have you brought it with you?" said Mr. Worthington.

"Excuse me, sir, worthy sir, but it was so heavy that it took two porters to carry it," said the silversmith. "Allow me to display it."

The table was speedily cleared of the tea-things, and for more than an hour and a half the party were busily engaged deciding between the merits of the Queen's pattern, the Albert pattern, the Cottage pattern, and a great many other patterns besides, including the fiddle pattern, which Worthington seemed inclined to purchase because it was less showy than the others.

Mrs. Worthington was all for the Queen's pattern, in which she was seconded by all the party, for the silversmith had given them a secret hint, that it was the most expensive, and by far the most profitable to himself.

"Set them all aside, my dear, for a while," said Worthington. "Let us have a sandwich, and try our friend Hutton's champagne."

"You'll find it a superior article, rely upon it," said Mr. Hutton.

"Which shall we try first—the Moet or the Ruinard?" said Mr. Worthington.

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"Try both," said Hutton, thinking that the sooner both cases were emptied, the better it would be for himself.

The party were all totallers, but somehow or another, in the excitement of the moment, they forgot that they had taken the pledge. Pop, pop, pop, went cork after cork, and everybody said that both were so excellent, that they could not decide between the rival makers. Pop, pop, pop, again, without coming to any decision.

"Well, well," said Worthington, "I'll keep both cases; but you must throw off ten shillings, ready money, recollect, or bill at two months, which is just as good."

"Can't, indeed I can't," said Hutton; "it's put in at the very lowest figure."

"You may as well taste the Port, and the Madeira, and the Sherry, and the Claret," said Mrs. Worthington.

"I think we had better, Mrs. W., my dear, we shall never get together such another committee of taste."

Pop went the corks, sip, sip, sip, first of one, and then of another sort. Louder grew the tongues of the differing judges. Devilled biscuits and strong cheese were introduced, more bottles were opened, and before the clock struck ten, the four wax candles—Punks's best at three-and-nine—were multiplied into eight, and Mrs. Punks felt so queer that she was obliged to retire.

"Hark!" said Worthington, "I hear the sound of wheels. It's Trumps with the pictures."

All the party went out to see the van, in which a most valuable little collection of pictures—real originals of the best masters—had been conveyed, for it was not safe to bring them down by rail, "they were so very careless."

"You won't unpack them to-night?" said Trumps.

"Impossible," said Worthington, "put the van into the yard and lock the gates. James shall sit up all night and watch it."

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"T—t—time to go," stammered out the silversmith.

"Q—q—q—uite," said Punks. "Good night, respected friends."

"But the plate?" said Mrs. Worthington.

"I cannot think of letting our friend risk the removal of it to-night," said her husband. "Let Mary take it carefully up stairs into our room, and do you see it safely locked up in our cupboard."

"I will take it up myself," said the lady.

"Ve—ve—very much 'bliged to you, marm; go—good night," said the worthy tradesman.

"I wish you all good night, and thank you for your company. We meet at the chapel to-morrow, of course," said Worthington.

And so they did, at three services, during the performance of which the decorous conduct of the Worthingtons, and the junior partner, Trumps, made a deep impression on all the worshippers in the Ebenezer chapel. The plate was sent round, too, for some colonial mission, and no one dropped gold into it but the occupiers of Clematis Cottage and their junior partner.

"A real blessing to the place," was the unanimous judgment of the good people of Brackenbury.

"Bless my soul! what can that be!" said Punks to the groceress, about twelve o'clock on the Sunday night. "It's very like a stage-coach, only they are all dead and buried."

"It's wheels, that's certain. It must be the fire-engine —do jump out of bed and see what it is," said Mrs. Punks.

Punks rose reluctantly, for his head still ached, from having taken too much of Hutton's samples. He drew aside the blind, opened the window, and caught sight of a covered van being driven at a rapid rate on the road towards London. Two males and a female sat on the box, and as they passed within a couple of yards of his head, Punks

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heard a voice—a well known voice—say, "Go it, Trumps, there's the spoon of a grocer."

You might have knocked Punks down with a feather. He closed the window, drew the curtains, and flung himself into bed, where he lay groaning deeply, and muttering, "Done—clean done—five, four, ten and nine—sheer cash—groceries—hams, oh, Lord! Responsible for introductions—poor Hutton's champagne! Six services of plate—off by first train in the morning."

As soon as it was light Punks was off without explaining further to his anxious wife. Before he went down to the station he ran to Clematis Cottage and peeped in at the window. Not a vestige of furniture was to be seen.

"Sure it was so—catch them in town," said Punks, as he trotted to the early train.

* * * * * *

It so happened that Mr. Hutton, the wine-merchant of Brackenbury, had occasion to visit London the same day. He arrived about noon, and as he was walking along Cheapside, he saw a crowd collected. He ran to see the meaning of it; and to his surprise, beheld his friend, the Deacon of the Ebenezer chapel, grasping "the real blessing to the town" by his collar, and shouting for a policeman.

"Are you mad, Punks?" said he; "you are apprehending the worthiest, most liberal—"

"No, I ain't," screamed Punks, "I am apprehending a Swindler—a Wolf in Sheep's clothing, and I'll hang him if I can."

"But you can't, my fine fellow, it's only a simple contract debt after all," said Worthington, alias Slinking Tom.

He was not hanged; merely sent out to over-colonize Van Diemen's Land, and the Brackenburyans had a hearty laugh at the owner of Clematis Cottage and his pious friends.

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Elkanah Smithers, Jun.

I SHALL never forget my first journey from Limerick to Dublin. A day-coach had been established, which was considered a marvel of celerity. It left Swinburne's hotel early in the morning, and contrived to accomplish half of the journey that day, arriving late in the evening at Mountrath, where the travellers slept, whence, starting next morning, after an early breakfast, it entered the metropolis by the light of the old oil-lamps, upon the second day. You may yet see the old roadside inn a little way outside the town of Mountrath—a large high house, retired a short way from the road, having a spacious sweep of gravelled space before it, and a multitude of windows; but, alas! it is now falling fast into decay; and one never sees the bustling face of the white-aproned waiter standing at the door, or hears the crack of the postillion's whip as he leads out his posters to horse a gentleman's travelling-carriage.

Well, all that is past and gone. On the second day of our journey, we had all assembled drowsily in the parlor, which smelled villanously of the preceding night's supper, and had sat down to our hurried breakfast. By the time

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we had half-finished our meal, a car drove up to the door, and in a few moments after a gentleman entered in a large drab travelling-coat, with half a dozen capes, and a huge red shawl wound around his neck. He deposited a travelling-case leisurely on the sideboard, and then looked keenly around him. The survey did not seem to give him much gratification. The eggs had all disappeared, and the cold beef was in a very dilapidated condition. However, he sat down, took off his coat and shawl, and addressed himself to the cold meat like a hungry man. The waiter made his appearance.

"Just five minutes more, gentlemen, the horses are putting to."

The traveller looked up quietly. He was not a man to be put out of his way. He ordered some eggs, and desired the waiter to make fresh tea.

"Are you going by the coach, sir?" inquired the attendant.

"Yes, certainly," was the reply, in an English accent (he was a traveller from a London house), "but I must have my breakfast first; so be quick, will you?"

The waiter left the room, and immediately after we heard the fellow telling the guard to be expeditious; an exhortation to which that worthy responded by a clamorous blast of his horn that made us all start from our seats, and hurry out of the room, leaving the English gentleman alone to finish his breakfast, which, to do him justice, he seemed by no means disposed to neglect. The waiter, meantime, brought in the tea, and retired; but was speedily summoned back by a vigorous ringing of the bell.

"A spoon, please," said the gentleman.

The waiter advanced to the table to procure the article, but, to his astonishment, there was not a spoon to be seen; nay, even those which had been in the cups had all disappeared.

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"Blessed Virgin!" ejaculated the dismayed attendant, "what's become of all the spoons!"

"That's just what I want to know, you blockhead," said the other.

"Two dozen and a half—real silver," cried Tom.

"I want only one," said the gentleman. "Haven't you a spoon in your establishment, my man?"

Tom made no reply, but rushed directly out of the room, and running up to the coachman, cried out, "Stop, Dempsey, for the love of heaven!"

"All right!" says Dempsey, with a twirl of his whip, gathering up the reins, and preparing to start—for we had all taken our places.

"'Tisn't all right, I tell you," cried Tom, "where are the spoons?"

"What spoons? Arrah! don't be bothering us, man: and we five minutes behind time. Joey, hold that off-leader's head, till she goes on a bit."

By this time the master of the inn had come out to learn what all the hubbub was about. Tom, half-blubbering, poor fellow, made him acquainted with the fact, that all his silver spoons had vanished. The landlord cried out "robbery!" the housemaids screamed out "murder!" and a variety of other exclamations, too dreadful to contemplate. When silence was restored, the inn-keeper insisted on stopping the coach till he ascertained if the report of Tom was true. Ere many moments he returned, as pale as a ghost, and said—

"Gentlemen, I'm sorry to trouble you; but I must beg you'll come down, till a search is made for my property. Tom, here, will swear that there was a spoon in every tea-cup this morning as usual—won't you, Tom?"

"Bedad, I'll take my Bible-oath of that same, sure enough," replied Tom; "and sure I didn't swallow them."

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The passengers all indignantly refused to submit to the search proposed by the landlord. An old lady inside went off in hysterics, when the inn-keeper opened the door, and proposed to turn her pockets inside out. There was an officer with a wooden leg on the box-seat, who swore, in the most awful manner, that he would run the first man through the body that attempted to lay a hand on him—by the way, he hadn't a sword, but he forgot that in his fury. There was a justice of the peace for the county, who protested that he would commit the host for contempt; and a Dublin attorney in the back-seat intimated his determination to indict Tom, who had laid hold of his leg, for an assault; and, moreover, to commence an action against his master for defamation. As I was but a youngster then, and the weakest of the party, the landlord chucked me down in a twinkling, and hauled me into the parlor, half dead with fright; and thereupon the rest of the passengers, including the wooden-legged captain, scrambled down, and followed, determined to make common cause and protect me from insult with their lives, if necessary. And now we were all again in the breakfast-room, clamoring and remonstrating, while, to add to the din, the guard kept up a continual brattle with his horn. All this time the English gentleman was steadily prosecuting his work upon the eggs and toast, with a cup of tea before him, which he was leisurely sipping, quite at his ease like.

"What the deuce is the matter!" said he, looking up, "can't you let a man take his breakfast in comfort?"

"The plate!" said the master.

"The silver spoons!" cried the butler.

"Robbery!" shouted the mistress.

"Murder!" &c., screamed the housemaids.

"Search every one," demanded the host; "come, let us

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begin with this young chap," diving his hand into my breeches pocket.

"I think," said the English gentleman, coolly, "'twould be as well first to search the premises. Is the waiter long in your service?"

"Fifteen years last Shrovetide, and I defy any man to lay as much as the big of his nail to my charge."

By this time the English gentleman had finished his breakfast, and, wiping his mouth most deliberately, he commenced to search the room. He opened every drawer of the sideboard, then he looked under the table, then behind the window-shutters, but all in vain. After that he stopped a moment to reflect, when a bright thought seemed to cross his mind, and he raised the lid of one of the teapots, but with as little success as before; nevertheless, he continued his examination of the teapots, and when he came to the last, what do you think, but he thrust in his hand, and drew out first one spoon, and then another, till he laid a number of them on the table. Tom rushed up and began to count —"Two, four, six," and so on, till at length he exclaimed—

"May I never see glory, but they're all right, every one. The Lord between us and harm, but this bangs all that ever I seen!"

"I'll tell you what, my man," said the gentleman, looking sternly at the astonished waiter, "I strongly suspect you have been playing tricks upon your master. A nice haul you'd have had of it when the company had gone away! I don't like the look of the fellow, I tell you," he continued, addressing himself to the host; "and if it wasn't for the fortunate circumstances of my coming in a little late and wanting a spoon, you would have lost your property, sir. You may count it a lucky day that I came to your house."

The landlord was struck dumb with amazement; even the mistress hadn't a word to say, though she looked wick-

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edly at poor Tom, and the housemaids began to cry and bless themselves.

"Gentlemen," proceeded the Englishman, "I hope you will overlook the insult you have received; as, after all, the landlord is not to be blamed; and if he will insist on this blackguard waiter making an ample apology, I will take upon me to say for you all, that you will not take any proceedings."

All cheerfully expressed their assent to the proposition except the attorney, who still muttered something about assault and defamation, which so terrified Tom that he most humbly entreated pardon of the whole company, though he still protested that he was innocent of the crime laid to his charge.

"Gammon!" said the gentleman; "but as you have made proper submission, and nothing has been lost, I shall make it a further condition with your master, that he won't turn you adrift on the world with a thief's character, but give you an opportunity of reforming. Keep a sharp eye on him, however, sir, I advise you. And now, gentlemen, I think we'd better be moving."

We all hurried out and took our places, the English gentleman getting up on the seat behind the coachman. Dempsey "threw the silk" into the horses; the guard blew an impatient blast on his horn, and off we went at a slapping pace, the host bowing humbly to us until we were out of sight.

"I'm driving on this road these ten years," said Dempsey, when he slackened his pace up a hill; "and I never knew such a thing as that happen before."

"Very likely," said the Englishman, quietly, "and never will again."

"I always thought Tom Reilly was as honest a fellow, man and boy, as any in the parish."

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"I make no doubt he is," replied the other; "he has a very honest countenance."

"I thought, sir," said the captain, "you said you didn't like his look?"

"Maybe I did say so," was the reply.

"And pray, sir, do you still think 'twas he hid the spoons?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Then who the d—l did?"

"I did. Do you think I'm green enough to travel so cold a morning as this without having a comfortable breakfast?"

"Well," said Dempsey, "that's the knowingest trick I ever heard of in my life."

"Not bad," replied the gentleman, with great *sang-froid*, "but it won't do to be repeated."

When we arrived at Portarlington, the gentleman—who, by the way, turned out to be a very pleasant fellow, and up to all sorts of life—got off the coach, and ordered his travelling-case to be taken into the inn.

"Do you stop here, sir?" asked the coachman.

"Yes, sir, for the present. I have a little business to do here as well as at Mountrath."

The gentleman having given the usual gratuity to the guard and coachman, and also a slip of paper to Dempsey, which he directed him to give to the host at Mountrath, passed into the inn; the coach drove on, and I never saw him again.

Dempsey having pocketed the shilling, looked at the paper with some curiosity, in which, to say the truth, we all shared.

"There's no harm in reading it, as it is open," said the Captain, taking it from Dempsey.

They were a few lines, written in pencil, on the leaf of a

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pocket-book, and the Captain read them out—I remember them to this day:—

"This is to certify that Tom Reilly put nothing into the teapot this morning except hot water and sloe-leaves, and that the other ingredients, the spoons, were added by me, for the purpose of giving the composition some strength. I further certify that the aforesaid spoons are capital for making 'stir.'

"Given under my hand,

"ELKANAH SMITHERS, JUN."

You may be sure we all enjoyed this finish to the joke, and Dempsey forwarded the paper by the down-coach, that poor Tom Reilly's character might be cleared with the least possible delay. Tom was fully reinstated in the confidence of his employers; but the landlady had got such a fright that she determined her silver spoons should never again be placed at the mercy of any traveller. Accordingly, she transferred them to the private part of the establishment, substituting for them in the public room a set of very neat pewter articles—there was no German silver, or albata, or such things in those days—which, when cleaned, looked nearly as well as silver. Many a time I stirred my tea at breakfast with one of them, and thought of "Elkanah Smithers, jun."

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Infatuation.

ONE summer's evening two gentlemen were seated at a well-spread dessert table in an aristocratic quarter of West-London. He at its head, its master, was a fine, stately man, wearing in his countenance, in its expression and form of feature, the impress of true nobility—nature's nobility, not that of the peerage, for in reality he was only a merchant, though one of the first class. His lady wife—*she* was the daughter of a peer—had just quitted the room, and left them to themselves. They were the heads of the well known City firm, "Grubb and Howard." Mr. Howard had walked up from the City at this evening hour to confer upon a matter, which had come to his knowledge, with his senior partner—senior in authority, but his junior in years; a private engagement having brought Mr. Grubb away from the City at mid-day.

"Did you draw a cheque on Saturday morning, before leaving home, in favor of self, and get it cashed?" began James Howard, as Mr. Grubb returned to his seat, from closing the door after Lady Adela. "At Glyn's."

The merchant threw his thoughts back to Saturday morning. The reminiscence was unpleasant. For a scene

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had taken place with his wife, painful to him, disgraceful to her. He had drawn no cheque.

"No," he answered.

"A cheque for £500 in favor of self?" continued Mr. Howard, slowly sipping his port wine.

"I don't draw at Glyn's in favor of self," interrupted the merchant, "only at my private banker's. You know that, Howard, as well as I do."

"Just so. Therefore, upon the fact coming to our notice this afternoon that such a cheque had been drawn and paid, I stepped over to Glyn's and made inquiries."

"Well?"

"Well, there it was, safe enough: a cheque purporting to be drawn and signed by you."

"Charles Grubb?"

"No; the firm signature, 'Grubb and Howard.' And a very good imitation it is. But if it is your writing, your hand was nervous when you wrote it, rendering the letters less decided than usual."

"Who presented it?" inquired Mr. Grubb.

"Mr. Cleveland. And he received the money."

"Cleveland!" uttered Mr. Grubb, in the most astonished tone. "There is some mystery about this."

"So it seemed to me," answered the junior partner. "Cleveland's out of town, you said, to-day."

"Went down yesterday to Brighton, to his father's. Will be home in the morning. But how did he procure the cheque? Who drew it?" resumed the puzzled merchant. "Where's the money?"

"It was Saturday morning that you left the cheque-book at home and sent Cleveland for it, if you remember."

"Ah, to be sure it was," echoed the merchant, quickly. "A long while he was gone."

"And during this period, between ten and half-past

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eleven, the cheque was presented and cashed. I thought he was of improvident habits, but never suspected he was one to help himself——"

"He *cannot* have helped himself in this sort of way," interrupted Mr. Grubb earnestly. "Cleveland is a wild, random species of young fellow, and has his faults, but he is certainly not one to descend to guilt of this nature."

"He is reckless in his expenditure, and is never out of debt—as I hear," urged James Howard.

"Very likely. I don't doubt he is of the fast genus. But that does not prove he would defraud us. The thing's impossible, Howard."

"He presented the cheque and received the money," dryly remarked Mr. Howard. "What has he done with it?"

"But no madman would go to work in this barefaced way," replied his more generous-minded partner, "bringing immediate detection and punishment down upon his head."

"Suppose you inquire what clothes he took with him," suggested Mr. Howard. "My impression is, that he's off. The Brighton tale may have been a blind."

Mr. Grubb rose and rang the bell, staggered nearly out of his senses; and, until it was answered, not another word was spoken. Each gentleman was busy with his own thoughts.

"Richard," said the master, "when Mr. Cleveland left for Brighton yesterday morning, did he take much luggage with him?"

"I don't think he took any, sir, unless it was his small portmanteau."

"Did you happen to hear him say whether he contemplated making a longer stay than usual?"

"I did not hear him say anything, sir. But Mr. Cleveland is back."

"Back!" echoed Mr. Howard, surprised into the interference.

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"He came back a few minutes ago, sir."

"Is he in now?" asked Mr. Grubb.

"No, sir; he went out again almost directly. The cab waited for him. He is gone to dine at the Army and Navy."

"Then no elucidation can now take place till morning," observed Mr. Grubb, as the servant withdrew. "When he goes out on these dining bouts he is never home till late, sometimes not at all. But rely upon it, Howard, this matter will be cleared up. Cleveland is no forger."

"Hope it may," sarcastically uttered the junior partner.

The merchant was seated next morning at his breakfast alone, for the Lady Adela never condescended to breakfast with her husband, and Charles Cleveland had not made his appearance.

"Does Mr. Cleveland know I am at breakfast?" he inquired of the servant.

"Mr. Cleveland left word—I beg your pardon, sir, I forgot to mention it—that he was gone out to breakfast with his brother, Captain Cleveland, who sails to-day for India."

Twelve o'clock was heard striking by St. Paul's, in the City premises of Messrs. Grubb and Howard, and no Charles Cleveland had made his appearance. Both partners, with a gentleman from Glyn's, were assembled in a private room, the latter gentleman and Mr. Howard fully persuaded that the delinquent had embarked for India with his brother, or some other place not speedily accessible to officers of justice. But ere the clock had well finished striking Charley himself came in, bustling and out of breath.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for being so late," he panted, addressing himself to Mr. Grubb, "especially after my holiday of yesterday. I went early this morning to Woolwich, and on board my brother's ship, intending to be up by business hours, but, what with one delay and another, I was unable to get back till now."

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"Take a seat, Mr. Cleveland," was the reply. "We have a few questions to put to you."

Charles glanced round. In his hurry, he had seen no one but Mr. Grubb. His eye now fell on the banker: he knew him well; and knew that the time was come when he would have need of all his presence of mind and his energies.

"You presented a cheque for £500 at Glyn's on Saturday morning, and received the amount in notes," began Mr. Grubb. "From whom did you get that cheque?"

No reply.

"Purporting to be drawn and signed by me," continued Mr. Grubb. "I ask from whom you received it?"

"I decline to answer," he said at length, speaking with hesitation, in spite of his resolve for firmness.

"Do you deny having presented the cheque?"

"No. I do not deny that."

"Do you deny having received the money for it?" questioned the banker.

"Nor that either. I acknowledge to have received £500. It would be folly to deny it," he continued, in a sort of calm desperation, "since the bank could prove the contrary."

"But did you know what you were laying yourself open to?" asked Mr. Grubb, evidently in a maze of astonishment.

"I know now, sir."

"Will you refund the money?" interposed Mr. Howard. "Out of consideration for your family, connected, as it is, with that of the head of our firm, we are willing to——"

"I cannot refund it, and I must decline to answer any more questions," interrupted Mr. Cleveland, fast relapsing into agitation.

Mr. Howard stepped into the next room, and soon a policeman was added to the group.

"It is our duty to give this gentleman into custody for forgery," said James Howard, pointing at Charles Cleve-

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land, who was standing side by side with Mr. Grubb: but the policeman, mistaking the direction, laid his arm on that of the head of the firm.

"Not me," said the merchant, with a slight smile.

"Why, officer, what are you thinking of?" cried the banker, indignantly. "Don't you know this gentleman yet—Mr. Grubb? You are a City policeman."

"No offence," deprecated the policeman, transferring his attention to Mr. Charles. "I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought the gentleman pointed to you. And so many, where you'd least expect it, get into trouble now, that if they handed over to us a duke, we should just take him, and make no bones about it. Is the charge to be gone into to-day?"

"Without any delay," peremptorily uttered Mr. Howard.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Charles Cleveland, turning to Mr. Grubb, in a high state of excitement, "will you look over this one error? My father will replace the money—I am sure he will, rather than suffer this public disgrace to fall upon the family. Do not force the shame upon him."

Mr. Grubb drew him aside from the rest, and spoke to him in private. "If I afford you the opportunity, will you tell me the circumstances of the case?" he asked, "for I own to you that your conduct appears to me perfectly incomprehensible. There is some mystery in the affair, which I do not fathom. It may be better for you to confide in me."

"I cannot," returned Cleveland.

"What if I tell you that, in spite of appearances, I do not myself believe you guilty?"

A bright, eager flush, a glance of *understanding*, illumined for a moment Charley's face. It seemed to say that just, honorable natures know and trust in each other's

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