OUR STORY TELLER

THE OTHER MAN.

I.

He stood on the brink of the precipice and looked over. Three hundred feet below him the sea broke on the somber rocks.

The man's muscles tensioned and he drew a deep breath. What an easy way to end it all! Just one little step—those rocks below were no bunglers; they would make no mistake over their work, and the sea would tell no tales—and then—then he would be away from it all, and would never have to bear the agony of hearing that she was married to Everett.

Married to Everett—married to Everett! The words clanged in his ears.

He groaned aloud and bent hastily over the edge.

A mist came before his eyes and his breath rose in a choking heave to his throat; the ground rocked sickeningly beneath him, and for one dizzy second he thought he was falling—falling down that interminable space.

Then the mist passed, the ground stopped rocking and he gasped with relief to find himself still standing safe and sound on firm earth.

He turned away with a scornful laugh at his own weakness.

Home again, he flung himself into an easy-chair and lit his pipe, resolved to give way no longer to morbid imaginings.

He picked up a magazine, but his thoughts flew off at a tangent to the dance which was to take place that very evening, to which he had been invited.

He had vowed not to see her again till he could settle once for all the demon of unrest within him, and a crowded ballroom was the last place for impassioned avowals.

He thought how cool and beautiful she would look in her white muslin, with her fluffy golden hair framing her sweet little flower-like face. Perhaps he would go, after all. Then a second figure rose up to spoil the picture—handsome, happy-go-lucky Everett, with a merry word for everyone, dancing untiring attendance on the fascinating hostess and never leaving her side for a moment.

How dared he take possession of her in that way! And how could she put up with it, unless——

His pipe—mankind's universal baby-bottle—for once failed utterly in its mission of soothing. He tossed it angrily across the table and buried his face in his hands, lost in a whirl of miserable conjectures.

His thoughts flew back to that dance one week ago—one week so crowded with hopes and fears that it seemed a lifetime.

He remembered those two dances, the music, the scent of flowers in the conservatory, and, more distinctly than all, the laughing face of Dolly.

Then those few overheard words rushed through his brain. He clinched his fists and his face flushed at the recollection. He had drifted from the ballroom to the conservatory. Would she consent? That was the question that throbbed in his brain. Should he say the words that would decide his future life and hers? He had puffed at a cigarette, and stared at the thin wisps of blue smoke. Would his hopes fade into nothingness as that fragrant smoke faded and vanished into air? And then he heard people talking. He recognized the voice of Everett, and then Dolly's. They were seated on the opposite side of the conservatory, and had not seen him as he sat almost concealed behind a tangle of palm leaves.

"Dolly," Everett was saying, "you must say 'Yes.' My whole life depends upon it. We have been chums so long. Say you will and make me the happiest man in England not to speak of Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Say 'Yes!' I know what you want to say—that we ought to be getting back again. And there are all those loathsome people who want dances. Confound 'em. You will? I knew you would——"

Fraser had sat there, almost unable to move. He did not know how long. The music from the ballroom floated out into the conservatory, mingling with the laughter and chatter of the guests. All hope, all interest in life was gone—snatched from him by those few overheard words. People were asking for him. What did it matter; nothing mattered now. A voice aroused him. He looked up, and saw Everett before him—Everett, who was his friend; who was now his rival—his enemy!

"Hallo, Fraser, old man, you seem to be ten fathoms deep in the blue dumps! What's the matter now? Come and have a smoke with me. I've been looking for you half the evening."

And that all happened a week ago! A week—the most miserable in his life. And now he was trying to forget her. What a fool he was!

II.

The thought of that steep drop down to the sea kept recurring to his mind again and again with a fatal fascination put it away from his as he would. Through all his broodings its somber invitation stood out clear and distinct. He could see even now the jagged rocks lurking below, dripping with spray, looking for their prey.

At last he got up. It was no good staying in. Inaction was torture to him in his present frame of mind. He would try and walk it off.

He started off rapidly, without any definite aim or intention, but unconsciously his steps turned toward the coast, and presently he found himself once more ascending the steep little path he had traversed that morning.

As he neared the summit he perceived that there was a man's figure before him, stooping perilously over the dangerous edge, evidently gathering some plant from the cliff below.

It was a foolhardy thing to do, and evidently bespoke a strong brain.

A little nearer, and he stopped short abruptly. The stooping figure was Everett.

All his love and hate surged up within him. Everett, the man who had stolen his love from him—the man who had made his life a blank and barren waste. A thousand devils seemed let loose within him. How very near that stooping figure was to death—so near that one touch—just one little motion of the foot—and he would lose his balance and go speeding, speeding down those smiling cliffs and be hurled to pieces on those cruel rocks beneath!

His breath came quickly.

Suppose it had happened accidentally? Even as he thought he knew he was a coward. Even then he was thinking of his own skin. Suppose a sudden noise made the man start? Almost unconsciously he opened his lips, and a harsh "Hallo!" broke from him.

Everett's nerves were steel. He turned his sunny face and smiled over his shoulder.

"Hallo, old man!" he responded amiably.

Fraser came and stood dumbly beside him, holding his hands tightly together behind him to hide their shaking. He had forgotten Everett was a sailor.

He watched him furtively leaning down further and further, till it seemed impossible he could retain his balance; and the waves below reached up hungry white arms to catch him, and fell back again with a murmuring thunder of anger at their failure.

A little further. Fraser caught his breath.

"You'll be over in a minute!" he said gruffly.

Everett laughed easily.

"Not I!" he said confidently. "But, I say, old chap, you might just hang on to my legs for a minute, will you? I want to reach that great bit just there, and it's just beyond me."

The waving pink bloom nodded impudently up at them just out of reach. Fraser stood motionless, moistening his dry lips.

Everett looked around.

"D'you mind, old man?" he said.

And mechanically the other stretched out his hand and obeyed.

Now—now! one movement of his fingers—just the opening of his hand——

He fought the thought back, gasping for breath.

Everett leaned still farther. He half glanced back.

"They're for Dolly, you know," he said, "to wear this evening."

The fingers opened as if by some suddenly pressed spring. There was a sudden cry, and then—then something went rolling, rolling, striking and bounding sickeningly down that steep side.

For an instant the white face was upturned.

"All right, old chap—I know—accident!" floated up brokenly, and then there was a last hideous thud, and the waves clutched greedily at their unrecognizable prey and drew it under. And the swooping seagulls shrieked wildly and circled upward.

Fraser stood as if turned to stone, gazing with distended eyeballs at the gurgling eddies where that—that thing had disappeared.

Murderer! Murderer! Murderer! The waves lashed it at him, the seagulls shrieked it, the whole living and inanimate world flung the awful word at him.

He stood paralyzed. Had he done it—he? What had he done? He held his hands vaguely and piteously out before him, asking them mutely. Murderer! Murderer! Murderer! Yes, it was true—true! His hands told him—his hands that he had opened. God! They were blood-red—stained with blood! The grass was red—the sky—the very sea was blood!

He flung up his hands with an awful cry and sprang blindly over that fatal edge. * * *

"I say, old fellow, do wake up and stop having the horrors! You don't know how beastly awful you look!"

Fraser opened his eyes slowly and stared in blank terror at the handsome tanned face looking down at him. He wondered vaguely whether he was dreaming now or had just awoke from a red nightmare. The voice went on:

"I only looked in to say ta-ta. I've had a telegram calling me back to Ireland immediately. Old Chris Murdoch has relented and consented to our being publicly engaged. And all through Dolly, too—bless her little heart! She's Meg's dearest friend, you know, and she's been moving heaven and earth to soften the old chap's heart." He waived an airy good-by. "Ta-ta!" he said merrily.

Fraser gazed speechlessly at him, the tears still standing thick on his white face.

Everett turned back, half-laughing.

"I wish you wouldn't look at me as though I were a ghost!" he protested "So long!"

Archbishop's Apt Retort.

The archbishop of Dublin recently performed a marriage in the family of a wealthy Irish distiller. After the breakfast the distiller thanked the archbishop effusively for his share of the proceedings and said to him as he took his leave, "The Lord be with you." "And with thy spirit," is reported to have been the rejoinder.

HUMOR OF THE WEEK

STORIES TOLD BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Odd, Curious and Laughable Phases of Human Nature Graphically Portrayed by Eminent Word Artists of Our Own Day—A Budget of Fun.

Mr. Cripps—Can you induce the cook to have one of her friends come and take dinner with her to-night?

Mrs. Cripps—The idea! What for?

Mr. Cripps—I expect to bring Jones and Smith home with me, and I'd like to have a nice dinner for them.—Philadelphia Record.

In Theatric Parlance.

Amateur—What does it mean in theatric circles when they say the "ghost walks?"

Veteran Actor—It means that the rest of us don't have to.—Detroit Free Press.

Inherent Talent.

Deacon Shanghai—Dat boy certainly is full ob music, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Jackson—Yes, Deacon; hit comes nachel toe dat chile; his pap war run ovah by one o' dem street planners.

Taking the Sting Out of It.

"Have I got a bright future?" anxiously inquired the sweet young graduate, who was chock-full of ambition.

"Well, it isn't as bright as it might be," answered the antique clairvoyant, who was taking a long look into it; "but," she added with a girlish titter, "perhaps the gas is turned down."—Puck.

Proved His Point.

"Opportunity comes once to every man."

"That's right; and any man is bound to become famous if he only lives long enough."

"Oh, I don't quite believe that."

"You don't? Suppose a man lives to be 150 years old; wouldn't that make him famous?"—Philadelphia Record.

Trying to Follow the Injunction.

"And now," continued his angry spouse, thoroughly aroused. "I am going to give you another piece of my mind—what are you doing?"

"I am turning the other ear," patiently responded Mr. Meeker.—Chicago Tribune.

The Mystery of Motive.

"Why," asked the young wife, naively, "do you always whistle when you get my millinery bills?"

"To raise the wind!" replied the man.—Detroit Journal.

Indisputable.

Mamma—Oh, Ethel, you never saw me behave like that.

Ethel (aged 4)—Well, I haven't knowed you so very long.—Tit-Bits.

Compulsory Proportions.

"You're not half so stout as you were, Billy."

"No; we've moved into a flat, and I just had to get thin."—Indianapolis Journal.

She Was Willing to Help.

Beggar—Plase, yer honor, do help a poor old body.

Irritable Old Chap—Don't bother me, woman. Can't you see that I couldn't possibly get a hand into my pockets?

Beggar—Ah, but perhaps I could, yer honor.

His Grasping Disposition.

"They say," remarked the mother thoughtfully, referring to the young man who had called the previous evening, "that he is of a grasping disposition."

"Well, I should say he was!" exclaimed the small boy.

"Willie!" cautioned his sister, but it was too late.

"You just ought to have seen the way he grasped Lou when she said she'd marry him," persisted the youngster.—Chicago Evening Post.

Crowded Out.

"Have you called on Penelope since she got back?"

"Yes, but I'll have to go again."

"Why?"

"She got started first in telling her summer experiences and I didn't get a word in edgewise about what I'd been doing all summer."—Chicago Record.

Discouraging.

"You are the first girl I ever loved," said Mr. Simper to Miss Kittish.

"In that case you may cease loving me. I do not care to be practiced on."

Correct.

"Johnny," queried the teacher of the new pupil, "do you know your alphabet?"

"Yes'm," answered Johnny.

"Well, then," continued the teacher, "what letter comes after A?"

"All the rest of them!" was the triumphant reply.

For Spoons.

"Here's a girl," remarked the Query Editor, "who writes to know 'what is the popular spoonholder of this season.'"

"Evidently," replied the Snake Editor, "she's never had any beaux."

"Why?"

"Because if she had she'd know that the most popular one is the parlor sofa."—Philadelphia Press.

Heavy Incidentals.

She—Is the writing of poetry very lucrative?

He—Well, it would be if one didn't have to lay out 50 cents or so every week on paper and stamps!—Puck.

Memory.

Husband (angrily) — Don't forget, madame, that you are my wife.

Wife—Oh, never fear. There are some things one can't forget.—Detroit Free Press.

Afforded Her Pleasure.

He—I am afraid you don't like my dancing.

She—On the contrary, I think it is very amusing.

Nominated.

"What does Mildred mean when she says that she is writing her letter of acceptance to Theodore." — Denver News.

Highly Enjoyable.

Buggins—I hear Smitkins is learning golf. Does he enjoy it?

Muggins—Says it's great. He has already put three caddies in the hospital.—Philadelphia Record.

Terrible.

Scene: A railway car. First Artist—Children don't seem to me to sell now as they used.

Second Artist (in a hoarse whisper)—Well, I was at Stodge's yesterday; he had just knocked off three little girls' heads, horrid raw things, when a dealer came in, sir; he bought 'em directly, took 'em away, wet as they were, on a stretcher, and wanted Stodge to let him have some more next week.

Old Lady (putting her head out of window and shrieking)—Conductor, stop the train and let me out, or I'll be murdered!

Intervals in Excitement.

"Ma, when I get big I'm goin' 'way off to be a pirate."

"Are you, Bobby?"

"Yes, but don't you be scared; I'll come home at night to sleep."—Chicago Record.

Plain Evidence of Art.

She—I came to study art.

Artist—I knew you could paint the moment I looked into your face.

They All Came Back.

"Half a dozen of us fellows," said the struggling young author, "held a competition in short story writing. My story won the prize."

"Conceded to be the best, eh?"

"Well, we sent them all to the same magazine, and the editor kept mine longer than any of the others."—Philadelphia Press.

Most Unfashionable.

"My gracious!" suddenly exclaimed little Mabel Blugore, who had been day-dreaming, "I suppose there's no help for it."

"What are you thinking of, dear?" asked her mamma.

"Why, I was just thinking when we die we'll have to wear ready-made heavenly robes for a few days till we can be fitted."—Philadelphia Press.

The Only Possibility.

He—Nothing could ever come between us, could it, dear?

She—I can't think of a single thing, unless I should happen to become engaged to some other man.—Harper's Bazar.

Used to It.

Mr. Lurker—Excuse me, Miss Snapper, but I have long sought this opportunity——

Miss Snapper—Never mind the preamble, Mr. Lurker. Run along in and ask pa. He's been expecting this would come for the last two years.—Tit-Bits.

A Courteous Offer.

"Couldn't I be squeezed in there somehow?" asked the pretty girl, as she vainly sought entrance to the crowded car.

"If you can get in, I have one arm free," exclaimed a young man in the center of the car.—Baltimore American.

No Birds.

"I am told that Miss Frocks is a vegetarian," said Mrs. Fosdick.

"She is," replied Mrs. Keedick, "even in her millinery."

Pepper in Olden Times.

Dr. Adolph Miller, of Philadelphia, President of the Pennsylvania Mycological Club, in a dissertation on the pepper plant, says that during the Middle Ages in Europe pepper was the most esteemed and most important of all the spices. Genoa, Venice and other commercial cities of central Europe were indebted to their traffic in pepper for a large part of their wealth. Its importance as a means of promoting commercial activity and civilization during the Middle Ages can hardly be overrated. Tribute was levied in pepper, and donations were made in this spice, which was frequently also used as a medium of exchange in place of money. When the imperial city of Rome was besieged by Alaric, the King of the Goths, in 408 A. D., the ransom demanded included 5,000 pounds of gold, 30,000 pounds of silver and 3,000 pounds of pepper, illustrating the importance of this spice at that time.

Fifty miles from the town where a man dies, the papers, if they mention his death at all, tell the truth about him.

HANDLESS BUT HANDY

ARMLESS PEOPLE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED DIFFICULT FEATS.

Individuals Minus Upper Limbs Have Become Famous Artists, Dextrous Penmen, Expert Musicians and Artisans.

That success in art is not the monopoly of such as are dowered with the normal number of limbs is conclusively proved by the skill of Mlle. Rapin, a Swiss artist, who, though without arms, has made a name for herself with her portraits and bas-reliefs, and of the Belgian painter, recently deceased, whom many of us have doubtless seen at work in the Antwerp picture gallery copying the works of the old masters there on view.

Other armless artists, too, have acquired fame, among whom may be mentioned the celebrated Miss Biffen, who earned a living as a miniature painter. Originally on exhibition at Bartholomew fair, she was seen by the Earl of Morton, who took her under his patronage and paid for her artistic education. She was a favorite of George IV. and William IV., the latter of whom allowed her a small pension.

Turning to earlier armless celebrities, mention must be made of John Valerius, born in Germany in 1667, who was capable of performing many surprising feats. He could shave himself, play on the drum, fence with much skill, and, in short, use his toes with as much adroitness as most men can their hands. He possessed, however, a modern rival in the person of Herr Unthan, whom many will remember as exhibiting himself a few years ago in London, where he surprised large audiences with his marvelous feats.

Matthew Buckinger, who was born at Nuremberg seven years later than Valerius, was but a mere trunk, possessing neither arms nor legs. Despite his natural disadvantages, however, he is said to have been an excellent performer on the flute, bagpipe and trumpet, while his sketches—landscape, figures and coats of arms—which were executed with a pen, were equal to the most finished engravings. His caligraphy, of which examples are still extant, would have done credit to the most expert writing master, and, indeed, he was able to make no inconsiderable income by the sale of these specimens of his skill.

He figured likewise in the not very invidious role of wife beater, for on one occasion when one of his wives—he was married four times—insulted him, he sprang upon her, got her down, and buffeted her so severely with his stumps that she was glad to escape further chastisement by promising amendment in the future—a promise that she faithfully kept.

Equally marvelous were the feats of William Kingston, who at the commencement of the present century resided at Ditcheat, near Bristol, where he cultivated a small farm. He could, without other aid than that of his toes, saddle and bridle his horse, milk his own cows, cut his own hay, bind it up in bundles, and carry it about the field for his cattle. He was an excellent carpenter, too, and had acquired no little renown as a hammer thrower, being able with his feet to cast a heavy sledge hammer as far as most men could with their hands.

Very expert, too, is Caleb Orton, an American, though in his case his skill has brought him within the clutches of the law, for though without hands he contrived to forge a postal money order. For that nefarious purpose he employed his mouth, and although the authorities were at first incredulous and doubted the truth of his confession, he soon put the matter beyond doubt by ocular demonstration.

Gripping the pen between his teeth, he, by means of a series of rapid movements of his head, executed one of those elaborate designs of birds, beasts and scroll work in which writing experts delight, and proved to the satisfaction of everybody present his undoubted culpability.

AT THE END OF 2000 A. D.

What One Writer Predicts Will Happen a Century Hence.

The twentieth century is to be the century of change; science, which is going at the trot, will then go at the gallop, says a writer in London Truth. We think we know much; those who will live 100 years hence will wonder we knew so little.

The folowing is prematurely quoted from the Daily Cinematograph of Dec. 31, 2000:

"On the eve of the twenty-first century it will be in the minds of many to contrast the present with the past. All are aware that gigantic strides have been made recently in the direction of progress, but few realize that only a hundred years ago men traveled in trains over the land and in ships over the water; that they communicated with each other by telegraph; that their streets and houses were lit with gas or with an early adaptation of electricity; that coal was used in almost every household; that hundred of millions were spent in taking instead of in saving life; that the soldier was more honored than the surgeon; that well-dressed women wore furs in the day while the sun was shining and half-stripped themselves in the evening and that it was not generally acknowledged that one of the most important of duties is to enjoy the legitimate pleasures of this exquisitely designed world!

"Only a century ago selfishness and superstition still bound our predecessors, but science has removed these bonds from us. As we walk in the silent streets and look upon the smokeless sky, where thousands of aerial carts, cabs and carriages hurry hither and thither, we wonder how man can have lived without flying. Even yet we are surrounded by a decaying past. Underground London is said to be honeycombed with tunnels in which trains ran up to fifty years ago! In many parts of the country telegraph and telephone poles still stand with dangling wires, though wireless telephony has long since superseded those older methods of communication. Builders occasionally come upon leaden piping through which gas was conducted when gas was an illuminant. At Plymouth the government retains from a sentimental motive a fleet of ironclads, though electricity long ago made warfare on the water impossible.

"Perhaps the most striking feature of modern civilization is that there are no ugly women. The improved conditions of life, the place which legitimate enjoyment has in the modern scheme of existence, the extirpation of many forms of disease, and the rational attitude of mind of the average woman have worked wonders. No modern playwriter would think of elaborating a plot in which married life was presented as having a dark side, for the woman of to-day is a joy in her own house, and not only in the houses of others, as there is reason to believe was the case a hundred years ago. Everywhere we see peace, prosperity, progress, and it is therefore with feelings of the utmost gratitude that we watch the departing hours of the twentieth century."

Dr. Stubbs, the Bishop of Oxford, was once importuned by a woman who, knowing his experience of the Holy Land, kept on asking him what places she ought to visit, as she was starting on a trip to Palestine. After answering topographical questions without number, he was again asked: "But, really, what place would you advise me to go to?" "To Jericho, madam," said the bishop, sweetly.

A London newsboy, who is accustomed to shout "Extras" every evening, recently had a very bad cold and became hoarse. Feeling himself at a disadvantage, he carried a large card in front of him, on which he had roughly written: "Hush! Noise is a nuisance! I can't shout my extras, but I have them all the same!" It idid not take the boy long to sell out his stock of papers to the grateful passers-by.

In her book on "Some Players," Amy Leslie says that Edwin Booth's detestation of "Richard III." was frank and incurable. One night, when in the most magnificent instant of Richard, a super fell in a writhing, squirming attack, which set the country audience laughing, Booth said, quietly, after the fall of the curtain, amid shouts of misguided laughs, "What was the matter, captain?" The trembling captain owned reluctantly that one of his twenty-five-cent men had been seized in a fit. "Please pay thirty cents next time, and employ one whose fits may not interfere with Richard. Richard is unendurable enough without the addition of rented fits."

The desire of the inhabitants of Sing Sing to change the name of the town recalls a somewhat similar desire on the part of the inhabitants of the town of Rugeley, England, to a correspondent of the New York Times. A man named Palmer had made Rugeley notorious by an atrocious murder, and a deputation of the inhabitants waited on the home secretary with a petition for leave to change the name. The minister hesitated, and asked what name they proposed to substitute. They replied that they had not decided. "What do you say," said he, "to taking my name?" They expressed their unqualified delight, and obtained the home secretary's consent to this method of obliterating the memory of the obnoxious Palmer. The home secretary in question was Lord Palmerston. The town is still known as Rugeley.

When George Sand, the famous French novelist, was living at Nahant, near the close of her life, she was fairly caught on her own grounds by a determined British journalist, of her own sex, who opened a formidable notebook and demanded: "At what hour do you work, madame?" "I never work," replied George Sand, gayly. "Ho! But your books? When do you make them?" "They make themselves, morning, evening, and night." This was baffling, but the British lady, although deficient in grace, did not lack grit, and said: "What is your own favorite, may I ask, among your novels?" "'Olympia,'" returned George Sand, with a beaming smile. "'Olympia? I do not know that one." Perhaps—I have not yet written it!" and the victimized author beat a hasty retreat, much amused as she looked back and saw that her nonsense was being duly jotted down in the formidable notebook.

Dr. Johnson's Regard for Truth

It was said of Dr. Johnson that he always talked as though he were taking an oath. He detested the habit of lying or prevaricating in the slightest degree, and would not allow his servants to say he was not at home if he was. "A servant's strict regard for the truth," said he, "must be weakened by such a practice. If I accustomed my servant to tell a lie for me have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell them for himself?" A strict adherence to the truth the doctor considered as a sacred obligation, and in relating the smallest anecdote he would not allow himself the minutest addition to embellish his story.

Mistaken Identity.

Attorney—You say you had called to see Miss Billings and was at the house at the time the burglary was committed?

Witness—Yes, sir.

"Then how did it happen that when the prisoner dashed into the room and assaulted you you leaped through the window and went home, making no attempt to defend the lady or give the alarm?"

"I thought it was her father."—Hartford Times.

Bootblacks in Berlin.

Bootblacks are seldom seen on the streets of Berlin, owing to the fact that it is one of the duties of German servant girls to shine shoes in the household, and of porters to attend to it in hotels. There are bootblacks at the principal railway depots, but they find more patrons among women than among men.

What a failure most of us make of life.

DEVIL DANCERS OF CEYLON.

Earn a Good Living by Exorcising Demons from the Sick.

The real Singhalese devil dancers in Ceylon are most ferocious and savage fellows. Their dances are revolting and horrible. But their profession is popular and affords a royal living for the men who go into it.

There is a superstition among the Singhalese that when a man falls sick he is supposed to be afflicted with a devil. In order to rid him of the disease the devil dancers are called in to propitiate the demon.

Two or more of them go by night to the sick man's house, in front of which a small, square inclosure, about six feet high, has been made of grasses and palm leaves. This answers the purpose of the green room at a theater. The men appear at first without masks and with long yellow grass streamers hanging from their heads and waists. The only light cast on the scene is by torches made of sticks, around which pieces of cloth are wrapped, dipped in oil. To the music of a tom-tom, kept up on one note, the dancers sing a peculiar, wild, funeral dirge, in which the spectators often join.

The dancers begin by slowly moving about, stretching the right foot and bringing the left up to it, and appear as if they were searching for something, during which the singing sounds like crying. They are then asking the devil to appear. There are twenty-four different sorts of devils, and after the first part, the dancers are constantly changing their clothes to represent the entire species; some wear masks, some don jaws and terrible teeth reaching to the ears; the jaws open and close in a very realistic manner.

A dance lasts over two nights, as the whole twenty-four devils have all to be personated before the particular demon who is afflicting the sick man is pitched on. When he gives signs of his presence the dancers go into a sort of frenzy, which increases as he takes possession of them; the tom-tom beats faster and faster, the chanting grows into yells, the men whirl and stamp, the bells fastened by bracelets on to their ankles jingle and clash.

At this stage the dancers appear to be looking for some object to give the devil in sacrifice, and into which he may pass. A chicken is usually offered by the friend of the sick man, and this unfortunate bird is seized upon, twisted and tormented and bitten between the false teeth, until the dancers, worn out, move slower and slower, and the chicken sinks into a sort of trance, which is a sign that the devil has accepted the sacrifice, and is willing to pass from the man into the bird. Now and then the bird is revived by some charmed water being thrown on its head, and then the torture of it begins again. After this the men don sheepskin petticoats and capes, and in the torchlight look more and more diabolical and frenzied in their thanks to the devil for consenting to leave the sick man.

When the bird dies it is a sign that the devil has left the man, and he will be cured. The bird is then thrown into the river, to be carried to the sea. It is never killed, and never eaten after dying. About an hour of this sort of thing is quite enough; it is really horrible and revolting, and one is thankful when the men leave off to go to drink the toddy prepared for them, and make a night of it.—New York Journal.

"April's Sowing" is Miss Gertrude Hall's first long story. The title is taken from Browning's "Pippa Passes."

Two weeks after its publication, 40,000 copies of "Alice in Old Vincennes" were sold. It is a story of American life by Maurice Thompson.

Wm. Dean Howells, the foremost figure in American letters to-day, is to be one of the literary advisers to the reorganized house of Harper & Bros.

Annie Russell Marble has written a book with a suggestive title, "Books That Nourish Us," published by T. J. Crowell & Co. It is certain that yearly come from the press books that give us neither temporary nor lasting nourishment, and the necessity arises for a wise choice.

Here is a story told in "Notes and Queries": A lady asked the novelist what her duty was in certain difficult circumstances, and received a clear reply. "But," she objected, "if I did that I should die." "Surely that has nothing to do with you doing your duty," answered George Eliot.

"The Biography of a Baby" is the title of an unusual volume by Miss Millicent W. Shinn. Miss Shinn is a Californian and still lives there. She has always been interested in babies, and has made a careful study of them both as teacher and friend. Published by the Century Company.

Apropos of prefaces—something that few care to praise—Mr. Kipling gives the following good advice, given when he was asked to write a preface: "Some rather interesting experiences have taught me that the best way of making a man hate me for life is to meddle in any way with his work. * * * If the book is good, it will go, and if not, nothing will make it stir. * * * All the men who want to stick a knife into me would stick it into you as soon as they saw my name prefacing your book. Bitter experience has taught that that kind of thing doesn't pay. If a book stands by itself, it will stand by itself; but if you use another chap's name to help it to a start, you will get all the whacks that the other chap would have got if he had written the book, in addition to a few whacks on your own merits."

It is folly to attempt to please everybody. It matters not in which direction a man faces he must of necessity turn his back on half the world.

Women either love or hate; there is no happy medium in their affections.