A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XVI.

Felicia, when she drove away from Mrs. Talbot's door, had been quite certain that, in spite of her warning, Roy would yield to the temptation of going to call upon Mrs. Desmond.

Felicia had learned a good many lessons of life since the month of September, when she and Mrs. Talbot had killed time and pursued health together at the Yorkshire seaside village. She had gone through her experiences and they had not been pleasant ones to undergo, but, at the same time, they had been beneficial to her, in that she had by now completely got over her fancy for the "wicked man" with whom she had imagined herself to be deeply in love.

Lord Augustus Wray had not come well out of his love affair with Miss Grantley. After an infinite amount of trouble, Felicia had persuaded her father to give a reluctant consent to her engagement with this penniless scion of a needy aristocratic house. He had consented provisionally, that is to say, if the young people would wait two years, and were in the same mind at the end of that period of probation, then, Mr. Gregory Grantley agreed that he would give them his blessing, with something substantial added thereto. Felicia was overjoyed; this concession upon her father's part seemed to her to surpass her wildest hopes. Two years to a young and enthusiastic girl who loves seems but a small thing to secure the whole happiness of her future life. She embraced her father joyfully, and was overwhelmed with gratitude at his goodness."

Not so Lord Gus. The state of his finances was such that he could in no way afford to wait two years for the realization of his dreams. His debts pressed upon him daily; duns pestered and pursued him from morning till night. he had raised the last shilling he could realize; he was, to use his own words, "stone broke." To request such a one to wait for two years for the fortune which was to come to him with the lady of his affections was like asking a starving man to do without food for another month, and promising him a good dinner at the end of it.

Lord Gus kissed his intended very affectionately, wrunk his future father-in-law's hand, and professed himself deeply impressed with his kindness. Then, having got in the good city of Bath a second string to his bow, he put himself into a train and betook himself to that ancient town.

"I should have preferred Felicia, of course," said Lord Gus, to himself. "She is young and she suits me; but I can't wait two years, not two months in fact, for any woman; and there is always Mrs. Cogger—I don't much like the idea—but two years! Oh, no, I couldn't do it at any price—not good enough!"

So, a week later, Felicia received a letter from her lover, with the Bath postmark upon it. He was afraid she would think him a great brute, he wrote, but then, he had never been good enough for; she was sure to meet with some one far more worthy. As for himself he had thought it wisest and best to offer his hand to a lady whom he had known for many years, and who was good enough to take him as he was in all his unworthiness. Mrs. Cogger had consented to become his wife, and they were to be united early in the following month. He ended by piously praying that heaven would watch over his dearest Felicia and make up to her for all the sorrow he felt constrained to bring upon her.

That was Felicia's lesson. She suffered very keenly at first, but she got over it, being chiefly assisted by the facts concerning her rival that came to her ears. Mrs. Cogger was 50; in stature she was short and inelegant; in feature, plain and uninteresting; her manners were said to be vulgar, and her temper violent and excessively jealous. Mrs. Cogger, however, was undoubtedly rich; she was the widow of a Bristol merchant who had left to her an income of six thousand a year. Having purchased Lord Gus, she proceeded to pay her money down for the doubtful acquisition in a truly liberal fashion. She paid his debts, and she made handsome settlements upon him, so that he derived some substantial consolations from his marriage in exchange for the lack of those personal charms that a man is apt to think desirable in the wife of his bosom.

Perhaps the one soft spot in her heart was the feeling that she had for Roy—Roy, who had never wished to marry her, and whose heart was still constant to the love of his boyhood. She felt that she would do a good deal to save him from pain, and yet she feared that a certain amount of suffering must inevitably be in store for him.

"Perhaps it will be better that he should see her and realize that she has forgotten him and is happy in her new life; it may be the best cure for him in the end," she said to herself, and at this moment her brougham drew up at the door of her father's club in Pall Mall. As it did so a gentleman was coming slowly down the steps of the club. He glanced at the lady in the brougham once quite idly, and then again more attentively. Felicia, too, looked keenly at him. Where had she seen that face with the pleasant gray eyes and the refined regular features? Suddenly there came back to her mind the breezy hill slopes above Kepplington Hall, the flickering sunshine through the branches of the beech trees, the blue distance in the valley below, and the great stone house sleeping in its solitude near by; and then the stranger who came strolling up the hill to address them, and whose persistent attentions to Gertrude had somewhat mortified and annoyed her.

She half put out her hand and smiled. The gentleman stopped at once and took off his hat.

"Surely I can't be mistaken; it is Mr. Raikes, is it not?"

Edgar Raikes loked down at her oddly for a moment; he drew himself a little away from the brougham door. She asked him whether he had been at Kepplington lately.

"Oh, yes, I am always there," and then he looked away for a minute, and added rather quickly, "I am a 'poor relation' of Brian Desmond's, Miss Grantley, an out-at-elbows younger son of a cousin of his mother's, whom he has taken pity on. I am his bailiff or agent, or whatever you choose to call it, at Kepplington. I am only in town now to see him on business, I suppose I ought to have told you that before—but, one has a sort of false shame."

"I don't see anything in it to be ashamed of," said Felicia heartily. "A man need never mind working for his living if it is in an honest way," and she felt she liked him all the better for his little confession.

"I don't know much about work," he answered, with a smile. "I am afraid I am rather lazy up there—there isn't much to do, you know. It's a very idle life, I fear."

"Still, whatever there is to be done I am quite sure that you do it, Mr. Raikes. Ah! here is my father. Papa, this is Mr. Raikes, a gentleman I met in Yorkshire last summer."

"Oh! Ah! Well, my dear, you had better ask Mr. Raikes to dinner. If you are doing nothing to-night we shall be delighted to see you at 8 o'clock sharp."

Edgar Raikes was upon the point of pleading another engagement, but a certain wistful glance into Felicia's dark eyes made him change his mind, and he murmured his acceptance and thanks. Mr. Grantley stepped into his daughter's brougham.

"This man, at all events, is honest," Felicia said to herself, and then she remembered that she had liked him when they had met him at Kepplington, and afterward, too, when he had called upon them at the hotel, only that his attention seemed to have been absorbed by Mrs. Talbot. She recollected how foolishly piqued and annoyed she had been that this had been the case, and how angry with herself she had felt afterward, because she, Felicia, whose heart was at that time presumably in the possession of Lord Augustus Wray, should have been so lost to self-respect as to have felt jealous—yes, commonly jealous, because a good-looking young man, who was a perfect stranger to her, should have taken no notice of her, and should have seemed to find pleasure in the society of her friend.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I have brought a friend of mine to pay his respects to you, Mrs. Desmond," said Mrs. Talbot that afternoon, as she entered Kitten's pretty drawing room in Lowndes Square.

Kitten herself had just come in from her solitary drive. She stood in the center of the room pulling off her long gloves; she looked just a little bit sad and weary, but her whole face brightened when, glancing past Gertrude, her eyes lighted upon the young man who entered the room in her wake.

"Roy!" she cried joyfully, running forward with outstretched hands to meet him.

"Kitten!"

"Oh, how glad I am to see you! Do you know, that I thought you had forgotten me, and that you were never coming to see me!"

"So you two are great friends already!" said Mrs. Talbot, in a voice of disappointment. "And I thought that I was going to introduce you to a new beauty, Sir Roy!"

"Mrs. Desmond and I have known each other since we were children," explained Roy, and then he thought no more about her, but sat down on the sofa by Kitten's side. How glad she seemed to see him again; she who used to snub him and laugh at him, and turn her back upon him in the old days; how delightful it was to be welcomed like this by her.

"You are very much changed," he said, almost involuntarily.

"Yes! I suppose I am. A woman does change, no doubt, after her marriage, and I have been to so many places, and have seen so many new things and so many people abroad. I think I was a very ignorant little person, Roy, when my dear old daddy was alive. You see, I was always a child to him, and now I am a woman. I seem to have jumped from one to the other, to have had no girlhood!" and she half sighed.

He bent down and looked anxiously at her. "Kitten, are you happy?"

"As happy as a woman can be who has married a man she loves with her whole heart," she answered proudly and a little defiantly.

When he came back an hour later to her house to dine with her, as she had asked him to do, he found her standing dressed in her ball dress under the light of a swinging lamp upon the landing outside the drawing room door. As he came up the staircase she seemed to him a surpassingly fair vision of youth and beauty in her soft, clouded raiment of white lace, with the glitter of diamonds upon her neck and arms.

"Punctual to a minute," she cried gayly, as she preceded him into the drawing room. "Ah, how I do love people who come punctually to dinner! How do you like my dress, Roy?"

"It is perfect," he said gravely, looking not at her dress, but at her.

"I dare say I shall not dance much," she went on in a sort of harried manner that puzzled him, "only with you and with Brian." Then, after a little pause, she added in rather a strained voice: "By the way, after all, you will have to put up with only me for dinner, Roy; I have had a note from my husband, in which he states he will be unable to get back to dinner, being detained by business. I hope you will not find it dull alone with me. Shall we go down?"

He offered his arm in grave silence and they went downstairs to dinner.

"How odd it seems to be sitting down to dinner alone with you like this!" she cried, with a brave effort to seem gay and happy. "Do you remember our luncheons by the river and the sandwiches and cherry pies I used to coax old Keziah into making, so that I might bring them out to you in the corner of the meadow under the willow trees?"

How nice it was! the softened lamp light, the fruit and the flowers, the dim background of pictures and old oak in the empty room—for the servants had left them—and Kitten, in her white dress, with the light shining upon her corn-gold head, sitting opposite to him while they capped each other's reminiscences of those happy days long ago in which Brian Desmond had had no existence!

"Brian will be here very soon now," she said, glancing at the clock. "How I wish he would come back; let us go upstairs and wait for him in the drawing room."

There was a sound of wheels at the door, and the bell rang. For one moment Kitten's face was radiant; if it had not been for very shame she would have flown downstairs to greet her returning prodigal, but the consciousness of her matronly honors prevented her from doing anything so very undignified.

There seemed to be a little delay downstairs; no manly feet, conscious of outrageous lateness, came tearing up the stairs two at a time—instead, there was a measured tread of heavy steps followed quickly by the swish of a woman's silken skirts against the banisters; the footman threw open the door, and there entered—Gertrude Talbot in amber satin and black lace, with a huge bouquet in her hand.

"Ah, my dear little woman!" she said, affectionately and gushingly, "here I am again, you see! how too—too lovely and delicious you look in that perfect dress! How well it suits you. I have just come from Felicia's dinner party—I thought I would drive round by your door, and carry you off with me to Lady Hunter's; your brougham, I see, is waiting for you, dear, so I can dismiss mine and we can go together, and you must follow us in a hansom, Sir Roy."

"But—you are very kind, Mrs. Talbot; but I cannot go with you; my husband will be coming back," stammered Kitten, confusedly.

Gertrude smiled more than ever, showing all her gleaming teeth, and flinging up her black gloved hands with an expressive gesture.

"Oh, my dear child, how deliciously young and fresh you are! Don't you see that—that naughty husband of yours had no more notion of going to Lady Hunter's to-night than your footman had?"

"What can you mean—have you seen him?" faltered Kitten.

"Ah, I understand men better than you do, child; they are all alike, every one of them—dear creatures, and we can't do without them, the more's the pity, but unreliable all of them! Seen him, my dear, of course I have; I passed him a few minutes ago, walking with a very good-looking woman—it was his sister, no doubt," she added, looking a little away from her victim.

"Yes, it was his sister," answered Kitten, very calmly, half turning to Roy. "It was stupid of me to forget it, but of course, I remember now. Brian told me that he was dining with her to-night."

"Then had we not better go on to the ball?" said Gertrude, considerably taken aback; Brian Desmond had no sister, and she knew it, but the young wife's coolness and courage struck her dumb.

"Yes; we will go together to the ball," assented Kitten, and she went.

"Do you want to break her heart?" whispered Roy, angrily to Mrs. Talbot as they went downstairs.

"Oh, dear, no! only to open her eyes," she answered, with a careless shrug of her beautiful white shoulders.

(To be continued.)

Scientific Farming.

A clerk in the Department of Agriculture said:

"So you think that scientific farming is a bluff? You demand some illustrations of the good that is accomplished by the scientific method? Very well.

"When clover was first introduced into Australia it grew there beautifully, but it never seeded. The soil was all right. The climate was all right. What, then, was the trouble?

"A scientist studied the matter, and this is what he found:

"He found that the native Australian bees had tongues too short to reach the clover's pollen forming organs. These organs in red clover are hidden deeply in the heart of the tube-like petals and they can only be fertilized by the long tongued bumblebee. If red clover is not visited by bumblebees, who bear the golden pollen grains from one blossom to another, it never seeds—it cannot be grown. The scientist, aware of the fact, soon put his finger on the barren Australian clover's trouble. He imported a lot of long tongued bumblebees. These bees flourished, and immediately Australian clover, which had promised to be a failure, became one of the country's richest and finest crops."—Chicago Chronicle.

Where It Is Useful.

Patient—What do you think of this faith cure business, doctor?

Doctor—Oh, it's all right in some cases.

Patient—For example?

Doctor—Well, say when a person imagines something ails him and then imagines he is cured of it.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

As Others See Us.

Green—Do you believe there is really such a person as the fool-killer?

Brown—Er—by the way, how old are you?

Green—Forty-five.

Brown—Well, if there is, he must have retired from business.

Professional Advice.

The new doctor had been called in to see a lady with a swollen jaw.

"Does it hurt you to talk?" asked the pill dispenser.

"Yes," she replied.

"Then don't," said the M. D. "Two dollars, please."

Mean Disposition.

"He's got a mean disposition."

"What makes you think so?"

"I told him I wanted to learn how to run an auto and he didn't offer to loan me his."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

FAITH IN SANTA CLAUS.

I used to watch for Santa Claus
With childish faith sublime,
And listen in the snowy night
To hear his sleigh bells chime.
Beside the door on Christmas eve
I put a truss of hay
To feed the prancing steeds
That sped him on his way.

I pictured him a jolly man
With beard of frosty white,
And cheeks so fat that when he laughed
They hid his eyes from sight;
A heart that overflowed with love
For little girls and boys,
And on his back a bulging pack,
Brimful of gorgeous toys.

If children of a larger growth
Could have a Christmas tree
From Father Time one gift alone
Would be enough for me—
Let others take the gems and gold,
And trifles light and vain,
But give me back my old belief
In Santa Claus again!

—Life.

NANNIE'S XMAS IN 1799.

BY JULES ADAMS FOWELL.

IT was the day before Christmas. Dame Yarrow stood in the store-room doorway, gowned in a warm frock of gray wool homespun, over which was tied an ample white apron. Her white-capped head nodded as she counted the pies on the shelves.

"Fifteen pumpkin—fifteen mince—fifty custard cups and two plum puddings—eighty-two in all, not counting Nannie's three little turnovers. I think that will do for the holidays this year, though Brother John is coming with those ten boys and one little girl. How cold it is. There is surely a storm brewing, and I hope the folks will get here before it breaks."

The good woman turned the key in the lock, and a door blowing open just at that moment, at the other end of the passageway, she hurried off to close it and forgot about the key.

By 3 o'clock madame was robed in her pretty gray poplin with white kerchief crossed on her breast, and a dainty white lace cap on her brown curls, which would stray out from beneath the cap band, and which Papa Yarrow slyly pulled as he passed through the hall where sat his wife and little daughter in front of the blazing wood fire.

"All ready for company, Nancy mine?" He caught the little one up in his arms and kissed her on either cheek, continuing: "And mother, too? Why she looks as young as the day I saw her for the first time."

Farmer Yarrow put the little girl down, glanced at his wife, who, with drooping face, did not respond to his merry speech.

Her husband, noticing this, bent over her tenderly, with the words, "Yes, my wife, our life has ben one of great happiness, marred only by one sorrow. If he—our eldest child—our Henry—were alive to-day, he would be a brave lad of 17."

"John," for the first time his wife raised her head and looked into his face, her brown eyes filled with tears, "John, sometimes, methinks our boy may yet be alive. In the fight with the Indians, we were told that he was carried away by them, and even though the country about was searched by scouts and others, it might be that they saved his life, for he was but a baby—5 years old, and if there was a woman in that tribe surely she would have mother-heart enough to preserve the life of an innocent babe who had never done harm to any."

"Wife, wife, this is very wrong for you to hope for the return of one who has been so many years from us. I am sure that our son cannot be alive, or we would have heard of him in some way. Ah! I hear sleigh bells."

Catching Nannie up again, he turned toward the window, and coming up the driveway were seen three immense sledges drawn by strong horses and filled with merry faces, the owners of which were soon clambering out. The front door was thrown open, and Madame Yarrow's tears vanished in the hearty handshakings and embraces of sisters, cousins and aunts.

Even Great-grandmother Hartwell had come, for this year it was Mary Yarrow's Christmas feast, and all had come to make the old house ring with joy and laughter until after New Year.

That night a merry crowd sat down at the supper table. There was Brother John Hartwell, his wife and eleven children. There was Great-grandmother Hartwell and her daughter-in-law, Grandmother Hartwell. Mr. Yarrow's father and mother were present, as were also his two brothers and one sister with their wives, husband and children. In all there were thirty-three.

One might well wonder where all this goodly company were to sleep, but if you had gone into the great garret you would have ceased wondering, when you saw the trundle beds for the little ones. Of course, the very smallest babies slept in their mothers' rooms.

Christmas Eve the children were always allowed an extra half hour around the fireside to listen to the stories of their elders, while the corn popped and chestnuts burned black, or else hopped across the floor.

On this evening Nannie sat in her favorite place on Cousin Roderick's knee. Uncle Tom had just been saying that a few days previous he had heard that the Indians had been causing trouble for the farmers. They were stealing the hoarded corn and wheat, and in one instance, after taking the grain, they had set fire to the granary.

Cousin Rod saw the look of terror in the eyes of some of the little ones, and interrupted with the words, "Well, now, Aunt Mary, wouldn't it be a great joke if these hungry Reds should get into your storeroom and carry off all those pies and puddings I know you have there for to-morrow?"

"Are they really so hungry, Cousin Rod?" asked a little voice from his lap.

"Yes, dear, an Indian is always ready to eat one out of house and home."

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Late that night no one heard the "pit-pat of tiny hare feet along the dark, cold hall, as a little white figure emerged from the attic, and flew downstairs in the moonlight, which flooded the house with its kindly rays.

She went directly to the storeroom. At the same instant a tall, dark form, that had but a moment before climbed into an unfastened window, stood transfixed with fear at the figure before him, but for the moment only, when, with a sort of grunt, the man moved toward the pantry door.

Nannie, beneath her breath, whispered, "It's a Indian, an' he's come for my turnovers. Cousin Rod said he might."

She was frightened and stood very still while the other fumbled with the lock, which soon yielded, and when Nannie saw the man was really inside the pantry, she turned and almost flew back to her father's room, where, standing on tiptoe, she whispered in his ear, "Father! Father! A Indian is down in the storeroom, stealin' my turnovers! Come quick, father!

He did "go quick," and arrived just in time to close the door of the storeroom, and turn the key in its lock.

There was a pause, then a pounding on the door. Hastily pushing a heavy table against it, Mr. Yarrow returned to his room; dressed, and calling two other male members of the household, they all marched to the storeroom well armed, and without much trouble, soon overpowered the thief, who proved to be an Indian, and who mumbled something that sounded like broken English.

They carried him out to the smoke-house, which was built of stone, and had a heavy iron door. The three men watched nearby the rest of the night.

At breakfast on this Christmas morning, Father Yarrow told the story of the previous night, and Nannie had her full share of caresses and praise from aunties, uncles and cousins alike.

Then there was a clamor from the youngsters to "see the prisoner," so after breakfast they all went forth to the temporary jail, Dame Yarrow among the others.

The great doors were pushed back, and lying on the floor was the Indian, asleep. But was it an Indian? Instead of the straight black hair, his was brown and curly.

Dame Yarrow gave one look, then turned to her husband, with extended hands, and the cry, "Oh, John, it is he!" fell fainting into his arms.

The lad was awakened and taken to the house. He spoke English hesitatingly, but could give no account of his former life, before he became one of a tribe of half friendly Indians.

He explained his being in the storeroom by telling his hearers that his tribe of Indians that was encamped several miles above, on the river bank, had been living on what they could steal from the whites.

He had been sent out on this night, and seeing a window open in the back of the Yarrow homestead he determined to crawl in and view the premises.

Mrs. Yarrow knelt before him and gazing searchingly into his eyes, which were blue, asked over and over, "Don't you know me, Harry, darling? I am your mother." But he could not be made to understand. He begged leave to return to the tribe, saying he would come back again with information.

This the men were inclined to believe a trick to get away, but when Mrs. Yarrow pleaded for him they let him go.

All idea of church-going was abandoned, for the first time on Christmas Day in the life of any member of that household, and dinner awaited at the bidding of madame until the return of the youth. He was seen coming up the walk at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and with him was an old Indian.

The following tale they all listened to with great interest:

"In the great Indian fight of twelve years before, the little captured boy was taken to the Indian encampment, and given to the care of a young squaw, the favorite wife of the chief of the tribe.

"One day she overheard the chiefs talking about the white man's child. They said he had brought misfortune to the Indians, as they had lost several battles since he had been with them, so they had decided that the innocent child should die.

"The squaw had learned to love the little one. That night she arose, and taking him in her strong arms she carried him away to another tribe of Indians, who were bitter enemies of her own, and, in order to save the boy's life, she told the chief of a deep-laid scheme that her tribe had planned for attacking them.

"She asked them to take the child and keep him, till perhaps, some day he would be restored to his "white tribe."

The old Indian was well rewarded with a load of wheat and corn to carry home on a hand sled.

Then the long-lost Harry Yarrow was made to understand that this was his home, and that he was to remain there.

The Christmas dinner did not suffer that night for want of attention, but before they partook of it, Farmer Yarrow, with his arm about his son, thanked God for this greatest of all His blessings.—House Monthly.

NOTHING FOR FREDDIE GREEN.

Freddie Green he said 'at Santa Claus was let a fake an' he laid awake in bed to find out for sure, an' when Santa Claus come in with a whole lots of things he hollered right out loud to "Get a hold o' to Santa Claus, an' Santa Claus let it fall up everything 'at he was going to leave an' turned out the bettie light an' Freddie Green didn't get nothing! It's 'cause Freddie Green hadn't got no manners—an' 'at's the reason.

An Improved Diary.

"This," explained the bookseller, "is our latest patent diary. We think it is the cleverest thing in that line ever devised."

The shopper turns the leaves idly.

"But I can't see where it is different from any other," she observes.

"No? Well, if you will look at all the dates after Jan. 23 you will see that in each space has been printed, 'Got up, ate breakfast, lunch and dinner and went to bed.' That insures a complete diary for the year."—Judge.

The Dawn of Christmas.

Christmas day begins in the middle of the Pacific ocean, and there is where Santa Claus starts and ends his great and only journey of the year.

Science and Invention

Recording bird migrations, Otto Herman, a Hungarian ornithologist, is surprised to find that swallows take 106 days to complete their passing from Gibraltar to Lules, in Sweden.

That electricity is soon to replace the manual labor of the housemaid is the prediction of Col. R. E. Crompton, the English electrician. It is capable of washing dishes, kneading dough, chopping meat and even doing the family washing, as well as many other things. The use of the motor to compress air may give a cold storage room for every man's house. Domestic motors have been greatly cheapened and electric lighting companies are profiting by selling current for day use at reduced price.

At a recent meeting of the Torrey Botanical Club in New York, Dr. C. S. Gager reported the results of experiments with the action of radium on growing seeds. It was found that the rays act as a stimulus, varying in intensity with their strength as well as with the thickness of the seed coats and the amount of intervening moist soil. If the stimulus is not pushed beyond a certain limit, germination and subsequent growth are accelerated. Above that limit the results are unfavorable. The growth of plants is retarded, and may be stopped, by placing them in an atmosphere containing the emanation of radium, such as may be drawn from a cylinder lined with Lieber's coating.

Ingenuity was manifested to a notable degree in Spain and France at the time of the solar eclipse of Aug. 30. The shop windows in Madrid, Paris and other towns were filled with a great variety of devices for viewing the passage of the moon across the sun's disk without danger to the observer's eyes. There were black glass spectacles, black glass monocles, black glasses set in pasteboard handles of 20 different forms, and also devices for viewing the phenomenon by reflection. But the people made many contrivances of their own, such as pinholes through paper, or through the tops of Derby hats. Some viewed the eclipse in the streets or on the roofs by reflection from pails or pans of water to reduce the glare, and some saw it through cambric handkerchiefs or thin umbrella tops. The book shops abounded with paper-bound treatises on eclipses.

Airship travel seems to be already popular. W. de Fonvielle estimates that seven or eight hundred balloon voyages are now made annually, and states that the members of the French Aero Club alone made more than two hundred last year. The forms and colors of the clouds, the brightness and the new views of the earth give a wonderful charm to sky automobiling. This is increased at night, and Camille Flammarion, whose wedding trip was made in a balloon, has expressed his surprise at the splendor of the lights of a great city—in this case Paris—as well as at the brilliancy of the constellations. The number of the stars is unbelievable, the dog star becomes as bright as Venus, while some of the nebulae appear like gas jets. The shooting stars are terrifying. Their explosions seem to be heard, and this may be really true, as the balloon acts like a gigantic ear trumpet, and catches such earthly sounds as the whistling of locomotives and barking of dogs. Hygienically the complete renewal of the air in the lungs is a delightful sensation.

SHOOTS RATS FOR A LIVING.

Hunter Stalks His Quarry and Is Unerring in His Aim.

There is a rat catcher who visits Baltimore periodically to rid hotels, among other places, of the rodent pests. Among the hotels he has two regular customers and his advent is always the signal for the pleasures of the chase in a small way.

This rat catcher is not a piper of Pan. He has no method of charming rats, but goes after them just as any hunter in the big woods would stalk his game. He does not sit down in front of a rat hole and tease the rodents forth with the sweet strains on a tin flute. Instead he carries a small air rifle, and it does the work. He makes straight for the basement, kitchen, baggage-room and open plumbing, where rat holes will be found if they are anywhere. Having located his rat hole, which he seems to accomplish almost by instinct, he listens at the opening until his keen ear detects a scratching or a squeak.

He unerringly locates his quarry by this sound, inserts his rifle at just the right angle and fires. If he misses—but what's the use—he doesn't. He hits his man every time. Then, with a long, hooked wire he probes into the hole and draws his victim out. Now and then he strikes a nest of young. In such cases it is usually an easy matter to hook nest and all and drag the pests from their palatial residence. His is a peculiar calling, but has its uses. And it's better than killing rats with poison and having them die within the walls.—Baltimore News.

By Way of Excuse.

Crawford—What makes that Senator so dishonest?

Crabshaw—He says he is merely getting back the money it cost him to be elected.—Tom Watson's Magazine.

Are you willing to admit that there are others in your line of business just as smart as you are?