

## JENIFERS INHERITANCE.

Rev. Clement Jenifer had inherited a property! The Lawyer's letter announcing the fact lay before him, beside the breakfast which he had forgotten in the thought of this unexpected good fortune. It was not a meagre breakfast, although Mr. Jenifer at five-and-forty was still only a curate on a stipend of £150 per annum, for through the greater part of his 20 years in holy orders he had acted on the principal that if he gave his time to the poor, it was as much as they could expect; and so if they called Parson Jenifer "hard" and "close," and preferred going to the vicar—why, that was not his fault.

His inheritance consisted in a good house and several hundred a year, and he sat and thought over the difference this would make in the future. No more for him the daily service, read as a part of the day's work—no more visiting of thrifless, complaining, muddling poor with whom he was completely out of touch—in a word, no more drudgery!

Twenty years of drudgery! That was what his life amounted to. Not for him the spirit of love that softens, and the high thoughts that sanctify, daily tasks; only the grudging gift of obligatory toil. It was written on his face, in lines marked by twenty years—no, not quite twenty—he had thought differently at first—but by more than a dozen years of discontent and repining. It was a pity, too, for the face was one of great possibilities, clouded over by the dullness of heart that fails to see through the service the Master who is served.

Even now he had no regret for the kind old friend who had left him a goodly share of his property, no thought that the hand which had ever been ready to help him and many another was helpless now henceforth, no spirit of gratitude for this last loving gift, only a selfish pleasure in his own good luck, and a feeling of discontent that it had been so long in coming. And thus thinking, he rose and went to see his vicar to make arrangements for the visit to the lawyer, which must precede his taking possession of his new inheritance.

He found no difficulty in obtaining leave of absence for the purpose. The vicar was a kind and open-hearted man, and pleased at his curate's unexpected prosperity.

"Well, Jenifer," he said, "I am very glad for you, though you can't appreciate it as much as if you had a wife and family dependent on you. All the same, you have my hearty congratulations."

"Ah," said Mr. Jenifer, "things generally come too late. Now, if this had happened when I was 10 years younger, what a difference it would have made in me!"

"But your friend's life was a very valuable one to many, was it not?" said the vicar. "From all I have heard of him, I should think that even now, there will be plenty to say that the end has come 10 years too soon, rather than too late."

"Why, he was nearly 90!" said Jenifer, as if the fact were rather a reproach to the old man. Then he hastened away to make his preparations for leaving.

The vicar's wife came in as the curate went out. She found her husband gazing rather sadly into the dull street.

"Mary, my dear," he said, "it is my belief that after the miracles of the loaves and fishes there were some amongst the five thousand who complained that the bread was stale, and the fish not so fresh as it might have been."

Meanwhile Clement Jenifer was speeding on to London to see his lawyer. He found there was one condition which he must fulfil before he could call himself master of house and income. Mr. Dacre had only willed Waterdell Hall to him under the proviso that he should pass one night in the house entirely alone.

Mr. Jenifer laughed when this clause was read to him.

"That's not a very hard thing to do," said he. "But was Mr. Dacre's brain softening when he made his will?"

"Not at all," answered the lawyer shortly. "Any one who saw Mr. Dacre in his last hours will tell you that the dear old man's mind was as clear to the end as in his best days. When you go to Waterdell, you will not please your poor neighbors there, if you suggest to them that the man who was so universally beloved and revered was crazy. I have no doubt this letter, which he instructed me to deliver to you personally, will explain the matter."

This was, however, not the case. The note was but a short one, and gave no reason for the testator's wish, except that he had inherited Waterdell Hall under the same stipulation, that he had ever been thankful for having carried it out, and hoped that though his friend Clement Jenifer was older than he himself had been when he came into the property ("for," he wrote, "with a touch of his ordinary humor. 'I have been, like Charles II., an unconscionable time a-dying'), yet,

that a solitary night passed in his future home would prove as great a blessing to him as it had been to the writer, and so, without further explanation, signed himself his affectionate friend, Thomas Dacre.

That was all. Clement Jenifer never liked being made ridiculous, and he thought that this will went very near that possibility. Yet he could not lose his inheritance for fear of being absurd, so, after certain business instructions from the lawyer, he went to his hotel for that night, and next morning started for Waterdell. He put up at a little inn in the nearest market town before proceeding to his destination, where, the lawyer had informed him, he would find all things in readiness to receive him for his lonely vigil, if vigil it was to be. The inn was full of farmers of the neighborhood, come in to the market; and after much discourse on grain and turnips, the conversation, Mr. Jenifer found—he being, of course unknown—turned on the death of Mr. Dacre.

"They do say," said one red-faced, gray-whiskered man of substantial appearance—"they do say that the ghost has begun to walk again since the squire's death."

"What ghost?" asked a young man, with an incredulous laugh. "I never heard of a ghost at Waterdell."

"No, you mayn't, said the first man; "but I've heard tell from my father, times upon times, that before Squire Dacre come here there were a power of queer things seen and heard at Waterdell, and they say that since he's dead, they become back."

"They say; who says?" asked a thin weasel-faced farmer.

"Well, my man Marvel, for one; he went across by the spinney last night, where he has been almost every evening this 30 years, and he swears that he saw some one walking up and down the long path and heard some awful noises."

"Ah!" said the thin man, with a grunt, "Marvel always were a liar."

"Liar or no liar," said the fat farmer, rather angrily, "my father saw the ghost himself 60 years ago; often and often he has told me of it; and I believe the old squire knew of it, too, for he never laughed or scoffed as some do" (with a significant sniff) "when folk talked of ghosts."

And so the talk drifted on to other matters, and Mr. Jenifer was left to contemplate another element of absurdity introduced into his well arranged, commonplace existence, and felt quite angry at the thought that he of all men should, by the irony of fate, be brought into a ghost story. But as he never had believed in ghosts, he did not mean to begin now; and, after inquiring his way to Waterdell Hall, he found that he must start at once if he wished to reach there before nightfall. It was a somewhat dull walk, which led him at last along a narrow road ending in an abrupt descent. The high hedges on either side had lost their summer beauty without yet gaining the glory of autumn; the few rose berries were sickly looking and withered, and frosted with a whitish blight, and their leaves hung shivering on the twigs, whilst in the fields beyond the evening mists were already rising. The road turned sharply to the right, and then Waterdell Hall lay before its future owner.

To a cheerful eye it might have seemed nestling in a bower of greenery; but Jenifer, out of tune with things in general, and tired with his walk, saw in its withdrawal from the high road a guilty seclusion from observation. Four tall Wellingtonias rose dark and solemn above the little wicket gate, and cast a gloom over the garden patch, in which some late geraniums and petunias, only served by their touches of brilliant color to accentuate the general melancholy. The house itself, instead of boldly looking forth on the passers-by, turned its face away from the road, and had no prospect but the little bit of garden and the four sentinel trees.

The door stood open, and Mr. Jenifer entered a narrow passage where no welcoming footsteps came to meet his own; only a Virginian creeper torn by the wind tapped on the porch; otherwise all was still. Mr. Jenifer looked around him for a moment, and then went through the silent house to the chief sitting room. It was neither large nor high, but it had that individual charm which only age and years of occupation can give. The old-fashioned mantel reached, with its dark, rich, carvings, to the ceiling, across which was a massive, oaken beam, nearly black with age; the fireplace with its glaring logs gave out a cheerful glimmer, reflected in the small quarries of the window opposite, over which hung a carved scroll, whose inscription there was not light enough to read.

Mr. Jenifer breathed a sigh of relief at the comfortable appearance here, in contrast to the depressing aspect of the rest of the house; but, instead of settling himself (as he felt tempted to do) by the fire, he again went out to look over the surrounding property. Behind, the ground rose abruptly, and was bounded by a closely-growing coppice, through which a narrow path seemed to strike in the direction of the village. The parson climbed the hill, leaving the coppice on his left, and standing on the highest portion of the meadow, looked across the low hedge at the last pageant of the sunset. Some elm trees were silhouetted against the sky, athwart which lay

bars of rosy flame, tender and evanescent. One moment the dying light leaped up brighter, and throbbled all the burning heaven, and then suddenly it died away, and the day was not.

Jenifer turned and looked at the hall. Already it seemed to be losing itself in the darkness which gathered round it, hiding in the recesses of the gables, drawing curtains of mist over the twisted chimneys. The silence entire and absolute, struck almost with oppression on the mind of this man accustomed to city noises; but even as he thought to himself, "How still it all is" there sounded in the coppice close by him a long sobbing cry, which rose and fell, and rose again, and then ceased.

Clement Jenifer was not a particularly tender-hearted or compassionate man, but that sudden cry filled him with a vague fear of some cruel deed just perpetrated—some awful mystery to be brought to light; and after a moment's hesitation he turned in the direction whence it had seemed to come, and found himself on a long path, with a thick yew hedge on either side. Far ahead, and in the dim twilight, he could descry a figure walking slowly away from him; he could hear a moaning sound, as of some one in pain. Mr. Jenifer hastened his pace in order to come up with the sufferer, and as he gained on him, and could see him more distinctly, it seemed to him that there was something familiar in the gait and bearing of the unknown. And as he so thought, the figure turned, and facing him, advanced with slow, uncertain, footsteps, wringing his hands as he came. What was it that struck Mr. Jenifer as so well known to him? What was it that filled him with sudden horror and sent the blood back to his heart? All the tales of ghosts and haunting noises at which he had scoffed so lately recurred to his mind, and yet there was nothing unearthly in the aspect of the man who was approaching him. And now they stood face to face, and Clement Jenifer saw that this—he knew not what to call it—bore the face which he himself had borne 20 years ago, and he knew, though how, he could not tell—that he was standing face to face with the ghost of his own dead past.

Then ensued a conversation—strange, unnatural—between these two, who still were one; but whether the words were uttered on the evening air, or whether the knowledge of what was in the mind of each was mutual to both it were hard to say.

"Why do I haunt you?" said this double of himself, gazing on him with reproachful eyes. "Do not murdered victims haunt their slayers, and have you not murdered that which was the best part of me? Where are the promises of your young days? Where are the aspirations, the desires after a higher life, the noble purposes with which my soul was filled? Dead—dead and buried beneath a crust of selfishness!"

"Youthful follies," answered Jenifer; "gone the way of all such early fancies. Why do you persecute me? Have I stolen, or murdered, or lived uncleanly? Have I not kept to my work and done it thoroughly, distasteful as it is?"

"It is true," said the other, "the commandments you have not broken; but where are the hearts you have helped to bind up? How many have you helped by your example? Rather, have you not by daily carelessness, by your dryness of spirit, by perfunctory performances of your duty, quenched the light that was, aye, God knows it was, in me? And in doing so you have wounded many another. There are sinners who slay the body, but you have slain your own soul; and woe be to him of whom this can be said."

Jenifer laughed in scorn. "When I was what you are, all this would have had its terrors for me; now I am not to be frightened with false fire. I know what you are, who, think to scare me thus—an illusion of the brain, a disturbance in the nervous system. Come daylight and this will be as if it had never been."

But the other with the sad youthful eyes looked at him in sorrow and said: "Even in your blindness you speak the truth, for when you were as I am, ere the world had dimmed your sight, you would have seen the precipice on which you stand. Oh, brother of me, though how degraded! give up your dreams of a selfish future; turn back while yet you may, use the wealth that has come to you, not for yourself only, but for others; redeem the time that is left to you, and bring to a happier second life the promises, the aspirations, of your youth."

"Begone!" said Jenifer. "If not an illusion, then you are an accomplice in some conspiracy to betray me in a rash vow. Did you and the old man who is in his grave plan it between you, and laugh to think how you would scare your foolish dupe! Away from me! and do not hope to work your will. I have inherited, and I will enjoy!"

"Nay then," said his double, "see to what an end your enjoyment shall bring you. I, whom you have destroyed, am what you were; see now what you shall be."

Then for one awful moment the parson knew that not only he himself stood there, with the spirit of his once pure and earnest-hearted youth beside him; but a third and dreadful shape—himself as he should be, if no hand of grace stayed his downward course.

The lightning flash of awakened perception showed him his own old age, where that which he had called economy had grown to avarice, where callousness had become cruelty—discontent, envy—carelessness, impiety. He saw himself, degraded, mean, despicable, bad, without affections, without tenderness, without hope; and as the horror of it swept over him with resistless force, Clement Jenifer—the icy crust of years of life for self broken at last—fell upon his face, with the agonized cry of the apostle of old. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

When he came to himself, he was in the quaint old sitting room in his new home. The fire had burnt low, and only dimly illumined the room; but as he gazed into the glowing embers a hitherto unkindled log broke into flame, and as it leaped and flickered, the scroll which he had before remarked and failed to decipher caught and threw back the yellow light, and Mr. Jenifer read in letters of gold the poet's words:

"Nor deem the irrevocable Past  
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,  
If, rising on its wrecks, at last  
To something nobler we attain."

He sank on his knees, and there in contrition of spirit and anguish of soul dedicated anew to his Maker the years that should be granted to him, the wealth that he had inherited—himself, body, soul and spirit, for evermore.

People said afterward that the prosperity had been good for Mr. Jenifer, that it had made him softer, more compassionate, more tender. He alone knew that the vision he had seen had come only just in time to save him from that utter ruin of soul to which he was tending; and when he thought, as many a time he did, of that awful night, he bowed his head in contrite humility and gave thanks for the warning that had been sent to him.

## Recovering a Foot-Ball.

Mrs. Beebe, an elderly New London lady, has been a good deal annoyed by boys who play foot-ball in the street before her house. She had tried entreaties and threats to no purpose, until the other day, when she had her innings. In the course of their games the boys knocked the ball out of bounds into the yard attached to Mrs. Beebe's residence, and before the spryest of the lot could scale the fence and recover the rubber sphere Mrs. Beebe had captured it, and when a demand was made for its return she was deaf to all forms of entreaty. The boys made two or three ineffectual attempts to soften Mrs. Beebe's great wrath for their previous bad conduct, but she was adamant and the boys were in a quandary. After a while they held a mass meeting for deliberation on the best course to pursue, and finally decided to form a committee, which was divided into sub-committees of two, whose duties should be in turn to make half-hourly calls on Mrs. Beebe and demand the return of their foot-ball. They kept this up all day, with little chance of success apparently until late in the day, when it became a mere question of endurance which of the adverse parties should prevail. For brute strength the boys had the call, and at 8 o'clock Mrs. Beebe surrendered and threw up the ball, to paraphrase a term in use in pugilistic circles.

## Fashion Notes.

A novelty is an entire gown of Jersey silk. It has but one fault—it is as expensive as it is beautiful.

Muslin and lace fichus are worn with low dresses or open bodices. The variety in shape and textures seems unending.

The newest blue is known as "Baltic." It is of a very dark, rich shade and harmonizes well with a deep shade of yellow-red.

Coquettish breakfast caps are much affected by young matrons. The Olivia shape still seems the favorite. Sometimes the crown or the centre of the cap is completely composed of tiny loops of ribbon.

The most brilliant and vivid as well as the most delicate colors will be worn this season. There seems to be no law, but fancy guiding their use.

The garnet, cut like a ruby, is a very desirable as well as effective article of bijouterie. These stones look well in slight settings and used as lace pins.

The Spring mantelets are more ornamental and smaller than ever. They show off the figure much better than those of last season and are not so confining to the arms.

## The Fate of One Boy's Kite.

A harrow-shaped flock of wild geese went northward over a Connecticut town the other day. They seemed to attend sharply to the business of traveling until they spied one of the numerous kites some of the boys were flying. This kite was uncommonly high in the air and the geese objected to it. At least they circled about it two or three times and then four of their number, seemingly delegated for the purpose, attacked the kite and tore it into shreds. Then they went on their way.

There are one hundred and ninety college papers in this country.

## ROMANCE OF THE MINES.

St. Louis Republican: "This is indeed a peculiar world," said a mining expert at the Planters' House yesterday. Here I pick up the papers and read of Mrs. Mackay's doings in Paris—how she receives the scions of royalty, how she entertains, how she appears at the opera, how she dresses, and how she does a thousand other things; and then I can scarcely conceive that eighteen years ago she kept a boarding-house in Virginia City and that I was one of her boarders. Yet it is true, and I often ponder over it. She was a young widow then, with an interesting child who has since matured into a young lady and was recently married to an Italian Prince of some kind. That little girl has often sat on my knee with a little tin can in her hand which contained the contributions of her admirers. In those days we lived principally on canned food, and Mrs. Mackay's back-yard was paved with tin cans.

The child had selected a very pretty can, which one of the boarders had transformed into a little bank. This was partly filled with coin, the result of a tribute which she levied on her friends. She would climb on the boarder's knees and, shaking her little bank, would say: 'Is you lucky today?' This query had the desired effect, and the bank receipts were increased. Even in her days of distress Mrs. Mackay was a good woman. She personally superintended affairs and made her boarders as comfortable as possible. I was then superintendent under Fair, and Mackay was already a millionaire. Mining stock was the rage then and I remember how often she would come to me and some of the other boarders and ask our advice about certain stocks, and I am happy to say that the advice I gave her was good, and if I had taken it myself I would now be \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000 better off than I am.

"Then Mackay took a shine to the widow, and being reputed one of the wealthiest men in the camp he found smooth sailing. He couldn't win on his shape nor his beauty, for everybody who has seen Mackay knows that he wouldn't take a prize in a congress of beauty. They were married, and the little girl no longer sat on miners' knees, and "mamma's" delicate hand no longer placed cornbeef and cabbage on miners' plates. They rose faster than Sheridan stock did last summer, the only difference being that their rise was backed by hard coin. The great Comstock lode continued to pour forth its riches and Mackay and his partner became immensely wealthy. Although reared in poor circumstances, Mrs. Mackay showed her good sense by securing a private tutor, by whom she was drilled and educated for five years. The little daughter was put through the same course and fitted to shine in the most cultured society of the Old World.

Then came the conquests in New York, San Francisco, and finally the trips to Europe. A year ago I was in Paris and one evening attended a performance at the Grand Opera-House. It was a first night, and prominent in a private box were two ladies bedecked with diamonds and festooned with flowers. They were the cynosure of all eyes and, leveling my glasses, I discovered behind the silks, flowers and diamonds the face of my former landlady in Virginia City. The outlines were the same, but time had wrought its changes. The young lady with her was the little girl who used to play on my knee. She had grown out of my recollection. As I stood looking at them 'midst the flashing lights, the perfume of flowers, and the delicious music, I could not help recalling something of "Some one who breathed high water, Swam the North Folk and all that, Just to dance with old Follanbees' daughter, The city of Poverty Flat."

There is no doubt at all that he was marvellously fitted to fill the most precarious posts in the world of diplomacy. And it is noticeable that where cool judgment was needed, while Raleigh always failed, Sidney always succeeded. It does not seem that he took any interest in politics. His prognostics of events in his letters are as incorrect as they could possibly be. His strength lay in personal intercourse with men who held the reins of power. He knew how to please them and secure their confidence, and even when they were the enemies of England he did not seem able to help leaving them Sidney's friends. It was not like Elizabeth's usual cleverness to distract the possessor of this extraordinary gift to other fields. The man who had more tact than all the rest of her Court should have been restrained, against his own preference form becoming a soldier.—*The Contemporary Review.*

## He Neglected His Opportunities.

Ethel—Don't you like Mr. Frits-Jones?  
Mabel—No, I don't. I despise him.  
Ethel—Why?  
Mabel—Well, he was calling on me last night, and I undertook to show him how well I could whistle.  
Ethel—Well, what of that?  
Mabel—A great deal of that. I just puckered my lips up as sweet and pretty as I could, and then—  
Ethel—Well, what then?  
Mabel—He just let me go on and whistle.  
Ethel—How mean!—*Tid Bits.*