your life. If you live solely for that it's an empty purposeless sort of existence, after all."

"You're unfairly prejudiced against the stage," put in the girl quickly.

"Perhaps I am, in your case at any rate. I'll admit I'm a very ordinary Philistine with only an ordinary primitive sort of idea that I want to keep the woman I—I love to myself. I can dispense with her name on the omnibuses and tramcars. There's only one position worth anything to a wise woman——"

"And that of course is at the head of her husband's table."

"Exactly."

"And if I decided to take your advice and become—someone else's wife?" asked the girl.

Brayshaw was silent for a moment. "Provided he was a decent chap and you were fond of him," he said at last; "I should——"

"Should what?"

The brown hand went out suddenly and caught hers, holding it close, "I should hate him, Nancy."

The girl laughed in a nervous uneven fashion. "Why, it's raining," she said. She tried to draw her hand away but Brayshaw still held it.

"Nancy," he said; "promise me that you will be my wife."

The girl shook her head miserably. "I can't," she said.

"That's final?"

She nodded, something in his voice made it difficult for her to speak.

His hand fell away from hers and he rose and looked out as she had done over the roofs of Dudley towards the distant hills. But now the day had changed. The big clouds, black and stormy looking, had spread over the clear sky, the wind sweeping through the trees with a wintry desolate sound brought down a shower of yellow leaves and the rain drops were beginning to fall heavily. For a few moments Brayshaw remained gazing over that view for which he had professed so much admiration, seeing nothing. Then suddenly he became conscious of the rain, and with a start he turned to the girl behind him.

"You'll get wet," he said quickly. "What a brute I am never to have thought of that. Is there shelter anywhere?"

"Yes, I think so, if we sit on the stairs," answered the girl.

"Come along then," said Brayshaw, hurrying her along the battlements. "It reminds me of the day we steamed into Sydney harbour. Do you remember all the headlands blotted out with the rain and how we had to race along the deck to the chart-room?"

They had reached the stairs and descending a little way found shelter.

"Just as you——" the girl bit her lips and stopped abruptly.

"Just as I was in the middle of my second proposal to you," finished the man grimly. "If you sit down here I think you'll be all right. It was the second wasn't it, or was it the third? I know the first was out in New Zealand by the light of a camp-fire under the willows above the Wai-o-lahi Falls. The Maoris were swimming their horses across the ford and calling out from the other side. We'd crossed over that hill in the moonlight before getting back to the camp. You haven't forgotten that have you?"

They were sitting now upon the stairs facing a loophole looking out over the courtyard of the ruined castle.

"That was the first time."

"And where will it be next time? On the top of Table Mountain!" The girl had spoken hurriedly, nervously, scarcely thinking of what she was saying, only dreading a silence. And the moment the words had left her lips she longed vainly to recall them.

There was a pause before the man answered very quietly: "There'll be no next time, Nancy. I'm leaving England to-morrow."

"Leaving England to-morrow?"

"Yes, that's why I came down here to see you. To try my luck for the last time. I was a fool. I believed—I hoped that——" he broke off for a moment and then continued steadily, "Galbraith wants me to go out and join him in South Africa. You know he formed a sort of settlement there for youngsters from the English slums. He's very keen on my joining him and I'm going to-morrow."

"You're going to-morrow?" Nancy repeated dully. All she seemed able to do just now was to echo his words.

"Yes. I've got his letter somewhere. Here it is." Brayshaw pulled out an open letter from his pocket and gave it to her. Her hand shook a little as she took it from him, and she shivered suddenly. In an instant the man's face changed.

"Nancy, you're cold. Dear little girl, I'm so sorry. You must have my coat." He had pulled off his overcoat and was wrapping it round her before she had time to protest, if indeed she had wished to; in that moment she seemed oddly grateful for the man's protecting care.

"What a confounded ass I was not to remember that you might be cold up here. I should never have allowed that child to go away. But she ought to be back at any moment now. Keep that round you and I'll go up and see if there's any sign of her."

He ascended the stairs and went out upon the battlements leaving Nancy alone. Through the loophole in the thick wall of the keep she could see the driving rain and the sodden yellow leaves flying fast now before the wind which blew in gusts about the tower. The sound of the wind and the sullen drip, drip of the rain seemed in some way to voice the feeling of utter loneliness and desolation which swept over the girl as she sat there on the old stairway in the gloom. In spite of the coat she shivered again. Then her eyes fell upon the letter in her hand. In the dim light the writing was not easy to decipher.

"—— Come out to us and make some use of your life and your money, Jim. We're doing good work. We're giving youngsters who'd otherwise grow up to swell the ranks of England's criminal class a chance of becoming citizens of whom the Empire may be proud. We're making history. Come and help us——"

Brayshaw's voice sounded above her. "The child's coming up from the cottage now. Have you managed to keep warm?" He was close beside her in the half-darkness touching her shoulder.

"Nancy," he said, "in all these years you've never kissed me once. Kiss me now—it's good-bye."

There was no sound from the girl. Turning he took her in his arms, and holding her close to him, kissed her. "Good-bye my little Nancy," he whispered, "best and dearest—always." His voice ended queerly, and he laid his cheek wet with the rain against hers. The girl pressing her face down upon the damp tweed of his shoulder seemed for a moment to creep closer within the protection of his arms.

"Jim," she said in a very small voice; "do you think the stage could get on without me?"

"I believe it might dear."

"And you're going to South Africa to make history?"

"I'm going to try."

Suddenly the girl raised her head and looked up at him. There were tears in her eyes but a little smile half mischievious, wholly tender trembled about her lips.

"You'll make a fearfully muddley lot of history out there, all by yourself, Jim," she said; "so in the interests of the Empire I think you'd better take a—sensible wife to help you, and as I'm the most sensible person you know perhaps after all you'd—you'd better—take me."

And then in the darkness of the old tower Brayshaw kissed her once more, but this time it was not good-bye.

Appetites of Great Men.

Addison said that when he beheld a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, he fancied that he saw gouts, dropsies, fevers, and legarthies, with other innumerable distempers lying in ambuscade among the dishes. It is queer that every animal but man keeps to one dish—herbs being the food of this species, fish of that, and flesh of a third, while man falls upon everything that comes in his way. According to history, great men especially seem to have been great eaters. Charles V., for instance, was an enormous eater; he would be awakened at daylight to partake of his favourite dish of fowl seethed in milk and dressed with sugar and spices; then he would go to sleep again. At midday he dined, partaking of 20 different dishes. He took two suppers, one at twilight, and another at midnight, after meat, consuming large quantities of sweetmeats and pastry, washing the whole down with vast drafts of beer and wine. He hastened his death by his gluttony, and died before he was 60 years of age. Philip II. was inordinately fond of pastry, and often made himself seriously ill by indulging his appetite so as to require the prompt and active services of his physician in order to save his life.

There is no doubt that the turnpike road to some people's hearts lies through their mouths. Frederick the Great was an illustration of this fact. True, he was a soldier, and could dine upon a bit of bread and a cup of chocolate in war-time; but still he loved good eating and drinking, and is known to have hastened his death by refusing to conform to proper rules of diet. Frederick ate every day of 10 or 12 dishes for his dinner, each and all highly seasoned. But a few days before his death he ate for his breakfast a plate of sweetmeats and sour cream, followed by strawberries, cherries, and cold meat. No wonder that he died of dropsy. Our readers will naturally recall in this connection the parallel of the English king who died of eating too many lampreys, and also the case of King John, who was said to have died of a surfeit of peaches and new ale. Some writer upon digestion has said that as houses well stored with provisions are likely to be full of mice, so the bodies of those that crowd their stomachs with food are full of diseases. Others go farther than this, and declare that gluttony is the source of all our infirmities and the fountain of all our diseases. Gluttony and drunkenness are about on a par, and about equally destructive, making the body and the pocket to smart.

Napoleon was a voracious eater, and his gluttony is said to have been the cause of his losing the battle of Leipsic. He partook of a shoulder of mutton stuffed with onions before coming to the field, literally gorging himself so as to be incapable of clear-minded and vigorous action. He ate very fast, the state dinners at the Tuileries lasting but about half an hour; but Napoleon was no lover of wine. Macaulay, the historian, tells us that when Peter the Great visited England, the immense quantities of meat which he devoured, the pints of brandy which he swallowed, and which it is said he carefully distilled with his own hands, was the one topic of conversation at court. But great as was Peter in his gluttony, he might have found more than his match in the Roman Emperor Maximin, who could eat, any day of the week, forty pounds of meat, and drink six gallons of wine; that is to say, if we can believe the historians. There is no doubt that the Roman emperors were not only great gluttons, but epicures as well, and that they racked their brains to invent novelties to satisfy the cravings of their stomachs. Elagabalus loved to sup upon peacocks' tongues and nightingales, and fed his lions on pheasants and parrots.

It is the same with eating as with drinking—"every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil." Every mouthful taken after satisfied hunger only adds labour to a tired digestion. "The misfortune is," says John Knox, "that when a man has found heavy, he enters upon the feast with an appetite so voracious that he usually destroys his own delight by excess and satiety." Mohammed, though the founder of a sensual religion, which promises a sensual paradise, was himself an abstemious man, observing without pretence the simple diet of an Arab and a soldier. The interdiction of wine by the religion he taught was also enforced by his own example, while he subsisted generally upon a sparing allowance of barley bread, sometimes varied by milk and honey, but his ordinary food was dates and water. It has been said that the pleasures of the palate deal with us like Egyptian thieves, who strangle those whom they embrace. Those who prolong their meals and force their appetites soon outsit their pleasures, and, metaphorically speaking, leave their health under the table.

New America Coinage.

The United States mints have begun the coinage of money on a new system, the designs on both sides of the coins being sunk below the face of the pieces, instead of raised in bas-relief, as is now the case with all coins throughout the world.

The new method allows coins to be piled in uniform heights, and also protects the designs from being worn.

At present the sunken designs will be used only for gold coinage, but if it proves success-ful it will be adopted for silver money.

Stamp Collecting

The colour of the 8 cents stamp of Brunei—village on the water type—has been changed to deep blue.

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With regard to the report that stamps had been issued for Greenland, the Postmaster-General of Copenhagen reports:—"No stamps for Greenland have been issued. Letters from Greenland are by care of 'The Royal Danish Greenland Trading Company' forwarded to Copenhagen, and in this city the letters are furnished with Danish stamps."

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The new stamps of Switzerland are so simple in design that only numerals are printed, and the buyer may fancy that either cents or francs are intended. Not a word is printed as to the stamps being for postal or fiscal use.

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"L'Echo de la Timbrologie" states:—"At the request of the Argentine Philatelic Society the Administration of Posts has decided to issue a special set of stamps in 1910 to commemorate the centenary of the independence of the Argentine, which was declared on 25th May, 1810. The celebrations committee has nominated a sub-committee to take charge of the new set of stamps; the members of this philatelic committee are M. Marco del Pont, one of the most prominent philatelists in South America, and Messrs. Gregorio F. Rodriguez and Miguel Gambin, who are the President and Vice-President of the Argentine Philatelic Society respectively.

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A pair of the Orange River Colony stamps of the type 1d. on 4d., issued December, 1890, sold for £2 6/ at auction in London.

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The late Sir William B. Avery, Bart., had since 1885 been an enthusiastic stamp collector, and for some years sat on the Council of the London Philatelic Society.

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As there were considerable remainders of the 1891 issue of stamps of Bolivia the 50 cent red and 100 cent yellow have been reissued, pending the appearance of a new set this year.

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The famous American stamp collection of the late Mr. John K. Tiffany, first President of the American Philatelic Association, has been disposed of to Mr. Frank P. Brown, of Boston, U.S.A. A year or two ago Mr. Tiffany's philatelic library was purchased by the Earl of Crawford for £2,000. What the collection realised has not yet transpired.

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A new series of stamps is threatened from the United States. A 2 cents red has already appeared. A new special delivery stamp has been authorised, the design being an olive branch, running diagonally across its face; the leaves entwine a Mercury hat, symbolic of peace and haste. In the upper left-hand corner is the inscription, "10c.," while in the lower right-hand corner in bold letters are the words "U.S. Postage, Special Delivery." The stamp measures one inch square, and is dark green in colour.

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The 6d. bi-coloured stamp of Tasmania has been punctured T for official use. A 10/- mauve and brown stamp is also reported, watermark crown A and perforated 11.

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It may not be generally known with regard to the current issue of stamps of Great Britain that there are two very distinct shades of the 3d. on chalk-surface paper, one on yellow paper and the other on nearly orange.

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It is reported that the current Fiji stamps have been surcharged New Hebrides—Condominium in two black lines, the overprint on the stamps in white paper being in heavy narrow block capitals, with the words New Hebrides on a yellow-green background. The overprint on the stamps on coloured paper is in thin narrow block capitals without any coloured background.