handle of the door. That yielded easily to his touch. He slipped into the darkness of the interior, breathing hard. A vertigo seized him. Near the altar, a mild bar of nebulous moonlight streamed through a window and touched the image of Mary. Padre Salvatore dipped his cold fingers into the holy-water basin, crossed himself, and bent his knee. Then, fortified by this simple ceremony, he advanced with bold carriage and firm tread into the sacristy. As he threw open the door, appearing on the threshold as might the black shade of an avenging power, a faint brightness struck his eyes, confusing him for an instant. Then he recoiled, with an involuntary cry of horror and dismay.

Crouching on the bare floor beside the oaken chest and grasping the golden chalice so that it glinted in the light, was Rosa, pale and terrified, while before her, holding an uplifted candle whose flickering flame shed a dim brilliance on Padre Salvatore's face, stood a stranger—a young man. His frightened glance swept the priest, and he uttered an exclamation of surprise. Padre Salvatore had grown livid. He staggered back against the door, and the pistol fell clattering to the floor. Presently he summoned courage to speak.

'What—what you do here, Rosa?' he asked, in hardly audible tones. 'Why you disturb the relics?' He seemed to gain courage from the sound of his own voice. He drew himself up and crossed both hands over his chest. 'You would steal—you?' he said, passionately. 'An' for what? For whom?' He pointed with one finger to her companion. His pallid face flushed scarlet. 'Is it—is it—for him, Rosa?'

She burst into tears and did not answer.

''Ow came you by the key? Answer me,' he said, imperiously.

'I took it while you slept. Oh, do not look at me like that! Forgive me. If you only knew—'

The young man had lowered the candle and stood with averted gaze, biting his lips until they bled. Padre Salvatore took no notice. He came forward, took the chalice gently in his hands, put it back into the chest and turned the key in the lock. He wheeled about and strode out of the sacristy, holding his head aloft.

'Come back to the 'ouse—both,' he said, briefly.

Dazed and ashamed, they followed him through the echoing aisle of the church. When they reached the house, Padre Salvatore was standing in the reception-room, drawn up to his full height, his hand resting upon the bare centre-table. He had lighted the kerosene lamp, and in its wan radiance his features looked grey and rigid. He appeared to have aged horribly.

'Who is he—this person?' he inquired, unsteadily, not meeting Rosa's glance.

She turned her eyes imploringly upon the young man, who answered for her. Padre Salvatore listened like one who only half understands. He heard the miserable little love story with compressed lips and fixed gaze. He comprehended as in a dream that the two had long desired to marry, but that Rosa's father had opposed the match because the suitor had no money to establish himself in business, and no prospect of getting any. So that was why Rosa had been sent away to visit the priest. Her father thought she would forget her foolish attachment. But she had not forgotten, nor, had her lover forgotten. He had found out where she was, and had come to the island to persuade her to run away and get married in St. Ignace. She had consented. They had met several times in the village, and all their arrangements were made. Only they had no money; merely a few dollars, which were insufficient. She had thought of the relics which were worth a great deal, and were of no use to anybody, lying in the old chest in the sacristy. That was all.

A blush of shame dyed Padre Salvatore's colourless cheeks. For a brief space he could not speak. Then he asked vaguely:

'There was no other objection to your marriage? Only the money?'

'No, there was no other objection,' they said.

Padre Salvatore knit his brows.

'It is well,' he said, moving towards the door. 'We can talk to-morrow; now it is late.'

He ushered the young man with ceremonious courtesy to the portico without; then he closed and bolted the door. His white lips trembled.

No more was said. He motioned to Rosa, and led the way upstairs, carrying the lamp uplifted, so that the yellow glimmer illumined one side of his face. He passed into the study, and sinking upon a chair, leaned his head upon his hands. He remained thus until the night was far spent, struggling bitterly with himself. A fearful blight seemed to have fallen upon him and crushed his buoyant spirit. Rosa's sin resembled some bitter disgrace of his own. Yet, try as he would, he harboured no anger against her; he felt naught but a tender pity. The grey morning found him still sitting there, but now a look of determination shone in his eyes. By-and-bye he rose, and, approaching the small hair trunk, that occupied one corner of the room, removed therefrom a wooden box, that he opened almost lovingly. It contained five hundred dollars, that by dint of enforced self-denial he had saved since his residence in America, and that he had meant to send at Christmas to his mother—an old, hard-working Neapolitan peasant. How much personal sacrifice was involved in this handful of gold no one but himself knew. Many a time he had gone without meat and clothes in order to save the money for his mother. Often, as he sat alone during the long winter evenings, warmed only by the lamplight, he had pictured to himself her joy when she should receive the gift. He imagined the tears of happiness coursing down her brown withered cheeks. He saw her calling to the neighbours to tell them who had sent it, and how it had come all the way from America, a wonderful country where the very streets were paved with gold.

Padre Salvatore's own eyes glistened as he placed the money on the table. Then, seeing that it was five o'clock, he recited his office and made preparation for the early mass. Rosa was waiting for him on his return from the church. She silently put the earthenware cup of strong coffee and the plate of dry bread upon the table, but as she turned to leave the room he called her back. At the sight of his white, quivering face she broke down, sobbing and imploring his pardon.

He took her hand in his, murmuring soothingly in Italian a verse from the Gospel:

'"Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."'

Aloud he said, trying to be calm:

'I am very sorry, Rosa, but I do not condemn. I, too, am sinner. I have offended God, an' He punished me. Go, and sin no more.'

Two tears overflowed upon his cheeks. Then he took the box and pressed it into her hands.

'See,' he said, forcing a smile. 'Ere is money for you, Rosa. You shall marry the man you love. Tell your father that I make you present; then it be all right. Now go; I much occupied.'

He almost pushed her from the room. He sat down to drink his coffee. A cheerful smile was on his lips.

When Rosa had gone, the village people, in spite of their vigilance, rarely saw him for days and days, except when he appeared at mass or to hear confession. He began to practice a desperate economy. The thought of his mother tortured him night and morning. He felt as if he had robbed her in her old age, and he prayed for forgiveness. He denied himself wine and macaroni, living on dry bread, with now and then a little fish. He sold a few things he did not need, and he saved nearly the whole of his meagre salary. In this way he hoped to send her something substantial at Christmas. But he had, in that short period, grown haggard and pinched and broken. The people remarked his changed appearance, and put their own construction upon it.

'*Hé!*' they whispered among themselves. 'We know! It is all on account of *la p'tite* he kept with him for so long and who left so suddenly. He said she was his cousin, but we know better. Now, next week comes *M'sieu l'Evêque*, and then *le Père* Salvatore shall see that we are not so blind and stupid as he thinks us. He shall be told everything—*M'sieu l'Evêque*. The *Curé* Salvatore is a bad man. He is not like the French priest we had last year.'

And when the bishop came in the evening preceding the ceremony of confirmation, the people assembled in a great mass near Padre Salvatore's door, hesitating as to whether they should march boldly in and demand an audience, or summon His Reverence outside. While they waited and took counsel among themselves a bright light shone all at once in the tiny parlour, and on the old worn linen blind were reflected the pale silhouettes of two figures—one tall and portly, that of the bishop, standing with outstretched hands, as if granting benediction. The other figure was smaller and appeared to be bowed in supplication.

'*Oh, hé! l' Père* Salvatore, he is making confession, as, indeed, he ought,' the people murmured. 'The bishop will come out and tell us how bad he is.'

The door opened presently, and on the dark threshold the bishop's form and that of Padre Salvatore stood out against the light. Something in the bishop's face caused the people to fall back in dismay. Padre Salvatore was white as death, and his shrunken limbs seemed lost in the long, loose folds of the bishop's coat that he wore. The sleeves hung down and hid his emancipated hands. The bishop waited for a moment before he spoke.

'My friends,' he began, in vibrant tones, and with that he extended one arm; and placing it about Padre Salvatore's neck, gathered him to his side as he might a child in distress—'my friends,' he repeated, after a significant pause, 'I bring you your pastor, a worthy son of God. I commend you to his care and his teaching, the more so, as lately you have condemned him unjustly in your hearts. For, verily, in the pure soul of Padre Salvatore is reflected the divine spirit of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.'

The bishop made the sign of the cross. For an instant the people stood as if spell-bound. Then, without a word, they slunk away, one by one.

By and bye only the bishop and Padre Salvatore remained standing on the chill threshold of the illuminated doorway, and the faces of both were wet with tears.

THE WOOD-MAID.

WHY will ye bring me your bold, brown faces,
Crowned with the leaves of my plundered wood?
Why will ye lurk in the low, leafy places,
Peering and jeering, and wooing me rude?

You frighten the bee from the linden blossom,
The doe in the dell, and the shy wood-dove,
The hare in its haunt, and the heart in my bosom,
With all your talking of love, love, love.

Here I live merry until you beset me;
What the birds sow is the harvest I reap.
Here I live merry till you come to fret me;
The heart in my bosom I keep safe asleep.

With the wit of your words to your will you would bind me,
As you bind the wings of the meek wood-dove;
In a snare, like a hare, you would wound me and wind me.
And bind me to the service of love, love, love.

Is love as sweet as the bloom the bee knoweth?
Is love as deep as the deep streams run?
Is love as pure as the wind when it bloweth?
Is love as true as the shining o' the sun?

I'll loose my locks to the free winds blowing,
I'll give my cheek to the sun and the rain,
I'll give my image to the clear stream's showing,
But I'll give not my lips to the lips of a swain.

Go hunt the bee with the sweet spoil laden!
Go hunt the hare, and the doe, and the dove!
Come not a-hunting a poor, merry maiden,
With all your mocking of love, love, love.

Come, Wind, kiss me! kiss and forsake not!
Smile to my smiling, thou constant Sun!
Heart in my bosom, wake not, wake not,
Till streams in the forest forget to run!

HELEN THAYER HUTCHESON.

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

A RAGGED coat finds little credit.

What we learn with pleasure we never forget.

'Whatever induced you to marry Fred?' 'Fred, of course.'

Adam was perhaps the first man who deemed marriage a failure.

It is remarkable; but the unfair umpire was never known to decide for our side.

It is all right for a man to shine in society; but if his clothes do it is quite a different matter.

It's a mighty little hammock that won't hold two souls with but a single thought.

Though there isn't much wit
In a statement like this,
Still a man makes a bit
When he Mrs a Miss.

Some men are born great; some achieve greatness, and some couldn't tell to save their necks how it happened.

AN EXCEPTION.—Some men cannot keep their eyes off the ladies unless, perhaps, they have seats in a horse-car and the ladies are standing.

A Philadelphia surgeon has dissected and mounted the complete nervous system of a human being—something never before accomplished.

Extremes, though contrary, have a like effect; extreme heat mortifies like extreme cold; extreme love breeds satiety, as well as extreme hatred.

AT A DISADVANTAGE.

She has changed her seat within the church
Because the sun shone through
The coloured window at her side
And turned her nose sky blue.

The smallest screws in the world are used in the manufacture of watches. The screw in the fourth jewel wheel, that appears to the naked eyes like a bit of dust, is so small that a lady's thimble would, it is stated, hold 1,000,000 of them.

Among a multitude of good things Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has said none better than this:—'The human race is divided into two classes—those who go ahead and do something, and those who sit still and inquire, "Why wasn't it done the other way?"'

INCIDENT IN A PARISIAN CAFE.—There are people in Paris who will die willingly if only they can die in public and with *éclat*. Thus, at a Belleville haunt, an old soldier ordered a repast, coolly enjoyed it, drank his coffee afterwards, and then—blew out his brains. On searching his note-book, the police discovered that the suicide had therein recorded his impressions to the moment that he had sat down to his last meal. It finished in these terms: 'All the same; there are some men who have no luck. I might have remained an honest man, but I was not allowed. When I have finished drinking my *petit verre*, I shall blow up the powder magazine.'

AN ADAPTABLE POEM.

They stood beside the open grate
(For summer, substitute a gate);
She was blonde (if you prefer
Why make a brunette out of her).
He spoke of love (they all do that,
And she? Her heart went pit-a-pat.
The speed, why you yourself can fix,
From seventy up to ninety-six.
She hung her head, she blushed, she sighed,
She laughed; or possibly she cried.
Just take your choice and have her do
Precisely as you wish her to.
She did et cetera, until
Her George, or Jack, or Jim, or Will.
Or any name you like the best;
But why go on? You know the rest.

SUNDAY IN THE OLDEN TIME—The old English Sunday in the North of England seems to have been characterized by some strange practices. Sunday announcements of forthcoming auction sales and other equally secular matters were in some instances made by the parish clerk in the churchyard, or even in the church itself. It seems, moreover, that at Wigton, in Cumberland, during the reign of Charles II., a Sunday meat market was held. Butchers put their carcases of meat at the church door, and customers actually took the joints they had bought inside the building, and hung them on the backs of the seats till service was finished. The clergyman was, we are told, so disturbed by this irreverent custom that he made a journey to London on foot, and secured the change of market day to Tuesday.

SOLO DANCING.—Engaging dancing ladies to display their agility at evening receptions, in London, now enables a great number of artistes to gain very handsome remuneration. The idea was, probably, started some months ago by the Queen commanding a very graceful young dancer, Miss Smith, to appear before her, to show her skill in her art; and since then one or two leading ladies of fashion have engaged her and other clever artistes in the 'poetry of motion' for the purpose named, the new departure meeting with the greatest success. It is thus quite likely, from a fad or craze of the hour, this long neglected art may again be brought into repute; for kicking and plunging violently on the stage, and tearing round like beings distraught in a ball-room, can scarcely be termed dancing, which should embody all the grace of which the human form divine is capable.

REUNITED IN OLD AGE.—Jackson Thomas married forty years ago a young woman, and after a few years they were divorced. Both found new and presumably more suitable companions. Death robbed each in a short time of the happiness thus found. Each tried a third matrimonial venture, and the new relations continued until recently, when again, by a singular coincidence, the visitation of death left each alone in the world. Uncle Jack, as he is called, is now eighty-one years old, the lady who was his first wife, sixty-nine. Old targets for Cupid, surely. But the little archer knew that under the dead ashes of a double bereavement in the old man's heart there was still something inflammable, so he aimed an arrow—a fiery arrow, so to speak—at the ancient breastworks, and the old flame of forty years ago burst forth again. It was carried by Uncle Jack to the woman from whom he separated thirty-five years ago. The flame caught and spread. Now the fire on the household altar is burning again, after a brief courtship.