Great Star Coming.

According to astronomers, the star of Bethlehem, which conducted the wise men to the birthplace of Jesus, will appear once more in 1910 or 1911. Josephus, the Hebrew historian, speaks of this star, which is now known as Halley's comet, and since his time it has appeared on twenty-three occasions.

Look Up.

Some men never see anything but mud while they are traveling through life, although the sky is lovely overhead.—Somerville Journal.

Just Before the Scrap.

Wife—I wonder how they make those parlor matches?

Husband—The process is very simple. I once made one.

Wife—Indeed! How did you manage it?

Husband—By first making a fool of myself in your mother's parlor during our courtship.—Chicago News.

Inevitable Cigarette.

"I can give you two seats in the front row of the parquet," said the man in the box office.

"Let's see," said the man, "the play's a melodrama with the usual polished villain, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Better give me something back in the parquet circle. My wife can't stand cigarette smoke." — Chicago Press.

One of Many.

Mifkins — How does your friend Hooker spend his time since he retired form active business?

Bifkins—Oh, he fishes all summer and lies about it all winter.

A Position of Trust.

"You say your son has risen to a position of great trust in the community?"

"That's what he has," answered Farmer Corntossel. "The folks say they've made him custodian of their most precious treasures. He drives an ice wagon in summer and a coal cart in winter."—Washintgon Star.

Picture Hats in Theaters.

It is announced that further attempts are to be made to cope with the hat nuisance at matinees by providing cloak rooms free of charge. Something also might be done by improving the quality of the plays presented. There is a good deal in the retort of the lady with the picture hat, who, on being told that those behind her could not see, said that they were not missing much.—London Punch.

Perrin's Pile Specific

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Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANNE JUDGE, SPINSTER," "LITTLE KATE KIRBY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

"A queer young woman," muttered Reuben, as he walked to the front door and let himself out of the house. He drove into the city of Worcester with his face graver and more thoughtful than he had driven away from it that morning—although he had foreseen much of the result of his journey, and had prepared for it. He should remember coming to Worcester again to the last day of his life. It was a new beginning; even in the rain last night he had stepped from the commonplace to a something like romance, but he had forgotten the first incident of his arrival until he was in Muddleton's coffee room, and the waiter was leaning across the white cloth toward him.

"Beg pardon, but he's been—the young man who helped to carry the luggage last night for you."

"Has she?" said Reuben.

"Yes, sir. And he said that he thought half a crown a precious little, considering how he had spoiled his things with your trunk. The infernal trunk, he called it, along with other names."

"She said that?"

"He tried it on very hard for another shilling, but I told that I had my orders from you direct, and could not afford to advance, and that it was like his impudence to come at all. I said that, sir," added the waiter, deferentially, "because he got awful saucy, and we had to put him out of the house. His langwidge, sir, was bad."

"What kind of a man was he?" asked Reuben Culwick. "A womanish kind of face—with big eyes—black eyes?"

"Oh, no, sir—not a bit womanish. He was as full of pock-marks as a cribbage board, and his eyes were particularly small, sir."

"Very good—or, rather, very bad," said Reuben Culwick; "half a crown poorer, and the man has got the money instead of the woman."

"Indeed, sir—yes, sir," and the waiter departed. Outside the door he tapped his forehead significantly, and jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the room he had quitted—this for the instruction or amusement of another waiter coming downstairs.

"Mad as a March hare, Bob," he said, sententiously.

"Who?" said Bob.

"Forty-eight."

"That's young Culwick, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"Oh! he always was a rum 'un."

CHAPTER IV.

Reuben Culwick had an early dinner at Muddleton's. After dinner he spent some time poring over a time table, and finally rang the bell.

"I shall want my luggage taken to the station this afternoon," he said to the waiter who had doubted his sanity. "I wish to catch the 5:15 train for London."

After he had defrayed the expenses of his board and lodging at Muddleton's he sat with his hands in his pockets, considering many things of grave perplexity. The waiter left him—when business took him into the coffee room again, number forty-eight was laughing to himself, just as lunatics of a cheerful frame of mind, or of no mind at all, are in the habit of doing.

"Why shouldn't I?" Reuben Culwick said to himself; "I shall not have another chance—she's one of the family—I may never see Worcester again."

He beckoned the waiter to him.

"The St. Oswald Almshouses are at the top of Foregate street, are they not?"

"Yes, sir—in the Tithing."

"Ah! the Tithing. I have been so long away that I forget names and places—everything but injuries," he muttered. He did not go direct to the Tithing, but wandered round the cathedral and strolled to the bridge, over which he looked at the Severn, and where he hesitated strangely.

"What is the use? I shall only hear the recital of her grievances, real and imaginary—disturb her and myself—feel myself in the way, and leave her none the happier. What's the use of my going, after all?—I am as helpless, poor and blind as she is."

He did not see the use of it in the sluggish waters that flowed on beneath the arch of the bridge, and at which he gazed so steadfastly—he had even turned away as from an unthankful task, of which the river warned him, when a second impulse set him with his face from the railway, and took him with rapid strides in the direction upon which he had first resolved. The church clocks were striking three when he paused at the gateway which opened upon the inner quadrangle of St. Oswald. The doors of some of the almshouses were open, and at one of them was a faint sign of life in the form of a young woman, poorly but neatly clad in a black and white striped cotton dress, who was sitting with her elbows planted on her knees, her hands supporting her temples, and her face bent close over a book that lay upon her lap. As Reuben advanced, he saw that the watcher on the threshold had tired of her volume, and closed her eyes.

"Can you tell me where——"

Reuben Culwick paused in his inquiry, for the white, pinched face, and the big black eyes were the face and eyes of the strange girl who had volunteered to carry his luggage last night, and collapsed by the way. He could not be mistaken; he had looked too anxiously at her as she lay in her swoon to be deceived, despite her feminine guise at this crisis, and the taller woman that she looked in it.

The big black eyes blinked like a cat's in the sun, and the lashes quivered in unison, but then he had awakened her from slumber, and there was no sign of recognition on her countenance. There was a certain amount of contraction of the eyebrows, that might have indicated a half scowl at the traveler for waking her thus unceremoniously.

"Do you know me?" Reuben said, changing his tone and question.

"No," was the slow reply; "I've never seen you before."

"Not at Worcester station, at ten o'clock last night, when you helped me with a heavy portmanteau that I was selfish enough to let you carry for me?" he continued.

"I help you with a portmanteau?" said the girl, scoffingly, "at Worcester station! Yes, that's very likely."

"It was you," said Reuben, sternly, as he continued to stare at her, and as the girl's cool denial of the fact began to aggravate him; "why do you tell me that it was not?"

The young woman did not answer readily. She rose to her feet—a tall, angular girl, smitten sorely by poverty—and leaned against the door post, peering at her questioner, with her brow still contracted.

"Why should I help you?" she said at last; "can't you help yourself?"

"You fainted away; you were weak, and gave up. Why deny this?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," was the sullen answer.

The girl was turning away, as if with the intention of passing into the house, when Reuben remembered the object of his quest.

"Will you tell me, please, in which of these small establishments resides Sarah Eastbell?" he asked.

The girl paused, and then swung herself rapidly round and faced him.

"What next?" she cried angrily, "and what's next after that?" she added; "I'm Sarah Eastbell, and if you have anything to say against me say it. I'm not ashamed of my name; I never was—I never did anything wrong in my life—now, then, what is it that you want?"

"You are Sarah Eastbell!" said Reuben, with a new interest asserting itself; "then you are—no, you can't be," added our hero, exhibiting again that incoherence which had already bewildered the waiter at Muddleton's.

"Will you tell me what you want here?" asked Miss Eastbell, peremptorily.

"I want to see an older lady than yourself, of the same name, and residing, I believe, in one of these almshouses."

"Oh, indeed—what for?" was the cautious inquiry.

"A friendly call—that's all," answered Reuben.

"My grandmother is not well enough to see company."

"She will see me," replied Reuben Culwick.

The statement concerning Mrs. Eastbell's idiosyncrasies was destined never to be completed, for a short, sharp "Sarah!" in an excrutiatingly high key, that was like the twang of a wire, and left a humming sound in Reuben's ears, came from an inner room on the left-hand side of the doorway.

"Coming!" said the tall girl, and she disappeared at once, and left Mr. Culwick on the threshold, half resolved to follow her, and before Reuben was prepared for her reappearance she was standing in the doorway again.

"You can come in," said the girl sullenly.

She led the way to a small room, scrupulously clean, with a bed in the center of the room, and an old woman in the center of the bed. There was nothing to be seen of Mrs. Eastbell but her face, and a grim, yellow, parchment face it was, cut up by a hundred wrinkles.

"Well, sir," said the head above the sheets, "will you please to state what business you have with old Sarah Eastbell, who has been past business for the last ten years?"

It was a crisp and not wholly shrill voice, now that it had dropped an octave or two. The visitor walked to the bedside, sat down in a rush-bottomed chair that was there, and looked hard at her.

"When I saw you last you were a bustling little woman, carrying your years well," said Reuben Culwick tenderly; "I am sorry to find on old friend brought down as low as this."

"It can't be Reuben, can it?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes it can."

"Now to think of that, after these years, and here!" said Mrs. Eastbell. "That's kind of you, Reu; I'm very glad," and the old lady fought hard with the sheets, and got a thin, yellow hand above the bedclothes, and extended it in the direction of her nephew, laughing in an odd chuckling way that portended future hysterics, if she were not careful. Reuben shook the hand in his, and the girl stood by the mantelpiece, watching the greeting furtively.

"What made you think of me?" said the old woman, after a moment's pause.

"I came to Worcester last night; I heard this morning for the first time that you were here."

"Who told you?"

"My father."

"You are friends, then? He has forgiven you?" she said.

"No."

"Ah! he will presently," said Mrs. Eastbell, with an easy confidence; "there are many good points about my brother Simon, and it is only a question of time. All things come round in time, Reu—even good luck. That's what I often tell our Sally."

Sally winced suddenly at this introduction of her name into the discourse, and Reuben looked across his prostrate relative toward the young attendant, who drew a pattern on the floor with the point of her boot, and did not return his glances.

"Some day Simon will walk in here—just as you have done—and say how sorry he is for all the past," said the old woman; "sometimes I lie awake fancying I can hear his footsteps coming across the paved yard toward me."

"I would not build upon his offering you any help," said Reuben Culwick.

"I don't want any help. Eight shillings a week keeps more life in me than I know what to do with. I'm very happy, though it's an awful place for flies. Sally does a little work when she can get it, and is a dear, kind nurse, who never tires of me. She'll read the Bible half the day to me, when I'm too ill to run about much—a good girl, Sally!"

"I am very glad to hear it," answered Reuben.

He would not have dispelled the old woman's faith in her granddaughter by a word—by any question hinging on last night's mystery or to-day's prevarication. This was a woman who had faith in everybody, and extracted happiness even from an almshouse in a shady corner of Worcester City.

"When I am gone, I should like somebody to get Sally a good place—you don't know any one who wants an honest, hard-working, truthful girl?"

"Not at present," said Reuben, glancing across at Sarah Eastbell again, who was still tracing hieroglyphics on the floor. She looked up this time as he replied to her grandmother, and shrugged her shoulders either at the old woman's criticism or at the wild idea of her being indebted to him for her future position in life.

"Will she be wholly alone in the world some day?" asked Reuben Culwick, inquisitively.

"She has not a friend—she will make plenty, of course, but she has them to make."

"My cousin Mark was her father, then. Is he——"

"Yes—he's dead. So's his wife. They were a worthy couple, but they were very unlucky, and so better out of the world than in it," said the grandmother, "when they died last year I offered Sally part of my home, and my sister tried to do something for Tom, but he went to sea."

"Does Sarah sleep here—live with you altogether?"

"Yes," answered the old woman; "it's very selfish of me to keep her to myself, but, please the Lord, it will not last a great while longer. She's young—she's industrious, and will be always able to get her living, anywhere; and if you hear of anything that will suit her, you will bear her in mind, Reuben?"

"I shall not forget her," said Reuben, dryly.

"She shall come and tell you when I'm gone, if you let me know where you live," added Mrs. Eastbell, in a brisk, business-like manner; "it is as well to arrange these little matters."

"I live at Hope Lodge, Hope street, Camberwell."

"That's right, Reu—always live in Hope, my lad."

It was a feeble joke, which nobody appreciated but this light-hearted old blind woman, and she appreciated it for the three of them, and lay chuckling over it until it nearly choked her.

"I am going now," said Reuben Culwick, stooping over her; "good-by, aunt."

"Good-by, lad; thank you for a visit which will cheer me up for days; and think of something for my Sally, if you can."

How strongly impressed that sullen girl by the fireplace was on the old woman's mind he did not entirely comprehend until this last moment of their meeting.

"Grandmother!" said Sarah the younger, deprecatingly; but Mrs. Eastbell went on, the thin bony hand clinging to her nephew's tightly.

"She's everything to me, but I wouldn't mind parting with her at once—to-morrow, if you should hear of a decent situation for her. Anybody can mind me, and I don't want to stop the way to her advancement. She's clever at her needle; she reads well; she's quick at figures; in any tradesman's shop, now, she's be very handy—and she's only seventeen. So young, Reu, to be alone in the world after I am gone!"

"Yes," said Reuben, "so young!"

So young, and so willful and deceptive, he thought also, after he had parted with his aunt and said "Good-day" to Sarah Eastbell; and walked into the little square court yard, where the rain had begun to patter briskly, as though there had been no wet weather for weeks, and it was coming down to make up for lost time.

(To be continued.)

A Youthful Estimate.

"Now," said the Sunday school teacher, in her most winning tones, "which little boy can tell me about the still small voice that is within us?"

"Please'm," said the freckled boy at the end of the seat, "my uncle has one."

"He has?"

"Yes'm. He's a ventriloquist."—Baltimore Herald.

Best of Reasons.

The Summer Girl (to her companion)—What do you suppose it is, dearest, that makes the sea murmur so?

Testy Old Gentleman Behind (who has encountered a mooning couple in every secluded nook along the shore)—Great Scott! Miss, you'd murmur if you had to listen to all the sentimental nonsense the sea hears.

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Mrs. Newed—I find my lessons in breadmaking have saved us a lot of money.

Mrs. Potts—But I thought you could not eat it, you said

Mrs. Newed—We don't; but I make playthings for the baby out of it, and they never break or wear out.—Tid-Bits.

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"Huh!" snorted the actor, "are you sure they mentioned beef or Limburger cheese?"—Philadelphia Press.

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