

you let this man kiss me, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live!"

Billy had no time for surprise at this. He lunged between the rubber-trees and the acacia, leaving a trail of broken branches to mark his course, into the open space where Miss Irving was standing, flushed and tearful and defiant, and actually in Frailey's arms. Billy bore down upon them, great, hulking, awkward, his blue eyes aflame.

"Here, you! Drop that!" he said furiously.

Poor Pierrot!—even with the situation in his hands he must mull it somehow. Miss Irving gave a half-hysterical giggle. Frailey laughed. Billy caught him by the collar, and as he released Miss Irving to defend himself, shook him until he choked and spluttered. In Billy's hands he was a reek, a helpless infant. Miss Irving stood by, her hands raised to her scarlet cheeks.

"Now, you go!" said Billy, husky with wrath, and propelled his victim violently downward. Thereafter, he promptly forgot him, for Miss Irving held out both hands to him, saying—still with the queer little catch in her voice:

"Thank you, Billy! If that little beast had kissed me I should have died." Billy took the hands and flushed to his hair.

"How did you know I was there?" he asked eagerly.

Miss Irving drew her hands away and seated herself on the bench, holding her skirts aside to make room. He had sense enough left to accept the hint, and sat beside her, leaning forward with an elbow on his knee that he might look into her face.

"Why, I know you were there nearly

"And—get laughed at again?" he said sullenly. "No, thanks, I think not!" Quite suddenly he lost his head and his reason, the last straw was too much. "My God, girl, how much more of a fool do you want to make me? (Can't you see it's gone far enough? It's no joke to me, whatever it may be to you!)" Then he got himself in hand again, and stopped short, crimson with anger and embarrassment. "I beg your pardon!" he said miserably.

A heavy silence fell. Out of it Miss Irving said sweetly and unexpectedly:

"Billy, how old are you?"

Billy stared.

"Twenty-eight. Why?" he answered briefly.

"You might just as well be eight," said Miss Irving unkindly. "I'm twenty-two, but I never was as young as you are at this instant minute."

Billy answered nothing. He was unhappy, and wanted nothing so much as to get away. She seemed to delight in his embarrassment, to take pleasure in prolonging it. He glanced at her. Her eyes were downcast, her fingers very busy with the chain which had held her fan. She began to speak, without raising her lashes.

"Then, if you won't propose to me, I—I suppose I'll have to propose to you. Oh, Billy, dear, don't you see what I'm trying to say, you stupid goose? We've treated you shamefully, and poked fun at you, and you've been so good—and I've been sorry for you all the time. You were funny, but—I like you all the better for it—I truly feel so. If I hadn't run away from you I should have cried. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." She stopped to catch breath. Billy got himself to his feet and stared down at her. He ran a finger around inside his witted collar, opened his mouth and shut it again, and said thickly:

"You mean—"

"Yes, oh, yes!" said Miss Irving fervently. She caught herself up. "No, oh, no! I don't mean anything at all! I mean if this is the way you're going to act, I'm sorry I spoke!"

She rose with a wild glance downward. Billy stepped between her and escape.

"Will you please tell me what's the matter with you?" he said steadily. "We can't both go crazy at once, you know! It rather seems to be your turn now."

Miss Irving laughed, but the laugh broke in a sob.

"I'm afraid of you!" she faltered. "If you wouldn't look so grave—the matter is that I—well, I will marry you whether you ask me again or not. Now do you understand?"

Billy's face broke into light. He took a stride toward her, stopped short and folded his arms across his chest—simply to keep them from going around her—and said in a curiously level voice:

"I'm nothing but a silly ass, you know, and an everlasting chump, and a clown that's always playing monkey for the crowd."

"Billy—don't!" cried Miss Irving with another sob. "You're good and kind—or you'd have hated us for the way we treated you—and I don't care what you are!"

He came toward her, and she stood still bravely, flushing rosy red. He took her in his arms, and she raised her hands to his shoulders, leaning against him ever so slightly, yielding to his embrace. So then he knew that even Pierrot could find his happiness as other men.

"It's better than dancing!" cried Billy in a burst of exultation.

An Age of Whitewash.

HOW CHARACTERS ARE RESTORED.

It is the rough and ready principle of human justice to label all men good or bad (writes "An Englishman" in the "Daily Mail"). We delight in harsh divisions and precise categories. We would if we could drive all those who make up the human race into this pen or that. Popular history disdains the finer shades. It bids us look through its eyes and discover in the past an endless array of saints and sinners. Alas! it bids us accept a fairy tale for truth. In this grey world there is nothing so rare as a saint except a sinner.

The truth is that what Coleridge calls "that deep intuition of oneness which is at the bottom of our faults as well as of our virtues" resembles genius itself. It eludes our search, like a will-o'-the-wisp. It seldom visits the earth, and when it comes it follows its own caprice rather than our expectation. To be "one" in spirit and temper, in thought and action, is given only to the few. How many good men are there who harbour no hidden vice, who yield neither to the love of gold nor to pride of plianisism? And of the bad there is scarcely one who escapes the suspicion of occasional generosity, who is not swayed now and then by private affection, who, in brief, is always true to his ideal of villainy. Of those who, since the beginning of things, have attained the "oneness" of virtue I will not speak. They are not many, and they need no word of praise. It is not uninteresting to expose the good qualities of the scoundrels, for whom is claimed "oneness" of vice, and who, when set at the bar, are forced to confess that they too have been inverse hypocrites, and that, with a firm intention to do wrong, they have done right by stealth.

The Fair Deeds of Criminals.

In the long annals of crime, the obvious hunting ground of villainy, there will be found but one or two who have never sullied their career by a fair deed. Many a time, when the burglar might be cracking a crib or the footpad speaking with a rich booty, you may surprise him at the bedside of sick friend or rescuing a defenceless woman from a burning house. That is the worst of the scoundrel; he constantly disappoints you, and if it were not for Jonathan Wild you might believe that pure villainy never existed in the region of crime. But Jonathan, at any rate, may honestly pretend to "oneness." A thief-catcher as well as a thief, he was faithful alike to justice and to his comrades. A greedy coward, he dared not steal with his own hands, yet he must have his share of every prize that was taken in the City of London. He lived a bully and he died in fear, nor can his memory be insulted by the record of a single good action.

And the great villains who, says Gay, "enjoy the world in state" are no better (or no worse) than the little villains who "succumb to fate." Try as they will, they cannot always escape the snare of virtue. The monsters, drawn by Suetonius with so fine a zest, are being loved, one by one, to yield their supremacy of wickedness. What is Nero in our modern eyes but an aesthetic impostor, an artist without an opportunity? What is Tiberius but an honest fellow who was cursed with an unsympathetic manner? Poor Messalina, again, was a much misunderstood woman, and Theodora would have had no harsh things said about her if she had not been a fanatical theologian. Our own kings fare as ill as the Roman emperors. Those of them who once were the blackest now shine forth in all the fulgurence of pure white. Richard II. is already casting off his garment of sin, while Richard III. and Henry VIII., once accounted the best hoggy to frighten children, are taking their place in the calendar of saints.

From One Extreme to the Other.

That, indeed, is the worst of the summary process which I have described. If the finer shades be forbidden, if black and white alone be allowed us, then that which to many a generation seemed black as night must suddenly become white in the sight of all men. In other words, whitewashing is a necessary process of historical criticism, a process to be deplored, because it drives us from one falsehood to another. With the inspiration of historians, sworn to serve the cause of the Tudors, Richard the Crook-back, for instance, was pictured as wickedness incarnate. He was less a man than a bundle of inanimate vice. Every legend that did him dishonour was willingly believed, and he went grimly down the stream of time as a perfect

hero of villainy. And then came Sir George Buck, and others after him, who discovered that Richard III. was not so bad a scoundrel after all, and, falling into the other extreme, held him up to the world as a model of statecraft and patriotism.

The admirers of Henry VIII. have been forced to similar disillusionment. For many years this portly monarch was represented as a kind of Bluebeard who was never influenced by any better motives than greed and rage. And all the while, though it had escaped notice, Henry had been set up in the garb of a saint long before the professional whitewasher had got to work upon him. Here is his character sketched by the Clerk of the Council to Edward VI.: "Let me pass these titles by," wrote this ingenious Welshman, "to come into a conclusion of our King, whose wisdom, virtue, and bounty my wit suffice not to declare; of personage he was one of the goodliest men that lived in his time, very high of stature, in manners more than a man . . . prudent he was in council and foresaig; most liberal in reward to his faithful servants, and ever unto his enemies as behoveveth a Prince to be; he was learned in all sciences, and had the gift of many tongues . . . and there was no necessary kind of knowledge from a King's degree to a carter's but he had an honest sight in it. What would you that I should say of him? He was undoubtedly the rarest man that lived in his time." There is no hint of Bluebeard here, no touch of the King who seen Anne Boleyn to the scaffold. The eulogist can find no word to say in disparage of the monarch whom many generations of men have condemned. Where, then, is the truth? Was he good or bad? White or black?

Complex Character of Men.

Being a man he was neither. Grey was his colour, as it had been the colour of all save the happy or unhappy few endowed with the rarest genius. The common character of mankind is too complex to permit of primitive distinctions. The formula of fair and foul can seldom be applied, and history is only interesting if we cease to whitewash the villains of the past, and remember that two or three souls may inhabit one body. If Richard III. murdered his nephews he aspired also to be a patron of learning. If Le Bon, the worst scoundrel discovered by the French Revolution exulted in the guillotine, he worshipped his child and shuddered with exquisite sensibility at a cut finger. The truth is that the devil is rarely as black as he is painted, and even in this world of radicals and pedants we may cheerfully say with Montaigne that "we are richer, each one of us, than we think."

INDIGESTION AND BILIOUSNESS.

Weakened by Vomiting and Heart Pains.—Bile Beans Banished All Suffering.

Mrs. J. Murley, of Howe Street, Lambton, Newcastl., N.S.W., says:—For a long time I was a victim to acute indigestion and severe attacks of biliousness. Splitting headaches also added to my suffering, for my head was racked with pains across the temples, I was weakened by awful bouts of vomiting, which severely strained me, while flatulence under the heart caused sharp pains to shoot through my chest to back, every time a breath was drawn. Work became an impossibility, for I would be overcome by feelings of dizziness and other unpleasant sensations caused by congested liver.

During the long period in which I suffered, I experimented with a great many medicines, but nothing seemed able to bring me the desired relief. A visitor to my house one day strongly advised Bile Beans, and more to please her than anything, I commenced taking this medicine. The action of Bile Beans was most mild and soothing. They quickly took away all disagreeable sensations, relieved the congested state of my organs, and set me on the right road to good health. I was so pleased with the first results of taking Bile Beans that I persevered with them until I was completely cured and all my ailments banished.

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all the time," she confessed. "I saw you jump, and the leaves. It made me tump," said Miss Irving, asked why.— "And you called me a red bug," said Billy.

Miss Irving flushed.

"I couldn't think of anything else to say," she murmured uncomfortably. "I'm sorry."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Billy politely, and made a move to rise. He had just remembered that his feelings had been badly hurt and that he was still sore. Miss Irving looked at him under her lashes; a curious glance, half anxious, half humorous, entirely alluring.

"Are you—in such a hurry?" she said faintly.

"Why, no," he answered without guile. "You—you managed Mr Frailey beautifully," said Miss Irving, feeling nervously for speech. Billy turned slow eyes of scorn upon her.

"Huh—that shrimp!" he said contemptuously.

Miss Irving tried again.

"Are you sure you don't want to go and dance?" I wouldn't keep you for the world—"

"No, thanks," said Billy shortly. He looked at her in surprise at her incomprehensibility, and found her looking at him. To his amazement she flushed, as he had never seen a girl flush before; a slow and heavy crimson that drowned the rose of her cheeks and crept to her white forehead.

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