questions, or to chat over politics, immediately after you'd been rescued."

"But not a word at seeing me," answered Dick. "Not a sign of pleasure at our meeting! What does it all mean?"

"It means that Miss Selby was so overwrought that she scarcely knew who you were or what had happened. Her friend now——"

"That's Teresa," said Dick. "She behaved splendidly."

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed Sylvester. "Now, is it needful to remind me of that? 'Behaved splendidly' doesn't convey the truth about Miss Brasco entirely. She is the most wonderful woman in the world. Why, she hadn't lost her nerve, even though the fire was on her as you may say."

"You admire her then?"

"That's not the question," replied Sylvester. "But if you want my honest opinion of Miss Brasco, I can sum it up in a word. She is a brick!"

"Take care."

"Certainly. I'm not the person who needs a warning of that sort, but at the same time, one must express their opinions. Now my honest opinion of Miss Brasco is——"

"Yes, I quite understand," interrupted Dick. "And I'm glad there's one man who's satisfied with himself. I'm not that one. To think, after we've been parted all this time, how Madge has treated me! I can't understand it. Am I to go away without seeing or speaking to her again?"

"I'd wait until to-mororw anyway," replied Sylvester, "before I did that. Besides, look at the situation. Now you've never viewed it in its proper light, I'll swear. The primary object of our lives—yours and mine, my dear Dick—at the present moment, is clothing."

Dick gave him a puzzled look.

"Clothing," repeated the other. "It is clearly impossible to speak to or see either of the ladies under present conditions, and my proposal is to call in the assistance of the landlady; give her carte blanche tobuy outfits for them. I understand that all their belongings have been burnt, and it's our duty to provide fresh ones."

Dick threw his purse on the table, and Sylvester summoned the landlady, explaining to her what was required, and she undertook with the greatest delight the duty of buying all that was necessary. In an hour or two she returned with a cab load of packages, which were taken to the room where Madge and Teresa had remained unseen by anyone but the sympathising landlady and the chambermaid.

Unable to remain inactive Dick had gone wandering aimlessly through the streets, Sylvester preferring to stay in the hotel, he said; and when Madge and her companion emerged from their retirement, arrayed in the latest Paris fashions, they found him alone in the room. Teresa's hands were outstretched, and he took them in his with a shy manner, answering her heartfelt thanks wtihout his accustomed coolness. How beautiful she looked! How different from an ordinary woman's were her smile and voice, and for a moment or two he forgot everything but these. Then he turned to Madge, asking the first question that occurred to him, which was a mere commonplace. They would dine together that evening, and settle what was best to be done, he told them.

"You are anxious to return home, of course, Miss Selby," he said.

"And Teresa goes with me," she answered. "Yes, I am most anxious, Mr Courtney, to get back to Marlhurst."

"Naturally. I wish Mortimer—" and then he stopped to change the conversation.

"I'm thinking whether I ought not to speak to you privately, Miss Selby," he went on, in a thinking tone. "It's rather an important matter, you see."

"Teresa doesn't understand a word of English," replied Madge, "so we can talk quite privately before her. What is it?"

"It's about Mortimer," he answered. "He's miserably unhappy. You're treating him badly, Miss Selby."

"No! no!" she cried, her eyes filling with tears. "You wrong me, Mr Courtney. It is I who suffer most."

"Thinking what you do," he continued, "that is only to be expected perhaps. I've learnt your secret, Miss Selby, and I'm in a position to state that Dick Mortimer is still one of the most upright, honourable gentlemen in this world or any other, that he and I are in a fair way to solve the mystery of what happened at Whyteleas Manor, and that he deserves all your love and help. If it is requisite that I say more, I will do so, but I ask you to believe that I am speaking the truth from my own knowledge, and that there is no hindrance to your marrying him. I'm afraid I'm saying this rather awkwardly, but I want to evade using words that I dislike. I am certain that you understand me."

Madge's hand was on his, and a look of the supremest joy came into her eyes. "I do believe you," she answered. "I can never, never forgive myself. It was that which parted us—that which I feared. Tell me how I can undo the past."

Sylvester looked at his watch.

"Dick said he would be here by seven," he replied. "It wants ten minutes to the time. I suggest that Miss Brasco and I leave you alone; we'll go into the coffee room. You see I'm hardly competent to advise what you ought to do, but I think I wouldn't attempt to explain anything to Dick. Let him guess, if he pleases, only he's too chivalrous to do that. Try and believe that you've never been separated; that you've never been distant in your manner."

"Thank you." Madge almost whispered the words, and then Sylvester turned to Teresa, speaking in French, of which language he was not a master, for all that he could make himself fairly intelligible in it. He was apt to let his native tongue intrude itself into his sentences, and this amused Teresa vastly, as they left Madge alone. Sylvester heard Dick's step pass the coffee room door, and enter the room they had just quitted, and he strolled to the window, Teresa being beside him.

"I hope we shall see something more of each other, Miss Brasco," he began, almost terrified at his own effrontery. "You're going to England with Miss Selby. That's rather jolly, you know."

Teresa's face was full of inquiring amusement. It made her more beautiful than she was before, thought Sylvester. Yes this was the sort of woman with whom a man might fall in love—just as he had, in the quickest, most delightful fashion possible. But the difficulties of making love in a foreign language rather troubled him. How could he make her understand that he was ready to die for her sake, etc., etc? As though love needs any words in any language to discover itself! But this was Sylvester's first and last experience of the tender passion, and he was naturally somewhat diffident. Teresa was certainly the most beautiful woman he ever seen. Dick was perfectly correct in everything he had said about her, and if they had known each other a little longer, she—but why should he wait? Hadn't he waited until he was thirty, and never seen anyone he could love till now? Only to make love in a foreign tongue well—they wouldn't be parted anyway, and these thoughts were coursing through Sylvester's mind as he and Teresa stood by the window.

And in the other room Dick Mortimer had been repaid for all his misery. It was the same sweet Madge of old, who had thrown herself into his arms, when he entered the room, the same loving voice and happy look that he remembered so well. But it was a strange word she had uttered. What had he to forgive?

"Never to be parted again, Dick," she whispered, as she clung to him. "Never, never again."

"Darling," he answered, kissing her tenderly. "We'll believe that we've never been separated. That's the best thing to do, and though I'm a poor man, I've got a friend who'll help to set me on my feet. If you only knew how true and tried a friend Sylvester Courtney has been to me!"

"Say to us, Dick," replied Madge. "And I think I do know. Better than you know, perhaps."

. . . . . .

Dick had given up his search for Jarvis Dorman, but he resolved to call him to account when they met again, as they must sooner or later. The Squire of Whyteleas was not a man who could efface himself like an ordinary person, and he would return to England in due course. The new Manor house was being built, and Mr Dorman took the greatest interest in the work, it was said, so Dick would bide his time. Madge had told him quite sufficient to make him resolute upon punishing Mr Dorman, but in what way he was too happy at that moment to decide.

Amid the ruins of the house in the Rue des Morts, the charred body of Madame Duval was found, and given burial. None will ever know, save her murderer, Jarvis Dorman, of the crime committed that night, nor the reason for the awful scream that had roused Madge from her sleep. He had meant to slay Teresa Brasco, who had discovered his secret, and as Teresa looks at Sylvester's earnest face she little thinks how mercifully she had been preserved. For the four happy people are on their way home to England, and all the shadows have flown away. The future will be bright now that the last dark page has been turned. Yet there remained one other to be read, one which neither guessed at, and fraught with the greatest meaning of them all.

To be concluded.

THE BOARD AND THE VELVET.

"A throne," said Napoleon, "is a board covered with velvet."

Strip the velvet from the throne and you have nothing left but bare, vulgar boards; replace the velvet and you have the most coveted symbol of human power and glory. How easy the transition, how vast the difference!

There is no operation in chemistry more sharp and sudden than that in human life whereby extremes of feeling follow each other—tears rarefying into smiles and smiles condensing into tears.

Is happiness, or is power, so poor a thing, then, that it drops into its antithesis at a touch—at a breath? Let us not be too hasty with our answer, as we may be wrong. The great French Emperor was a cynical fellow, and right well he loved a throne, even though it was only an upholstered board.

And we all love life and its blessings, even though they are uncertain and shaky.

Hence, when we hear a man say, "I had no pleasure in life, and did not care what became of me," we are interested to know the reason why.

The person from whom we quote these words explains himself thus:—

"For over two years," he tells us, "I suffered from loss of appetite, sleeplessness and nervousness. Prior to May, 1894, I had always been strong and hearty. At this time I began to feel that something had come over me—I felt so low and weak. After eating my face would flush and the food gave me great pain across my chest and at the left side. I had a cutting pain around the heart, and bad attacks of palpitation."

I beg to interrupt our good friend a moment at this point. The burning of a barn or a hayrick may make a bigger blaze than the burning of the cottage we live in. But the latter alarms and excites us most because we do live in it. On the same principle a very painful ailment of the hand or foot may cause little or no mental anxiety, while a disturbance of the heart's action does, for the heart is one of the three houses which life resides in, the other two being the brain and the lungs. Yet, as generally happens in so-called heart troubles, the worry was needless, as we shall presently see.

"For weeks together," continues the narrator, "I got no proper sleep, and, in truth, so bad was this condition that I dreaded going to bed. My nerves were thoroughly unstrung and affected the left side of my face, which was quite drawn. I suffered martyrdom with facial neuralgia.

"As time went on I grew to be so low and miserable that I had no pleasure in life, and did not care what became of me. I consulted a doctor, but none of his medicines helped me. Better and worse, I continued to suffer until a friend told me about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and persuaded me to try it. I got a bottle from Mr Pulham, Grocer, Spring Road, and after taking it a short time I felt it was doing me good. I slept well and had less distress after meals. This encouraged me to persevere with it, and gradually I got stronger, and the nerve pains wore away. I now enjoy good health, and have recommended this medicine to many of my customers. You can publish this statement as you like. (Signed) Harry Wenden, Hairdresser, 171, Spring Road, St. John's, Ipswich, July 17th, 1896."

Mr Wenden's explanation of his loss of life's pleasure is commonplace after all. And yet how much more important than if it were unique or exceptional, because the commonplace is the universal. It is disease, my gentle reader, that tears the velvet from thrones, that robs the cottager of his sleep, that makes the baby cry in its cradle, that strips the strong man of his vigour, that wipes the bloom from the cheeks of fair women, that hurries humanity to the churchyard with bowed heads and bleeding feet. And the most pitiless ogre of all diseases is the one from which Mr Wenden suffered, and which Mother Seigel's Syrup cures—indigestion, dyspepsia. Even without the velvet, Health is the best of thrones, and this great remedy helps to keep you seated safely and happily upon it.