

BUSKERS AT BAY

BY ARTHUR MORRISON.

TRULY it seemed like to be what is called an old-fashioned Christmas in the matter of cold and snow. The weather had cheated all observers till as late as three days before the festival. Autumn had lingered long, ways were dank, leaves still brown about boughs, and what little chill hung in the air was all pointless and in the main a mere effect of damp. But a night had changed all, and what had begun as drizzle turned to sleet and then to snow. All that day it fell, and toward evening prevailing over the air, it whitened the roads at last, even as it had already whitened fields and hedges and the houseposts of the little town of Crowbridge. So that morning, the morning before Christmas, broke upon a muffled whiteness, and though the fall had ceased, the sky had an even grayness that promised another.

Of the townsfolk of Crowbridge the more robust looked out of window and called it seasonable, and others who had grumbled a week ago because of the mugginess, now that they had what they asked for, grumbled again. But there were visitors long past grumbling at anything, though the change hit them sorely. At the end of the town nearest the railway station, on a piece of common ground given to fairs and markets, Leatherby's Royal Victoria theater stood forlorn and solitary. It was a dismal construction of canvas and wood, called an outdoor fit up, and it had stood almost unregarded for a week. Never had Leatherby's so little encouragement to stay, never so grievous a lack of means to get away. Business had been bad, and worse than had, even for a strolling company. And now—

The whole concern was fallen on evil times, and its early welfare was gone with its early paint. All show of salaries had been dropped months ago and equal division made of what poor sums might remain after expenses. But now it seemed that an end had come to all things. Once upon a time the show had been wont to travel by rail and the buskers to take cheap lodgings; now it moved as it might and sheltered the company itself. It had crawled into Crowbridge drawn by two angular horses, hired in the last town, but there seemed no possibility of its ever crawling out unless the company harnessed themselves and dragged it. The load of one van stood more or less erect, with a groan and a flap at each stir of wind, and was the theater; in the other Leatherby himself and his wife had taken to lodge, with their daughter of seventeen, Lou, called in print in the days when it ran to Miss Sibylla de Vere.

It was a horrible place, this Crowbridge; nobody would trust, nobody would support the drama. As for trust, a gallant effort had been made in the beginning, when Teddy Norton, general utility—all the company were general utility—was engaged in the best mixture of clothes the show could get together and sent forth to pledge the credit of the concern with butcher and baker. He did it all with an air, poor fellow—somehow the air of a private secretary conferring a royal appointment in person, and he was careful to stipulate for the punctual presentation of bills next Saturday. But the Crowbridge shopkeepers were a stony hearted, even a stony faced, lot, and they wanted money down and made no bones of saying so, without circumlocution. And as for the drama, they would have none of it. It would seem, indeed, that most of them judged it sinful, for Crowbridge was a most dull and proper place, and the money it sent to Leatherby's doors scarce paid for lamp oil.

"Patronage," too, failed utterly, and every cover was drawn blank. Chieftly and first, Leatherby attacked Baring Spencer, Esq., and attacked him again and again. Baring Spencer, Esq., would neither send his servants nor support a "special performance," nor presently permit the theater standing round on his doorstep. It seemed that something must be got out of Baring Spencer, Esq., if only he were pestered enough, for he was a man of vast projects in money and companies, and he was here at Crowbridge, where he had taken a furnished house for a few months, with schemes in bicycle factories that would make the place rich. Indeed it was said that he was buying the house outright and would some day go to parliament for the county. The local paper was full of Baring Spencer, Esq., his undertakings and his designs for the nourishment and glory of Crowbridge. His name was everywhere, so that it was doubly maddening to find him resolute not to patronize the drama as represented by Leatherby's. There was his house, almost in sight of the "pitch," and his fame and his glory pervaded Crowbridge. It would seem that every applicant might tap him, if not for money, for his name, except Leatherby. Him he would not even see.

Last night had been bad indeed at the show. They had tried a wonderful version of "The Courier of Lyons," slashed and battered out of all recognition to fit the five male and three female members of the company and the only two scenes available, and the "house" (2s. 4d. and a few passed in loaves) had merely sniggered and rattled its feet. Tomorrow would be Christmas, and unless something occurred desperately like a miracle the festival must be celebrated by a total fast. What could be done? A desperate suggestion of carol singing had been considered and abandoned early. There were already two parties each night, one from the church and one from the chapel, each with its harmonium and even an ad lib to the other at intervals even from opposite ends of the town. And it was plain, as Sam Davis (general utility) observed, that outside competition was useless when the regular crowd worked for nix.

Mrs. Hendy sat about a little coke fire behind the stage mending and darning, a task that grew day by day—grew in difficulty as well as magnitude. The girl was haggard and sharp beyond her years, and already her complexion was rough and unwholesome because of the nightly pain; perhaps it was worse today from overnight weeping. Even her mother, stanch through a hundred ups and downs, made but a poor face of it, try as she might, and the widening bulk that had long led her, with rare frankness, to abandon juvenile parts was now merely recorded by a slowness of clothes. As for Mrs. Hendy, who was also Miss Beaumont, leading lady, she almost wept as she sewed. She lamented aloud, in season and out, the fate that had brought her to such a pass, for she would have it known that she, above all the rest, had known better things and had played Pauline to the great Kedgeford's "Claude Melnotte" at Liverpool. She was at great pains to impress these things on anybody who would listen, and she made them a ghastly affliction to her husband, into whose misfortunes she had married, and little thanks she got for it, as she was insistent to remind him.

For his part it was his habit to receive her reproaches sometimes with querulous retort, but mostly with mild deprecation, and to make his escape when it was possible in the direction of the nearest liquid refreshment he was aware of.

But that now he was one of the first of the men furtive and ill clad, to sneak across toward the bar of the Crown. Not because he or they had money to spend there, but, if truth must be confessed, because they had fallen low, and very low—so low that not a man of them but was glad to take a drink at the invitation of any free handed bar lounger who might offer it.

A drover was in the bar and a butcher—a butcher who had declined the honor of Leatherby's custom as offered by Teddy Norton. Norton and Hendy pushed open the door and stared about the bar with a poor pretense of looking for some of the others—whom they had left at the show. They stared as long as possible and were making a reluctant show of withdrawal when the butcher, with a wink and a grin at the drover, sang out: "Come along—come along in! There ain't no charge for comin' in!"

They pushed the door wide, mumbling something about "looking for a friend," but with expectant eyes. "Ah, your friend's bin called out unexpected to his gran'mother's funeral. 'Ave a drink?"

They let the door swing to and came sheepishly in. The drinks were ordered and brought, and then the butcher, pulling out a handful of silver, said abstractedly, with another wink at the drover, "Let's see; we toss odd man out for these, don't we?"

The drover grinned, and Teddy Norton made a ghastly show of feeling about his pockets for money. But Hendy only flushed and paled and frowned at the floor. He had his feelings yet.

The silence endured for three seconds, and then the butcher flung the money on the counter, with a coarse laugh. "All right," he said; "my show."

successful engagement that brought first to last half the stipulated salary, and, though it was held "too bad" when a manager bolted with the money bags, the thing was so common as scarce to seem worse than a piece of rather sharp practice.

Last, poor old Leatherby himself, a sad figure of a stout man worried thin, round of drinks. It was hard, very hard, to maintain the dignity proper to a proprietor and manager conscious of the while that he, even he, had fallen to "press" for a drink among strangers, though in truth he did his best.

That night they played "The Ticket of Leave Man"—played it with the energy of despair. Whatever that performance might bring was all that lay between them and the lack of a Christmas dinner, and worse lack than that. Hendy played Bob Brierly to his wife's May Edwards. Leatherby doubled Melter Moss and Mr. Gibson, with a rustic round at the back and a change of coat in the office scene, played with a cottage interior. Billy Mack doubly, too—Malby and Green Jones—and Leatherby's daughter was Sam Willoughby and Miss St. Evremont by turns, while Mrs. Leatherby as Mrs. Willoughby, Teddy Norton as Hawkshaw the detective and Davis as Dalton had only one part apiece to think about. So that on the whole the play was fairly complete and regular, save for a cut or a botch in rare places and a lack of crowds here and there.

It was not a comforting play altogether for the players. Money had to be flourished recklessly in some scenes, and a basket of trotters made of rolled rags, and once Hendy had to pretend that he couldn't eat a biscuit.

But the house—well, it was better than last night, by eightpence. The butcher came and brought a friend. He was not so bad a fellow after all in his own way, and he did his best to applaud for the whole house. But half the rest were boys, disciples of the local wit, a hostler from the Crown, and these made the night's work harder.

Hawkshaw was called "Lockjaw" or "Lockjaw the Defective," and the sally drew yells of delight at every repetition. A certain frock coat that from time to time adorned a different character, in accordance with necessity, was greeted with cheerful recognition at each reappearance, and "Garn, it ain't your turn—you've 'ad it on twice!" was the indignant reproach that met Mr. Gibson in the office scene. And toward the end Leatherby (as Melter Moss) came forward with injured dignity and a large potato, which he protested that no gentleman would have thrown.

All was done that Leatherby's could do, and all was done in vain or very near it. A few pence apiece was all the poor strollers had to see them through Christmas and to get them away from this abhorrent town. The men shared a screw of tobacco and turned in as best they might. Mrs. Hendy was near to tears as she left the stage, and she indulged in a passionate and reproachful outburst as she and her husband were alone. For his part, he could but feebly protest that it wasn't his fault.

"Nice situation this is for me," she scolded; "and then to be told it's not your fault!" How she went afresh, "Of course you put on to me—like a man. Oh, oh, to think I ever was such a fool as to bring it on myself!"

"But, my dear," Hendy began, with entreaty in his voice—"Oh, don't talk to me!" she answered, pushing away the hand he had put on her shoulder. "To think I should come to this! And then you tell me it's my fault!"

PARTED BY TRIFLES

HONEYMOON QUARRELS SOMETIMES END IN SEPARATION.

Trivial Things That Have Striven the Sea of Matrimony With the Weeks of Married Lives Before the Voyage Was Fairly Begun.

"The only reliable thing in marriage is its uncertainty," Douglas Jerrold once remarked in a cynical moment, and, like many sayings to which one may object, this aphorism contains at least an elementary truth. It is a curious fact that while some matrimonial barks survive fifty or more years of voyaging and come safely into harbor at last others are wrecked before they leave the still waters of the honeymoon.

This was the fate of a couple known to the writer who were married a few years ago under the brightest of auspices and for whom their friends predicted nothing but happiness. The very first day of the honeymoon their wedded lives came to an abrupt and tragic termination from the simplest of causes.

The bride had brought with her on the honeymoon a parcel of a vivid, aggressive red color, to which her husband objected. He begged her not to use it, but she persisted. The dispute grew warmer and warmer, heated words were exchanged, until at last in an impulse of anger the bridegroom snatched the sunshade out of his wife's hands and threw it into the sea.

Thus ended their life together, for the indignant young wife took the next train to her mother's home, and from that day to this the foolish people have never met.

In another case, known professionally to the writer, a dispute as to the pronunciation of a word completely wrecked the married life of a young couple and brought their little tragedy into the light of the law courts.

It came out in evidence that during the honeymoon the bridegroom had ventured to correct the bride, who had mispronounced a word at the breakfast table. She resented the correction, maintaining that she was right and her lord and master wrong. The argument thus began ended in a bitter quarrel, during which each disputant no doubt said things which had much better have been left unsaid, with the result that the silly couple separated, each refusing to yield to the other.

Efforts were made by their friends and relatives to heal the breach, but to no purpose, and the little tragedy ended in a judicial separation.

It seems almost incredible that people should allow their lives to be wrecked by such trivial causes, but in these cases actual fact proves stranger even than fiction.

More ludicrous, if not more trivial, was the cause that separated a couple who were united less than a year ago. In a suit by a husband for the restitution of conjugal rights the wife declared that it was impossible to live with the plaintiff "because he snored so dreadfully."

A LAWYER'S EXPERIENCE.

The Story of a Convicted Man, a Pardon and a Painter.

"A good many years ago," said a well known Michigan lawyer who was reminiscing the other day, "I became greatly interested in a state prison case. A young farmer was charged with having driven off ten out of a flock of twelve sheep and sold them to a butcher. He put up a fair defense, but was convicted and sentenced to a term of three years.

"There were plenty of people who believed that he was perfectly innocent, and even the butcher who bought the sheep came in time to doubt if he had identified the right party. After the case had stirred up a whole county I took a hand in it. In my petition to the governor I had the evidence of the young man's father, mother and sweetheart, and I got sight of the jurors to sign it. I made out such a good case that the governor took it under advisement and finally agreed to issue a pardon. In speaking to me of the case he said:

"There is no sort of doubt in my mind that this was a case of mistaken identity, and I shall be only too glad to restore the young man to liberty."

"It became my pleasant duty to drive seven miles over the muddest of roads to bear the news to the parents that a pardon was to be issued. The old man was under the weather and in bed in a room off the parlor. The wife received word and sobbed over the good news and then went in to break it to her husband. That partition wall was thin, and they both spoke in loud tones, and I plainly heard her say:

"Oh, Samuel, there's a man here who says our John is to be pardoned tomorrow!"

"You don't say," he exclaimed.

"Yes; it's certainly so."

"Going to be pardoned right out, eh?"

"Yes; he is."

"Waal, waal, that's good news. Say, Mary, what a fool John was not to get the other two sheep while he was about it!"

"I left the rejoicing farmhouse, intending to wire the governor to withhold the pardon," said the lawyer, "but it presently struck me that I had advanced about twenty good reasons why the young man couldn't be guilty, and I therefore decided to sing small and let things go on. He was duly pardoned and sent home, and the governor never met me for years after without congratulating me on rehabilitating an innocent man wrongly convicted!"—Detroit Free Press.

COOKING HINTS.

For a change try boiling apples in sweet cider. When apples begin to get tasteless, this makes a change.

Cocoa loses that raw taste if it is allowed to simmer for a good five minutes after being added to the boiling milk.

A cut potato dropped in the fat in which vegetables are to be fried will indicate the proper temperature by turning brown.

Have charcoal fires for broiling if you wish for perfect cookery. The hot flames close the pores quickly, and the result is very tender meat.

For preparing soup for invalids make a great point of delicate flavorings. Avoid much turpentine or carrot, and instead have a suspicion of bay leaf, sweet herbs and mace.

When roasting a chicken in the oven, roast it in the usual way until it is nicely brown, then turn it back upward and let it remain so until cooked. It will be found that the juice of the chicken runs into the breast and makes it moist and delicious.

She Played the Tramp Card.

"How did she get here?" At a famous dancing assembly this was the quite audacious comment made by several married belles when a beautiful young matron as yet on the outskirts of the exclusive set entered the room. The newcomer, whose first appearance it was, proved herself quite equal to the occasion. She had a nodding acquaintance with nearly every woman in the room. Some of them even went to her lunch-compartment. Calmly turning to the most supercilious critic in the room, she echoed as though in reply:

"How did I get here? I drove here, my dear Mrs. Crossbeam. Did you walk?"—Lippincott's Magazine.

An Irish Bull.

Bridget and Pat were sitting in an armchair reading an article on "The Law of Compensation."

"Just fancy," exclaimed Bridget, "accordin' to this, when a man loses an eye, he gets another eye in its place. For instance, a blind man gets more sense as he gets 'an' touch, an'—"

"Shure, an' it's quite true," answered Pat. "O've noticed it meself. When a man has one leg shorter than the other, he gets the other's longer."—Philadelphia Times.

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Draw Corks Easily.

If you want to amuse friends at an evening party, tell them that you can draw a cork out of any bottle without a corkscrew. Of course they will laugh, but very soon it will be your turn to laugh.

Take a piece of sealing wax and hold one end of it over a lamp or gas jet until it becomes soft; then let some drops of the wax fall on the cork. As soon as the wax is on the cork, it is covered with wax you must press the piece which you hold in your hand against the cork, and you must hold it there until the wax is quite dry. Then it will be easy for you to draw out the cork by using the stick of wax, which adheres to it in the same manner as you would use a screw.

No matter how firmly fixed the cork may be, it will almost immediately yield to the pressure. You must, however, take care not to wrench the stick of wax away from it while you are drawing it out, and you must also see that the cork is perfectly dry before you pour any wax on it.

Bengal Tigers.

The man eater is usually an older tiger, whose strength is falling and whose teeth have partly lost their sharpness. Such a beast finds it easier to lurk in the vicinity of settlements and to pick up an occasional man, woman or child than to run down wild cattle.

The largest, fiercest and most brightly colored tigers are found in the province of Bengal, near the mouths of the Ganges river and not far from Calcutta. A full grown Bengal tiger sometimes measures ten feet from nose to tip of tail. Such a monster makes no account of springing upon a man that a cat does of seizing a mouse. He surpasses the lion in strength and ferocity and has no rival among beasts of prey except the grizzly bear and the recently discovered giant bear of Alaska—St. Nicholas.

The Forgotten Dot.

A wedding took place a short time back in a large town in the north of England, the service being conducted by a rather eccentric vicar. Two days after the ceremony he called at the house of the bridegroom's mother, but she happened to be out, so he said he would call again, which he did later on in the day, carrying two large green bags under his arm.

This time he found her in. So he began by asking them to clear the table a little. Then he opened the green bags, from which he took the registers. These he opened and in a most solemn tone said:

"Mrs. Williams, you have foregone to dot the 'I' in Elizabeth."

The family breathed once more.

Sea Necklaces.

Pretty nearly every one has seen the curious "sea ruffles," or "sea necklaces," which are found plentifully on ocean beaches. These are the eggs of the sea snails. They consist of a number of small disk shaped envelopes attached along a sort of stem, the biggest of them being in the middle. In each envelope there is a little spot of thinner material, which the young break through when they are ready to be hatched. When the female gastropod is about to lay, she buries herself in the sand, from the surface of which the "necklace" of eggs is gradually extruded. Being thus set adrift and exposed to the elements, as well as to devouring enemies, few of the eggs are ever hatched, but those which do come into the world safely and survive doubtless live to a very great age.

Physical Formation of Mexico.

Mexico possesses a curious physical formation. Rising rapidly by a succession of terraces from the low, sandy coasts on the east and west, it culminates in a central plateau, running in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction and having an elevation varying from 4,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea. High above this plateau tower the snow capped crests of several volcanoes, most of which are extinct. Ten of them are over 12,000 feet in height, and three look down upon fertile valleys from altitudes of 17,782, 17,356 and 16,000. These are Popocatepetl, Orizaba and Ixtacchuatl.

Giants and Pygmies of Space.

There is an immense range of difference in the brightness of the stars when the sun is taken for a standard of comparison. Some of the stars emit only one one-hundredth as much light as the sun emits. Others emit a thousand times as much light as he does. Indeed, one scientist thinks there are at least two stars each of which is probably 10,000 times as bright as the sun, which signifies that if either of those stars were as near to us as the sun is it would outshine him 10,000 times in brightness. The two stars are Canopus, which is in the southern hemisphere and invisible from our part of the earth, and Rigel, one of the two brightest stars in the constellation Orion.

Man's Unkind Cat.

"Miss D. doesn't have a single foreign label on her trunks and bags, not a sign that she ever has had them out of the country," said the girl who at the end of a six weeks' trip abroad surveyed her plastered over luggage with pride and admiration.

"Ah, well, you see Miss D. doesn't need to," replied the unkind man. "She goes across so often, and every one knows it."—New York Press.

Nothing Too Good.

Mose Johnson—Dat liniment you sold me did mah wife lots of good.

Druggist—Why, that was horse liniment! You said you wanted it for a horse!

Mose Johnson—Ah did, sub; but dar ain't nuffin' too good fo' mah ole woman needer. Jess yo' understand dat!

—Puck.

A Political Pointer.

Hilton—They say politics makes straddle bedfellows.

Weller—Yes; but it doesn't matter if you get a good berth.—Boston Transcript.

Fish are sold alive in Japan, the peddlers conveying them through the streets in tanks.

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Bright's Disease

Is Positively Curable.

Interview with the pioneer manufacturer, N. W. Spaulding, president of the Spaulding Sewing Company, San Francisco.

Q.—We are told a member of your family was cured of a case that the doctors pronounced Bright's Disease, although it is believed to be incurable?

A.—That is correct.

Q.—Don't you think the facts ought to be known?

A.—Yes. If it will help anyone else you may say that a cure was effected.

Q.—You say physicians had diagnosed the case as Bright's Disease?

A.—Several had. They told us the condition was critical, when my brother, who had been helped by the Fulton Compound, told us of it, and I went for it.

Q.—Was it long before a change was noted?

A.—In a few weeks the improvement was marked. The sleep was better and there was a gradual return to health, although it was a year or so we considered the cure full and permanent.

Q.—Know of any other cases?

A.—Numerous of them. I'm sure I could scores of them.

Q.—Were there any failures?

A.—I know of none where it was taken in season.

Q.—Can you recall any individual cases?

A.—Several. I told an English acquaintance about it. He began to mend and ultimately recovered, and took a supply of the Compound and the Fulton Compound. John J. Fulton Co., San Francisco, "St. Nicholas" francisco sole compounders. Free trials made for patients. Descriptive pamphlet mailed free.

Beyond Belief.

When Abraham Lincoln was a young man, his prodigious strength and his skill in wrestling were matters of note throughout central Illinois. Few in the neighborhood were the men who could boast of having laid him on his back.

Somewhere along in the thirties there was a case on trial in one of the circuit courts in that section in which an effort was made to impeach the testimony of one of the witnesses. The evidence was conflicting. Some would believe the witness on oath and others would not.

At last a middle aged man with a determined expression of countenance was called to the stand. The usual question was put touching the reputation of the witness for truth and veracity:

"Would you believe him on oath?"

"No, I wouldn't," he answered, and before the lawyer on the opposite side could interpose he gave his reason: "I heard him braggin' once that he'd throwed Abe Lincoln in a fair square rastle."

No other witnesses were called. The attempt to impeach was successful.—Youth's Companion.

A Shrewd Yankee.

A certain Boston hotel man tells this good story at his own expense:

When a small boy on the farm, his folks often sent him to the neighbors to buy a dozen eggs when their hens failed to lay enough.

He noticed that the old farmer always held each egg before a lighted candle and examined it carefully. In his innocence of Yankee shrewdness the boy supposed that this was prompted more by honesty and intention to detect whether the eggs were bad or not.

One day, however, when he counted his eggs, according to custom, there were only eleven in the basket.

With a determination not to be cheated, the lad trudged proudly back to the house and quickly made known his discovery.

"Oh," said the old farmer, "that's all right, my boy. One of them has a double yolk."—Boston Record.

Halifax.

The evil reputation of Halifax implied in the adage "Go to Halifax!" came to it by inheritance from Halifax in Yorkshire, England. Halifax law, as may be gathered from a letter of Lord Leicester quoted by Motley, was that criminals should be "condemned first and inquired upon afterward."

Halifax lay within the forest of Hardwick, where the law was that if a felon was taken with 13½ pence worth of stolen goods he should be tried by four free burgesses from four of the precinct towns and if condemned by them he hanged the next day. After this proceeding had been carried out to the letter the case might be sent to a jury.

Halifax is also credited with being the home of the gullitton, which the Scot, Earl Morton, introduced into England only to have his own head chopped off with it.

The Dress is for the Thing.

"She's going in for athletics, she says."

"What particular kind of athletics?"

"Oh, she won't settle that until she has studied up the various costumes."—Chicago Post.

A Political Pointer.

Hilton—They say politics makes straddle bedfellows.

Weller—Yes; but it doesn't matter if you get a good berth.—Boston Transcript.

Fish are sold alive in Japan, the peddlers conveying them through the streets in tanks.



They stared as long as possible.

And presently they were all talkative together, for, after all, there were the drinks, and the poor players had learned not to be too thin skinned.

Sam Davis and Billy Mack found their way across soon, and the drover was good for another round of drinks on his entrance.

"Trade in your line don't seem fast rate," said the butcher, happy in many Christmas orders. "Ain't overcrowded, are you?"

The buskers looked one at another and shook their heads. There could be no concealment. "Beastly business," Davis answered—"orrid!"

"Not a very payin' game, eh?" said the drover.

"Well," Teddy Norton replied, "I'd be pretty well off if I had all that's owing me, anyhow."

"Ah, but then suppose you had to pay all your own?" rejoined the butcher and guffawed joyously at his own wit.

"Owing?" cried Hendy, with excitement. "Why, the money in salaries I haven't 'ad 'ud start a bank!"

"Yes—no doubt," said the butcher, and laughed again. "What I ain't got 'ud sink a ship."

"Let's see," said Davis, "you was in Trevor Fitz-Howard's crowd, wasn't you, when it left 'em stranded at Leeds?"

"It was that, my boy, an' Teddy Norton here, an' my missis—before I married her. That was the second time he put me in the cart, too," Hendy went on, with bitter reminiscence. "He dropped a company at Bristol once after three weeks, an' I was in that, an' that second time at Leeds he collared a bag o' mine to put the plunder in, with a new pair o' boots in it!"

"I bet you'd like to have 'em now," observed the butcher, with a glance at the actor's dilapidated shoes.

"I didn't know Fitz-Howard," ventured Davis, "but I've known some pretty near as hot. There was Digby, that called himself Stuart, an' Waldegrave an'—"

So the talk went, and each poor player fell to a computation of what he had lost in shortages by reason of "bad business" and by the robberies of rascally managers, so that if debts were but assets here would sit a company of affluent persons sponging for drinks in the Crown. Scarce a town in the kingdom but one or other had been stranded in it. They counted it a

The first good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of one, To see the blessed soul Christ, When he was first her Son. When he was first her Son, Good Lord, And happy may we be! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost To all eternity!

The carolers had come over the snow unheeded, and now choirboys' voices were uplifted lustily, while the bass of a large and healthy curate went booming below them:

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of two, To see her own dear Christ, Making the lame to go— Making the lame to go, Good Lord, And happy may we be! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost To all eternity!

At the first shock man and wife lifted their eyes toward each other. Then something took the woman at the throat, and she dropped her head in a fit of sobbing. If Hendy had come to her now, he would have been repulsed no more. But he was sulky and resentful and peevishly conscious that the advance was due from her. More, this carol sung at his very shoulder, this sign of merriment in the world about him, gave favor to his self pity. So the woman sobbed herself quiet again, and the carol went verse after verse to its end:

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of seven, To see her own Son, Jesus Christ, Ascending into heaven, good Lord, And happy may we be! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost To all eternity!

There was silence and then the shout of the carolers as they went their way by the street corner. "A merry Christmas!" was the final touch of irony.

For awhile neither spoke, but sat as they were. Then Hendy said roughly: "I'm going to sleep. That's cheap enough anyhow." And he reached for an old rug that made part of his bed.

His wife made no answer. It irritated him. "For heaven's sake, Polly," he said, "don't sit there sulking!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ptolemy Philopater possessed a nuptial yacht, the Thalamegon, 312 feet long and 45 feet deep. A graceful gallery supported by curiously carved columns ran round the vessel, and within were temples of Venus and of Bacchus. Her masts were 100 feet high, and her sails and cordage of royal purple hue.