

but cannot afford to work so cheaply. An actors' petition to Congress is, therefore, being drawn up with the end of obtaining protection against this unfair foreign competition.

A letter from Cardinal Gibbons to Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati has been published in which his Eminence speaks of an interview given by him to Master General Powderly, of the Knights of Labour—who had expressed his willingness in every way to comply with the wishes of the ecclesiastical authorities, and to make the amendments in the rules of the association required by the Holy Office. The Knights of Labour have always had in Cardinal Gibbons an enlightened and powerful protector, and their ready acceptance of such modifications as ecclesiastical authority has proposed to them amply proves that his Eminence has not been mistaken in his patronage of them.

Parsons, the labour contractor of Connecticut, has been fined for ill-treatment of one of his subjects. This was a young Pole whom he had chained to his waggon, and in that position exposed to extreme suffering from cold. Parsons, in the course of his trial, spoke of himself as a public benefactor, and produced evidence to prove that he was connected with a Young Men's Christian Association and a Sunday school, and, therefore, in all respects necessarily a humane and exemplary character. Slave-driving, however, in its open form, was found consistent with much that was pious, and it is not astonishing if, in its more surreptitious methods, it sustains such a relationship.

The Fisheries question still remains doubtful. A case of peculiar hardship has just occurred, in which an American vessel that had put in to Halifax disabled and leaking badly was refused leave to dispose of her cargo, consisting of five thousand pounds of fresh halibut, and, therefore, condemned to have it rot in her hold. What makes the case still more serious is that it was the consequence of a sharp rebuke addressed by the Minister of Customs at Ottawa to the collector at Halifax for having a little time before, under somewhat similar circumstances, permitted a trans-shipment of cargo. The obstinate determination of the Government is thus made plainly visible. It is no wonder if American fishermen are looking forward with anxiety to the assumption of the reins of Government by President Harrison and his Cabinet. They hope that under their jurisdiction a sterner attitude towards their Canadian oppressors will be assumed and maintained.

The question of the negroes in the South has of late been again attracting attention. Senator Ingalls, for example, has given it as his opinion that if the races cannot assimilate—which he evidently believes they cannot—one or other must go to the wall. He does not say which, but there can be little difficulty in settling on his choice. The eminent Georgian, Mr. Grady, is more emphatic and shows how the justifying text oft quoted in old times, "Cursed be Canaan," still passes current. "The negro," he says, "can never be established in dominion over the white race in the South. No sword drawn by mortal man, no army marshalled by mortal hand, can replace them in the supremacy from which they were cast down by our people, for the Lord God Almighty decreed otherwise when He created these races, and the flaming sword of His chastity will enforce His decree and work out His plan of unchangeable wisdom." In other quarters it is proposed to settle the difficulty by the immigration of a white population. Meantime, the fact remains, as Senator Ingalls explains it, that the negroes—pure negroes, for the half-caste, or mulatto, strain is dying out—are increasing in numbers much more rapidly than the whites. All thoughtful men, therefore, are looking with apprehension towards what the future may bring forth.

Good news for compositors comes from Hartford, Connecticut. A newspaper in that city, the *Evening Post*, is now entirely set up by machinery. The machine used is the Thorne Type-setting Machine, invented by the man from whom it takes its name in 1880, and which has now been made perfect for practical purposes. Three boys or girls, by the aid of one of these machines, can do the work of six fully qualified compositors. The advantage is manifest as a great army of labour will be liberated and permitted to turn to other pursuits. The advantage of having one child out of every two families do the work of two heads of families is evident—particularly when the wages earned are those of the child rather than of the parent. The advantage, however, is possibly more visible to employers than to the employees liberated. When machinery was first introduced for labour-saving purposes riots ensued, and many machines were smashed. The rioters were condemned as short-sighted men fighting against their own interests, and, in any case, opposing the inevitable. The world is, nevertheless, now face to face with a problem—that of the machine *versus* the man—which must sooner or later be solved, and in whose solution it is not impossible that riots, as yet unequalled, may occur. The child and the machine, as opposed to the unoccupied man, present a very ominous appearance. The number of compositors to be liberated in the United States alone is calculated at 70,000.

A band of supporters of order and morality has then organised at Agra, Kansas. These amateurs wear a uniform consisting of a white cap drawn over the head and face, with holes for the eyes and mouth, and a red robe. Their horses are also covered with black blankets, and, so equipped, they ride forth at night in fulfilment of their self-appointed duty. Their methods, if wholesome, are rather rough. A dirty and lazy man, for example, has been half-drowned by them with buckets of water poured over him. A man who had ill-treated his wife has been tied to a telegraph pole and savagely whipped. Under the guardianship of the White Caps, as these nocturnal enemies of misconduct are called, ill-doers in the neighbourhood of Agra have evidently cause to be careful of themselves. The community generally, however, seems rather disinclined to look upon the matter as an unmixed good.

THE MYSTERY OF CLOOMBER.

(By A. CONAN DOYLE, in the *Pall Mall Budget*.)

"There is a scientific incredulity which surpasses in imbecility the obtuseness of the clod-hopper."—BARON HELLENBACH.

CHAPTER V.

HOW FOUR OF US CAME TO BE UNDER THE SHADOW OF CLOOMBER.

I TRUST that my readers will not set me down as an inquisitive busy-body when I say that as the days and weeks went by, I found my attention and my thoughts more and more attracted to General Heatherstone and the mystery which surrounded him. It was in vain that I endeavoured by hard work and a strict attention to the laird's affairs to direct my mind into some more healthy channel. Do what I would on land or on water, I would still find myself puzzling over this one question, until it obtained such a hold upon me that I felt that it was useless for me to attempt to apply myself to anything until I had come to some satisfactory solution of it. I could never pass the dark line of five-foot fencing and the great iron gate, with its massive lock, without pausing and racking my brain as to what the secret might be which was shut in by that inscrutable barrier. Yet with all my conjectures and with all my observations I could never come to any conclusion which could for a moment be accepted as an explanation.

My sister had been out for a stroll one night, visiting a sick peasant, or performing some other of the numerous acts of charity by which she had made herself beloved by the whole countryside. "John," she said when she returned, "have you not observed Cloomber Hall at night?"

"No," I answered, laying down the book which I was reading. "Not since that memorable evening when the General and Mr. McNeil came over to make their inspections."

"Well, John, will you put on your hat and come a little walk with me?" I could see by her manner that something had agitated or frightened her.

"Why, bless the girl!" cried I boisterously, "what is the matter? The old bail has not gone on fire, surely? You look as grave as if all Wigton were in a blaze."

"Not quite so bad as that," she said, smiling. "But do come out, Jack. I should very much like you to see it."

I had always refrained from saying anything which might alarm my sister, so that she knew nothing of the interest which our neighbours' doings had for me. At her request I took my hat and followed her out into the darkness. She led the way along a little footpath over the moor, which brought us to some rising ground, from which we could look down upon the Hall without our view being obstructed by any of the fir-trees which had been planted round it. "Look at that," said my sister, pausing at the summit of this little eminence.

Cloomber lay beneath us in a blaze of light. In the lower floors the shutters obscured the illumination; but above, from the broad windows of the second story to the thin slits at the summit of the tower there was not a chink or an aperture which did not send forth a stream of radiance. So dazzling was the effect that for a moment I was persuaded that the house was on fire, but the steadiness and clearness of the light soon freed me from that apprehension. It was clearly the result of many lamps placed systematically all over the building. It added to the strange effect that all these brilliantly illuminated rooms were apparently unoccupied, and some of them as far as we could judge, were not even furnished. Through the whole great house there was no sign of movement or of life—nothing but the clear, unwinking flood of yellow light. I was suitably lost in wonder at the sight when I heard a shrill, quick sob at my side.

"What is it, Esther, dear?" I asked, looking down at my companion.

"I feel so frightened. O, John, John take me home; I feel so frightened!" She clung to my arm, and pulled at my coat in a perfect frenzy of fear.

"It's all safe, darling," I said soothingly. "There is nothing to fear. What has upset you so?"

"I am afraid of them, John; I am afraid of the Heatherstones. Why is their house lit up like this every night? I have heard from others that it is always so. And why does the old man run like a frightened hare if anyone comes upon him. There is something wrong about it, John, and it frightens me."

I pacified her as well as I could, and led her home with me, where I took care that she should have some hot port negus before going to bed. I avoided the subject of the Heatherstones for fear of exciting her, and she did not recur to it of her own accord. I was convinced however, from what I had heard from her that she had for some time back been making her own observations upon our neighbours, and that in doing so she had put a considerable strain upon her nerves. I could see that the mere fact of the Hall being illuminated at night was not enough to account for her extreme agitation, and that it must have derived its importance in her eyes from being one in a chain of incidents, all of which had left a weird or unpleasant impression upon her mind. That was the conclusion which I came to at the time, and I have reason to know now that I was right, and that my sister had even more cause than I had myself for believing that there was something uncanny about the tenants of Cloomber.

Our interest in the matter may have arisen at first from nothing higher than curiosity; but events soon took a turn which associated us more closely with the fortunes of the Heatherstone family. Mordaunt had taken advantage of my invitation to come down to the laird's house, and on several occasions he brought with him his beautiful sister. The four of us would wander over the moors together; or, perhaps, if the day were fine, set sail upon our little skiff and stand off into the Irish Sea. On such excursions the brother and sister would be as merry and as tappy as two children. It was a keen pleasure to them to escape from their dull fortresses, and to see, if only for a few hours, friendly and sympathetic faces around them. There