

ness" at the same time—cocking up his ears with a humourously inquisitive air, and looking round with a comical, wide-awake glance, before he bounces into his hole.

The charge of indifference towards the lives and interests of his progeny, so frequently brought against the buck rabbit, we consider highly libellous and improper. Cooped up in a separate hutch, and shut out from all intercourse with his family, it is not to be wondered at that the buck rabbit becomes, to a certain degree, morose and ill-tempered. He is kept in a sort of Bastille, and naturally grows as indifferent to the outer world as the unhappy old prisoner whom the Parisian insurgents found cowering in the stronghold of tyranny in 1790. But give him fair play; let him inhabit some spacious hutch, or—better still—some old outhouse, where he may be unrestricted monarch over his descendants, and you will soon see that the authority is in the hands of no sluggish king. He will take his youngsters between his fore-paws, one after the other, and lick them and smooth them down, with a laudable desire that they should look tidy; and, in many respects, will show himself a most careful and respectable "Paterfamilias."

With regard to the sway he bears over his descendants, let us take the testimony of a gentleman who was a rabbit-breeder for many years. "These animals," he says, "seem to have a great respect for paternal authority; at least I judge so, from the great deference which all my rabbits showed for their first ancestor, whom I can always easily distinguish by his whiteness. It was no matter that the family augmented; those which, in their turn, became fathers, were still subordinate to him. Whenever they fought, whether from mere temper or concerning their food, their great progenitor would run to the place of dispute with all speed, as soon as he heard the noise. No sooner did they perceive him than everything was presently reduced to order; and if he surprised any one of them actually assaulting another, he used to separate him from the rest and punish him upon the spot. Another proof of his dominion over all his posterity is, that when I gave the signal, by a whistle, for them to come to me, however distant they might be, this old one immediately put himself at their head; and though he came first, yet he made them all file off and enter before him, not going in himself till the very last."

No animal seems to "enjoy life" more heartily and completely than does the domestic rabbit, provided, of course, he be well kept, and allowed sufficient exercise to keep up the buoyancy of his spirits. It is a pleasure to feed him. He does not rush forward, like illbred animals of the pig kind, to devour his food, but comes tripping up to you daintily, with a hop, skip, and a jump, takes the leaves in a graceful way, and begins nibbling them with a relish that it does your heart good to see. We are sorry to be obliged to confess that he is the least bit inclined to be a tyrant; and occasionally tyrannises over his weaker companions with rude thumps and kicks; but all is done in such a comical way, that you cannot be angry with the funny little swaggering blade.

Even the rabbit's natural timidity gives way when its young are threatened. Witness the following anecdote, which we quote as a crowning point in "bunnie's" favour:—

"I was," says Mr. Howitt, "on a fine summer's day, sitting in the meadow opposite Tutbury Castle, in Staffordshire, contemplating the remains of that fabric, which once imprisoned the Queen of Scots. On the slope of the castle hill facing me, I observed a rabbit sitting by its burrow. Suddenly, from a bush, at some distance, issued a large weasel, and darting on with the rapidity of an arrow, attempted to make its way into the burrow, in which, no doubt, were the rabbit's young one. The rabbit, with an air of the utmost coolness, raising itself as the weasel approached, received him with several smart thumps upon the

head. He fled back, but speedily renewed the attack, and was received in the same style. The assault, battery, and retreat were maintained for at least a quarter of an hour, when the weasel crawled away, apparently exhausted, and appeared no more. Such is the valour infused by parental instinct into the most weak and timid creatures."

The Elopement.

MATILDA MURRAY was left an orphan and an heiress at the age of sixteen. Jacob Dale, a member of the Society of Friends, was her guardian; and, with him and his wife, an invalid and a great sufferer from nervous attacks, Matilda was to find a home. She had been a petted and idolised child; and the change from the lavish outpourings of parental love to the cool, calm companionship and care of friend Dale and his wife was like coming out of the heated air of a ball-room into the dark and chilling night. They tried to perform the duties that Mr. Murray, in his confidence and esteem, had devolved upon them; but Matilda felt, without knowing exactly how or why, that duty, and not affection, was the motive that influenced her guardian and his wife towards her. She was not a pretty girl; although, through the mistaken fondness and flattery of her parents, she had learned to think herself beautiful. Neither was she very wise or prudent. She had grown up in such an enervating atmosphere of praise and indulgence, that her mind was almost in a state of lethargy. She could not endure study or books of any kind, except the weakest and trashiest of love-sick romances; and it was so great a mental effort to her to read one of those quite through, that she rarely accomplished it. The only motive sufficiently strong to arouse her to much exertion was a love for dress. She was quite happy and excited when she was shopping; and, next to that, she liked to sit at the window and criticise the attire of the passers-by—a most uncongenial inmate for the household of a strict and uncompromising Quaker.

It was not the least of Matilda's troubles that her ribbons and laces had to be laid aside, as friend Dale, though he did not require her to conform exactly to the mode of dress his tenets prescribed, yet objected decidedly to allowing a ward of his to deck herself out with any superfluous gauds. It cost the young girl many a sigh and pang to close the drawers in which lay her useless finery. She pined, too, for love, and for the flattery and praise of which she had so long been the object. Her guardian still allowed her to attend the school which her mother had selected for her—one of the most fashionable establishments in York. And, although he often shook his head, and groaned over the worldly notions and love for display which seemed to be the chief results of this kind of education, yet, as he said, he did not feel free to take the child away; for, while Mr. Murray had left him at full liberty to act as he thought best with regard to Matilda, Mrs. Murray had made it an especial request that her daughter's education should be finished at Madame Constant's.

There Matilda had formed an intimacy with a young girl, named Anna Fleming, who affected to regard her with that exaggerated fondness so common among school-girls. Their homes were in the same direction; and Anna always seemed to consider it an important part of her duties, as a friend, to accompany Matilda to her own door before she parted from her.

One day they were joined in the street by a tall, showy-looking young gentleman, whom Anna introduced to Matilda as her brother. After this, Mr. Fleming became their constant escort on their way to and from the school, leaving them regularly when within a short distance of either place.

Mr. Fleming was one of the most fashionable and dashing young men in the city. He lived elegantly and expensively; yet no one could tell how he contrived to do so. His way of life was one of those mysterious secrets that abound in large cities, for he had no apparent means; and yet he vied with the wealthiest around him. Admirer, as he was, of beauty, and spirit, and wit, there must have been some reason for his selecting a plain, uninteresting girl to be the object of his devoted attention. Probably the solid charms, in the shape of eighteen thousand pounds, with which Matilda was endowed, had much to do in gaining her so devoted a worshipper. She admired him excessively. He fully realised the *beau-ideal* she had formed from

the books in which she delighted. She told Anna she thought her brother perfect. This compliment, of course, soon found its way to the ears of the gentleman, who smiled to think how easily he had won so important a prize.

In a few weeks more, he had obtained Matilda's promise to be his wife, and had, at the same time, impressed upon her the necessity of keeping the whole affair a profound secret from friend Dale and his wife. To this Matilda readily consented, as all her preconceived ideas of guardians were that they were a class of people whose only pleasure lay in thwarting the wishes of their wards, especially in the matrimonial way; and she anticipated no difficulty in this, as Mr. Dale was too much absorbed in his business to pay much attention to her; and his wife's attention was almost entirely engrossed by her ailments, which developed every day something new and singular. Mrs. Dale had been watching and pondering over her own ill health for ten years, and had not yet been able to determine satisfactorily what her disease was, or where it had its stronghold. In her perplexity, she had tried eight different physicians, who each gave her complaint a different name; and some were truly frightful, so that the poor lady would keep her bed for weeks after finding out how ill she was; and it would take all her husband's generalship to persuade her that she was able to sit up. Of course Mrs. Dale could do little for Matilda. All that she attempted was to urge her to keep her feet well protected from the damp pavements, and be sure and wear a veil.

There was one inmate of the family of whom the young girl stood in a little dread—George Dale, a nephew of Mr. Dale, and a boy of about thirteen. He was very curious and inquisitive, and, Matilda said, "had no soul." He called her "Miss Fancy," and teased her until her patience was quite exhausted. Lately, he had met her several times when she was taking a longer walk than usual with Mr. Fleming, discussing ways and means. Matilda had one fixed idea connected with an elopement; and that was a rope-ladder from a chamber-window, a carriage underneath, and a moonlight night.

Mr. Fleming tried to convince her that this combination, in these days of policemen, would be sufficient to arouse the whole neighbourhood. But his eloquence was wasted. Matilda would seem to yield to his reasonings every day; but the next morning would find her firmly planted on her rope-ladder again. She rejected with scorn Mr. Fleming's proposal to walk to some clergyman's house, and induce him to marry them. It was too much like a servant-girl, she said.

Fortunately for Matilda, this discussion occupied several days. Meantime, George had used his eyes and his wits to some purpose. One day, after Mr. and Mrs. Dale and Matilda had seated themselves at the dinner-table, a singular noise was heard in the hall; and George came in, dragging after him an enormously long rope-ladder.

"Now, Matty! what on earth do you want with this contrivance? I saw the man smuggling it into your room; and I thought I would bring it down for you to see if he had made it according to orders. You at the window, and Mr. Fleming on the pavement, with this for a passage-way, is to be the order of the day, is it? It reminds me of some one's description of a fishing-rod—a worm at one end, and a fool at the other, only I should put knave for fool."

"Thee should not use such language, George," said Mr. Dale. "What does thee mean by that thee was saying about Mr. Fleming? And, Matilda, for what purpose did thee have that made?"

Matilda burst into tears, and ran from the room without replying; but George enlightened his uncle as far as he could. He knew that Matilda walked every day with Mr. Fleming; and the rope-ladder told the rest. Without Mr. Fleming's knowledge, Matilda had obtained it by the help of a servant. That very night, she intended to make use of it, if a favourable opportunity presented. Anna was to spend the evening with her, and help her to arrange her plans, and carry the intelligence of them to her brother, who was growing a little impatient at Matilda's delay.

Now, all her hopes were blighted, at least for a time. She remained in her room weeping, while her guardian spent a busy afternoon in investigating the doings of his ward. He questioned the servants, who generally know all that is to be known of any matter of that kind, and went to find Mr. Fleming. He expostulated with him on inducing so young a girl to take

such a step without the knowledge of her protectors. Mr. Fleming appeared to be quite affected by Mr. Dale's arguments; and, although the latter was a shrewd man of business, he allowed himself to be entirely thrown off his guard by the apparent manliness and frankness with which Mr. Fleming avowed his own consciousness of his error, and promised that, although he would not be willing to consider the engagement between himself and Miss Murray as at an end, still he would wait some years before attempting to carry the matter further.

"The young man behaved himself with great propriety," said Mr. Dale to his ward. "If thee does as well, I shall be quite satisfied."

"It is as well, though, not to trust too much to young people," said he to his wife. And, therefore, he kept Matilda at home, employing private teachers for her, to her great vexation and annoyance, and entirely discountenanced any intimacy or intercourse with Anna Fleming. But Matilda's fancy had become too deeply interested for these moderate measures to prove effectual. Mr. Fleming still continued to write to her. The washerwoman was Cupid's messenger in this case; and another attempt at elopement was agreed upon. Mr. Fleming had arranged a plan that he thought would succeed without fail; when Matilda's absurd desires and obstinacy in carrying them out made him almost repent having wasted so much time on such a simpleton. If she could not have a rope-ladder, she would have a bridal wardrobe; and Mr. Fleming was forced to wait several weeks, while she was collecting the various articles she thought necessary. Her supply of pocket-money was ample to meet all her extravagant wishes. Her dressmaker wondered what Miss Murray could want with the magnificent dresses she was having made, and at last surmised somewhat of the truth. But no one else seemed to suspect anything. Once or twice Matilda fancied that George looked a little mysterious when he saw her take a package from a servant; but, in her many occupations, she soon forgot her suspicions.

At last, the wardrobe was prepared, and packed in three large trunks. The plan was finally arranged. Mr. Fleming was by no means satisfied with it; but it was the best he could do with the materials he had to work with. Matilda and Anna were to meet him at a certain hotel at Harrogate, and accompany him to some clergyman's there, where the ceremony could be performed.

If Matilda had obeyed implicitly Mr. Fleming's instructions, all would have succeeded; but, after seating herself by the side of Anna, in the carriage that had been ordered to meet them at Taylor's, she insisted on returning for her trunks. Anna remonstrated in vain. Matilda was sure there was no danger. Her guardian was at his counting-house, which he would not leave for several hours. His wife was in her bed, with one of her nervous attacks. George was at school; and the servants were busy in another part of the house; and, as for returning for them afterwards, as Mr. Fleming wished, that she would never dare to do. So Anna was obliged to yield.

Now, it happened that that day, of all the days of the year, George was seized with so severe a headache that he found himself obliged to leave the school-room. Hurrying home, he was surprised to see three trunks, evidently prepared for some traveller, standing in the hall. He forgot at once his headache, and proceeded to investigate the cause of this phenomenon. He had his own suspicions; and they guided him on the right track. Finding Matilda's room empty, he sought the servant. "Are those Miss Matilda's trunks in the hall?" asked he.

"Miss Matilda's trunks? Ye want to know if they was Miss Matilda's trunks, do ye?" returned the Irishman, with a look of stupid wonder.

"Yes; are they?"

"Sure, and how should I know whose trunks they are?"

"Where did they come from?"

"And it's where they come from ye want to know?"

"Yes."

"Sure, and how should I know where they come from?"

"Did you bring them down from Miss Matilda's room? Tell me; yes or no."

"And was it I that brought them, do ye want to know?"

The man was evidently pledged to secrecy; but, convinced by his evasive answers, George ran down to his uncle's place of business with the intelligence, in a state of as great excitement as a young sportsman when he shoots his first woodcock.

Mr. Dale came hurrying up the street under the warm rays of the morning sun, and reached his own door just as the driver was strapping on the last trunk.

"You may take that luggage off again," said an authoritative voice; and Matilda glanced out of the carriage-window in dismay, as she heard it, and saw her guardian standing at the door, somewhat heated and flushed with his long walk, but otherwise as calm and composed as ever. He threw open the carriage door, and assisted, with his usual courtesy, the frightened girls to alight. Without a word, Anna walked away in the direction of her own home. Mr. Dale had a short conversation with Matilda, and easily drew from her the particulars of her projected elopement. Then, taking her place in the carriage, he ordered the driver to proceed.

It was not long before the panting horses stopped at the appointed place of meeting; and Mr. Fleming sprang down from the steps of the hotel, where he had been standing on the alert, saying, as he drew near—"Oh, dearest, how long you have kept me waiting! I have been walking away for wings, that I might fly to hasten you." And he threw open the carriage door.

"I am sorry thee has been wasting thy time to so little purpose," said the stout old gentleman, as he alighted slowly and carefully. "It seemed to me we came with great speed. The driver told me, when I cautioned him about it, that he was to have double fare if he were here before twelve. Will thee see that he gets his pay, as he surely deserves it?"

When Mr. Dale had seen the man's demand satisfied, he requested Mr. Fleming to allow him a short conversation with him; and together they sought the drawing-room of the hotel.

"Before thee goes further with thy purpose, I thought I would let thee know one clause of James Murray's will—the most sensible thing he did," said the old gentleman, as if to himself. "By it, I have full power to withhold all the income of her estate from his daughter, if she marries without my consent, until she is twenty-one. She is now sixteen; and I assure thee, friend Fleming, if thee marries her, thee shall not have one penny of hers as long as I can help it. Thee is false to thy promise; and I do not longer feel bound to act towards thee as a gentleman."

Mr. Fleming attempted to excuse his conduct by saying that his feelings were too much interested for him to consider calmly what he did. Mr. Dale listened to him patiently and politely, but seemed in no way softened by Mr. Fleming's appeal.

A few days after, Matilda was sent to a school in the country, under the control of a lady, one of Mr. Dale's personal friends. Mr. Fleming made several attempts to renew his intercourse with her there, but at last gave up in despair.

For three years Matilda remained in this seclusion; and although she at first spent a greater portion of her time in lamenting over the cheerless home to which her severe guardian had consigned her, she soon allowed herself to be consoled; and, removed from all disturbing influences, she began, at last, to find some pleasure in study and useful occupation. Mr. Dale, when he placed her there, had been quite hopeless about her, and had adopted that course as the best one to keep the foolish girl from falling a victim to the arts of some fortune-hunter, while she was still under his care. "But now," said he to his wife, "Matilda has become really a tolerably sensible and right-minded young woman. I think I might venture to bring her home again, especially since Mr. Fleming is out of the city."

"Where is he?" asked Mrs. Dale.

"In California. When he was last heard of, he was employed in a boat, on one of the rivers there. He had been trying to work at the mines, but had not succeeded. There is no prospect of his returning."

Matilda came home soon after this conversation; and Mr. Dale, with some formality, gave her the latest intelligence with regard to Mr. Fleming.

All poets—and they surely are the oracles on such points—agree in saying that "Love is love for evermore;" so that, as Matilda felt her early preference for Mr. Fleming fading from her mind, from the moment she began to think of him as a boatman, she concluded that she never had loved him. "It was only the fancy of a foolish girl," said she to Robert Dale, George's elder brother, with whom, as her affianced lover, she was talking over the one great episode in her early life. "If I had succeeded, how unhappy I should now have been! But I never can help

smiling when I think of Mr. Fleming's rushing forward to greet me, and seeing uncle's portly figure seated inside the carriage. I laughed, that day, whenever I thought of it. It seemed such a ridiculous ending—not at all like a novel. So, you see, I was not very much in love."

Literature and Music.

A Lover's Quarrel. By the Author of "Cousin Geoffrey," "Married for Love," &c. &c. &c. A Novel, in three volumes. Hurst and Blackett.

The announcement of a new novel by the author of "Cousin Geoffrey" is always welcome to those who delight in a well-told tale, combining genuine humour and deep pathos. We are tempted to pronounce "*A Lover's Quarrel*" to be the best of the writer's many popular works. It is essentially a love story, and its object is to warn lovers against that false but popular maxim, that "the quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love." This is done in that eloquent and sprightly manner which in a former work made the *Times* pronounce Mrs. Gordon Smythies' style "perfect." A careful perusal of this interesting fiction, which, though abounding in wit, humour, and playful satire, has always a moral in its mirth, enables us to indorse the opinion of the leading journal.

Nothing can surpass the interest and reality of the plot, scenes, and characters which make "*A Lover's Quarrel*" so fascinating a work. The incidents are varied, and the dialogue sparkling. It has—as all Mrs. Gordon Smythies' tales have—a high aim and great moral purpose; and we cordially recommend it to our lady readers as in every way worthy of the attention of married and single, young and old.

After the Battle. Composed by Mrs. R. K. Barnes, 7, Portman-street, Portman-square.

THIS is the title of an exquisite piece of music for the piano-forte. It is at once martial, pathetic, and descriptive; and is composed by Mrs. R. K. Barnes, and dedicated to the hero of Kars, General Sir William Fenwick Williams, K.C.B.

Mrs. R. K. Barnes is already very favourably known to the musical world as a composer of great merit. Ladies daily distinguish themselves in literature, painting, and even science. The most popular novel of the age ("Uncle Tom's Cabin") is by Mrs. Beecher Stowe; and no name stands higher for science than Mrs. Somerville's. In poetry, Mrs. Barrett Browning is by far the best of a bad, but fashionable, school; and our circulating libraries would be closed but for the inventive and descriptive genius of our ladies. Still, we have very few musical composers of the fair sex; and, as it is our aim and object to encourage all legitimate female enterprise, and, if possible, to open new fields to woman's laudable ambition and to remunerative feminine exertion, we both applaud and recommend Mrs. R. K. Barnes's brilliant and spirited venture.

We welcome, then, this beautiful piece of music both on account of its merit and the novelty of the attempt. The piece is so exquisitely got up, with so effective a frontispiece, beautifully drawn and coloured, that we recommend it as a present at this season of general exchange of tokens of regard. The "idea" is a little similar to that of the "*Battle of Prague*," so popular in the days of our grandmothers; but the treatment is new and effective, and decidedly of the modern and popular school. The "*Approach*," the "*March*," the "*Battle*," the "*Victory*," and the "*After*" (terrible word!) are expressed almost as vividly as they could be by words, through the singular and highly cultivated talents of the fair composer.