

The public organisation gradually ceased to exist save as a respectable means of collecting funds and passing resolutions hawked about by their secret masters and soon fell into contempt under the nickname of "The Resolutionists."

## A Complete Story

### A Newspaper Wrapping

(By EVELINE COLE, in the *London Month*.)

John Jameson was at work by the big window of the little room behind his shop.

It was a quite ordinary china shop but, as both the village and its overshadowing neighbor the big house knew, the craftsmanship of its owner was not quite ordinary, owing perhaps as much to qualities of character in the worker as to a command of technique and manual skill.

Before him just now, for instance, upon the table which held the medley of materials necessary for the healing of injured pottery, lay a Derby plate. Nor, though there was no example of that ware any more than of Chelsea, Bow, or Worcester among his stock, was it by any means uncommon for still more valuable ceramic specimens to be entrusted to him for repair.

The plate was set on edge between two blocks of wood so that the weight of the pieces he had just inserted would tend to keep them in position. That finished, a Worcester cup in ruins, and a jug from which the long slender handle had been broken, stood at his elbow awaiting their turn. The shop bell summoned him, however, before he could begin upon either.

He removed the spectacles he wore for fine operations and went to answer the call. His customer, a Mrs. Delaware, the owner of the plate, had come to enquire after the condition of her valued possession.

"The repairing should have been done as soon after the breakage as possible, Madam," Mr. Jameson said, with a hint of slightly sad reproach in his voice. "When the broken fragments are allowed to lie about and rub together, their edges get chipped, and the joint cannot be so fine and close."

"Oh, I didn't know," Mrs. Delaware returned airily, "I'm afraid it's been lying by for some months. I kept putting it off, though I always meant to have it done."

The china-dealer nodded his head. He remembered the soaking and the cleansing with an old nail-brush to remove the grit and dirt her carelessness had necessitated, and could not in his mind exonerate her from blame, though it was not permitted him to speak more clearly.

"I took care the pieces were clean and warm before I fitted them in, Madam," he said, "and I hope to make as good a job of it as may be."

"Warm?" Mrs. Delaware exclaimed. "Dear me, how extraordinary; it really sounds quite like the treatment of a wound."

"Which is, after all, just what it is," Mr. Jameson muttered to himself, as with ceremonious dignity he bowed her out of the shop.

He returned to his workroom when his client had departed. He was accustomed to spend daily many happy hours therein, tasting, as was but fair, the joy of a good craftsman in the exercise of his skill. Yet beyond and above the satisfaction afforded him on this plane of life there was a strange and secret hunger within John Jameson which no one of his friends or acquaintances suspected or could have understood. Religious yearnings did not, in the village, fall under the heading of a generally recognised want.

The peculiar ache, however, from which he suffered in hours of solitude was, as a rule, reserved for his evening hours after the closing of the shop, and at present as artist-craftsman he absorbed himself in the Derby plate. The cement had not as yet thoroughly set and hardened, but the joint would, he trusted, in its final result defy detection. He was reminded by the triangular fracture of the outline of the map of India, for Mr. Jameson was a reader as well as a manual worker.

Then he ran his eye over the miscellaneous collection

covering the surface of the table, from the heap of tape, string and fine copper and iron wire for "binders" to the lump of beeswax which, when softened, served as a convenient holder for delicate ornaments. Not discovering what he needed for his next job, he opened a cardboard box and took therefrom some sticking-plaster in long strips for his operation upon the delicate cup. He had always a clear plan of action, and as an experienced workman would not make the mistake of attempting the joining too many pieces at once.

He arranged the bits carefully in order, and then into pairs of adjacent parts, reducing so his twelve fragments to six pairs. The day following he would simplify the number to three on its way to unity. By this method of successive pairing he could have put together a hundred atoms.

The shop bell then rang again, Mr. Jameson was glad to find that it heralded an interesting case; a messenger, heavy-laden, from the caretaker up at the big house, at present tenanted only by servants to prepare for the advent of the new owner. The boy therefrom, of boot-blackening and knife-cleaning profession, fidgetted in the shop. If he had not held the parcel in his arms he would, Mr. Jameson divined, have been fingering the wares.

"Hallo," he said, holding out his burden at the shop-keeper's appearance, "there ain't nowhere I can stow this 'cept the floor."

Mr. Jameson accepted it with reverential care, not knowing what it might contain, while the errand boy plunged into the explanation of matters.

"Cook's Irish, you see," he commented, with fine discrimination of racial attributes, "and dead sure to have a smash now and again." There was not lacking, Mr. Jameson noted, a fiendish delight at the inevitability of the tragedy.

"Anyway, she's done it this time, a real bad 'un, and all along of too much cleanin', if you ask me."

At this point of the narrative the china-dealer, having unpacked the newspaper wrappings, gingerly lifted out their contents. Two, three Copeland plates were in pieces.

"You're quite sure *all* the bits, every scrap is here?" he queried anxiously.

"Certain sure," the boy said. "While cook was a-doin' the mournin' I picked 'em up myself. There wasn't nothin' Chinese left on *that* floor."

"I can't promise these under a week; tell Mrs. Parry," Mr. Jameson said cautiously. "I've some other jobs I must finish first."

"Oh, that'll do all right I 'spects," the youth returned. "Family's not arrivin' just yet. You fix 'em up and I'll be hoppin' down again come next Wednesday," and he departed whistling, glad to be rid of his responsible burden.

The shopman carried the parcel into his workroom and deposited it on a spare corner of the table. Next he unlocked a safe close at hand, and lifting out the broken plates from their coverings, placed them, not without tenderness, within.

Then methodically he turned to fold the newspaper, and as he did so something caught his eye which stopped him in his task. The outer wrapping was an old *Daily Telegraph*: it was nothing on that which had attracted his attention, but some small bits of the broken china had been screwed up separately, and it was a sentence on this inner parcel that had shot like an arrow into his consciousness.

Picking up the torn sheet which contained it, he folded and placed it in his pocket. After supper he would read its context. There was no time now: Maggie was already calling him impatiently.

He ate his food absent-mindedly, and after that, when the table was cleared, the sentence got between him and his simple accounts which it was his habit to total up each day.

He was glad when it was done and he could allow himself the leather arm-chair and his pipe. He had meant to continue reading *Macaulay's Essays*, but the fragment of newspaper claimed precedence.

He took it out of his pocket and looked it carefully over to discover how much matter he possessed. It was